Mad Cows and Bt Potatoes: Global Public Goods in the Food System

Globalization and Demand Shape Innovation and Incentives in U.S. Food and Agriculture

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ABSTRACT: Globalization in the food system is being shaped by structural changes in demand, bringing about “deep integration” of markets at all levels. Risks and benefits from changes in the food system now cross borders more often, so that private strategies and public policies now need to consider how global demand shapes food markets. Agricultural economics research, supported by federal funding, has played a key role in understanding these global forces and their implications for U.S. food markets and for the U.S. agricultural research system.

BIOSKETCH: Laurian J. Unnevehr is Professor of Agricultural and Consumer Economics at the University of Illinois. Her research examines the impact of food regulation on producer and consumer welfare; and consumer demand for safety, quality, and nutrition in food. She received her PhD from Stanford University in 1982; was a Rockefeller Social Science Post-Doc at the International Rice Research Institute from 1982-1985, joined the University of Illinois faculty in 1985, and was on-leave at USDA/ERS from 1993-95. With co-authors, she has received the American Agricultural Economics Association (AAEA) awards for Quality of Communication and for Publication of Enduring Quality, recognizing contributions in food policy and food demand. She served as chair of the National Academies report on Frontiers in Agricultural Research, and as president of the AAEA; she is currently on the Editorial Board for Food Policy.

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