

Henry A. Wallace (1888–1965): Agricultural Statistician
(Econometrician) Extraordinaire

This talk is about Henry A. Wallace who was (among other positions he held) the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture under Roosevelt and the New Deal (1933–1940), and Vice-President under Roosevelt (1941–1945). Wallace demonstrated the absolute best practices in (agricultural) statistics and econometrics, including his time as the New Deal Secretary of the USDA. He demanded an evidence-based set of agricultural policies and practices (through statistics and data gathering) that helped pull the U.S. out of the Great Depression. Wallace is arguably the single person responsible for the first Department of Statistics in the U.S.; this is because of Wallace's connections with George Snedecor. Finally, Wallace was the lead architect in the development of numerical procedures (in the 1920s) for solving the normal equations in large-scale multiple regression.