Editorial

Preface: The 3rd International Electronic Conference on Agronomy †

Gianni Bellocchi 🄳

French National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and the Environment, 63000 Clermont-Ferrand, France; gianni.bellocchi@inrae.fr

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1. Introduction

The 3rd International Electronic Conference on Agronomy (IECAG 2023) took place from 15 October to 30 October 2023, organized by *Agronomy* in collaboration with related open-access journals (*Agriculture*, *Plants*, and *Horticulturae*) of the academic open-access publisher MDPI (Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute). This conference comprised three live sessions held on 16, 23, and 30 October 2023. With a successful turnout, the event attracted a diverse array of participants, including students, academics, scientists, and experts in agronomy and related fields from various countries. This conference continued the tradition of previous editions of fostering dialogue among academia and industry to address current contemporary challenges, explore innovative solutions, and promote global collaboration and networking within the agronomy community.

Out of numerous submissions received, 58 contributions were included in this volume of the *Biology and Life Sciences Forum*. The Organizing Committee extends its gratitude to the Editorial Board and the reviewers for their invaluable contributions to this volume. Special appreciation is also extended to all the authors for their cooperation and adherence to deadlines.

2. Conference Topics

The conference encompassed a wide range of agronomy research topics, offering a platform for the presentation and discussion of new findings. Areas of interest included, but were not limited to:

- Disease, pest, and weed control in sustainable agriculture;
- Agro-ecology innovation to re-invent cropping and grazing systems;
- Improving nutrient- and water-use efficiencies;
- Digital farming for the evolution of agriculture and agricultural engineering;
- Plant breeding, genetics, genomics, and biotechnology;
- Horticultural and Floricultural Crops Session.

The scientific presentations, comprising lectures and posters, covered a broad spectrum of research domains. This volume provides a comprehensive overview of the prevailing trends in agronomy and confronts the hurdles in achieving sustainability.

3. Committee Members

3.1. Chair of the Conference

Dr. Gianni Bellocchi, the conference chair and a senior scientist at the Grassland Ecosystem Research Unit (UREP) of the French National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and the Environment (INRAE) specializes in agro-meteorological and hydro-climatic modeling (https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Gianni-Bellocchi, accessed on 26 February 2024). His research focuses on understanding the responses of agro-ecosystems to

environmental variables and management practices using simulation models. His primary focus lies in modeling carbon and nitrogen cycles in grasslands, exploring dynamics of sequestration/emission, and elucidating the relationships between plant diversity and biogeochemical processes. He has led numerous international modeling activities, notably developing ensemble-modeling approaches for simulating production and biogeochemical variables in grasslands and arable crops. He also investigates the complex connections between species diversity, the functioning of grassland systems, and their capacity to provide ecosystem services.

3.2. Scientific Committee

The Scientific Committee consisted of 29 distinguished experts in agronomy and related sciences from institutions in 14 countries in Asia, Europe, North America and Oceania:

1. Tran Dang Xuan, Hiroshima University, Japan;
2. Juan A. Fernández, Technical University of Cartagena, Spain;
3. Christos Athanassiou, University of Thessaly, Greece;
4. Roberto Ferrise, University of Florence, Italy;
5. Giuseppe Ferrara, Department of Soil, Plant and Food Sciences, University of Bari, Italy;
6. Paul Kwan, School of IT & Engineering, Melbourne Institute of Technology, Australia;
7. Dilip R. Panthee, Department of Horticultural Science, North Carolina State University, USA;
8. Angel Llamas, Departamento de Bioquímica y Biología Molecular, Campus de Rabanalesy, Campus Internacional de Excelencia Agroalimentario (CeiA3), Edif. Severo Ochoa, Universidad de Córdoba, Spain;
9. Othmane Merah, Agro-Industrial Chemistry Laboratory (LCA), University of Toulouse, France, Biological Engineering Department, Paul Sabatier University, France;
10. Stathis Kaloudis, University of the Aegean, Greece;
11. Baskaran Stephen Inbaraj, Fu Jen Catholic University, Taiwan;
12. Leifeng Guo, Agricultural Information Institute of Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, China;
13. Byoung Ryong Jeong, Department of Horticulture, College of Agriculture & Life Sciences (CALS), [& Division of Applied Life Science (BK21 +), Graduate School], Gyeongsang National University (GNU), Republic of Korea;
14. Javier M. Gonzalez, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, National Soil Erosion Research Laboratory, USA;
15. Carlos García Delgado, Department of Geology and Geochemistry, Autonomous University of Madrid, Spain;
16. Daniel Real, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Australia;
17. Junfei Gu, Jiangsu Key Laboratory of Crop Genetics and Physiology, Co-Innovation Center for Modern Production Technology of Grain Crops, Yangzhou University, China;
18. Susana Pascual, Entomology Group, Plant Protection Department, Instituto Nacional de Investigación y Tecnología Agraria y Alimentaria (INIA, CSIC), Spain;
19. Thorsten Kraska, Institute of Crop Science and Resource Conservation & Field Lab Campus Klein-Altendorf, University of Bonn, Germany;
20. José David Flores-Félix, Department of Microbiology and Genetics, University of Salamanaca, Spain;
21. Estefania Carrillo-Perdomo, UMR AGAP Institut, Univ. Montpellier, CIRAD, INRAE, Institut Agro, San Giuliano, France;
22. Mario Cunha, Sciences Faculty, University of Porto (FCUP), Institute for Systems and Computer Engineering, Technology and Science (INESCTEC), Portugal;
23. Mirosław Tyrka, Rzeszów University of Technology, Poland;
24. Jerzy Henryk Czembor, Plant Breeding and Acclimatization Institute – National Research Institute PBAI-NRI, Poland;

25. Peng Fu, Center for Environment, Energy, and Economy, Harrisburg University, PA, Department of Plant Biology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, IL, USA;
26. Louis Kouadio, University of Southern Queensland, Australia;
27. Georgia Ntatsi, Agricultural University of Athens, Greece;
28. Mukund Shukla, Gosling Institute for Plant Preservation, University of Guelph, Canada;
29. Alessandro Miceli, Department of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Sciences, University of Palermo, Italy.

3.3. Conference Secretariat

The conference secretariat consisted of Wanda Wang, Mina Wu, and Ann Li (iecag2023@mdpi.com), who diligently handled administrative tasks and provided support to ensure the smooth running of the conference.

4. Invited Speakers

Twelve distinguished scientists delivered keynote speeches:

1. Neringa Rasiukevičiūtė, Lithuanian Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry, Institute of Horticulture, Babtai, Lithuania;
2. Marina Cano Lamadrid, Postharvest and Refrigeration Group, Department of Agricultural Engineering and Institute of Plant Biotechnology, Universidad Politécnica de Cartagena, 30203 Cartagena, Murcia; Grupo de Calidad y Seguridad Alimentaria, Centro de Investigación e Innovación Agroalimentaria y Agroambiental (CIAGRO-UMH), Miguel Hernández University, Orihuela, Alicante, Spain;
3. Reka Howard, Department of Statistics, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, NE, USA;
4. Pedro Revilla, Misión Biológica de Galicia (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas), El Palacio—Salcedo, Pontevedra, Spain;
5. Kaloudis Efstathios, Department of Food Science and Nutrition, School of the Environment, University of the Aegean, Lemnos, Greece;
6. Rajib Roychowdhury, Agricultural Research Organization–Volcani Center, Israel;
7. Daniel Real Ferreiro, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, South Perth, WA, Australia;
8. Chenggen Chu, Sugarbeet and Potato Research Unit, USDA Agricultural Research Service, Fargo, ND, USA;
9. Leontina Lipan, Grupo de Investigación Calidad y Seguridad Alimentaria, Centro de Investigación e Innovación Agroalimentaria y Agroambiental (CIAGRO-UMH), Universidad Miguel Hernández, Orihuela, Alicante; Fruit Production Program, IRTA Mas Bové, Tarragona, Spain;
10. Juan A. Fernández, Technical University of Cartagena, Spain;
11. Ivo Vaz de Oliveira, Centre for the Research and Technology of Agro-Environmental and Biological Sciences—CITAB, Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro, UTAD, Quinta de Prados, Vila Real, Portugal;
12. Weitao Li, State Key Laboratory of Crop Gene Exploration and Utilization in Southwest China, Rice Research Institute, Sichuan Agricultural University, China.

5. Sponsors

A big thank you goes out to all the organizers and media partners of the IECAG 2023 conference (Figure 1).

Organizers

Media Partners

Figure 1. Logos of the organizer [1,2] and media partners [3–7].

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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