

Agricultural Statistics 2000: Closing Remarks

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In June 1996, Odell Larson, Zoltan Kenessey and I met at the International Statistical Institute office in Voorburg to discuss the possibility of having an international conference on agricultural statistics. When we finished that meeting, we had agreed to hold such a conference and had also outlined six broad topics to be covered in half day sessions. I also left this meeting with the names of six people to ask to help with the program. David Heath, David Binder, Andreas Lindner and Sid David agreed to help Odell, Zoltan and me organize a program. They accepted the challenge, and the rest is history. I want to thank the Program Committee again for their efforts to ensure such a fine program.

Next, I want to thank all of the authors of the invited papers for not only their fine papers and excellent presentations, but also for getting them to us in time to be included in the conference materials. Kudos also go to the discussants who had the challenging job of reviewing the papers which they did so well.

We are indebted to the organizing committee for the arrangements this week. This conference was also an opportunity for NASS to showcase its capabilities in its State offices because the printing of the materials was done in the North Carolina office.

Next, I want to thank you the participants. You are what made the conference a success. It was your attention to the presentations and the open discussions that truly made the efforts of the speakers worthwhile.

A very important thing I got out of this conference was the opportunity to see old friends and to become acquainted with so many new people. It was beyond my wildest dream to think I would ever know people with a common interest from so many countries. I am truly proud to be associated with you.

So, rather than saying this is the end of the conference, I would like to say it is just the beginning. Hopefully, this is the beginning of a new spirit of cooperation among agricultural statisticians around the world.

I propose we continue to strengthen the role of agricultural statisticians in the ISI. Most of the people at this conference are either from government organizations or universities. We need to expand the representation to include statisticians from private industry. I propose we form a new association within the International Statistical Institute and call it the International Association of Agricultural Statisticians.

I propose that someone volunteer to build a website on the Internet to foster communications among all of us here. As a start, the web page could contain all of this session's papers and a directory of participants.

I propose we consider having another conference dedicated to agricultural statistics. I also propose that someone else host the conference.

So with this new beginning for the world of agricultural statistics, I want to close this conference by wishing you a pleasant visit for the rest of your stay in Washington, D.C. and by wishing you a safe journey home.

Thank you and Godspeed.