

Resume for Paul O'Connell (Ph.D)

Dr. O'Connell earned his BS degree from the University of Minnesota, majoring in Biochemistry, and Dairy Science. He obtained a Masters Degree from Colorado State University in Agricultural Economics and His Ph.D. degree in Natural Resource Economics was earned at the University of Wisconsin.

Paul O'Connell's 40+ years professional career revolved around the economic analyses of agriculture and forestry production and processing; the natural resources on which the production depends; administration of related research and development programs; International Economic Development activities at the World Bank; and during the last 2 years--teaching Macro & Micro-Economics at a local college. Following are some highlights of that career—beginning with the more recent activities.

1995-2005

Attached to the Rural Development Division of the World Bank in Washington DC. Major activities included the soil fertility initiative in African countries like Malawi, Togo, and Benin; examining farming practices in the Azov-Black Sea corridor of Ukraine that integrates production and economic goals with biodiversity and watershed management goals; training courses for World Bank personnel on Sustainable Land Management; preparation of the Rural Action Plan--“Rural Development-Putting the Pieces in Place”; coordinated the World Bank six year partnership with the Walt Disney Company; managed the World Bank exhibit at EXPO 2000 in Germany; and developed marketing strategies for produce farmers in the Philippines.

Highlights of a few of these activities include: 1) working with the Africa Operational Division in the Bank--along with NGO's, private sector, and public service agencies in Africa--designing a soil fertility management strategy that enhances crop yield-- while using only that amount of purchased fertilizers and pesticides that best meets economic and ecological criteria of small stakeholder farmers; 2) for a GEF sponsored project in the Ukraine, prepared a work plan for the Azov-Black Sea Corridor that explores opportunities to reduce the impact of farming on ecologically sensitive areas--with agricultural policy reform, regenerative farming practices, integrated pest management, freshwater management, and other appropriate techniques or reforms; 3) development and implementation of a two day training course on Sustainable Land Management that was held two to three times a year from 1996 till 2004. This was accomplished by using the Chesapeake Bay Area in Maryland and selected projects in Africa, Asia, and Latin America as case study sites; 4) coordinating a partnership arrangement between the World Bank, CGIAR, Rodale Institute, and the Disney Company in Orlando, Florida from the middle of April to early June from 1996 till 2002-- portraying small scale farming as it is practiced in Africa, Asia and Latin America; and 5) working with small produce farmers in the Philippines developing marketing strategies to increase their profit margins.

While with the World Bank I also had opportunities to Lecture in Australia and New Zealand. In 1999 I received the Miegunyah Distinguished Fellowship Award from the University of Melbourne in Australia for a Semester--to lecture on Agricultural and Environmental issues. While there a paper was prepared on that topic. I had both undergraduate and graduate classes. In 2001 and 2002, I lectured at Lincoln University in Christchurch, New Zealand—also on Agricultural and Environmental issues.

1991-1994

Dr. O'Connell served as first Director of AARC (Alternative Agriculture Research and Commercialization) Center for three years. Commodity Associations like corn, soybeans, wheat, cotton and others convinced the U.S. Congress to pass legislation to provide start-up funds to small entrepreneurs to establish processing facilities that made new industrial based products from raw farm and forest products. In 1993 AARC invested \$9.0 Million, matched by \$25 million from private partners in 23 separate projects.

1986-1990

Became Deputy Administrator in the Cooperative State Research Service, USDA where Dr. O'Connell, interested farm groups, and a few associates convinced the U.S. Congress to fund a research and education program specifically for sustainable farming practices that emphasizes on-farm farming practices to address nutrient and pest problems. Initially the program was called the LISA (Low-Input Sustainable Agriculture) Program, but was later changed to the SERA (Sustainable Education and Research Agricultural) Program. Other than focusing on integrated pest, crop, and nutrient management strategies; another unique aspect of this program was that it is managed by regional committees--made up of Farmers, NGO's, and Research and Extension Administrators--with the Administrators making up a minority of the voting members. Every state in the U.S. now has an active Sustainable Agricultural Group dominated by farmers—and who have a major impact on the Sustainable R & E projects funded. Current funding for SERA is about \$18 million.

1979-1985

Moved to Washington DC where he served as Special Assistant to Assistant Secretary for Science and Education, USDA—Orville G. Bentley. Primary responsibilities included: interpreting trends in science, economics, and political philosophies; preparation of position papers and speeches; and representing the Assistant Secretary's office in Congress, and at selected national and state level meetings.

1969-1978

Paul O'Connell joined the U.S. Forest Service in Tucson, Arizona--where he was Project Leader for a multiple use economics project on how to best meet demands for marketable products like timber and grazing lands, versus non-marketable uses like wildlife habitat and wilderness values. The answer involves a combination of political, social, and bottom-line economic criteria. Dr. O'Connell did a mid-career Ph.D. on this topic, and many of the ideas published in his Ph.D. thesis (Application of Political-Economic Concepts to Planning and Decision-Making on National Forests) have been adopted by the U.S. Forest Service. In 1975 he became Assistant Director at the Forest Products Laboratory (FPL), U.S. Forest Service, Madison, Wisconsin. Primary duties included the management of a research staff, and long range planning of FPL's research programs—based on the needs of land managers, wood industries, and wood using public.

During his 30 year career with USDA, Dr. O'Connell received the Superior Service Award, several cash awards, and certificates of merit.

1964-1968

Full time position as a Staff Economist with Twin Cities Milk Producers Association in St. Paul, Minnesota where Paul O'Connell conducted economic analyses and presented testimony at Federal Milk Order hearings. Next position was as a Resource Economist with the Economic Research Service, USDA where he evaluated the social and economic impacts of proposed water resource developments in the Susquehanna River Basin--located in New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland.

Publications and Reports

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