

# Agronomy 810 Seminar



## John Schnittker

Agricultural Consultant for Conflict and Post-Conflict Developing Countries

### “Agricultural Challenges in Post Saddam Iraq”

#### Abstract

Iraq’s agricultural sector remains depressed and underperforming relative to its potential, facing a range of challenges, including poor irrigation water management and limited access to modern seed and adequate supplies of fertilizer, fuel, and modern equipment. Irrigation water availability has also decreased, due to upstream diversions in neighboring countries, and recurring drought. This situation is made worse by a canal delivery system that is in extremely poor condition and inefficient irrigation practices by producers. The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) continues to play a pervasive and generally negative role in Iraqi agriculture. While it promises to supply many of the required inputs through various state companies at subsidized prices, the quality is poor and quantities actually supplied are less than one-third of market requirements for items like wheat and barley seed and fertilizer. The effect of providing low-quality and subsidized inputs is to severely limit private sector development.

#### Biography

Mr. Schnittker is an agricultural consultant specializing in agricultural development issues in conflict and post conflict nations. He holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in agricultural economics from Kansas State University and Colorado State University. His undergraduate and graduate work focused on production economics and agricultural policy. Mr. Schnittker served as USDA’s in-country agricultural economist and Ministerial Advisor in Baghdad Iraq. His responsibilities included agricultural trade, policy matters, and serving as the principal US diplomat interacting with Iraqi agricultural officials on Iraqi agricultural development issues. Before Baghdad, Mr. Schnittker served as senior agricultural advisor for the Department of State in Kirkuk Province, located in Northern Iraq. In this capacity he led the US effort to revitalize agricultural production and processing in one of Iraq’s principal agricultural provinces. Mr. Schnittker held a number of senior level economist positions over his career, including with the WFA Group, Public Voice for Food and Health Policy and the US Grains Council. He has testified as an expert before numerous state legislatures, and congressional committees on agricultural trade and policy issues. Recent consulting assignments involved resolving contractual issues involving grain shipments between a US company and a Mid-Eastern shipper and assessing the potential for center pivot irrigation in African developing countries.

WEDNESDAY

JANUARY 29,  
2014

4:00 P.M.

Room 1014  
Throckmorton  
Plant Sciences  
Center

Refreshments  
at 3:30 P.M.