

AES Bursary Report for the 10th EAAE PhD Workshop

I would like to express my gratitude to the Agricultural Economics Society (AES) for offering me the travel bursary to attend the European Association of Agricultural Economics (EAAE) PhD Workshop taking place from 5-7 June 2024 in Budapest, Hungary.

This PhD workshop successfully provided the platform for doctoral researchers from European universities or research institutes to communicate with peers and receive constructive feedback from leading agricultural economists on their work. There were over 70 doctoral researchers presenting their studies in the way of discussion papers or flash papers, covering diverse topics and methods. Three keynote speeches from Professors delivered valuable insights to early career researchers regarding the resilience to food and nutrition insecurity, successes and failures of publishing, and applications for grants and projects (see Figure 1). Furthermore, participants had the chance to discuss with the experienced academics specific issues on their paper refinement, career development, and grant application in the one-on-one consultation session. Social events such as coffee breaks and conference dinners enable researchers to identify and network with colleagues doing similar work or sharing the same research interests.

In the discussion paper session – Consumers and Choices, I presented the paper titled “Smallholders’ Preferences for Agricultural Drone Services: Evidence from a Choice Experiment in Hubei, China” (see Figure 2). This study focuses on investigating farmers’ preferences for agricultural drone services in smallholder farming systems. We conduct a discrete choice experiment among 342 farmers in Hubei, China, and use mixed logit models to elicit farmers’ preferences for the agricultural drone service (ADS) and its attributes. The results show that the large majority of sampled farmers are willing to adopt ADS. Besides low prices, farmers prefer services with local suppliers and formal contractual agreements, which reduce uncertainty over accessibility and service quality, respectively. Potential adopters in this choice experiment are characterized by youth, high education, high agricultural income, owning a small-scale farm with poor topography, drone learning via word-of-mouth, and adoption experience. The willingness to pay analysis indicates that farmers are willing to spend 48 USD per ha on average for ADS, which is slightly above current market prices in the study area. Furthermore, farmers value the localness of suppliers more than the form of agreements. These findings suggest the provision of supply-side incentives and uncertainty-reducing promotion strategies to enhance smallholders’ access to and adoption of agricultural drones.

Afterward, I received insightful feedback and comments from Professors and fellow researchers, mainly on experimental methodology, storyline organization, study contributions, and policy implications. Attending other parallel sessions, I was also inspired to improve my presentation skills and broaden my research perspectives. During networking time, I had extensive discussions with peers in the field of experimental economics and learned more about the design and implementation of different lab-in-the-field experiments. It was rather helpful to guide my current and following research work. Beyond this, the creation of networks would be a good start for potential cooperation in the future.

Overall, thank you for awarding me the financial support to travel to the EAAE PhD workshop. This experience is crucial for me, as an early researcher, to gain comprehensive insights into my study field and to motivate the development of my academic career.



Figure 1. Keynote Speech 1 – Resilience to food and nutrition insecurity: old wine in new bottles?



Figure 2. My presentation in the session “Consumers and Choices”

Best regards,

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