A Brief Review of the History of the AIAEE:
The Beginning and the First Ten Years

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Abstract

A review of the beginning and first ten years for the Association for International Agricultural Education which later was renamed the Association for International Agricultural and Extension Education. The activities and three major events prior to the formation of the AIAE in April 1984. The development of purposes, events, publications and involvement of members are reviewed primarily from 1984 through 1994. Names of key individual members and leaders are mentioned in connection with particular events. General references used by the author are listed at the end.

Keywords: History, organization, annual meetings, publications, mission, officers, development, future
Introduction

The Association for International Agricultural Education (AIAE) was officially organized, adopted a constitution and elected officers at a meeting held at the State Department in Washington, D.C. on April 6, 1984. The name was changed at the Annual Meeting in April 1987 to Association for International Agricultural and Extension Education (AIAEE). In April 2009 the AIAEE celebrated its 25th Year while holding its annual meeting in Puerto Rico. The following article is intended to provide some background information about the years prior to the formal organization plus some highlights for the first ten years.

When dealing with history it is important to recognize that impressions are very personal and that different individuals may have participated in or observed the same events but have drawn different impressions about them. The following observations and recollections are those of the author and hopefully, they will stimulate others to reflect on their own memories about the events and activities of those years.

Actions Leading to AIAE

The AIAE was a consequence of actions related to the perceptions of individuals and groups with concerns for people about food, health, and general well being not only in their own communities and states but around the world. My reflections go back to the period after World War II. That period of military service by hundreds, yes thousands, of USA citizens, in the military actions across the Atlantic and the Pacific, which brought a new sense of awareness of peoples and cultures around the world. Those men and women who were fortunate enough to be able to return home, took with them an awareness of other cultures, other customs. That awareness triggered a movement of many young people to relocate from their original home communities to areas throughout the continental USA so that sons and daughters more frequently than before the war sought careers in other parts of their country. The opportunities provided by the GI Bill of Rights for education opened the doors for change. Finally, the U.S. governmental actions to help reestablish functioning governments and economies in the countries which had been defeated provided an organized basis for what is now commonly called international development actions. The emphasis on improving agriculture and food production in new and emerging nations, an emphasis seen through government actions, provided opportunities for agricultural educators in the USA to become involved in international projects.

In the early 1950s there were requests from U.S. government agencies and UN organizations for agricultural educators to assist with food and agricultural projects in countries such as India, Philippine Islands, Cuba, Taiwan, Japan and others. By the late 70s there were many agricultural educators who had been directly involved in short term and long term assignments in many countries, helping to improve food production through educational programs to prepare teachers of agriculture and agricultural extension workers. In the spring of 1978 a survey was conducted by Meaders to get an inventory of international experience and interest among agricultural educators, primarily teacher educators. Responses from 63 persons in 38 states indicated a wealth of experiences and a potential source of practical experiences.

In 1981 an Ad Hoc Committee on International Agricultural Education within the AATEA (American Association of Teacher Educators of Agriculture) reported that “at least 25 AATEA members, 27 foreign countries, and 19 United States Universities” were involved in international programs during 1980-81.
Three other meetings in 1983-84 had considerable relevance to the actual formation and initial direction of the Association for International Agricultural Education. First, was a conference held at Sam Houston State University (SHSU), Huntsville, Texas on April 20-22, 1983. The key organizer was Dr. David Riley, Director of the Title XII Strengthening Grant at SHSU. The international seminar was designed to bring together agricultural educators who were interested in improving educational systems in developing countries. A list of the ten guest speakers for the seminar illustrated the international scope of the talent brought to that meeting.

The second meeting was a Seminar on Agricultural Education in Africa, August 23, 1983, held at the Agency for International Development, Bureau for Africa, Washington, D.C. The seminar was “organized to facilitate a sharing of ideas among experts in development of agricultural education. Its purpose was to record recommendations for an AID strategy on agricultural and extension education in sub-Saharan Africa.” Future leaders in AIAE who were active for that seminar included Dr. William L. Thuemmel and eight other future members of the association. Dr. Thuemmel was a key person in the planning and organizing of the meeting.

The third meeting was held near Kansas City, February 1-3, 1984. It was held at the Best Western Airport Inn, Platte City, KS. Dr. Burton Swanson, Dr. Larry Miller and others have shared personal notes from that meeting. David Riley was instrumental in the arrangements for this meeting near Kansas City. Dr. Thuemmel prepared a record of the meeting which was included in the March 1984 issue of the AATEA Newsletter. There were three developments from that meeting which have been key for the beginning of the Association. They were: 1) A five-person steering committee composed of Frank Bobbitt, David Riley, Hugh Rouk, Burton Swanson, and William Thuemmel was assigned to develop plans for establishing the Association for International Agricultural Education and to develop plans to strengthen its linkages with various international organizations; 2) prepare plans for a one-day meeting in April at the New State Building, Washington, D.C. for implementing the new organization; and 3) to plan AATEA/AIAE involvement in the AID-sponsored conference on Agricultural Education in Africa to be held in Yaounde, Cameroon during the summer of 1984.

It must be noted that not all agricultural teacher educators or their departments were enthusiastic about being involved in international work. In a memo dated March 29, 1995 which I received from a young faculty member at a prominent midwest university, the writer was responding to my request for memories about the beginning of AIAEE. He indicated he had attended the meetings in the late 70s and early 80s in his attempt to better serve his graduate student advisees and to foster his growing interests in expanding my world view of agricultural education. He was further motivated by the prospect of assisting his department to begin to internationalize its curriculum and its involvement in international projects. He went on to offer a comment about how that Department had been domestically oriented and provincial. He had experienced faculty who were vocally and adamantly opposed to an international dimension to the mission of the (their) department. However, he clearly stated how over the next decade the program of their department evolved to substantial involvement in international activities and for such work to be a specific dimension of their mission statement.

The Organizational Meeting
The organizational meeting with adoption of a constitution and election of key officers for the Association for International Agricultural Education (AIAE) was held in Washington, D.C. on April 6, 1984. Thirty-
two agricultural educators and related professionals attended, representing 14 universities, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), International Agricultural Development Service (IADS), World Bank, Kalamazoo Spice Extraction Company, Knockalva School in Jamaica and the Future Farmers of America. After morning and early afternoon meetings regarding need for and scope of agricultural education in international agricultural development, opportunities for support within BIFAD and regional bureaus of USAID, and strengthening of linkages with the private sector, the constitution and bylaws were adopted. The officers and executive board members elected were as follows:

Officers:
Chairperson, Burton W. Swanson, University of Illinois
Vice Chairperson, William L. Thuemmel, University of Massachusetts
Secretary-Treasurer, Lennie H. Gamage, FFA

Executive Board Members:
Robert E. Julian, University of Idaho
O. Donald Meaders, Michigan State University
David J. Riley, Sam Houston State University
Hugh F. Rouk, Oklahoma State University

Membership was set to begin July 1, 1984 with dues as follows: Regular Members, $10.00; International Members, $5.00; Student Members, $3.00; and Honorary Members, No Fee. Some of the additional planning included presentations by the officers at meetings of related national and international organizations such as AUSUDIAP, NASULGC and others to inform interested individuals about the purposes and goals of the new Association.

The stated purposes in the original constitution for the AIAE were as follows:

Provide a medium for exchange of ideas and information relating to international education programs in agriculture and rural development

Provide a liaison on international agricultural education between colleges and universities, government agencies, private industries, foundations, international agencies, and international agricultural educators on a global scale.

The First Meeting of the Executive Board
The first meeting of the Board was held in Yaoundi, Cameroon on July 26, 1984, while the members were attending the Agricultural Education Workshop sponsored by the Education and Human Resources Division, Office of Technical Resources, Bureau for Africa, AID/Washington. A quorum of four board members (Swanson, Rouk, Riley, Meaders) were present plus one visitor, James Christiansen, Texas A&M University. Important items which were discussed included a) a sample brochure with a logo, b) a personnel resource survey with options for possible release of information upon request, c) a one-page Newsletter which Rouk and Riley agreed to produce for release in the fall of 1984, and d) initial planning for workshops designed to improve skill of agricultural educators who want to get started in international work (Riley agreed to initiate planning). Most of these items proved to be critical for the successful beginning of the Association. In addition, plans were initiated for the next Board meeting to be held December 4, 1984 at New Orleans, at the time of the annual AVA, AATEA, and other educator meetings.
First Annual Meeting for AIAE

The planners for that meeting in 1985 were aware of the lack of precedents and the peril of setting new procedures for the beginning of the Association. Arrangements were made for the meeting to be held at the National 4-H Center, 7100 Connecticut Ave., Chevy Chase, Maryland April 25-26, 1985. Fifty-nine agricultural educators and related international development specialists participated in the two-day conference. The participants represented 20 U.S. universities, five developing countries (Cameroon, Egypt, Iraq, South Korea, and Venezuela), the U.S. Agency for International Development, the World Bank, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and two private consulting firms.

The conference program featured a one-half day workshop on AID procedures, an update of AID projects and activities in agricultural education and rural development, a presentation of professional papers session, and an AIAE annual business meeting. Nineteen professional papers were presented and discussed in three concurrent sessions. A $15.00 conference fee was collected upon arrival to cover miscellaneous conference expenses, 3 coffee breaks and two receptions.

It is important to note some of the procedures which were used at this first conference. The registration was handled by graduate students, each presenter of a paper was requested to bring 50 copies, double punched on the left-hand margin to facilitate binding, and the papers were then assembled at the conference.

The concurrent presentation sessions were organized so that each presenter had a total of fifteen minutes for presentation, five minutes for a discussant plus questions from the audience.

The concurrent sessions each had a theme: a) Agricultural Schooling/Extension Education, b) Development Strategies/Technology Transfer, and c) Educational Programs on U.S. Campuses/Meeting Developing Country Needs.

The Association business meeting resulted in several decisions with long-term implications in addition to an election of new officers. Dr. Thuemmel automatically moved from Vice-Chairperson to Chairperson; Dr. David Riley was elected to the Vice-Chairperson position; and Dr. Jan Henderson was elected to the vacant 3-year term as a Board member. A resolution was accepted to develop an amendment to the by-laws to provide for representation by student members on the Board. A program planning committee for the 1986 annual conference was designated and the Publications Committee reported on value and feasibility of publishing a journal. The date and place for the 1986 meeting was set for Washington, D.C. during early spring with possible sites: National 4-H Center; a hotel in Rosslyn, Virginia; or a campus facility at the University of Maryland in College Park.

Indications of Change & Development

Change seems to have been a characteristic which was built-in for the organization. Over the first few years the members and officers freely proposed and enacted changes as it became evident that they were needed. The organizational format soon changed. There had been no standing committees. Within a few years the office of Secretary-Treasurer was divided into two separate offices. One of the Board member positions was officially designated for graduate students. Then the Board was called the Leadership Team and consisted of: President, President Elect, Past President, Secretary, Treasurer, Editor of Newsletter, Editor of Journal, Committee Chairpersons, Graduate Student Representative and one Board Member at Large.
Publications

A Newsletter, The Informer, was published the first year of the organization and continued each year thereafter. Usually it was published three times each year. Its purpose was to provide information to the membership about Board meetings, annual meetings, offer an opportunity for sharing news about activities and planned events, as well as promoting the association. The first editor was Hough F. Rouk followed by a series of editors who usually held the office for two or three years.

A Journal was started in 1994 with Dr. Jack Elliot as the first editor. It started with two issues each year until 1997 when a summer issue was added to provide an opportunity to publish outstanding papers from the annual meeting. The Journal had been a subject of discussion from the time of the first annual conference and a subject of a committee for many years. The Journal of International Agricultural and Extension Education is a refereed journal and recognized for it high quality articles. It usually includes three types of articles: feature articles, commentary articles and tools of the profession articles. It provides the profession with an excellent means for sharing on a global basis articles which deal with results of research and on topics of current and emerging interest.

Involving Participants at Annual Meetings

The first annual conference involved graduate students in the registration of participants, the management of the concurrent sessions for presentation of papers, and even in the assembly of sets of the papers. The graduate students have a tradition of participation both as members, as a board member, and as organizers. They were encouraged to help raise money at the annual meetings through ‘silent auctions’ and ‘sale of T-Shirts’, with the money to be used for scholarships to help graduate students pay the expense of travel to the annual meetings. From the beginning the participation of the graduate students was viewed as an educational plus for all of the participants, young and older.

One special activity needs mention. At the 1995 annual conference Dr. Edgar Persons, University of Minnesota, took the leadership role for developing the basic framework of a handbook on how to organize for a purpose. The members in attendance responded to seven questions about organizing and from that exercise came a publication: Lets Organize: A Handbook for Helping Groups Organize for the Promotion of Agricultural Education and Extension.

Mission/Purposes

The two purposes for the organization, stated in the original constitution, provided the basis of many discussions. Those discussions were brought into focus again by Dr. Clifford L. Nelson, president 1987-88, when he brought to the Board meeting in February 1988 for discussion a paper, “Positioning AIAEE for the 21st Century: The Next Steps.” The Board urged him to use it as the keynote address the first afternoon of the 1988 annual meeting. That was a catalyst which eventually resulted in adoption of wording for use in promotional brochures of the purpose as “...an international professional association linking agricultural educators and extension practitioners aimed at strengthening agricultural and extension programs and institutions worldwide.”
The brochure identified six objectives which are stated in brief as:

Serves as a catalyst, bringing the expertise of educators globally to meet needs in agricultural development

Promotes research on agricultural and extension education programs around the world

Provides a forum for discussing research/issues with a global perspective

Establishes and expands global networks for dialogue and partnerships

Collaborates with international development agencies in designing strategies

Welcomes diversity in its membership and actively seeks the participation of people from diverse ethnic origins and geographic areas.

**Promotion of Learning about International Dimensions of Agriculture**

A major concern over the years has been to help students, at all levels of education from elementary schools through university, see themselves as part of the world, not just as members of their particular community, state or nation. Those efforts have been made through many individual efforts and even through development of new courses and programs at individual institutions. There have been some group efforts during the ten years after the organized beginning of the AIAEE for promotion of learning about the global nature of the agricultural industry. Many of the members and leaders in the Association have been involved in those efforts. Special mention must be given to one of those major efforts. It was led by Dr. Robert A. Martin, a long-time member and a president of AIAEE, who was chairperson of the National Task Force in International Agriculture. Over a three-year period they developed three volumes of student activities designed for use by teachers of agriculture to infuse global concepts into the study of agriculture. The personnel involved in the work of each team were teachers of agriculture, representatives from state departments of education, and representatives from agricultural education programs at universities. The first volume published in 1989-90, involved teams from two states, California and Michigan. The second volume published in 1990-91, involved teams from three states, Ohio, Iowa and Pennsylvania. The third volume published in 1991-92, involved teams from two states, South Dakota and Minnesota.

The results from those efforts are not known to me but the growing concerns in recent years for the impact of global marketing, global financing, global climate change and seems to underline the importance of those educational efforts. Thomas Friedman’s publications in 2005, The World Is Flat, and in 2008, Hot, Flat, and Crowded, accentuate the political and social importance of the international scene, not only for agriculture and natural resources but for all groups.

**The Future**

The AIAE (AIAEE) became a reality because there were concerned professional agricultural and extension educators who were directly and personally involved with development programs in, not only the United States, but also in developing countries. They responded to requests by other organizations and governments for assistance in improving agriculture and natural resource programs through education. The circumstances in 2009 are quite different from those in the 60s, 70s and early 80s. Perhaps the most dramatic changes are in the communication technologies which seem to make the world seem smaller and closer to individuals. But the challenges are as great as ever, even
though they may seem to be different. The acknowledgment of different cultures and languages is still at the heart of effective methods for helping bring about the changes which make for a better life and greater opportunities to people around the world.

References


