



Rural History 2017

11 - 14 September, Leuven

View panel data

Panel title International food markets and local production systems in the 19th-early 20th centuries
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Abstract text

The aim of the session is to highlight the way that international food markets developed during a period of significant change in agriculture and the agro-industry. The discovery and deployment of innovative production, processing and preserving technologies - together with improved transport systems over long distances - led to the growth of the food trade. Colonialism, migration, a growing urban population and increased purchasing power all played a major role in shaping this transformation. The storage and distribution of food came to be crucial to millions of people, while ongoing globalisation would turn into a great opportunity for those producers and traders who were able to expand their businesses over a wider area, connecting local and international contexts. Local production systems in particular were affected by a profound transformation since they were involved in the new international foodstuffs markets.

The purpose of the panel is to offer some reflections and inspire new research, in order to develop the analysis of food market globalisation up to WWI. Taking into consideration the major actors in the process of economic and social transformations, the papers aim to underline the relationship between economic policies, trading companies' strategies, innovative technologies in the international context and in local economic changes, e.g. in agricultural systems and farming, manufacturing organisation and communication.

The insights embrace a wide international perspective, presenting contributions about different countries and local realities in Europe and/or its interaction with other parts of the world in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Some issues are:

the relationship between the development of international markets and the transformation of local farming systems, manufacturing and food processing;

the role of urban consumption and policies in the promotion of food production, manufacturing, trading and marketing;

the action and interaction of major players (states, political economy and institutions, entrepreneurs, technology) in fostering local economic development or the exploitation of resources;

the influence of colonialism on the organisation of the foodstuffs' supply chains.

Chair and Discussant : Chair: Yves Segers (Coordinator of the CAG-Centrum Agrarische Geschiedenis en ICAG-Interfacultair Centrum Agrarische Geschiedenis, KU Leuven)
Discussant: Laurent Herment (CRH-CNRS-EHESS, Paris)

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