

Michael James Roberts

Contact Information

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Education

PhD University of California at Berkeley. Agricultural and Resource Economics. December 2000.

Fields: Environmental and Resource Economics
Advanced Economic Theory
Applied Statistics and Econometrics

Dissertation: *Hotelling Reconsidered: The Implications of Asset Pricing Theory on Natural Resource Price Trends*

Committee: Peter Berck (Chair), Jeffrey Perloff, Paul Gertler

MA University of California at Berkeley. Statistics. December 2000.

MS Montana State University. Applied Economics. August 1994.

BA University of California at San Diego. Quantitative Economics and Decisions Sciences. Minor concentrations in mathematics, engineering science, and writing. June 1992.

Honors and Awards

USDA Secretary's Honor Award. For research on the value of information provided to farmers about impending soybean rust infestations, 2006.

Heilos Award for Research and Policy Contribution. A USDA-ERS agency-wide award given once every two years. Awarded as a member of the Conservation Reserve Program Study Team, 2005.

Outstanding Dissertation. American Agricultural Economics Association, 2001.

Hung Wo Ching Fellowship in Econometrics. Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of California at Berkeley, 1997.

Outstanding Masters Thesis, Honorable Mention. American Agricultural Economics Association, 1994.

Professional Experience

RESEARCH

Economist, US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Current Series/Grade: GS-0110-14. Independent research on risk, contracting, structure, land use and conservation in U.S. agriculture. August 2000 to present. Current supervisor: Utpal Vasavada.

Graduate Student Researcher, University of California at Berkeley. Assisted research efforts of Peter Berck, Ethan Ligon, David Zilberman and David Sunding. August 1994 to June 1999.

TEACHING

Adjunct Professor, The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University. Instructor of a master's level course in econometrics. Spring 2005 - present.

Consultant, Columbia University. Developed a course syllabus for a spatial econometrics course as part of a proposed new PhD program in the University's Earth Institute for Sustainable Development. 2003.

Master Thesis Committee Member, for Shawn Bucholtz, graduate of the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of Maryland. 2003.

Graduate Student Instructor, University of California at Berkeley. Teaching assistant and discussion leader for undergraduate courses in introductory microeconomics, introductory statistics, advanced undergraduate econometrics, advanced undergraduate environmental economics. August 1995 to December 1999.

Instructor, University of California at Berkeley. Taught mathematics preparatory courses for entering graduate students. Summers 1995, 1996, 1999.

Part-time faculty position, City College of San Francisco. Instructor of two introductory statistics courses for business and economics applications. Fall 1997.

Publications

USDA REPORTS AND ARTICLES

- G12.** *Government Payments, Farm Business Survival, and Farm Size Growth.* With Nigel Key. Forthcoming Economic Research Report, US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service.
- G11.** "[Agricultural Policy Affects Land Use and the Environment.](#)" *Amber Waves.* September 2006. With Ruben N. Lubowski and Roger Claassen.
- G10.** [Environmental Effects of Agricultural Land-Use Change: The Role of Economics and Policy.](#) With Ruben Lubowski, Roger Claassen, Joseph Cooper, Anna Gueorguieva, and Robert Johansson. Economic Research Report No. 25, 81 pp. US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, August 2006.
- G9.** [Major Uses of Land in the United States, 2002.](#) With Marlow Vesterby Ruben Lubowski, Shawn Bucholtz, and Alba Baez. Economic Information Bulletin No. , US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, May 2006.
- G8.** [The Value of Plant Disease Early-Warning Systems: A Case Study of USDA's Soybean Rust Coordinated Framework.](#) With David E. Schimmelpfennig, Michael Livingston, and Elizabeth Ashley. Economics Report Number 18. USDA Economics Research Service, April 2006.

- G7.** [“Public Information Creates Value.”](#) Feature (cover) article in *Amber Waves*, April 2006. With David E. Schimmelpfennig.
- G6.** [“How Do Decoupled Payments Affect Resource Allocations Within the Farm Sector?”](#) *Amber Waves* 2(5). USDA/ERS, November 2004. pp 8-9.
- G5.** [Decoupled Payments in a Changing Policy Setting.](#) Edited by Mary E. Burfisher and Jeffrey Hopkins. AER-838. (author of Chapter 6, “Effects of Government Payments on Land Rents, Distribution of Payment Benefits, and Production.”) USDA/ERS, October 2004.
- G4.** [The Conservation Reserve Program: Economic Implications for Rural America.](#) With Patrick Sullivan, Daniel Hellerstein, Leroy Hansen, Robert Johansson, Steven Koenig, Ruben Lubowski, William McBride, David McGranahan, Stephen Vogel, and Shawn Bucholtz, Resource Economics Division, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Agricultural Economic Report No. 834. 112 pp. October 2004.
- G3.** [Economic and Policy Implications of Wind-Borne Entry of Asian Soybean Rust into the United States.](#) With Mike Livingston, Rob Johansson, Stan Daberkow, Mark Ash, and Vince Breneman. Electronic Outlook Report, OCS-04D-02, USDA Economic Research Service, April 2004.
- G2.** [Decoupled Payments: Household Income Transfers in Contemporary U.S. Agriculture.](#) with Mary Burfisher, Jeffrey Hopkins, and others. U.S. Department of Agriculture. Agricultural Economic Report No. 822, February 2003.
- G1.** [Risk, Government Programs, and the Environment.](#) With Meredith Soule and Craig Osteen. USDA-ERS Technical Bulletin Number 1908. 51 pp. March 2004.

JOURNAL ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS

- A17.** Enduring Impacts of the Conservation Reserve Program: An Econometric Analysis.” With Ruben Lubowski. Forthcoming at *Land Economics*.
- A16.** [“Non-linear Effects of Weather on Corn Yields.”](#) With Wolfram Schlenker. *Review of Agricultural Economics* Vol 28 (3), Fall 2006.
- A15.** [“Estimating the Extent of Moral Hazard in Crop Insurance Using Administrative Data.”](#) With Nigel Key and Erik O’Donoghue. *Review of Agricultural Economics* Vol 28 (3), Fall 2006.
- A14.** [“Risk and farm operator labor supply.”](#) With Nigel Key and Erik O’Donoghue. *Applied Economics*.

- A13.** "[Government Payments and Farm Business Survival.](#)" With Nigel Key. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* Vol 88 (2) May 2006.
- A12.** "[Slippage in the Conservation Reserve Program or Spurious Correlation? A Rejoinder.](#)" with Shawn Bucholtz. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* Vol 88 (2) May 2006.
- A11.** "[Farm-Level Production Effects from Participation in Government Commodity Programs: Did the 1996 Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act Make a Difference?](#)" with Nigel Key and Ruben Lubowski. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, Vol 87 (5) December 2005: 1211-19.
- A10.** "Financial Market Imperfections and Structural Change in Agriculture," with Nigel Key. In *Progress in Agricultural Economics*. Nova Science Publishers, New York, 2005.
- A9.** "[How Cost-Effective are Land Retirement Auctions? Estimating the Difference between Payments and Willingness to Accept in the Conservation Reserve Program.](#)" with Barrett Kirwan and Ruben Lubowski. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, Vol 87 (5) December 2005: 1239-47.
- A8.** "[Losing Under Contract: Transaction-Cost Externalities and Spot Market Disintegration](#)", with Nigel Key, *Journal of Agricultural & Food Industrial Organization*: Vol. 3: No. 2, Article 2, 2005. <http://www.bepress.com/jafio/vol3/iss2/art2>.
- A7.** "[Slippage in the Conservation Reserve Program or Spurious Correlation? A Comment.](#)" with Shawn Bucholtz. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, Vol. 87, No. 1 (February 2005): 244-250.
- A6.** "Comparative Assessment of Risk Mitigation Options for Irrigated Agriculture." With Noel Gollehon and Marcel Aillery. In *Water Rights and Related Supply Issues*, Proceedings of the 2004 Water management Conference. U.S. Committee on Irrigation and Drainage. Denver: 2004.
- A5.** "History of Energy Prices." with Peter Berck. In [Encyclopedia of Energy, Volume 5](#). Elsevier Inc. 2004.
- A4.** "[Who Benefits from Government Farm Payments?](#) Relationships between Payments Received and Farm Household Well-Being." With Nigel Key. *Choices*, August 2003.
- A3.** "[The Incidence of Government Program Payments on Agricultural Land Rents: The Challenges of Identification.](#)" With Barrett Kirwan and Jeffrey Hopkins. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* Vol. 85 No. 3 (2003), pp 762-769.

- A2.** “Does Liquidity Matter to Agricultural Production?” with Nigel Key. In R.E. Just and R.D. Pope eds., [A Comprehensive Assessment of the Role of Risk in U.S. Agriculture](#). Boston, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers. 2002.
- A1.** “[Natural Resource Prices: Will They Ever Turn Up?](#)” with Peter Berck. *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*, 31(1): 65-78. July 1996.

OTHER REPORTS

- O2.** *The Conservation Reserve Program. Economic and Social Impacts on Rural Counties*, Report to Congress. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Delivered in January, 2004.
- O1.** *Irrigation Water Reductions from Federal Actions: Economic Losses and Mitigation Strategies*. Interim report to Congress, produced under contract with USDA Risk Management Agency. With Noel Gollehon, Marcel Aillery, Glenn Schiabe, and Bill Quinby. Delivered in February, 2003.

WORKING PAPERS AND ARTICLES UNDER REVIEW

- W9.** “Government Payments and Structural Change in Agriculture.” With Nigel Key. Revise and resubmit at *Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics*.
- W8.** “Agricultural Payments and Land Concentration: A Semi-Parametric Spatial Regression Analysis.” With Nigel Key. Revise and resubmit at the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*.
- W7.** “[Non-linear Effects of Temperature on Crop Yields: Implications for Climate Change](#).” With Wolfram Schlenker. Under review at *Journal of the American Statistical Association*.
- W6.** “Estimating the Value of Early Warning Systems.” With Elizabeth Ashley, Michael Livingston, and David Schimmelpfennig. Under review at *Science*.
- W5.** “Risk and Diversification: Estimating the Benefits of Federal Crop Insurance.” With Erik O’Donoghue and Nigel Key. Under review at the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*.
- W4.** “Nonpecuniary Benefits to Farming: Implications for Supply Response to Decoupled Payments.” With Nigel Key.
- W3.** “Extent, Location, and Characteristics of Land Cropped Due to Insurance Subsidies.” With Ruben Lubowski and Roger Claasen.

W2. “Discount Rates and Energy Efficiency Standards.” With Larry Dale.

W1. “Can Portfolio Theory Explain Flat and Downward Natural Resource Price Trends?”

Government Briefings

B3. Briefed Eldon Gould, Administrator of USDA’s Risk Management Agency (RMA), the Associate Administrator and several Division Chiefs on our report on the value of information provided by the Soybean Rust Coordinated Framework. April 2006.

B2. Briefed Kevin Shea, Deputy Administrator of USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service on the soybean rust study. April 2006.

B1. Briefed Bill Hawks, Undersecretary of Agriculture on increasing trends in ad hoc disaster payments in agriculture. February 2003.

Media Citations

M4. USDA Radio story and interview featuring our report on the value of information provided by the USDA Soybean Rust Coordinated Framework.

M3. Press release by the Secretary of Agriculture on the soybean rust information report, posted on the front of the USDA website for several days.

M2. News coverage of our soybean rust reports: (various)

M1. USDA TV story and interview about ERS report *Risk, Government Programs and the Environment*. Story was broadcast on “AgDay” syndicate by many local stations throughout the U.S.

Presentations

- P25.** “Agricultural Payments and Land Concentration: A Semi-parametric Spatial Regression Analysis.” Invited presentation, University of California at Davis Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics. November 16, 2006.
- P24.** “Land Retirement Auctions: Current and Alternative Designs.” Invited presentation, University of California at Berkeley Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics. November 15, 2006.
- P23.** “Estimating the Extent of Moral Hazard in Crop Insurance Using Administrative Data.” With Nigel Key and Erik O’Donoghue. AAEA session at the Allied Social Science Association Meetings, Boston, MA, January 7, 2005.
- P22.** “An Introduction to the Analysis of Spatially Referenced Data.” Guest Lecture, Program in Sustainable Development at the Earth Institute, Columbia University, New York, November 2, 2005
- P21.** “How Cost-Effective are Land Retirement Auctions? Estimating the Difference between Payments and Willingness to Accept in the Conservation Reserve Program.” Invited presentation, Department of Economics, Columbia University, New York, November 1, 2005.
- P20.** Farm-Level Production Effects from Participation in Government Commodity Programs: Did the 1996 Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act Make a Difference?” with Nigel Key and Ruben Lubowski. Presentation of a Principal Paper at the American Agricultural Economics Association in Providence, RI, July 2005.
- P19.** “Adjusting Discount Rates for Energy Price Risk” with Larry Dale. Invited presentation at Resources for the Future, Washington DC, October 12, 2004.
- P18.** “Enduring Benefits of Land Retirement Policies: Evidence from the Conservation Reserve Program.” Invited presentation at Washington State University, September 17, 2004.
- P17.** “The 1996 Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act: Correcting a Distortion?” With Ruben Lubowski and Nigel Key. A presentation at the American Agricultural Economics Association in Denver, CO August 2004.
- P16.** “Enduring Impacts of Land Retirement Payments: An Econometric and Simulation Analysis of the Conservation Reserve Program.” A Presentation at the Heartland Environmental and Resource Economics Workshop, September 21-22, 2003.

- P15.** “Government Payments and Structural Change in Agriculture.” With Nigel Key. A presentation at the American Agricultural Economics Association in Montreal, July 2003.
- P14.** “Pesticide and Fertilizer Applications in Response to Crop Insurance: Evidence from Panel of Census Microdata.” With Nigel Key and Erik O’Donoghue. A presentation at the American Agricultural Economics Association in Montreal, July 2003.
- P13.** “The Importance of Income Risk in Labor Allocation Decisions.” With Nigel Key and Erik O’Donoghue. A presentation at the American Agricultural Economics Association in Montreal, July 2003.
- P12.** “The Incidence of Government Program Payments on Agricultural Land Rents: The Challenges of Identification.” Invited presentation at the annual meetings of the Allied Social Sciences Association, Washington, DC, January 2003.
- P11.** “Slippage or Spurious Correlation? An Analysis of the Conservation Reserve Program.” With Shawn Bucholtz. Invited presentation at the Environmental Protection Agency, December 2002.
- P10.** “APHIS Emergency Eradication Payments: A Retrospective Comparison with Other Farm Programs, Economic Conditions, and Conceptual Goals.” An oral briefing presented to Under Secretary of Agriculture Bill Hawks, December 2002.
- P9.** “Risk and Structural Change in US Agriculture: How Income Shocks Influence Farm Size.” Invited presentation. University of California at Berkeley, September 2002.
- P8.** “Slippage or Spurious Correlation? An Analysis of the Conservation Reserve Program.” With Shawn Bucholtz. Annual meetings of the American Association of Agricultural Economics. Long Beach, California, July 2002.
- P7.** “Risk and Structural Change in US Agriculture: How Income Shocks Influence Farm Size.” Annual meetings of the American Association of Agricultural Economics. Long Beach, California, July 2002.
- P6.** “Slippage or Spurious Correlation? An Analysis of the Conservation Reserve Program.” With Shawn Bucholtz. Second World Congress of Environmental and Resource Economists. Monterey, California, June 2002.
- P5.** “Can Portfolio Theory Explain Flat and Downward Natural Resource Price Trends?” Second World Congress of Environmental and Resource Economists. Monterey California, June 2002.

- P4.** “Losing Under Contract: Transaction Cost Externalities and Spot Market Disintegration.” Invited presentation. University of Massachusetts at Amherst, March 2002.
- P3.** “Losing Under Contract: Transaction Cost Externalities and Spot Market Disintegration.” Economics of Contracting in Agriculture, Second Annual Conference, Annapolis, Maryland, July 2002.
- P2.** “Does Liquidity Matter to Agricultural Production? How Transitory Income Shocks Influence Subsequent Plantings.” An annual meeting of agricultural risk researchers, SERA-IEG-31 in Gulf Shores, Alabama, March 2001.
- P1.** “Can Portfolio Theory Explain Flat and Downward Natural Resource Price Trends?” University of California at Santa Barbara Workshop in Environmental Economics. August 2000.
- P0.** USDA Economic Research Service, Resource Economics Division. Various seminars given 2001-2005.

Professional Service

Reviewer: *American Journal of Agricultural Economics, Journal of Environmental Economics and Management, Climate Change, Environmental and Resource Economics, Legal Studies, Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics, Resource and Energy Economics, Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics, Journal of Agricultural and Food Industrial Organization, Agricultural and Resource Economics Review, Journal of Econometrics.*

Member: American Agricultural Economics Association, Association of Environmental and Resource Economists, American Economics Association.

Organized a Principal Paper Session “Has Decoupling Worked?” for the 2005 meetings of the American Agricultural Economics Association in Providence, Rhode Island.

Organized a Principal Paper Session “Applications of Quasi-Experimental Methods in Agricultural Economics” for the 2006 meetings of the Allied Social Sciences Association in Boston, Massachusetts.

Member AAEA Outstanding Masters’ Thesis Committee, 2006.