

## **REVIEW:**

### **TOMORROW'S AGRICULTURE: INCENTIVES, INSTITUTIONS, INFRASTRUCTURE AND INNOVATIONS<sup>1</sup>**

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This highly successful conference was preceded by two workshops, one in Spatial Data Analysis and the other on Economic Analysis of Food Security Policy. Both workshops provided an overview of analytical techniques for policy applications. They included lectures, discussions and many real world examples.

The main conference consisted of the Presidential Address, the Elmhirst lecture, invited panel sessions, plenary sessions, 135 contributed papers, 195 poster papers and some 400 individual presentations. South Africa was represented by 16 agricultural economists from various universities and agro industries. All of them made valuable contributions through their presentations.

Douglas Hedley (Canada) delivered the presidential address and announced the venue for the next IAAE Conference, which is to be held in Durban, South Africa in 2003.

The prestigious Elmhirst lecture was delivered by Professor James Bonnen (Michigan State University, USA) titled: The Transformation of Agriculture and the World Economy: Challenges for the Governance of Agriculture and for the Profession. This was followed by five concurrent sessions of panel discussions on:

- Gender Perspectives on Land Rights, Intrahousehold Allocations and Productivity;
- Political Economy of Agricultural Reforms in Central and Eastern Europe;

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- Livestock Revolution in Developing Countries;
- Sub-Sahara Africa: Same Old Challenges for Sub-Sahara Africa in the New Millennium: Widespread Poverty, Environmental Degradation and Shrinking Opportunities in a Globalised Market; and
- Agro industrialisation, Globalisation and International Development.

The main theme of the first plenary session was Globalisation of the Food and Agricultural Economy. In this session Walter P Falcon delivered a paper on "Globalisation of Proprietary Technology: New Partnerships, Problems and Potential." He argued that if the 70 poorest nations are to reap the benefits of 21<sup>st</sup> century research they will probably need assistance from intermediary agencies who can help transform, adapt, and develop new forms of technology for orphan crops and lagging regions. Investments in human resources should be increased substantially.

Another contribution was by Klaus M Leisinger on "The Political Economy of Agricultural Biotechnology for the Developing World". According to him public acceptance of agricultural biotechnology will have a direct influence on society and the economy.

The second plenary session dealt with Improved Market Incentives in Transition Economies, and included presentations by:

- J Huang (China) & S Roselle (USA) "Growth, Productivity and Efficiency: An Assessment of 20 years of China's Agricultural Reform";
- J Swinnen (Belgium) "Reform Policies of Initial Conditions: What caused Different Performances of Agrarian Reforms in Transitional Countries?" ;
- E Serova (Russia ) "Emerging Agri-Food Markets: Russian Experience"; and
- A Gulati (India) "Towards Improved Market Incentives in South Asia".

The theme of the third plenary session was Agricultural Research, Technology Development and Institutions. The papers presented included the following: M Rosengrant (USA) "Agricultural Research Technology and World Food Markets".

W Huffman (USA). "Human Capital for agriculture: Prospects and Potential." According to him, the big payout to agriculture from highly skilled labour comes from knowledge creation through institutionalised research and development.

J Alston (Australia) "Reassessing Research Returns: Attribution and other Problems."

R Johnson (New Zealand) "The Role of Institutions in Policy Formulation and Delivery."

The fourth plenary session, Making Agriculture Environmentally Safe, included presentation by

G Norton (USA) "Precision Agriculture: Global Prospects and Environmental Implications";

M Smale (USA) "Crop Genetic Diversity in Modern Agriculture: What it is, Where it is, and Where to maintain it";

K Otsuka (Japan) "Population Pressure, Land Tenure and Natural Resource Management"; and

H Binswanger & E Lutz (World Bank) "Agricultural Trade Barriers, Trade Negotiations and the Interests of Developing Countries." They argued that developing countries will have to continue their agricultural policy reforms and that the main focus has to be on the constraints on agricultural trade imposed by developed countries as well as on the prospects for reducing them in the current round of WTO negotiations. Contributed papers with South African relevance were from S Gay & WL Nieuwoudt, "Effects of the European Union Tariffs on the South African Fresh Orange Industry." RM Armitage, WL Nieuwoudt and GR Backeberg "Incentives for Tradable Water Rights: Two case studies in South Africa showed that water rights transferred to farmers with the highest return per unit of water applied."

P de Bruyn, JN de Bruyn, N Vink and J Kirsten, "How Transaction Costs Influence Cattle Marketing Decisions in the Northern Communal Areas of Namibia." They show that transaction cost variables have a significant effect on the preparation of cattle sold to Meatco, and thus indirectly on the choice of marketing channels.

J van Zyl, J van Rooyen, J Kirsten and T Doyer presented an invited paper, "Agricultural Economics Curricula: Strategies for change." Their presentation focussed on the curriculum transformation at the University of Pretoria.

Another highlight for South African was the awarding of Honorary membership to Prof WL Nieuwoudt and the election of Prof J van Zyl to the IAAE executive. Both are a first for South Africa.

A Compact Disc containing some of the main papers and the abstracts of contributed papers and the list of posters and computer demonstrations are available at the editor's office.