Bio

Otto Doering has teaching, research and extension responsibilities in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Purdue University. He is a public policy specialist and has served the U.S. Department of Agriculture working on the 1977 and 1990 Farm Bills. In 1997 he was the Principal Advisor to USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service for implementing the 1996 Farm Bill. From 1985 to 1990 he was director of Indiana’s State Utility Forecasting Group. In 1999 he was team leader for the economic analysis of the White House’s National Hypoxia Assessment looking at the dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico. He has overseas experience with the Ford Foundation and the National Academy of Sciences, primarily in Southeast Asia. He has been a visiting professor at Berkeley, Cornell, and North Carolina A&T State University. He is a National Science Foundation evaluator for the NSF Industry/ University Cooperative Research Program. Dr. Doering has served on Indiana’s Commission for Higher Education. He has been a Director of the American Agricultural Economics Association and Chairman of the National Public Policy Education Committee. He has twice received the AAEA’s Distinguished Policy Contribution Award as well as its Extension Economics Teaching Award. In a previous life he worked as a horse wrangler and a legal investigator. Professor Doering teaches The Economic Geography of World Food and Resources to undergraduates and the Department’s research methods class to graduate students. His recent publications include a book on the 1996 Farm Bill and a book on the effects of climate change and variability on agricultural production systems. Recent publications focus on economic linkages driving the response to nitrogen over-enrichment, the rationale for U. S. agricultural policy, and integrating biomass energy into existing energy systems.

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Abstract

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The general perception is that when push comes to shove economists are not very useful (some would say useless) for real world important decisions. This state is partially caused by economists’ view of themselves and also by the extent to which economists forget simple economic concepts when combating economic sin. However, there are cases where economists, when pushed, have been extremely helpful and relevant in important decisions. This talk covers some basic economics and ways in which economists can help in making real world important decisions.