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Maintaining the Cutting Edge

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International Trade Considerations for Extension Education Programs

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The recent poor trade performance of the U.S. farm sector has caused much concern about the ability of American farmers to compete on a global scale. This symposium addressed this and other key issues regarding agricultural trade. Although the U.S. is not as competitive as in the late 1970's, a comparative advantage has been maintained in most traditional crops. Certain regions, such as the Southeast, appear to bear more of the burden of adjusting to changes in prices of wheat, corn, and soybeans. Recent empirical evidence provided support for the contention that developing countries can increase food production and imports simultaneously. Broad-based per capita income growth in agriculture is a key to successful market growth. U.S. agriculture has much to gain from the upcoming Uruguay Round of GATT, although most benefits will accrue over the long term. Finally, future growth in agricultural exports will be difficult to attain, requiring an extension-research interface that focuses on specific product systems. More regionalization of education activities will follow, resulting in a more diverse clientele base.

International Trade Considerations for Extension Education Programs

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