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hensively, there are some topics—for instance, rural and agricultural finance (covered in Chapter 10), and marketing margin, food marketing and distribution research (Chapters 16 and 20)—where rich literatures exist focusing on developing country and other industrialised country problems and issues, but where these applications are covered very selectively.

Taken as a whole, however, these limitations are minor. These volumes will serve as an indispensable reference for legions of agricultural economics researchers in the years ahead. In combination with their companion volumes comprising Vol. 2 of the *Handbook*—which are more heavily weighted toward international development, market and policy topics—they also provide a summary perspective on the state of agricultural economics research today. As Goodhue and Rausser state in their concluding chapter (Chapter 21), the distinguishing characteristic of the best of the agricultural economics research culture is a “dual standard of top quality economic research and empirical relevance”. They go on to observe that an overemphasis on either pure empirics or economic methodology risks a loss of disciplinary relevance, on the one hand, or a reduced effectiveness in addressing real-world problems, on the other. This is useful guidance to researchers and an appropriate note on which to end this impressive set of volumes.

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Agricultural Policy for the 21st Century

Tweeten, Luther and Stanley R. Thompson (Eds.); Iowa State University Press, Ames, 2002, 384 pages, US\$ 73, ISBN 0-81-380-899-5

The essential conclusion in this book is provided in the first three sentences of Chapter 1 by Luther Tweeten:

“Contemporary commodity programs poorly serve publicly stated objectives for agricultural pol-

icy. These programs have become an exercise in politics rather than economics. In a bidding war using taxpayers’ money to win votes, Congress has ignored the new agricultural paradigm that farm commodity markets are efficient, that farm households have higher income and wealth than nonfarm households, and that farm people and natural resources are more appropriate targets than commodities for public policy.”

As a supporter of the *new agricultural paradigm*, I find the book to be a refreshing look at US agricultural policies. Moreover, the book is well enough written to be assigned as reading material in an undergraduate policy course.

The book consists of 15 essays written by distinguished members of the agricultural economics profession on the occasion of Luther Tweeten’s retirement from The Ohio State University. These essays provide insightful and “outside the box” views on a wide range of agricultural policy issues. The book qualifies as a “should read” for academic and government economists interested in agricultural policy, congressional staffers and agricultural producers.

I am in full agreement with D. Gale Johnson’s closing statement of the book’s Forward:

“The essays in this volume represent significant contributions to our understanding of recent developments in farm policy. While you may not agree with everything that is written here, I am confident that you will find much from which you can learn and some things that will challenge your firmly held beliefs.”

Each of the essays in the book focuses on relevant topics and issues. The authors have made excellent contributions to an enlightened public discussion regarding US farm policy. I will not comment on each essay but will mention a few that I found most interesting.

Bruce Gardner notes that “economywide costs, common to both pre-1996 and post-1996 programs constitute a good reason for economists to question US farm programs generally.” Hopkins and Morehart observe that “the *farm problem* is frequently interpreted as one of excessive volatility in returns. Our analysis indicates, however, that cross-sectional if not temporal variability in the distribution of returns is

much greater for the nonfarm business sector than the farm business sector.”

College of Agriculture Deans touting increased funding for R&D will take little comfort from Dan Sumner’s suggestion “that access to international markets can be a more effective contributor to food consumption than agricultural R&D. Indeed, with access to international markets, food security for a nation may hinge on agricultural R&D on a global basis rather than locally.” Tim Josling picks up on the idea of changing policy paradigms to identify and discuss four competing paradigms of agricultural policy in the OECD. He provides some interesting observations regarding trade policy issues, as the “old” paradigm (that agriculture is not competitive with other sectors) is confronted with three competing new paradigms: (1) agriculture is indeed “competitive”, (2) agriculture is more than commodity production—“multifunctionality”, and (3) global agriculture is becoming a consumer-driven sector as a result of “globalisation”.

The new paradigms espoused by Tweeten and other authors in this book stand in rather stark contrast to current US farm programs. Tweeten contends “that the most effective anecdote for government failure lies not in political science but in economic education—a better informed public pressuring Congress for policy reform that recognises the new agricultural policy paradigm.” This book makes a positive contribution to developing that “better informed public”.

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Local Partnerships for Rural Development: The European Experience

Malcolm Moseley (Ed.), CABI Publishing, Wallingford, Oxon, UK, 2003, 210 pp. + XIV, US\$ 90, ISBN 0-85199-657-4

Malcolm Moseley, as editor of *Local Partnerships for Rural Development: The European Experience*,

tells two separate stories. The first and dominant story is about an elaborate and truly complex research project investigating the role of local partnerships in European rural development—the Partnerships for Rural Integrated Development in Europe Research Project (PRIDE). It is a good story, about collaboration among researchers from Finland, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The first story tells about the sequencing of various research approaches to collecting insights about the functioning and impacts of partnerships in rural development in Europe. It tells about blending qualitative and quantitative methods, about blending survey research with intensive case studies. It tells about using follow-up investigations with respondents to the survey and to participants in the case studies based on preliminary findings along the way.

The second story, which this reviewer wishes was the first story, is about the role of partnerships in rural development generally, and then specifically about the European experience. The first part of the second story is extracted from the first story, when the reader learns what a rural development partnership is in a section entitled “research objectives.” For purposes of both stories, a rural development partnership is “a voluntary alliance of organizations from at least two societal sectors (state or public-sector organizations, private companies, civil associations) with a clear organizational structure, with ongoing and long-term activities that include more than one project, and which shows an integrated approach to the promotion of the development of rural areas with no more than 100,000 inhabitants (p. 7).”

The reason that partnerships are important and why anyone should care about them—the whole purpose implied by the title of the book, *Local Partnerships for Rural Development: The European Experience*—is relegated to Chapter 2, Literature Review and Theoretical Framework. In a book telling the local partnership story, the context for the whole book should be in the first chapter. And it is not until Chapter 3 on the methodology and execution of the research that we learn what questions of importance need to be asked about local partnership in rural development.

Just as with the context of the story of local partnerships, insights into local partnerships must be extracted from within the story of the conduct of the research. The reader must look for insights by the