



The 8<sup>th</sup> ECHAE Seminar  
Interuniversity Consortium for Agricultural and Related Sciences in Europe (ICA)

## The Public and the Agriculture and Forestry Industries

The role of higher education in questioning assumptions and matching expectations

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2006

to be held at

the Czech University of Agriculture Prague

[www.8echae.czu.cz](http://www.8echae.czu.cz)

***In addressing the public's expectations for the rural environment:***

- *What are the issues of concern to the public, and why?*
- *How are the public's perceptions and expectations articulated?*
- *How are issues formulated, agreed and acted on?*
- *How should universities educate students to question assumptions and match expectations?*

The public's expectations encompass not only the desire for safe and healthy food, but also for the quality of the landscape for passive and active recreation, for the conservation of natural habitats and biodiversity, and for a clean environment. In all the public are concerned for the sustainability of the rural economy and for a feeling of well being for the rural environment.

The rural industries (agriculture for food, agriculture and forestry for the production of non-food renewable resources, aquaculture and tourism) have not only to be aware of the public's perceptions, expectations and requirements, but should also play a part in rationalising society's expectations and in setting priorities for the rural environment.

**Higher education has a responsibility in preparing our graduates to address the public's perceptions for the rural environment** through an in depth understanding of the rural environment as a system in the natural and social sciences, and by developing an awareness of the processes by which political decisions are formulated, agreed, and acted on.

This Conference will first examine practice in addressing the public's assumptions, expectations and requirements for the rural environment. We will then share experience in teaching and learning activities to prepare graduates to assess the public's perceptions for the rural environment and to participate in the processes involved in matching expectations.

On behalf of ICA and the Czech University of Agriculture Prague we look forward to welcoming you to Prague in September 2006.

Leopold März  
President ICA

Brian Dennis  
Chairman ECHA  
International Committee

Milan Slavik  
Chairman ECHAE  
Local Committee

## Conference themes – teaching in the context of research

### **1 The public and the agriculture and forestry industries: perceptions, assumptions and expectations**

- How is public perception articulated? What are the power relationships that underpin social, economic and environmental action, and how is resolution reached in the context of the rural environment?
- What are the **public's perceptions** of
  - agriculture for the production of safe and healthy food? Do traceability, quality assurance/certification schemes build public confidence?
  - the rural environment for the delivery of safe drinking water?
  - the rural environment in terms of recreation and the conservation of natural habitats and biodiversity?
  - the value of the agricultural and forestry industries in providing non-food renewable resources?
- How should higher education address the perceptions, assumptions and expectations of the public for the rural environment in its degree programmes?

### **2 Good practice in higher education in addressing the expectations and requirements of the public for the rural environment**

- What universities are or could be doing to equip students to address societal expectations and requirements of the rural environment?
- Teaching ethical issues in relation to society and food production
- Teaching assessment of risk in relation to innovation in agriculture and forestry
- Addressing the need for multi-disciplinarity in teaching and learning
- Teaching and learning models (e.g. team teaching, problem based learning, case studies, life long learning) exploring the expectations of the public for the rural environment.

### **Who should attend?**

Academic staff and students in disciplines relating to the rural environment, particularly those relating to the agricultural and forestry industries.

### **Call for contributions**

Proposals for contributed papers, interactive workshop sessions and posters are invited which address the themes of the conference and provide examples of how to include them in higher education. Abstracts should be submitted online through the Conference web site ([www.8echae.czu.cz](http://www.8echae.czu.cz)) by 31 March 2006

### **Conference format**

The Conference will include plenary keynote papers, and contributed papers and workshops in parallel sessions, as well as a conference-themed excursion. The conference language will be English and translation will not be provided. All accepted papers will be included in the conference proceedings.

### **Conference location**

The Conference will be held at Czech University of Agriculture Prague.

### **Deadlines**

Submission of abstracts	31 March 2006
Notification to authors of paper acceptance	30 April 2006
Earlybird registration	31 May 2006
Final date for registration	28 July 2006

### **Conference Secretariat**

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### **Further information**

To obtain further information please complete the pre-registration form on our website  
<http://www.8echae.czu.cz>