

Family Economics Research Priorities Set

Frances C. Lawrence, Angela C. Lyons, and Elizabeth E. Gorham

During the 2005, 2006, and 2007 annual meetings, members of the Family Economics Research Coordinating Committee (NCCC052) developed three national research priorities for family economics research. This committee, functioning under the National Agricultural Experiment Station System, facilitates collaboration among family economics researchers nationally and internationally and provides a forum to examine research methodology and family economic issues in depth from a multidisciplinary perspective. In addition, the committee fosters development of research related to the economic well being of individuals and families that is of interest to multiple institutions across the nation. Much of the financial research that is conducted relates to one or more of these priorities. It is possible that researchers and educators might use this document to justify the importance of their work.

2007-2010 Research Priorities

Planning for a Secure Financial Future

Financial security is the ability to meet day-to-day obligations while planning, saving, and investing to achieve future financial goals such as education, retirement, homeownership, and small business startup. By building assets and managing debt, households are better able to contribute to the economic vitality of their communities. More research is needed to determine the practices that motivate people to build wealth and not debt. Additional research is needed to examine the relationships between economically secure families, community prosperity, civic engagement, and rural entrepreneurship.

Household Food Security and Health

Research has explored the links between family socioeconomic status and issues of food security and health. Resources such as community food support programs, the local health care system, and employer-sponsored benefit programs profoundly influence family food security and

health. How families use these resources also can influence their food security and health. Independently, none of the resources can fully address these issues. To comprehensively address health and food security, research must look at all of these resources and the interactions among them.

Loss in Times of Disaster

Research is needed on the economic consequences and adjustments of households following natural disasters, terrorism, and wars. Vulnerability is the risk of substantial losses from which families may have difficulty recovering or may never recover. These losses are emotional, social, and financial because of the loss of family members, personal health, jobs, houses, household goods, cars, financial incomes, assets, and social support at interpersonal and community levels. Research is needed on the kinds of resilience demonstrated, the best practices to meet human needs following disasters, and information from households to inform practices.

Committee members involved in the development of the document include Cheryl Achterberg, Iowa State University; Shirley Baugher, University of Minnesota; Constance Costner, Michigan State University; Sharon DeVancy, Purdue University; Patricia Duffy, Auburn University; Bernadine Enevoldsen, South Dakota State University; Elizabeth Gorham, South Dakota State University (NCCC052 Chair, 2004-2005); Craig Gundersen, University of Illinois; Michael Gutter, University of Florida; Charles Hatcher, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Karen Holden, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Catherine Huddleston-Casas, University of Nebraska; Frances Lawrence, Louisiana State University (NCCC052 Chair, 2007-2008); Angela Lyons, University of Illinois (NCCC052 Chair, 2006-2007); Barbara O'Neill, Rutgers University; Debra Pankow, North Dakota State University; Kathryn Rettig, University of Minnesota; Robert Scharff, The Ohio

Frances C. Lawrence, Ph.D., Gerald C. and Lena Grand Williams Alumni Professor, School of Human Ecology, Louisiana State University and LSU Agricultural Center, Baton Rouge, LA 70803, flawrence@lsu.edu, (225) 578-1726

Angela C. Lyons, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics, University of Illinois, 440 Mumford Hall, 1301 West Gregory Drive, Urbana, IL 61801, anglyons@uiuc.edu, (217) 244-2612

Elizabeth E. Gorham, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Extension Family Resource Management Specialist, Design, Merchandise, and Consumer Sciences Department, South Dakota State University, SNF 301/2275A, Brookings, SD 57007, Elizabeth.Gorham@sdstate.edu, (605) 688-4035

State University; Holly Schrank, Purdue University; Jane Schuchardt, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, USDA; Sharon Seiling, The Ohio State University; Rui Yao, South Dakota State University; and Virginia Zuiker, University of Minnesota.

A document that can be used to disseminate the research priorities follows. For more information on the Committee's research activities, visit the National Information Management and Support System (NIMSS) at <http://nimss.umd.edu>. NCCC052 Family Economics is listed as a North Central Region research project. For more information on how to get involved, researchers can contact Frances Lawrence, NCCC052 Committee Chair, Louisiana State University Agricultural Center or Craig Gundersen, NCCC052 Committee Chair-Elect, University of Illinois.

FAMILY ECONOMICS

Family economics examines how individuals and families obtain and use resources—such as money, time, human capital, material resources and community services—by exploring the relationship between individuals and families and the larger economy and by studying the impact of public issues, policies and programs on family economic well-being.

2007-2010 RESEARCH PRIORITIES

Planning for a Secure Financial Future

Financial security is the ability to meet day-to-day obligations while planning, saving and investing to achieve future financial goals such as education, retirement, homeownership and small business startup. By building assets and managing debt, households are better able to contribute to the economic vitality of their

communities. More research is needed to determine the practices that motivate people to build wealth and not debt. Additional research is needed to examine the relationships between economically secure families, community prosperity, civic engagement and rural entrepreneurship.

Household Food Security and Health

Research has explored the links between family socioeconomic status and issues of food security and health. Resources such as community food support programs, the local health care system and employer-sponsored benefit programs profoundly influence family food security and health. How families use these

resources also can influence their food security and health. Independently, none of the resources can fully address these issues. To comprehensively address health and food security, research must look at all of these resources and the interactions among them.

Loss in Times of Disaster

Research is needed on the economic consequences and adjustments of households following natural disasters, terrorism and wars. Vulnerability is the risk of substantial losses from which families may have difficulty recovering, or may never recover. These losses are emotional, social and financial because of loss of family members, personal

health, jobs, houses, household goods, cars, financial incomes, assets and social support at interpersonal and community levels. Research is needed on the kinds of resilience demonstrated, the best practices to meet human needs following disasters and information from households to inform practices.

Developed by the Family Economics Research Coordinating Committee (NCCC052)

This committee, functioning under the National Agricultural Experiment Station System, facilitates collaboration among family economics researchers nationally and internationally. The committee provides a forum to examine research methodology and family economic issues in depth from a multidisciplinary perspective. The committee fosters development of research related to the economic well-being of individuals and families that is of interest to multiple institutions across the nation. For more information, see <http://nimiss.umd.edu>.

Leadership team:

Fran Lawrence, Ph.D., Chair
Louisiana State University Agricultural Center
School of Human Ecology
South Campus Dr. & Tower Dr.
Baton Rouge, LA 70803

225-578-1726 flawrence@lsu.edu

Craig Gundersen, Ph.D., Chair Elect
University of Illinois
Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics
324 Mumford Hall, 1301 West Gregory Dr.
Urbana, IL 61801-3605

217-333-1810 cggunder@illinois.edu