

Rural Community and Farm Crisis Task Force
Report to ESCOP
July 31, 2000

The joint ECOP and ESCOP Rural Community and Farm Crisis Task Force has just begun its deliberations. This Task Force is charged with recommending specific action items to help the land-grant system address high priority research and education issues related to rural communities and the farm crisis. A framing assumption is that rural communities and the farm crisis are two separate issues, but they also clearly have more similarities than differences. Given the interrelatedness of these issues, it was determined that it is better for one group to address both issues rather than have each addressed separately. This Task Force is expected to develop a document that identifies high priority research and education action items leading to specific outcomes which will be attractive to funding agencies. To do this, the task force will seek to analyze the conditions influencing both rural communities and farmer caught in the current farm crisis very carefully and come up with something new and different that will improve the quality of life on farms and in rural communities in a significant, measurable way.

A guiding document is the presentation by Mark Drabenstott, Vice President and Director, Center of the Study of Rural America, Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, at the 1999 Hatch Memorial Lecture "New Futures for Rural America: The Role for Land-Grant Universities" on November 8, 1999, at the NASULGC Meeting. Mark's lecture caught people's attention as he addressed challenges and "taking up the tasks that promise new futures for rural America." You may find his address of interest for your task as identified above.

The Task Force will have its first conference call during the week of the Denver meeting. The work of the Task Force will be presented at the ESCOP Social Science Committee during their September meeting and then to ESCOP's Science and Technology Committee.

You may access the Drabanstott document at:

<http://www.reeusda.gov/1700/whatnew/hatch99.pdf>.