



The mission of the Italian Association of Agricultural and Applied Economics (AIEEA)

The Italian Association of Agricultural and Applied Economics has been established for two reasons: the rapid development of Agricultural and Applied Economics and research methods in agriculture and food, and our ambition to have a “diverse” and agile organization able to take innovative actions.

In recent years, academic associations of agricultural economists worldwide have been led to re-examine their role because of the fundamental changes taking place in the role of farming and agriculture. One of the most striking responses has been the decision of the American Agricultural Economics Association to re-form as the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association.

Agriculture continues to play a key role in society and of course underpins food production, but even compared to a few decades ago, it accounts for a much lower share of GDP and a smaller share of employment. And even within the wider agro-food system, farming itself is shrinking in comparison with the services that are incorporated into products, processing, distribution including HoReCa, and marketing. The increasing integration of economies and societies enabled by the technological revolution in transport and communications has enormously enlarged markets and revolutionised the nature of economic and social relations of all actors in the agro-food system. Other factors and constraints relating to agriculture’s new role include growing awareness of environmental impact of agriculture, climate change, issues in energy supply and demand and the consequent need for alternative energy sources. In the developed world, there is also growing public awareness of the need to conserve natural resources and protect the environment. Research into the socio-economic aspects of food and agriculture now needs to broaden its scope to cover increasingly diverse and complex areas. This entails the use of new tools of analysis, including tools developed outside what has traditionally been the field of agricultural economics.

Socio-economic research in food and agriculture nowadays needs to include skills which can investigate all aspects related to food production and safety in order to evaluate economic and social implications and identify policy challenges in food, environment and energy as well as agriculture. There is thus an urgent need for academic exchange with fields outside agricultural economics, including regional and economic development, food, rural sociology and general sociology, consumer choice, distribution, energy management, and the environment, and there is a need for debate on policy on these issues.

The second reason for forming a new association is the need for a “diverse” society integrated into the processes of the international academic associations. The main aim is to promote socio-economic research in food and agriculture by offering a forum for debate and sharing of findings. This will include regular and ad hoc congresses and seminars offering the opportunity to share and disseminate quality research, and a journal with potential for international impact. The association will aim to use its resources carefully and membership will be open to all who apply. Importantly, it will make its

findings available to all those who are the main users of research findings working in institutions. It will also aim to meet the needs of young researchers. It will provide a forum for dissemination and debate on research findings with regard to university degree courses at all levels, taking account of the need to keep these abreast of developments in the world of food and agriculture. Lastly, it will collaborate with Italian and international associations in the field and promote joint initiatives and schemes in generating new synergies.

AIEAA will hold an annual congress on a specific theme, with the participation of external academics and researchers, and presentations of members' research. Sharing and discussion of findings will be facilitated by appropriate timing of sessions. The association will also promote and support smaller scale seminars on specific research questions. There will also be an annual workshop on a theme of relevance to the design and application of public policy, which will be an opportunity for collaboration between academic research and institutions in sharing information on findings, ongoing research and requirements of institutions. Membership and attendance costs will be as low as possible and unnecessary expenses will be kept to a minimum. Lastly, in order to disseminate research findings effectively, the association promote an academic journal, which in the medium term aims to build up a consolidated reputation in the international academic community.