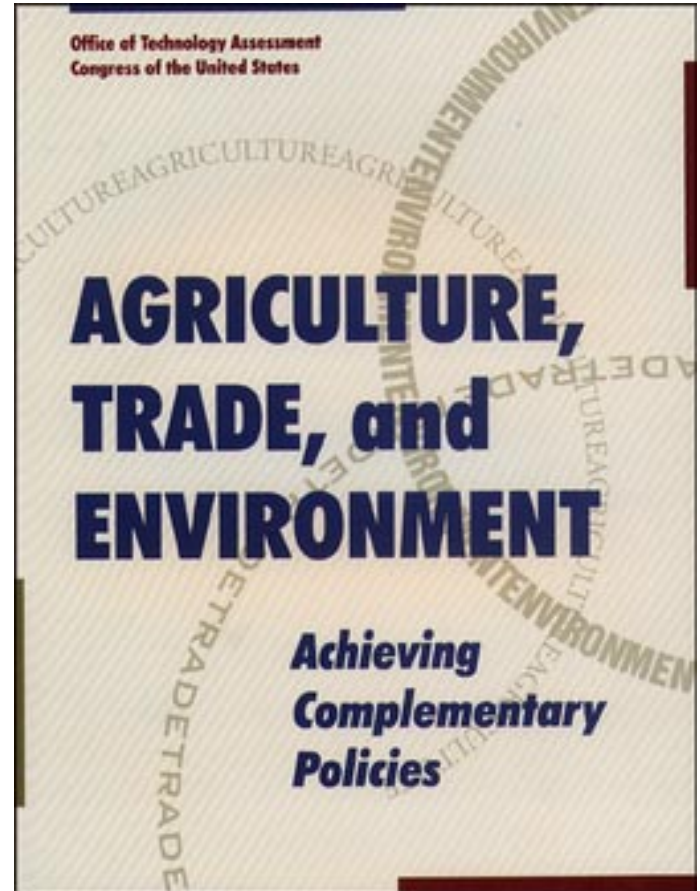


*Agriculture, Trade, and Environment:  
Achieving Complementary Policies*

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# Foreword

**T**imes have changed. No where is that more evident than in U.S. agriculture. Increasing global integration, expanding world agricultural markets, and broadening environmental priorities both at home and abroad are defining new policy challenges for the United States. Passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement and the Uruguay Round Agreements of GATT have spurred debate about the effects that liberalizing trade might have on the environment, and these debates continue. As the 104th Congress prepares to deliberate reauthorization of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act (FACTA), more commonly referred to as the 1995 Farm Bill, the relationships among agriculture, trade, and the environment are prominent subjects.

Anticipating further debates on free trade, on FACTA, the Clean Water Act, and other policy issues related to agriculture, trade, and the environment, Congress requested this assessment to provide guidance on policies and technologies needed for U.S. agriculture to be competitive in world markets and to ensure that environmental goals are met. Committees requesting the assessment were the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; the House Committee on Agriculture; and the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

This report provides information that can help align agricultural legislation with emerging needs and trends. Current policies do not ameliorate conflicts between agricultural production and environmental quality, between trade and the environment, and between agriculture and competitive trade. Opportunities for greater complementarity among these areas are possibly being missed.

Technology is integral to achieving complementarity. So often, agricultural technology has been developed for the sole purpose of increasing production with little attention to the market, environmental, or budgetary trade-offs. Unintended consequences have often been the result. Today, with the vast array of powerful scientific tools available, such as biotechnology and advanced computer technologies, it may be possible to develop technologies that incorporate multiple objectives, such as increasing production while enhancing environmental quality. Innovations in science and technology paired with future-oriented policies to guide agriculture, trade, and the environment could position the United States as a leader in world markets and in domestic environmental protection.

OTA greatly appreciates the contributions of the Advisory Panel, authors of commissioned papers, workshop participants, and the many additional people who reviewed material for the report or gave valuable guidance. Their timely and in-depth assistance allowed us to do the extensive study our requesters envisioned. As with all OTA studies, the content of this report is the sole responsibility of OTA.



**ROGER C. HERDMAN**  
Director

# Advisory Panel

**Alexander F. McCalla**

*Panel Chair*

Director, Agriculture & Natural  
Resources Department  
The World Bank  
Washington, DC

**Sandra Batie**

Elton R. Smith Professor of Food  
& Agricultural Policy  
Michigan State University

**William L. Bryant**

Chairman  
W.L. Bryant Co.  
Seattle, WA

**Anne Chadwick**

Trade Policy Advisor  
California Department of Food &  
Agriculture  
The Chadwick Co.  
Sacramento, CA

**John M. Duxbury**

Director, Agricultural Ecosystems  
Program  
Cornell University  
Ithaca, NY

**Peter Emerson**

Senior Economist  
Environmental Defense Fund  
Austin, TX

**Dan Esty**

Director  
Yale Center for Environmental  
Law & Policy  
New Haven, CT

**David Frederickson**

President  
Minnesota Farmers Union  
St. Paul, MN

**Stephen R. Gliessman**

Director, Department of  
Agroecology Program  
University of California  
Santa Cruz, CA

**Ralph W.F. Hardy**

President  
Boyce Thompson Institute  
Ithaca, NY

**Robbin Johnson**

Corporate Vice President  
Cargill, Inc.  
Minneapolis, MN

**Jack Laurie**

President  
Michigan Farm Bureau  
Lansing, MI

**Kitty Reichelderfer Smith**

Director of Policy Studies  
Henry A. Wallace Institute for  
Alternative Agriculture  
Greenbelt, MD

**Ann Veneman**

Counsel  
Patton, Boggs, & Blow  
Washington, DC

**Justin R. Ward**

Senior Resource Specialist  
Natural Resources Defense  
Council  
Washington, DC

**Cecil A. Watson**

Farmer  
Cavalier, ND

**Pete Wenstrand**

President  
National Corn Growers Assoc.  
Essex, IA

**Note:** OTA appreciates and is grateful for the valuable assistance and thoughtful critiques provided by the advisory panel members. The panel does not, however, necessarily approve, disapprove, or endorse this report. OTA assumes full responsibility for the report and the accuracy of its contents.

# Project Staff

**Clyde Behney**  
Assistant Director

**Walter E. Parham<sup>1</sup>**  
Program Director  
Food & Renewable Resources

**Robert Niblock<sup>2</sup>**  
Program Director  
Environment Program

**MICHAEL J. PHILLIPS**  
Project Director

**David E. Ervin**  
Senior Analyst

**Leo V. Mayer**  
Senior Analyst

**Sherry L. Showell**  
Analyst

**Elisabeth A. Graffy**  
Analyst

**Vivian N. Keller**  
Analyst/editor

## ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

**N. Ellis Lewis<sup>1</sup>**  
Office Administrator

**Kathleen Beil<sup>2</sup>**  
Office Administrator

**Nellie M. Hammond**  
Administrative Secretary

**Kimberly Holmlund<sup>2</sup>**  
Administrative Secretary

**Sharon Knarvik<sup>2</sup>**  
Secretary

**Carolyn M. Swann<sup>1</sup>**  
PC Specialist

---

<sup>1</sup>Through February 1994  
<sup>2</sup>From March 1994