



May 2016

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International Association of Agricultural Economists

Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear members of the IAAE,

After a tumultuous decade during which food prices soared in 2007-8, paused and then soared again in 2010-11, commodity prices seem to have returned to something approaching a normal state of relatively subdued — and much-less-volatile — prices. Most forecasts now put the “new normal” forecast for most food commodities at levels that would have seemed low a few years ago. This is broadly consistent with what we know about the typical behavior of commodity markets once enough time has elapsed for supply to respond. While an excellent outcome for food consumers, one troubling feature of this outcome is that it might — or might already have — caused policy makers to assume that the problems of agriculture are “solved” and to turn their attention away from the many serious problems that need to be addressed. Getting and keeping the attention of policy makers is likely to require more of our skills of persuasion than during the wild ride of much of the past decade.

As a profession, we are clearly in rude health. Our triennial conference in Milan last August was attended by 1452 members — a record by a substantial margin. For me, however, the highlight of the conference was the extraordinary enthusiasm and commitment of our members. This was really on display in the excellent plenary sessions. But it was equally evident in the Contributed Papers, Organized Symposia and Innovative Sessions. Another example was the enthusiastic participation in the Poster Sessions, organized into U-shaped “rooms” that promoted active discussion — even in the cool of the early morning following active social events.

As part of the Association’s continuing outreach activity, IAAE co-sponsored an Inter-Conference Symposium held in Almaty, Kazakhstan from April 4 to 6 of this year. This Silk-Road Symposium focused on the challenges facing agricultural economists in the Central Asia region — primarily but not exclusively from the former Soviet Union. This region faces many challenges — some associated with the transition from the former central planning system, some associated with infrastructure and regional trade barriers, and some associated with climate change. The symposium drew more than 200 participants from 30 countries and provided an insight into the strength of our profession in this region.

The African Association of Agricultural Economists will be holding its triennial meetings in Addis Ababa, 23-26 September this year. The academic program for this conference is being organized by our President-Elect, Nick Vink, who reports on this conference in more detail later in this newsletter.

Between now and our Board Meeting in September, our Board will be giving a lot of thought to how we might better serve you, our members, in the three-year membership cycle 2017-2019 centered around our next triennial conference, July 28 to August 2, 2018, in Vancouver. If you have any suggestions for things we might do, or do better, please feel free to write to me at w.martin@cgiar.org.

Best regards,

Will Martin

REPORT ON THE SILK ROAD SYMPOSIUM

To help promote the profession internationally, the IAAE sponsors a number of regional inter-Conference Symposia. This April, we worked with the Leibniz Institut of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies (IAMO) and the Kazakh National Agricultural University on the Symposium *Agricultural Transitions along the Silk Road*, which was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan from April 4 to 6, 2016. This Symposium was a great success, with approximately 200 participants from 30 countries and 60 institutions. The conference included 90 presentations (oral papers and posters), with 42 from researchers working at institutions in the Silk Road countries, and another 19 from researchers originating from these countries but currently working abroad. An additional 29 presentations were made by researchers originating from outside the region.

Many of the presentations focused on post-transition issues in the Central Asian countries, including the restructuring of the agricultural sector following privatization, and the challenges of integration between countries in the region. Others addressed issues of climate change, which has arrived with particular force in the region. Details of the program, including many of the papers, are available online.*

A key issue on the table in the closing session, in particular, was how to build on this Symposium to help strengthen work on agricultural economics in the region, and to build better connections with professionals in other regions. Might this be best achieved through participation in the existing regional associations — such as the Asian Society of Agricultural Economists and the European Association of Agricultural Economists — and/or through a new association focused on the challenges of the Silk Road countries? A number of proposals for action were discussed, and we look forward to further progress.

We especially thank our partners — IAMO and the Kazakh National Agricultural University for their excellent organization of the conference. IAAE looks forward to collaborating with agricultural economists in Central Asia towards establishing new institutional network.

* <https://www.conftool.net/silkroad2016/sessions.php>

UPCOMING: AFRICAN ASSOCIATION MEETINGS IN ADDIS ABABA, SEPTEMBER 2016

The African Association of Agricultural Economists will be holding its 5th International Conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from September 23 to 26, 2016. The theme of the conference is “Transforming smallholder agriculture in

Africa: The role of policy and governance.” The Conference will take place at the United Nations Conference Centre in Addis Ababa. The deadline for contributed paper submissions has passed; submissions are being reviewed and authors will be notified about acceptance by June 6. Early bird registration is open and will close on June 20. For more information, contact the Local Organizing Committee at conference@aaae-africa.org and visit the conference website at aaae2016.org.

JOURNAL BUSINESS

It has been another year of success for the IAAE journal, *Agricultural Economics*. Some of the highlights include:

At the Milan meeting last summer we presented the annual award for best article in *Agricultural Economics* in 2014. This went to Joseph V. Balagtas, Humnath Bhandari, Ellanie R. Cabrera, Samarendu Mohanty and Mahabub Hossain for their paper “Did the Commodity Price Spike Increase Rural Poverty? Evidence from a Long-Run Panel in Bangladesh”, published in volume 45 (2014), pp. 303–312.

Our award for best paper published in 2015 is currently under consideration and will be presented in conjunction with the African Association of Agricultural Economics meetings in September in Addis Ababa. Stay tuned for that announcement!

Several colleagues have joined us as new Associate Editors. These are Sven Anders, Hung-Hao Chang, Sergio Gomez y Paloma, Arne Henningsen, Jose M. Gil, Sergio Lence, Saweda Liverpool-Tasie, Garnesh-Kumar, Timothy Park, J.V. Meenakshi, Agnes Quisumbing, and Paswel Marenya.

Our sincere thanks go out to the entire team for their service and commitment to our community of scholars. The entire editorial team can be found listed at the journal’s web site: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/%28ISSN%291574-0862/homepage/EditorialBoard.html>.

With the addition of Ashok Mishra as co-Editor, after Gerald Shively stepped down in June 2015, we have continued to deal with the rising tide of submissions. Regular submissions to the journal continue to rise, and we thank all our authors, associate editors and referees, for their many contributions. We are especially pleased to see more than half of our articles accompanied by data archives, to help others replicate and build on these papers.

As usual, we look forward to hearing from you, by email at aabdula@food-econ.uni-kiel.de or the websites listed below.

Awudu Abdulai and Ashok Mishra
Co-Editors, *Agricultural Economics*

General info: www.iaae-agecon.org/journal/journal.html
Journal contents: www.blackwell-synergy.com/loi/agec
Article submission: www.editorialexpress.com/agecon

IAAE Web Site Job Postings

Requests for job postings, along with a check for \$200 for each listing for international or regional organizations and \$300 for postings from other organizations, should be sent to the IAAE, 555 E Wells St., Suite 1100, Milwaukee, WI 53202, U.S.A. Postings of up to 300 words will generally be linked to the complete job posting on the organization's own website and maintained for 90 days maximum.

IAAE Newsletter

The IAAE Newsletter (ISSN 1052-5815) is published semiannually by the IAAE. News Alerts are published periodically to provide new information. Information for the **October 2016** issue must reach the IAAE Secretary-Treasurer's office by October 10, 2016 (contact on Page 1). Every effort will be made to include the material provided. IAAE reserves the right to select and shorten items for publication.