

Former Agricultural Economics Faculty

Chris Hurt



Chris Hurt was a Purdue professor in the Agricultural Economics Department for 39 years from 1981 to 2020. His initial passion for agriculture came from growing up on a family grain and livestock farm in Illinois.

Chris strongly believed in the power of markets, but also, in the need for effective regulation of those markets. He studied ag market performance in his formal education: B.S. Univ. of Illinois; M.S. Cornell Univ.; and PhD. Univ. of Illinois. His personal experiences in production agriculture and as a grain merchant for Cargill reinforced his knowledge of commodity markets. This background enabled him to be a valued teacher at Purdue of commodity marketing classes: Grain Market, Livestock Marketing, and Futures & Option.

Dr. Hurt spent most of his time working with the Purdue Extension Service. He provided information, economic analysis, and taught economic principles to help stakeholders: farmers; ag bankers; business leaders; policy makers to improve their decisions. He was a popular speaker doing nearly 100 presentations per year to agriculture groups. Chris published about 25-30 extension articles per year.

He partnered with the print and broadcast media to extend his economic evaluations, so they reached the regional and national ag community. Requests for interviews ranged from 200-300 per year. For a time, he was the most highly quoted faculty member at Purdue University in an evaluation done by Ag Communications.

Chris truly enjoyed working with people in agriculture in every interaction. Not only did he provide information, but also, he listened to their needs. That gave a basis for future program plans. He was recognized with many state Extension awards. National awards from the Agricultural & Applied Economics Association included the top national extension award; best articles in the first ten years of "Choices" magazine; two national "team" awards; and the quality of communications award for "What's Driving Food Prices" with colleagues, Phil Abbott and Wally Tyner. Chris was asked on two occasions to testify before Congressional committees. In 2017, he received the distinguished Ag Alumni award. His departmental leadership included heading the Agricultural Outlook program for 20 years and serving as the Extension Coordinator for several years.

Professor Hurt was a leading academic in understanding and restructuring the U.S. pork industry in the 1990's. This led to a sabbatical at North Carolina State University. Global interest in the industrialization of the pork industry extended Dr. Hurt's work for two decades in Mexico, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, and China.

Chris is deeply thankful to his wife, Becky, and four sons: Andrew, Jarrod, Nathan, and Taylor

for their support over the years. The joy of this profession came in working with the people in agriculture and being aligned with the land grant mission of Purdue University.