Rosson’s Roundup

This has been a wild week, with the AgriLife Conference, getting ready for the upcoming semester and preparing for the Departmental review. The AgriLife Conference was a major success. We had great sessions in Research, Teaching and Extension. One of the highlights of the conference was the Tuesday night presentation by Dr. Sonny Ramaswamy, director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. He outlined several important emerging trends, provided an overview of NIFA initiatives focusing on food and health, he then indicated where land grant institutions such as Texas A&M can pursue funding opportunities with NIFA. I think we need to pay attention to some of his priorities and see where we can work together. We also had a number of off-campus faculty and staff attend the conference. Thanks to those who made the trip to campus. It’s always good to have you here.

Another highlight of the week was the departmental visit by Dr. Doug Steele, Director of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. He discussed Extension priorities, some funding opportunities, the upcoming legislative session and the importance of meeting the needs of a changing public. We certainly appreciated the time he spend with us and hope to have him back in the department in the future.

Eric Foy was here Wednesday and Thursday to interview for the Extension position of Attorney-at-Law. We will post his seminar and a couple of his papers on the web site for review. Thanks to all who participated in the process.

Finally, it’s time to welcome our students back to campus for the spring semester. I hope you all have a productive semester and look forward to seeing you.

David Bessler

My focus is on teaching and research in the area of agricultural price dynamics. I teach undergraduate courses AGEC 317 and AGEC 447 and graduate courses AGEC 607 and AGEC 676. At the undergraduate level I focus on basic mathematics and intuitions behind static demand and supply and their extensions when measured over time. At the graduate level my teaching looks at methods for acquiring knowledge about how the agricultural economy works. My research focus is on the dynamic modeling of economic variables. This involves building representations among economic variables in current and lagged time. A key criterion of “goodness” in my work is out of sample forecast performance (ex post study of ex ante forecasts) of alternative representations. My primary metaphor here is that dynamic modeling is much like a “never ending open track meet”, where the “best” model is able to show better out-of-sample forecast performance relative to any alternative. Sometimes we find the “best” is actually a combination of several models. In a portion of my work the forecasts are probability forecasts and the “track meet” involves measures of calibration and sorting of alternative probability representations. Questions open for further study involve the evaluation of conditional probability forecasts of the type typified by agricultural policies. Here a whole series of “track meets” is scheduled, one for each set of policy conditionals, but we “run the race” with only those forecasts for which the conditional actually obtains. Races with other forecasts, those for which the conditionals did not obtain, are called off.
Assistant Professor, West Texas A&M University, Agricultural Business and Economics, This is a nine-month, tenure track (60% teaching 30% research and 10% service) position that reports to the Head of the Department of Agricultural Sciences. Ph.D. in agricultural economics, economics, agribusiness, or closely related field, Demonstrated commitment to excellence in teaching, research, and service. Closing Date: April 1, 2013. Position is available September 1, 2013. Salary and benefits are competitive and commensurate with qualifications and experience. Potential for summer salary from teaching and/or extramural research funding is available. Applicants should provide a letter of interest, official transcripts, resume, a statement of current and future research interests and arrange for at least three letters of reference to be sent to: Dr. Lal Almas, Search Committee Chair, Department of Agricultural Sciences, WTAMU Box 60998, Canyon, TX 79016-0001, Phone (806) 651-2550, Fax (806) 651-2938, E-mail: lalmas@wtamu.edu.

Senior Agricultural Economist, Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI), based in Belfast, UK is a leading provider of scientific and economic research services to government, non-governmental and commercial organisations. The Agricultural and Food Economics Division is led by Professor John Davis and is nationally and internationally recognized. There is currently a vacancy for a full-time Senior Agricultural Economist. The post-holder will initially be appointed on a fixed-term contract of 36 months. For more detailed information and to apply, please go to www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk

Assistant/Associate Professor, University of Maryland at College Park, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics in collaboration with the Maryland Sea Grant College Program invites applications for a faculty position focused on fisheries, coastal and marine economics. The appointee will be expected to teach one course per year in the department. The position is a nine-month, tenure-track or tenured position at the assistant or associate professor rank with rank and salary commensurate with the candidate’s record. All candidates must apply online to both: 1) https://jobs.umd.edu/applicants/Central?quickFind=58269 and 2) https://www.econjobmarket.org/AdDetails.php?posid=1943. On https://jobs.umd.edu/applicants/Central?quickFind=58269, the applicant need only upload their curriculum vita, which should include contact information for three references. On www.econjobmarket.org applicants should upload the following materials as separate documents: (i) curriculum vita, (ii) a statement of interest to develop an outstanding extension/outreach program supported by applied research and targeted at key audiences for marine resources, (iii) up to 3 publications and/or research paper(s) including a dissertation abstract for new Ph.D. applicants. Applicants must also arrange for three letters of recommendation to be submitted to www.econjobmarket.org. All materials must be submitted in pdf format. Application packages without all required documents may not be considered. Applications must be received by January 18 to be guaranteed full consideration but will be accepted until the position is filled.

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Faculty, staff, and graduate students are encouraged to submit articles and photos on current events Deadline for all submissions is noon, Thursday. Please send your information to valnoyes@tamu.edu