

Nominee: **Prof. MICHELE DE BENEDICTIS**

(Professor Emeritus, University of Rome “La Sapienza”, Italy).

Michele De Benedictis, born in 1927, was the first Italian to earn a Ph.D in the U.S. in Agricultural Economics (Iowa State. 1957).

After a two-year appointment with FAO in Latin America, his professional career in Italy can be divided into three periods:

- the first one – from 1959 to 1978 – at the University of Naples and at the *Centro di Specializzazione e Ricerche Economico-Agrarie per il Mezzogiorno* (Advanced Training and Research Center in Agricultural Economics for Southern Italy) in Portici;
- the second one – from 1978 to 1996 – at the University of Rome "La Sapienza";
- the third one – since 1996 – with the *Associazione per studi e ricerche Manlio Rossi-Doria* (Rossi-Doria Studies and Research Association).

In 1989 he was the first agricultural economist to be elected Fellow of the *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*, the most prestigious Italian Scientific Academy, established in 1555 (Galileo Galilei was one of the first members and among the International Fellows for Economics are W. Leontief, M. Friedman, P. Samuelson, A. Hirschman, R. Solow, F. Modigliani, J. Buchanan, and D. Patinkin).

In 2000 he was awarded Lifetime Membership by the International Association of Agricultural Economists.

He is emeritus member of the European Association of Agricultural Economists since 2008.

We believe Michele De Benedictis achievements in research and teaching and his record in services rendered to the profession make him well deserved to be elected Fellow of the AIEAA.

Research

During the years at the Portici Center, his research interests concentrated in two main areas:

- theoretical issues and quantitative methods applied to production economics: his work was instrumental in accelerating the “modernization” of Italian agricultural economics research in this area;
- agricultural production and structural adjustment in Agriculture in Southern Italy, with particular emphasis on issues linked to efficiency and equity.

In 1979 Michele De Benedictis published (with Vincenzo Cosentino) *Economia dell'Azienda Agraria*, a production economics textbook that made profound innovations in the traditional teaching of farm management in Italy and that represents the major output of his research efforts during this period. In 1980, the book received the Saint Vincent Award in Economics, a prize decided by a panel of leading Italian economists. The professional success of this book is considerable. It has been the main reference on farm management for several generation of Italian agricultural economists and, even after many years since its publication, it is still widely used as a textbook in undergraduate classes both in the Faculties of Agricultural Sciences and Economics.

Starting from the second half of the seventies, Michele De Benedictis research interests moved toward agricultural policy, with specific attention to the problems of the Common Agricultural Policy, international economics and international trade and, more recently, neo-institutional economics and its potential implications for agricultural economics research. The Reports on the Common Agricultural Policy he prepared from 1976 to 1986 for the Italian National Council of Economy and Employment combine analytical rigor and political insight and have received wide recognition in Italy. The book *Struttura degli scambi agroalimentari e politica agraria* (Structure of agricultural trade and agricultural policy) – edited with Fabrizio De Filippis – opened-up a research area that had been largely ignored so far in Italian agricultural economics research.

Teaching

There is no one element that has been more influential than his association with the *Centro di Specializzazione e Ricerche Economico-Agrarie per il Mezzogiorno* (Advanced Training and Research Center in Agricultural Economics for Southern Italy) in Portici. There, as a scholar and research manager, he made notable contributions in forging a new spirit of collaboration between agricultural economists, development economists, and statisticians. As a manager, he initiated several mentoring programs that have guided dozens of emerging professionals in agricultural economics and other social sciences. By directing graduate students, collaborating with junior faculty, and participating in regional, national and international initiatives he encouraged productive research in agricultural economics and development economics disciplines. Many of his students are now productive researchers, university professors and administrators or business leaders.

In the initial period of his years at the Center, his main contribution was a radical innovation – with respect to the situation prevailing in Italy at the time – in teaching and research methods in agricultural economics. Thanks also to the intense collaboration with faculty at the University of California at Berkeley and Davis (George Bressler, Sidney Hoos, George Kuznets, Gerald W. Dean, among the others) the Graduate Program at the Portici Center quickly became the place where young graduates from all over the country interested in pursuing an academic career in agricultural economics would come. A good indicator of the role played by the Center is given by two facts:

- the Center started to offer a two-years graduate program in 1960 while graduate programs in Italian Universities began only in the middle 1980s;
- a sizeable fraction of professors of agricultural economics in Italian academic institutions today are graduates of the Center in the 1960s and 1970s.

Michele De Benedictis contributed in a decisive manner to the Center's performance by holding major responsibilities in:

- designing the graduate program;
- coordinating teaching and research activities in the area of production economics;
- holding the position of Center's Vice-Director from 1968 to 1975 and Director from 1975 to 1978.

In the second period, Michele De Benedictis taught agricultural economics and policy at the University of Rome “La Sapienza”, the largest Italian university, in the College of Economics. He was a faculty of the Department of Public Economics and held the position of Department Chair from 1987 to 1988. After retirement he was

acknowledged with the title of “Professor Emeritus” in recognition of his outstanding academic and professional record.

Administration

- From 1976 to 1990 the President of Italy appointed Michele De Benedictis to the Italian National Council of Economy and Employment, a constitutional body whose task is to advise the Government and Parliament on economic and social issues.
- From 1984 to 1991 the Italian Minister of Agriculture appointed him to the Board of the *Istituto Nazionale di Economia Agraria* (Italian National Institute of Agricultural Economics).
- From 1984 to 1992 he was member of the *Consiglio Superiore dell'Agricoltura e delle Foreste* (National Council for Agriculture and Forestry).
- Since 1993 he has been Vice-President of the *Associazione Nazionale degli Interessi del Mezzogiorno d'Italia* (National Association of the Needs of Southern Italy).

Service to the profession

Michele De Benedictis is a commendable professional servant. He served as editor for two journals, revolutionizing the *Rivista di Economia Agraria's* management structure, and participated actively in the preliminary work for the establishment of the *European Review of Agricultural Economics*. As editor or member of editorial boards Michele De Benedictis provided intellectual leadership, efficiency, and fairness, and he was always mindful of the stewardship responsibilities of maintaining quality and standards.

During the 1970s Michele De Benedictis innovative role in teaching and research in agricultural economics and his professional leadership have been increasingly recognized at the national and international levels:

- From 1976 to 1980 he was appointed Secretary-Treasurer of the Italian Association of Agricultural Economics.
- From 1976 to 1980 he was appointed Editor of the *Rivista di Economia Agraria*, at the time by large the main scientific Journal in agricultural economics in Italy. Under his editorship, the scientific standard of the journal increased considerably, a procedure of rigorous peer reviewing of submitted articles was introduced, and the Journal's methodological and thematic horizons widened.
- In 1981 he played a major role in the creation and editorial management of *La Questione Agraria*, a Journal aimed at enlarging the research horizons of agricultural economics, promoting international cooperation between Italian and foreign agricultural economists, and fostering interdisciplinary research.
- In 1996 he was among the founders of the *Associazione per Studi e Ricerche Manlio Rossi-Doria* of which he remains President so far.

Michele De Benedictis career shows a long lasting concern for strengthening the connections between Italian agricultural economics and teaching and research in the international sphere:

- He participated actively in the preliminary work for the establishment of the European Association of Agricultural Economics and of the *European Review of Agricultural Economics*.

- He served on the Editorial Board of the journal *Agricultural Economics* from 1985 to 1991.
- He participated actively in the International Association of Agricultural Economics, the European Association for Agricultural Economics, the Agricultural Economics Society and in the *Societe Francaise d'Economie Rurale* delivering invited papers and acting on the program in their meetings.
- He served as visiting assistant professor at the University of California at Berkeley (1964-65) – as a Fulbright Scholar – and as a visiting professor at the Universidade Federal Rural de Rio de Janeiro (1993).

Publications

The full list includes almost 150 titles. Here we mention few of the most relevant ones from an international perspective:

1. «Intratemporal Resource Efficiencies in Leasing Systems – An application of Linear Programming», *Dissertation abstracts*, n. 5, 1958.
2. «Identification and Measurement of Inefficiencies in Leasing Systems» (with John F. Timmons), *Research Bulletin 490*, Iowa State University, January 1961.
3. *Coffee in Latin America: Brazil, State of Sao Paulo, Part I and Part II A: Case Study of Thirty-three Typical Coffee Farms*, Fao and U.N. Economic Commission for Latin America, Mexico City, 1960.
4. «Les problèmes et les méthodes de la gestion de l'exploitation et de l'amélioration de l'efficacité dans les territoire à agriculture paysanne», Paper presented at the United Nation Conference on the Application of Science and Technologies to Support Development in Less Developed Regions, November, 1962.
5. *Models d'exploitation agricoles. Leur application en Italie*, CEE, 1963.
6. «A model of Economic Development for Peasant Farms in Southern Italy» (with G. W. Dean), *Journal of Farm Economics*, May 1964.
7. «Extent of Gaps between Plans and Realization», in *Economic Models and Quantitative Methods for Decision and Planning in Agriculture*, Iowa State University Press, 1971.
8. «Potential Use of Mansholt Plan for Restructuring Agriculture in the Italian Mezzogiorno» (with G.W. Dean, G. Fabiani, R. Fanfani, and G. Marengo), *European Economic Review*, n. 1, 1972.
9. «Discussion of C.D. Throsby "New Methodologies in Agricultural Production Economics: A Review"», in *The Future of Agriculture. Technologies, Policies and Adjustments*, Oxford Agricultural Economics Institute, 1974, pp. 183-188.
10. «Agricultural Development in Italy: National Problems in a Community Framework», *Journal of Agricultural Economics*, September 1981.
11. «Les services de vulgarisation dans une agriculture hétérogène - Le cas de l'Italie», *Economie Rurale*, n. 159, janv.-fév., 1984.
12. «Italy: Fragmentation of Policies and Research Efforts», *European Review of Agricultural Economics*, vol. 13, n. 3, 1986.

13. *Agricultural Policy Formation in the European Community: The Birth of Milk Quotas and CAP Reform* (with M. Petit, D. Britton, M. De Groot, W. Henrichsmeyer and F. Lechi), Elsevier, Amsterdam, 1987.
14. *Desenvolvimento Agrícola e Políticas para a Agricultura: Trinta Anos de Experiências na Comunidade Europeia*, «Estudos em desenvolvimento agrícola», n. 1 del Curso de Pós-graduação em desenvolvimento agrícola - CPDA dell'Universidade Federal Rural do Rio de Janeiro, April 1990.
15. «Social and Economic Consequences of EEC Agricultural Policies» (with F. De Filippis and L. Salvatici) in A. Bonanno (ed.), *Agrarian Policies and Agricultural Systems*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1990.
16. «Between Scylla and Charibdys: Agricultural Economists' Navigation Around Free Trade and Protectionism» (with F. De Filippis and L. Salvatici), *European Review of Agricultural Economics*, n. 18., 1991, pp. 311-337.
17. «Nature and Causes of CAP Changes in the 80s and Tentative Exploration of Potential Scenarios» (with F. de Filippis and L. Salvatici), in G. Anania, C. Carter, A.F. Mc Calla (eds.), *Agricultural Trade Conflicts and GATT. New Dimensions in North-American European Trade Relations*, Westview Press, Boulder, 1994.
18. «Rural and Environmental Issues at Stake in CAP's Future», in O. Ferro (ed.), *What Future for the Cap? Perspectives and Expectations for the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union*, Wisserischafsverlag Vauk, Kiel, 1996.
19. «La questione Contadina ieri e oggi», Lezione Rossi-Doria 2008, in QA-Rivista dell'Associazione Rossi-Doria, n.4, 1996

Over the past 50 years, Michele De Benedictis has been the most visible and influential Italian agricultural economist, and his efforts have undoubtedly made a difference to the agricultural economics profession. His leadership at the university level, in government, and within the profession has enhanced the stature of the discipline of agricultural economics and its contribution to public policy decision-making in Italy.

Michele De Benedictis has been a leader in the profession, a strong voice for scientific rigor in analysis, and a mentor to some superb graduate students. He has always been very committed to teaching and students always found him to be an exceptional mentor.

In conclusion, we think that Michele De Benedictis is an outstanding scholar, a prolific writer, and a valued colleague. Beyond his scholarly prowess, he is a dedicated teacher, an editorial workhorse, and a strong advocate for his peers, students and profession. Therefore, we do believe he rightly deserves to be appointed as one of the first Fellows of our Association.