



Name: Arie Oskam

The invitation to provide a 'personal page' led to a rather reflective page.

Education and Career

After five years of primary school with some 'blind spots' and 3-month preparation for secondary school (with entrance exam), I finished secondary school in 1962. At the Technical University of Delft I failed in Chemical Technology: too much involved in 'student life'. A good reason to shift - after 3 years - to Wageningen: a rather broad type of education with Agricultural Economics as its central element. After 2 years, I combined that with studying Econometrics in Rotterdam and some Philosophy in Utrecht. Here I shared efforts with Arie Kapteyn. I then started my working life (1971-2009), during which I had only one employer: Wageningen University, which however allowed me several foreign sabbaticals. I followed a 'usual' university career, finishing as professor of 'Agricultural Economics and Rural Policy'.

Activities and Service to the Profession

My main activities at Wageningen were originally research and (after a year) teaching, the latter with a rather 'practical' approach. The group, where I worked, halved in scientific staff from 4 to 2 persons, but given the high work speed of Piet van den Noort, I could still mainly focus on research. After working on two different thesis subjects, Van den Noort and I were asked by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Dutch Dairy Association (FNZ) to make a study of EEC dairy policy. The whole project took me (as model developer and report writer) nearly two years. Unfortunately, the report (in Dutch) could not be published due to objections by the FNZ. Therefore, it was named an '*Interim-Report EEC dairy policy*' (1978). Personally, I consider this as my most productive and innovative research period. It took me another ten years to put the research in a number of publications – adding more sophistication to the dairy models and developing practical experiences (e.g. stimulated by Eisso Woltjer of the European Parliament). My own PhD at the University of Amsterdam (1988) was on Modelling EU dairy policy (based on work during 12 years). Time for a sabbatical at the University of Minnesota, where I worked on DEcision Based Economic Theory (DEBET) and a number of other papers. The particular working paper on DEBET, however, did not make it into the *Economic Journal*.

The next ten years of my activities showed a broadening of subject matter, with much more attention to environmental issues and institutional economics. I also edited the European Review of Agricultural Economics (ERAЕ) for five volumes, before being succeeded by Alison Burrell. The Chair Group AEP to which I belonged worked on making our teaching programme more advanced and - after that - suitable for foreign students. Furthermore, we made PhD research a more central part of our activities. In 1994, a social science research institute (the 'Mansholt Institute') was established at Wageningen. At about that time, at the request of a Norwegian group, I became co-ordinator of an EU Concerted Action on environmental policy issues.

After a sabbatical period at the University of Maryland in 1997/98, I became Scientific Director of the Mansholt Institute, changing it to the Mansholt Graduate School, with a stronger focus on research methodology and external and internal PhD courses, seminars and research proposals. In 2000, the AEP Chair Group was widened to Agricultural Economics and Rural Policy, the number of courses and

PhDs increased, and more postdocs could join the group.

In what could be named the 'harvest period', more projects (also externally financed) were implemented. However, I still considered good teaching to our Bachelor and Masters students together with PhD and staff research, as our core activity. After retirement, I counted 33 Doctoral Graduations (see my CV), most of whom defined their own research project, with an increasing degree of shared supervision.

But 'the world around us' was also important. To give one example, together with Alison Burrell, I started in 1997 'short' professional courses on 'European Agricultural Policy in Transformation', with a focus on participants from potential New Member States, but also from existing ones. Later on, I worked together with Gerrit Meester (and Huib Silvis) to provide courses on 'EU Policy for Agriculture, Food and Rural Areas' and the 'Common Agricultural Policy', resulting in several books.

Service to the EAAE

From 1978 to 2014, I attended most Congresses of the EAAE and several of its Seminars, often with personal or joint contributions and discussion participation. We suggested a PhD workshop at European level under the umbrella of the EAAE, and Alison Burrell organised the first one. Krijn Poppe (EAAE) and I (on behalf of the ERAE Foundation) made up a document on the relationship between the EAAE and the ERAE.

Reflection

Looking backward and forward has been done in my Farewell Lecture (see <http://edepot.wur.nl/55763>)

Due to my link with the Network of General and Quantitative Economics (NAKE), but also because of the courses provided by Mansholt Graduate School, many of our PhD students followed typical PhD-oriented courses and workshops with a focus on theory, methodology and sometimes application. This became a bit of 'the signature of the Group'. However, this implies for both myself and the Chairgroup that we were less involved in multidisciplinary projects.

After my retirement I observed, that applied economists may be more productive in wider research teams. Something for the next generation?

A full CV is at: <https://www.wur.nl/en/Research-Results/Chair-groups/Social-Sciences/Agricultural-Economics-and-Rural-Policy-Group/People/Emeritus-staff-AEP.htm>