



CSREES Economic and Community Systems Unit Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) Announcement

One Year Opportunity with CSREES in Economics

The Economic and Community Systems (ECS) Unit within the Cooperative Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) has available an opportunity for an outstanding faculty member specializing in the development of economic systems/models to address evolving challenges in natural resource economics, and food marketing and distribution, because of the impacts of globalization, energy crisis and climate change. CSREES will support one-half of the faculty member's salary/benefits and living expenses in the Washington, D.C. area. Justification and deliverables for the position are listed below.

Justification:

Contemporary Challenges are Globally Related and Require Complex Models

The complex nature of contemporary issues facing agriculture and natural resources are illustrated by the global interactions of human and natural caused phenomena like global climate change; the emergence of internationally derived policies affecting trade, resource use, and labor mobility; short, intermediate and possible long term disruptions to food security; and the transition from fossil-based to biobased energy sources.

CSREES is responding to this complexity with increased focus on integrated, transdisciplinary scientific endeavors to provide sustainable and viable solutions to problems. This new emphasis requires a systems approach to fully comprehend the nature of problems, guide multiple facets of science in a more collaborative and interdependent manner, and demonstrate valid, reliable and tangible outputs and impacts.

Economics Methods Must be Expanded to Accurately Model the New Complexity

Economics focuses upon articulating complex, interrelated problems and identifying related values in order to inform decision making. Economic methods and approaches need to be expanded and improved upon to better understand the composition and distribution of the costs and benefits associated with agricultural and forestry production, resource use, and resource management. New approaches that fully and accurately encompass a consideration of externalities need to be developed to better understand choice and enable decision-making.

Purposes of the IPA Position

An IPA position in CSREES economics can help build the synergies and strengthen the coordination across CSREES units and programs, and enhance linkages with the profession in emerging strategic areas.

- Agriculture and forestry face growing global competition for the services of soil, water, and other natural resources driven by rising demand for food, fiber, fuel, and non-agricultural uses.
- In agro-ecosystems, human behavior often offsets or accentuates bio-physical changes and may introduce nonlinearities or discontinuities into natural systems that are difficult to quantify, let alone mitigate or enable market exchange. The human link to global climate change is an

example. On the other hand, unexpected external economic, technological, or environmental shocks can also push over thresholds identified or observed. Comprehending the complexity of agro-ecosystems necessitates a multidisciplinary approach that integrates economics or behavioral sciences with bio-physical systems.

- A combination of conditions - changing public policy, global economic growth, changing weather and growing conditions world wide – have seriously disrupted the production and distribution of food; and has the potential to seriously exacerbate the impacts the over the next decade or more – malnutrition, starvation, adverse environmental conditions, and health problems.

Deliverables

- Set up a series of informative seminars or panel discussions geared to CSREES National Program Leaders (NPLs, in other sciences) to demonstrate the ability and contributions of systems approaches integrating bio-physical sciences with economics. CSREES hot topic areas such as global climate change, bioenergy, food security, specialty crops, and organics will be the focus of these seminars or panel discussions.
- Develop CSREES economically related liaisons with other agencies, including ERS, NRCS, AMS, FSA, RMA and others as need and opportunities arise.
- Review the current content area of multistate committees and identify if a new one needs to be developed to facilitate efforts of the new generation of economists to expand economic applications into systematic, multidisciplinary efforts.
- Help identify new content areas for CSREES NRI programs to address.
- Provide input to CSREES NPL's (e.g., specialty crop, organic program, invasive species, managed ecosystem, etc.) in including more prescriptive reference to economics/social science in Request For Application's.

Time Frame: Preferably in the year 2009, or as negotiated

Candidates should provide one of the contacts below with a short explanation identifying the specific contributions he or she expects to make, along with a current resume.

For information contact:

Franklin E. Boteler, Deputy Administrator, CSREES (202) 720-5305

fboteler@csrees.usda.gov

or,

JH Bahn, National Program Leader, Agricultural Markets & Trade, CSREES (202) 720-8143

hbahn@csrees.usda.gov

or,

Fen Hunt, National Program Leader, Resource Economics, CSREES (202) 720-4114

fhunt@csrees.usda.gov