



The Role of
**Agricultural
Economic
Research**
in Sustainable Transformation
of Agrifood Systems
in Central and South-East Europe

Croatian Association of Agricultural Economists (HAED)
Slovenian Association of Agricultural Economists (DAES)

18 – 19 September 2025
Osijek, Croatia



Conference background and themes

The agricultural and food systems are at a critical juncture, facing multifaceted challenges that demand innovative solutions. Geopolitical tensions, accelerated market volatility and the impact of climate change are shaping an uncertain landscape. Evolving consumer preferences and the urgent need for more environmentally sustainable agricultural practices add layers of complexity. This conference aims to address these challenges and explore opportunities for sustainable transformation, particularly focusing on Central and South-East Europe.

Multilevel Response: Addressing the complexities of sustainable transformation requires action at various levels. Microeconomic adjustments at farm-level, cooperation and fair relations between actors in the food supply chain, accompanied by forward-looking and effective public policies, are essential components of a resilient agrifood systems. Tightened fiscal condition, accompanied by a deterioration of the price-cost ratio in agriculture, arouse resistance of farmers to new societal demands. Researchers are invited to share insights on how these aspects can be harmonized to foster sustainable and resilient food systems.

Opportunities in extended agrifood value Chains: One avenue for navigating these challenges lies in embracing extended agrifood value chains, adding value through valorising side-streams along the principles of a circular bioeconomy. This approach presents opportunities for sustainable resource utilization, waste reduction, and the creation of new economic avenues. The conference invites contributions on how such strategies can be practically implemented and their potential impact on the agricultural and food systems.

Shifting consumer preferences and public expectations from agri-food systems: persisting food inflation has further upset the already dynamic interplay of forces that affect our food purchase decisions. The conference seeks to quantitative evidence, how price sensitivity and value-for-money considerations have shifted food consumer preferences in the region. Considering these shifts, it raises the question of how this is translating to the general public expectations from agri-food systems.

Dialogue Among Stakeholders: A crucial aspect of navigating these challenges is fostering dialogue among governmental actors, civil society, and researchers. The conference encourages submissions that explore collaborative approaches to address the diverse needs and perspectives within the agricultural and food systems. How can effective communication and cooperation lead to more informed decision-making and sustainable outcomes?

Challenges in Central and South-East Europe: The EU has stepped up the integration process with the Western Balkans. After years of waiting, the accession of individual countries in the region is becoming a realistic option. At the same time, the EU integration is expanding eastwards, where the prospect of Ukraine's accession presents a whole new dimension of challenges for agricultural markets and policies. The conference seeks for theoretically and empirically grounded insight to EU integration process and possible specific response of the agrifood systems in Central and South-Eastern Europe.

Agricultural economics research plays a pivotal role in responding to these challenges. The conference invites submissions that offer new analyses, proposals, solutions, and tools to support the strategic planning of agricultural policies in Central and South-East Europe. How can research contribute to bridging the gap between manifold and often conflicting challenges? What novel approaches can facilitate sustainable transformation in these regions? The HAED/DAES Conference invites both scholars and professionals from various domains of

agriculture, food systems, natural resource management, and related social sciences, to share their viewpoints and research findings, that contribute to our understanding of the likely implications of the challenges described above. The ambition of the conference is to serve as a platform for stimulating professional discussion and searching for context- and area- specific solutions for agri-food systems and rural areas.

Themes:

Expected topics to be covered by the papers include:

Value chain performance: The role of traditional and extended value chains in addressing societal changes undergoing agrifood systems and rural areas.

Environmental Sustainability: Investigating the economic feasibility and farmers' acceptance of sustainable farming methods, resource management, valorisation of ecosystem services in agriculture.

Innovation and Technology Adoption: Assessing the economic impact of technological innovations, precision agriculture, and digitalization in transforming traditional farming practices.

Market Dynamics and Trade: Examining the economic implications of market trends, international trade, and the position of Central- and South-East European agriculture in international markets.

Microeconomic strategies: Awareness, knowledge and adoption of resilience-enhancing strategies by the actors along the agrifood systems and rural areas, as well as the analysis of policies and system characteristics.

Policy and Governance: Analyzing the role of policy frameworks and governance structures in promoting sustainable agrifood systems and rural development, with a particular attention to the projected impacts of the EU integration processes.

The Conference will be organised as a mix of plenary sessions, and parallel sessions with selected paper and poster presentations, as well as workshop sessions with experts, policy makers and agribusiness actors.

Symposium preliminary schedule:

Day/date		Program
Thursday 18 September2025	Morning	Registration of participants Plenary speaker 1 Coffee break HAED-DAES Sessions
	Afternoon	Lunch break HAED-DAES Sessions Round table 1 / Workshop 1 Join dinner
Friday 19 September2025	Morning	Plenary speaker 2 Coffee break HAED-DAES Sessions
	Afternoon	Lunch break HAED-DAES Sessions Round table 2 / Workshop 2 Excursion + joint dinner

Call for papers:

The Conference invites scholars and professionals with expertise in the fields of agricultural and resource economics, agrifood business, sustainability, institutional economics, policy assessment and any other field referring to the topics listed above. In addition, any other current topic related to agricultural economics, rural areas as well as rural society is warmly welcome. Short papers from the Conference will be electronically published and made available to the wider audience in electronic proceedings.

As the Conference is also a networking event of agriculture and resource economics experts and practitioners from Croatia and Slovenia, the Programme Committee warmly encourages proposals for workshop sessions on topics of wider relevance for our professional community. Proposals for workshop sessions should be sent to (e-mail address: haeddaes@fazos.hr).

Upon the invitation from the Programme Committee, authors of selected short papers will be given an opportunity to expand their works to full papers. Full papers will be considered for a publication in the Journal of agriculture which is published by the Faculty of Agrobiotechnical sciences Osijek and Agricultural Institute Osijek. The contents of journal Agriculture are indexed in following databases: **Web of Science (WoS) Core Collection – Emerging Sources Citation Indeks, SCOPUS**, CAB International (CAB Abstract), , DOAJ, Hrčak, National and University Library in Zagreb, Croatian Bibliography, chain C.

Important deadlines for authors are the following:

Short paper submission:	15th April 2025
Submission of workshop session proposals:	15th April 2025
Author notification:	end of May 2025

Authors are invited to submit short papers prepared along the recommended template which is available on the Conference website <https://haeddaes.fazos.hr> (in .docx format) to (e-mail address haeddaes@fazos.hr).

Web site: <https://haeddaes.fazos.hr>
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