

## Reflections on the value of IAMFE conferences

### Author

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### Summary

This paper gives a short history about IAMFE and my reflections on the value of the International and Regional IAMFE Conferences as well as the National IAMFE Branches

### Short History

It is 50 years since 1958 when I made a study tour to five European countries. During this tour I conceived the idea that agronomists and plant breeders should have a place to write to in order to get up to date information about machinery, equipment and instruments for the mechanization of field experiments. It took me six years before this idea was realized. IAMFE was founded at the "NATO Advanced Study Institute on Mechanization of Field Experiments" arranged in Norway in 1964. Seventyone participants from 17 countries took part in this event. This was the world's first international conference and exhibition on mechanization of field experiments. The NATO conference in Norway was later named IAMFE / NORWAY '64 . Since then I was President of IAMFE for 36 years until I stepped down in the year 2000. Because of lack of funds I also served as Executive Secretary of IAMFE for almost 28 years, except for 14 months in 1972-73, when Dr. Graeme R. Quick, Australia / USA was employed as Acting Executive Secretary of IAMFE.

In 1993 Torbjorn Leuchovius, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, without salaries from IAMFE, took over as Executive Secretary of IAMFE and became Director of our International IAMFE Centre which was moved from Norway to Uppsala, Sweden. ([www.iamfe.org](http://www.iamfe.org)) After IAMFE / RUSSIA 2004, Dr. Vladislav Minin, St.Petersburg, Russia, without salaries from IAMFE, took over these positions. Since 2001 Torbjorn Leuchovius has been Director

of our Global Institute and Agricultural University Internet HUB ([www.iau-hub.org](http://www.iau-hub.org))

Since I retired as President of IAMFE in 2000, IAMFE has had the following Presidents: Bjorn Andersson, Sweden, Acting 2000- 2001, Kolbjorn Moskvil, Norway, 2001-2004, and Dr. John Stevens, New Zealand, Acting 2004-2008.

### Reflections on the value of IAMFE / NORWAY '64 can be summarized as follows

Our first conference was a great success and it became a model for all the later IAMFE Conferences. The main content of the programme was: Presentations of papers, discussions and an exhibition of machinery, equipment and instruments for mechanization of field experiments. The most important value of IAMFE '64 is that IAMFE / NORWAY made a foundation for organizing 11 International and six Regional IAMFE conferences. These conferences have resulted in the establishment of 12 national IAMFE Branches. The IAMFE conferences have created a meeting place for manufacturers, agronomists and plant breeders. Standardization of working widths of plot seeders and plot combines was an important result of IAMFE '64. Agronomists, plant breeders as well as manufacturers of plot research equipment have followed our 1964 recommendations.

### The participants reflections on the value of IAMFE / NORWAY '64

On June 23, the participants of IAMFE / NORWAY '64 adopted a Resolution which among several flattering statements about the success of the NATO conference, singled out Egil Oyjord as "*one deserving our highest praise for his farsightedness and motivation that made this meeting possible.*" Additional reflections on the value of IAMFE / NORWAY '64 were expressed in letters from the participants upon their return home after the con-

ference. Some of these letters are quoted:

**Professor Wesley F. Buchele, USA:**

*“Please let me express my deep appreciation to you for the concept, organization, and execution of the NATO Advanced Study Institute. Because everything was so well organized and planned, everyone was able to efficiently work toward developing the concept of the International Association on Mechanization of Field Experiments”- - -*

**Research Manager, Mr. G. Wiren, Sweden:**

*—“I was impressed by the excellent execution of the Conference and the great efficiency of the technical organization. I am convinced that the Conference was of great benefit to all and we are full of expectations as to the further activity.”*

**Senior Scientist, Mr. T.R. Dickinson, UK:**

*- - -“ The formation of the International Association on Mechanization of Field Experiments is a most welcome move and we at Colworth House look forward to participating in the interchange of ideas and information that is proposed.”*

**Professor Dr. E. H. Everson, USA:**

*- - -“I am sure that the organization we initiated will prove to be a valuable one to all plant scientists in the future.” - - - “As a member of a NATO nation I am pleased that their funds were expended for such a worthwhile cause. I believe our role of teaching the underdeveloped nations to feed themselves will be greatly enhanced by the efforts of our group.”*

**Dr. A. von Muller, West-Germany:**

*“Even if it is now the third week after finishing our meeting you will believe me that I am really thankful. I have learnt a lot not only about mechanization in field experiments, but also about parliamentarism and the formulation of international agreements.”*

**International IAMFE Conferences and Exhibitions arranged since 1964**

In cooperation with national organizing committees and national IAMFE Branches International IAMFE Conferences have successfully been arranged in the following 11 countries:

Federal Rep. of Germany 1968, Czechoslovakia, 1972, USA 1976, The Netherlands 1980, Ireland 1984, Hungary 1988, Germany 1992, China 1994, France 1996, UK 2000 and Russia 2004. Up to 37 countries have been represented at our international conferences and the numbers of participants have been up to 230.

**Reflections on the value of our International IAMFE Conferences since 1964:**

*Our International IAMFE Conferences and the Proceedings have given the participants up- to- date information on machinery, equipment and instruments for the mechanization of field experiments. Mechanization has multiplied the capacity of field experiments since IAMFE was founded 44 years ago. This has been possible through a close cooperation between the agricultural scientists and the manufacturers. The International IAMFE Conferences have given inspirations to the arrangements of Regional and National IAMFE Conferences and to the foundation of National IAMFE Branches. IAMFE by its conferences has created a basis for the publication of The IAMFE Handbook, The ASAE/IAMFE Directory, The IAMFE / IAU Directory, The IAMFE News, The Chinese Textbook on Mechanization of Plant Breeding and Seed Processing and The Global Institute and Agricultural University Internet Hub. “Efficiency and precision in research” has been our guideline for the operation of IAMFE:*

**Regional IAMFE Conferences and Exhibitions**

So far the following 6 Regional IAMFE Conferences have been arranged: Sweden 1977, India 1985, Syria 1987, Lithuania 1995, Argentina 1998 and Russia 2006. The numbers of participating countries have been up to 20 and the numbers of participants have been up to 130.

**Reflections on the value of our Regional IAMFE Conferences**

*The Regional IAMFE Conferences and Exhibitions have served its purpose by spreading important information to agricultural scientists who have not had the possibility to participate in the International IAMFE Conferences and Exhibitions.*

**National IAMFE Branches**

So far the IAMFE Conferences have given inspiration to the foundation of the following 12 National IAMFE Branches: The Baltic Branch ( 1995), The Belarussian Branch (1997), The BeNe Lux Branch SPIL (1997), The Chinese Branch (1994), The French Branch AFMEX (1985), The Hungarian Branch (1996), The Indian Branch ( 1995), The Norwegian Branch (2000), The New Zealand & Australian Branch (2000), The North American Branch (2003), The Russian Branch (1997), and The Ukrainian Branch (2001). IAMFE wishes that all countries carrying out field experiments should establish National IAMFE Branches. I hope such branches can be established in the African and in the Latin American countries as well as more branches in the Asian countries.

### **Reflections on the value of our National IAMFE Branches:**

*The National IAMFE Branches have organized National IAMFE Conferences and Exhibitions and are very important for the promotion of mechanization of field experiments in their countries. The IAMFE Branches have also been very useful for IAMFE in the arrangement of International and Regional IAMFE Conferences and Exhibitions. Our experiences from Europe are that most countries with National IAMFE Branches are able to handle their own problems in mechanization of field experiments.*

### **Reflections on the value of the exhibitions and demonstrations arranged at the IAMFE Conferences:**

*The exhibitions and demonstrations of machinery, equipment and instruments carried out by the manufacturers at the IAMFE conferences, have been extremely important to the participants as well as to the manufacturers.*

In a statement of 23.10.07, Dr. Hans-Ulrich Hege, a German plant breeder, founder and manufacturer of the famous Hege plot research machinery wrote to me:

*"I would like to confirm that the foundation of IAMFE has been very important for the progress in the world plant production. IAMFE is of essential assistance in keeping the climate in balance and to feed a growing population in the world. Plants are the natural sources for minimizing the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to avoid a warmer climate. With a warmer climate the diseases become more aggressive and the lifetime of varieties becomes shorter.*

*Therefore development of new varieties and efficient field experiments are of increasingly importance in the future.. IAMFE with its international and regional conferences helps in an effective way to distribute modern experiences between countries and regions. I rely on further plant breeding for adaptation of plant varieties for meeting the challenges of tomorrow."*

### **Main Conclusions regarding the value of the IAMFE Conferences**

*The IAMFE Conferences, the Proceedings and the Exhibitions and Demonstrations have transferred technology and knowledge to agronomists, plant breeders and agricultural engineers all over the world.*

*Further information about IAMFE and its activities can be found by writing [www.iamfe](http://www.iamfe) on Google and clicking.*

*I regret very much that in spite of all efforts made, I was not able to secure a financial basis for operation of our International IAMFE Centre.*

*IAMFE and the IAMFE Conferences have survived because I and others have worked without salaries from IAMFE. We strongly believe that mechanization of field*

*experiments is extremely important for increasing the efficiency of plant breeding and agronomic trials in order to meet the need for food in the world. Others shall judge the value of our efforts.*

In a letter of November 13, 1970, the Nobel Peace Prize winner 1970, Dr. Norman E. Borlaug, wrote to me:

*.. "It will be a pleasure to work with you and IAMFE in the furtherance of the green revolution."*

I have contributed to this aim in two ways:

1. Started production of the Oyjord batch type plot seeders in Jens A. Schou Mek. Verksted in 1960. Until Wintersteiger, Austria took over the production in 1974-76, I designed, developed, organized and directed the production and export of the Oyjord plot seeders from Norway to agronomists and plant breeders in 57 countries all over the world. Increased capacities in sowing of plots per man-hour between 10 to 400 times as well as reduced experimental errors have been reported.
2. By founding and developing IAMFE with its International and Regional Conferences and National Branches together with others. (See Google: egil oyjord )

I believe the IAMFE contributions to efficient plant breeding research have been very important for the increase in the world food production. I hope the "Green Revolution" also can become a reality in Africa as it has been in China, India and other countries.

My main reflections are that the ideas I conceived 50 years ago and have worked on realizing, have had a significant impact on food production in the world. I am very grateful to all who have helped me to try to fulfil my visions and I would especially like to extend my thanks to Torbjorn Leuchovius and my wife Malfrid.