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A. J. Rayner

*Professor of Agricultural Economics
University of Nottingham*

and

David Colman

*Professor of Agricultural Economics
University of Manchester*

Palgrave Macmillan UK

ISBN 978-0-333-55695-5 ISBN 978-1-349-22698-6 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-1-349-22698-6

Selection, editorial matter and Chapter 1 © A. J. Rayner and
David Colman 1993

Individual chapters © David Colman, Csaba Csáki, Tim Josling, W. Lesser
and D. Lee, P. Midmore and D. A. Peel, A. J. Rayner and David Colman,
A. J. Rayner, K. A. Ingersent and R. C. Hine, Terry Sicular, K. J. Thomson,
L. Alan Winters 1993

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Scholarly and Reference Division,
St. Martin's Press, Inc., 175 Fifth Avenue,
New York, N.Y. 10010

First published in the United States of America in 1993

ISBN 978-0-312-09091-3

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Current issues in agricultural economics / edited by A. J. Rayner and
David Colman.

p. cm. — (Current issues in economics)
Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-312-09091-3

1. Agriculture and state—United States. 2. Agriculture—Economic
aspects—United States. 3. Produce trade—Government policy—United
States. 4. Agriculture and state. 5. Agriculture—Economic
aspects. 6. Produce trade—Government policy. 7. International
economic relations. I. Rayner, A. J. II. Colman, David.

III. Series.

HD1761.C87 1993

338.1'0973—dc20

92-30623

CIP

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Series Editor's Preface

The *Current Issues* series has slightly unusual origins. *Current Issues in International Trade*, which Macmillan published in 1987 and which turned out to be the pilot for the series, was in fact 'conceived' in the Horton Hospital, Banbury, and 'delivered' (in the sense of completed) in the Hilton International in Nicosia! The reader may be struck by the thought that a more worthwhile and enjoyable production process would start and finish the other way around. I agree! Be that as it may, that is how the series started.

As I said in the Preface to *Current Issues in International Trade* the reason for its creation was the difficulty of finding suitable references on 'frontier' subjects for undergraduate students. Many of the issues which excite professional economists and which dominate the journal literature take quite a time to percolate down into texts; hence the need for a volume of *Current Issues*. The reception which *Current Issues in International Trade* received persuaded me that it may be worth doing something similar for the other subject areas we teach. Macmillan agreed with my judgement, hence the series. Thus each volume in this series is intended to take readers to the 'frontier' of the particular subject area. Each volume contains nine or ten essays, one of which provides a general overview whilst the remainder are devoted to current issues.

As series editor the main challenge I faced was finding suitable editors for each of the volumes – the best people are generally the busiest! I believe, however, that I have been fortunate in having such an impressive and experienced team of editors with the necessary skills and reputation to persuade first-class authors to participate. I would like to thank all of them for their cooperation and assistance in the development of the series. Like me, all of them will, I am sure, hope that this series provides a useful service to undergraduate and postgraduate students as well as faculty.

Current Issues in Agricultural Economics is the ninth in the series. Agricultural economics is one of the oldest branches of economic analysis. It is an area of considerable controversy – in industrialised,

developing and erstwhile centrally planned economies. In this volume, Tony Rayner and David Colman have selected papers which have a topical and current policy focus, including the political economy of agricultural policy, agricultural policy reform in the US and the EC, agricultural trade and the GATT, transformation in Eastern Europe and in China, and environmental economics and policy. Certain complementary topics are also covered – macroeconomics and agriculture, agricultural research and biotechnology, and the rural economy and less favoured areas. These are interesting and exciting issues both to specialist students of agricultural economics as well as students in other sub-areas of the discipline. The editors have persuaded a group of distinguished authors from three different countries to contribute in order to give a balanced and international perspective to the subject matter. I am grateful that they have cooperated to produce such a useful addition to the series.

University of Nottingham

DAVID GREENAWAY

Notes on the Contributors

David Colman is Professor of Agricultural Economics, University of Manchester.

Csaba Csáki is Professor of Agricultural Economics, Budapest University of Economic Sciences, and President of the International Association of Agricultural Economists.

R. C. Hine is Lecturer in Economics, University of Nottingham.

K. A. Ingersent is Senior Research Fellow in the Centre for Research in Economic Development and International Trade (CREDIT), University of Nottingham.

Tim Josling is Professor of Agricultural Economics, Food Research Institute, Stanford University.

D. Lee is Professor of Agricultural Economics, Cornell University.

W. Lesser is Professor of Agricultural Economics, Cornell University.

P. Midmore is Lecturer in Agricultural Economics, University College of Wales, Aberystwyth.

D. A. Peel is Professor of Economics, University College of Wales, Aberystwyth

A. J. Rayner is Professor of Agricultural Economics and Assistant Director of CREDIT, University of Nottingham.

Terry Sicular is Associate Professor of Economics, Harvard University.

K. J. Thomson is Professor of Rural Economics, University of Aberdeen.

L. Alan Winters is Professor of Economics, University of Birmingham.