

**PERCEPTIONS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS AS PARTICIPANTS OF  
DOMESTIC FARM POLICY PROGRAMS: IMPLICATIONS FOR  
EDUCATION**

A Record of Study

by

REBECCA HALL PARKER

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

August 2004

Major Subject: Agricultural Education

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Approved as to style and content by:

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Gary Briers  
(Co-Chair of Committee)

---

Cindy Akers  
(Co-Chair of Committee)

---

Chester P. Fehlis, Jr.  
(Member)

---

James H. Smith  
(Member)

---

Edward G. Smith  
(Member)

---

Glen C. Shinn  
(Head of Department)

August 2004

Major Subject: Agricultural Education

## ABSTRACT

Perceptions of Agricultural Producers as Participants of Domestic Farm Policy Programs:

Implications for Education. (August 2004)

Rebecca Hall Parker, B.S, Texas A&M University;

M.Ed., University of West Florida

Co-Chairs of Advisory Committee: Dr. Gary Briers  
Dr. Cindy Akers

The purpose of this record of study was to examine the perceptions held by a targeted “grassroots” society composed of agricultural producers regarding farm policy goals, policy commodity components, and operational factors as potential barriers to successful policy. The study also examined the relationship of the government defined and “grassroots” perceived intended outcomes of current components to seek areas of needed education or research.

A researcher developed questionnaire was used to collect the data from members/producers of USDA, FSA county committees in Texas. The questionnaire consisted of 37 questions divided into three sections: demographic and farm data; policy perception data; and operational issues. Ultimately, there were a total of 761 surveys returned from 175 FSA county committees of 206 (85%) representing farms and ranches from 232 of 254 counties (91% of counties) in Texas. Descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVA were used to examine the data.

Major findings, identified through descriptive analysis, were that the producer respondents in the study were predominately male, between the ages of 36 – 65 years of

age and Caucasian. As a group, the producer respondents will be farming and ranching to provide food and fiber for a population much more diverse than itself. The perception data collected yielded that, while some general and important conclusions can be drawn from the data, the different size/types of producers had different opinions, knowledge levels, and therefore, educational needs. Overall, policy goals involving global orientation and the supply and stabilization of farm income for producers were high targets for educational needs by the respondents. Respondents also considered those policy tools providing producer control or proprietary decision making as high areas of need for education. Several operational issues noted educational needs such as individual handling of landowner/tenant issues, administrative costs/changes, and changes in commodity programs.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The research presented in this paper is representative of a journey that began four years ago as a part of an innovative doctoral program that enabled folks like myself, fully employed and with families, to pursue an advanced degree. The Doc@Distance Program is an example of what can happen when sharp folks begin to think out of the box. Who would have imagined 10 years ago that doctoral students would graduate as an educational product of the faculties of two great institutions of higher learning at the same time? My heart-felt thanks goes to the faculties of the AgEd Departments of Texas A&M University and Texas Tech University for visioning the possibilities of distance learning before it was a catch-phrase for all.

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Akers has provided guidance and instruction through the research process for which I am grateful. I have always felt a kinship with Dr. Akers, born of experience and interest, and am especially lucky to have found her. Dr. James Smith is as solid as a rock - always responsive and caring. His contributions of content and attention to detail resulted in a stronger project and a stronger student.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Policy is defined as “a principle or course of action chosen to guide decision making” in Webster’s II New Riverside Dictionary (1984, p. 540). Further, perception is defined in the Webster’s II New Riverside Dictionary as “the act, process, or result of the achievement of understanding or awareness” (1984, p. 520). A grassroots perspective of farm policy will, then, convey a level of understanding and awareness that the local society possesses regarding policy goals and the course of action that can be taken by the government and partner agencies to facilitate policy delivery and subsequent adoption. The ability of the grassroots society to successfully understand and then to implement policy in congruence with government intentions is at the heart of successful policy. Feedback captured throughout the process can shape further policy creation and assist in educational efforts needed. Further, feedback can guide current policy changes as one of many pieces providing influence and contributions to agricultural policy.

The purpose most generally attributed to the overall goal for implementing farm policy in both the public sector and agricultural society hinges on the need to provide the masses with a stable and safe food supply while maintaining an acceptable income

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This record of study follows the style and format of the *Journal of Agricultural Education*.

for agricultural producers and ensuring preservation of the environment (Flinchbaugh, Knutson, & Penn, 1998). Agricultural producers have received support through a series of markedly different policy approaches since the founding of America in the pursuit of these ideals within different contexts depending on the time period (Price, Wescott, & Young, 2002). Differences of opinion and staked interests grounded in the consequences of policies and developments concerning policy have been a common thread through its evolution. The dynamics of problems in policy acceptance/adoption or conflict resolution may be profoundly different over the past 200 years; however, “a constant public consensus has remained constant – the problems inherent in the production of food and fiber warrant public support” (Effland, 2000, p. 21).

Agricultural policy has focused on different themes and goals from time to time. These focuses include: the distribution of the Nation’s vast land resources, on increasing the productivity and standard of living of American farmers, and on assisting farmers in marketing their products. From the 1930s, U.S. farm commodity policy has focused on price and income supports. Through much of this period until 1996, farm policy relied partly on supply management in the form of acreage limits and commodity storage programs. Agricultural policy has broadened its scope to include agricultural trade issues, food safety, food assistance, conservation and environmental concerns as its definition has altered with the changing needs of society (Price, Wescott, & Young, 2002).

Movements toward more open worldwide trade, an increasing emphasis on market driven production decisions, and attention to environmental concerns involving

agricultural production have all influenced current farm policy (Effland, 2000). Beginning with the 1985 Farm Act and continuing with farm legislation in 2002, a series of important changes in commodity programs and other agricultural policies have begun to move the agricultural sector toward greater market orientation and reduced government involvement. Commodity loan rates and target prices were lowered in the 1985 Farm Act. The 1990 Farm Act introduced partial planting flexibility. It also changed rules for grain removal from the farmer-owned reserve, providing more discretion to producers in the marketing of crops. The 1996 Farm Act furthered the trend toward greater market orientation for agricultural production as the expressed desire by U.S. producers to reduce the amount of government intervention in agricultural production was actualized. This action redesigned income support for major crops with the termination of target price-based deficiency payments, the introduction of decoupled production flexibility contract payments, and almost total planting flexibility. It completely ended supply management programs. Several factors (increased global supplies and weaker demand for agricultural commodities, large U.S. expansion in production due to planting flexibility, domestic weather catastrophe, and economic crisis in Asia weakening global demand) resulted in a plummeting of farm incomes and as a result, Congress enacted five supplemental emergency assistance packages in 1998 with additional direct payments for agricultural producers (Price, Wescott, & Young, 2002).

The 2002 Farm Act sought to assure an income support safety net for producers, enhance risk management options as well as educational options, support of more

defined conservation and environmentally beneficial practices, improvement and increased awareness of agricultural trade opportunities, and assistance for small and limited resource agricultural producers. World Trade Organization (WTO) concerns added a new dimension to the domestic farm commodity policy as U.S. commitments to the WTO played an ever increasingly important and visible role (Effland and Young, 2001).

The continued evolution of U. S. Farm Policy provides a backdrop from which participatory policy research may be used to develop a useful information base from which to integrate with established operational protocol to achieve the final goal of successful policy adoption. The inclusion of participatory research in policy will provide the advantage of the analysis of differences in perception between stakeholders from top to bottom. The resulting ownership of the stakeholders will positively affect the likelihood of change/adoption (Blackburn, Chambers, & Holland, 1998).

#### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study examined the perceptions held by a targeted “grassroots” society composed of agricultural producers regarding farm policy goals, policy commodity components, and operational factors as potential barriers to successful policy use. This study also examined the relationship of the government defined and “grassroots” perceived intended outcomes of current components to seek areas of needed education and/or research.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Farm Policy components are comprised of goals and objectives set at the federal level in the pursuit of the broader goal and policy purpose of providing a stable and safe food and fiber system by way of farmer income stability and industry economic success without compromising the environment in which we must live. The inherent distance between the federal entity and the grassroots producers acting on policy is a relationship of dependence to be successful and to result in successful policy. It is essential to detect lack of understanding regarding policy and barriers to implementation that may affect the economic well-being of either. The results of the study will be shared with stakeholders on both ends to be used in terms of education initiation.

### THEORETICAL BASE

The knowledge bases of planning and needs assessment as well as evaluation and accountability provide many sound concepts and models from which participatory research may be justified and prescribed. Effective planning and needs assessment is at the root of successful policy development and adoption. The hierarchical TOP, Targeting Outcomes and Programs, model by Rockwall and Bennett integrates evaluation with program development providing proven process for beneficiary input through the development and adoption process (Rockwall & Bennett, 2000). Scriven provides additional weight to the importance of the participatory role through his consumer-oriented evaluation focus with work noting needs assessment, market responsiveness, and consumer performance data (Scriven, 1967). Worthen's Touchstones include the importance of conceptual clarity, sensitivity to political

problems in effective evaluation, and, most importantly, a clear picture of audiences and beneficiaries of the program/policy (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997).

The historical benchmark concept in economics theory centers around the Pareto optimum which exists when one individual is made better off, and then, another is in turn made worse off. Since policy making would work toward the premise that all parties are better off, the compensation principle is normally the basis for policy decisions. “This principle suggests that as long as those who are made better off by a policy change are able to more than compensate those who are made worse off, the change is justified” (Flinchbaugh, Knutson, & Penn, 1998, p. 24). The basic concept pertaining to agricultural farm policy might then be that as the agricultural producer becomes better off, the general economy will be proportional to that revenue increase and possibly balance by degrees of satisfaction and/or quality of products consumed by the public.



## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### HISTORICAL POLICY

Farm Policy has existed in America from this country's beginning. The most commonly studied and researched portions of policy are the farm programs characterized by farm income support in place since the 1920s. However, farm policy has taken many forms and focuses in historical America beginning in the late 1700s. During the period from 1785-1890, the focus of farm policy was land distribution and expansion of settlement through many expansive private farm operations. (Effland, 2000).

The expansion and distribution period of 1785-1890 focused on filling the land acquired during that period. Large amounts of land were sold during this period which brought revenue to America's new government. The government then in turn endeavored to transfer that land into private hands. This process was slow and ultimately led to liberal laws governing the sale of public lands in favor of the small, independent farmer. The secession of the southern states during the Civil war silenced the last opposition to open access to public land. Land prices were low and credit terms eased through this period to facilitate expansion of our young nation. The Homestead Act of 1862 actually provided for free distribution of land to anyone who could settle and farm it. The policy precedent establishing federal support for the independent

family farm system was maintained. By 1890, most open farmland had been claimed and the American frontier was declared closed (Effland, 2000).

The period of 1830 – 1914 focused on productivity of farm operations through government support of research and education. The organization of state and county agricultural societies marked the period. Education and research were identified as integral at this point in development as agricultural interests from the south and east (with long-farmed land) heavily backed this push as western farmers (freshly fertile and extensive land) began to compete more significantly for the markets of the day. It was felt by residents of the long-established regions that agricultural education and research would provide an equalizing force. Many policy actions took place during this period including: the formation of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, authorization of the national system of agricultural colleges, appropriation of Federal funds to support agricultural science research at state agricultural experiment stations (1870s), and the organization of an adult education system in the Cooperative Extension Service with the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 (Effland, 2000).

From 1870 – 1933, agricultural events limited regulation of markets, infrastructure improvements, and provision of economic information to help agricultural producers compete marked the period. Surplus from increased numbers of producers and productivity and natural disasters contributed to an increasing division between the growing wealthier urban-based industries and the relative poor economic status of the agricultural industry in comparison. A growing demand for additional federal support for agriculture resulted. During the 1920s and 1930s the Cooperative Extension Service

and the USDA Bureau of Agricultural Economics actively delivered programs enabling agricultural producers to compete more effectively in the free market. Legislation established also exempted farmer cooperatives from antitrust regulation which enabled greater marketing abilities while continued infrastructure development ensured increased market access (Effland, 2000).

Farmers had begun to be more competitive in the larger scene and more in-line with other industries nearing 1920 as farm populations peaked. However, as WW I ended, international food demand diminished significantly as European production recovered. Agricultural leaders and farm societies continued garnering support for proposals initiating a national program to support farm prices by domestic supply control with increased use of exports to absorb surplus. The Federal Farm Board Act of 1929 reflected this growing need prompted by the Depression. Active agricultural policy initiated and formed was incorporated as a part of Roosevelt's New Deal in 1933 (Flinchbaugh and Knutson, 1999).

The Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933 addressed waning farm income primarily through price supports and supply control. The Act supported prices at 100% parity as it related to price goals (Flinchbaugh, Knutson & Penn, 1998). Perishable commodities such as milk and some specialty crops invoked supply control through a system of marketing orders (like a quota) that provided negative incentives for producing beyond specified levels (Anderson, Richardson, & Smith, 1999). Many of these programs came in direct relation to the economic situation of the times.

The Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 included several components that further developed the Federal Farm Program such as additional price supports, marketing quotas, acreage allotments and all risk crop insurance. The non-recourse loan was first utilized during this legislation as another tool for farmers. The Commodity Credit Corporation served as a beneficiary for forfeit crops under the non-recourse loan program (Anderson, Richardson, & Smith, 1999).

The 1949 Agricultural Act continued the use of the parity policy tool. It is in this legislation that the use of the income support farm policy became known as fundamental or permanent, and without an expiration date (Anderson, Richardson, & Smith, 1999).

The Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act (PL 480) of 1954 provided a mechanism for disposal of surplus Ag commodities through sale, barter and credit. The 1956 Agricultural Act established a Soil Bank as a fixed payment to agricultural land owners to retire land for 10 years. The Conservation Reserve was determined to consist of up to 29 million acres during this time period (Anderson, Richardson, & Smith, 1999).

The first 5-year program began in 1965 with the Food and Agriculture Act. This program came about as a compromise between proponents of high price supports and those who believed farm prices should be allowed to fluctuate according to market demand. This debate was set in the backdrop of large surpluses, low prices and political efforts by the presidential administration to return to pre-New Deal structures. It served as a compromise between the opposing sectors. This Act made most production controls

voluntary and set price supports in relation to world market prices (abandoning parity levels set by 1920 standards). A system of direct income support (deficiency payments) compensated farmers for lower support prices. (Effland, 2000)

The Agricultural Act of 1970 eliminated allotments and marketing quotas for wheat, feed grain, and cotton. Deficiency payments were equal to the difference between a percentage of parity and market price (Flinchbaugh, Knutson & Penn, 1998).

The Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973 emphasized expanded production to replace price supports to increase farm income in the form of target prices and deficiency payments. A \$20,000 payment limitation was also included in the Act on a per crop basis. This Act also introduced the disaster payment which rendered the crop insurance program implemented in 1938 as ineffective. Crop Insurance was instituted again in 1980 introducing multi-peril crop insurance (MPCI) for all crops. It was viewed as a replacement for disaster programs (Anderson, Richardson, & Smith, 1999).

The Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 set target prices for a four year period. Rice allotments and marketing quotas were eliminated during this time. (Anderson, Richardson, & Smith, 1999).

The 1985 Food Security Act of 1985 included a number of programs maintained, altered, and introduced that were designed to address large budgetary outlays. Debate over price supports and supply control occurred to the extent during this legislative period as to impact the direction of policy. Farm financial crisis combined with presidential administration efforts to move towards the free-market system which

resulted in the introduction of some broad changes aimed at greater market orientation such as lower price supports, greater planting flexibility, and developing greater export opportunities (Effland, 2000). This Act also saw the introduction of the Export Enhancement Program (Anderson, Richardson, & Smith, 1999).

This 1985 legislation failed to address the large budgetary outlays and eventually resulted in increased costs of income supports. This issue greatly affected the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 and the 1990 Budget Reconciliation Act (Flinchbaugh, Knutson & Penn, 1998). These acts were an exercise in budgetary control. The CAT (catastrophic yield coverage) Program was introduced during this legislation. Ultimately, the 1993 amendments to the National Wool Act terminated the Wool and Mohair Programs (Anderson, Richardson, & Smith, 1999).

The Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 changed the federal farm policy approach. Target prices for income supports were eliminated. AMTA payments were decoupled and more complete planting flexibility allowed for producers (Flinchbaugh & Knutson, 1999). The FAIR Act of 1996 was meant to allow American farmers to move to a free market system. This would, in theory, enable higher potential profitability while assuming much of the risk of production (Flinchbaugh & Knutson, 1999).

After the FAIR Act of 1996 was instituted, American agriculture experienced volatile markets, low commodity prices, regional weather catastrophes, high fuel prices, and trade disparities. These events in concert resulted in additional federal legislation in the form of the Emergency Farm Financial Relief Act of 1998. Disaster assistance was

also provided in this act as an MPCCI additional premium subsidy. Livestock and dairy disaster assistance programs were also provided. The Consolidated and Emergency Appropriation Act of 1999 provided for a 100% additional AMTA subsidy, disaster assistance, MPCCI additional premium subsidy as well as a livestock and crop assistance program for another year (Anderson, Richardson, & Smith, 1999).

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 was signed into law on May 13, 2002. The lasting effect of the current Farm Policy will be documented on an on-going basis. Broad changes between 1996 farm legislation and the 2002 Farm Act would include an alteration of the farm payment program and the introduction of even more concentrated counter-cyclical farm income support. It will also expand the conservation land retirement programs and emphasize on-farm environmental practices. The 2002 legislation will also relax rules to make borrowers eligible for federal farm credit assistance. Several commodities will be added to those that will require country-of-origin labeling. However, the details of how this portion of the bill will be interpreted and applied are still withstanding debate and potential change (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Farm policy: The 2002 farm bill provisions and economic implications, 2003).

The commodity programs in the 2002 Farm Act will provide income support for wheat, feed grains, upland cotton, rice and oilseed through 3 programs: direct payments, counter-cyclical payments and marketing loans. Support for peanuts is changed from a price support program with marketing quotas to a program with marketing loans, counter-cyclical payments, direct payments, and a quota buyout. A new dairy income

support program has also been introduced (Economic Research Service, Farm policy: the 2002 farm bill provisions and economic implications, 2003). The 2002 Farm Act primarily affects the crop sector through acreage and production changes. The changes in loan rate under this new legislation and under the marketing assistance loan program should affect production choices most in the initial years when projected prices are low enough that marketing loan benefits exist. Overall plantings of the major program crops will likely increase slightly. Over time, overall planting of program crops may fall slightly due to higher enrollment in the Conservation Reserve Program.

#### HUMAN PERCEPTIONS IN RESEARCH

Combs, Richards, & Richards (1976) state, "...the perceptions of different persons will differ" and that "each individual will interact with or respond to a situation in terms of what it means to him" in the text *Perceptual Psychology* (p. 17).

The effective assessment of policy and its delivery requires that the operational participants in the policy process are understood and that perceptions regarding policy are compared against the intention of that policy.

Perception can be inflective of a sense observed through seeing, hearing, smelling or feeling. It can also be a description of the act of knowing, understanding, or forming ideas. The subject or object may change depending on the context, but the process is the same. Each will involve a measure of personal meaning (Combs, Richards, & Richards, 1976). Perception can also be defined as a process. It can be thought of as the process between a stimulus and the response. It is further described as a concept within this process which will yield unique results attributable within the



defined parameters. This use of converging operation within perception can even allow the use of concepts in this process that are not directly observable (Fried, 1974).

Important variables to perception are: 1) physical organism, 2) opportunity, 3) time, 4) need, 5) phenomenal self, 6) goals and values, and 7) organization of the perceptual field. The first three listed variables can provide important information as a frame of reference. The latter can provide the researcher a more comprehensive understanding of human functioning in relation to research and information collected (Combs, Richards, & Richards, 1976).

Perception as considered from a behaviorist point-of-view is understood as a consequence of stimuli. Observations are made externally, counted, and recorded from the point of view of an outside observer. The science behind it is founded on disciplined observation and control of behavior. Perceptual psychology contends that behavior is a function of perception. Perceptions and their interrelationships along with behavior are the desirable data (Combs, Richards, & Richards, 1976).

There are no right methods to gather this type of perceptual data. The data sought and the methods used must be determined by the frame of reference used and the purpose for the observations to be made (Combs, Richards, & Richards, 1976). Perceptions are derived from inside people and can never be open to direct observation. You would think that to know how a person sees himself, the thing to do would be to ask him/her. This is called introspection. The problem with introspection is that when a person is asked how they see themselves, the reply is not a description of his/her phenomenal or true self, but rather a self-report. The self-report is a person's description

of self as he/she reports it to an outside observer. It is what he/she says he/she is like. It can reveal to an extent what is internalized. However, a self-report and the phenomenal or true self are not the same thing. One is a behavior; the other is a perceptual organization. The self report is a product of a person's phenomenal field – perceptions in themselves of him/herself and their perception of the situation which it involves (Combs, Richards, & Richards, 1976).

When using perceptions as a part of research, sources of distortion and error should be noted and addressed. *Variations in clarity of the subject's awareness* may be a factor. The concepts of self held by a person vary widely with respect to their clarity at any given moment. Some concepts of self may exist only at low levels of awareness. *Lack of adequate symbols for expression* in terms of communication can also be a factor in research. Words are notoriously inadequate to convey full meaning and these variables may need to be controlled. *Social expectancy* in our society is customary and may need to be considered as distorting. It is even considered necessary at times for persons to hide their true concepts of self even if he/she can report them accurately. We are always aware of the approval and disapproval of others and the things we say about ourselves are always more or less affected by these perceptions. Behavior is not only determined by what people would like to do, but also by a social norm, habits formed, and the expected consequences of the action or behavior (Triandis, 1973). *Cooperation of the subject* may also be an issue. People have control of their self-report. They can choose not to reveal an aspect or even refuse to cooperate at all. Instruments should be used that deal with this problem without constituting unethical deception. *Freedom from*

*threat and degree of personal adequacy* is another factor to consider. The more adequate a person feels, the more likely the self report will approach an accurate description. *Change in perceptual field operation* is another factor (Combs, Richards, & Richards, 1976).

### DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE CONSUMER

Historically, food was viewed strictly in terms of commodities produced in bulk and was meant to be plentiful and affordable. However, consumer's concept of and expectations for food have changed as a result of the prosperity of the last 50 years. Increasingly, U.S. consumers insist on defining what is produced, how production takes place, and with what effects (Veneman, 2001). Three broad demographic trends will shape future U.S. food markets: maturity of consumers, increased diversity, and more people to feed. More mature consumers will consist of an aging baby boomer generation (born between 1946 – 1964) who will number 54 million by 2020. The U.S. population under 18 will increase by 7 million by 2020, but will decline as a share of the total population. Older consumers will likely be more health conscious and typically eat less due to lower activity. American consumers participate in a food system that is characterized by the fulfillment of basic needs – this is termed as a mature market. Consumers have a higher standard of living than in the past. Real per capita income grew 1.8% during 1978 – 1988 and 1.2% during 1988 – 1989. A conservative forecast of real per capita income growth would be a growth of 1% per year between 2000 – 2020. Americans dedicate a declining share of their household budget to food. However, consumers with rising incomes are willing to increase food spending if it

means more convenient, better quality, or more valued food attributes. Higher incomes allow food choices to become expressions of personal preference, values and lifestyles, rather than necessities. Per capita food expenditures in 2020 are expected to be about 6% above those in 2000 as a result of higher incomes (Ballenger & Blaylock, 2003).

Growing ethnic diversity has contributed to shifts in food preferences as well as a notable expansion of the American food repertoire. This more diverse population is likely to eat more fruit, nuts and seeds, eggs and fish. Citrus fruits may see the largest per capita gain, driven by the taste preference of the Hispanic population. The consumption of dairy products may be reduced. Greater fish, rice and poultry consumption are other likely trends. Underlying these expectations is the assumption that ethnic populations in 2020 will have similar eating preferences to those of today's ethnic and immigrant-based populations. The Hispanic population is expected to grow by 1.2 million annually, compared with annual increases of 500,000 among non-Hispanic whites and 400,000 each among Blacks and Asians. Hispanics are expected to increase from 12.6% of the population in 2000 to 18% in 2020, and Asians are expected to increase from 3.9% to 5% (Ballenger & Blaylock, 2003).

The 2000 census of 281 million people (54 million more than in 1980) will likely grow by 18 – 28% by 2020. This implies another 50 – 80 million people to feed in the U.S. Total household food spending will increase by over 26% between 2000 and 2020. In a mature market, population growth is a main source on increased demand for commodities going into food production. However, it is expected that the population expansion will benefit some commodities more than others because of the changing

population composition and related shifts in food preferences (Ballenger & Blaylock, 2003).

The U.S. market is a mature market; therefore, demand for farm products will grow at just about the same pace as the Nation's population. Also, the demographic changes that are altering the composition of the American population imply at least moderate shifts in consumer preferences among food categories and individual products. However, it is not anticipated that shifts in food preferences will be sufficient to transform agricultural composition of production or the profile of the American farm landscape by 2020. Finally, the anticipation that increasing income will have a larger impact on demand for quality and variety of foods than on quantity will continue to transform agriculture into a more sophisticated business venture along the lines of other American businesses. Responsiveness to the consumer will be the key. Growth in demand for value-added food products at the supermarket and in restaurants is likely to increase the share of food dollars that go to processors and retailers, and further diminish the share to providers of basic commodity inputs. Farmers should expect an even higher need to position themselves to capture a larger share of the value added by use of specialty crops carrying premiums and developing branded products that are readily linked by the consumer with a particular food company, production region, or even individual farm (Ballenger & Blaylock, 2003).

#### DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE PRODUCER

The American farmer/rancher provides food and fiber for a diverse consumer base. The farmer/rancher population is no less interesting than the clientele base they

provide for. The United States Department of Agriculture conducts a Census of Agriculture in five year increments. Data compiled in 2002 Census of Agriculture provided insight into demographic data of American producers. The data available in these reports also included state specific information.

There are 3,115,172 producer-operators in the United States and 335,326 producer-operators in the state of Texas. Both U.S. and Texas producers were 88% male and 12% female. The average age for a producer-operator in Texas is 56.9 while the average age for a producer operator in the United States is 55.3. Both averages have increased from 1997 data provided. The Texas figure is slightly greater than data recorded in 1997, but, the United States figure has fallen slightly. The race of farmers and ranchers in Texas is recorded as 96% Caucasian, 3% Black, 6% Hispanic .6% American Indian/Alaska native, .1% Asian, and .4% with more than one race. The United States data suggest that producers/ranchers are 97% Caucasian, 2% Hispanic and 1.4% Black. Female representation as producer-operators in both Texas and the United States has increased since 1997. Females make up 12% of the producer population in Texas and make up 11% of the producer population in the United States. The number of female producers has increased by 12.62% in the United States since 1997 (U.S. Department of Agriculture. National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2002 Census of Agriculture, 2004).

Data portraying the age of the producer-operators in the 2002 Census revealed the following for both national and state figures:

Under 25 years - .8% for the U.S., 1% for Texas

25 – 34 years - 5% for the U.S., 4% for Texas

35 – 44 years – 17% for the U.S., 15% for Texas

45 – 54 years – 27% for the U.S., 25% for Texas

55 – 59 years – 13% for the U.S., 13% for Texas

60 – 64 years – 11.2% for the U.S., 12% for Texas

65 – 69 years – 9% for the U.S., 10% for Texas

70 years and over - 17% for the U.S., 20% for Texas

(U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2002 Census of Agriculture, 2004).

#### PARTICIPATORY POLICY-MAKING

Citizen involvement in the development and implementation of policy (for rural development and farm production) generates a flow of information between citizens and representatives of the government. This increased citizen involvement and the recognition of citizen perceptions improves the information base upon which policy-makers draw in developing and implementing policies (Poteete, 2000). Further, knowledge of the citizen involved may lead the way in showing connections between the environment (land), the production of the commodity, as well as social or operational issues that draw out implications for public policy. Citizen participation in policy making will provide a larger scope and range than a tasked government entity. A Ghanaian proverb states, “The one who rides the donkey does not know the ground is hot” (Blackburn, Chambers, & Holland, 1998, p. 1). Priorities of the policymakers are likely to be different than those of the beneficiaries. Also, the indicators of successful

policy may be different between the makers of policies and the recipients. Citizen involvement will ensure that issues and topics targeted by policy will be grounded by local realities and local interpretations.

John Clayton Thomas (1995) states, “Perhaps the most striking finding (studies researching interaction between managers or policy-makers and the public) is that managers have generally...sought to simplify decisions by excluding the public, the result is usually the exact opposite. Decision making becomes more complicated when the public, probably angry at being excluded, eventually insists on having a say.” (p. 1). The inclusion of participatory research in policy will provide the advantage of the analyses of differences in perception between stakeholders from top to bottom. The resulting ownership of the stakeholders will positively affect the likelihood of change/adoption (Blackburn, Chambers, & Holland, 1998).

Policy must be implemented, interpreted, and prescribed as rules in most cases. The more complicated the policy or the larger the agency responsible for it, the greater number of rules (or specifics) are necessary. Public participation and input will contribute towards legitimacy. It will also serve as an important source of information needed in the establishment of the rules and/or procedures crucial to policy implementation. Kerwin (1994) stated that “...stupid rules do not beget respect” (p. 162).

There is a critical bridge between the aspiration of the policy or law and the reality expressed in program operation that will require public participation to



successfully cross in many cases. The content and tone from the public will help agencies plan for circumstances that are likely to occur (Kerwin, 1994).

Comments from the public sector will also alert an agency to gaps in their knowledge and provide them with an understanding of the conditions of the affected sector they are impacting. This participation by the public can also be crucial in the assessment of learning that may be needed to successfully deliver the policy by officials and what is needed by the beneficiaries of the policy (Kerwin, 1994)

### TERMS

Parity: Commodity support prices (such as loan rates or commodity purchase price) whose level in a given year is mandated to be calculated in a way that will maintain the commodity's purchasing power at the level it had in the 1920 – 1914 base period (Flinchbaugh, Knutson, & Penn, 1998).

Deficiency Payment: direct government payments made to farmers who participated in an annual commodity program for wheat, feed grains, rice, or cotton. The crop-specific payment rate for a particular crop year is based on the difference between an established target price and the higher of the commodity loan rate or the national average market price for the commodity during a specified time period (Klinefelter, Knutson, Richardson, Rosson, & Smith 1993).

Payment-In-Kind: an acreage diversion program with the diversion payment in the form of a commodity rather than cash (Klinefelter, Knutson, Richardson, Rosson, & Smith, 1993).

Supply Control: a production control tool implemented to prevent over-production and surplus in domestic farm policy. Examples of supply control tools are: acreage allotment, acreage reduction, set-aside, diversion, cross-compliance, buyouts, PIK, land retirement, and marketing quotas (Flinchbaugh, Knutson, & Penn, 1998).

Marketing Quota: a mechanism to determine the quantity of a commodity that can be marketed (Klinefelter, Knutson, Richardson, Rosson, & Smith, 1993).

Acreage Allotment: a supply control measure restricting a producer to planting only a specific number of acres of a specific crop (Klinefelter, Knutson, Richardson, Rosson, & Smith, 1993).

WTO: (World Trade Organization) – An international organization established by the Uruguay Round Trade agreement to replace the institution created by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, known as GATT. The Uruguay Round Trade agreement modified the code and the framework and established the WTO on January 1, 1995. The WTO provides a code of conduct for international commerce and a framework for periodic multilateral negotiations on trade liberalization and expansion (Flinchbaugh, Knutson, & Penn, 1998).

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### RESEARCH DESIGN

This record of study utilized a combination of two research methods to address the research questions and objectives outlined. Descriptive Research design was used to investigate characteristics and perceptions pertinent to the target population of grassroots agricultural producers. “Research in its most basic form involves the description of natural or social phenomena – their form, structure, activity, change over time, relationship to other phenomena and so on...” (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p. 4). A causal-comparative research design was utilized to explore differences among producer groups concerning perceived importance, acquired knowledge, and educational needs.

#### PURPOSE & RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

This study examined the perceptions held by a targeted “grassroots” society composed of agricultural producers regarding farm policy components and operational factors as potential barriers to successful policy use. This study also examined the relationship of the government defined and “grassroots” perceived intended outcomes of current components to seek areas of needed education and/or research. The research questions targeted were:

- 1) What are the demographic and farm characteristics of members of Farm Service Agency county committees in Texas?

- 2) What Farm Service Agency county committee member perceptions exist regarding current farm policy goals, components and operational barriers?
- 3) What is the consistency of the agency intention and FSA county committee member perception outcomes that exist implying educational needs for farm policy goals, components/tools, and operational barriers?

#### ASSUMPTIONS

- 1) The agricultural producers to be surveyed were actively involved in agricultural production and were elected members of the FSA Committee in the counties in which they farm.
- 2) The respondents submitted answers to survey questions honestly and diligently in keeping with their local leadership positions.

#### LIMITATIONS

- 1) The sampling method used produced data and findings that are limited in their external validity. Extending the results to the entire population of agricultural producers will go beyond the scope of this study at the current time. The results can only be extended to members of USDA FSA county committee members.
- 2) The educational ratings are perceived ratings from the respondents' point of view. They are self reports and subject to distortions and error as such.
- 3) The data collected and resulting research results and analysis will be conducted only for selected major crop commodities and federal programs.

## POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The universe for this study will be agricultural producers participating in domestic farm policy programs in Texas. From this universe, an accessible population was derived from within Texas Farm Service Agency-United States Department of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency is an agency within the federal USDA structure. The Farm Service Agency is organized to administer the farm program locally. Local producers are eligible to participate in this task as a member of a three to five person county committee which reviews county office operations and makes decisions on how to apply the programs (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency, What is the Farm Service Agency?, 2004). Texas possesses 206 FSA offices under the leadership of a state office. The number of offices with their recorded members will serve as the sampling frame. Some of the FSA offices and county committees may cover more than one county. Each FSA office possesses a county committee as referred to above. The representatives of the county committees were identified for this study as local producers with the greatest overall working knowledge of past, present and future farm policy. FSA committees are composed of agricultural producers who are responsible for implementation locally of farm bill programs. The FSA-USDA committee members are required to be adults. The positions held are elected within the county to represent locally identified communities. The committee must also meet federal standards and may consist of a minority representative depending on the county and the agricultural population there. The committees meet monthly (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency, What is the Farm Service Agency?, 2004).

## INSTRUMENT

A researcher developed questionnaire was used to collect the data in this descriptive, causal-comparative study (Appendix A). The first section involved demographic and farm data for the individual producers filling out the instrument. These questions were important for categorization. Producers were asked to provide farm definitions pertaining to their own operation within the following USDA farm types: Rural Residence farms (revenue less than \$250,000 with the operator's major occupation as something other than farming); Intermediate Family Farm (sales between \$250,000 - \$499,999) , Large Family Farm (sales of \$500,000 or more), and Commercial Farm (non-family corporations or cooperatives or farms operated by hired managers) (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, America's diverse family farms assorted sizes, types, and situations, 2001). Heterogeneity within the farm sector results in an unbalanced distribution of government payments, and therefore, level of participation in policy programs. Those data were crucial in the investigation of the perceptions applying to the policy components/tools. Other factors included in the first section were: the types of commodity produced, location, and operator descriptives and household characteristics (source of household income – farm, off-farm) (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Briefing room, farm and commodity policy: Government payments and the farm sector, 2003).

The second section contained queries related to policy issues perception related to importance and personal knowledge. The instrument used a 5-point Likert scale (scale of 1 to 5, 1 being low and 5 being high) which was used to determine perceptions

of farmers on policy goals and components/tools of commodity programs as well as operational barriers to implementing successful policy programs. This two part scaling allowed for the end calculation of an educational need score for each program component using the following equation: Educational Need = (Importance Rating – Knowledge Rating) x (Mean Importance). The educational need rating is a self-reported perceived rating (Borich, 1980). A third section used a five point Likert scale in which the producers were be asked to rate potential operational barriers to efficient policy participation and adoption. The data display will consist of issue, educational ratings, and rank (Bowe, Hansen, Massey, & Smith, 1999).

#### PROCEDURE

Survey procedure and management followed Dillman's Tailored Design Method (Dillman, 2000). This involved a specific set of procedural contacts – 1<sup>st</sup> week – survey sent with cover letter and return postage prepaid, 2<sup>nd</sup> week, thank-you/reminder, 6<sup>th</sup> week – a replacement survey sent with another cover letter if needed, and 7<sup>th</sup> week – a replacement survey and cover letter sent to non-respondents by certified mail if needed. All mailings were personalized on letterhead and sent and returned by first class mail.

A planning meeting was held on January 9, 2004, including a doctoral committee member to discuss the instrument and procedure used to collect the data at the Texas State FSA Office in College Station. A pilot test of the instrument was completed on February 26, 2004, in Denton, Texas with the Denton County FSA county committee. The survey instrument was reviewed by the County Executive Director and

committee members for content validity, face validity and construct validity (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). The recommendations received from the pilot test were incorporated into the instrument and consisted of clarification of statements posed in two of the survey questions.

The surveys were mailed through the Texas State FSA Office with an additional letter of instruction provided by Mr. Darren Owens, State Common Management & Price Support Division Chief in FSA regular county mailing on March 10, 2004. A return postage prepaid envelope addressed to the researcher was included with the surveys. The County Executive Directors, Committee advisors, and members were instructed to complete and return the surveys before April 30, 2004 to the researcher. A follow-up reminder (and thank you) was completed by Mr. Owens in a scheduled meeting with County Executive Directors the following week and over the FSA email directory. At the deadline for survey return (April 30, 2004), a response rate of 85% was reached (175 offices of 206 responding), and no additional follow-up with non-responding offices was conducted.

The instrument was checked for reliability post-data collection. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were calculated for the three constructs; policy goals (Q 11-22) within section two, commodity policy (Q 23-30) within section two, and operational issues (Q 31-37) within section three. The Likert scale used with two-part scaling (Borich, 1980) consisted of an importance rating and personal knowledge rating for each question. The alpha reliability coefficient was calculated for the importance scale and the knowledge scale separately for each of the three constructs. The



Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the goal construct was .85 for importance and .93 for knowledge. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the commodity policy construct was .87 for importance and .93 for knowledge. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the operational issue construct was .82 for importance and .89 for knowledge. There were a total of 761 surveys returned from 175 FSA county committees representing farms and ranches from 232 of 254 counties (91% of all counties) in Texas.

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics consisting of means, standard deviations, percentages, frequencies and crosstabulation were used to describe the demographic and farm data from Section 1 of the survey. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the data collected in Section 2 pertaining to the policy issues perception related to importance and personal knowledge. Statistical comparisons were performed using one-way ANOVA tests for the educational needs data. Section 3 was described using similar descriptive statistics.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **MAJOR FINDINGS**

The purpose of this research was to examine the perceptions held by a targeted “grassroots” society composed of agricultural producers regarding farm policy goals, policy commodity components or tools and operational factors as potential barriers to successful adoption of policy. The research also examined the relationship of the government defined and “grassroots” perceived intended outcomes of current components to seek areas of needed education and/or research. The three questions addressed in the research were:

- 1) What are the demographic and farm characteristics of members of Farm Service Agency county committees in Texas?
- 2) What Farm Service Agency county committee member perceptions exist regarding current farm policy goals, components and operational barriers?
- 3) What is the consistency of the agency intention and FSA county committee member perception outcomes that exists implying educational need for farm policy goals, components/tools, and operational barriers?

In the study, a researcher developed questionnaire was distributed to members of 206 Texas FSA county committees. This chapter will analyze the data that was obtained from responses to the questionnaire. A total of 761 individual questionnaires were received to compile the data set from 175 Texas FSA county committees. The county

committee members making up the data operate, own or manage farms ranches in 233 counties of 254 in Texas.

## SECTION I-CHARACTERISTICS OF PRODUCERS REPRESENTED IN

### RESEARCH DATA

The FSA county committee members responding were predominately male (78%) and were over the ages of 45 years (80%). Table 1 shows a crosstabulation for respondents based on age and gender. The respondent county committee population was overall, 78% male and 22% female. The largest group responding with an of 218 (27%) within these two variables of age and gender were men between the ages of 46 and 55 years of age.

The county committee respondents were also predominately white (90%) with the next largest group represented by Hispanics at 5.3%. It was also noted that of the demographic questions queried, the racial background questions was the only one in which many of the respondents hesitated or took exception to answering which may be reflected in the 1.6% “other” response level. Several respondents wrote in “American” on the questionnaire next to the “other” response. As would be expected, when the role was asked of the respondents, the predominant answer was reflected as County Committee person. Nearly 65% of the respondent’s role on the county committee was in the county committee person role. It was also reflected that 20% of the respondents were County Executive Directors for the county committee and 15% served in the Minority Advisor role. It is also noted that the Minority Advisor role may be filled by either a racial or gender minority. The gender minority (females) was representative of

Table 1

*Crosstabulation for Age and Gender of County Committee Members, N=761*

Age	Gender		Total	Percent of Total
	Male	Female		
25 & under	2	0	2	.3
26-35 yrs	32	3	35	4.6
36-45 yrs	95	22	117	15.4
46-55 yrs	218	47	265	34.8
56-65 yrs	131	49	180	23.7
66-75 yrs	85	30	115	15.1
76-85 yrs	30	11	41	5.4
86 & over	4	2	6	.8
Total	597	164	761	100
Percent of Total	78.4	21.6	100	

69% of the total for Minority Advisor. A crosstabulation for the race and role variable is shown in Table 2.

Table 2

*Crosstabulation for County Committee Role and Race*

Race (Ethnicity)	Role			Total	Percent of Total
	County Executive Director	County Committee Person	County Minority Advisor		
Caucasian	136	468	79	683	89.8
Black	3	5	16	24	3.2
Hispanic	10	11	19	40	5.3
Indian	1	0	0	1	.3
Asian	0	0	0	0	0
Other	2	10	1	12	1.6
Total	152	494	115	761	100
Percent of Total	20	64.9	15.1	100	

The educational level of the respondents reflected a highly educated group in which 69% had received formal education beyond high school. Nearly 40% of the county committee members had completed a Bachelor's degree or higher. Further, of the female committee members, 65% had received education beyond high school. Seventy percent of the male committee members had received education beyond high

Table 3

*Crosstabulation for County Committee Role and Educational Level*

Educational level	Role			Total	Percent of Total
	County Executive Director	County Committee Person	County Minority Advisor		
High School or less	13	176	50	239	31.5
Attended college, but no degree	23	157	38	218	28.6
Undergraduate degree	99	139	16	254	33.4
Master's degree	16	20	10	46	6
Doctorate degree	1	2	1	4	.6
Total	152	494	115	761	100.0
Percent of Total	20.0	64.9	15.1	100.0	

school. From the race/ethnic standpoint, the white members had received education beyond high school at 70%, the black members at 75%, the Hispanic members at 63% and both the Asian and Other members at 50%. Table 3 provides a crosstabulation for role and educational level.

The county committee respondents were asked to indicate the headquarter county from which their farming/ranching interests were based and then to indicate as many as two other counties in which they farmed or ranched. It is noted that the County

Executive Director respondents may or may not actively farm or ranch but may indicate the headquarter county they serve in. The following listing reflects the total of counties indicated by county committee respondents as either a headquarter county or other counties with farms or ranches.

Anderson	Andrews	Angelina	Aransas
Archer	Armstrong	Atascosa	Austin
Bailey	Bandera	Bastrop	Baylor
Bee	Bell	Bexar	Blanco
Borden	Bosque	Bowie	Brazoria
Brazos	Brewster	Briscoe	Brooks
Brown	Burleson	Burnet	Callahan
Caldwell	Calhoun	Cameron	Camp
Carson	Cass	Castro	Chambers
Cherokee	Childress	Clay	Cochran
Coke	Coleman	Collin	Collingsworth
Colorado	Comal	Comanche	Concho
Cooke	Coryell	Cottle	Crane
Crockett	Crosby	Culberson	Dallam
Dallas	Dawson	Deaf Smith	Delta
Denton	Dewitt	Dickens	Dimmit
Donley	Duval	Eastland	Ector
Edwards	El Paso	Erath	Falls
Fannin	Fayette	Fisher	Floyd
Foard	Fort Bend	Franklin	Freestone
Frio	Gaines	Galveston	Garza
Grayson	Gillespie	Glascock	Goliad
Gonzales	Gray	Grayson	Grimes
Guadalupe	Hall	Hamilton	Hansford
Hardeman	Hardin	Harmon	Harris
Harrison	Hartley	Haskell	Hays
Hemphill	Henderson	Hidalgo	Hill
Hockley	Hopkins	Howard	Houston
Hudspeth	Hunt	Hutchinson	Irion
Jack	Jefferson	Jeff Davis	Jim Hogg
Jim Wells	Johnson	Jones	Karnes
Kaufman	Kendall	Kent	Kerr
Kimble	King	Kinney	Kleberg
Knox	Lamb	Lamar	Lampasas
LaSalle	Lavaca	Lee	Leon
Liberty	Limestone	Lipscomb	Live Oak
Loving	Lubbock	Lynn	Marion
Martin	Mason	Matagorda	McLennan
McCulloch	McMullen	Medina	Menard

Midland	Mills	Mitchell	Montaque
Montgomery	Morris	Motley	Moore
Nacogdoches	Navarro	Nolan	Nueces
Ochiltree	Oldham	Orange	Palo Pinto
Panola	Parker	Parmer	Pecos
Polk	Potter	Presidio	Rains
Randall	Reagan	Red River	Reeves
Roberts	Robertson	Rockwall	Runnels
Rusk	Sabine	San Augustine	San Jacinto
San Patricio	San Saba	Scurry	Shelby
Sherman	Starr	Stephens	Sterling
Stonewall	Swisher	Tarrant	Taylor
Terrell	Titus	Tom Green	Travis
Trinity	Tyler	Upton	Uvalde
Val Verde	Van Zandt	Victoria	Walker
Waller	Ward	Washington	Webb
Wheeler	Wichita	Wilbarger	Willacy
Williamson	Wilson	Winkler	Wise
Wood	Yoakum	Young	Zapata
Zavala			

The number of times individual counties were entered ranged from 1 – 9 across the multiple potential entries. The counties entered the most frequency across the multiple entry option were: Bandera, Chambers, and Morris with nine entries. Archer, Gray, Hall, Jim Hogg, Kerr counties were entered eight times. There were 211 counties entered as a headquarter county. Further, there were ten entries across the three county entry option not classified as Texas Counties. There were two entries for Oklahoma counties, three for New Mexico, one for Louisiana, and five for cities.

The farm/ranch size question included farm operation descriptions established by the USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, America's diverse family farms assorted sizes, types and situations, 2003). More than 54% of the county committee respondents indicated that they operated a Rural Residence Farm with revenue less than \$250,000 and an operator's major occupation in something other



than farming. There were 71 or 9% non-responses to this question reflecting a non-farming option for County Executive Directors. There were 80 CEDs represented in the Rural Residence farm size/type operation. The quantitative acreage designation would be expected to mirror the farm/ranch size designation made by the county committee members. There were only 67 non-responses to this question. The reason for this revolves around the fact that County Executive Directors, while having a non-response option, partially responded to questions seven through ten. All responses made were entered. The choices provided to the county committee members were presented in intervals of 499 acres with the exception of the very first interval of 1 – 99 acres. The interval displaying the largest percentage of responses was the 100 – 499 interval at 18% while the median response was in the 1500 – 1999 interval. A crosstabulation for the variables of farm/ranch size and farm/ranch acreage is detailed in Table 4.

It is interesting to note that 11% of the respondents indicating an operation described as a Rural Residence with revenue less than \$250,000 also reported operations of more than 3000 acres. On the other hand, 75% of the respondents reporting the Corporate Farm reported an operation of less than 3000 acres. Since the Corporate Farm designation carries no revenue stipulation, the Large Family Farm with \$500,000 revenue and over designation respondents also reflect 73% of operations under 3000 acres. Operations of more than 10,000 acres were indicated by 3.8 of all county committee respondents with 76% of all of those reporting an Intermediate Family Farm with revenue of \$250,000 - \$499,999 or a Rural Residence with \$250,000 or less of revenue.

Table 4

*Crosstabulation for Size/Type Farm Operation and Total Acres in Operation*

Acres of Land in Operation	Size/Type Farm Operation					Total	Percent of Total
	N/R	Rural Residence revenue under \$250,000	Intermediate Family Farm revenue of \$250,000 - \$499,999	Large Family Farm revenue \$500,000 or more	Corporate Farm		
N/R	66	1	0	0	0	67	8.8
0-99 acres	1	55	0	0	0	56	7.4
100-499 acres	0	126	9	1	1	137	18.0
500-999 acres	2	70	20	1	0	93	12.2
1000-1499 acres	1	56	28	4	1	90	11.8
1500-1999 acres	0	27	29	5	2	63	8.3
2000-2499 acres	0	15	18	7	1	41	5.4
2500-2999 acres	0	16	25	4	1	46	6.0
3000-3499 acres	0	7	17	7	1	32	4.2
3500-4999 acres	0	12	11	28	0	51	6.7
5000-9999 acres	1	17	18	19	1	56	7.4
10,000 acres & more	0	11	11	7	0	29	3.8
Total	71	413	186	83	8	761	
Percent of Total	9.3	54.3	24.4	10.9	1.1		

The percentage of household income attributed to farm income was reported with 72 non-responses. The county committee member respondents indicated that almost 36% had farm incomes that constituted 75 – 100% of their household income.

Table 5

*Crosstabulation for Size/Type Farm Operation and Percentage of Household Income from Farming*

Percentage of Household Income	Size/Type Farm Operation					Total	Percent of Total
	N/A	Rural Residence revenue under \$250,000	Intermediate Family Farm revenue of \$250,000 - \$499,999	Large Family Farm revenue \$500,000 or more	Corporate Farm		
N/A	69	3	0	0	0	72	9.5
Farm Income at 0-24%	2	170	5	1	0	178	23.4
Farm Income at 25-49%	0	93	10	3	1	107	14.1
Farm Income at 50-74%	0	69	50	12	2	133	17.5
Farm Income at 75 – 100%	0	78	121	67	5	271	35.6
Total	71	413	186	83	8	761	100.00
Percent of Total	9.3	54.3	24.4	10.9	1.1	100	

There were 23 % reporting that farm income constituted 0 – 24% of their income. It is noteworthy that 53% of respondents reporting a percentage of income indicated that over 59% of their household income was attributable to the farm, less non-respondents. A crosstabulation for percentage income attributable to the farm or ranch and size/type operation designation is exhibited in Table 5.

It is noteworthy that of the county committee members indicating their operation as a Rural Residence with revenue under \$250,000, 53% depend on their farm income for half or more of total household income. Further, county committee respondents indicating their operation as an Intermediate Farm/Ranch with revenue between \$250,000 - \$500,000, 92% depend on their farm income for over 50% of their household income.

County Committee respondents were asked to indicate their top three commodities in terms of gross sales produced on their operation in rank order. Many of the responses received indicated the top three commodities, but in no rank order. The commodities totaled for all three potential choices are listed in Table 6.

The commodity reported most frequently by the county committee members as one of the top three they produced was clearly, beef cattle. Of all respondents who indicated at least one commodity, over 66% indicated beef cattle as one of their top three commodities produced on their farm or ranch. Wheat followed beef cattle, but with 215 fewer responses. Top commodities produced by the county committee respondents were, 1) Beef Cattle, 2) Wheat, 3) Forage, 4) Cotton, 5) Grain Sorghum, 6) Corn, 7) Sheep/Goats, 8) Oats, 9) Soybeans, and 10) Rice. There were no respondents

listing tobacco, sugar beets, or barley as one of the top three commodities produced.

The “other” designation was used to create three new commodity responses. The new responses were forestry, CRP, and poultry. The initial “other” designation included a space for the county committee person to write in the commodity not included on the questionnaire list. These responses led to the creation of the new commodity

Table 6

*Ranking of Commodities Produced by Respondent Committee Members by Number of Responses*

Commodity	Number of Responses	Ranking	Commodity	Number of Responses	Ranking
Beef Cattle	457	1	Rice	13	13
Wheat	242	2	Dairy Cattle	12	14
Forage	201	3	Milk/Dairy Products	11	15
Cotton	178	4	Forestry	10	16
Grain Sorghum	157	5	CRP	10	16
Corn	118	6	Poultry	8	18
Sheep/Goats	66	7	Sugar Cane	5	19
Oats	35	8	Pork	2	20
Other	33	9	Nursery	2	20
Peanuts	32	10	Tobacco	0	22
Soybeans	19	11	Barley	0	22
Fruits/Vegetables	18	12	Sugar Beets	0	22

designations. In summary, Livestock commodities totaled 534 and Crop Commodities totaled 693 as top ranking commodities produced by County Committee respondents.

Who produces what? The listing that follows shows county committee respondents by role with descriptors of size for the commodities they produce. There were 67 County Executive Director respondents who reported no size/type farm operation, seven of whom did report Beef, Forage and CRP land.

County Executive Directors

Sugar Cane (Large Farm) – 1

Pork (Rural Residence Farm) - 1

Beef Cattle (Rural Residence Farm) – 48, (Intermediate Farm) – 2

Forage (Rural Residence Farm) – 26

Corn (Rural Residence Farm) – 5, (Large Farm) – 1

Fruit/Vegetables (Rural Residence Farm) – 1

Oats (Rural Residence Farm) - 4

Sheep/Goats (Rural Residence Farm) – 9

Wheat (Rural Residence Farm) – 18, (Intermediate Farm) – 2, (Large Farm) - 1

Cotton (Rural Residence Farm) – 8, (Large Farm) – 3

Grain Sorghum (Rural Residence Farm) – 8, (Intermediate Farm) – 2,

(Large Farm) – 2

Peanuts (Rural Residence Farm) – 1

Soybeans (Rural Residence Farm) - 1

Other (Rural Residence Farm) – 8

Poultry (Rural Residence Farm) – 1

Forestry (Rural Residence Farm) - 3

CRP (Rural Residence Farm) - 4

County Committee Persons

Dairy Cattle (Rural Residence Farm) - 1, (Intermediate Farm) - 3,

(Large Farm)- 4

Milk/Dairy Products (Rural Residence Farm) – 2, (Intermediate Farm) – 2

(Large Farm) - 4

Pork (Rural Residence Farm) – 0

Sugar Cane (Intermediate Farm) – 1, (Large Farm) – 3,

Beef Cattle (Rural Residence Farm) – 200, (Intermediate Farm) – 88,

(Large Farm) – 37, (Corporate Farm) - 1

Forages (Rural Residence Farm) – 97, (Intermediate Farm) – 40,

(Large Farm) – 11

Nursery (Rural Residence Farm) - 1

Rice (Rural Residence Farm) – 4, (Intermediate Farm) – 4, (Large Farm) – 4,

(Corporate Farm) - 1

Corn (Rural Residence Farm) – 24, (Intermediate Farm) – 41,

(Large Farm) – 28, (Corporate Farm) - 3

Fruit/Vegetables (Rural Residence Farm) – 2, (Intermediate Farm) – 4,

(Large Farm) – 2

Oats (Rural Residence Farm) – 13, (Intermediate Farm) – 11, (Large Farm) - 1

Sheep/Goats (Rural Residence Farm) – 37, (Intermediate Farm) – 10,

(Large Farm) - 2

Wheat (Rural Residence Farm) – 69, (Intermediate Farm) – 84,

(Large Farm) – 27, (Corporate Farm) - 5

Cotton (Rural Residence Farm) – 27, (Intermediate Farm) – 76,

(Large Farm) – 37, (Corporate Farm) - 3

Grain Sorghum (Rural Residence Farm) – 32, (Intermediate Farm) – 56,

(Large Farm) – 22, (Corporate Farm) - 4

Peanuts (Rural Residence Farm) – 3, (Intermediate Farm) – 11,

(Large Farm) – 11, (Corporate Farm) - 1

Soybeans (Rural Residence Farm) – 6, (Intermediate Farm) – 4,

(Large Farm) – 5, (Corporate Farm) - 1

Other (Rural Residence Farm) – 8, (Intermediate Farm) – 8, (Large Farm) - 2

Poultry (Rural Residence Farm) – 1, (Intermediate Farm) - 4

Forestry (Rural Residence Farm) – 6, (Intermediate Farm) - 1

CRP (Rural Residence Farm) - 3

#### County Minority Advisors

Dairy Cattle (Rural Residence Farm) – 1, (Intermediate Farm) – 2,

(Large Farm) - 1

Milk/Dairy Products (Intermediate Farm) – 2, (Large Farm) - 1

Pork (Rural Residence Farm) – 1



Beef Cattle (Rural Residence Farm) – 62, (Intermediate Farm) – 11,  
     (Large Farm) – 1, (Corporate Farm) - 1  
 Forages (Rural Residence Farm) – 23, (Large Farm) – 1, (Corporate Farm) - 1  
 Nursery (Intermediate Farm) - 1  
 Rice (Rural Residence Farm) – 1, (Intermediate Farm) - 2  
 Corn (Rural Residence Farm) – 10, (Intermediate Farm) – 4, (Large Farm) - 1  
 Fruit/Vegetables (Rural Residence Farm) – 8, (Large Farm) – 1  
 Oats (Rural Residence Farm) - 6  
 Sheep/Goats (Rural Residence Farm) – 8  
 Wheat (Rural Residence Farm) – 26, (Intermediate Farm) – 8, (Large Farm) - 2  
 Cotton (Rural Residence Farm) – 12, (Intermediate Farm) – 8, (Large Farm) - 2  
 Grain Sorghum (Rural Residence Farm) – 15, (Intermediate Farm) – 11,  
     (Large Farm) – 3  
 Peanuts (Rural Residence Farm) – 4, (Intermediate Farm) – 1  
 Soybeans (Intermediate Farm) – 2  
 Others (Rural Residence Farm) – 2, (Intermediate Farm) – 2, (Large Farm) - 1  
 Poultry (Rural Residence Farm) – 1, (Corporate Farm) - 1  
 CRP (Rural Residence Farm) – 2

County Executive Directors who farm or ranch outside of their employment  
 predominately are Beef Producers who also produce Forage as Rural Resident Farm  
 operators (53%). The commodities that follow Beef Cattle and Forage for CEDs are:

Wheat, Cotton, Grain Sorghum and Sheep/Goats. County Committee members are also predominately Beef Cattle producers and are more widely spread among the farm size/types. Approximately half of all county committee member respondents are Rural Residence operators with 33% as Intermediate Family Farm operators, 15% Large Family Farm operators and 1% Corporate farm operators or managers. The Committee members produce Beef Cattle as first commodity and Wheat as a second commodity ranking followed by Forages, Cotton, Corn and Sheep/Goats. The Minority Advisor Members are also Beef Cattle producers with an even higher percentage operating Rural Residence Farms (83%). Wheat follows Beef Cattle with Grain Sorghum, Forages, Cotton, Corn and Fruit/Vegetables coming next.

It is also important to discern the role the county committee respondent plays with the context or their function as an agricultural producer. Certainly, some of the County Executive Directors are also producers, but some may not be. As a function of employment, these Executive Directors will receive intensive training in many aspects of farm policy as a whole and in the specifics of delivery and utility. By virtue of their role within the county committee comprised of farmer/rancher leaders elected by their peers, they would serve as a facilitator and technical expert providing needed background and operational procedure details. In other words, they will wear two hats, as they implement policy through programs within the county committee structure. They stand to represent the government presence for their assigned grassroots constituency or farmers/ranchers and deliver the farm program based on unique characteristics and agricultural make-up of that local base as well as walking in the role

as a farmer/producer either by association or personal venture. Table 7 examines the relationship and characteristics of the county committee member's role with the farm operation size/type reported.

Table 7

*Crosstabulation for Committee Role and Farm Operation Size/Type*

Committee Role	Size/Type Farm Operation					Total	Percent of Total
	N/A	Rural Residence revenue under \$250,000	Intermediate Family Farm revenue of \$250,000 - \$499,999	Large Family Farm revenue \$500,000 or more	Corporate Farm		
County Executive Director	67	80	2	3	0	152	20.0
County Committee Person	3	245	164	75	7	494	64.9
County Minority Advisor	1	88	20	5	1	107	15.1
Total	71	413	186	83	8	761	
Percent of Total	9.3	54.3	24.4	10.9	1.1		

The crosstabulation for committee role and farm size/type shows that 20% of the 761 respondents were County Executive Directors. Of those County Executive Directors, 44% reported no personal farming operation. For this percentage of CEDs, their only role in the county committee process is as facilitator and advisor with

producer alignment as a function of association and community identity. There are 53% of the CEDs that operate a Rural Residence farm with revenue under \$250,000. Only 3% of CEDs operate farms larger than this. Collectively, 66% of CED's operate farms.

The County Committee Person and County Minority Advisors are both roles filled by local producers. The County Minority Advisors comprise just over 15% of the committees while the county committee persons comprise close to 65%. The County minority Advisors are predominately producers on Rural Residence Farms at 82%. The County Committee Persons are Rural Residence Farm operators at 50%, with 33% operating Intermediate Family Farms and 17% operating Large Family Farms and Corporate Farms.

## SECTION II-FARM POLICY/POLICY GOALS AND COMMODITY POLICY

Section II included two constructs. The Farm Policy Goal construct included twelve questions pertaining to specific farm policy goals. These specific goals (Commission, 2003) were:

- \*The Goal of Domestic Farm Policy is to foster an abundant supply of food and fiber.
- \* The Goal of Domestic Farm Policy is to supply and stabilize farm income.
- \* The Goal of Domestic Farm Policy is to help producers get access to credit.
- \* The Goal of Domestic Farm Policy is to expand agricultural exports.
- \* The Goal of Domestic Farm Policy is to conserve natural resources.
- \* The Goal of Domestic Farm Policy is to maintain the family farm.
- \* The Goal of Domestic Farm Policy is to maintain the vitality of rural communities.

- \* The Goal of Domestic Farm Policy is to counter the protection provided to agriculture in other countries.
- \* The Goal of Domestic Farm Policy is to reduce government spending.
- \* The Goal of Domestic Farm Policy is to prevent large operations from receiving excessive support.
- \* The Goal of Domestic Farm Policy is to prevent wealthy non-producers from receiving payments.
- \* The Goal of Domestic Farm Policy is to redistribute agricultural program spending over regions, commodities and/or functions such as policy tools (conservation versus direct program spending).

This section began the use of the Likert scale with a two part Borich scaling (Borich, 1980). The county committee respondents were asked to rate the importance of the goal specified as well as their personal knowledge of it on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being the lowest and 5 being high. This two part design allowed the computation of an educational needs score for each of the goals identified. The equation used was  $(\text{Importance} - \text{Knowledge Rating}) * (\text{Mean Importance}) = \text{Educational Need}$ . The basic rankings of importance, personal knowledge, and the resulting educational needs score are displayed in Table 8 (Bowe, 1999).

Table 8

*Ratings & Rankings of Importance, Knowledge, & Educational Need for Policy Goals*

<b>Farm Policy Goal</b>	<b>Importance</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Educational Need Score</b>	<b>Rank</b>
...foster an abundant supply of food and fiber (Q11)	4.22	3	3.66	5	2.3679	2
... supply and stabilize farm income (Q12)	4.38	1	3.84	2	2.3598	3
... help producers get access to credit (Q13)	3.52	10	3.34	9	.6291	10
... expand agricultural exports (Q14)	4.16	5	3.45	8	2.9136	1
...conserve natural resources (Q15)	4.11	6	3.68	4	1.7499	6
...maintain the family farm (Q16)	4.32	2	4.00	1	1.4135	7
... maintain the vitality of rural communities (Q17)	4.20	4	3.77	3	1.8323	5
... counter the protection provided to agriculture in other countries (Q18)	3.74	8	3.22	11	1.9413	4
... reduce government spending (Q19)	3.29	12	3.27	10	.0562	12
... prevent large operations from receiving excessive support (Q20)	3.63	9	3.49	7	.4961	11
... prevent wealthy non-producers from receiving payments (Q21)	3.82	7	3.53	6	1.1223	8
... redistribute agricultural program spending over regions, commodities and/or functions such as policy tools (conservation versus direct program spending) (Q22)	3.42	11	3.22	11	.6786	9

Importance rankings indicate that supply and stabilization of farm income as well maintenance of the family farm are for-most on the minds of the county committee members. It is also important to note that while importance ranking and knowledge ranking are important pieces of information in their own right, the educational needs rating will be greater when the gap between importance and knowledge is greater...and positive. This is evidenced by the number 2 ranking in importance of the family farm, the like-wise ranking of number 1 in knowledge and then the subsequent ranking of number 7 for educational need. Based on the importance rankings, it is interesting to see that county committee respondents do not seem to assign importance to reduction of government spending (overall or across commodities/functions) or getting access to credit. None of these goals ranked highly on personal knowledge or educational need. County committee respondents ranked high in knowledge for the goal areas of maintaining the family farm, stabilization of farm income/supply, maintaining the vitality of rural communities, and conservation of natural resources. The highest ranking for educational need came in the area of expanding agricultural exports. The goal of providing supply in abundance and the stabilization of farm income also received high ranking for educational need. Another foreign trade goal topic of countering the protection provided to agriculture in foreign countries would seem to complement the number 1 ranking of agricultural trade expansion.

Since County Executive Directors may have received the educational benefit of agency training, their entries were removed to determine if the educational needs for policy goals might be affected by their status. The results are portrayed in Table 9. Only

slight variations in rankings and ratings occurred. The overall score for importance, knowledge and educational needs increased but relationships from one goal to another remained fairly constant for both Table 8 and Table 9.

Table 9

*Ratings and Rankings of Importance, Knowledge, & Educational Need for Policy Goals with County Executive Directors Removed*

<b>Farm Policy Goal</b>	<b>Importance</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Educational Need Score</b>	<b>Rank</b>
...foster an abundant supply of food and fiber (Q11)	4.16	4	3.54	5	2.6540	3
... supply and stabilize farm income (Q12)	4.34	1	3.72	2	2.7474	2
... help producers get access to credit (Q13)	3.47	10	3.28	9	.6647	11
... expand agricultural exports (Q14)	4.14	5	3.41	6	3.0397	1
...conserve natural resources (Q15)	4.08	6	3.60	4	1.9639	6
...maintain the family farm (Q16)	4.31	2	3.94	1	1.5961	7
... maintain the vitality of rural communities (Q17)	4.20	4	3.69	3	2.1586	4
... counter the protection provided to agriculture in other countries (Q18)	3.72	8	3.19	11	1.9959	5
... reduce government spending (Q19)	3.27	12	3.19	10	.2485	12
... prevent large operations from receiving excessive support (Q20)	3.62	9	3.37	8	.8822	10
... prevent wealthy non-producers from receiving payments (Q21)	3.81	7	3.41	7	1.5345	8
... redistribute agricultural program spending over regions, commodities and/or functions such as policy tools (conservation versus direct program spending) (Q22)	3.41	11	3.12	11	.9940	9



It is apparent that the educational needs scores vary across County Committee Respondent Operation size/type. Rural Residence Farm operators will typically determine that educational need is greater than the larger revenue operation owners based on their self perceptions of importance and need. Table 10 shows the means for educational need per each county committee respondent designation for farm operation size type. It should be noted that the N for the size/type operation differs in size greatly.

The one-way ANOVA statistical analysis conducted found that there was a significant difference at the .05 level between the county committee members from different size/type operations for all but one of the goals presented. The one goal where no statistical significance was found was related to the expansion of agricultural exports. The results of the ANOVA are shown in Table 11.

Post hoc tests indicate that there is some statistical difference between the mean scores of some of the different size/type operations. The Games Howell (equal variances not assumed) shows the following county committee member respondents of the different size/type operations as being statistically different for policy goals.

\*Rural Residence Farms/Large Family Farms regarding the goal accessing farm credit.

\*Rural Residence Farms/Intermediate Farms regarding the goal countering protection provided to agriculture in other countries.

\*Rural Residence Farms/Intermediate Farms & Intermediate Farms/Large Family Farms on the goal reducing government spending.

\*Rural Residence Farms/Intermediate Farms & Rural Residence Farms/Large Family Farms on the goal preventing large operators from receiving excessive support.

Table 10

*Means for Educational Need Across Respondent Operation Size/Type*

Farm Policy Goals	Mean / SD	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
	Rural Residence Farms N=413	Intermediate Farms N=186	Large Family Farm N=83	Corporate Farm N=8	Non-Response N=71
...foster an abundant supply of food and fiber	2.7282 SD - 4.4801	2.4049 SD - 3.8451	1.6270 SD - 4.2626	2.6375 SD - 3.1398	1.0104 SD - 4.6483
... supply and stabilize farm income	2.8316 SD - 4.0045	2.1429 SD - 4.3975	1.9525 SD - 3.94456	2.1900 SD - 2.3412	.6786 SD - 4.4819
... help producers get access to credit	1.3637 SD - 8.0036	.0189 SD - 4.0673	-.6786 SD - 4.3445	-1.3200 SD - 4.1808	-.2975 SD - 4.6754
... expand agricultural exports	3.2535 SD - 4.4166	2.6839 SD - 4.4803	2.3557 SD - 4.6936	2.0800 SD -7.0317	2.2851 SD - 4.265
...conserve natural resources	2.1296 SD - 3.7616	1.3258 SD - 3.2354	1.3865 SD - 3.758	2.0550 SD - 3.1069	1.0420 SD - 4.8490
...maintain the family farm	1.9456 SD - 4.3733	.8594 SD- 4.8755	.7287 SD - 5.2615	-1.0800 SD - 5.5371	.8518 SD - 5.3470
... maintain the vitality of rural communities	2.3492 SD - 4.3196	1.5355 SD - 4.3794	1.0120 SD - 4.4772	.0000 SD - 7.0993	.7690 SD - 4.7257
... counter the protection provided to agriculture in other countries	2.4269 SD - 4.4455	1.2266 SD - 4.642	1.2166 SD - 4.6401	.4675 SD - 5.4519	2.0017 SD - 4.4176
... reduce government spending	.6453 SD - 4.5620	-.4953 SD - 4.10340	-1.2288 SD - 4.5585	.4113 SD - 5.9474	-.4634 SD - 4.5620
... prevent large operations from receiving excessive support	1.4063 SD - 4.4888	.0390 SD - 4.7441	-1.7057 SD - 5.2370	-1.3613 SD - 7.4991	-.8180 SD - 4.8000
... prevent wealthy non-producers from receiving payments	1.8918 SD - 4.8521	.8237 SD - 5.2935	-.5076 SD - 5.7612	.4788 SD - 6.9236	-.5934 SD - 5.2457
... redistribute agricultural program spending over regions, commodities and/or functions such as policy tools	1.3084 SD - 3.7508	.3677 SD - 3.6425	-.4533 SD - 4.3316	-1.2825 SD - 7.0653	-.6262 SD - 4.5997

Table 11

*One-Way ANOVA for Policy Goal's Educational Need by Size/Type Farm Operation*

Policy Goal		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
...foster an abundant supply of food and fiber	Between Groups	230.844	4	57.711	3.099	.015
	Within Groups	14076.579	756	18.620		
	Total	14307.423	760			
... supply and stabilize farm income	Between Groups	315.367	4	78.842	4.619	.001
	Within Groups	12904.726	756	17.070		
	Total	13220.094	760			
... help producers get access to credit	Between Groups	525.382	4	131.346	3.041	.017
	Within Groups	32652.332	756	43.191		
	Total	33177.714	760			
... expand agricultural exports	Between Groups	116.965	4	29.241	1.457	.214
	Within Groups	15175.818	756	20.074		
	Total	15292.784	760			
...conserve natural resources	Between Groups	140.295	4	35.074	2.493	.042
	Within Groups	10637.797	756	14.071		
	Total	10778.092	760			
...maintain the family farm	Between Groups	285.100	4	71.275	3.214	.012
	Within Groups	16763.505	756	22.174		
	Total	17048.605	760			
... maintain the vitality of rural communities	Between Groups	289.687	4	72.422	3.701	.005
	Within Groups	14795.318	756	19.571		
	Total	15085.005	760			
... counter the protection provided to agriculture in other countries	Between Groups	253.641	4	63.410	3.099	.015
	Within Groups	15468.054	756	20.460		
	Total	15721.695	760			

Table 11 Continued

Policy Goal		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
... reduce government spending	Between Groups	357.097	4	89.274	5.232	.000
	Within Groups	12900.021	756	17.064		
	Total	13257.119	760			
... prevent large operations from receiving excessive support	Between Groups	933.584	4	233.396	10.553	.000
	Within Groups	16720.657	756	22.117		
	Total	17654.241	760			
... prevent wealthy non-producers from receiving payments	Between Groups	693.948	4	173.487	6.602	.000
	Within Groups	19866.761	756	26.279		
	Total	20560.709	760			
... redistribute agricultural program spending over regions, commodities and/or functions such as policy tools	Between Groups	439.753	4	109.938	7.153	.000
	Within Groups	11619.681	756	15.370		
	Total	12059.434	760			

\*Rural Residence Farms/Large Family Farms on the goal preventing wealthy non-producers from receiving payments.

\*Rural Residence Farms/Intermediate Farms & Rural Residence Farms and Large Family Farms on the goal to redistribute agricultural program spending.

The Commodity Policy Construct included eight questions pertaining to components/tools of commodity programs. The components and tools portrayed in the questions consisted of the basic mechanisms of current farm policy such as

countercyclical payments, direct payments and marketing loans for commodity crops. A portrayal of factors influencing these components and tools were also included within the questions such as production and the World Trade Organization status.

The same Likert scale was used for the responses with the two part Borich design (Borich, 1980). Again the county committee respondents were asked to rate the importance of the policy component/tool specified as to their personal knowledge of it on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest. The two-part design allowed the computation of an educational needs score for each of the components/tools identified. The equation used was (Importance-Knowledge Rating) \* (Mean Importance) = Educational Need. The basic ranking of importance, personal knowledge and the resulting educational needs score is displayed on Table 12.

Importance, Knowledge and Educational score rankings all seem to reflect that the county committee members are most concerned with those policy components/tools that they have the most control over. Countercyclical farm income support calculation (Q25), the Marketing Loan Program as it relates to the LDP (Q30), the ability to update yields (Q27), and direct payments rank highly in both, importance and knowledge as well as educational need ranking. The connection to the influencing factor of the World Trade Organization on components/tools is assigned lower importance and knowledge ranking by the county committee members. The fact that countercyclical payments are made in incremental partial payments over the current farm bill period seems to be lower in importance, but something they feel they are knowledgeable about enough to cause it to be ranked last in educational importance.

Table 12

*Rankings of Importance, Knowledge & Educational Need for Policy Components/Tools*

Farm Policy Component/Tool	Importance	Rank	Knowledge	Rank	Educational Need Score	Rank
Direct payments are decoupled from both price and production and allows the producer, with few exceptions, to farm land based on market signals. (Q23)	3.89	4	3.52	5	1.4568	4
Direct payments are considered non-trade distorting by the World Trade Organization. (Q24)	3.44	8	3.05	7	1.3516	6
Commodity Programs include counter-cyclical farm income support in which base owners receive a payment specific to a commodity when average market price falls below the target price minus the direct payment but is equal or greater than the loan rate. (Q25)	4.11	1	3.64	1	1.9497	1
Countercyclical payments are made in incremental partial payments for the 2002-2006 period. (Q26)	3.80	5	3.57	3	.8689	8
Commodity Programs Yields were allowed to be updated for counter-cyclical payments purposes. Producers had three options: 1) retain current yield, 2) update by adding 70% of the 1998-01 average yield, or 3) update by using 93.5% of 1998-01 yields excluding a year where planted acreage was zero (Q27)	3.98	3	3.61	2	1.4748	3

Table 12 Continued

Farm Policy Component/Tool	Importance	Rank	Knowledge	Rank	Educational Need Score	Rank
Counter-cyclical payments, marketing loans and loan repayments are considered trade distorting by the World Trade Organization and total payments on these programs made by the U.S. are limited. To an aggregate 19,1 billion annually (Q28)	3.45	7	3.04	8	1.4054	5
The marketing loan program provides benefits coupled to both price and production and is a trade distorting policy because it directly impacts production decisions (Q29)	3.45	6	3.10	6	1.2240	7
The marketing loan program includes fixed rate loan rates for covered commodities. The potential Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP) equals the loan rate minus the Posted County Price (PCP) or adjusted world price (repayment rate). The LDP can be taken at any day after the crop is harvested but before beneficial interest is lost in commodity (Q30)	4.02	2	3.55	4	1.8964	2

When County Executive Directors are removed from the data, the results follow in Table 13. As one would expect, the removal of the County Executive Directors as the

FSA committee members having received the most previous training in keeping with their position, resulted in higher rating scores for both knowledge and educational needs. The ratings for importance varied very little from Table 12. Rankings on educational need varied only slightly with the only noticeable change being the increased scores reflecting the knowledge level difference.

Table 13

*Rankings of Importance, Knowledge & Educational Need for Policy Components/Tools With County Executive Directors Removed*

Farm Policy Component/Tool	Importance	Rank	Knowledge	Rank	Educational Need Score	Rank
Direct payments are decoupled from both price and production and allows the producer, with few exceptions, to farm land based on market signals. (Q23)	3.83	4	3.33	5	1.9099	3
Direct payments are considered non-trade distorting by the World Trade Organization. (Q24)	3.40	8	2.95	7	1.5760	7
Commodity Programs include counter-cyclical farm income support in which base owners receive a payment specific to a commodity when average market price falls below the target price minus the direct payment but is equal or greater than the loan rate. (Q25)	4.06	1	3.45	1	2.4768	1
Countercyclical payments are made in incremental partial payments for the 2002-2006 period. (Q26)	3.76	5	3.39	3	1.3790	8



Table 13 Continued

Farm Policy Component/Tool	Importance	Rank	Knowledge	Rank	Educational Need Score	Rank
Commodity Programs Yields were allowed to be updated for counter-cyclical payments purpose. Producers had three options: 1) retain current yield, 2) update by adding 70% of the 1998-01 average yield, or 3) update by using 93.5% of 1998-01 yields excluding a year where planted acreage was zero (Q27)	3.88	3	3.40	2	1.9018	4
Counter-cyclical payments, marketing loans and loan repayments are considered trade distorting by the World Trade Organization and total payments on these programs made by the U.S. are limited. To an aggregate 19,1 billion annually (Q28)	3.46	7	2.93	8	1.8185	5
The marketing loan program provides benefits coupled to both price and production and is a trade distorting policy because it directly impacts production decisions (Q29)	3.46	6	2.98	6	1.6599	6
The marketing loan program includes fixed rate loan rates for covered commodities. The potential Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP) equals the loan rate minus the Posted County Price (PCP) or adjusted world price (repayment rate). The LDP can be taken at any day after the crop is harvested but before beneficial interest is lost in the commodity (Q30)	3.94	2	3.36	4	2.3169	2

When educational need is viewed across the county committee designations for size/type farm operation, the results are a bit more varied than when looking at the policy goals across the same designations. The results of this view are displayed in Table 14. The direct payment question detailing its decoupled nature seems to prompt a similar response from Rural Residence Farm operators and Corporate Farm operators while the Intermediate and Large Family Farm operators portray more confidence their knowledge and assigned importance as determined by a lower educational needs mean rating. For the issue portraying the connection between direct payments as non-distorting per the WTO, the smaller revenue operators seem to acknowledge that education may be needed. The policy tool of the countercyclical farm income support mechanism shows a trend whereby the smaller the producer, the greater the need for education. The questions detailing the countercyclical incremental partial payments show no clear trend with Rural Residence and Corporate Farms in agreement that greater education is needed. Again, the tool allowing the updating of yields seems to show no clear trend with Rural Residence and Intermediate Farms in agreement that greater education is needed. The connection to all payments to the WTO concern provides a varied opinion most notably showing Rural Residences with a greater desire for education and the Intermediate Family Farms with little desire for education. Both questions covering the Marketing Loan program result in Rural Residence operators portraying a greater need for education much larger than the other three Farm designees.

The one-way ANOVA conducted found that there was a significant difference at the .05 level between the county committee members from the different size/type farm

Table 14

*Means for Educational Need Across Respondent Operation Size/Type*

Policy Components/Tools	Mean Rural Residence Farms N=413	Mean Intermediate Farms N=186	Mean Large Family Farm N=83	Mean Corporate Farm N=8	Mean Non- Response N=71
Direct payments are decoupled from both price and production and allows the producer, with few exceptions, to farm land based on market signals. (Q23)	1.9120 SD – 3.6925	1.2548 SD – 3.1414	1.1717 SD – 4.3697	1.9450 SD – 2.9406	-.3835 SD – 4.4671
Direct payments are considered non-trade distorting by the World Trade Organization. (Q24)	1.6575 SD – 3.6472	1.2206 SD – 3.0411	1.0776 SD – 4.1241	.4300 SD – 1.2162	.3392 SD – 4.47219
Commodity Programs include counter-cyclical farm income support in which base owners receive a payment specific to a commodity when average market price falls below the target price minus the direct payment but is equal or greater than the loan rate. (Q25)	2.2690 SD – 3.95821	1.9666 SD – 3.4772	1.8817 SD – 3.6480	1.5413 SD – 3.7653	.1737 SD – 3.9566
Countercyclical payments are made in incremental partial payments for the 2002-2006 period.(Q26)	1.3157 SD – 3.9158	.6538 SD – 3.5394	.6410 SD – 4.2306	1.4250 SD – 2.8273	-.9634 SD – 4.2953
Commodity Programs Yields were allowed to be updated for Countercyclical Payment purposes. Producers had three options: 1) retain current yield, 2) update by adding 70% of the 1998-01 average yield, or 3) update by using 93.5% of 1998-01 yields excluding a year where planted acreage was zero (Q27)	1.7635 SD – 3.9114	1.3053 SD – 3.5956	1.8222 SD – 3.6930	1.4925 SD – 2.0599	-.1682 SD – 2.9659

Table 14 Continued

Policy Components/Tools	Mean Rural Residence Farms N=413	Mean Intermediate Farms N=186	Mean Large Family Farm N=83	Mean Corporate Farm N=8	Mean Non- Response N=71
Counter-cyclical payments, marketing loans and loan repayments are considered trade distorting by the World Trade Organization and total payments on these programs made by the U.S. are limited. To an aggregate 19,1 billion annually (Q28)	1.8795 SD – 3.8700	1.2056 SD – 3.71304	.7482 SD – 5.0844	1.2938 SD – 1.7855	-.0486 SD – 4.7909
The marketing loan program provides benefits coupled to both price and production and is a trade distorting policy because it directly impacts production decisions (Q29)	1.8712 SD – 3.8703	.8347 SD – 3.4417	.2494 SD – 4.4031	1.2938 SD – 1.7855	-.3887 SD – 4.9327
The marketing loan program includes fixed rate loan rates for covered commodities. The potential Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP) equals the loan rate minus the Posted County Price (PCP) or adjusted world price (repayment rate). The LDP can be taken at any day after the crop is harvested but before beneficial interest is lost in the commodity (Q30)	2.2485 SD – 3.9600	1.7290 SD – 3.1222	1.6952 SD – 3.5582	.5025 SD – 1.4213	.6794 SD – 3.5299

operations for all of the commodity components/tools. The level of significance was noticeably different for the policy question detailing the direct payments as non-trade distorting in relation to WTO. The level of significance was .048 while each of the remaining policy component/tool questions were from .000 - .010. The results of the ANOVA are shown in Table 15.

Table 15

*One-way ANOVA for Policy Components/Tools Educational Need by Size/Type Farm Operation*

Policy Components/Tools		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Direct payments are decoupled from both price and production and allow the producer, with few exceptions, to farm land based on market signals. (Q23)	Between Groups	342.291	4	85.573	6.181	.000
	Within Groups	10466.045	756	13.844		
	Total	10808.336	760			
Direct payments are considered non-trade distorting by the World Trade Organization. (Q24)	Between Groups	127.649	4	31.912	2.413	.048
	Within Groups	9996.253	756	13.223		
	Total	10123.901	760			
Commodity Programs include counter-cyclical farm income support in which base owners receive a payment specific to a commodity when average market price falls below the target price minus the direct payment but is equal or greater than the loan rate. (Q25)	Between Groups	267.823	4	66.956	4.611	.001
	Within Groups	10978.098	756	14.521		
	Total	11245.921	760			
Countercyclical payments are made in incremental partial payments for the 2002-2006 period. (Q26)	Between Groups	336.221	4	84.055	5.550	.000
	Within Groups	11449.931	756	15.145		
	Total	11786.152	760			
Commodity Programs Yields were allowed to be updated for counter-cyclical payment purposes. Producers had three options: 1) retain current yield, 2) update by adding 70% of the 1998-01 average yield, or 3) update by using 93.5% of 1998-01 yields excluding a year where planted acreage was zero (Q27)	Between Groups	241.448	4	60.362	4.363	.002
	Within Groups	10458.752	756	13.834		
	Total	10700.201	760			

Table 15 Continued

Policy Components/Tools		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Counter-cyclical payments, marketing loans and loan repayments are considered trade distorting by the World Trade Organization and total payments on these programs made by the U.S. are limited. To an aggregate 19.1 billion annually. (Q28)	Between Groups	286.317	4	71.579	4.340	.002
	Within Groups	12469.815	756	16.494		
	Total	12756.133	760			
The marketing loan program provides benefits coupled to both price & production & is a trade distorting policy because it directly impacts production decisions (Q29)	Between Groups	464.718	4	116.180	7.521	.000
	Within Groups	11678.272	756	15.447		
	Total	12142.990	760			
The marketing loan program includes fixed rate loan rates for covered commodities. The potential Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP) equals the loan rate minus the Posted County Price (PCP) or adjusted world price (repayment rate). The LDP can be taken at any day after the crop is harvested but before beneficial interest is lost in the commodity (Q30)	Between Groups	180.460	4	45.115	3.348	.010
	Within Groups	10188.741	756	13.477		
	Total	10369.201	760			

### SECTION III-OPERATIONAL ISSUES OF POLICY

Section III included one construct. The Operational Issues construct included seven questions pertaining to potential barriers to policy adoption that may occur related to functional implementation. The general areas of coverage are administrative/budget issues, the use of technology, and changes in proprietary areas.

This section also used the Likert scale with the two part Borich design (Borich, 1980). As with the policy goal and policy component tool constructs, the county committee respondents were asked to rate the importance of the operational issue specified as well as their personal knowledge of it on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest. This two part design allowed the computation of an educational needs score for each of the operational issues identified. The equation used was (Importance-Knowledge Rating) \* (Mean Importance) = Educational Need, The basic rankings of importance, personal knowledge and the resulting educational needs score are displayed in Table 16.

County Committee respondents indicate that the most important operational issue to them is the fact that Landowner/Tenant decisions and issues were handled on an individual bases through the County FSA Office. This issue also ranked number one in knowledge which caused the educational needs score to fall to number two. The educational needs score is based on the gap between self perceived importance and knowledge. This gap is the area for potential education. It was also important to the county committee respondents that landowners, not the tenant farmer, were responsible

Table 16

*Rankings of Importance, Knowledge, & Educational Need for Operations Issues*

Operational Issue	Importance	Rank	Knowledge	Rank	Educational Need Score	Rank
The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 sets payment limits (per person) on counter-cyclical payments of \$65,000, direct payments of \$40,000, and Loan Deficiency Payments of \$75,000. The 3-entity rule remained in effect. The certificate exchange and loan forfeiture are non-restrictive for the \$75,000 LDP limit. (Q31)	3.93	4	3.54	4	1.5183	4
The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 stipulates that land owners are responsible for program signup, base & yield decisions, as well as payment decisions (Q32)	4.06	2	3.81	2	1.0190	7
Administrative costs associated with implementation of current policy as well as changing and/or policy additions have an effect on overall program cost effectiveness. These costs might include: staffing; information technology; training and program management (Q33)	4.04	3	3.60	3	1.7731	3
The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 repealed the marketing quota for peanuts. Producers will receive compensation for quotas held in 2001 in the form of a buyout at \$0.55/year per lb. of quota held per farm (Q34)	3.27	7	2.81	7	1.4911	5



Table 16 Continued

Operational Issue	Importance	Rank	Knowledge	Rank	Educational Need Score	Rank
The change made by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 moving the peanut program from a quota system to a similar program of direct payments, counter-cyclical payments, and marketing loans/LDP's will shift production acreage (Q35)	3.35	6	2.81	6	1.8357	1
The provision of the a computer based decision aid assisted producers in making base and yield update decisions for their farm operation (Q36)	3.66	5	3.31	5	1.2889	6
Landowner/Tenant decisions and issues were handled through County FSA Offices on an individual basis (Q37)	4.36	1	3.94	1	1.8047	2

for program sign up. Even though it was considered important by the county committee respondents, the knowledge ranking was high, causing the lowest educational needs score. Administrative costs like staffing, technology, training and program management ranked high across importance, knowledge and educational need. The change in the peanut program from a quota system to a marketing loan system ranked low for both importance and knowledge, but ranked number one for educational need.

When County Executive Directors are removed, the ratings and rankings appear in Table 17. The importance rating that remained fairly constant for the two data sets on policy goals and commodity components/tools, differed slightly more for the operational issues. Knowledge ratings differed in view of the CED status and a change

Table 17

*Rankings of Importance, Knowledge, & Educational Need for Operations Issues  
With County Executive Directors Removed*

Operational Issue	Importance	Rank	Knowledge	Rank	Educational Need Score	Rank
The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 sets payment limits (per person) on counter-cyclical payments of \$65,000, direct payments of \$40,000, and Loan Deficiency Payments of \$75,000. The 3-entity rule remained in effect. The certificate exchange and loan forfeiture are non-restrictive for the \$75,000 LDP limit. (Q31)	3.86	4	3.35	4	2.0263	4
The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 stipulates that land owners are responsible for program signup, base & yield decisions, as well as payment decisions (Q32)	4.00	2	3.66	2	1.4133	7
Administrative costs associated with implementation of current policy as well as changing and/or policy additions have an effect on overall program cost effective-ness. These costs might include: staffing; information technology; training and program management (Q33)	3.94	3	3.39	3	2.2024	2
The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 repealed the marketing quota for peanuts. Producers will receive compensation for quotas held in 2001 in the form of a buyout at \$0.55/year per lb. of quota held per farm (Q34)	3.18	7	2.62	6	1.8364	6

Table 17 Continued

Operational Issue	Importance	Rank	Knowledge	Rank	Educational Need Score	Rank
The change made by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 moving the peanut program from a quota system to a similar program of direct payments, counter-cyclical payments, and marketing loans/LDP's will shift production acreage (Q35)	3.25	6	2.60	7	2.1948	3
The provision of the a computer based decision aid assisted producers in making base and yield update decisions for their farm operation (Q36)	3.64	5	3.13	5	1.8931	5
Landowner/Tenant Decisions and issues were handled through County FSA Offices on an individual basis (Q37)	4.31	1	3.80	1	2.2051	1

in ranking resulted for both knowledge and then, educational needs for the administrative issue. All scores across importance, knowledge and educational needs increased when County Executive Directors were removed.

Table 18 exhibits some interesting results when looking at the dispersal of the educational need score mean across the county committee respondents within farm operation size/type. The payment limit issue shows that the Rural Residence Farm operators depict a greater need which progressively declines as the farm size/type grows in revenue. The Rural Residence operators also show a greater educational needs score for both the issues involving landowners as proprietors of program signup and decisions, the concept of landowner/tenant issue being handled individually at the local

Table 18

*Means for Educational Need Across Respondent Operation Size/Type*

Operational Issue	Group Mean for Rural Residence Farms N=413	Group Mean for Intermediate Farms N=186	Group Mean for Large Family Farm N=83	Group Mean for Corporate Farm N=8	Group Mean for Non- Response N=71
The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 sets payment limits (per person) on counter-cyclical payments of \$65,000, direct payments of \$40,000, and Loan Deficiency Payments of \$75,000. The 3-entity rule remained in effect. The certificate exchange and loan forfeiture are non-restrictive for the \$75,000 LDP limit. (Q31)	2.2077 SD – 4.124	1.1832 SD – 3.9947	1.0417 SD – 5.1014	.0000 SD – 2.1007	-.8856 SD – 4.2638
The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 stipulates that land owners are responsible for program signup, base & yield decisions, as well as payment decisions (Q32)	1.5434 SD – 4.3608	.5894 SD – 4.1692	.3913 SD – 4.6428	.5075 SD – 1.4354	-.1144 SD – 4.6531
Administrative costs associated with implementation of current policy as well as changing and/or policy additions have an affect on overall program cost effectiveness. These costs might include: staffing; information technology; training and program management (Q33)	2.1814 SD – 3.9236	1.3901 SD – 4.07239	1.8983 SD – 3.7507	1.5150 SD – 2.091	.2845 SD – 3.9421

Table 18 Continued

Operational Issue	Group Mean for Rural Residence Farms N=413	Group Mean for Intermediate Farms N=186	Group Mean for Large Family Farm N=83	Group Mean for Corporate Farm N=8	Group Mean for Non- Response N=71
The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 repealed the marketing quota for peanuts. Producers will receive compensation for quotas held in 2001 in the form of a buyout at \$0.55/year per lb. of quota held per farm (Q34)	1.6310 SD – 3.3533	1.4065 SD – 3.1858	1.9305 SD – 4.0223	2.0437 SD – 5.5100	.3224 SD – 4.5965
The change made by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act if 2002 moving the peanut program from a quota system to a similar program of direct payments, counter-cyclical payments, and marketing loans/LDP's will shift production acreage (Q35)	1.8981 SD – 3.5375	1.9272 SD – 3.4433	2.2199 SD – 4.0955	2.5125 SD – 2.9695	.7077 SD – 4.4195
The provision of the a computer based decision aid assisted producers in making base and yield update decisions for their farm operation (Q36)	1.5508 SD – 4.2779	1.2397 SD – 3.2253	1.7198 SD – 4.7252	1.8300 SD – 1.9564	-.6701 SD – 4.4744
Landowner/Tenant Decisions and Issues were handled through County FSA Offices on an individual basis (Q37)	2.1853 SD – 4.0372	1.6877 SD – 3.4840	1.5234 SD – 3.8176	1.0900 SD – 2.0183	.3070 SD – 3.0674

level as well as the issue involving Administrative costs such as staffing, technology, training and program management. The inverse is true for several of the other issues. The Corporate Farm operator/managers indicate a higher educational needs score for

the issues involving computer based decision aids, the peanut program buyout, and especially the change for the peanut program from the quota system to the marketing loan program. It would seem that the Corporate Farm size/type county committee respondents express a greater educational need for those issues that specifically affect commodity programs and present entirely new technology.

The one-way ANOVA conducted found that there was a significant difference at the .05 level between the county committee members from the different size/type farm operation for all issues but one. The only operational issue not posting statistical significance was the movement of the peanut program quota system to the marketing loan program. The results of the ANOVA are shown in Table 19.

Table 19

*One-Way ANOVA for Operational Issues's Educational Need by Size/Type Farm Operation*

Operational Issue		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 sets payment limits (per person) on counter-cyclical payments of \$65,000, direct payments of \$40,000, and Loan Deficiency Payments of \$75,000. The 3-entity rule remained in effect. The certificate exchange and loan forfeiture are non-restrictive for the \$75,000 LDP limit. (Q31)	Between Groups	664.741	4	166.185	9.378	.000
	Within Groups	13396.572	756	17.720		
	Total	14061.313	760			

Table 19 Continued

Operational Issue		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
The Farm Security & Rural Investment Act of '02 stipulates that land owners are responsible for program signup, base/yield decisions, & payment decisions (Q32)	Between Groups	273.897	4	68.474	3.608	.006
	Within Groups	14348.074	756	18.979		
	Total	14621.971	760			
Administrative costs associated with implementation of current policy as well as changing and/or policy additions have an affect on overall program cost effectiveness. These costs might include: staffing; information technology; training and program management (Q33)	Between Groups	255.299	4	63.825	4.130	.003
	Within Groups	11682.461	756	15.453		
	Total	11937.760	760			
The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of '02 repealed the marketing quota for peanuts. Producers will receive compensation for quotas held in 2001 in the form of a buyout at \$0.55/year per lb. of quota held per farm (Q34)	Between Groups	124.865	4	31.216	2.477	.043
	Within Groups	9528.421	756	12.604		
	Total	9653.286	760			
The change made by the Farm Security & Rural Investment Act if '02 moving the peanut program from a quota system to a program of direct payments, counter-cyclical payments, and marketing loans/LDP's will shift production acreage (Q35)	Between Groups	109.408	4	27.352	2.037	.088
	Within Groups	10153.561	756	13.431		
	Total	10262.969	760			
The provision of the a computer based decision aid assisted producers in making decisions for their farm operation (Q36)	Between Groups	319.026	4	79.757	4.739	.001
	Within Groups	12723.183	756	16.830		
	Total	13042.210	760			
Landowner/Tenant decisions and issues were handled through County FSA Offices on an individual basis (Q37)	Between Groups	232.270	4	58.068	4.049	.003
	Within Groups	10842.958	756	14.343		
	Total	11075.228	760			

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This last chapter contains a summary of the purpose, methodology, and major findings of the research conducted for this record of study. Based on the literature cited and data portrayed in previous chapters, conclusions are drawn and recommendations for education and research are presented.

#### SUMMARY

This record of study examined the perceptions held by a targeted “grassroots” society composed of agricultural producers regarding farm policy components and operational factors as potential barriers to successful policy use. This study also examined the relationship of the government defined and “grassroots” perceived intended outcomes of current components to seek areas of needed education and/or research. The research questions targeted were:

- 1) What are the demographic and farm characteristics of members of Farm Service Agency county committees in Texas?
- 2) What Farm Service Agency county committee member perceptions exist regarding current farm policy goals, components and operational barriers?
- 3) What is the consistency of the agency intention and FSA county committee member perception outcomes that exist implying educational needs for farm policy goals, components/tools, and operational barriers?



The data collection for this record of study was conducted during the months of March, April, and May of 2004. The questionnaire instrument contained 37 questions. The questions included demographic and farm data (Q1 – 10), policy perception data composed of policy goals (Q11 – 22) and commodity components/tools (Q23-30), as well as operational issues for current farm policy (Q31-37). The population consisted of county committee members of the Farm Service Agency, United States Department of Agriculture. The FSA county committee would be considered the local producer population most knowledgeable about farm bill policy.

Pilot testing was conducted with a selected FSA County Committee and analyzed post-data collection using Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the three constructs. The questionnaire instruments were mailed on March 10, 2004 (Appendix A) in FSA regular county mailing to the 206 FSA offices across the state. The FSA county committee members were instructed to return the questionnaires by the designated date of April 30, 2004. A response rate of 85% was reached with 175 FSA offices of 206 completing and returning their questionnaires by the due date. No follow-up was needed.

Overall data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows XP. Specifically, descriptive statistical analysis utilized means, standard deviations, percentages, and crosstabulation. Statistical comparisons were performed using one-way ANOVA tests for educational needs scores derived from the data.

Research question 1 asks, “What are the demographic and farm characteristics of members of Farm Service Agency county committees in Texas?” Literature suggests that the perceptions individuals have may differ as a result of the experiences and characteristics that are unique to them (Combs, Richards, & Richards, 1976). The effective assessment of policy and its delivery requires that the operational participants in the policy process are understood and that their perceptions regarding policy are compared against the intention of that policy. Literature also tells us that research done in the pursuit of the perceptions from individuals may be subject to various sources of distortion and error based on the fact that the individuals sampled will self report their perceptions. We have learned that variations in clarity of the subject’s awareness may be a factor. The concepts self held perceptions by a person vary widely with respect to their clarity at any given moment. Some concepts of self may exist only at low levels of awareness. This potential distortion or error may be in part addressed by the inclusion of the two-part design of the Likert scale used in the questionnaire documenting both importance and knowledge and the summary assessment of responses. We also have learned that lack of adequate symbols for expression in terms of communication can also be a factor in research. The pilot test and expert panel review of the questionnaire instrument for content and face validity were measures to counter this issue. Social expectancy was potentially also a concern as the county committee respondents, in the majority of the cases, would have filled out the questionnaire as a group. It was acknowledged that this potential issue existed. People are always aware of the approval and disapproval of others, and the things we say about ourselves are always more or less

affected by these perceptions. This area is at the crux of distortion that may affect documentation of perception data in the context of self-reporting. Statistical measures were utilized as recommended to address these concerns (Combs, Richards, & Richards, 1976).

The use of the perception data and the worth of the information gathered rested on the establishment of a foundation of knowledge about the participants. This knowledge serves to frame the perception data within the most accurate context. Characteristics of the county committee respondents are collected in the first section of the questionnaire for this purpose.

The crosstabulation found in Table 1 of the Major Findings chapter tells us that the county committee respondents are mostly male (78%) and that 74% of all the respondents fall in the age range from 36 – 65 years of age. The 2002 Census of Agriculture tells us that both state and national agricultural operators are 88% male and 12% female. Literature also tells us that the age range expecting to see the most growth in the future is the baby boomer generation spanning the ages of 40 – 58 years of age. The age ranges of both groups are close enough as to mirror the general population. However, another group, the 18 years of age and younger group is also reported to be increasing in the general population. This group, however, is not well represented in the questionnaire respondents with only .3% listed as 25 or younger. Of course, since the committee members are generally considered leaders and are elected within their communities, and a certain maturity might be expected to achieve this status in the farming/ranching profession. This may provide some explanation for the absence of the

young adult population (Ballenger & Blaylock, 2003). The county committee respondents were 90% Caucasian by race with the next race noted as Hispanics at 5.3%. This would be a point of divergence with the general population as the literature documents rises in racial diversity as a whole. However, 2002 Census of Agriculture statistics document US figures as 97% Caucasian, 2% Hispanic and Texas figures as 96% Caucasian, 6% Hispanic for agricultural operators.

A majority of respondents were county committee persons as one would expect since the FSA committee structure allows multiple places for members by design, while the Executive Director member role and Minority Advisor member role are typically filled by singular individuals. Of the respondents, 20% were Executive Directors who may or may not be active farm operators, 65% were county committee members, and 15% were County Minority Advisors, both of whom would be active farm operators

Overall, the county committee respondent population was well educated with 69% having completed education beyond high school. This is important to document in addressing the concern of recognition and interpretation of language and symbols when conducting perception research as cited in the literature review. Nearly 40% of the respondents had completed and received a college degree.

The county committee respondents farmed in 232 of 254 counties (91%) in the state of Texas. All geographic regions were represented. The counties with no producer data recorded were: DeWitt, Ellis, Hale, Hood, Jackson, Jasper, Kenedy, Llano, Madison, Maverick, Milam, Newton, Real, Refugio, Schleicher, Shackelford, Smith, Somervell, Sutton, Terry, Throckmorton, Upshur, and Wharton. The number of times a

county was entered varied from one time to nine times. The number of entries for any county was accepted as fairly consistent across the geography of the data collected.

The 30 highest counties in Texas (in no order) in terms of yield per acre harvested in the major commodity crops (cotton, corn, wheat, grain sorghum, rice, and peanuts) were: Hale, Lamb, Gaines, Lubbock, Hockley, Dallam, Hartley, Sherman, Moore, Castro, Haskel, Knox, Collin, Hill, Runnels, Nueces, San Patricio, Wharton, Hidalgo, Floyd, Colorado, Matagorda, Jefferson, Jackson, Brazoria, Terry, Yoakum, Collingsworth, Dawson, and Frio (Benson, Buzby, & Skees, 1992). There are three counties in the top thirty list that are not represented in the 232 counties providing data for the study. They are: Hale, Jackson and Wharton.

Farm or Ranch size/type was another characteristic of the county committee respondents collected through the questionnaire. Over 54% of the county committee respondents indicated that they operated a Rural Residence Farm with revenue less than \$250,000. It is noteworthy that only 12% of the county committee respondents operated farms/ranches categorized as a Large Family Farm or a Corporate Farm. The acreage interval indicated with the largest number of responses was the 1500 – 1999 acre interval. In crosstabulation for size/type farm or ranch and acreage designation, it was noted that 11% of the respondents described their farm/ranch type as a Rural residence (with revenue less than \$250,000), but also reported an operation of more than 3000 acres. On the other hand, the Corporate Farm designees indicated that 75% of the respondents operated farms/ranches less than 3000 acres. For the farms/ranches

indicating the largest acreage (over 10,000 acres), 76% of those reporting, described their operation as an Intermediate Family Farm or a Rural Residence Farm.

When looking at responses for percentage of income attributed to farm income, over half (53%) of the county committee respondents indicated that over 50% of their household income was farm/ranch in orientation. Of the Intermediate Farm respondent (having the largest acreage operations mentioned earlier), over 92% indicated that over 50% of their income was attributable to farm/ranch income.

The county committee respondents were asked to indicate their top three commodities produced in terms of gross sales. The commodities produced in the highest frequency by the county committee respondents were: 1) Beef (457); 2) Wheat (242); 3) Forage (201); 4) Cotton (178); 5) Grain Sorghum (157); 6) Corn (118); 7) Sheep/Goats (66); 8) Oats (35); 9) Soybeans (19); and 10) Rice. The commodity list would then be: 1) Wheat; 2) Forage; 3) Cotton; 4) Grain Sorghum; 5) Corn; 6) Oats; 7) Soybeans; and 8) Rice for the county committee respondents. State data collected by the National Agricultural Statistical Service for all producers indicated that Texas production follows this ranking for crops produced, 1) Cotton; 2) Greenhouse/Nursery, 3) Corn, 4) Wheat; 5) Grain Sorghum; and 6) Rice (Anderson, Evans, Freer, Jones, LeBas, Nelson, & Plaut, 2001). While data from the county committee respondents follow a slightly different ranking, all commodities are represented in both listings with the exception of greenhouse/nursery. Commodity crops aside, the county committee respondents indicated that beef cattle was the commodity most frequently produced on farms/ranches. This is also the case for the state of Texas based on data from the Texas

Agricultural Statistical Service (Anderson, Evans, Freer, Jones, LeBas, Nelson, & Plaut, 2001). However, when total livestock interests were compared to commodity interests, commodity production was listed much more frequently than livestock production was among county committee respondents.

Crosstabulation for committee role and farm size/type shows that 20% of the 761 respondents were County Executive Directors. Of those, 44% of the CEDs reported no personal farming operation. The only role of these CEDs in the county committee process is as facilitator and advisor with producer alignment as a function of association and community identity. There are 53% of the CEDs that operate a Rural Residence farm with revenue under \$250,000. Only 3% of CEDs operate farms larger than this. Collectively, 56% of CEDs operate a farm.

The County Committee Person and County Minority Advisors are both roles filled by local producers. The County Minority Advisors comprise just over 15% of the committees while the county committee persons comprise close to 65%. The County Minority Advisors are predominately producers on Rural Residence Farms at 82%. The County Committee Persons are Rural Residence Farm operators at 50%, with 33% operating Intermediate Family Farms and 17% operating Large Family Farms and Corporate Farms.

Section II included two constructs – farm policy goals and commodity policy. The farm policy goal construct included twelve questions pertaining to specific farm policy goals. This section began the use of the Likert scale with a two part Borich design (Borich, 1980) allowing the calculation of an educational needs score. Data and

information in relation to research question 2, “What Farm Service Agency county committee member perceptions exist regarding current farm policy goals, components and operational barriers?” and question 3, “What is the consistency of the agency intention and FSA county committee member perception outcomes that exist implying educational needs for farm policy goals, component/tools, and operational barriers?”, will be outlined through examination of the data collected for Section II and III of the study.

Importance rankings indicate that supply and stabilization of farm income as well maintenance of the family farm are for-most on the minds of the county committee respondents. As important as supply and stabilization of farm income was determined to be, county committee respondents do not seem to assign importance to reduction of government spending (overall or across commodities/functions) or getting access to credit. County committee respondents ranks themselves high for knowledge in the goal areas of the maintaining the family farm, stabilization of farm income/supply, maintaining the vitality of rural communities as well as conservation of natural resources. That being said, the highest ranking for educational need came in the area of expanding agricultural exports. Another foreign trade goal topic of countering the protection provided to agriculture in foreign countries would seem to compliment the number 1 ranking of agricultural trade expansion as a high educational need. Educational needs scores varied quite a bit across County Committee Respondent Operation size/type. Rural Residence Farm owners determined that educational need is



generally greater than the larger revenue operation owners based on their self perceptions of importance and need.

The N for the size/type designations ranged from 8 to 413 in the analysis for policy goals. The statistical analysis conducted found that there was a significant difference at the .05 level between the county committee members from different size/type operations for all but one of the goals presented. The one goal where no statistical significance was found was the related to the expansion of agricultural exports.

The Commodity Policy Construct included eight questions pertaining to components/tools of commodity programs. The components and tools portrayed in the questions consisted of the basic mechanisms of current farm policy such as countercyclical payments, direct payments and marketing loans for commodity crops. A portrayal of factors influencing these components and tools were also included within the questions such as production and the World Trade Organization status.

The same Likert scale was used for the responses with the two part Borich design (Borich, 1980). Again, the county committee respondents were asked to rate the importance of the policy component/tool specified as to their personal knowledge of it on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest. The two-part design allowed the computation of an educational needs score for each of the components/tools identified.

Importance, Knowledge, and Educational score rankings for the commodity policy construct all seem to reflect that the county committee members are most

concerned with those policy components/tools that they have the most control over. Countercyclical farm income support calculation, the Marketing Loan Program as it related to the loan deficiency payments, the ability to update yields, and direct payments all ranked highly in both importance and knowledge as well as educational ranking. The connection to the influencing factor of the World Trade Organization on components/tools is assigned lower importance and knowledge ranking by the county committee respondents. The fact that countercyclical payments are made in incremental partial payments over the current farm bill period seems to be lower in importance, but something they feel they are knowledgeable about enough which probably caused it to be ranked last in educational importance for this examination.

When educational need is viewed across the county committee designations for size/type farm operation, the results are a bit more varied than when looking at the policy goals across the same designations. The N for the size/type designations ranged from 8 to 413 in the analysis for commodity policy as it did for policy goals. The statistical analysis conducted found that there was a significant difference at the .05 level between the county committee members from the different from different size/type farm operations for all of the commodity components/tools. The level of significance was noticeably different for the policy question detailing the direct payments as non-trade distorting in relation to WTO. The level of significance was .048 while each of the remaining policy component/tool questions were from .000 - .010.

Section III included one construct. The Operational Issues construct included seven questions pertaining to potential barriers to policy adoption that may occur related

to functional implementation. The general areas of coverage were:

administrative/budget issues, the use of technology, and changes in proprietary areas.

This section also used the Likert scale with the two part Borich design (Borich, 1980). As with the policy goal and policy component tool constructs, the county committee respondents were asked to rate the importance of the operational issue specified as well as their personal knowledge of it on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest. This two part design allowed for the computation of an educational needs score for each of the operational issues identified.

County Committee respondents indicate that the most importance operational issue to them is the fact that Landowner/Tenant decisions and issues were handled on an individual basis through the County FSA Office. This issue also ranked number one in knowledge which caused the educational needs score to fall to number two. The educational needs score is based on the gap between self perceived importance and knowledge. This gap is the area for potential educational. For the county committee respondents, it was also noted as important that landowners, not the tenant farmer, were responsible for program sign up. Even with this importance noted by the county committee respondents, the knowledge ranking was very high which caused the lowest educational needs score. Administrative costs like staffing, technology, training and program management ranked high across importance, knowledge and educational need. The change in the peanut program from a quota system to a marketing loan system surprisingly ranked low for both importance and knowledge, but ranked number one for educational need.

The N for the size/type designations ranged from 8 to 413 in the analysis for all the constructs, this one being no different. The analysis conducted found that there was a significant difference at the .05 level between the county committee members from the different size/type farm operation for all issues but one. The only operational issue not posting statistical significance was the movement of the peanut program quota system to the marketing loan program.

### CONCLUSIONS

This study sought to gain access to a grassroots population of agricultural producers for the purpose of assessing the perceptions they might have related to farm policy goals, components/tools and operational barriers in an effort to understand more clearly, based on a foundation of knowledge about the local society as well an literature base, to discover what educational needs might exist that, if addressed, would allow the most successful utility of agricultural policy established directly affecting them, their livelihood and indirectly, the world. While the world continues to evolve through a maturity of consumers, increased diversity, and more people to feed (Ballenger & Blaylock, 2003), the agricultural producer population would seem to have remained much the same. This study indicates that the producer population sampled through county FSA committees hold to that notion. The respondents in the study were predominately male, between the ages 36 – 65 years of age and 90% Caucasian. As a group, the producer respondents, while more diverse than both national and state demographics for producer-operators, will be providing food and fiber for a population much more diverse than itself.

The county committee member producers represent the span of the state geographically. They also represent a large majority of the major commodities produced in Texas and reflect historical production accounts of the state (Anderson, Evans, Freer, Jones, LeBas, Nelson, & Plaut, 2001). The respondents surveyed consist of size/type farm/ranch operations from Rural Residence Farms to Corporate Farms. Data collected indicate that a large proportion of the respondents categorize their operations as either Rural Residence Farms or Intermediate Family Farms. However, when indicating the number of acres involved in the farming operation, the size/type operation (based on revenue generated) does not correlate to a progression involving number of acres. In fact, Intermediate Family Farm operators represent the largest acreage holding across all groups, not the Large Family farms or Corporate farms. The diverse use and characteristics of farm land across Texas are likely to play a part in this finding.

More than 59% of county committee producer respondents attribute over half to all of their income as originating from the farm/ranch operation. There were very few county committee members who reflected an operation of monoculture. A diverse range of commodities emerged from the data collected from the respondents. The largest proportion of the county committee members were beef cattle producers by a fairly large margin. Even with this fact noted, commodity production over-shadowed livestock production based on the data collected. Commodities reflected in the data collected were also very similar to production figures for the state of Texas (Anderson, Evans, Freer, Jones, LeBas, Nelson, & Plaut, 2001) with only slight variations in ranking and the omission of greenhouse/nursery noted.

Collection of perception data detailing importance and knowledge levels for specific topics clearly indicated that county committee respondents did have different perceptions, and thus, different educational needs for the three constructs addressed in the study. The policy goal construct with the resulting highest educational need for all respondents was the Farm Policy Goal of expansion of agricultural exports. The farm policy goal of countering the protection provided to agriculture in foreign countries was rated very high for educational needs. The presence of both globally oriented goals in the highest rankings implies an understanding for the need to attune local operations to an increasing global structure (Effland, 2000). Across rankings for importance and knowledge resulting in educational needs, the goal of supply and stabilization of farm income was consistently highly ranked by the respondents.

Differences were detected when the perception data were dispersed to show the delineations between size/type operations. In general, rural residence farm operators tallied higher educational needs scores than the large revenue farm size/types. Where significant differences were noted, the Rural Residence farm operator typically was included as one of the groups having a different opinion. The only policy goal where there was no statistical difference noted between these groups was in the expansion of exports goal.

The Commodity Policy construct yielded interesting results. For all county committee respondents, importance, knowledge and educational needs all tended to be higher for those components or tools that provided the producer control or proprietary decision making. These component/tools were: countercyclical farm income support

calculation, the marketing loan program as it related to loan deficiency payments, the ability to update historic yields, and direct payments. Components/tools where decisions were made as a result of world events seemed to result in lower educational needs scores. There was quite a bit of variation between county committee producer respondents when viewed across size/type groups. The countercyclical farm income support mechanism reflected a greater educational need for operators with smaller revenues. Rural Residence Farm and Corporate Farm operators indicated higher educational needs scores for direct payments as decoupled from production concepts while the larger revenue operators indicated that the subject of direct payment's status as non-distorting to trade as a greater educational need. The basic subject of marketing loan programs was rated as a high educational need for Rural Resident Farm operators. There was significant difference between the groups on the component of the direct payment relation to WTO as non-trade distorting.

The operational issues construct detailing the individual handling of landowner/tenant issues locally through the FSA office was ranked as high for importance, knowledge and even educational needs for all respondents. Also ranking highly across the importance, knowledge and educational needs ranking for county committee members respondents was the issue of administrative costs. The administrative costs issue included: staffing, technology, training and program management. The top educational need indicated for the operational issues construct was the change over of the peanut program from a quota system to a marketing loan system for all respondents.

The educational need for the payment limit issue was shown to decline as the revenue generated across the farm size/types increased. Overall, Rural Residence Farm operators had higher educational needs rankings for issues involving landowners as proprietors of program signup and decisions, the landowner/tenant issues handled locally at the FSA Office, and the administrative issue including staffing, technology, training and program management. On the other hand, Corporate Farm operator/managers posted higher educational needs for issues involving computer decision aids, the peanut program buyout and the change of the peanut program quota system to a marketing loan system. There were significant differences between the size/type groups for all the operational issues with the exception of the landowner proprietary for program signup and decisions as well as the change of the peanut program from the quota system to the marketing loan system.

### IMPLICATIONS

Data collected from FSA county committee members as a grassroots representation of agricultural producers provides us important insight into producer characteristics, producer perceptions, and educational needs related to successful farm policy. FSA county committees are somewhat more diverse than statistics indicate for agricultural producers of Texas and the U.S by a small percentage. Literature cites increasing diversity within the consumer public implying potential changes in food choices, consumables, and eating habits (Ballenger & Blaylock, 2003). The producer respondents surveyed in this study portray a population that is not indicative of the consumer population. These recorded differences between these populations will



introduce interesting challenges for the Texan producer that will involve education and recognition of trends and changes in demographics as the agricultural commodities produced seek to be attractive to the public that will consume them. Ann Veneman, USDA Secretary, suggests just this as she states that consumers are increasingly insistent on defining what is produced, how the production takes place, and with what effects (Veneman, 2001).

The producer respondents surveyed present farm/ranch operations that are diversified while they, themselves, are highly educated individuals. They are highly dependant on farm/ranch income for their family livelihood. A large majority of the producers consider beef cattle to be one of the main commodities they produce. However, in total, commodity production is the main agricultural endeavor. While the farm bill has become increasingly diverse with programs attuned to many aspects of agricultural production (Effland, 2000), the mainstay for the agricultural producer's operation is still heavily invested in commodity production directly affected by farm policy.

A primary observation regarding the perception data collected is that, while some general and important conclusions can be drawn from the data, the different size/types of producers have different opinions, knowledge levels, and therefore, educational needs. Educational implications would center around curriculum developed and planning for targeted groups of agricultural producers to have a significant impact on successful policy adoption. The following list is a collection of the goals, policy components/tools, and operational issues that emerged as potential areas meriting

educational initiatives through stated perceptions of importance, assessments of personal knowledge, and a corresponding educational needs score.

- \* The Farm Policy Goal of expansion of agricultural exports for all types.
- \* The Farm Policy Goal to counter the protection provided to agriculture in other countries for Rural Residence farms, Intermediate Farms and Large Family Farms.
- \* The Farm Policy Goal to support and stabilize farm income for all types.
- \* The Farm Policy Goal fostering an abundant supply of food and fiber for all types
- \* The Farm Policy Goal maintaining the vitality of rural communities for Rural Residence farms, Intermediate Farms and Large Family Farms
- \* The Policy component/tool that states, commodity programs include countercyclical farm income support in which base owners receive a payment specific to a commodity when average market price falls below the target price minus the direct payment but is equal or greater than the loan rate for all types.
- \*The Policy component/tool that states, the marketing loan program includes fixed rate loan rates for covered commodities. The potential Loan Deficiency Payment equals the loan rate minus the Posted County Price or adjusted world price (repayment rate). The LDP can be taken at any day after the crop is harvested but before beneficial interest is lost in the commodity for Rural Residence farms, Intermediate Farms and Large Family Farms.

\* The Policy component/tool that states, commodity program yields were allowed to be updated for countercyclical payment purposes. Producers had three options: 1) retain current yield, 2) update by adding 70% of the 1998-01 average yield, or 3) update by using 93.5% of 1998-01 yields, excluding a year where planted acreage was zero for all types.

\* The Policy component/tool state states, direct payments are decoupled from both price and production and allows the producer, with a few exceptions, to farm land based on market signals for all types.

\* The Operational Issue involving administrative costs associated with the implementation of current policy as well as changing and/or policy additions having an affect on overall program cost effectiveness. These costs might include: staffing; information technology; training; and program management.

\* The Operational Issue involving the change made by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 moving the peanut program from a quota system to a similar program of direct payments, counter-cyclical payments, and marketing loans/LDP's will shift production acreage for all types.

\* The Operational Issue involving the provision in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 stipulating that land owners are responsible for program signup, base & yield decisions, as well as payment decisions for Rural Residence Farms.

\* The Operational Issue detailing that landowner/tenant decisions and issues are handled through the County FSA Office on an individual bases for all types.

\* The Operational Issue consisting of the provision of a computer based decision aid assisting producers in making base and yield update decisions for their farm operation for all types.

\* The Operational Issue involving the setting of payment limits (per person) on countercyclical payments of \$65,000, direct payments of \$40,000, and LDPs of \$75,000. The 3-entity rule remains in effect as educational need noted for Rural Residence Farms.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Diversity and demographic trends among consumers resulting in changing food choices and changing product needs will have implications for the agricultural producers providing food and fiber. Agricultural producers would benefit tremendously from educational programs and informational resources that will allow them to anticipate needed changes in production that, in turn, would allow them to anticipate the demands of a public that very well may be unfamiliar to them from a historical production standpoint. Agricultural producers are educated professionals with operations that are diversified. A high percentage of producers are also highly dependant on farm income to sustain their household livelihood. While maintaining a diversified commodity base, they remain heavily invested in commodity programs and basic policy components and tools. Educational efforts invested will be met by a willing and able agricultural population that will require knowledge and education to adapt to the evolution of the agricultural industry and a more complex farm policy program.

Educational needs per farm policy goals, policy components and operational issues were defined through the study. However, a very clear picture was drawn noting the difference in opinions, knowledge, and educational need among the producer respondents. Educational programs designed for these identified needs should be targeted towards the producer type. Specific educational needs compiled through perception data collected for importance and present knowledge by the targeted grassroots producers are listed below.

- \* Educational programs and resources targeting **agricultural exporting** for all producers.
- \* Educational programs and resources providing American producers information concerning the **farms programs offered to producers in other countries** targeted for family owned operations.
- \* Educational programs and resources targeting farm policy goals related to the **support and stability of farm income** for all agricultural producers.
- \* Educational programs and resources targeting farm policy goals related to the maintenance of an **abundant supply of food and fiber** for all producers.
- \* Educational programs and resources targeting the vitality of rural communities for family owned operations.
- \* Educational programs and resources targeting the **countercyclical farm income support policy tool** for all agricultural producers.
- \* Educational programs and resources targeting the **marketing loan program policy tool** for family owned operations.

- \* Educational programs and resources targeting the regarding the **updating of commodity program yields** for all agricultural producers.
- \* Educational programs and resources targeting the **direct payment farm income support policy tool** for all agricultural producers.
- \* Educational programs and resources targeting the delivery of information concerning USDA FSA **administrative changes** related to policy change and impacting staffing, information technology, training and program management at the local level for all agricultural producers.
- \* Educational programs and resources targeting **peanut program changes** for all agricultural producers.
- \* Educational programs and resources targeting the **task of landowners to conduct signup, base & yield decisions, and payments decisions** for Rural Residence farm operators.
- \* Educational programs and resources targeting the use of **computer-based decision-aids** assisting producers in making base and yield decisions for all agricultural producers.
- \* Educational programs and resources targeting **payment limits** for Rural Residence farm operators.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH

The data collected for this record of study should be used to conduct targeted research beyond the scope presented in this paper. Targeted analysis related to the perceptions held by the grassroots agricultural population collected as a solid

geographical representation may yield useful information within demographic and farm/producer characteristics. Specifically, analysis should be conducted per commodity types to conclude educational needs for discipline specific producer groups. Additional analysis regarding perceptions and resulting educational needs for the largest farm type/size represented, the Rural Residence operator, should be examined for development of educational programs.

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**APPENDIX A**

# PERCEPTIONS OF PRODUCERS AS PARTICIPANTS OF DOMESTIC FARM POLICY PROGRAMS

*What do you think?*



A survey to help understand perceptions held by producers on domestic farm policy.



Dear Producer:

You have been selected to receive this survey because of your producer status and important role within your area as an identified leader among other producers. You have been selected to participate in a study that could improve policy education delivery methods in regard to education and even the policy formation process.

The evolution of the farm policy process and its successful implementation is dependent on responsiveness and applicability to the agricultural system locally, federally and globally. In the 18th century in U.S. agriculture, farm policy began with a focus on management of vast, and many times unsettled, land resources. In line with inevitable change in a growing nation, policy shifted focus in the 1930s to farm commodity programs relying in part on supply management to target price and income support of producers. Today, our focus has even broadened further to include trade issues, food safety and food assistance, as well as conservation and environmental concerns along-side producer needs for greater market orientation. Policy congruence with producer needs has never been more important as agricultural policy has become more complex.

Please complete the survey booklet within the next month and mail it back to me with the enclosed pre-stamped county envelope. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes of your time. This survey will be handled anonymously by a disinterested 3rd party. The surveys will be handled by the researcher for non-origin data retrieval only.

This research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board—Human Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, the Institutional Review Board may be contacted through Dr. Michael Buckley, Director of Support Services, Office of Vice President for Research at (979)458-4067.

Thank you for your support of this study. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Rebecca Parker at (972)952-9240, email [r-parker@tamu.edu](mailto:r-parker@tamu.edu), or Dr. Gary Briers at (979)862-3003, email [g-briers@tamu.edu](mailto:g-briers@tamu.edu).

Sincerely,

Rebecca Parker  
Regional Program Director—ANR, East Region  
Texas Cooperative Extension

## Section 1 Demographic & Farm Data

1. What is your age group?  
 25 years or younger     26-35 years old     36-45 years old  
 46-55 years old     56-65 years old     66-75 years old  
 76-85 years old     86 years and older
2. What is your Gender?  
 Male     Female
3. What is your predominate ethnicity?  
 Caucasian     Black     Hispanic  
 Indian     Asian     other
4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?  
 High School diploma or less  
 Attended college, but did not degree  
 Undergraduate degree (Bachelors)  
 Master's degree  
 Doctoral degree
5. In what county (s) does the majority of your farming activity take place?  
 Headquarter county: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other counties: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Please designate role in your county.  
 County Executive Director     County Committee person  
 County Minority Advisor



**Section 1**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC & FARM DATA—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3**

7. What size/type Farm Operation, as indicated by gross revenue, do you operate? (Please choose only one)

- Rural Residence Farm (revenue less than \$250,000 and operator's major occupation is something other than farming)
- Intermediate Family Farm (Farm with sales \$250,000–\$499,999)
- Large Family Farm (Farm with sales of \$500,000 or more)
- Corporate Farm (Farm organized as corporation, cooperative or operated by a hired manager)

8. For all Farms, please indicate the percentage of your household income that can be attributed to farm income.

- Farm Income at 0–24%
- Farm Income at 25–49%
- Farm Income at 50–74%
- Farm Income at 75–100%

9. How many acres are included in your farm operation calculated on total land?

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0–99 acres      | <input type="checkbox"/> 100–499 acres         | <input type="checkbox"/> 500–999 acres   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1000–1499 acres | <input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1999 acres       | <input type="checkbox"/> 2000–2499 acres |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2500–2999 acres | <input type="checkbox"/> 3000–3499 acres       | <input type="checkbox"/> 3500–4999 acres |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5000–5499 acres | <input type="checkbox"/> 5500–5999 acres       | <input type="checkbox"/> 6000–6499 acres |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6500–6999 acres | <input type="checkbox"/> 7000–7499 acres       | <input type="checkbox"/> 7500–7999 acres |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8000–8499 acres | <input type="checkbox"/> 8500–8999 acres       | <input type="checkbox"/> 9000–9499 acres |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9500–9999 acres | <input type="checkbox"/> 10,000 acres and more |  |

10. What are the top three commodities (in terms of gross sales) produced on your operation? (Please rank from top to bottom with 1, 2 and 3)

- |  |                                      |   |  |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Barley              | <input type="checkbox"/> Beef Cattle | <input type="checkbox"/> Corn             | <input type="checkbox"/> Cotton        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dairy Cattle        | <input type="checkbox"/> Forage      | <input type="checkbox"/> Fruits/Vegetable | <input type="checkbox"/> Grain Sorghum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Milk/Dairy Products | <input type="checkbox"/> Nursery     | <input type="checkbox"/> Oats             | <input type="checkbox"/> Peanuts       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pork                | <input type="checkbox"/> Rice        | <input type="checkbox"/> Sheep/Goats      | <input type="checkbox"/> Soybeans      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sugar Cane          | <input type="checkbox"/> Tobacco     | <input type="checkbox"/> Wheat            | <input type="checkbox"/> Sugar Beets   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other               | -----                                |   |  |

## Section 2 Policy Perception Data

### Overall Policy Goals

Please mark **your response** to the statements below on the 5-point Likkert scale provided. Each statement will ask for your opinion about the statement based on the importance you assign to it as well as your personal knowledge about the policy goal.

11. The Goal of Domestic Farm Policy is to foster an abundant supply of food and fiber.

The importance I place on this goal is:

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Not important                      Somewhat important                      Very important

My personal knowledge about this goal is:

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Very low                      Moderate                      Very high

12. The Goal of Domestic Farm Policy is to support and stabilize farm income.

The importance I place on this goal is:

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Not important                      Somewhat important                      Very important

My personal knowledge about this goal is:

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Very low                      Moderate                      Very high

13. The Goal of Domestic Farm Policy is to help producers get access to credit.

The importance I place on this goal is:

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Not important                      Somewhat important                      Very important

My personal knowledge about this goal is:

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Very low                      Moderate                      Very high

14. The Goal of Domestic Farm Policy is to expand agricultural exports.

The importance I place on this goal is:

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Not important                      Somewhat important                      Very important

My personal knowledge about this goal is:

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Very low                      Moderate                      Very high

**Section 2**  
**Policy Perception Data—continued from Page 5**

15. The Goal of Domestic Farm Policy is to conserve natural resources.  
*The importance I place on this goal is:*  
 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Not important                      Somewhat important                      Very important  
*My personal knowledge about this goal is:*  
 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Very low                      Moderate                      Very high
16. The Goal of Domestic Farm Policy is to maintain the family farm.  
*The importance I assign to this statement is:*  
 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Not important                      Somewhat important                      Very important  
*My personal knowledge about this goal is:*  
 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Very low                      Moderate                      Very high
17. The Goal of Domestic Farm Policy is maintain the vitality of rural communities.  
*The importance I assign to this statement is:*  
 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Not important                      Somewhat important                      Very important  
*My personal knowledge about this statement is:*  
 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Very low                      Moderate                      Very high
18. The Goal of Domestic Farm Policy is to counter the protection provided to agriculture in other countries.  
*The importance I place on this goal is:*  
 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Not important                      Somewhat important                      Very important  
*My personal knowledge about this goal is:*  
 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Very low                      Moderate                      Very high

**Section 2**  
**Policy Perception Data—continued from Page 6**

19. The Goal of Domestic Farm Policy is to reduce government spending.  
*The importance I place on this goal is:*  
 1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Not important                      Somewhat important                      Very important  
*My personal knowledge about this goal is:*  
 1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Very low                      Moderate                      Very high
20. The Goal of Domestic Farm Policy is to prevent large operators from receiving excessive support.  
*The importance I place on this goal is:*  
 1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Not important                      Somewhat important                      Very important  
*My personal knowledge about this goal is:*  
 1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Very low                      Moderate                      Very high
21. The Goal of Domestic Farm Policy is to prevent wealthy non-producers from receiving payments.  
*The importance I place on this goal is:*  
 1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Not important                      Somewhat important                      Very important  
*My personal knowledge about this goal is:*  
 1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Very low                      Moderate                      Very high
22. The Goal of Domestic Farm Policy is to redistribute agricultural program spending over regions, commodities and/or functions such as policy tools (conservation versus direct program spending).  
*The importance I place on this goal is:*  
 1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Not important                      Somewhat important                      Very important  
*My personal knowledge about this goal is:*  
 1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Very low                      Moderate                      Very high

**Section 2**  
**POLICY PERCEPTION DATA—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7**

Counter-cyclical, Direct Payments, and Marketing Loans for Eligible Crops

*Please answer the following questions from a perspective of how they are currently implemented rather than an “ideal” scenario.*

23. Direct payments are decoupled from both price and production and allows the producer, with a few exceptions, to farm land based on market signals.

*The importance I assign to this policy tool is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Not important                      Somewhat important                      Very Important

*My personal knowledge about this policy tool is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Very low                      Moderate                      Very high

24. Direct payments are considered non-trade distorting by the World Trade Organization.

*The importance I assign to this policy tool is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Not important                      Somewhat important                      Very Important

*My personal knowledge about this policy tool is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Very low                      Moderate                      Very high

25. Commodity Programs include counter-cyclical farm income support in which base owners receive a payment specific to a commodity when average market price falls below the target price minus the direct payment but is equal or greater than the loan rate.

*The importance I assign to this policy tool is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Not important                      Somewhat important                      Very Important

*My personal knowledge about this policy tool is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Very low                      Moderate                      Very high

26. Counter-cyclical payments are made in incremental partial payments for the 2002-2006 period.

*The importance I assign to this policy tool is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Not important                      Somewhat important                      Very Important

*My personal knowledge about this policy tool is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Very low                      Moderate                      Very high

**Section 2**  
**POLICY PERCEPTION DATA—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8**

27. Commodity Program yields were allowed to be updated for counter-cyclical payment purposes. Producers had three options: 1) retain current yield, 2) update by adding 70% of the 1998-01 average yield, or 3) update by using 93.5% of 1998-01 yields, excluding a year where planted acreage was zero.

*The importance I assign to this policy tool is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 Not important                      Somewhat important                      Very Important

*My personal knowledge about this policy tool is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 Very low                      Moderate                      Very high

28. Counter-cyclical payments, marketing loans, and loan repayments are considered trade distorting by the World Trade Organization, and total payments on these programs made by the U.S. are limited to an aggregate 19.1 billion annually

*The importance I assign to this policy tool is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 Not important                      Somewhat important                      Very Important

*My personal knowledge about this policy tool is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 Very low                      Moderate                      Very high

29. The marketing loan program provides benefits coupled to both price and production and is a trade distorting policy because it directly impacts production decisions.

*The importance I assign to this policy tool is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 Not important                      Somewhat important                      Very Important

*My personal knowledge about this policy tool is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 Very low                      Moderate                      Very high

30. The marketing loan program includes fixed rate loan rates for covered commodities. The potential Loan Deficiency Payment equals the loan rate minus the Posted County Price (PCP) or adjusted world price (repayment rate). The LDP can be taken at any day after the crop is harvested but before beneficial interest is lost in the commodity.

*The importance I assign to this statement is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 Not important                      Somewhat important                      Very Important

*My personal knowledge about this statement is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 Very low                      Moderate                      Very high

**Section 3**  
**OPERATIONAL ISSUES FOR POLICY DATA**

31. The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 sets payment limits (per person) on counter-cyclical payments of \$65,000, direct payments of \$40,000, and Loan Deficiency Payments of \$75,000. The 3-entity rule remained in effect. The certificate exchange and loan forfeiture are non-restrictive for the \$75,000 LDP limit.

*The importance I assign to this statement is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Not important                      Somewhat important                      Very Important

*My personal knowledge about this statement is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Very low                      Moderate                      Very high

32. The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 stipulates that land owners are responsible for program signup, base & yield decisions, as well as payment decisions.

*The importance I assign to this statement is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Not important                      Somewhat important                      Very Important

*My personal knowledge about this statement is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Very low                      Moderate                      Very high

33. Administrative costs associated with implementation of current policy as well as changing and/or policy additions have an affect on overall program cost effectiveness. These costs might include: staffing; information technology; training and program management.

*The importance I assign to this statement is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Not important                      Somewhat important                      Very Important

*My personal knowledge about this statement is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Very low                      Moderate                      Very high

**Section 3**  
**OPERATIONAL ISSUES FOR POLICY DATA—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10**

34. The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 repealed the marketing quota for peanuts. Producers will receive compensation for quotas held in 2001 in the form of a buyout at \$0.55/year per lb. of quota held per farm.

*The importance I assign to this statement is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Not important                      Somewhat important                      Very Important

*My personal knowledge about this statement is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Very low                      Moderate                      Very high

35. The change made by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 moving the peanut program from a quota system to a similar program of direct payments, counter-cyclical payments, and marketing loans/LDPs will shift production acreage.

*The importance I assign to this statement is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Not important                      Somewhat important                      Very Important

*My personal knowledge about this statement is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Very low                      Moderate                      Very high

36. The provision of a computer based decision aid assisted producers in making base and yield update decisions for their farm operation.

*The importance I assign to this statement is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Not important                      Somewhat important                      Very Important

*My personal knowledge about this statement is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Very low                      Moderate                      Very high

37. Landowner/Tenant decisions and issues were handled through County FSA Offices on an individual bases.

*The importance I assign to this statement is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Not important                      Somewhat important                      Very Important

*My personal knowledge about this statement is:*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Very low                      Moderate                      Very high



Rebecca Parker  
Regional Program Director-Texas Cooperative Extension  
Dallas Research & Extension Center  
17360 Coit Road  
Dallas, Tx. 75252

Rebecca Parker  
Regional Program Director-Texas Cooperative Extension  
Dallas Research & Extension Center  
17360 Coit Road  
Dallas, Tx. 75252

**VITA****Rebecca Hall Parker**

17360 Coit Road  
Dallas, Texas 75252  
Telephone: (972)952-9240  
Fax: (972)952-9227  
e-mail: r-parker@tamu.edu

**TITLE:** Regional Program Director for Agriculture and Natural Resources  
Texas Cooperative Extension - East Region

**LOCATION:** Dallas, Texas/ Overton, Texas/ Stephenville, Texas

**EDUCATION:** **B.S.** (Agricultural Education), Texas A&M University, 1986.  
**M.S.** (Educational Leadership/Curriculum & Instruction), University of  
West Florida, 1991.

**PROFESSIONAL and ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE:**

- \* Regional Program Director-ANR, East Region, Texas Cooperative Extension, September 2, 2003 - present.
- \* County Extension Agent - ANR, Denton County, Texas Cooperative Extension, August 1997 - September 1, 2003.
- \* County Extension Agent - ANR, Orange County, Texas Cooperative Extension, August 1993 - August 1997.
- \* 4-H Agriculture Extension Agent, Walton County, IFAS-University of Florida, June 1988 - July 1993.
- \* Vocational Agriculture Teacher, Crestview Vocational Technical School, Crestview, Florida, August 1986 - May 1988.