CALL FOR PAPERS – Special Issue

The Digitainability of the European Agri-food System

New challenges and opportunities for business decision-making across system levels, chain and network levels, and firm levels

GUEST EDITORS

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Submission deadline for extended abstracts (~1000 words excluding references): 31 May, 2024

Feedback to authors on abstracts: 30 June, 2024

Submission deadline for full-paper submission: 31 August, 2024

FOREWORD

IFAMA is actively working to coordinate opportunities for collaboration with its regional chapters, recognize and support their work, and offer all IFAMA members opportunities to benefit from these activities. At the same time, IFAMA intends to profile its journal, the IFAMR, and its annual World Congress with broad participation of fellow European researchers.

To pursue these objectives, IFAMA and IFAMA Europe boards have decided to publish an annual “IFAMA Europe Special Issue” of IFAMR focusing on hotly discussed topics of European agri-food systems. Thematic Guest Editors will edit the Special Issue. The thematic frames described in a dedicated call for papers and IFAMR’s review requirements follow.

GUEST EDITORS

Verena Otter After being PhD candidate, postdoc and Interims Professor of Agribusiness Management at the Georg-August-University of Goettingen, Germany, Verena Otter became a Senior Assistant Professor of Innovation & Organization in Supply Chain Networks at the Business, Management & Organisation chairgroup of the School of Social Sciences, Wageningen University and Research (The Netherlands) in 2020. Her research activities focus on the role of digital and sustainable innovations in agri-food supply/value chain networks from the viewpoint of organizational theories and different management fields. She is involved in the research projects TITAN, EcoReady and BEATLES. Verena Otter is the deputy chair of the IFAMA Young Board.

Loïc Sauvée Head of the research unit InTerACT at institut polytechnique UniLaSalle in France, Loïc Sauvée earned a doctorate in agricultural economics, a post doctorate in Agricultural Economics at Purdue University (USA) and a habilitation to supervised research (HDR) in management sciences, university of Montpellier (France) in 2002. Pr Sauvée has been the IFAMA Europe chairman since 2021 and is a managing editor of IFAMR. Current research aims to deepen the understanding of governance in collaborative organizational forms, networks and territories in the context of sustainable transitions, and is also focused on sociotechnological and organizational conditions for sustainable transformations at the territory level.

GENERAL STATEMENT

Two major trends affect simultaneously agriculture and agri-food businesses: sustainability transition and digital transformation (Lichtenthaler, 2021). This topic, sometimes coined as digitainability (Gupta et al., 2020)
concentrates one of the most powerful phenomena affecting the future of agribusiness and food industries, in Europe and all over the world. These two trends of sustainability and digitalization have their own logic, based upon internal and external forces, such as societal demands, disruptive strategies of newcomers and startups, innovative strategies of conventional companies, policy-driven decisions, globalization of the supply chains as well as the rise of short agrifood distribution channels. How these two powerful and long-lasting trends combine, and with which rationale? What are the specificities of Europe on this issue? What are, what will be, the consequences of digital sustainability for business models of agribusiness, food industries and agriculture? What are the strategies of in-house companies? Of external companies, more especially in the development of digital services and global digital platforms? Business decision-making around those questions is complex and involves system level, chain & network level, and firm level thinking.

This IFAMA Europe Special Issue of IFAMR welcomes contributions centered on one country, inter-European comparisons, or comparisons between European and non-European situations. It also welcomes research that focuses on Europe testimonies from managers, original case studies, intersectoral comparisons etc. The contributions can also be focused on original theories and methodologies dealing with this topic of digitainability.

### THEMES & TOPICS

1) **System level thinking**: Multi-stakeholder perspectives on the role of systemic digital innovations in the digitainability of the European agri-food system
   a) Socio-technical innovation bundling for digital sustainability in the European agri-food system
   b) Diffusion of systemic digitainable innovations to the mainstream in the European agri-food system
   c) Globalization vs territorialization in the process of agri-food system digitainability

2) **Chain and network level thinking**: Digitainable innovation – organization – fit in agri-food supply/value chain networks
   a) Innovative organizational structures to facilitate collaboration with competitors for digitainable transparency in agri-food supply/value chain networks
   b) Relational multiplexity in digitainable agri-food supply chain network management
   c) Best practices in agri-food supply chain network governance on the digital road towards due diligence

3) **Firm level thinking**: Agri-food entrepreneurship and digital business models for sustainability in innovation ecosystems
   a) Certification schemes of digitainability processes.
   b) EU policy (including Green Deal, CAP reform and CSDDD) as driver and/or barrier for agri-food businesses companies’ digital sustainability?
   c) Scaling up the digitainable transformation of agri-food businesses via business model innovation

### REVIEW PROCESS PROTOCOL

The review process of this Special Issue is two-step.

**Step 1**: an IFAMA Europe review committee will select extended abstracts through a double-blind process. Extended abstracts should include the following sections: problem description; methodology; results; and managerial implications.

**Step 2**: the full papers of the selected extended abstracts will enter the IFAMR reviewing process with a double-blind review process and will follow the guidelines of regular IFAMR issues.

### SPECIAL ISSUE TIMELINE

- **31 May, 2024**: Submission deadline for extended abstracts (approximately 1000 words excluding references). Send to verena.otter@wur.nl and loic.sauvee@unilasalle.fr
- **30 June, 2024**: Feedback to authors on abstracts
- **31 August, 2024**: Submission deadline for full papers
- **Early 2025**: Articles will be published ‘in press’ as soon as possible after acceptance. The complete issue is expected to be the first issue of 2025.
REFERENCES


