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# Agribusiness

 – Industry Commentary, Debate, Analysis and Research

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## IAMA - 2003

The International Food and Agribusiness Management Association (IAMA) is pleased to announce that early registration is now available for the 13th Annual World Food and Agribusiness Forum and Symposium.

The conference will be held in Cancun, Mexico on June 21st - 24th, 2003 at the Fiesta Americana Grand Coral Beach hotel. The theme of this year's conference is "**Strategy Development in Turbulent Times**" and the program will include

- President of Mexico Vicente Fox as the featured luncheon speaker,
- Presentations of over 100 research papers during the symposium,
- A number of timely, educational and interesting CEO panels and roundtable discussions during the forum.

Register by April 5, 2003 in order to receive a US \$100 early-bird discount.

Web Links:

Registration Brochure - <http://www.ifama.org/conferences/2003RegBrochure.pdf>

Registration Form - <http://www.ifama.org/conferences/2003RegistrationForm.pdf>

Hotel Reservation Form - <http://www.ifama.org/conferences/2003HotelForm.pdf>

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## Drought.

You can find a thought provoking paper on Drought policy located on the front page of the Association web site; it's titled *Drought – Time for a new approach?*

The contents of the paper caused a great deal of media interest and spawned 5 interviews and talk back radio sessions (on regional and national ABC and Radio National).

The basic points of the paper are.

- Australia is the driest continent and we should be better prepared for drought, it is a common occurrence, not an exception and definitely not a 'natural disaster' (as cyclones, floods or major fires are).
- Preparation for drought should underpin management through all sectors of the value chain.
- Drought assistance should not be used to save financially unsound enterprises from closure, but equally there has to be a strong safety net to alleviate poverty, but at the farm level and for related regional businesses (a sector that is not well catered for by current policies).
- All policies relating to soil and water management and to drought (the three are strongly linked) should be reviewed to arrest asset decline and better prepare our regional economy for droughts.

Interestingly, the paper drew almost universal support for its tenor, with only a couple of calls (to talk back radio sessions and directly to the Association) criticising the thesis. There will be a follow up paper in the next week or so.

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## Publishing Update

A new Perspectives paper has been published titled ***Collaborative Groups: Themes for Success and the Role of Universities*** by David Trechter from the University of Wisconsin--River Falls USA and Roy Murray-Prior Muresk Institute of Agriculture in Western Australia.

This is an interesting paper that looks at the dynamic shifts in economic power that have accompanied the development and implementation of 'value chain' thinking in the US and Australia.

The paper examines the various approaches used by food and fibre producers to combat the increasing aggregation of value chain power to fewer and fewer organisations as the chain reaches its end – the consumer.

The issue of market / economic / financial influence is pervasive, as it becomes evident no matter what involvement the producer has with those further along the value chain, solely due to the numerical imbalance between producers, the processors and handlers along the middle of the chain, and those who interface directly with consumers (where concentration of 'influence' on the rest of the value chain is greatest).

The authors set out a plan for universities to consider, with the implicit message that the education system has to account for and adapt to the changes documented a) so they can produce graduates with a contemporary understanding of the agri-food and fibre sector and b) so they can play a role in better equipping existing managers with the skills needed for this new 'interdependent' world.

Find this paper in the Agribusiness Online Members Section under Perspectives <http://www.agrifood.info/>

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