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Review of "Agricultural Policy Reform: Politics and Process in the EC and USA" by H. Wayne Moyer and Timothy E. Josling

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Agricultural Policy Reform: Politics and Process in the EC and USA. H. Wayne Moyer and Timothy E. Josling. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1990, 235 pp. Graphs, notes, and bibliography. \$27.95 cloth (ISBN 0-8138-1371-9).

In days gone by, Economics and Political Science were one, and the discipline was termed Political Economics. Here, it was recognized that acceptable economic theory was tempered by the political system in which the economy existed. The Mercantilism of England and the Netherlands was in direct conflict with the Physiocratic doctrines of France, yet each prospered in their own political environment—and could be studied separately as an integrated unit. Today, the separation of Economics and Political science can

lead to frustration when an economic solution for the problems of one society is not perceived by another political system as appropriate. The main strength of the work by Moyer and Josling is a reunification of economics and political science to analyze the agricultural economic policies of the European Community (EC) and the United States of America (USA).

The theme of their work is that agricultural policy can be understood only when referenced to a specific political environment. The crux of their argument is that major changes (reform, in their syntax) in agricultural policy can, occur only when the political climate is ripe—and that the simultaneous occurrence of knowledge that a particular agricultural policy needs reform and the political climate that will allow reform is an uncommon event.

The book begins with an analysis of political-economic models that might be used for their analysis. The authors conclude that a modification of the process schematic approach used by Petit in 1986 best suited their analysis of EC and USA agricultural policies. With this model the authors show that major changes in agricultural policy are resisted by all major players to the decision making process. Thus they conclude that change (reform) will only occur when there is a generally recognized need for change and the central political system is forced to reduce expenditures or face fundamental changes in the underlying political fabric. Such a unification of events is rare. More common is a continuation of short-term patches to the current agricultural policy that do not excite wrath because the economic impacts are not directly discernible by other segments of the political economy. Only when continuation of present agricultural policies require noticeable reductions in the economic well-being of others will reform take place.

To illustrate this thesis, the authors undertake a detailed review of the agricultural policies, political players, and economic pressures within the EC and USA with focus on the 1960s-1980s. Their tight synopsis alone is worth study by all those interested in agricultural policy. During their period of focus the authors conclude the concurrence of economic need and political necessity came to pass only in 1984 and in 1988 for the EC and in 1985 for the agricultural policies of the USA.

Budgetary crises within the EC forced the imposition of milk quotas in 1984 and the establishment of budget stabilizers in 1988. Similar forces within

the USA in 1985 led to freezing of bases and yields for deficiency payments, creation of the conservation reserve for environmentally fragile acres, and the tough sod-buster and swamp-buster provision to prohibit bringing many new lands into production. These, the authors conclude, are the only examples of agricultural policy reform since World War II.

The book concludes with a forecast for the continuing GATT negotiations. At publication in 1990, the Uruguay Round was stalemated with the agricultural sector as an obstacle. This review in late 1991 finds the situation much unchanged. The authors using their analysis model concluded that agreement between the EC and USA on agricultural reforms is unlikely. Most probable, they suggest, is a series of incremental changes to agricultural policies of both that will slowly move toward accommodation of a modified status quo—continuation of protection for the respective domestic agricultural producers. **James G. Kendrick**, *Agricultural Economics*, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.