

Dear friends and colleagues,

Prepare yourselves for “disrupting Agri-Food Landscapes”!

IFAMA’s vision of “**food security by 2050**” constitutes a formidable challenge – feeding 70 billion people by 2050: ensuring that good, safe and healthy food moves sustainably and efficiently through the value chain to reach consumers – rich and poor - all over the planet.

May I remind you “**people feed the world** “. This is the mission and passion that unifies us in IFAMA. We need your support in accomplishing our mission. So thank you for considering investing your time and interest to participate in the 2017 IFAMA World Conference, jointly organised by IFAMA and Purdue University Centre for Food and Agricultural Business.

We will meet in Miami during a time when the agribusiness and food management landscape is rapidly and dramatically changing. Transformation of the agri-food system as we know it today, will be dramatic, often disruptive. The prospects of a Global Agricultural Revolution is not a remote idea anymore; it has rather become a question of “what, where and what next” and “how can we exploit it best”. Mary Shelman, a former IFAMA president refer to “**disruptive innovations**” because it will create new markets, new value networks and new players, disrupting existing markets and establishments, changing current ways of doing things. Consider the following:

- The increased application of productivity increasing technological innovation, notably through the “digital revolution”- flying drones, cattle facial recognition, robots and the “internet of things”. All this will dramatically impact on all in the global and local agri-food value chains;
- Increased “climate smart “ production systems to meet the demands of climate and environmental changes and natural resource scarcities , in particular water -all this changing the spatial patterns of production
- The power of Big Data analytics- a new competitive advantage to drive strategies of agri-food companies, industries and governments and supporting policies;
- The impacts of changing trade regimes i.e. “country first” approaches vs expanding open markets vs regional markets and the volatility and disruptions brought about by such changes with many implications for competitive performances in the agri-food system;
- New ownership structures of production factors and resources within the agri-food system- ranging from private ownership and shareholding to broad based community participation and shared value governance systems;
- Mass urbanisation with new food delivery systems following “short value chains” and allowing “ fresh” for all and on demand; and
- Increasingly interactive and virtual educational institutions, linking industry, academy and research/advisory systems like never before in order to develop talent and future leaders for the task of operating in volatile and disruptive business environments; and
- All the above with dramatic Impact throughout the agribusiness and food system, with an array of business, social, environmental, economic, legal and ethical implications and challenges.

The IFAMA forum and network clearly provides a perfect platform to consider and analyse and learn more about these emerging disruptive agri-food business landscapes. The Miami 2017 conference provides the platform for:

- top researchers and academics to participate in the Scientific Symposium, driven by Dr Vicky Salin from Texas A & M, with more than 200 peer reviewed papers and discussion sessions;
- around 20 student agribusiness teams from universities all over the globe, partly sponsored by IFAMA members, to contest the Student Case Study Competition;
- Eight Executive Round Tables, organised by Dr Allan Gray, CAB Purdue University, with top agribusiness and food industry panellists, exploring forces and changes that will drive the global agri-food system over the next decade; and
- Various informal networking sessions where participants “meet and greet” executives, academics and distinguished IFAMA fellows to discuss, question and debate, socialise and engage in the comfortable ambience of the Marriott, Key Biscayne Resort.

I encourage you to take full advantage of this unique opportunity and to engage across sectors, cultures, nations. This is, and have been for 28 years, one of the special values that brings IFAMA to each of us and in the words of a previous IFAMA president, Chad Simons “let’s be bold with our perspectives, ask challenging questions and seek new ways to collaborate – this is how we innovate and how our industry advances”

Thanks to the conference organising committee (Alan Gray and April Sauer of CFAB and Francesco Braga, CEO IFAMA) for a job well done; and all our sponsors too.

Do not forget to enjoy yourselves; remember - “People feed the World”!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Johan van Rooyen', written in a cursive style.

Johan van Rooyen

President, IFAMA