

NEW LANDSCAPES AND NEW MANDATES FOR AGRICULTURE
30th International Conference of Agricultural Economists
Westin Bayshore, Vancouver, Canada
July 28 - August 02, 2018



The 30th International Conference of Agricultural Economists (ICAE) was organized at Westin Bayshore, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada from July 28 to August 02, 2018. Prakash P, Sangeetha V and Sendhil R reflect on their participation at this event.

THE CONTEXT

The flagship conference of the International Association of Agricultural Economists (IAAE) – 30th International Conference of Agricultural Economists – was organized at the Westin Bayshore, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada from July 28 to August 02 2018 (<http://www.icae2018.com/>). The Local Organising Committee in Canada (LOCC) hosted ICAE 2018. Around 1200 participants attended this conference. The attendees came from many countries across the world (including many Asian countries). About 45 delegates from India, including us, attended the conference that included many agricultural economists, development practitioners, policymakers, academicians, researchers, and students.



Indian Delegates at the 30th International Conference of Agricultural Economists

The main theme of this conference, “New Landscapes and New Mandates for Agriculture,” aptly focused on the changing landscape and the critical role of agriculture in addressing emerging trends and challenges. The ICAE program committee was led by Nick Vink of Stellenbosch University, South Africa. The programme consisted of pre-conference workshops, keynote sessions, invited panels, parallel sessions with oral and visual presentations, and a conference tour. A total of 105 sessions and 1036 presentations were on offer at the conference.

Box 1: The International Association of Agricultural Economists (IAAE)

The International Association of Agricultural Economists (IAAE) is a worldwide association of agricultural economists and others involved with agricultural economic problems pertaining to the use of renewable resources and the environment.

It aims to:

- foster the application of agricultural economics to improve rural economic and social conditions;
- advance knowledge of agriculture's economic organization; and
- facilitate communication and exchange of information among those concerned with rural welfare.

The IAAE flagship conference – International Conference of Agricultural Economists (ICAE) – is held every 3 years and attracts about a thousand members from around the world. The 31st conference of ICAE will be held in New Delhi, India, in 2021.

PROGRAMME

Inaugural Session

The meeting started with the welcome and presidential address by Chris Forbes, Deputy Minister, AAFC; Nick Vink, Programme Chair; and Will Martin, IAAE President. Dr Martin laid stress on the drastic changes occurring in food and trade policies, and the impact of food prices on poverty and food security in many developing countries.

Technical Sessions

The conference included pre-conference workshops, keynote presentations, plenary sessions, parallel oral presentations, oral presentations, e-poster presentations, and a conference tour. A total of seven plenary sessions were the following: Welcome and opening session; Agricultural technology – the data revolution; The future of food systems in developing countries; New landscapes and challenges amidst Africa's rapidly transforming food systems; Producing more with less: agriculture, land use and ecosystems; Insights from a behavioural lens: why perceptions and diversity matter; Award distribution and closing ceremony. There were seventeen invited panel sessions, eight parallel sessions including oral, visual and e-poster presentations at the conference. At the end of second day of the conference, there was a movie screening on **Food Evolution**. At the end of the conference, the awards, namely the TW Schultz Award, the Nils Westermarck Award and the Uma Lele Prize, were given away to the researchers.

Visual Presentations

A total of eight parallel sessions were organized for making visual and oral presentations. The three of us made visual presentations on the following topics:

- I. Status, performance and impact of sweet potato cultivation on farming communities of Odisha, India – **Prakash P**;
- II. Nutritional status and food consumption pattern in India: A study in disadvantaged areas of Madhya Pradesh – **Sangeetha V**;
- III. Perceptions, yield sensitivity and adaptation to climate change: Insights from wheat production in India – **Sendhil R**.

It was very interesting to note that the visuals were given the same importance as the oral presentation, which is generally not the case in many such conferences and seminars.



Prakash P made a presentation on ‘The status, performance and impact of sweet potato cultivation on farming communities of Odisha, India’ on July 29, 2018, wherein he stressed that sweet potato production is profitable. The higher yield had improved its profitability for farmers. He also stressed that value-added products need to be promoted for increasing farmers’ incomes. Furthermore, all these need to be supported through a proper institutional mechanism that can make sweet potato farming sustainable in the near future.



Sangeetha V presented her paper on ‘Nutritional status and food consumption pattern in India: A study in disadvantaged areas of Madhya Pradesh’, on July 29, 2018. She emphasized that dietary diversity is poor and efforts to improve nutritional status must address the issue of nutrition education, dietary diversity and nutrition-sensitive agriculture.



Sendhil R presented his paper on ‘Perception, yield sensitivity and adaptation strategies to climate change: Insights from wheat production in India’ on July 29, 2018, where he stressed that research on identifying sensitive stages for all wheat growing districts should be prioritized, followed by developing region-specific climate-smart technologies. He also pointed out that climate-smart farming practices and adaptation strategies assume greater significance while managing yield sensitivity for ensuring sustainable production.

Oral Presentations

Sendhil R, as co-author, also presented another paper on ‘Decontrolling, price transmission and market Integration of sugar sector in India vis-à-vis global market’ on July 31, 2018. Here he highlighted the fact that poorly integrated markets warrant interventions along the commodity value chain so as to enhance competitiveness. Local sugar mills having a strong hold in regional markets should take responsibility for promoting sustainable business practices along the sugar value chain – for promoting sustainability in the overall market system. Further, he pointed out that for better price signals in domestic markets, the decontrol of sugar prices should be accompanied by measures to strengthen free trade, such as reduction in the duties for trade along with stable export and import policies.



FIELD VISIT – VANCOUVER HARBOUR BOAT AND A SMALL FRUIT FARM

On 31 July 2018, we visited a Vancouver harbour boat and a small fruit farm. This visit focussed on major grain and commodity export terminals, especially on berry exports – such as blueberries, cranberries and raspberries. It was an excellent learning experience as it helped the participants to learn in particular about the agricultural and commercial activities of Vancouver city. This was a unique opportunity and the participants were split into various groups and visited various places as part of the conference tour.



Small Fruit Farm



Vancouver Harbour

OUR IMPRESSIONS

Participants & Presentations: The conference was announced well in advance with a properly drafted brochure of the meeting. It was different from other conferences where the major focus was on the total number of participants and presentations. A similar type of conference was observed in Bangkok, Thailand during January 11-13, 2017. Furthermore, the participants were very active in attending the sessions of the conference. As there were plenty of sessions, we had an option to choose/attend the ones with topics most interesting to us. The help team was present at the registration desk to help and guide the participants on sessions.

Time Management: All sessions including the welcome and presidential address ended well within the stipulated time. The presentations were of good quality and papers were in the final stage of uploading to AgEcon search (<https://ageconsearch.umn.edu/?ln=en>) as conference papers. The presenter of the last

paper was the moderator of the session and there was no chair/co-chair for the sessions, hence there were no formalities like welcome and vote of thanks. This type of management created a friendly environment for the presenters. It helped moderators to manage sessions in a timely and effective manner, and this provided more time for discussions after each presentation.

Use of Social Media: The conference used social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, etc., for extensive publicity through which announcements and schedules were well communicated. One important thing which we noticed was that there was no printed program schedule. It was emailed to participants. And every day, there was a reminder via email regarding the conference program. And the details of the organized sessions were already available on the conference website.

FINAL REMARKS

Our participation in the conference greatly benefited us in terms of gaining more information and knowledge, along with exposure that would go on to help us build a professional network. We gained good information from different sessions and from plenary sessions and speakers. This conference gave us an opportunity to interact with researchers from around the world, share ideas/experiences with them, and establish new professional connections.

Mr Prakash P is a Scientist with ICAR-Central Tuber Crops Research Institute (ICAR-CTCRI), Thiruvananthapuram (India). (prakashiri@yahoo.com).

Dr Sangeetha V is a Scientist with ICAR-Indian Institute of Agricultural Research (ICAR-IARI), New Delhi (India). (sangeeq@gmail.com).

Dr Sendhil R is a Scientist with ICAR-Indian Institute of Wheat and Barley Research (ICAR-IIWBR), Karnal, Haryana (India). (r.sendhil@gmail.com).

All three scientists' visits were funded by the International Conference of Agricultural Economists (ICAE 2018), Vancouver, Canada.

**AESA Secretariat: Centre for Research on Innovation and Science Policy (CRISP),
Road No 10, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad 500034, India
www.aesa-gfras.net Email: aesanetwork@gmail.com**