

REINVENTING AND REORIENTING THE STRATEGY OF WCC-72

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What is agribusiness?

- Cash cow A large volume of undergraduate student numbers that justifies the continuing existence of ag econ to university administrators.
- Necessary evil Ag econ faculty would rather be economists (not management specialists), but they *must* do agribusiness because it is a cash cow.
- True sub-discipline Own methods, own outlets, own associations, own legitimacy. Are we there yet? Are we first tier when it comes to tenure and promotion?
- Valued expertise Industry wants our expertise. Senior faculty can consult with great ease. Does this add or subtract from our academic legitimacy?

Who “speaks” for agribusiness?

- IAMA academic representatives
- AAEA Industry Committee/new Agribusiness Section
- First-tier agribusiness programs/centers
- Others? NCR-194, Food Distribution Society, ARF
- What is WCC-72’s role and status in this mix of voices? Does agribusiness have too many voices already? Should we fold our tent in favor of making other voices stronger?

Why does WCC-72 not have more significant impact?

- There are too many other demands on agribusiness faculty time to give much to WCC-72.
- Weak sister to the other stronger voices.
- Designed historically to be the place where we nurture our “young” and our “identity.”
 - This has had significant impact
 - Is it enough for the future?

What would it take to be more significant?

- More joint research
 - Establish and maintain research agenda
 - Create research working groups
 - Advocate and raise research funding
- More promotion of sub-discipline
 - Study and publish research, teach, and outreach impacts
 - Track hiring and tenure/promotion processes
 - Advocate appropriate and distinctive standards for professional excellence
- “Senior fellows” address/paper
- Can we compete with other voices? Should we? Is our present role the right role?