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2018 AARES Distinguished Fellows

Wendy Umberger



Wendy J. Umberger is Professor of Agricultural and Food Economics and the Executive Director (Foundation) of the Centre for Global Food and Resources at the University of Adelaide. Whilst growing up on her family farm in South Dakota, USA, she assisted in all aspects of raising beef and dairy cattle and farming small grains. This early involvement in agriculture inspired her passion and desire to contribute to the agricultural sector's sustainability, eventually leading her to pursue a career in agricultural economics and academia. In addition to her academic career, Wendy is the very proud parent of a daughter, Grace (age 7), and two adult stepchildren, Breeana and Joshua, as well as a wife to Michael ('Mick').

Since approximately 2003, Wendy has been a continual and passionate supporter of AARES. She first became a member of the North American branch, and after relocating to Adelaide (2006), she became active in the SA Branch and on Federal Council. In particular, during her time in the roles of President-Elect (2015–2016), President (2016–2017) and Immediate Past President (2017–2018) she worked closely with other members of the AARES Executive and Federal Council to lead the Society through a significant strategic planning exercise.

Wendy holds a BSc in animal science (1996) and a MSc in economics (1998) from South Dakota State University. Her PhD in Agricultural Economics was completed at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (2001) whilst on a USDA National Needs Agribusiness Fellowship. Publications

based on her PhD research were some of the first in the literature to use experimental auctions to measure willingness-to-pay for quality attributes in food.

Wendy was Assistant and Associate Professor in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics (DARE) at Colorado State University (CSU) from 2001 to 2007. At CSU, she worked closely with animal, range and veterinary scientists; industry; and government on whole-of-chain issues including food safety; food quality; and traceability, certification and labelling programmes for origin and other credence attributes. This work resulted in several publications, including a highly cited 2007 Food Policy article with Professor Maria Loureiro titled: 'A choice experiment model for beef: What US consumer responses tell us about relative preferences for food safety, country-of-origin labeling and traceability'. She also taught courses in agricultural policy, marketing, econometrics, agricultural production economics and integrated resource management, and supervised postgraduate research students in DARE and animal science.

Wendy was heavily involved in the US Western Extension Marketing Committee (WEMC) from 2001 to 2007 (Chair, 2005 to 2007), delivering extension programmes on commodity marketing; direct and niche marketing of agricultural products; certification and labelling of credence attributes; and livestock identification and traceability programmes. She led the WEMC project, 'U.S. Livestock Identification Systems: Risk Management and Market Opportunities', which won a 2007 American Agricultural Economics Association Outstanding Group Extension Award.

In 2006, Wendy joined the University of Adelaide. She and Professor Randy Stringer established a still successful postgraduate agricultural business degree programme, a higher degree by research training programme and research projects across Australasia. In 2013, Wendy became the Foundation Director of Global Food Studies. Under Wendy's leadership, GFS grew from a small team to what is now the Centre for Global Food and Resources (GFAR). GFAR has a significant applied research profile, with a team of approximately 20 academics specialising in agricultural, food, water, resource and environmental economics, policy and agribusiness, and students from nearly every continent. GFAR has re-invigorated agricultural economics and agribusiness at the University of Adelaide.

Wendy's recent research addresses issues across Australasia including food security (food safety issues and drivers and implications of diet and nutrition transition); consumer behaviour with respect to credence attributes and implications for food value chains; and producer behaviour related to drivers of adoption. She is an author or co-author of over 130 publications, including peer-reviewed articles published in agricultural economics, agribusiness, consumer behaviour, animal science, meat science, food science, nutrition and public health journals. According to REPEC, she is ranked in the top 25% of authors in economics from Australian institutions. In the last decade, as the principal or chief investigator she has led over 7 million dollars of

research projects. She has also been the principal or co-supervisor of 15 PhD students enrolled at the University of Adelaide.

Wendy is passionate about ensuring her research and teaching are relevant. As such, she regularly accepts invitations to speak at industry and government events nationally as well as globally. She also serves or has served on numerous industry and government advisory and governance boards and panels. She is currently an honorary Fellow of Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) (2016-), serves on the Governance Board of The International Crop Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (2015-), and is Independent Director of Grain Producers South Australia (2017-).