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Kimberly L. Jensen

2005–2006 President

Kim Jensen was born in Navarro County, TX, and was raised in Texas and Oklahoma. Dr. Jensen received a B.S. in Bio-Agricultural Sciences from Arizona State University in 1981. In 1983, she completed her M.S. in Agribusiness also from Arizona State University. She received her Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics at Oklahoma State University in 1986.

In late 1986, she joined the faculty in Agricultural Economics at the University of Tennessee. She was promoted to associate professor in 1992 and to full professor in 1999. Dr. Jensen's appointment is a mixture of research and teaching. Her research interests include agricultural marketing, consumer markets, and agribusiness development. She is the author of over 150 journal articles, proceedings papers, reports, and bulletins. Dr. Jensen has served as a principal investigator or project researcher on over \$1.6 million in grant and contract funded work, including four USDA National Research Initiative Competitive Grants. She has taught a variety of undergraduate and graduate level courses, including principles of economics, agricultural price analysis, international agricultural trade and marketing, managerial economics for agribusiness, and advanced agribusiness marketing. She has co-developed two online courses in agricultural economics.

In 1998, Dr. Jensen joined forces with Dr. Burt English and Mr. Jamey Menard to form the Agri-Industry Modeling and Analysis Group. The mission of this research group is to assess and project the effects of agri-industry development on the Tennessee economy and to analyze market opportunities for economically efficient agri-industry development



within Tennessee. This research group has conducted projects for a wide variety of clients, including USDA, Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Tennessee Soybean Growers, Tennessee Farm Bureau, North American Agricultural Marketing Officials, Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, Tennessee Valley Authority, U.S. Department of Energy, Oak Ridge National Laboratories, and other local and regional economic development agencies. Their research has been used in shaping agricultural marketing laws in Tennessee.

Dr. Jensen has previously served as a Board member and as a Second Vice President

of the SAEA. She has also served as the selected papers chair for the SAEA and a co-chair of the selected papers for the American Agricultural Economics Association. She currently serves as a board member for the Council on Food and Agricultural Resource Economics. She is also an editorial council member for *Review of Agricultural Economics*. She has served as a Faculty Senator for the University of Tennessee and as a Vice President for the University of Tennessee Research Council. She has been an advisor to the Agribusiness Club and to Alpha Zeta.

In 2001, an article she coauthored received the Food Distribution Research Society President's Award for Excellence in Research and Communication. She received the University of Tennessee, College of Agriculture Sciences and Natural Resources, Neal and Tacie Peacock Teaching and Learning Merit Certificate in 2000. In 1996, she was awarded University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture Outstanding Young Scientist. She received the Southern Agricultural Economics Association Best Poster Presentation Award in 1995.

The SAEA: Current Services and Future Directions

Kimberly L. Jensen

In reviewing past Southern Agricultural Economics Association (SAEA) presidential addresses, a continuing theme is the changing structure of agriculture and how we, as applied economists, can address critical issues facing a dynamic food and fiber sector. Although the SAEA membership should periodically reflect on our role as a profession, we should also reflect on the role of our professional organization. This reflection is particularly important as the academic environment shifts toward fewer new Ph.D.'s and tighter budgets, our membership base evolves to encompass a more diverse set of interests, and the economic environment in which we operate changes, with an increasingly concentrated structure of agriculture and expanding emphasis placed on environmental and social issues as they relate to the food and fiber sector.

Many of the trends potentially influencing membership in the SAEA were outlined in last year's SAEA presidential address by Richard Kilmer. In particular, he focused on potential reasons for declining membership in the SAEA and other professional agricultural economics associations. Among potential reasons, he notes the declining number of new Ph.D.'s in agricultural economics and a shifting spe-

cialization among new Ph.D.'s toward environmental economics, natural resource economics, international trade, and development; areas that are served by alternative organizations. He also cites a national trend of declining membership in service organizations in general.

Although certain factors that influence membership levels and viability of a professional organization are beyond the control of the organization, core functions served by the organization are not. To maintain a viable membership base, it is critical that these core functions create value to the members. Among the functions of a professional association are to facilitate sharing of ideas both among the professionals in the association and with others outside the association. Professional associations can provide a mechanism for mentoring of students and new professionals. In addition, activities of a professional association can serve as certifying mechanisms for professional advancement. Some questions that the SAEA should periodically ask in fulfilling these functions include:

- Are we bringing in sufficient new ideas to foster professional development?
- Are we providing good avenues for sharing of ideas?
- Are we providing a mentoring role for students and new professionals?
- Are we providing the necessary quality of papers and articles in our meetings and journal to provide a "certification" role?

The SAEA's two most important products are the annual meeting and the *Journal of Ag-*

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ricultural and Applied Economics. Therefore, if the SAEA is to fulfill the functions outlined above, then the Association will most likely do so through the provision of these two products.

In 2004, the SAEA Board undertook the challenges of examining the services and products offered by the Association and identifying potential methods for better serving the Association's membership and other users of its services and products. As president-elect, I volunteered to spearhead these efforts with the assistance of the SAEA Board members. The approach the SAEA Board decided to take was to ask purchasers or potential purchasers of the SAEA's services and products about perceived benefits from using the products and services, purchasing habits, ideas for products and services, and their demographics. In fall 2004, SAEA members and nonmember economists in the region and surrounding areas were asked to participate in an online survey regarding the SAEA's services and products. The majority of this paper will be dedicated to presenting the results from this survey. The SAEA's two primary services and products are the annual meetings and the journal; hence, a large portion of the analysis of the Association's products and services is focused on the meetings and the journal. However, other services are also examined.

In the following section of the paper, I refer to past SAEA presidential addresses to more fully develop the four questions posed above regarding the core functions of our professional association. Again, at the end of the discussion of the survey results, I will return to these four questions to summarize how the survey results provide insights into answering how well the Association may be providing these core functions.

Are We Bringing in Sufficient New Ideas to Foster Professional Development?

The SAEA, through the annual meetings and journal, provides continuing education opportunities and professional development services for its members. To provide these services, sufficient new ideas must be brought into the

organization on an ongoing basis. Bateman notes that reviews of our papers or articles are done by others doing similar work. He adds that although this is functional for assuring correct methods and terminology, the process might be less effective for infusing ideas into the profession. This raises concern about the breadth of the Association's focus. More than a decade ago, Larry Libby, in his presidential address, examined the issue of diversity in our profession, and the trade-offs of responding to uncertainty either through "circling the wagons" to areas with which we are most familiar or anticipating problems and seeking out new client bases. Certainly, a delicate balance exists between a focus that is sufficiently broad to facilitate infusion of new ideas into the profession without being so broad that the organization loses focus of the core issues that make it unique. Not only is this true for the profession of agricultural economics, but also for its professional associations.

Are We Providing Good Avenues for Sharing of Ideas and Information?

The selected papers, organized symposia, and invited papers of the SAEA annual meetings provide an avenue for the presentation and discussion of ideas and information among agricultural economists. A less formalized avenue for sharing ideas and information available at the meetings is "networking." In a 1997 survey of SAEA members, Segarra found that one of the most often identified reasons for the formation of the SAEA was that it would foster increased interaction among southern agricultural economists. This reason received a higher rating even than the role of the SAEA in increasing the number of publication outlets. In this same study, respondents were asked about the *Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics* as a vehicle for sharing information. The journal received higher ratings as a vehicle for sharing research findings than for sharing extension program findings or teaching experiences and views. This result suggested some disparity in perceptions about the efficacy of using the journal to communi-

cate teaching or extension ideas compared with research ideas.

Are We Providing a Mentoring Role for Students and New Professionals?

Mentoring of students and new professionals can be an important role of a professional association. The undergraduate student activities of the SAEA, especially the Academic Quiz Bowl, have provided an excellent vehicle to facilitate student interaction during the annual meetings. In addition, the SAEA provides an avenue for students to present their research through selected papers. However, we have not provided awards for excellence in graduate research through outstanding thesis or dissertation awards. Opportunities exist for symposia or workshops on topics that are of specialized interest to those new to the profession, such as the tenure and promotion process, the peer reviewed publication process, instructional methods, or methods for building external funding. With regard to instruction, Broder notes that the annual meetings have traditionally offered limited opportunities for dialogue on resident instruction activities. Broder also admonishes the SAEA to critically evaluate whether the Association might lend greater support to resident instruction.

Are We Providing the Necessary Quality of Papers and Articles in Our Meetings and Journal to Provide a "Certification" Role?

An additional role of the SAEA's activities is to provide support for professional advancement. Reasons for being a member of a professional association are intimately tied to motivations of professional development. An important role of a professional association is to provide mechanisms that help build professional status. Although agricultural economists do not have mechanisms arranged for professional licensure, as some professional associations do, quality control in papers and articles produced and published by the Association provide a de facto *certification* role in hiring, tenure and promotion, or other professional advancement. Therefore, perceived quality of

the annual meetings papers and journals by faculty/employees and administration/management is critical to maintenance of this certifying role. In the 1997 survey of the SAEA membership, the respondents gave good ratings to the Association's activities as they related to professional advancement (Segarra).

Survey Methods

In 2004, a survey of SAEA members and non-member faculty and USDA/Economic Research Service (ERS) economists in the Southern Region and surrounding states was conducted. Those surveyed were notified of the study via emails. Email addresses were collected from SAEA membership information and from departmental and USDA/ERS internet sites. The survey was offered online. Respondents entered their answers through an internet site, and the information was stored in a database. No identifiers were used to track respondents versus nonrespondents. The sample consisted of SAEA members who had renewed their membership in the year 2000 or more recently. This consisted of 1,259 email addresses. In addition, faculty in the Southern Region and surrounding states and USDA/ERS economists that were nonmembers were contacted.¹ This group consisted of 282 email addresses. Grouping these two sets of email addresses together provided a total email list of 1,541. Of these, 230 email addresses were found to be undeliverable. Therefore, 1,311 emails were delivered to usable email addresses. Among these 1,311 individuals contacted by email, 222 responded to the survey, providing a response rate of 16.9%. Although no identification codes were used to trace respondents, of the 1,259 current or recent members, a total of 537 had renewed membership in 2004 or were honorary or lifetime members. In the survey responses, 165 identified themselves as currently being members, whereas 52

¹ States included Alabama, Arkansas, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

identified themselves as not currently members ($n = 217$). From the responses regarding membership, the response rate among current members was about 30.7%. Of the emails, about 774 were sent to current nonmembers (either had not joined or renewed in 2004). Therefore, the response rate among nonmembers was about 6.7%.

The survey instrument consisted of several sections. In the first section, all respondents were asked to answer questions regarding their current membership status. The second section related to the annual meetings of the SAEA, and the third section contained questions about the *Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics*. The fourth section asked questions regarding additional SAEA services. Members of the SAEA were asked to respond to these latter three sections. The fifth section contained questions for nonmembers regarding reasons why they were not members. The final section asked questions of all respondents regarding their demographics, including years since terminal degree, type of appointment, and area of specialization.

Survey Results

Characteristics of Respondents

On average, the respondents had 16.2 years of experience since their terminal degree ($n = 201$). The majority of the respondents were professionals at academic institutions (80.6%), with additional respondents being from government (12%), graduate students (3.9%), retired (2.0%), or from industry (1.5%) ($n = 206$). On average, respondents' academic responsibilities were 42.3% research, 28.7% teaching, 26.5% extension, and 2.5% other ($n = 168$). The "other" category was administration or other types of appointments. If these responses are classified according to the majority of the academic appointment (for example, greater than 50% extension is classified as extension), then the appointments could be classified as: majority research, 38.1%; majority extension, 25.6%; majority teaching, 13.7%; evenly split appointments, 16.7%; and administrative or other appointments, 5.9%.

Table 1. Area of Specialization

| Area of Specialization | % of Respondents ($n = 220$) |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Marketing | 19.1 |
| Agribusiness Management | 17.7 |
| Farm Management | 10.9 |
| Policy | 10.9 |
| Production | 8.2 |
| Environment | 6.8 |
| Natural Resources | 6.8 |
| International | 5.5 |
| Econometrics | 5.0 |
| Finance | 4.1 |
| Rural Economics | 2.7 |
| Consumer | 2.3 |

The majority of the respondents had obtained their Ph.D. (80%) ($n = 220$). Nearly 12% attained a Master's degree as their highest degree, and 6.4% had attained a B.S. The remainder had attained other degrees such as a law or other professional degrees.

The areas of specialization represented most often were marketing, agribusiness management, farm management, and policy (Table 1). These four specializations composed over 58% of the responses.

Membership Status

About 76% of the respondents were currently members, and nearly 14% were not currently members but had been in the past. About 10% had never been members ($n = 217$). Among the respondents, the average number of years they had been a member was 13.6 years ($n = 155$).

Membership status was compared across several demographics to examine whether the SAEA is drawing from particular segments of the profession but not others. First, membership was compared across type of employer. Among responding professionals at academic institutions, the membership rate was 80%, whereas among responding professionals in government, the membership rate was only 36% ($n = 205$). A chi-square test of association (calculated $\chi^2 = 22.4$, 2 df) revealed a

significant association between membership and type of employer, whether academic, government, or other at the 95% confidence level.

Second, membership status was compared across type of academic appointment. If the appointment was greater than 50% in any one area, the response was assigned to that area. Among those with a majority research appointment, 78.1% were currently members. For those who were majority extension, the membership rate was 79.1%; for majority teaching, the rate was 78.3%; for mixed appointments the rate was 78.5%; and for administrative or other, the rate was 88.9%. A chi-square test of association did not reveal a significant association between membership and type of appointment. Therefore, these results suggest that membership rates are fairly consistent across research, teaching, and extension appointments.

Third, membership status was examined across area of specialization ($n = 216$). In the specialization areas of Marketing, Agribusiness Management, Farm Management, Policy, Econometrics, Production, Environment, Finance, and Rural Economics, the membership rates exceeded 70%. The three areas with lower membership rates were Consumer Economics (20%), International (58.3%), and Natural Resource Economics (53.3%). A chi-square test of association ($\chi^2 = 19.9$, 11 df) revealed significant association between membership and area of specialization at the 95% confidence level. Interestingly, Laurian Unnevehr, President of the American Agricultural Economics Association (AAEA), in a recent AAEA Newsletter, indicates that for AAEA membership, subject matter interest areas that have been increasing as a percentage of all subject matter areas include International Ag Trade/Development, Natural Resource/Environmental Economics, and Consumer Economics.

When years since the terminal degree were compared across membership status, interestingly, current members and former members had a similar number of years since their terminal degree (16.8 and 17.7 years, respectively; $n = 200$). However, for those who had never been members of SAEA, the average

number of years since the terminal degree was only 9.8, indicating that newer professionals are less likely to be members than professionals who have been out of school for longer periods of time. A t -test at the 95% confidence level (calculated $t = 3.12$, 198 df) revealed that the number of years since terminal degree was significantly lower among those who had never been members than among those who are or have been members.

SAEA Annual Meetings

The SAEA Annual Meetings are one of the two primary services offered by the Association. Therefore, input from users of this service about the quality of the service and ideas for future meetings were solicited from SAEA members in the survey.

The respondents were asked about how many meetings they had attended in the past 5 years. On average, the responding members attended two meetings within the past 5 years ($n = 164$). The average number of meetings was then compared across several demographics. When the average number of meetings was examined across type of appointment, no statistical differences were found in mean number of meetings attended across appointment type (calculated $F = .58$, 4 and 128 df). The average number of meetings attended was also compared across area of specialization. An analysis of variance F statistic (calculated $F = 0.6$, 11 and 152 df), showed no significant differences among average number of meetings attended across area of specialization. When the average number of meetings attended was compared across type of employer, however, significant differences were found (ANOVA $F = 3.96$, 2 and 150 df). As shown in Table 2, professionals from academic institutions attended about three times as many annual meetings as professionals from government institutions. If the number of meetings attended was compared across experience (10 years or greater compared with 10 years or less), no significant difference between the mean numbers was found. The results from comparisons of meeting attendance across demographics suggest that the Association is

Table 2. Average Number of Meetings Attended by Members by Type of Employer

| Type of Employer | Average Number of Meetings Attended |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Academic | 2.1 ^a |
| Government | .7 ^b |
| Other | 1.5 ^{ab} |

Note: Means with the same letter are not significantly different at the 95% confidence level (*t*-test).

drawing attendance by members with a variety of appointments, specialization areas, and experience levels, but it is not drawing as much attendance from government-employed economists.

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement, ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree), with a statement about the value of the SAEA Annual Meetings to their programs. As shown in Table 3, graduate students (1.9 rating) and researchers (2.5 rating) were in the most agreement that the annual meetings were of value to their programs. Although graduate students strongly agreed that the meetings were useful to their programs, researchers were somewhere between in agreement and neutral about the usefulness. Ratings regarding the value of the annual meetings to extension and teaching programs were somewhat lower, falling into the neutral range. These results indicate the need for the Association to investigate methods of increasing the applicability of the meeting content to extension and teaching programs.

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of reasons for attending the SAEA annual meetings from 1 (very important) to 5 (not important at all). The averages of these ratings are shown in Table 4. The reason receiving the highest importance ratings were networking opportunities and opportunity to make a professional presentation. This was followed by meeting content being relevant to the participant's programs. Moderately important reasons were affordable cost of travel and lodging and the time of year. Reasons of lesser importance were meetings registration fees,

Table 3. Perceived Value of SAEA Meetings to Programs

| Type of Program | Average Rating of Agreement |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Study program (students, <i>n</i> = 8) | 1.9 |
| Research program (<i>n</i> = 130) | 2.5 |
| Extension program (<i>n</i> = 69) | 3.0 ^a |
| Teaching programs (<i>n</i> = 105) | 3.1 ^a |

Note: Level of agreement was rated from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Means with the same letter are not significantly different at the 95% confidence level (*t*-test).

location near home institution, and employment contacts.

The timing and location of the SAEA Annual Meetings seems to be an ongoing point of discussion among the members. In the survey, respondents were asked to list their top three choices of months for holding the SAEA Annual Meetings. The preferred months appear to be near or during months in which the SAEA Annual Meetings have often been held. The most often cited months as first choices were February, May, March, and January (Table 5). If the months were assigned ratings of 1 to 3 (3 being the highest preference) and weighted by the number of responses, then

Table 4. Reasons for Attending the SAEA Meetings

| Reasons for Attending | Average Rating of Importance (<i>n</i> = 131) |
|---|--|
| Networking opportunities | 1.9 ^a |
| Opportunity to make a professional presentation | 1.9 ^a |
| The meetings content is relevant to my programs | 2.2 |
| Affordable cost of travel and lodging | 2.5 ^b |
| Time of year | 2.6 ^b |
| Location is a place I would like to visit | 2.7 ^b |
| Meeting registration fees | 3.2 |
| Location is near my home institution | 3.8 |
| Employment contacts | 4.0 |

Note: Importance ranged from 1 (very important) to 5 (not important at all). Means with the same letter are not significantly different at the 95% confidence level (*t*-test).

Table 5. Preferred Months for Holding the SAEA Meetings

| First Choice (<i>n</i> = 146) | | Second Choice (<i>n</i> = 140) | | Third Choice (<i>n</i> = 131) | |
|--------------------------------|------|---------------------------------|------|--------------------------------|------|
| Month | % | Month | % | Month | % |
| February | 31.5 | March | 23.6 | February | 15.3 |
| May | 14.4 | May | 13.6 | May | 13.7 |
| March | 12.5 | April | 12.9 | April | 13.0 |
| January | 11.6 | January | 12.1 | March | 12.2 |
| June | 11.0 | June | 12.1 | January | 8.4 |
| April | 8.9 | February | 12.1 | June | 8.4 |

February received the highest rating, followed by March, May, and April. From these results, it appears the majority of the membership prefer to continue holding meetings in February or to hold the meetings in later spring months.

Respondents were also asked about their top four choices for meeting locations. The results from these responses are shown in Table 6. Clearly, preferences for a "southerly band" of locations were expressed. The most often cited locations as first choices were Orlando, New Orleans, Atlanta, and San Antonio. By assigning ratings of 1 to 4 (4 being the highest preference) to the responses and multiplying by the number of occurrences, the destination with the highest rating overall was New Orleans, followed by Orlando and Atlanta. The fourth most preferred location was San Antonio.

When respondents were asked whether the SAEA should consider holding some or all of its meetings concurrently with other related economics or social sciences organizations, 74.7% said yes (*n* = 154). Among those stating that the SAEA should consider meeting with these other types of organizations, re-

sponses were collected regarding specific organizations. These results are shown in Table 7. The most commonly cited organizations with which the SAEA should hold its meetings concurrently are the Southern Economic Association, American Agricultural Economics Association, Southern Extension Committees, and Southern Rural Sociological Association (SRSA). The Association currently meets at the same time as the SRSA as part of the Southern Associates of Agricultural Scientists (SAAS) meetings. Agricultural economists often present papers at the SRSA meetings and rural sociologists often present papers at the SAEA meetings. However, opportunities for more formalized joint sessions on a regular basis might be explored. On the basis of the survey results, the Association should also investigate opportunities for holding its meetings concurrently with other economics or social sciences organizations. The Southern Economic Association meets in November, whereas the American Agricultural Association meets in late July/early August. The Southern Extension Committees often meet in June. The SAEA should likely be in contact

Table 6. Top Four City Destinations for the SAEA Annual Meetings

| First Choice (<i>n</i> = 137) | | Second Choice (<i>n</i> = 132) | | Third Choice (<i>n</i> = 129) | | Fourth Choice (<i>n</i> = 113) | |
|-----------------------------------|------|------------------------------------|------|-----------------------------------|------|------------------------------------|------|
| City | % | City | % | City | % | City | % |
| Orlando | 23.4 | New Orleans | 18.2 | New Orleans | 14.7 | Atlanta | 13.3 |
| New Orleans | 22.6 | Orlando | 11.4 | San Antonio | 10.8 | Orlando | 9.7 |
| Atlanta | 12.4 | Nashville | 10.6 | Orlando | 9.3 | Nashville | 8.8 |
| San Antonio | 7.3 | Atlanta | 10.6 | Atlanta | 9.3 | Dallas/Fort Worth | 8.0 |
| Dallas/Fort Worth | 7.3 | San Antonio | 7.6 | Nashville | 8.5 | New Orleans | 5.3 |
| Memphis | 3.6 | Tampa | 6.1 | Memphis | 6.9 | Savannah | 5.3 |

Table 7. Potential Organizations with Which the SAEA Might Hold Some or All of its Annual Meetings

| Organizations | % Responding for Concurrent Meeting (n = 119) |
|---|---|
| Southern Economic Association | 50.4 |
| American Agricultural Economics Association | 49.5 |
| Southern Extension Committees | 38.7 |
| Southern Rural Sociological Association | 38.7 |
| Agribusiness Associations | 32.8 |
| Western Agricultural Economics Association | 29.4 |
| Multistate Regional Research Project and IEGs | 24.4 |
| Allied Social Sciences Association | 23.5 |
| Northeastern Agricultural Economics Association | 18.5 |

with the Southern Extension Committees regarding opportunities for joint meetings. Another possibility might be to hold SAEA meetings concurrently with the AAEA meetings when the AAEA meetings are held in the Southern Region.

Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics

Members were asked to provide information about their use of the *Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics* (JAAE). Of the member respondents, 54.4% have submitted a manuscript to the JAAE in the past 5 years ($n = 160$). However, submission rates varied widely across type of appointment. If submission rates within the past 5 years are compared across primary appointment type, then the percentage of those with majority research appointments who have submitted a manuscript in the past 5 years is 75% and 72.7% for those with split appointments ($n = 129$). However, among those with majority extension and teaching appointments, the rates are 38.2 and 38.9%, respectively. Among those with ad-

Table 8. JAAE Manuscript Submission Across Area of Specialization

| Area of Specialization | % Responding that Had Submitted a Manuscript in Past 5 Years (n = 159) |
|-------------------------|--|
| Econometrics | 87.5 |
| Production | 80.0 |
| Policy | 70.0 |
| Finance | 62.5 |
| Marketing | 59.4 |
| Environmental | 54.6 |
| Natural Resources | 50.0 |
| Farm Management | 36.8 |
| Agribusiness Management | 34.6 |
| International | 28.6 |
| Rural Economics | 20.0 |

ministrative or other appointments, the rate is 28.6%. A chi-square test of association between submission rates and type of appointment showed a significant degree of association ($\chi^2 = 18.2$, 4 df). These differences in submission rates could be natural outcomes of different types of appointments and the accompanying job responsibilities. However, even if this is a strong reason, the Association should make efforts to encourage submission of manuscripts to the Journal oriented toward instructional and extension topics. One potential avenue for encouraging journal representation of teaching and/or extension topics would be to place special calls for invited paper sessions in these topic areas.

Submission rates were also compared across type of employer, area of specialization, and experience level. No significant degree of association between manuscript submission and type of employer was found. Also, no significant degree of association between article submission and experience level was found. A chi-square test of association showed a significant degree of association between submission of manuscripts and area of specialization ($\chi^2 = 20.7$, 10 df). These results are shown in Table 8. Consumer economics did not have sufficient observations to be included in this

Table 9. Perceived Value of JAAE to Programs

| Type of Program | Average Rating of Agreement |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Research program ($n = 144$) | 2.3 ^b |
| Study program (students) ($n = 14$) | 2.5 ^{ab} |
| Extension program ($n = 72$) | 3.1 ^a |
| Teaching program ($n = 116$) | 3.2 ^a |

Note: Level of agreement ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Means with the same letter are not significantly different at the 95% confidence level (*t*-test).

analysis. Although over 70% of the respondents with a specialization in the areas of econometrics, production, and policy had submitted a manuscript to the JAAE in the past 5 years, less than 40% in the areas of farm management, agribusiness management, international economics, or rural economics had.

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with a statement about the value of the JAAE to their programs from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). As shown in Table 9, the JAAE received the highest ratings of value to programs for research and study (students) followed by extension programs and teaching programs. On average, responses regarding research and study programs were in the neutral range of agreement. However, for teaching and extension programs, the ratings of agreement with usefulness averaged in the neutral to disagree range. These results indicate a lower perceived usefulness of the JAAE to extension and teaching programs. One idea to encourage manuscript submissions focused on issues of use to extension or teaching programs might be to periodically make special calls for manuscripts in these areas or to have a special section of the journal dedicated to extension or teaching issues.

As displayed in Table 10, reasons for submitting articles to the JAAE that received the highest importance ratings on a scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree), were contribution to professional career and content quality of the journal. A *t*-test revealed no significant differences in ratings between these

Table 10. Reasons for Submitting Articles to the JAAE

| Reason | Average Rating of Importance ($n = 135$) |
|--|--|
| Contribution to professional/career | 2.3 ^a |
| Content quality of the journal | 2.4 ^a |
| Speed of review | 2.8 ^b |
| Regional focus of the manuscript topic | 2.9 ^{bc} |
| Manuscript acceptance rate | 3.1 ^c |

Note: Importance level ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Means with the same letter are not significantly different at the 95% confidence level (*t*-test).

two reasons. However, speed of review, regional focus, and acceptance rates received lower ratings. The results in Table 10 reinforce the perceived importance of maintaining the quality of the journal and the journal's certifying role in professional advancement. Interestingly, respondents were fairly neutral about the importance of regional focus of the manuscript topic in deciding whether to submit an article. This result could suggest that the JAAE is not perceived as an outlet with a predominantly regional focus.

Additional SAEA Services

Members were asked to rate the usefulness of additional services from 1 (highly useful) to 5 (not useful at all) that might be offered by the SAEA. The results are shown in Table 11. The services with the highest perceived level of usefulness were an online journal article submission/review process, an M.S. thesis award, and an online submission and review process for selected papers, posters, and organized symposia. The service receiving the lowest rating was an award for a nonacademic industry professional. On the basis of the responses, the Association should consider formation of a graduate research awards committee to develop a submission and evaluation process, so outstanding M.S. thesis and Ph.D. dissertation awards can be implemented in the near future. The Association should also investigate effective but low-cost methods for online submissions of journal articles and papers.

Table 11. Perceived Usefulness of Additional SAEA Services

| Type of Service | Average Rating of Usefulness (<i>n</i> = 140) |
|---|---|
| Online journal article submission/review process | 2.1 ^a |
| M.S. thesis award | 2.1 ^a |
| Submission and review process for selected papers, posters, and organized symposia that is conducted online | 2.1 ^a |
| Ph.D. dissertation award | 2.2 ^{ab} |
| Online searchable SAEA membership | 2.3 ^{ab} |
| Online published proceedings of SAEA meetings (in addition to listing in AgEcon Search) | 2.3 ^{ab} |
| Online bulletin board to post position, internship, and assistantship announcements | 2.4 ^b |
| Award for nonacademic industry professional | 2.7 |

Note: Rating of usefulness ranged from 1 (highly useful) to 5 (not useful at all). Means with the same letter are not significantly different at the 95% confidence level (*t*-test).

Table 12. Reasons Cited for Not Being an SAEA Member

| Reason for Not Being a Member | % of Respondents (<i>n</i> = 52) |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Changed job and/or moved | 50.0 |
| Employer does not reimburse for membership | 44.2 |
| Quality and/or number of papers in my specialty are at the SAEA meetings | 41.0 |
| Do not participate in the SAEA meetings on a regular basis | 40.4 |
| Do not publish in or use the <i>JAAE</i> on a regular basis | 30.8 |
| Join only when presenting a paper or submitting an article | 17.3 |
| Overlooked renewal | 17.3 |
| Quality and/or number of articles related to my specialty in the <i>JAAE</i> | 11.5 |
| Switched to another professional association | 11.5 |
| Too expensive | 9.6 |
| Retired | 5.8 |

Because presentations at annual meetings are increasingly presented directly from laptop computers, respondents were asked about paying an additional \$30 fee for LCD projectors at the meetings. This rate was based on recent quotes given by hotels and conference centers hosting the annual meetings. About 49.2% of respondents said they would be willing to pay an additional \$30 in SAEA meetings registration so that LCD projectors can be provided in each meeting room (*n* = 134). Given that less than half of the respondents were willing to pay the fee, other solutions might be explored. One potential solution to the LCD problem would be to ask moderators to loan laptop computers and LCD projectors to the sessions they are moderating. If they do not have them available, a moderator's responsibility could be to contact the authors regarding whether any of them have laptops or LCD projectors they could loan for the session.

An additional service examined was membership expansion. Respondents were asked about whether special efforts should be made to expand membership outside the region and outside the United States. Nearly 80% believed the SAEA should make additional efforts to expand membership outside the region (*n* = 147), whereas just under 65% believed the SAEA should make additional efforts to expand international membership (*n* = 156). From these results, the membership appears to be interested in attracting new members from outside the region. With the recent policy that at least one author must be a member to submit a manuscript to the *JAAE*, it is likely that our membership from outside the region will increase. The Association should also consider other means to encourage members from outside the region and even outside the country.

Nonmember Views

Because nonmembers represent a potential market, several questions were asked of nonmembers about why they were not SAEA members. The reasons most commonly cited were that they had changed their job or moved and that their employer does not reimburse for membership (Table 12). Other commonly cited

reasons were the quality and number of papers in their specialty area at the SAEA meetings and not participating in the SAEA meetings on a regular basis. Interestingly, only 11.5% said that switching to another professional association was a reason. The majority of nonmembers (57.1%) were not sure whether they would renew their membership in the future.

Conclusions

In general, the results from this survey suggest that most members are in agreement with or neutral regarding the usefulness of the annual meetings and the journal to their programs. Some very specific preferences for time of year and location of the annual meetings were expressed. In addition, the membership believes there are opportunities to expand our membership outside the region and even outside the country. Although the two most important services and products of the Association are the annual meetings and the journal, members expressed preferences for new methods of delivering these products/services, namely, taking the review process online. Interest in providing recognition for outstanding graduate research through an M.S. thesis or Ph.D. dissertation award was also expressed.

Returning to the original four questions posed at the beginning of this paper and using the results from the survey in answering these questions provides some useful insights.

Are We Bringing in Sufficient New Ideas to Foster Professional Development?

The results suggest that our representation in some of the growth areas of Natural Resource Economics, International Economics, or Consumer Economics could be expanded. In addition, the results suggest that the membership rate among government economists, a potentially large pool of applied economists, is considerably lower than among those at academic institutions. Perhaps some of our annual meetings programs might be focused on issues of interest to economists employed in government positions, or periodically, our annual

meetings might be held near the Washington, D.C., area to attract this pool of economists.

Are We Providing Good Avenues for Sharing of Ideas and Information?

The results suggest that the annual meetings and the journal are perceived as good avenues for sharing research ideas, but responses regarding usefulness for teaching and extension were, on average, only neutral. Given the integrated nature of research, teaching, and extension at Land Grant universities, one of the largest employers of the membership, the Association should increase opportunities during the annual meetings and in the journal to share teaching and extension ideas. On the basis of survey results, as important to the respondents as the opportunity to make a professional presentation, the annual meetings serve as a location to network with other agricultural economists. With the interest of many of the respondents in holding meetings with other social sciences groups, perhaps one method for increasing idea sharing and the potential for networking would be to encourage concurrent meetings with other social sciences groups or specialty groups within agricultural economics.

Are We Providing a Mentoring Role for Students and New Professionals?

Findings from the study suggest shortcomings in our mentoring role and some opportunities to improve this role. First, the results suggest that those who are not members are "newer" in the profession than those who are members. This could indicate that the Association's services and products might need to be adapted more toward those new to the profession, especially in the expanding fields of International Trade, Natural Resource Economics, or Consumer Economics, to capture the interest of nonmembers in our region. Second, the membership appears to favor awards for graduate research through M.S. theses or Ph.D. dissertations. Awards for excellence in graduate research provide an avenue for the Association to mentor and reward graduate stu-

dents who are doing exceptional research, as well as potentially attracting younger members.

Are We Providing the Necessary Quality of Papers and Articles in Our Meetings and Journal to Provide a "Certification" Role?

The survey results show that the most important reason for members to submit articles to the JAAE is the potential for contribution to professional status or career, suggesting that the membership perceives a benefit to their career from publishing in the journal. Also, the opportunity to make a professional presentation was an important reason for attending the meetings. Some interesting insights from non-member responses can also be gained. About 41% cited the quality/number of papers in their specialty area at the SAEA meetings, whereas only 11.5% cited the quality/number of papers in the journal, as reasons for not being members. This result suggests that although nonmembers might perceive the journal to have a certification role, they might not hold the perception that presenting at the annual meetings has as great of a certification role, because of the quality and quantity of papers in their specialization area.

Recommendations for the Future as a Result of the Survey Responses

First, the Association should consider adopting thesis and dissertation awards. Second, the Association should look for additional avenues for sharing of ideas and findings from teaching and extension programs. Perhaps special calls for manuscripts, papers, or organized symposia might be one avenue. Another avenue might be to encourage concurrent meetings of specialty groups, such as extension committees in the region. Third, because definite time and location preferences for the annual meetings were expressed in the survey, the Association should carefully monitor the time of year and location of the meetings and encourage time/venue combinations that will draw attendance. Fourth, the Association

needs to look for ways to encourage membership, journal submission, and meeting attendance by those "new" to the profession. After all, these professionals represent the future of the Association. This then raises the question: Who are these "new" professionals? In looking back at the survey data, dividing the respondents into groups of greater than 10 years experience or 10 years or less experience, I found higher percentages among the "new" professionals in the following specialty areas: Agribusiness, Consumer Economics, Environmental Economics, Finance, International Economics, and Natural Resource Economics. What will this mean for the future of the SAEA? As Penn notes, "Institutions that thrive over time are those that adapt successfully, that effectively continue to meet the needs of the membership." If these numbers provide a projection of the SAEA a decade from now, perhaps the focus of the Association will be much more consumer, internationally, and environmentally oriented.

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