

Faculty Profile

Gordon Rausser is the Robert Gordon Sproul Distinguished Professor in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at UC Berkeley. Gordon is a fellow of the American Agricultural Economics Association (AAEA), the American Statistical Association and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Gordon's broad research interests focus on contract markets, public policy, economic regulation, political economy, environmental and natural resource economics, applied econometrics and statistical decision theory.

Gordon spent his childhood years on a dairy farm in California and completed his advanced degrees in agricultural economics at UC Davis. In his second year of graduate studies, he accepted a position on the faculty at UC Davis and simultaneously, upon the death of his father, became the manager of the family dairy farm while also completing his dissertation, teaching graduate courses, and chairing the dissertations of six other Ph.D. students. In the face of this hectic launch of his professional career, Gordon was granted tenure at UC Davis, one year following the completion of his dissertation. Subsequently, he was awarded a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Chicago in economics and statistics, became a professor of economics and statistics at Iowa State University and Harvard University. He returned to California in 1979, becoming the Chair of the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at UC Berkeley until 1985, and again in 1992.

Gordon has remained in Berkeley since, except when he served with the President's council of economic advisors and, at another time, as the chief economist of the U.S. Agency for International Development. He has assumed a wide array of leadership responsibilities at UC Berkeley, including serving as the Dean of the College of Natural Resources at UC Berkeley, where he provided the creative spark to design innovative public-private research agreements; expanded the faculty by 50 percent; increased the development contributions by 300 percent; and instituted a merit-driven allocation for college resources.

Professor Rausser's research has greatly enhanced the toolbox of agricultural economics and has anticipated and contributed solutions for the most important issues of the time. Gordon developed techniques to make better decisions for allocation of resources over time and under conditions of



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uncertainty. This work won the AAEA Enduring Quality Award and has provided a framework for management of commodity inventories and for analysis of price dynamics. In the 1980s, Gordon's public policy research distinguished between predatory versus productive government policies and suggested policy-making procedures that would increase the likelihood of sustainable, productive policies. This work received AAEA's distinguished public policy award in 1993 and the 2000 USDA Secretary of Agriculture Award.

Gordon also pioneered the formal research of the links between agricultural economy and general economy and introduced tools to predict the impact of macroeconomic forces in the farm sector. This, too, led to one of Gordon's sixteen national research awards. In the late 1980s, Professor Rausser established the Institute for Policy Reform, and led this think tank to produce critical research on constitution design and the role of legal and regulatory institutions in supporting and sustaining economic growth.

In recent years, Gordon's research has proposed a new paradigm for management of public research and intellectual property, collective decision-making and multilateral bargaining, especially in water resource systems, and the application of his active learning and risk management frameworks to contract markets. Today, Gordon continues to research emerging societal problems and shape the landscape of agriculture and natural resources.

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