

Agricultural Policy and 21st Century Food Systems

Agriculture Policy Education

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National Public Policy Education Conference
Fayetteville, Arkansas
September 20, 2006



The Agricultural and Food Policy Center
at Texas A&M University

Presentation Outline

- Policy Education in ... (Note: my frame of reference may be shorter than yours)
 - “The Good Old Days”
 - a Different World
- Policy Preference Survey
- Planning for 2007 FB Education
- Conclusions



Policy Education in...

"The Good Old Days"

- Whether reality or just my perception... it seemed that the commodity groups were better organized
 - Better understood they needed each other
- A lot fewer groups "at the table"
 - Commodity, food, and environmental groups
- Secretary of Agriculture was perceived to be – the farmer's man in Washington
 - No distinction between commodity program participants and nonparticipants
- Farm Bills actually had some goals both explicit and implicit inside the front cover

Policy Education in...

"The Good Old Days" - Continued

- WTO was still the GATT
 - Had been burned by trade
- The WWW was "in process"
 - News didn't travel nearly as fast
- Once A Bill Was Passed
 - CSREES had a role
 - Extension educators were THE source of information
 - Policy education was qualitative
 - Decision aids were very unsophisticated in today's terms
 - Super Calc templates

Policy Education in...

a Different World

- Commodity groups
 - Don't see the strong leadership from elected producers or professional staff
 - Are all about "taking care of their own"
- What group doesn't want a say in the farm bill?
 - Commodity, food, and environmental groups
 - Others that have decided they have a role
 - EWG and AFT are two examples
- Secretary of Agriculture is trying to be every farmers' man in Washington
 - Program participants do not like the inclusiveness
- 2002 Farm Bill had no explicit or implicit goals

Policy Education in...

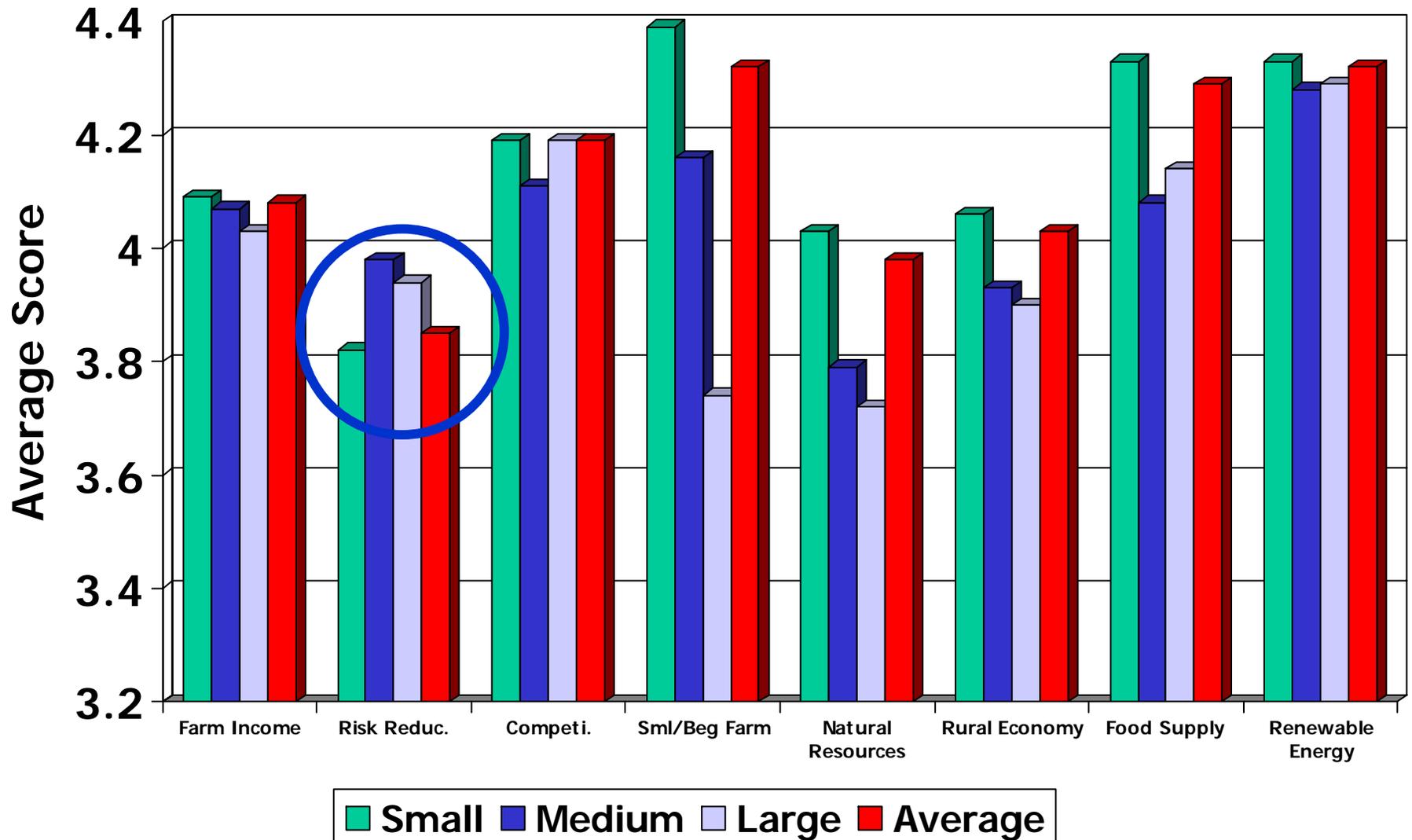
a Different World - Continued

- WTO is perceived as critical – especially by those in the U.S. who want to end current programs
 - I have a lot of whys that I need answered
- The internet put us in the world of instant information – regardless of whether any good or not
 - A lot of electronic newsletters available
 - Incredible pressure on Extension Policy Educators to stay up with
- Once A Bill Is Passed
 - CSREES has no role
 - Extension educators are only 1 source of information
 - Policy education is qualitative but also increasingly quantitative
 - Decision aids are very sophisticated
 - Base and Yield Analyzer

Policy Preference Survey

- Great accomplishment to get 27 states involved – Brad and committee and FF
- Dates back to at least 1985
- Have we always messed it up? Not reflective of commodity groups – not just leadership
 - Survey stratas great idea
 - News release gave average
 - Texas example (even after oversampling)
 - 4000 surveys sent out -- 953 usable
 - Small 554 (58%) 33% had <\$10,000 GR
 - Medium 217 (23%)
 - Large 182 (19%)
 - Cattle made up 51.5% of cash receipts, cotton 10%
 - Only 40% of respondents participate in commodity programs

Goals for the Farm Bill



Planning for 2007 FB Education

- Pre-farm bill education has been hard
 - Clientele groups want to know too many whys
 - Perceived drivers – budget and WTO
 - Difficult to get stakeholders to move beyond thinking of money and what box program spending fits in
 - What are their “policy” goals?
 - Have been doing a lot of options and consequences work with commodity groups
 - Really hard to say anything about Revenue Assurance plans
 - Have to know details...

Planning for 2007 FB Education

- Post-farm bill education will be uncomfortable
 - So many players at the table – many will lose
- Have to balance between:
 - Committee activities
 - Train the trainer event(s)
 - Best use of our time in the short run to fill in the gap left by others who don't do this anymore
 - Individual activities
 - We all have to do this
 - Large waste of time but... P&T requires

Conclusions

- Times have changed and more difficult to be relevant to stakeholders
- Options and Consequences only way I can see to do this
- Next year will be very interesting