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AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS**

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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.

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DAVID GREENAWAY

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