

# Nathan Skuza

## Curriculum Vitae

### Office Contact Information:

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*Citizenship:* U.S.A.

### Education

- Ph.D., Economics, Washington State University, Spring 2011 (expected).  
*Dissertation:* Essays on Organic Agriculture. *Advisor:* Dr. Vicki McCracken
- M.S., Statistics, Washington State University, Fall 2010.  
*Project:* Spatial Analysis of a Wheat Rotation Study. *Advisor:* Dr. J. Richard Alldredge
- B.A., Political Science, Central Washington University, 2005.

### Major Fields of Concentration

Experimental Economics, Agricultural Marketing, Agricultural Economics, Applied Econometrics

### Teaching Experience

2008            *Instructor*, School of Economic Sciences, Washington State University  
EconS 101: Principles of Microeconomics (*summer session*)

2007-2008      *Instructor*, School of Economic Sciences, Washington State University  
EconS 102: Principles of Macroeconomics (*four semesters*)

2007            *Teaching Assistant*, School of Economic Sciences, Washington State University  
EconS 311: Undergraduate Econometrics

2007            *Teaching Assistant*, School of Economic Sciences, Washington State University  
Economics 305: Theory of the Firm and Market Policy

2006            *Teaching Assistant*, School of Economic Sciences, Washington State University  
EconS 101: Principles of Microeconomics (*Virtual Course*)

2006            *Teaching Assistant*, School of Economic Sciences, Washington State University  
EconS 102: Principles of Macroeconomics (*Virtual Course*)

### Research Experience

2010-Present   *Research Assistant*, Impact of Mexican Tariffs on U.S. Tree Fruit Exports, IMPACT Center, Washington State University. Dr. Tom Marsh

- 2009-Present *Research Assistant, Economic Returns to Canola Rotations, Biofuels Cropping Systems Research and Extension Project, Dr. Vicki McCracken, Dr. Bill Pan*
- Conducted economic analysis of the economic sustainability of including oilseeds in crop rotations in various regions of Washington State using farm enterprise budgets
  - Developing (in progress) dynamic enterprise budgets that account for rotation and transportation considerations
- 2008- 2010 *Research Assistant, Which Way Forward in a Niche Market: Willingness to Pay for Organic and Functional Foods, Dr. Vicki A. McCracken*
- Led the design and implementation of several field auction experiments for the purpose of assessing the value consumers place on organic labels in apples and milk.
- 2008 *Research Assistant, Northeast Asian Airline Network Project, Dr. Jia Yan*
- Developed a program (Gauss Code) to simulate hub-spoke transportation networks of the airline industry for use in estimating an empirical structural model of competition among airlines in the Northeast Asian airline network.

### **Presentations/Posters**

*An in-store assessment of consumers' Willingness-To-Pay for organic apples: Does size matter? Vicki A. McCracken, Nathan Skuza, Joan Ellis, and David Granatstein, Washington State Horticulture Association Annual Meeting, Yakima WA, December 6-8 2010.*

*Economic Returns to Canola Rotations in Eastern Washington. Nathan Skuza and Vicki McCracken, Washington Bio-energy Research Symposium, Seattle WA, November 8 2010.*

*Consumers' Willingness to Pay and Impacts of Prior Purchase Behavior for Organic Apples. Poster Presentation, Academic Showcase, Washington State University, April 2010.*

*Economic Returns to Canola Rotations. Biofuels Cropping Systems Research and Extension Project, Washington State University, November 22 2009.*

*Methods of Eliciting WTP in the Field. Borlaug Fellows, a group of visiting scientists from Africa, learning about organic and sustainable agriculture, Washington State University, October 2009.*

### **Working Papers**

Ellis, J., V. McCracken, and N. Skuza, 2010. Willingness to Pay for Organic Cotton: Insight from Apparel Consumers.

Aharonovitz, G. D., F. Fahs, and N. Skuza, 2008. Can Integrity Replace Institutions? Theory and Evidence. *CESifo working paper #2730.*

## Professional Memberships

Agricultural and Applied Economics Association  
Western Agricultural Economics Association

## Languages

English, Spanish (*undergraduate minor*)

## Dissertation Abstract

### *“Compensation and Participant Response: A Field Experiment on Organic Apples”*

Recent evidence suggests that compensation given to respondents for participating in valuation studies influences participants’ responses. We conducted a study in a retail food store using the incentive compatible BDM mechanism to test the impact that non-compensation has on participants’ responses. Our results suggest that despite receiving similar training, uncompensated individuals responses were more thoughtful and less arbitrary than compensated individuals. Our research will contribute to researchers’ understanding of best practices for implementing economic experiments in the field.

### *“Adoption of Organic Agricultural Systems in the Presence of Uncertainty”*

We investigate the decision that farmers’ face when considering a conversion from conventional farming systems to organic systems. The conversion process includes equipment changes, adjustment of management practices, and a certification process. Certification entails a three year transition period in which the crop is produced under organic processes, but during which the product cannot be labeled organic. Organic yield tends to be more volatile due to prohibitions against the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers. Thus, the conversion constitutes a costly, irreversible investment for producers. The organic technology adoption decision is modeled following a real options approach. We apply the real options model to data from an experimental organic farm (WSU) to assess economic sustainability of the studied systems.

### *“An Experimental Investigation of Willingness to Pay for Organic Apples and Milk”*

We implement an experimental economics mechanism (BDM) at the point-of-purchase to elicit consumer preferences, in terms of WTP, for the organic label in apples and milk. For apples we investigate tradeoff in terms of willingness to pay between the organic label attribute and apple size, while for milk we consider the tradeoff between the organic attribute and milk fat content. Experiments were conducted in four stores in Spokane, WA. Along with production costs, consumer demand for a product is a primary consideration of an agribusiness in adopting a new product. The information gathered by our study will assist Washington apple and dairy farmers in their decisions to enter organic markets.

## References

**Dr. Vicki McCracken**, Professor, School of Economic Sciences, Washington State University, Pullman, WA 99164, Phone: (509) 335-4728, Email: [mccracke@wsu.edu](mailto:mccracke@wsu.edu)

**Dr. Jia Yan**, Assistant Professor, School of Economic Sciences, Washington State University, Pullman, WA 99164, Phone: (509) 335-7809, Email: [jiay@wsu.edu](mailto:jiay@wsu.edu)

**Dr. Rich Alldredge**, Professor, Department of Statistics, Washington State University, Pullman, WA 99164, Phone: (509) 335-3737, Email: [alldredg@wsu.edu](mailto:alldredg@wsu.edu)