

One thing is sure: The papers in this book are sufficiently critical and interesting that one can only hope that policy makers will also read them, so that in the future no conference has to be organised around the failure of the next CAP reform.

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Agro-Food Marketing

CAB International, Wallingford, UK, 1997. ISBN: 0 85199 144 0, 492 pp.,

Price: £27.50/\$49.50

This book stems from the 'Advanced Course on Marketing of Agricultural and Food Products', organised annually in Zaragoza by the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM). The book is composed of contributions by twenty-one authors from six different countries. Nineteen chapters are distributed over six parts: (i) Introduction, (ii) Agricultural commodity analysis, (iii) Agricultural market organisation and performance, (iv) Researching the food consumer, (v) Food product marketing decisions and (vi) Marketing strategy and control.

The first introductory chapter by Padberg emphasises the increasingly global character of agro-food marketing and makes a useful distinction between marketing of *agricultural commodities* (unprocessed or minimally processed agricultural materials which are handled and traded in bulk) and marketing of *food products* (manufactured and/or packaged food products). The author observes that trade in agricultural commodities displays a responsiveness to comparative advantage in production, whereas trade in manufactured food products seems to be 'less orderly' (p. 4). Integrating these disciplines (marketing of agricultural commodities and marketing of food products) is mentioned as one of the major purposes of this book.

The second introductory chapter by Ritson starts with the (correct) observation that agricultural marketing is the domain where the roots of (general) marketing can be found, and therefore has a much longer pedigree than 'mainstream business marketing'. For the rest, this author is not very complimentary about (business) marketing. He calls marketing 'parasitic, applying fundamental disciplines to marketing issues' and states that 'most writers would agree that marketing does not really possess a core theory which it can call its own. It is a cocktail of applications of other social sciences' (p. 16). This point of view may have been true thirty years ago, but cannot be maintained seriously in the light of the enormous production of marketing knowledge, both theoretical and empirical, that has taken place since. The number of textbooks and scientific journals on marketing subjects in general is now easily fifty times that which has been produced in agricultural marketing.

The following set of chapters has a primarily (micro-) economic approach. The topics are: supply and demand of agricultural products (by Young and Burton), agricultural price analysis (Carman), international trade in agricultural commodities (Ahrens), commodity marketing modelling (Garcia and Leuthold) and marketing margins in food products (Briz and de Felipe). These contributions cover material that one would find in a standard agricultural economics course and deal with the first type of marketing distinguished above – the marketing of agricultural commodities.

Of course a collection of papers on agricultural marketing is not complete without a treatment of market structure and institutions. This subject is taken care of in a contribution by Farris, who uses the well known structure-conduct-performance paradigm to analyse the effects of concentration on prices and profits. He also provides a discussion of such institutions as co-operatives, marketing orders, marketing boards and future markets. Schiefer contributes a chapter on marketing information and support systems. Although several interesting topics are discussed, a thorough treatment of the 'marketing information revolution', caused by the availability of point-of-sales data is missing. There is a short contribution on consumer behaviour by von Alvensleben. However, if one accepts the modern marketing concept – in which consumers and their attitudes, habits, preferences, lifestyles, perceptions and decision processes constitute the starting point of any marketing operation – then consumers should receive much more attention than is given here (see, for example: Steenkamp, 1997).

The chapters on marketing research (Gofton), product policy (Altmann), pricing policy (Panigyrakis) and marketing control (Maurer) are reasonable summaries of what can be found in standard marketing textbooks. There is also a chapter on multivariate analysis in marketing research (Ness), dealing with factor analysis, multi-dimensional scaling and conjoint analysis. Interestingly, advertising and promotion, one of the major market instruments, is treated only from the perspective of commodity advertising and not brand advertising. A chapter by Ward provides an interesting analysis of the effects of generic product advertising, with case studies on beef, dairy, apples and citrus. However the analysis remains strictly within the domain of economics, with advertising conceived as causing a shift in the demand curve and no discussion of the effects of advertising on consumer's product perceptions and product categorisation.

In the chapter on distribution, rightly called by its author 'the mother of agricultural marketing' (p. 376), Meulenberg provides a contemporary treatment of issues in physical distribution and channel strategy and also discusses the main developments in wholesaling and retailing. Albisu contributes the final chapter on the international marketing of food products. He discusses the role of multinationals, strategic alliances and partnerships and the issue of standardisation versus adaptation in international marketing. Stating that 'strategic management perhaps is more an art than a science' (p. 423) he includes two case studies on the subject of strategic management.

This book contains much interesting information on developments in (agricultural) marketing. However, while the treatment of typical agricultural marketing topics may be adequate, the treatment of what is often referred to in this book as 'business' marketing is rather limited. First, business marketing processes are much more driven by psychological phenomena (consumer decision making, communication processes, information processing by marketing decision makers, power and trust in distribution channels) than by the laws of economics. This book is predominantly written from an economic point of view and, hence, does not pay adequate attention to behavioural science approaches. Most notably, contemporary models on consumer decision making (see, e.g., Engel, Blackwell and Miniard, 1995) are not covered. We need these models to understand changes in consumer behaviour with respect to food products, such as changes in eating and shopping habits, the need for variety, the role of health and animal welfare concerns, and the influence of culture.

Second, in order to build a bridge between agricultural commodities and food products, much more emphasis must be put on *marketing channels*, with extensive attention to the mutual coordination of decisions by the partners at various stages of the 'chain' between the primary producers and final consumers. New forms of vertical channel co-ordination such as supply chain management, agri-food value-adding

partnerships and electronic data interchange are important topics in this respect that receive little attention. Finally, the treatment of marketing strategy issues is not adequate. This field has developed far beyond the stage at which strategic decisions have to be considered as 'less orderly' or 'more an art than a science'. Theories of strategy and competition developed by Porter (1985) or Hamel and Prahalad (1994), for example, are frequently used for strategic decision making in marketing and are very relevant for the guidance and explanation of decisions by companies. In this book these approaches are completely missing.

Practically all the authors in this book have been recruited from departments of agricultural economics and/or agricultural marketing. Of course, such authors can also give an account of developments in general marketing. However, an alternative would have been to ask experts on general marketing to give their views on the marketing of food products. This would be in the true spirit of marketing, since these authors would presumably start from the (final) consumer of food products and 'translate' the ideas and approaches of marketing at the consumer level back into requirements for the marketing of agricultural commodities located at earlier stages of the food chain. In this way, a more balanced account could have been provided of the way the state-of-the-art in marketing has evolved and how marketing can help to deal with issues and problems in the agro-food sector.

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J. Sijm

Food Security and Policy Interventions in Sub-Saharan Africa – Lessons from the Past Two Decades

Tinbergen Institute Research Series No. 166. Thesis Publishers Amsterdam, 1997.
ISBN: 90 5538 025 3, 729 pp.

The title of this book promises a comprehensive treatment of the food security problem in sub-Saharan Africa that has proven so difficult to resolve during the past decades, and the book's content delivers. Sijm conducts a literature review of both macro-economic and sectoral policies affecting food security, and relates these policies to the food security situation in selected African countries. The author analyses in particular the food security situation and policy framework during the past two decades, thus including pre- and post-structural adjustment periods. Four case study countries are selected for an in-depth, comparative review: Ghana, Malawi, Mali, and