

THE ARC OF HISTORY

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Farming systems facing global challenges: Capacities & strategies,

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The History

- 1981-86 Kansas State University
- 1989 ASFRE – worldwide movement
- 1998 IFSA: 1992 Montpellier; 1996 Sri Lanka; 1998 South Africa; 2000 Chile; 2004 Florida; 2006 Rome....
- 1994 European IFSA: Edinburgh 1994; 1996 Granada; 1998 Hohenheim; 2000 Volos; 2002 Florence; 2004 Vila Real; 2006 Wageningen; 2008 Clermont Ferrand; 2010 Vienna; 2012 Arrhus; 2014 Berlin.....
- Cropping systems; methods & capacity building; whole farm systems; product development in systems contexts; learning systems; institutional issues in R,D,E; empowering, visioning futures; responding to change in socio-economies & natural resource states; agro-ecosystem analysis; food security, sustainability, climate change

The FSRE movement's core business

- Development & application of methods, tools, research teams, processes, systems theory, & institutionalisation of capacities to address smallholders' needs & opportunities
- European IFSA
 - Recognising small scale & family farming in Europe
 - Opening to the south and east
 - Engaging with systemic transformations

‘Business as usual is not an option’ [IAASTD, 2009]

- Our notable contributions to systemic transformations in
 - Farming systems
 - Agro-ecological systems
 - Food systems
 - Research systems & extension [advisory, IT etc]
 - Innovation capacities & strategies

Farming systems

- Crops [livestock] improvements in a whole farm context
- New designs for whole farm systems
- Options for combining productivity, sustainability, equity
- Seed systems

Agro-ecological systems

- Avoiding harm [pollution, pesticides etc]
- Farming & catchments: co-managing uses of water
- Landscape mosaics: restraining monocultures
- Sustaining functions – biodiversity, erosion, soils

Food systems

- Food cultures
- Food qualities & consumer concerns
- Health outcomes
- Strengthening the bonds between food cultures, territorial identities, & production systems
- Civil society movements

Research & extension systems

- Numerous initiatives; some lasting impacts
 - academic journals
 - Training, tools, methods
 - Organic & agro-ecological options
 - EU legislation
 - Sustainability issues
- Many failures – mainstream researching & [privatised] extension
 - remain in linear, transfer mode
 - Technology production line

Innovation capacities & strategies

- Increasing recognition of complexity, urgency, risk
- But most *innovation* is technology-led change in response to currently dominant market signals & corporate interests
- Ex: we continue to use nitrogen to subsidise photosynthesis
- If this continues, as the wombat said – ‘we are all doomed!’

Are we doomed?

- ‘Business thrives in the real world’
- Meta-research [so much research is lousy]
- Food security resides in [also] supporting small farmers & agro-ecological mosaics
- Entomophagy, urban agriculture, & phosphorus recovery.....
- Demand management [food, water, fossil fuel use etc.]