



TRANSFORMING AGRICULTURE



IFMA19 Congress – Delegate Evaluation Survey Report

19th International Farm Management Congress, Warsaw University of Life Sciences, Warsaw, Poland

Sunday 21th July to Friday 26th July 2013.

Survey carried out during and after the congress

(You can see the delegate evaluation survey form at the end of this report)

A total of 67 completed forms were collected during the congress (40) and after by e-mail (26) and post (1) – out of a possible 169 delegates. A 40% return. Note – all percentage figures given are rounded to nearest number.

Question 1 – Your country?

- Of the survey respondents 70% came from 8 countries – USA (13), New Zealand and Canada (5 each), UK and South Africa (7 each), The Netherlands and Denmark (4 each), Australia (2). Altogether 27 nationalities were represented at the congress, more diverse than recent congresses.

Question 2 – Is this your first Congress?

- 28 answered ‘Yes’ – 39 answered ‘No’ – 42% and 58% of the respondents respectively (virtually the same mix as those for IFMA17 & IFMA18).

Question 3 – If ‘no’, how many previous congresses have you attended?

- The number of previous congresses attended ranged from 1-14 – the 39 who had attended a congress previously had attended 188 congresses between them, an average of 2.8 each.

Question 4 – Please indicate your age

- Age 30 or less = 10 (15%), Age 31-40 = 10 (15%), Age 41-50 = 4 (6%), Age 51-60 = 21 (31%), Age 61+ = 22 (33%). A very different mix to the IFMA18 survey – a higher number at age 40 or less at 30%, and a very low number in the 41-50 age group. (Perhaps this group avoid filling in surveys?) The two older groups made up 64% of the respondents.

Question 5 – Your Occupation?

- As expected the occupations of the delegates were many and varied. The breakdown between Farmer / Farm managers, Consultant / Advisors (inc. Extension), Academic / Educators (inc. Students) and Researchers was complicated as several respondents were involved in more than one activity e.g. ‘farming and consulting’ or ‘education and consulting’. Some may have been involved across a wider number of activities than their entry indicated (e.g. Professor).
- As a result there were 82 activities entered (from 67 people) in these groups. 11 were Farmer / Farm managers (13%), 19 were Consultant / Advisors (23%), and 21 were Academic / Educators (26%), 11 Researchers (13%) and 5 Students (6%). A further 15 descriptions were given (18%).

Question 6a – If you are involved in “farm management” in terms of overseeing or advising on a farm or farms – please state the area you are involved in.

- There were 17 entries for this section with a total of 293,311 hectares (724,478 acres) – averaging 17,254 ha (42,617 ac) per entry. Consultants & Extension Advisors influenced 208,220 ha (514,303 ac.), and farmers and managers 85,091 ha (210,175 ac.). Many of the other 50 respondents who included ‘consulting and advising’ in their titles – but did not make an area entry.

Question 6b – If you are not filling in the above figure – how do you influence farm management?

- There were 17 ‘lecturers’ or professors involved with the teaching of 1,763 students (range 10 to 400). Again, not all lecturers / professors entered a number for their students. There were 4 financial accountants and 30 “Others” with a wide range of connections to Farm Management, including 11 researchers and 5 students.

Question 7 – How did you hear about IFMA19?

- 40 of the respondents had heard about the congress either because they were members of IFMA or had heard about it in IFMA Newsletters, 24 had heard from Colleagues, 1 from Internet Search, and 2 claimed to hear about the congress by other means - 1 of them via the Journal (IJAM).

Question 8 – What were the main deciding reasons for you to attend this congress (tick up to 3)?

- There were 177 “ticked boxes” out of 202 options (67 x 3) – of these: Poland had 38 (21%), Plenary Programme 11 (6%), Field Trip Programme 17 (10%), Combination of Papers and Field Trips 30 (17%), Pre and Post Tours available 21 (12%), International Networking 41 (23%), Opportunity to present a paper to an international audience 19 (11%).

Questions 9 – 17 were rating evaluations - Excellent / Very Good / Good / Fair / Poor

Results are expressed as a **percentage** – rounded to the nearest full number for convenience

Question 9 – Plenary Sessions result (67 respondents)

- Excellent 31%, Very Good 40%, Good 19%, Fair 9%, Poor 0%

Question 10 – Contributed Papers result (65 respondents)

- Excellent 18%, Very Good 49%, Good 25%, Fair 8%, Poor 0%

Question 11 – Day Tours (65 respondents)

- Excellent 54%, Very Good 38%, Good 6%, Fair 2%, Poor 0%

Question 12 – Posters – (60 respondents).

- Excellent 15%, Very Good 28%, Good 42%, Fair 15%, Poor 4%

Question 13 – Social Program (66 respondents)

- Excellent 50%, Very Good 38%, Good 11%, Fair 2%, Poor 0%

Question 14 – Accommodation and arrangements (65 respondents)

- Excellent 51%, Very Good 35%, Good 11%, Fair 3%, Poor 0%

Question 15 – Overall how do you rate this Congress? (67 respondents)

- Excellent 36%, Very Good 49%, Good 13%, Fair 1%, Poor 0%

**Question 16 – If you submitted a paper or poster Your assessment of the process?
(37 respondents)**

- Excellent 24%, Very Good 49%, Good 24%, Fair 3%, Poor 0%

Question 17a & b – If you attended a Pre or Post Congress Tour – (27 respondents)

- Excellent 78%, Very Good 19%, Good 4%, Fair 0%, Poor 0%

Questions 18 – 21 requested written responses

Not all the respondents completed these – but only 2 made no comment to all the questions. Most responded to at least some of the questions. There were of course lots of different suggestions and comments – so below are the ones that were mentioned most frequently or seemed most significant.

Question 18 – Please give two highlights of the Congress for you (123 of an available 134 slots).

- Where delegates had attended the Pre Congress tour – (or the Post if survey submitted by e-mail) these tours were frequently listed as a highlight.
- Plenary Presentations as a group were very often included as a highlight - with Plenary Sessions 1, 2 and 3 each received several mentions. Scott Roselle, David Harvey, David Hughes and Alastair Patterson received individual mentions. Also the EU plenary session and the Polish development plenary and the plenary session with industry professionals. “I liked the variation of invited speakers, good choices”.
- Field Trips got the highest praise in general – with the 3 factories (particularly flower production), the Dairy, Diversity, Vegetable chain and Fruit field trips had specific mentions. “Field trips were very well done”.
- ‘Networking’ again received many mentions – often referring to the mix of peoples’ interests – ‘Interaction of delegates from Academia, Farming & Extension’, ‘meeting and making new friends’, ‘socialising with international guests’ much appreciated and often listed. “Meeting like-minded people from around world”.
- On the social side – the social programme – with specific mentions of the Welcome BBQ and the Banquet by several respondents – but food at all meals was often praised as excellent. “Nice atmosphere”, “Pianist at congress dinner”, “Sunday Warsaw tour”, “social dinner (sounds stupid but it was amazing)” were some of the comments.
- There were lots of highlight comments about the organisation – “Hospitality of organising team”, “Good organisation”, “The book of papers was very good”, “Very good venue, nice staff/team, very good food”, “Kindness and hospitality of Polish people & organisers”. Poland itself was a highlight. One person said they could not name just 2 highlights – “there were too many”.

Question 19 – Please give two areas where improvement could be made (91 comments / poss. 134)

- **Time management** by speakers – this seems to have been a particular issue with the contributed papers, with some presenters taking twice as long as allowed and messing up the following speakers, and also preventing people moving from one session to another -> “shambles”, “particularly on first day”. Chairmen should be better briefed and should enforce the timing. There were also comments about the timing of some of plenary presentations.
- Also on contributed papers – papers should be more tightly grouped to reduce the need to change rooms. Several comments that contributors needed earlier notification of the presentation program (e.g. when they were due to make their presentation).
- Acoustics in the main conference hall were poor – especially for those at the back.
- **Programme** – ‘Days were too long’, ‘allow more free time’ – ‘Programme too long’, ‘days were too strenuous’, ‘too many plenary speakers’, ‘plenary sessions too long (2hr) – need time to stand and stretch’. Some field trips were late returning (7.30 and 9.30 pm mentioned) – difficult to then

go out for a meal. Suggestion that all evening meals should be provided in package (some would disagree as they enjoyed time in Warsaw on the free evenings).

- Distance between The hotels and venue was mentioned several times – too much time taken up travelling. Also some of the coaches transferring from hotel to venue did not work well – those staying at the Pulawska Hotel were particularly affected.
- Field trips – better arrangements and information regarding toilet breaks and facilities. This was also a complaint on the pre and post congress tours. Many would have liked more toilet/coffee breaks on long journeys between visits.
- Add maps and more background information to field trip information so that people learn more about the area they are travelling in and the industry they are looking at. Also, have an agricultural translator on each coach for field trips for discussion and information when travelling.
- Other comments included - “Poster session should be run with port and cheese in a formal session”. “Promoting more audience discussion after speakers”. “The registration website was difficult especially the payment element”.
- However 2 people wrote - “None - the food was excellent as was everything else” and “Can't think of anything” in the way of improving the congress.

Question 20 – How can more people be attracted to future Congresses? (65 comments / poss. 134)

- Individual members promoting the congress was clearly seen as the no.1 means to improve attendance – ‘Get the members to spread the news, especially to good farmers’, ‘Best way is personal contacts - remind Members to contact as many colleagues as possible’. Several people committed themselves personally to promote the congress. “Word of mouth probably best”. “Offer members incentive to bring new members”.
- Once again there were several suggestions about the cost of attending, with lots of suggestions that students should be sponsored, young farmers, etc. etc. all much as suggested in previous congress evaluations. “Ask Ag. companies in each country to sponsor a delegate. Promotional sheet from IFMA to assist.”
- “Provide more pre-Congress communication. Reach out to other professional groups - Nuffield, IFAMA, WFO, etc. to tap into their members.”
- Better promotion - Promotion by linking-up with national farming organisations including young farmer organisations, agricultural economics societies, universities. Promote more strongly to farmers. Wider and more targeted promotion. “What does the IFMA brand deliver? We need to let more people know”. “The field trips and practical exposure to the generic issues should be marketed.”
- Advertise the quality of speakers, the practical nature of congress, and the benefits to be gained from attending. Advertise in Journals and on websites of similar organisations.
- Changing the perception of the congress, improve appeal to wider ag. involved groups such as animal sciences, agronomy.
- Increase the amount of publicity through more channels. Delegates to send e-mail lists to Hon. Secretary to put on Newsletter distribution list*. Extend to South America and Asia.
- There were several suggestions regarding changing the dates of the congress – these were personal preferences from various countries that related to harvest times etc., or from students who need to earn money during the holidays.
- There were a number of suggestions by students about the focus of the congress – some wanting the congress to be more scientifically focused (to get better academic rating), but others suggesting the opposite and wanting more practical papers and farm visits.
- One comment was “Numbers were OK - doesn't want to get too big”.

Question 21 – Please add any comments you would like to make. (54 comments made).

Several of the comments here continued suggestions relating to Questions 18 and 19, most on similar themes to those already included, so not added here.

- A large number of compliments for the congress and the organisers: “Conference was a very rich, rewarding experience. Contact with interesting and knowledgeable participants. Well done!” “The balance between field and papers is superb, as is conviviality, networking and learning. This organisation is a paradise for the polymath. Many Thanks”. “Thank you for wonderfully organised and managed congress - we got good value for money”. “Outstanding organisation from Edward and his great team of young people. Excellent to see the young people helping so much.” “Overall, I believe the conference was a great success. It was easy for me to see how much work and effort went into the management of the congress activities by our Polish colleagues, and they certainly do deserve many congratulations for their efforts!” “An excellent Congress. Will never forget the experience and knowledge gained”. And many more similar comments.
- “There were too many individuals who when given the microphone used it to push personal or political aims”
- “More case studies. Shorter days”.
- “IFMA is a great concept and vehicle for networking and exchange of ideas between those working in FM”.
- “Really enjoy combination of sessions with field trips”.
- “Expected interesting and fun congress - more than satisfied. Efficient and friendliness of hosts could not be improved upon. Memorable event.”
- “The food was amazing. The program books will be a great reference. Very professional event.”
- “Lovely society, we'll always come back!”
- “It would be great if some Halal food can be served as well. Non Halal food was the main reason that I could not eat together with other participants.”
- And finally one comment just said “Perfect!”

Question 22 – Optional – your name please: 40 respondents gave their name.

Conclusions

- Disappointing that not more delegates completed the forms at the congress – just 40 received – but a further 27 were provided either by post or as a result of the e-mail request. One question therefore if an e-mail evaluation request following the congress would have a better response?
- The proportion of “first timers” was higher than normal at 42% (prior to NZ congress this had normally been at around a third of delegates). IFMA19 attracted more young people from newly emerging European Countries (Czech Republic, Lithuania, Macedonia etc.).
- The spread of the age grouping was somewhat better than we often believe – with 30 percent in the up to 40 age group, but clearly people in the 41-50 age group found it more difficult to attend (or failed to complete the evaluation?). Once again those in the 51+ age group predominate at 64% which should be no surprise as people in this group are more likely to be able to decide to attend without reference to others.
- The wide range of occupations was much as we have come to expect, and this is a major attraction of the congress allowing an interesting exchange between all those involved in the industry. We need to continue to work hard on attracting all groupings – but in particular the farmer and consultant / advisor groups. And again do our best to assist younger people to attend by external sponsorship.
- The land area ‘managed or advised upon’ figure was substantial, but unfortunately several people who could have provided figures for this question chose not to, which is unfortunate as this is seen

as vital in marketing the congress to sponsors. The section on Lecturers and students is also valuable in terms of their impact on students – but again several academic respondents did not provide student numbers.

- The question about where people first heard about the congress strongly emphasises the importance of personal recommendations by colleagues (IFMA Members).
- The reader can make their own conclusions of the Ratings Questions (9-17), but these show that in general we have an excellent basic formula for the congress and that the 19th Congress was highly appreciated by virtually all attendees. In the important areas for those who attended - the content of plenary papers and field trips - it was highly rated, although some felt a few of the plenary papers were not rated so highly. The field trips received particular praise, particularly those that provided refreshment and entertainment!
- There seemed to be consensus that the congress days – both conference and field days had been over long, and that perhaps too much was packed into some of the sessions. The days had been strenuous. This ‘criticism’ was also pointed at the Pre and Post Congress tours – but people appreciated seeing and learning a lot.
- There were many good comments and expressions of thanks to the organisers and the venue providers, and the general hospitality experienced in Poland.
- The Pre Congress tour was a great success getting universal approval and high praise from those who participated –and this was also true for the Post Congress Tour. The need for detailed information about each day, and the provision of sufficient toilet / coffee breaks was emphasised.
- Again Posters **must** be given a higher profile than we have achieved at the last three congresses. Some younger attendees, and some older ones with little time to prepare a full paper, like to use a Poster submission as a way to justify their funding to attend. Others use them to outline projects in progress for discussion and elicit feedback.
- As usual the need to keep costs down in terms of the Registration Fee featured in the survey – a continuing struggle for the congress organisers when offering a great deal of diversity including meals and entertainment, not to mention transport, throughout the week.

My thanks go to all those who completed the Congress Evaluation Survey – your participation greatly assists IFMA Council and future congress organisers when planning congresses.

*If Members want to send me the e-mail addresses of prospective congress delegates so that I can include them on IFMA Newsletter distribution lists – they are most welcome to do so.

Report compiled and edited by Tony King, IFMA Hon. Secretary – January 2014.

IFMA19 CONGRESS 2013

DELEGATE EVALUATION FORM

The Council of IFMA ask you to complete this questionnaire to help both them and the organisers of future congress in their planning of future congresses.

Please complete the following: (tick boxes that apply).

1. Your country: _____
2. Is this your first Congress: Yes No
3. If no, how many previous Congresses have you attended: _____
4. Please indicate your age:
30 or less 31-40 41-50 51-60 61+
5. Your occupation: _____
6. a) If you are involved in "farm management" in terms of managing, overseeing or advising on a specific farm or farms – please could you give us an indication of the area you are directly influencing:
 Number: _____ acres OR hectares
 b) If you are not filling in the above figure – how do you influence farm management?
 Lecturer (no. of students.....) Financial / Accountant Other
 Describe other _____
7. How did you first hear about IFMA19?
 IFMA Newsletter IFMA Member Colleague Internet Search
 Other _____ Don't know
8. What were the main deciding reasons for you to attended this Congress (**tick up to 3**)
 Poland The Plenary Programme The Field Trip Programme
 Combination of Papers and Field Trips Pre & Post Tours available
 International Networking Opportunity to present a paper to international audience
 Other reason _____

We are interested in your evaluation of the Congress (please tick one box in each row)

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
9. Plenary sessions					
10. Contributed papers					
11. Day Tours					
12. Posters					
13. Social program					
14. Accommodation and arrangements					
15. Overall how do you rate this Congress?					

Continues over >>>

Excellent Very good Good Fair Poor

16.	If you submitted a paper or poster to the congress – your assessment of the submission process					
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17.	If you attended the Pre Congress Tour					
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17 b If you attended the Post Congress Tour (added to post congress form - email)

18. Please give two highlights of the Congress for you:

19. Please give two areas where improvement could be made:

20. How can more people be attracted to future Congresses?

21. Please add any comments you would like to make:

22. Optional – your name please: _____

THANK YOU VERY MUCH INDEED – YOUR FEEDBACK IS MUCH APPRECIATED.

The Evaluation Survey Report will be published on **www.ifmaonline.org** in the Articles section. All members will be informed via the IFMA Newsletter when it is published.

TK 03/07/2013