

The First International Conference of the Asia-Pacific Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics

Conference Theme: “Food Safety and Security for the Twenty-first Century”

November 28-30, 2013

Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

Overview

The First International Conference of the Asia-Pacific Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics (APSAFE2013) be held at Chulalongkorn University from November 28 to 30, 2013. The conference will be a forum for exchange of research findings and networking among academics in various disciplines, as well as policymakers and other stakeholders on the topic of ethical implications of food and agriculture, broadly construed. The conference is organized in close collaboration with the series of conferences organized by the [European Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics](#) (EurSAFE), of which the Asia-Pacific Society (APSAFE) is a sister organization.

The conference is jointly organized by the [Center for Ethics of Science and Technology](#) and the [Office of the Commission on Agricultural Resource Education](#)(OCARE), a new organization at Chulalongkorn University that concentrates on providing education to Chula students on agricultural and related topics. The Office of the UNESCO in Bangkok is also providing close collaboration.

The idea of establishing the Asia-Pacific Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics originated at a meeting organized by the UNESCO in Bangkok in December, 2011. The President and Vice-President of the European Society, Prof. Matthias Kaiser and Prof. Kate Millar were present at the meeting, together with Dr. Soraj Hongladarom, Director of the Center for Ethics of Science and Technology, Chulalongkorn University, Dr. Kriengkrai Satapornvanit from Kasetsart University, Dr. Pakki Reddi from India, both of whom had been collaborating with Profs. Kaiser and Millar on a project funded by the European Union on ethics of food production. Dr. Darryl Macer, Regional Advisor for Science and Human Science in the Asia and the Pacific, UNESCO Bangkok was also present.

It was resolved during the meeting that the Asia-Pacific Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics be established in order to provide a forum of exchange of research findings and networking among scholars and scientists working on the ethical implications of food and agricultural production. Agricultural and food ethics is an interdisciplinary field consisting mainly of applied ethics, sociology, political science, economics, food science, environmental science and others whose main concern is the relation between food and agriculture on the one hand, and the socio-economic and cultural milieu in which food and agriculture find themselves on the other. Among the questions investigated in this field are: Are genetically modified food a viable alternative as a source of food for the present century? What

are the ethical considerations surrounding the practice of aquaculture, such as safety issues, global justice, threats to the environment, and so on? Surely these questions are very important in today's interconnected world and need to be studied very closely.

It is for this reason that the Asia-Pacific Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics has decided to organize its first international conference, and the Center for Ethics of Science and Technology, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, was deeply honored to have been formally invited by both the APSAFE and the EurSAFE to organize the meeting in November 28-30, 2013. The congress will represent the first attempt by scholars and scientists in the Asia and the Pacific regions to get together to share thoughts, insights, research findings and to create and deepen networking among scholars in Asia and elsewhere.

Rationale

As the world is becoming more interrelated and as the pace of scientific and technological advances is indeed breathtaking, there is always a need to think deeply about how values are infused in our food and agriculture more than ever. On the one hand, there is a need for having enough supply of food to feed the growing population. This demands a series of breakthroughs in technology, among other factors such as equitable food distribution system. On the other hand, the rush to rely on technology to solve our problems has brought with it a number of serious problems which could have been prevented had we paid more attention on how those technologies might affect us in the longer run. Hence, there is a tension between “food security” on the one hand, and “food safety” on the other. The purpose of the conference is to ask the question where the balance between can be found, and in what form. As we progress deeper into the twenty-first century it seems we cannot avoid either food security or food safety. Is there a way so that we can optimally achieve both of them? And how?

The conference will attempt to provide answers to the questions above; furthermore, it will deal with food and agricultural ethics from a variety of disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, philosophy, food science, biotechnology, veterinary science, agricultural sciences, and others, especially as they are related to safety or security. There will be four main themes at the conference, listed below. However, papers do not have to fall directly into either of these categories, but are within the domain of agricultural and food ethics broadly construed are certainly welcome.

There are four main topics will the conference aims at discussing in detail, namely

- Ethical considerations pertaining to the production of food
- Ethical considerations pertaining to the distribution and trading of food and agricultural products
- Environmental aspects, sustainability, contextual issues surrounding food, forestry and aquaculture production (e.g., land use, related issues in philosophy of technology, etc.)
- Food policy and regulatory issues in Asia and beyond, educational issues in food and agricultural ethics.

Objectives

1. To provide research findings on the topics related to agricultural and food ethics.
2. To function as a forum and a center for researchers, practitioners and policy makers in these areas to interact and exchange findings and viewpoints.
3. To encourage cross-disciplinary research aiming at directly addressing the world's problems in

food and agriculture, especially as they are related to ethical, legal, social, economic issues.

Organization

The conference is jointly organized by the Office of the Commission of Agricultural Resource Education (OCARE), the Center for Ethics of Science and Technology, the Center for the Studies of Peace and Conflict Resolution, and the Faculty of Veterinary Science, Chulalongkorn University.

Format of Conference

1. Special lectures by invited keynote speakers.
2. Group discussions
3. Oral and poster presentations

Participants

1. Faculty and students from academic institutions in Thailand and abroad
2. Representatives from national governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations.

Date and Venue

November 28 – 30, 2013, Chulalongkorn University

Conference Website

<http://www.apsafe2013.org/>

Expected Outcomes

1. A number of high-quality research works dealing with the ethical and other contextual aspects of food and agriculture
2. International network of scholars and scientists in these areas
3. Effective policy recommendations to concerned policymakers both at domestic and international levels.