

Hard-Launch of IFMA Professional Development Fund, July 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to speak this morning to those gathered here in Saskatoon for IFMA24, especially:

Elder Rolan Duquette,

Dean Bedard-Haughn,

IFMA President, Trevor Atkinson,

IFMA24 Chair, Eric Micheels,

Distinguished Delegates and Colleagues.

As Interim Chair of the IFMA Professional Development Fund Trustees may I add my welcome to this 24th Congress.

AN IDEA: IFMA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

Two years ago in Copenhagen what started as a conversation over a beer (or two), with continued refinement of that conversation, brings IFMA to a point where I have the privilege to announce the “hard-launch” of the **IFMA Professional Development Fund**; PD Fund for short.

Ideas and thoughts were tossed about as to what can IFMA do, as an organization, to promote and encourage young professionals in the area of farm management and help sustain IFMA? The idea of a “ring-fenced fund”, internal to IFMA, was born as a vehicle to provide bursary awards or scholarships to worthy applicants from around the world to support, in part, the awardees attendance to IFMA Congress and tours. To this end, IFMA Council provided 5,000 pounds Sterling as seed money to begin this effort. Additionally, our colleagues from Scandinavia provided funds from IFMA23 surplus

revenue with the express direction to apply their contribution to support the initial PD Fund awards. Thus, a total of \$13,000 Canadian was available to be awarded.

The intended awardee is a worthy individual who is engaged in farm management: as a farmer, as a consultant/advisor, or as an academic involved in extension, research, or teaching. The awardee can be “NEXT-GEN”, early to mid-career, coming from across the globe, and with an expressed interest to learn and then take “home” what was learnt, and to disseminate that learning and indeed with a hope to continue returning to future IFMA Congresses.

The PD Fund award is intended to support, in part, the recipient in their journey of professional development by attending an IFMA Congress. However, the recipient needs to have “skin in the game too.”

These three groups: farmers, consultants, and academics are the professionals who attend IFMA Congresses, we can gather these three distinct groups, in the same room, to discuss issues of mutual interest in the discipline of farm management all the while keeping all of us “honest” in seeking the optimal solution. This is what I believe makes IFMA so unique in the world of agricultural conferences.

THANK YOU TO MY FELLOW TRUSTEES

I would be remiss if I didn’t thank my fellow trustees for their hard work and time as the trustee team evaluated the 10 applications received.

Agata Malak Rawlikowska – Poland

Mariana de Aragao Pereira – Brazil

Henry Jordaan – South Africa

Julian Gaffney – New Zealand

Over the course of February and March, the trustees received, reviewed all applications and decisions were made. The task was not easy as each application was evaluated on its own merits and then compared to the cohort of applicants. A matrix was developed and used to quantify what is a subjective process.

Ultimately, eight of the ten applicants received a PD Fund award whose ages range from the mid-20s to mid-40s. While I had sincerely hoped to be able to introduce to you all eight applicants, some of the applicants, for reasons beyond their control, are unable to attend IFMA24.

INTRODUCTION OF FIRST CLASS OF IFMA PD FUND AWARDEES

I am pleased to introduce to you the First Class of IFMA Professional Development Fund awardees: As I call your name please rise to be recognized.

Rebecca (Bec) Dean – Australia (Full Delegate & Next Gen)

Louise Schwass – New Zealand (Full Delegate & Next Gen)

Mattie Mink – United States (Full Delegate)

Paul Brennan – United Kingdom (Full Delegate)

Jan Hendrick Mica – The Netherlands (Full Delegate)

Brent Jammer – South Africa (Full Delegate)

Unable to attend:

Hiraina Tangiora – New Zealand

Svetlana Lazarevea – Canada

I encourage all delegates to introduce yourself and get to know our IFMA PD Fund awardees. ID badges have been coded to help with easy identification.

I believe we've had a very successful "soft-launch" of the IFMA PD Fund with our first class of awardees.

Obviously, we come to what is the "next step(s)" for the PD Fund...

HARD-LAUNCH PITCH

To get to the point, it involves us all as we move forward with a "hard-launch" and I have the privilege to announce the beginning of a capital campaign to develop a "ring-fenced" fund to support ongoing IFMA Professional Development Fund awards to subsequent IFMA Congresses. As an economist...more is preferred to less! However, let's be reasonable, this will be an ongoing endeavor with support from IFMA members, industry donors and supporters and others to be identified...in other words, "Guido wants to get into your back pocket!"

THE CHALLENGE

Individuals approached me, in confidence, to create a challenge. These persons challenge IFMA membership to match their initial \$27,400 Canadian, €18,730 euro, \$20,000 (US), £15,850, \$30,081 Australian, \$32,880 NZ, or pick your own currency...you get the point.

I think this is a great opportunity to meet this challenge as IFMA together launches the capital campaign and set a goal so that by IFMA25, in Argentina in 2026, the fund can support a similar if not larger group of awardees.

Earlier this year following an IFMA newsletter to membership, a member raised the following question during the earlier soft-launch phase, “What would be an appropriate amount to give?” I think that is an interesting question based on the three groups of attendees that make up the cadre of delegates. My response to that question might be:

- 1) If you’re a farmer, having attended IFMA Congresses in the past, how much as your farm management practices improved based on what you learned on a per acre, per hectare, per ton, per animal unit? Perhaps a contribution reflecting that increase in profitability might be a way to come to that answer.
- 2) If you’re a consultant having attended IFMA Congresses, how much has your consultancy benefited from the knowledge you gained, did it translate into increases in how you benchmark your business and what intangible benefits might have been monetized? This might be a way to think about any contribution to the IFMA PD Fund.
- 3) If you’re an academic, what benefits did you take back to the classroom and encourage students to explore other regions of the world? What stories did you tell to engage and discuss with your students? Were IFMA papers required reading in your classroom or as extra-curricular materials? Surely, there was benefit...but how to measure?

Quantifying a donation, if any, is an individual and unique determination. One which I believe is worthy of consideration.

In closing, thank you for this opportunity to speak to you about what I believe is a GREAT INVESTMENT INTO IFMA’S FUTURE and the future of agriculture worldwide.

Please join me and my wife, Emily, in contributing to the IFMA Professional Development Fund as an investment into the future...as others in the past have invested in each one of us to make us who we are today!

If you have any questions, please seek out me, other trustees, or Council members here during the conference or reach out to me or Richard Cooksley IFMA's Treasurer via email.

Again, thank you for your attention today.