



# CALL FOR PAPERS – Special Issue

## The Digitainability of the European Agri-food System

*New challenges and opportunities for business decision-making across system levels, chain and network levels, and firm levels*



### IFAMR GUEST EDITORS

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### GENERAL STATEMENT

Two major trends simultaneously affect agriculture and agri-food businesses: sustainability transition and digital transformation (Lichtenthaler, 2021). This topic, sometimes coined as *digitainability* (Gupta et al., 2020) concentrates on one of the most powerful phenomena affecting the future of agribusiness and food industries in Europe and worldwide. These two trends of sustainability and digitalization have their own logic based upon internal and external forces which include societal demands, disruptive strategies of newcomers and startups, innovative strategies of conventional companies, policy-driven decisions, globalization of the supply chains, as well as the rise of short agrifood distribution channels. Some questions framing this discussion include:

1. How do these two powerful and long-lasting trends combine and with what rationale? What are the specificities in Europe regarding these issues?
2. What are the impacts and consequences of digital sustainability for business models of agribusiness, food industries and agriculture?
3. Business decision-making becomes complex and involves system-level, chain and network-level, and firm-level thinking. What strategies are in-house and external companies using in the development of digital services and global digital platforms?

This IFAMA Europe Special Issue of IFAMR welcomes contributions centered on one country, inter-European comparisons, or comparisons between European and non-European situations. It also welcomes research that focuses on Europe testimonies from managers, original case studies, intersectoral comparisons, etc. The contributions can also be focused on original theories and methodologies dealing with this topic of *digitainability*.

**Submission deadline for extended abstracts (~1000 words excluding references): 31 July, 2024**

**Feedback to authors on abstracts: 30 August, 2024**

**Submission deadline for full-paper submission: 30 October, 2024.**

### FOREWORD

IFAMA is actively working to coordinate opportunities for collaboration among its regional chapters, recognize and support their work, and offer all members opportunities to benefit from these activities. Consecutively, IFAMA intends to profile its journal, the IFAMR, and its annual World Congress with broad participation of fellow European researchers.

In pursuit of these objectives, IFAMA and IFAMA Europe Board have decided to publish an annual IFAMR Special Issue focusing on hotly discussed topics of European agri-food systems. Thematic Guest Editors will edit the Special Issue.

## THEMES & TOPICS

- 1) System level thinking: Multi-stakeholder perspectives on the role of systemic digital innovations in the digitainability of the European agri-food system
  - a) Socio-technical innovation bundling for digital sustainability in the European agri-food system
  - b) Diffusion of systemic digitainable innovations to the mainstream in the European agri-food system
  - c) Globalization vs territorialization in the process of agri-food system digitainability
- 2) Chain and network level thinking: Digitainable innovation – organization – fit in agri-food supply/ value chain networks
  - a) Innovative organizational structures to facilitate collaboration with competitors for digitainable transparency in agri-food supply/value chain networks
  - b) Relational multiplexity in digitainable agri-food supply chain network management
  - c) Best practices in agri-food supply chain network governance on the digital road towards due diligence
- 3) Firm level thinking: Agri-food entrepreneurship and digital business models for sustainability in innovation ecosystems
  - a) Certification schemes of digitainability processes
  - b) EU policy (including Green Deal, CAP reform and CSDDD) as driver and/or barrier for agri-food businesses companies' digital sustainability
  - c) Scaling up the digitainable transformation of agri-food businesses via business model innovation

## REVIEW PROCESS PROTOCOL

**Step 1:** An IFAMA Europe review committee will select extended abstracts through a double-blind process. Extended abstracts should include the following sections: problem description; methodology; results; and managerial implications.

**Step 2:** Full papers of the selected extended abstracts will enter the IFAMR reviewing process with a double-blind review process and will follow the [guidelines of regular IFAMR issues](#).

**Step 3:** Upload final manuscript to <https://www.editorialmanager.com/ifamr>, and select Article Type as the name of the Europe Special Issue: "Digitainability of the European Agri-food System."

## SPECIAL ISSUE TIMELINE

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|-------------------------|---|
| <b>31 July, 2024</b>    | Submission deadline for extended abstracts (approximately 1000 words excluding references). Send to <a href="mailto:verena.otter@wur.nl">verena.otter@wur.nl</a> and <a href="mailto:loic.sauvee@unilasalle.fr">loic.sauvee@unilasalle.fr</a> |
| <b>31 August, 2024</b>  | Feedback to authors on abstracts  |
| <b>30 October, 2024</b> | Submission deadline for full papers   |
| <b>Early 2025</b>       | Articles will be published 'in press' as soon as possible after acceptance. The complete issue is expected in early 2025.   |

## GUEST EDITORS

[Verena Otter](#) is a Senior Assistant Professor of Innovation and Organization in Supply Chain Networks in the Business Management & Organisation chair group, School of Social Sciences, Wageningen University and Research (The Netherlands). Her research examines digital and sustainable innovations in the agri-food supply-value chain networks from different management fields and organizational theories. Her current research projects include: [TITAN](#), [EcoReady](#) and [BEATLES](#). Previously, Dr. Otter earned a PhD, served as a postdoc and the Interims Professor of Agribusiness Management at the Georg-August-University of Goettingen, Germany. She is also the Deputy Chair of the IFAMA Young Board.

[Loïc Sauvé](#) is Head of the research unit [InTerACT](#) at Institut Polytechnique UniLaSalle, France. He earned a doctorate in Agricultural Economics from Purdue University (USA), then worked as a post doc and a habilitation to supervised research (HDR) in management sciences, University of Montpellier (France) in 2002. Professor Sauvé is an IFAMA Board Member, Chair of IFAMA Europe Chapter, and a Managing Editor of IFAMR. His current research aims to deepen our understanding of governance in collaborative organizational forms, networks and territories in the context of sustainable transitions, and also focuses on socio technological and organizational conditions for sustainable transformations at the territory level.

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