

Another retirement but our policy column continues

A year ago last May we wrote about Daryll's retirement from the University of Tennessee after 24 years as Blasingame Chair of Excellence in Agricultural Policy and Director of the Agricultural Policy Analysis Center. With this column, we announce Harwood's retirement after 16½ years, first as a Research Associate and for the last 6 years as Research Assistant Professor.

Harwood is retiring because his position was 100 percent grant funded and the grant that has paid for his position for the last three years was not renewed. He is in the process of identifying funds he can use for his work in agricultural policy and development activities in Senegal.

After 30 years as a parish pastor in the United Church of Christ serving rural churches, Harwood came to the University of Tennessee to work at the Agricultural Policy Analysis Center. He brought with him a deep understanding of the ways in which federal agricultural policy and broader economic forces affected the lives of the farmers he had worked with. Much of his work was in Kansas and Minnesota and his observations were remarkably similar to those of Daryll who grew up in Iowa. Our shared experiences and observations have contributed to the close working relationship we have developed over the years.

As with Daryll's retirement, Harwood's retirement will have no effect on this column, which we began writing just over 16 years ago. Each of us has often remarked to the other that he could not write the column without the help of the other. The writing of this column truly is a collaborative effort where the sum of 1 plus 1 is more than 2.

In addition, we like writing the column and providing our readers with insight and analysis that they might not find elsewhere. But, we are realists and at 71 and 73, we recognize that we will not live forever, so we have agreed that we will stop writing the column when either one of us no longer is able to put in the quality of work that we expect of ourselves.

With our departure from employment in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, we will be reestablishing the Agricultural Policy Analysis Center as an independent analytical organization with no affiliation with the University of Tennessee or the department. In doing so, we hope to include people from other academic disciplines and organizations in the work of the Center. We have long felt that good policy analysis is best done in an interdisciplinary setting. This transition gives us the chance to make that change.

The Center will also expand on the international development work that Harwood has been engaged in in recent years. It is our hope that we will be able to include rural, agricultural, and development experts from around the world in our work. We know this is a rather large vision, but we believe farmers everywhere are buffeted by the same weather and economic forces and focusing policy on only one country or another is a mistake. The policies made by one country with respect to its farmers have repercussions for farmers around the world, thus the need for an interdisciplinary, international analytical center.

Through all these changes, our commitment to you, our farm and consumer readers, remains the same. We strive to provide you with the information you need to make decisions. Sometimes we wish our analyses were wrong. As we look at falling corn prices that are nearing \$1.50 per bushel below the full cost of production, we wish those who said corn prices would never go below \$4.00 were correct.

When we go out to give a talk at the annual meeting of a farm organization, people often come up after the presentation and say, “I did not like hearing what you just told us, but we need to hear that.” We hope this column has provided information to help our readers better understand why the agricultural economy fails to adjust rapidly to over supply or slackened demand, which has historically caused, and will continue to cause, extended periods of price and income problems.

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