

AES Symposium 2026

Strategic directions for the Journal of Agricultural Economics

The purpose of the symposium is to have a discussion of challenges confronting the JAE and discuss how they can best be addressed. It follows up on a symposium on the same topic held at the Society's 2024 conference in Edinburgh. Key takeaways from that meeting are summarized in a blog on the AES website (https://aes.ac.uk/blog_more.asp?blogID=10).

The JAE is one of a small number of journals focused squarely on the subject of agricultural economics. It provides a forum for research that applies the discipline of economics to key issues confronting the food and agricultural sector. Those issues include, but are not limited to, food security and nutrition, farm level performance, rural development, international trade, the natural environment, land use and climate change.

To a large extent the material coming into the journal reflects the wider evolution of the discipline and the signals provided by the Authors' Guidelines.¹ In an invited piece of structural topic modelling, Cei (2026) has noted the increasing prevalence of micro based analysis, either in the form of causal inference from survey data or experimental economics. The anniversary issue of the journal will provide an opportunity to take stock of how the journal has evolved and identify some research priorities for the future.

A major change since the last symposium has been the rise of Artificial Intelligence – which is already having far reaching implications for the journal process as well as for the way in which applied research is conducted. Another development with implications for researchers has been a fundamental shift in the policy landscape, with a growing divergence between adopted policies in many countries and “evidence base” policies, based on empirical analysis such as that appearing in the JAE.

In this evolving research landscape it makes sense to revisit the same three issues that we discussed at the Symposium in 2024.

- The first is the aims and scope of the journal. Here the journal needs to remain true to its core principle of producing innovative, rigorous and relevant research. At the same time, there is a balance to be struck between the JAE's immediate role as a forum for academic research (and associated career advancement) and its function as an organ of the Society that should have meaningful things to say about the challenges facing the food and agriculture sector in the 21st century. Fundamentally, how does the JAE find its niche? Can or should it establish a “brand” identity?
- The second relates to the topics and associated methods applied in research articles. The articles published feature a great deal of micro level econometrics looking at the determinants of farmers' (and increasingly food consumers') decisions, with an increasing emphasis on experimental economics. Do further steps need to be taken to broaden the scope of material in the journal, in terms of both topics and associated methods? How should the journal respond to the growth of AI?
- The third issue concerns communication and how the Journal can enhance its real world impact. How can the journal engage more effectively with information users outside a

¹ The Author's Guidelines specify: Preference will be given to articles which present either new developments in research and methods of analysis, or apply existing methods and techniques to new problems and contemporary situations which are likely to be of interest to the journal's international readership. The journal is not a suitable publication for articles of purely local interest.

narrow group of specialist researchers. More use is being made of social media e.g. through LinkedIn, but can more be done, for example by linking special issues to wider stakeholder events?

Moderator: Jonathan Brooks (current Editor-in-Chief)

Panelists: Frederic Ang (University of Reading), Doris Läßle (University of Göttingen), Jill McCluskey (Washington State University), Cornelis Gardebroek (Wageningen University).

Introductory biographies

Professor Jill McCluskey is Director, School of Economic Sciences – Regents Professor at Washington State University. She is President-Elect of the International Association of Agricultural Economists (IAAE), and was Editor of the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* from 2021-23. Her main research areas are applied industrial organization, retail markets, and reputation; nutrition, access to healthy food, and food safety; consumer preferences for food, including new technology, food labeling, organic/eco-labels, and sensory attributes; environmental, natural resources, and energy economics

Frederic Ang is an Associate Professor in the Department of Agri-Food Economics and Marketing at the University of Reading. He serves as Co-Editor of the *Journal of Agricultural Economics* and as Associate Editor of the *Journal of Productivity Analysis*. His research analyses the performance of the actors in the food supply chain from a production economics perspective. His topics of interest include sustainable intensification, dynamic optimisation behaviour and modelling of subprocesses. He was on the faculty of Wageningen University's Business Economics Group from 2017 to 2025.

Doris Läßle is Professor in Economics of *Sustainable Agri-Food Systems* at the University of Göttingen and Co-Editor of the *Journal of Agricultural Economics*. Before joining the University of Göttingen, she was Associate Professor at the School of Business and Economics at the University of Galway, Ireland. Her research focuses on how to support sustainable agricultural practices. This involves using farm accountancy data and gathering survey and experimental data to explore agricultural production decisions, technology adoption and extension effectiveness, and their interactions with the environment and wider society.

Dr. ir. Cornelis (Koo) Gardebroek is an associate professor in Agricultural Economics and Rural Policy at Wageningen University and Editor of the *European Review of Agricultural Economics*. His research and teaching focus on applied econometric analyses of the agricultural sector, with applications in the field of markets and prices, technology adoption, and risk and uncertainty. He organized various PhD summer courses in Advanced Econometrics and Machine Learning.

Jonathan Brooks is current Editor-in Chief of the *JAE*. Jon was previously Head of the Agricultural and Resources Policies Division in the Trade and Agriculture Directorate at OECD and prior to that Head of the Agri-food Trade and Markets Division where he worked from 1999-2022.