
IFIAD Annual Conference

Speakers Biographies



**Steve Wiggins,
Principal Research Fellow,
Overseas Development
Institute London**

Steve Wiggins is an agricultural economist with over 40 years' experience of agricultural and rural development, primarily in Africa and Latin America. He has lived in Paraguay, Bolivia, El Salvador and Kenya. Formerly at the University of

Reading, since 2002 he has been a research fellow at the Overseas Development Institute, London. His current interests centre on smallholder commercialisation; food and nutrition security, including obesity; and changing patterns of rural development with a particular interest in SE Asia and Latin America. He is lead editor of Development Policy Review and a former President of the Agricultural Economics Society.



**Dr David Styles,
Plant & AgriBiosciences
Research Centre, NUI
Galway**

David Styles specialises in environmental and techno-economic assessment of food, bioproduct and waste management systems, and has 15 years of experience in life cycle assessment at Trinity College Dublin, the EPA, the European Commission's Joint Research Centre, Bangor University and NUI Galway. He lectures on the Climate Change Agriculture

and Food Security MSc program at NUI Galway, and leads the rapidly expanding research group in Bangor University evaluating novel value chains for plant-protein foods & animal feeds, dairy products, wood, miscanthus, anaerobic digestion and beers and spirits. Dave is increasingly interested in tropical systems, and is currently involved in projects evaluating sustainable intensification strategies for tropical beef and dairy systems in Colombia and Costa Rica. He is a member of the UN task force developing life cycle impact indicators for water and air pollution.



**Rui Benfica, Lead Economist,
Research and Impact
Assessment Division,
International Fund for
Agricultural Development
(IFAD)**

Rui Benfica undertakes research in areas relevant to IFAD's overarching goal of overcoming poverty and achieving food security. This includes development of research outputs, the design and implementation of Impact Assessments in client countries, and economy-wide modelling analysis to inform IFAD's Country Strategies. Rui Benfica has extensive policy research and outreach experience in developing regions. Before joining IFAD in 2015, he was Associate Professor at Michigan State University

USA. Prior to that, he worked at the World Bank as an Economist with the Gender and Development Group, and Poverty Economist with the Africa region, Mozambique Country Office, where he worked closely with the Ministries of Planning and Development, and of Agriculture and Rural Development. He holds a Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from Michigan State University, USA, with a focus on International Development, Commodity Market Analysis, and Quantitative Development Policy Research. He is a member of several professional organisations and has published extensively in peer reviewed journals. He also serves as co-editor of the IFAD Research Series.



**Professor Ken Giller,
Chair of Plant Production
Systems Group,
Wageningen University**

Ken Giller is Professor of Plant Production Systems at Wageningen University. He leads a group of scientists with profound experience in applying systems analysis to explore future scenarios for land use with a focus on food production. Ken's research has focused on smallholder farming systems in sub-Saharan Africa, and in particular problems of soil fertility and the role of nitrogen fixation in tropical legumes. His research interest is also in resource utilization efficiency and scaling in systems analysis,

particularly on the role of nitrogen fixing legumes in provision of food, feed, fuel, and soil fertility in tropical farming systems. He leads a number of initiatives such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation funded N2Africa - Putting Nitrogen Fixation to Work for Smallholder Farmers in Africa. Ken is member of the Unilever Sustainable Sourcing Advisory Board. He is co-chair of the Thematic Network 7 on Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network of the United Nations. Ken joined Wageningen University as Chair of Plant Production Systems in 2001 after holding professorships at Wye College, University of London, and the University of Zimbabwe.



**Professor Rachel Bezner
Kerr, Associate Professor
in Development Sociology,
Cornell University**

Rachel Bezner Kerr is an Associate Professor in Development Sociology at Cornell University. She is a development sociologist with a background in environmental science, anthropology and international development. She currently serves on a project team of the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security

& Nutrition of the United Nations and the Coordinating Lead Author for Chapter 5 on Food for the next Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report. For the past 18 years, she has worked with the Soils, Food and Healthy Communities organization in Malawi. She currently is leading several research projects which use participatory methodologies to test the impacts of agroecological approaches on livelihoods, nutrition and sustainable land management for rural communities.



**Tom Arnold
Chair, EU Commission Task
Force on Rural Africa**

Tom Arnold has served in a number of governmental and non-governmental roles, at national and international level. He has been Director General of the Institute of International and European Affairs (2013-17), Coordinator of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement (2014-16), Chairman of the Irish Constitutional Convention (2012-14) and CEO of Concern Worldwide (2001-13). He served as Assistant Secretary General and Chief Economist with the Irish Department of Agriculture and Food (1988-2001) and Senior Economist with the Irish farm advisory service, ACOT. He worked for the European Commission (1973-83), serving in Brussels and Africa. His

current European and international commitments include serving as Chair of the EU Commission's Task Force on Rural Africa; Member of the Lead Group of SUN; the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition; the Malabo Montpellier Panel; the Board of the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition. He is a former Chair of the Irish Times Trust and Board member: Chair of the OECD Committee of Agriculture: Member of the Board of the CGIAR: the UN's Millennium Project's Hunger Task Force: the Irish Hunger Task Force: and the Mary Robinson Foundation - Climate Justice. He is a graduate in agricultural economics from University College Dublin (UCD), has Masters degrees from Trinity College Dublin and the Catholic University of Leuven, and has honorary doctorates from UCD and the National University of Ireland.



**Professor Jessica Fanzo,
Senior Nutrition and
Food Systems Officer,
UN Food and Agriculture
Organization and Bloomberg
Distinguished Associate
Professorship of Global
Food and Agriculture Policy,
Johns Hopkins University**

Jessica Fanzo, PhD serves as the Senior Nutrition and Food Systems Officer in the Nutrition and Food Systems Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). While at the UN, Jessica is taking a leave of absence from her Bloomberg Distinguished Associate Professorship of Global Food and Agriculture Policy and Ethics at the Berman Institute of Bioethics, the Bloomberg School of Public Health, and the Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at the Johns Hopkins University. She also serves as the Director of the Global Food Ethics and Policy

Program at Hopkins. She is the Co-Chair of the Global Nutrition Report and was the team leader for the UN High Level Panel of Experts report on Food Systems and Nutrition. Before joining John Hopkins, Jessica was an Assistant Professor of Nutrition in the Institute of Human Nutrition and Department of Pediatrics and as the Senior Advisor of Nutrition Policy at the Earth Institute at Columbia University. Prior to her academic career, Jessica held positions in the UN World Food Programme, Bioversity International, and the Millennium Development Goal Centre at the World Agroforestry Center in Kenya. Her area of expertise is on the linkages between agriculture, nutrition, health and the environment in the context of sustainable and equitable diets and livelihoods. She was the first laureate of the Carasso Foundation's Sustainable Diets Prize in 2012 for her work on sustainable food and diets for long-term human health. Jessica has a PhD in nutrition from University of Arizona.