Public Policy Education/Public Issue Education: Relevance to Agrosecurity

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Public policy educators should work on issues that make grown men and women cry.

Threats & Challenges

- Terrorism?
- Bioterrorism?
- Local or global?
- Protection vs Freedom?
- Foreign vs Domestic threats?
What’s the Issue?

- Every issue tells a story
- The PPE/PIE educator may be the only professional positioned to
  - accurately interpret this story, and
  - objectively assist the public in developing appropriate public response(s).
Anatomy of a Public Decision

Public Problem

- Facts
- Myths
- Values

Public Decision
Preliminary Questions

1. Is there a “Problem”?
2. Is it a “Public” problem?
3. Can public discussion offer a solution?
4. Is there a window of opportunity for education?
5. Are there resources for education?
6. Are you willing & able to be neutral/objective?
Dealing With Conflict

- Act quickly
- Bring various sides/key actors together
- Set the example to rise above differences
- Take educational role; be objective
- Let affected parties decide on action
- Work with leaders to implement action plan
- Encourage leaders to update news media
Heading off Conflict

- Know your user audiences/various publics
- Earn confidence/trust
- Monitor situations
- DON’T--DON’T--DON’T ADVOCATE
Framing the Issue means:

- Clarify or redefine the “problem”
- Be sensitive to
  - perceived concerns
  - various groups
- Include affected groups
  - All key stakeholders need to be invited
And, Framing the Issue also means:

- **Not** Pro versus Con  
  - divisive & destructive  
  - Avoid any labels or issue framing that imply good vs bad

- **Instead**, Alternatives versus Consequences  
  - cohesive & constructive  
  - Allows more thoughtful consideration with low threat
Issue Framing Requires:

- Objective attention & facilitation
- Recognition of community vision
- Creation of structure that allows discussion without arguing over solutions


ISSUES EVOLUTION
--Agrosecurity (various aspects)

9. NEW SET OF CONCERNS—address concerns from formal/informal reviews/studies

8. EVALUATE POLICY: (a) state/federal agencies may conduct periodic formal review; (b) citizens groups may conduct informal review; (c) Co-op Extension/land grant may get grant to conduct scientific evaluation

7. IMPLEMENT RULES/REGULATIONS—depends on #6, but will likely include USDA/other state/fed agency mechanisms that may include public hearings

6. MAKE PUBLIC CHOICES—depends on situation, but could include agency/Congressional public hearings, Congressional vote & Presidential signature

5. EVALUATE CONSEQUENCES—[expand w/scientific, objective analysis]

4. IDENTIFY ALTERNATIVES: (a) education programs on objective info for public & media; (b) arrange meetings w/key agencies; (c) Extension/land grant analysis of relevant alternatives; (d) facilitate farmer/agribusiness/ consumer meetings; (e) define status quo & relevant options.

3. ISSUE DEFINED—Farmers/agribusiness are concerned about profitability & consumers are concerned about food availability/safety.

2. INVOLVEMENT OF SOME PUBLIC—arrange a meeting w/concerned citizens &/or their affected group leaders

1. CONCERN—Farmers & consumers are concerned about potential for terrorist attacks on food chain.

91x1313 CONCERNS—address concerns from formal/informal reviews/studies

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