

Special Issue on: Redefining Rural Development in the Modern Digital Era

Editorial

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The Hellenic Association of Agricultural Economists (ETAGRO), having completed 30 years of continuous scientific presence, organized the 15th Panhellenic Conference (in November 2018), which has an anniversary character, entitled “Redefining Rural Development in the Modern Digital Era”.

The main aim of this conference was to bridge communication and cooperation between the agricultural economics scientists, the institutions, but also those involved with the rural area, contributing to the exchange of research results and know-how. The interest in the improvement of agricultural production and wider rural areas is always a common goal for those involved in the rural economy and policy. In this context, the conference was an important step, in which the new data formed by the digital era for the development of all sectors of the rural area were presented.

The conference was held at a time when on the one hand, the economic crisis continues and on the other hand, the Common Agricultural Policy of the period 2015-2020 has reached the middle of its life, and the processes for planning the next programming period have already begun. At the same time, Greek agriculture needs to address important environmental issues, such as the inefficient use of irrigation water, as well as the potential effects of climate change, which undermine the sustainability of the industry. The use of technology (precision agriculture) can significantly contribute to addressing the above problems, but the effective implementation of which, in several cases, has the need to change the existing structures of Greek agriculture.

Technology developments focusing on improving access to data and information, facilitating communication, raising environmental awareness and developing transport lead to new - and often drastic - changes in the way agriculture is practiced internationally and, in the country, while influencing rural development policies. On the other hand, the socio-economic and financial framework that is being formed as a result of the severe recession, which has hit and continues to hit the country's economy hard, makes it difficult to integrate all these developments. However, this difficult situation is a real motivation of the domestic agricultural sector, for the identification and long-term utilization of international markets, for the integration and efficient utilization of modern supply systems, the modernization and reorganization of the production process, in order to create value-added chains of agricultural or food products.

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This special issue includes the following 6 reviewed papers:

1. High Spatial Analysis on the Effects of Climate Change on Cereal Yield in Greece (Ioanna Gkiza & Stefanos Nastis)
2. Multifunctional farms in Greece: a new business model need assessment tool for their activities (Evropi-Sofia Dalampira, Afroditi Papadaki-Klavdianou, Anastasios Michailidis & Maria Partalidou)
3. SWOT Analysis of Cotton cultivation in Greece (Evangelia Sioki & Anastasios Michailidis)
4. Market connectedness in the US beef supply chain (Panos Fousekis & Dimitra Tzaferi)
5. Optimization of fertilization recommendation in Greek rice fields using precision agriculture (Miltiadis Iatrou, Christos Karydas, George Iatrou, Zois Zartaloudis, Kostas Kravvas & Spiros Mourelatos)
6. The Greek farmers' ICT skills and the intra-rural digital divide formation (Maria Botsiou, Vassilios Dagdilelis & Stavriani Koutsou)

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