

Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group
Unit 4, Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN, UK

21 November 2008

***The Journal of Agricultural Education & Extension:* 2008 Best Paper Award winners announced**

Choosing the best article from [*The Journal of Agricultural Education & Extension* \(JAEE\)](#) wasn't easy this year. We believe that this is indicative of a generally high quality of the article submissions in 2008. In the end, the committee decided to award the best article prize to two papers. The editorial committee congratulates all authors of these papers: **Alex Koutsouris**, **Kristin Davis**, **Javier Ekboir** and **David Spielman** for winning the best article prize in 2008!

Alex Koutsouris's article titled "*Innovating towards sustainable agriculture: A Greek case*" (JAEE 14(3), 203-125) deals with sustainability issues in agriculture. Agriculture is increasingly met with demands to integrate good natural resource management and ecological sustainability into production approaches. Koutsouris describes the Melissa project, which attempted to introduce "Integrated Crop Management" in the Greek village "Melissa". Despite the project being less successful than hoped, Koutsouris took the opportunity to gain insight in the reasons for this, and how future agriculture innovation projects might be improved. Koutsouris analysis clearly indicates that differences in goals and expectations between scientists and extension workers on the one hand, and local farmers on the other, and a lack of mutual understanding about these goals and expectations were the major weaknesses that led to the rupturing of the Melissa Project. Based on his analysis, Koutsouris underlines the importance of participatory practices in innovation projects: farmers, extension workers and scientists need to become co-learners in innovation projects, which would in turn result in a redistribution of powers, and negotiation of planning and decision-making processes.

Kristin Davis, Javier Ekboir and David J. Spielman wrote in with an innovation systems perspective. In their article "*Strengthening Agricultural Education and Training in sub-Saharan Africa from an Innovation Systems Perspective: A Case Study of Mozambique*" (JAEE 14(1), 35-51), they employ this perspective to derive recommendations for post-secondary agricultural education and training (AET) in Mozambique. Davis *et al.* applied their innovation systems perspective to Mozambique, and found that, although Mozambique has made significant investments in AET, it still does not have a strong potential for knowledge generation, adoption, and dissemination, but that it is moving towards. As the Mozambique agricultural system is moving towards a more productive, diversified and commercialised agricultural sector, demands on AET to foster this innovation will increase, while the AET system is not adequately equipped for this role. Davis *et al.* use their analysis to propose important recommendations for AET reform, such as aligning the mandates of AET organizations to national development policies, linking AET more closely to user communities, and integration information and communication technology into economic and social networks.

The committee found both articles particularly strong, but for very different reasons. Davis *et al.* was chosen for its visionary perspective on innovation systems. They have shown that their perspective is far-reaching in its theoretical breadth, while at the same time being of practical use for finding ways to improve existing AET systems. Koutsouris impressed us with the clarity of his methodological approach and conclusions. Koutsouris's procedure is detailed well in his methodological section, and his results are clearly distinguished from his conclusions. This enables the reader to follow Koutsouris in his lines of argument, resulting in an interesting and pleasant read. Finally, the editorial committee appreciates the societal importance of both papers, and their recommendations offer good starting points for both improving existing innovation and extension methods, and new research about agricultural education and extensions.

Both articles are freely available from the 'Online Contents' link of the journal homepage, www.tandf.co.uk/journals/raee or by clicking the links below:

[Innovating Towards Sustainable Agriculture: A Greek Case Study](#)

Alex Koutsouris

Volume 14, 2008, Issue 3, Pages 203-215

[Strengthening Agricultural Education and Training in sub-Saharan Africa from an Innovation Systems Perspective: A Case Study of Mozambique](#)

Kristin E. Davis, Javier Ekboir and David J. Spielman

Volume 14, 2008, Issue 1, Pages 35-51

To contribute a paper to **JAE**, and thus be eligible for the award, please refer to the 'Instructions for Authors' link on the journal homepage: www.tandf.co.uk/journals/raee.

Martin Mulder

Editor of *JAE*