

## The Traditional Role of Extension Economists at the 1890 Land-Grant System

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## Good Afternoon!

Let me begin by expressing my sincere thanks to the organizers – Duncan Chembezi, James Novak, Ntam Baharanyi, and Doris Newton – of this session.

Let me further offer my thanks for the privilege of being invited to *pinch hit* for Dr. Baharanyi. It is indeed an honor for me, but I want to extend my regrets to him (Dr. Baharanyi) in that he could not be here today.



Before I begin, I would, if I may, like to make a couple of comments about the overall theme: “Changing Dynamics in Cooperative Extension and the Role of Extension Economists: **Change or Change agents?**”

There’s a lot of explicit and implicit meaning to this title.

**Change:** to make different; transform

**Change Agent:** someone who causes change to occur.



## Change

In preparation for this presentation, I reviewed a number of publications of the AAEA, dating back to 1959.

◆1959 Proceedings – several papers on changes in the Farm Structure

◆1979 Proceedings of the IAAE, Banff, Canada – Theme: Rural Change – The Challenge for Agricultural Economists.

## Change cont'd

- ◆ Presidential Address: Denis K. Britton, Fifty years of Agricultural Economics – and what next? In describing our professional role in the future – from Harold Jensen’s review of literature, cited the following passage from an article by D.R. Fusfeld in the Saturday Review.

## Change cont'd

- ◆ A humane economy requires more than prosperity and economic growth, more than efficient allocation of resources. It demands changes in the framework of economic institutions to achieve greater equality and freedom. It requires dispersal of the economic power and governmental authority that support the present disposition of income, wealth and power. It requires a social environment that brings a sense of community and fellowship into human relationships. It demands compatibility among man, his technology, and the natural environment. And all these things must be done on a world-wide scale. These are the goals of the future, to which economists and everyone else will have to devote their energies.

## Change<sub>cont'd</sub>

- ◆1998 Annual Report – Farm Foundation  
Understanding Change
- ◆A number of popular books – Spencer Johnson, “who moved my cheese”
- ◆Jack Welch - “Change”.

## The Traditional Role

- ◆Historically, 1890 Extension workers, not necessarily Ag Economists have had to wear many hats.
- ◆1890 Agents – mostly “Extension Agents” – (Agriculture) Home Demonstrations.
- ◆1862 vs 1890 – significant difference in early emphasis.

## The Traditional Role Cont'd

- ◆ 1890's – self-sufficiency/self-reliance, subsistence farming
  - sanitation, safe water supplies, improved drainage systems.
  - year-round gardening to feed the family
  - community outreach

## Emerging Role of the Extension Economist

- ◆ Facilitator/Convener
- ◆ Advisor/Resource person
- ◆ Business planner
- ◆ Marketing strategist
- ◆ Record keeping/finance
- ◆ Community outreach/Community Development
- ◆ Policy analysts

## Traditional/Typical Clientele

- ◆ Mostly older, African-American
- ◆ Limited formal education
- ◆ Small size operations
- ◆ Traditional crop/livestock enterprises
- ◆ Traditional in thinking and in actions
- ◆ Farm/Rural background

## Environmental Impactors Shaping The Future

### **Economic**

- ◆ Economic indicators
- ◆ Policy implications
- ◆ Emerging competitors
- ◆ Global markets



## Social Impactors

### Social

- ◆ Consumer driven
- ◆ Changing perspective
- ◆ Changing Demographics
- ◆ Non-traditional



Times Do Bring About Change  
Thank You