Session proposals for Agri-Food XV

1. Climate Change and Agricultural Prospects in Australia

This session will focus on how climate change may affect regional agricultural prospects in Australia. The aim of the theme is to present leading research that highlights: (i) what we know about the likely prospects for Australian agriculture, (ii) the approaches taken to develop this knowledge, and (iii) what we need to know to enhance agricultural prospects and better inform industry, decision-makers, researchers and the broader Australian community. Papers are not limited to the social sciences, but we do encourage papers on the topics of adaptation, adoption, adaptive capacity and even transformation within the climate change context. Given sufficient interest and cohesion, papers may be reviewed and published as a small book through CSIRO publishing. For more information, please contact Nadine Marshall: nadine.marshall@csiro.au

2. Centring social science in building diverse and resilient biological economies

The initiative, funded by the NZ Building Research Capabilities for the Social Sciences (BRCSS), seeks to mobilise New Zealand social scientists into a constructive dialogue with a range of strategic primary sector actors around the wealth creating and sustainability enhancing proposition of building diverse and resilient biological economies. The project aims to establish pathways for inserting novel social science thinking and knowledge production into the policy arena. Specifically the Agri-food XV session is intended to offer scope to interrogate the politics and ethics of assembling social science approaches to interrogate biological economies, provide re-mappings of the diversity of activities engaging with biophysical processes in Australia and New Zealand, expose for critical comment alternative narratives about existing and emerging biological economies and examine strategies and tactics for performing such narratives in various political, policy, community and commercial contexts. Papers are encouraged from different disciplinary and interdisciplinary backgrounds. For further information please contact Richard Le Heron at r.leheron@auckland.ac.nz

3. Carving up the landscape: agriculture, land use change, and planning

Rural landscapes are caught up in a contest of consumption: their foods swallowed by the diners, their views drunk in by the tourists, their cultural significance carved up by residents old and new. Competition for land is especially intense in peri-urban areas (particularly metropolitan) and other amenity landscapes, where agriculture, nature conservation, rural living and urban development mix in ways that are sometimes synergistic, sometimes antagonistic. Researchers in government and academia have explored the influences on land use change, and their implications agriculture and natural resource management. A growing body of research on land values, tenure and suitability, landholders’ aspirations and demographic change raises questions about how these elements fit together, and how they should best be used to encourage optimal land use. Some favour the market, others the planners. In either case there is both opportunity and
need for further explorations of rural place. The session welcomes papers the following rural themes;

- social aspects of land use and land suitability
- influences on land use change (environmental, social, economic, technological)
- agriculture and NRM in amenity landscapes (including urban and peri-urban areas)
- land use planning
- consumption of place

For more information please contact Peter Parbery at peter.parbery@dpi.vic.gov.au

4. Biofuels -- What Role for Energy from Agriculture?

This session will focus on the conflicts ignited by the rapid emergence of biofuels in developed countries' energy policies. The aim of the theme is to invite discussion on topics including: the role of biofuels in global food price inflation; the potential for biofuels to generate new revenue streams for developing country farmers; the potential of biofuels to move developed countries to more sustainable energy consumption patterns; whether biofuels just create another subsidy for unsustainable production patterns; and, the potential for biofuels to reduce oil dependence in agriculture. Those interested to contribute should contact Sophia Murphy, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (in Adelaide), at email address -- smurphy@iatp.org

5. Global markets and local environments: understanding the positions of agricultural smallholders in the Asia-Pacific

The aim of this session is to further the debate on the changing role and fate of smallholder agriculture in the developing countries of the Asia-Pacific. As numerous studies attest, globalising markets for food products have major implications for small producers. Large buyers at the apex of buyer-driven value chains have sought to reorganize upstream production systems to meet requirements for the large-scale supply of product that meets various accreditations. What are the effects of these developments for smallholders, and how should NGOs, researchers and policy-makers intervene? For more information contact Bill Pritchard (b.pritchard@usyd.edu.au) (before 2 July) or Jeff Neilson (jneilson@geosci.usyd.edu.au) thereafter.

6. Doing agri-food field in developing countries

This session is intended to provide a collaborative space for early-career and post-graduate researchers undertaking agri-food fieldwork in developing countries. Topics will include consideration of issues relating to methodology, ethics, finance, and collaboration with local partners, with a focus on specific experiences in the field. For more information, contact Jasmine Glover at jglo9763@mail.usyd.edu.au.