

## **Global Perspectives of Agricultural and Metropolitan Leaders**

**Barbara G. Ludwig, Assistant Professor**  
The Ohio State University

Extension systems across the country are being challenged to integrate international perspectives into programs and to assist staff and clientele in developing an awareness of global concepts. Skinner (1991), in an address to the American Home Economics Association, noted that in a world which is increasingly interdependent, Extension does itself and its clients a disservice if it does not prepare them for an increasingly internationalized society and economy. Patterns of Change (1991), a report of the Cooperative Extension Service Strategic Planning Council, discussed the impact of the "shrinking global village." The United States Department of Agriculture in April of 1989 published Global Perspectives for Extension. The document established goals for integrating international perspectives into all Extension programs and reaffirmed the importance of global competency for Extension staff and clientele. In October of 1989, another USDA publication, Going Global, further outlined the importance of clientele developing an understanding of global markets.

Little is known about the attitudes of agricultural or community leaders in Ohio which help to shape their global perspectives. Surveying leaders from both Extension's traditional agricultural constituency and its growing metropolitan clientele was identified as one way to better understand citizen attitudes towards global concepts. Once information was gathered, curriculum development and staff inservice education could be based on identified needs rather than assumptions.

### **Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of the study was to identify the attitudes of Ohio agricultural and metropolitan leaders toward three international concepts. Specific objectives of the study were to:

Ascertain the attitudes of Ohio leaders toward third world development and poverty.

Ascertain the attitudes of Ohio leaders toward international trade.

Ascertain the attitudes of Ohio leaders toward other cultures.

Describe differences in attitudes that exist among the groups sampled.

### **Procedures**

#### **Population**

The target population consisted of three strata of Ohio citizens: 1) county agriculture leaders, 2) state level agriculture leaders and 3) metropolitan leaders. A sample of 385

(Krejcie & Morgan, 1970) was identified using a proportionate stratified random sampling technique to allow a five percent margin of error in estimating the mean attitude score for each domain. Names were secured from College of Agriculture faculty at The Ohio State University. The sample was identified as follows:

County-Agriculture Leaders: The population to be sampled was stratified by the five Extension districts in Ohio, and six counties per district were randomly selected. Each country agriculture extension agent was asked to provide 12 names and addresses of agricultural leaders. The sample was drawn from the identified, accessible population.

Metropolitan Leaders: Extension country chairpersons from Ohio's 11 metropolitan counties (Butler, Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Lorain, Lucas, Mahoning, Montgomery, Stark/Summit and Trumbull) identified community leaders and provided addresses. For the purposes of this study, the community leaders were identified as those individuals who were invited to participate in Speak-Out or Town Meetings utilized by OCES in its 1991 Needs Assessment. Any agricultural leader duplications were eliminated. Both users and nonusers of the Extension Service were represented. The sample population was randomly selected from the identified, accessible population.

Ohio Agriculture Leaders: The College of Agriculture's Vice President's Council consists of approximately 48 members. Each was asked to submit names and addresses of state level agriculture leaders. Duplications were eliminated and the sample randomly selected from the identified, accessible population.

An accessible population of 1,427 names constituted the frame. The accessible frame included: 361 country agriculture leaders (25%); 687 metropolitan leaders (48%); and 388 (27%) Ohio agriculture leaders. The sample of 385 consisted of 96 (25%) country agricultural leaders; 185 (48%) metropolitan leaders and 104 (27%) Ohio agriculture leaders. Sampling, frame and selection error were controlled in this manner.

### Instrumentation

A questionnaire, titled "Global Issues for Ohio's Citizens", was developed. Content validity was established by a panel of experts from the College of Agriculture at The Ohio State University. A five-point, Likert-type scale was used to measure attitudes on three dimensions: 1) third world development and poverty, 2) international trade and 3) sensitivity to other cultures. Respondents were asked to identify whether they: 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) agree, 4) strongly agree or 5) don't know how they feel about a series of statements on the topic. Only the numbers 1 through 4 were used in calculating the scale values. Respondent personological information collected included the following: age, gender, level of schooling completed, country of birth, ethnicity, language proficiency (other than English) and time spent outside of the United States. To help control measurement error, the questionnaire was tested and field tested using leaders who had not been selected as a part of the sample. Cronbach's alpha ranged from .58 to .68 on the three dimension and for the instrument was .87. This met criteria (Nunnally, 1967) established for reliability (internal consistency).

### Data Collection and Analysis

Three hundred sixteen (82%) of the questionnaires were returned; 306 were usable. Responses were coded for computer analysis using SPSS. A .05 level of significance was established a priori. Of the total respondents, 91 (30%) were county agricultural leaders, 133 (44%) were metropolitan leaders and 80 (26%) were Ohio agricultural leaders. Returns closely approximated the proportions in the population.

## **Results**

### Background Demographics

Seventy-one percent of the respondents were men and 27% women. Most (96%) were born in the United States; 78 percent of the respondents had visited another country and 61 percent of the respondents had made their visit within the past 10 years. College graduates made up 69 percent of the group, 19 percent had a high school diploma or less. Eleven percent considered themselves to be a minority. Main sources of current events information were television (40%) and newspapers (42%); 72 percent indicated they read a newspaper daily.

Occupations varied with the largest single group being agribusiness (25%). Seventeen percent of the respondents identified themselves as farmers, 17 percent as educators, 18 percent as agency professionals and 10 percent as business persons.

Respondents showed the most positive attitude toward cultural sensitivity, agreeing with the concepts stated. Slightly less positive attitudes were shown toward third world development and international trade. A four-point scale was used to calculate scale values with the scaling reversed on negatively worded items. No respondents indicated they did not know how they felt about the statements. Table 1 provides the overall mean score, regardless of group, on each of the dimensions studied. Negative items on the questionnaire were reverse coded so that the domain could be summated.]

Table 1. Attitudes Toward Global Issues

Dimensions	Mean*	SD
Third World Development/Poverty	2.88	.39
International Trade	2.77	.44
Sensitivity to Other Cultures	3.07	.37

Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Strongly Agree

\*Negative items were reverse coded so that the domain could be summated.

Leaders indicated strongest agreement with statements on the questionnaire which: 1) acknowledged respondent's ability to learn from other cultures and countries, 2) valued citizen exchanges between countries, 3) indicated Extension had a role to play in educating farmers and agribusiness owners about competing in global markets, 4) global issues and 5) third world development, 6) recognized the need for agricultural growth in the world's poorest countries to provide the poor with purchasing power and 7) saw Extension staff needing additional training, particularly related to global markets.

Strongest disagreement was with statements that 1) American farmers did not need education on global issues, 2) U.S. responsibility extended only to its own farmers and 3) foreigners in the U.S. were taking jobs from U.S. citizens (Table 2.)

Table 2. Attitudes of Ohio Citizens Toward Global Issues (n=306)

Attitudinal Statements	Mean*	SD
<u>Statements on Third World Development/Poverty</u>		
Citizen exchanges between countries improve the ability of participants to understand and care about how other people live	3.33	.51
American farmers do not need education from Extension on global issues	3.25	.68
We can learn from the culture and technology of other countries	3.25	.47
Global interdependence is a myth**	3.13	.68
The large number of foreigners in the U.S. are a primary reason for the high jobless rate among American citizens**	3.03	.77
Our customs, beliefs and values should be used as models by other countries**	2.94	.69
Citizens of the United States are ignorant about world affairs	2.83	.77
Getting to know people of another culture is a good idea, but little ever comes of it**	2.78	.73
<u>Statements on International Trade</u>		
Small and medium sized American businesses can become effective participants in global markets	3.12	.64
U.S. responsibility extends only to its own farmers**	2.97	.76
We must stop giving away America's technology to other countries**	2.79	.78
In the future, the U.S. government should not assist countries in producing agriculture commodities if those same countries are producing commodities which compete with the U.S. on world agriculture markets**	2.63	.71
If the U.S. helps other countries grow more agricultural products, those countries will import fewer agricultural products from the U.S.**	2.62	.66
One of the main U.S. agricultural problems is that we have too many cheap, subsidized foreign agricultural products flooding the U.S. market**	2.51	.78
<u>Statements on Sensitivity to Other Cultures</u>		
In the poorest countries of the world, agricultural growth will be necessary to provide the poor with more purchasing power	3.20	.65
One of the major obstacles to economic development in poor countries is that there are too many people who do not work hard enough**	3.10	.75
Third world countries will be important customers for U.S. agricultural products in the 1990's	3.08	.70
Increased agricultural production in third world nations has coincided with an increase in their demand for agricultural imports	2.82	.56
U.S. agricultural assistance to third world countries creates new competition and undercuts American farmers in the international market**	2.74	.73
Trying to help starving people in the world is counterproductive because so much of the food we give never reaches the people in need**	2.67	.81
The solution to the world hunger problem is to severely limit production growth in third world countries**	2.54	.83

\*Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Agree; 4=Strongly Agree

\*\*Reverse coded so that the domain could be summated

ANOVA was used to determine differences among the three target groups on each of the three dimensions. Statistically significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) were found between some groups on each dimension. A Scheffe post hoc test was used to identify significant differences between groups. In all instances where there were significant differences between groups, the attitude of county agricultural leaders was less positive than metropolitan leaders or Ohio agricultural leaders.

**Attitude Toward Third World Development and Poverty.** The mean score of all groups was 2.88 (SD=.39) which is just below the agree score of 3. As reported in Table 3, county agricultural leaders varied significantly ( $p < .05$ ) from metropolitan leaders and Ohio agricultural leaders relative to their attitudes toward third world development and poverty. The attitude of county agricultural leaders was less positive than metropolitan leaders or Ohio agricultural leaders. Metropolitan leaders showed the most positive attitude of all groups with a mean score of 2.95 (SD=.36) which approximates the agree score of 3.

Table 3. Means, standard deviations and f-value for Attitudes of Ohio Citizens Toward Third World Development and Poverty

Group	N	Mean	SD	F-value
County Agriculture Leader	91	2.73 <sup>ab</sup>	.38	10.07*
Metropolitan Leader	133	2.95 <sup>b</sup>	.36	
Ohio Agriculture Leader	80	2.92 <sup>a</sup>	.39	
Total Population	304	2.88	.39	

\* $p < .05$

ab - Means with common superscript differ significantly

**Attitude Toward International Trade.** The mean score for all groups was 2.77 (SD=.44) which would be between "disagree" and "agree," but closer to "agree". County agricultural leaders exhibited a significant ( $p < .05$ ) difference from metropolitan leaders and Ohio agriculture leaders. In both instances, county agricultural leaders showed a more negative attitude.

As reported in Table 4, metropolitan leaders' attitudes were the most positive of the three with a mean score of 2.86 (SD=.38), but did not vary greatly from Ohio agriculture leaders' scores (mean=2.84, SD=.48). Both scores approximate the agree score of 3.

Table 4. Means, Standard Deviations and F-value for Attitudes of Ohio Citizens Toward International Trade

Group	N	Mean	SD	F-value
County Agriculture Leaders	91	2.59 <sup>ab</sup>	.45	10.07*
Metropolitan Leader	133	2.86 <sup>b</sup>	.38	
Ohio Agriculture Leader	80	2.84 <sup>a</sup>	.48	
Total Population	304	2.77	.44	

\* $p < .05$

ab - Means with common superscript differ significantly

**Attitude Toward Other Cultures.** The mean score for all groups on this dimension was 3.07 (SD=.37) which would be between agree and strongly agree, but closer to agree. As reported in Table 5, there was no significant difference between metropolitan leaders and Ohio agricultural leaders on this dimension. A significant ( $p<.05$ ) difference was noted between county agricultural leaders and metropolitan leaders. County agricultural leaders were less positive in their attitudes.

Table 5. Means, Standard Deviations and F-value for Attitudes of Ohio Citizens Toward Other Cultures.

Group	N	Mean	SD	F-value
County Agriculture Leader	91	2.97 <sup>a</sup>	.35	6.40*
Metropolitan Leader	133	3.14 <sup>a</sup>	.37	
Ohio Agriculture Leader	80	3.06	.35	
Total Population	304	3.07	.37	

\* $p<.05$ .

<sup>a</sup> - Means with common superscript differ significantly

### Conclusions

Overall, county agriculture leaders, metropolitan leaders and Ohio agriculture leaders were in agreement with concepts related to: 1) third world development/poverty, 2) international trade, and 3) sensitivity to other cultures, but not strongly so.

Metropolitan leaders exhibited the most positive attitudes toward all three international dimensions.

County agricultural leaders were the most negative of the three groups targeted for study in attitudes toward all three international dimensions. County agriculture leaders were significantly ( $p<.05$ ) more negative than metropolitan leaders in attitudes toward: 1) third world development and poverty, 2) international trade, and 3) sensitivity to other cultures.

The groups surveyed were well educated and internationally traveled with 99 percent completing high school and 91 percent attending college or going on to earn an advanced degree. Twenty-five percent had obtained post graduate degrees. Seventy-seven percent had traveled outside the United States and 71 percent read a daily newspaper.

County agricultural leaders, Ohio agricultural leaders and metropolitan leaders expressed the attitude that America's farmers, agribusinesses and rural leaders need education about competing in global markets. Respondents indicated we can learn from the culture and technologies of other countries and felt citizen exchanges between countries improved the ability of participants to understand and care about how other people live. Attitudes expressed indicate Extension has a role to play in helping clientele understand global issues, global marketing and the role of agriculture development in third world countries.

### Educational Significance

For most people in the world, direct experience with other countries and cultures is infrequent or nonexistent. Even in the U.S., with its geographically mobile society, a tendency exists to stay within our own communities and circle of acquaintances. Contemporary people learn about their world primarily through information systems. Information travels rapidly by way of television, radio and other communication devices. The media, coupled with experience, socialization, and nonformal and formal educational systems all contribute to an individual's global perspective -- a blend of many things that shape how an individual views and interacts with his or her world.

Extension prides itself on developing curriculum and educational programs in response to the needs and interest of people. Surveying leaders from both traditional agricultural constituency and Extension's growing metropolitan clientele has helped increase understanding of existing attitudes toward global issues. Now that this information has been gathered, curriculum development and staff inservice education programs can be based on identified needs rather than assumptions.

Extension should begin to educate staff and clientele regarding global issues and the many interrelationships which exist. The study indicated global marketing and international trade should be targeted for emphasis and reinforced ES-USDA recommendations in Going Global (1989). Traditional county agricultural constituency may require curriculum designed to broaden their understanding of third world development. Any curriculum developed needs to incorporate opportunities for citizens of different cultures to meet and exchange ideas. This may mean travel or better utilization of visiting students, scholars and foreign nationals living within local communities.

### References

- Hubbard, D.D. (Coordinator), et al. (1990). Competitiveness in American agriculture international marketing.
- Harris, P.R. & Moran, R.T. (1987). Managing cultural differences. Houston: Gulf.
- Kerlinger, F.N. (1983). Foundations of behavioral research. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Krejcie, R.V. and Morgan, D.W. (1970). Educational and psychological measurement, 30, pp. 607-610.
- Ludwig, Barbara G. (1991, March). Identifying competence and interest of Extension professionals in internationalizing the Ohio Cooperative Extension Service. Paper presented at the Association of International Agriculture and Extension Educators, Chevy Chase, Maryland.
- Miller, Larry E. & Smith, K. (1983). Handling non-response issues. Journal of Extension, 21, 45.
- Nunnally, Jum. (1967). Psychometric theory. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.
- Skinner, G. (1991, June). Extension's role in linking visions and global opportunities. Unpublished manuscript. (Speech presented to American Home Economics Association, Extension Section).
- Strategic Planning Council. (1991). Patterns of change. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- United States Department of Agriculture. (1989). Going global. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- United States Department of Agriculture Extension Service. (1989). Global perspectives for Extension. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.