

Highlights from the 2022 Conference

The New Zealand Agricultural and Resource Economics Society (NZARES) Annual Conference was held in Nelson on the 1st and 2nd of September - the first in-person conference after two years of disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the planned pre-conference field trip to vineyards in the Marlborough region on 31st August had to be cancelled due to the recent state of emergency after heavy rain, floods and major slips caused road closure in the Nelson area. This conference has been exciting with the conference theme titled as *“Better Resilience, Sustainability and Production: Interdisciplinary, International, and Inclusive”*.

The conference was held over two days, consisting of a keynote session, three panel sessions and three contributed paper sessions. There were more than 50 delegates registered to attend. The Ministry for Primary Industries and Waikato Regional Council were key sponsors of the conference. It commenced with the Robin Johnson Memorial Session led by Distinguished Professor Caroline Saunders as the Director of the Agribusiness and Economics Research Unit (AERU), which celebrated its 60th anniversary this year. There were three panel sessions on important sub-themes, namely *“Emission Pricing and Trading in Pastoral and Forestry Industries”*, *“Farm Environment Planning”*, and *“Water Quantity, Allocation and Markets”*. In addition, there were three contributed paper sessions (comprising 35 presentations) on various topics, and provisions were made for postgraduate research students who could not join the conference online. The AARES session of the conference was led by AARES President Frank Scrimgeour, who gave a fascinating talk on the challenges and responsibilities for members of the agricultural and resource economics profession.

Associate Professor Nazmun Ratna began her term as the President of NZARES and presented the awards for the 2022 NZARES conference: Best First Time Presenter Award, NZARES Post-Graduate (PG) Award and Heading East Award. The Award Committee for the best first-time presenters was very impressed with the quality of presenters and declared Robbie Maris as the winner for his presentation titled, *“Fostering Freshwater Conservation in Urban Populations: Insights from Field Experiments in New Zealand”*.

Ben Marmont, Odmaa Narantungalag, and Robbie Maris received the NZARES Post-Graduate Award, and Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman received the NZARES/AARES Heading East Award 2022. This year there was no Best Paper award as there was only one entry for the award and at least three entries are required for the award to be presented.

The NZARES Committee welcomed Professor Peter Tozer as President-elect, and Timothy Driver as new members for 2022/23. Assoc. Prof. Nazmun Ratna expressed our sincere thanks to Dr Femi Olubode for his leadership, and to Professor Anita Wreford and Rachael Evans, who stepped down from the Committee after three years of service.

The conference finished with a session led by Minister of Agriculture, the Honourable Damien O’Connor, who answered questions from conference participants on the future of the agri-food system in New Zealand and issues related to international trade in the face of *“three Cs”*: Conflict, COVID and Climate Change.

Lincoln University Distinguished Professor Caroline Saunders, a long-serving committee member of the Committee, became the sixth life member of NZARES in recognition of her service to the society and her contribution to agricultural economics.

The Conference Dinner was held at the Tides Restaurant in Nelson with Mr Hermann Seifried from Seifried Estate, Nelson, as dinner speaker, who outlined challenges encountered in developing a leading winemaking firm from scratch.