

COSBAE'S Continuing Legacy of Achievement

Contributions to the AAEA and the Agricultural Economics Profession

Introduction

Before 1980, black agricultural economists rarely presented papers at American Agricultural Economics Association (AAEA) meetings. The number of Black agricultural economists and where they were located was not well known in the broader agricultural economics community. Therefore, in the Fall of 1980, the AAEA Executive Board, led by President Luther Tweeten, charged a committee with "the task of determining the opportunities, role, and status of Blacks in agricultural economics." **The Committee on the Opportunities and Status of Blacks in Agricultural Economics (COSBAE)** was formed.

Over the past 24 years, COSBAE has prospered in its mission to "promote the welfare of Black Agricultural Economists by representing their interests within the [AAEA] and by engaging in activities which will encourage the professional advancement of Black Agricultural Economists."

COSBAE plays a vital role in research at the AAEA and other professional meetings—**Southern Agricultural Economics Association (SAEA) and the Professional Agricultural Workers Conference (PAWC)**. COSBAE members have sponsored and presented papers on Agricultural Trade, Economic Development, Agricultural Programs and Policies, Agricultural Marketing, Rural Development, Cultural Diversity, and Labor Market Conditions for Agricultural Economists.

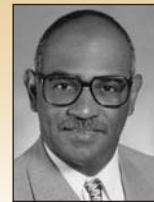
Summary of COSBAE's Contributions

- Documented status of Blacks in agricultural economics
- Conducted and published research on critical issues affecting economically and socially disadvantaged populations (e.g., African-American farmers, rural poor)
- Promoted diversity within the agricultural economics profession and the AAEA
- Highlighted contributions of Black agricultural economists
- Emphasized contributions of 1890 Land-Grant Universities
- Increased communication among Black agricultural economists

Pivotal Passages in the Evolution of COSBAE

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., selected as AAEA Fellow, 1988

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., Appreciation Club established, 1994 in his honor



Ralph D. Christy, elected as AAEA President, 1996-97

Thomas T. Williams (1988), **Sidney Evans** (1990), and **Carlton Davis** (1996), COSBAE members received Lifetime Achievement Award from the **Southern Agricultural Economics Association**

Continuing the Legacy...

Between 1998 and 2004, Ntam Baharanyi was COSBAE's Chairman. In 2000-2001, he surveyed COSBAE members during and after the summer meetings in Tampa, Florida. The results were presented in the report **Strategic Planning Survey for COSBAE**, by Amadou M. Diop and Odiase Abhulimen, Tuskegee University. This report helped determine COSBAE's focus and objectives for the future. Responses to the survey encouraged COSBAE to increase member communication, networking, and publicity, and to recruit young agricultural economics professionals.

With Christopher Davis elected as Chairman in 2004, COSBAE will explore new avenues of growth and opportunities, as well as further develop and expand activities already in place.

COSBAE "Firsts"

- **Fall 1980:** COSBAE is formed as Ad Hoc Committee of AAEA.
- **1983: Invited paper session**, "Opportunities and Status of Blacks in the Agricultural Economics Profession" reported the results of a survey of black agricultural economics professionals.
- **1987: COSBAE Newsletter** first published and distributed throughout the AAEA and agricultural economics community.
- **1987: Committee on Women in Agricultural Economics (CWAE), AAEA Employment Services Committee and COSBAE joint pre-conference**, "The Future for Agricultural Economists—Career Opportunities and Planning," at AAEA summer meetings, Michigan State University.
- **1987: Directory of Black Agricultural Economists**—this compendium of information for the AAEA and agricultural economics community on 96 Black agricultural economists lists who they are, where they were located, and areas of expertise. A 1989 revision contained 175 contacts.
- **1988:** COSBAE becomes a Standing Committee of AAEA.
- **1989: Pre-conference, "A Century of Service: The Past, Present, and Future Roles of 1890 Land-Grant Colleges and Institutions."** For AAEA annual meetings at Southern University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, this pre-conference honored the centennial year founding of the 1890 Land-Grant System.
- **1990: The Book—A Century of Service: The Past, Present and Future Roles of 1890 Land-Grant Colleges and Institutions.** Edited by Ralph Christy and Lionel Williamson with articles contributed by nine COSBAE members. The



product of COSBAE's first AAEA pre-conference meeting, this book highlighted historical development and contemporary views of 1890 institutions, their strengths and traditions, and explored alternative institutional designs to enhance the status and opportunities for African-American scientists.

- **1990: Outstanding Black Agricultural Economists**, In recognition of the centennial anniversary of 1890 institutions, this brochure featured pictures and biographies of 15 Black agricultural economists selected by their peers:

Joyce E. Allen-Smith
Ralph D. Christy
Ivery D. Clifton
Carlton G. Davis
Sidney H. Evans
Allie C. Felder, Jr.
Tesfa Gebremedhin
Alfred L. Parks

Richard D. Robbins
Howard F. Robinson
Melvin E. Walker, Jr.
Clifton R. Wharton, Jr.
Thomas T. Williams
Lionel Williamson
Handy Williamson, Jr.



- **List Server:** e-mail communication link currently serves 125 members: cosbae-members@yahoo.com.
- **1994: COSBAE** produced a Special Issue of *The Review of Black Political Economy*, titled "Blacks in Rural America." Fifteen COSBAE members contributed articles.
- **1997: COSBAE Website** was developed and is currently being redesigned to better serve members and the agricultural economics community.
- **2002: COSBAE** becomes a Section of AAEA.