

Editorial

This issue includes some selected papers presented at the 53rd annual Conference of the Italian Society of Agricultural Economics (SIDEA), held in San Michele all'Adige/Bolzano on the 22th-24th of September 2016.

The theme of the Conference was “The future of agriculture between globalization and local markets”. The choice of this theme aimed to stimulate a scientific debate on the future of agriculture which is marked by the dualism of opening global markets and the growing demand for local products linked to the territory and traditions. The dichotomy of liberalism versus localism involves multiple challenges requiring appropriate answers to guarantee a sustainable path of local and global agricultural development. It will also require policy changes with implications for all actors along the supply chain and for agriculture’s role in economic, social and environmental terms.

The 53rd SIDEA annual Conference hosted the scientific debate on selected subjects by means of plenary and parallel sessions.

The parallel sessions were focused on several topics including: International trade regulation and market organization; Market structure of local and global demand; New frontiers of organizational development, Cooperation and networking; Innovations towards sustainable production and market development; Sustainable consumption patterns and Agricultural policies beyond 2020.

The papers presented at the Conference were selected on the basis of a peer review process developed by means of a double blind review of each submitted paper. The reviewing process has been realized with the support of many reviewers that we would like to thank for their contribution. Comments and evaluations from the reviewers were sent back to the Authors, inviting them to revise the papers according to the suggestions received. The final revised papers were considered by the Conference Program Committee for publication on the SIDEA Journals or on the Conference Proceedings.

At the end of this process, the 53rd SIDEA Conference Program Committee and the Editorial Team of the “Rivista di Economia Agraria/Italian Review of Agricultural Economics” selected some papers for publication on this Journal based on the consistency between the topics addressed in the papers and the aims of the Review. The five papers selected were finally subjected to the standard peer review process before being accepted for publication on the Journal.

Papers presented in this issue deal with some of the most relevant themes addressed in the Conference and contribute to the debate under both a meth-

odological and empirical points of view. Indeed, a quite visible thread connecting the five papers is their attention towards the environmental, economic and social challenges and perspectives related to the agricultural sector that will strongly affect its evolution in the above dichotomy.

A first topic refers to the food waste issue that is addressed in two papers contributed within a project supported by the Italian Ministry for the Environment.

The paper by Tua *et al.* reports on “*The REDUCE project: definition of a methodology for quantifying food waste by means of targeted waste composition analysis*”. A standard methodology for the quantification and classification of food waste is a prerequisite that may contribute to raise awareness among citizens as well as to support the definition and the monitoring of specific preventive measures. A classification based on several criteria (by subcategories of avoidable, possibly avoidable and unavoidable waste; by product type; by packaging materials) was tested on representative some samples of residual waste thanks to the cooperation of the National Consortium for Packaging waste (CONAI). Preliminary results of the study were useful in order to quantify the food waste fraction in residual waste at some incineration plants and to highlight the weight of avoidable food waste. Furthermore, the classification criteria have been applied to measure the composition of the food waste fraction revealing areas of future in-depth analysis and difficulties associated to the unclassifiable waste fraction.

In the context of the REDUCE Project lies the second paper of Boschini *et al.* that reports a “*Preliminary assessment of a methodology for determining food waste in primary school canteens*”. Italian data on food waste at this stage of the food chain is scarce. They are often qualitative data derived from researches conducted on large samples or quantitative data obtained from a limited number of schools. A case study implemented in a primary school involving kitchen employees, teachers and pupils, was reported in the paper allowing to measure the percentages of total food waste of non-consumed and non-served food per each daily meal offered in the canteen. From a methodological perspective, the case study revealed the feasibility of implementing a data gathering on food waste in school canteens and the importance of actively involving all concerned actors.

The paper “*Social life cycle assessment for agricultural sustainability: comparison of two methodological proposals in a paradigmatic perspective*” by Iofrida *et al.* addresses the social dimension of sustainability, a very interesting and topical issue. A review of studies dealing with social impacts in a life cycle perspective was carried out and two opposite paradigms (post-positivism or interpretivism oriented) were detailed in their strength and weaknesses points. The two methodological proposals setting up from the above paradigms were

applied to the citrus growing sector in Calabria and compared in terms of research process and typology of insights. The study highlighted the possible consequences of different paradigmatic stances in Social Life Cycle Assessment studies (in terms of procedures, assumptions, methodological choices, study purposes) and provided some useful suggestions in steering the choice of the most appropriate methodology.

A focus on the social dimension together with the environmental perspective is presented in the paper of Prete and co-authors that deals with “*Well-being and rurality: a spatial tool for rural development programs evaluation*”. The paper aimed to realize a spatial decision support tool able to define a Quality of Life (QoL) index at local level. The QoL index was based on the opportunities provided to populations (living conditions, health care services, education, work-life balance, environmental health and protection) and on indicators grouped in thematic areas and further categorised in relevant dimensions (economic, social and environmental). The QoL index was measured for the municipalities of Basilicata region and compared with the index of rurality. Results revealed a negative correlation between the two indexes and drew attention to the weaknesses of the smallest and rural areas compared with other territories. The proposed methodologies might be usefully applied in both ex ante and ex post assessment of rural development policies.

Within the recent European debate about a bioeconomy strategy, the paper by Drejerska and Gołębiewski aims to measure “*The role of Poland’s primary sector in the development of the country’s bioeconomy*” for the periods 2004-2006 and 2010-2012. Authors analysed and quantified the national bioeconomy potential at a low level of territorial scale by means of a spatial autocorrelation analysis applied to the share of the primary sector in the gross value added. The results showed that biomass production in Poland differs considerably by region, justifying an interregional approach in strategic and policy planning in order to facilitate the development of the bioeconomy in the Country.

In our opinion, these five papers show the contribution of the SIDEA in discussing such topics, propose approaches, and show empirical findings that will fuel the future scientific and political debate. The papers in this issue provide useful insights regarding some of the main issues the farm sector is currently facing and that will shape its evolving role between globalization and future markets.

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