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The Human Factor in Agricultural Management

**Proceedings of the First I.A.A.E. Intereuropean Seminar
Warsaw, May 1968**

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Preface

The activity of the International Association of Agricultural Economists (IAAE) has so far been centred around the arrangement of international conferences, which usually take place at three-year intervals. Owing to the fact that IAAE has become more and more global in character, the length of the period before the conferences return to a certain continent is likely to become prolonged. There has therefore arisen an urgent need for IAAE to strengthen the intracontinental regional activity during the interval between the conferences. Also the fact that the number of members has steadily increased—a trend that is anticipated to continue—has contributed to a rising demand for the maintaining of intraregional contacts with members during the periods intervening between the conferences.

This seminar held in Warsaw, Poland, during the period 27 May-1 June 1968 constitutes the first attempt to accede to this demand. Being optimists by nature, we have called this gathering "The First IAAE Intereuropean Seminar" dealing with the theme "The Human Factor in Agricultural Management".

Since World War II, two international organizations in particular, i.e. the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have carried out valuable research work showing the growth of national income in different countries and have mapped out the factors that have influenced the increase. It was observed in this connection that the differences did not depend upon the capital formation to as great an extent as had been assumed. One can agree with the opinion, even if rather summarily expressed, that the rate of economic growth depends to about a half on the combined input of capital and labour, while the other half is ascribable to a group that is designated by a variety of terms, such as technical improvements, level of knowledge and skill, more effective organization, and so on. A favourite child has many names.

We shall perhaps never be able to obtain a thoroughly exhaustive concept of what enters into knowledge and skill, for they are connected with so many different factors, beginning with the general economic policy pursued by the state and the possibilities which this provides for

economic growth in general, down to the personal characteristics of the human beings. It is certain, however, that behind these factors there lies the decisive one: mental ability. It is therefore comprehensible that in the sphere of agriculture, too, the human factor being given increasing attention both among research workers as well as among persons engaged in this occupation themselves.

So it certainly was not by chance that the human factor in agricultural management was selected as the theme of our Seminar. Agricultural economists in countries with a private entrepreneurial economy as well as in countries with a centrally planned economy entertain at the present time a growing interest in management of the enterprise. Persons representing 10 countries delivered papers at the first Seminar of IAAE.

The Seminar was arranged jointly with the Polish Academy of Sciences. Thanks to the favourable attitude of, and financial aid from, the Polish Academy of Sciences it is possible to publish the papers read during the Seminar. IAAE feels deep gratitude for this generosity, which renders it possible to spread knowledge of the subjects discussed at the Seminar to a wider public.

I deem it a most agreeable duty to extend cordial thanks to all who read papers at the Seminar. In particular I wish to thank the local Polish organisers of the Seminar who, with Professor Richard Manteuffel as the prime mover, spared neither time nor trouble in making excellent arrangements. We are also thankful that, in connection with the Seminar, an opportunity was provided to the participants to study, during a tree-day excursion, the agriculture of Poland and to obtain an insight into its current questions and problem solutions.

Without any doubt the acquaintanceships and friendships that spring up at such an occasion will later on materialise into exchanges of information and plans which will further the common good. IAAE does therefore hope that similar regional seminars will be arranged in the future, more especially in the developing continents.

Nils Westermarck

Helsinki in November 1968