Jeffrey Dorfman is professor of agricultural and applied economics at The University of Georgia where he teaches classes on economic theory and the economics of the food industry. He performs research on statistical methods, futures markets, the economics of land use and development, and productivity and efficiency measurement. His work has been published in journals such as the AJAE, Review of Economics & Statistics, J. Econometrics, J. Applied Econometrics, J. Productivity Analysis, JBES, J. Regional Science, Land Use Policy, CJAE, JARE, JAAE, and J. Futures Markets. He has written three books, including a new textbook on the economics and management of the food industry. His opinion columns appear regularly on Forbes.com and RealClearMarkets.com. He received his Ph.D. in agricultural economics from UC Davis in 1989. He has served the AAEA on numerous committees, is a past co-editor of the AJAE, and was elected an AAEA Fellow in 2013.

What are the biggest challenges and opportunities for AAEA?
AAEA’s challenges lie in remaining relevant and useful as a broad professional association in an age where more narrowly focused groups are proliferating. Our best opportunities lie in our members; by sharing our knowledge and ideas we enhance each other, by communicating that knowledge with others we can improve policy debates and real world outcomes. My number one reason for attending the annual meetings is always to learn. As long as we are seen as that sort of association, we will flourish.

What actions would you initiate to address the challenges and opportunities described in your response to the previous question?
I would focus a lot of attention on the annual meetings. I believe we need to make sure we have informative topics, real world applications, high level economic content, and a schedule that is most conducive to the attendees learning, networking, and believing they had a positive experience at the meetings. We need fewer presentations and more posters so that we can maximize both participation and attendance at sessions (so presenters can benefit from high quality feedback). We need to ensure we don’t have multiple sessions on the same topic at the same time. I believe a few small changes would reap major benefits. I also like and would look to continue or expand the smaller meetings/symposia that AAEA has been sponsoring.

At the end of your three-year term, what changes/new initiatives would you have helped create?
I would hope to have helped make some changes to the meetings format and schedule and to see more topic-focused or regional meetings underway. I would like to see AAEA offer a media training session at the annual meetings and have more emphasis on and assistance in communicating important findings to decision makers.