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# Statement of Extension Philosophy

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As an agricultural economist with roots in a small farming community in Iowa, I realize the importance of agricultural extension in improving the livelihoods of farmers and rural agricultural communities. I have witnessed firsthand the disconnect that often exists between highly technical economic research and the realities of the agricultural industries being studied. This disconnect has driven me to pursue a career in which I focus on agricultural extension, so that I may perform economic research informed by practical knowledge to reflect the realities that farmers face, with the goal of communicating my research to agricultural stakeholders and policy-makers to provide the most benefit to the agricultural community.

Extension economists play a key role in informing agricultural decisions through their focus on disseminating economic research. Agricultural producers, professional farm managers, and other agribusiness professionals have varying levels of educational background and technological experience, so an effective agricultural extension economist should invest effort into improving his/her ability to inform a broad audience through the employment of different communication strategies. In a position that allows me to focus on agricultural extension, I would make it my priority to accommodate all individuals by providing information in various media forms. As part of my graduate education, I have invested in learning the communication skills necessary for successful extension and outreach. For example, I completed a class entitled “Translating Research Beyond Academia: Communicating Science and Informing Policy.” I learned invaluable skills regarding communicating with individuals from a variety of backgrounds, in addition to receiving exposure to various mediums for disseminating research.

Throughout my dissertation research, I have sought to improve my communication skills with industry. To form relevant research questions, I conducted informational interviews with almond growers, beekeepers and other industry stakeholders involved with the California almond pollination market. I have worked with industry organizations, including the Almond Board of California (ABC) and the California State Beekeeper’s Association (CSBA) to collect data. This interaction includes developing and implementing a survey at the 2015 Almond Conference in two formats. I utilized an Audience Response System to collect responses from over 70 almond growers at once, and afterwards I elicited responses through face-to-face interactions with almond growers using a paper survey. I will present my research findings at both the ABC and CSBA annual meetings this year to ensure that my research is circulated among industry stakeholders. In the future, I plan to continue providing in-person interaction with the agricultural communities I serve by organizing and taking part in workshops and presentations. This can be a useful way to disseminate research, as well as to maintain accessibility to agricultural stakeholders in order to effectively meet their needs and receive feedback on communication strategies and research.

In addition to gaining experience in industry outreach through presentations and in-person interviews, I have co-authored an article in ARE Update, an outreach publication published by the University of California Giannini Foundation of Agricultural Economics. This article was intended to present useful information to almond growers, beekeepers, and almond pollination brokers regarding their almond pollination contracts. It has been featured in industry newsletters and presentations as a resource for both growers and beekeepers. In my future career, I will strive to publish relevant research in peer-reviewed academic journals and agricultural outreach publications, having observed the value these resources hold for the agricultural community. I also plan to write regular newsletters and bulletins posted on my department website to keep the agricultural community up to date on current research and

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markets. Employing print and digital media, as well as in-person interactions as parts of my research and extension strategy are essential for reaching a broad audience of agricultural stakeholders.

Growing up in an agricultural community provided me with a passion for using my skills to help inform agricultural producer decision-making. This passion will drive me to hold myself to the highest standards as an economist who focuses on extension and outreach. I will constantly search for new ways to improve my communication skills, provide the most relevant research for industry stakeholders, and enhance my effectiveness at disseminating research to a broad audience.