INTEGRATING SOCIAL SCIENTISTS IN AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS RESEARCH

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The Dreaded Phrase

- "…*this research is interesting but we suggest that you add an economic component to the work.*"

Searching for Economics in SARE Projects

	Southern Region		All Regions		
Term	# of projects	%	# of projects	%	% S of All Regions
Southern Region	249		1235		20
Economics	188	76	839	68	22
Costs	171	69	814	66	21
Returns	123	49	503	41	24
Profit	72	29	386	31	19
Budgets	73	29	288	23	25

Searching for Economics in SARE Projects

Term	Southern Region # of projects	Southern Region %	All Regions # of projects	All Regions %	% S of All Regions
Markets	141	57	670	54	21
Supply	104	42	432	35	24
Demand	92	37	374	30	25

Searching for Economics in SARE Projects

Term	Southern Region # of Projects	Southern Region %	All Regions # of Projects	All Regions %	% S of All Regions
Economic Returns	97	39	116	9	84
Economic Analysis	68	27	389	31	17
Economic Impact	32	13	132	11	24
Economic Models	9	4	76	6	12

Searching for Economics in SARE Projects

Term	Southern Region # of Projects	Southern Region %	All Regions # of Projects	All Regions %	% S of All Regions
Consumer	81	33	313	25	26
Business	61	24	346	28	18
Policy	49	20	181	15	27
Investment	49	20	176	14	28
Trade	36	15	171	14	22
Regulation	36	14	157	13	23

Searching for Economics in SARE Projects

Term	Southern Region # of Projects	Southern Region %	All Regions # of Projects	All Regions %	% S of All Regions
Quality of Life	24	10	110	9	22
Finance	18	7	79	6	23
Credit	18	7	103	8	17
Competitiveness	16	6	16	6	100
Taxes	16	6	73	6	21
Economic Development	16	6	49	4	29

Searching for Economics in SARE Projects

Term	Southern Region # of Projects	Southern Region %	All Regions # of Projects	All Regions %	% S of All Regions
Agribusiness	14	6	49	4	29
Market Development	12	5	43	3	28
Community Development	10	4	33	3	30
Risk Management	8	3	40	3	20
Debt	5	2	23	2	22

Typical Economic Objective

- Develop enterprise budgets of the cover crop-based production systems vs. those based on use of methyl bromide.

More Interesting Objective

- To compare the monetary costs and returns to producers in comparisons to conventional (non-organic) production systems, ***non-market environmental and social benefits associated with reduced consumption of pesticides***, and regional economic impacts of expanded local vegetable production.

More Interesting Objective

- To identify structural, ***demographic and economic determinants of farm labor input substitution decisions*** (i.e. substituting family with hired labor, and vice versa) made by conventional farms and organic farms at various stages of business maturity (such as established versus transitioning organic farms)

Typical Economic Analysis

- Nevertheless, much of the economic work on the project has been based on generating annual crop budgets for each of the systems, laying the foundation for systems budgets that will eventually encompass multiple years and crops.

Typical Economic Analysis

- Detailed records of input use and tillage operations were used to develop cost and return budgets for components in both production systems. Cost of the production portion of these budgets was composed of variable costs and fixed costs.

Typical Economic Analysis

- Preliminary economic analysis suggests that producers implementing the system reduce their drug costs by 70% or more while potentially improving herd or flock genetics for resistance. Exact dollar amounts are difficult to assess due to widely variable drug costs.

Alternative Scenario

- Include a social science perspective from the beginning of the planning for an inter-disciplinary research team

(with maybe a few budgets)