The Center for Agri-Food Industrial Organization & Policy: Scholarly Economic Research for a Changing Agri-Food Industry

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The Center for Agri-Food Industrial Organization & Policy: Scholarly Economic Research for a Changing Agri-Food Industry

The Department of Agricultural Economics at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln is now the home of the Center of Agri-Food Industrial Organization & Policy. Founded in June 2001, the Center pools the research expertise of 5 scholars from the Department of Agricultural Economics and the Department of Economics to address in a timely and scientific manner agri-food industrial organization & policy issues of vital interest to the agricultural economy of the State of Nebraska, to disseminate research results to the public, and to train students and interested citizens in the economics of the food supply chain that links input suppliers, farmers, processors and consumers.

Examples of completed and ongoing research include:

1. The effect of the Livestock Mandatory Reporting Act on competition in the livestock industry.
2. The effect of the Tyson-IBP merger on competition in the cattle and hog industries.
3. Monopoly power and cost-efficiency effects of increased concentration in beef-packing and pork-packing on beef and pork price spreads.
5. The relationship between productivity and concentration in food processing.
6. The effect of Initiative 300 on the structure of the cattle industry in Nebraska.
7. Vertical economies of scope in hog production.
8. The effects of cooperatives on imperfect markets and vertical coordination in agricultural raw product markets.

9. The effects of biotechnology on concentration and structure in the agricultural inputs industry.

10. The market effects from the introduction of genetically modified (GM) food.

11. Economic analysis of issues related to the labeling of GM products.


13. The effectiveness of the USDA program on highly erodible lands in inducing adoption of conservation practices.


The Center is also launching *The Journal of Agri-Food Industrial Organization & Policy*. As the Editor, I will be assisted by an editorial board of 28 industrial organization scholars from 11 countries. The aim of the *Journal* is to foster use of state-of-the-art economic analysis of agri-food industrial organization and policy issues. Of particular interest are issues related to regulatory economics and competition policy, horizontal and vertical coordination, mergers and acquisitions, contracts, auctions, monopolistic competition and product differentiation, food labeling, food safety, cooperatives and strategic alliances, economics of innovation and property rights, strategic trade, market structure and environmental economics and political economy.

One unique aspect of the Center is that, since it is Web-based, the additional cost to the University of Nebraska of running the Center is practically zero, but the additional benefits are immeasurable. One particularly important benefit is maintaining balance in the public debate about food industry issues by providing the economic side of the arguments.

We invite you to visit the Center’s Website at [http://agecon.unl.edu/CAIEP/HOMEPAGE.html](http://agecon.unl.edu/CAIEP/HOMEPAGE.html). There you can meet the core faculty and learn about their credentials. The Website will soon have a section containing brief non-technical summaries of research findings and their public policy implications. Feel free to contact the Center’s core faculty at any time.

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