

ISPA Newsletter Volume 6 Issue 7 : 14th ICPA Review, ISPA Elections, Community Meetings

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International Society of Precision Agriculture

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



14th ICPA Update

The 14th ICPA in Montreal from June 24th to 27th 2018 has been a tremendous success. Registrants from 43 countries was at record levels (470) since the establishment of the International Society of Precision Agriculture.

The three pre-conference workshops were virtually full. The first keynote, Dr. Chris Paterson from Xarvio set the stage by showing from the industry perspective how sophisticated precision agriculture can help improving practices today and into the future. Dr. Yoshua Bengio, our second keynote from the Montreal Institute for Learning Algorithms, presented the most recent developments around artificial intelligence while the audience made notes about how this can be transformative for agricultural research and its impact. New-Zealand farmer Craige Mackenzie, well known around the world for his activism on agricultural innovation addressed the participants in a plenary and a breakout session about the license to produce and the use of precision agriculture for securing it.

There were 247 orals and 93 posters presented which were very well attended. All proceedings are now open access from the ISPA site. The closing ceremony featured a word of farewell by the Honourable Lawrence Macauley, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. The technical tour after the conference was filled to capacity with about 110 participants who visited L'Acadie Experimental Farm of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Delfland commercial vegetable production farm, and Macdonald Campus Farm of McGill University.

Our valued sponsors and exhibitors helped providing a vibrant exhibit hall to the event and maintaining a high value for money for the attendees. Preliminary ratings of the conference show participants satisfaction well above 80%.

We want to express our most sincere thanks for all those who contributed to making the 14th ICPA such a great edition. Looking forward to seeing you at the next one.

Nicolas Tremblay and Viacheslav Adamchuk, co-chairs of the 14th ICPA.

ISPA Board Election Results

The voting for the ISPA Board of Directors wrapped up just ahead of the conference on Sunday, June 24th. Two new members were voted to the board.

- James Lowenberg-DeBoer, President-Elect
- Victor Alchanatis, Secretary

Many thanks to all candidates and those who participated in the voting.

Agreement Reached with other Conferences

We are proud to announce that a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed on the 26th day of June, 2018 at the 14th International Conference on Precision Agriculture in Montreal, Canada, by representatives of the International Society of Precision Agriculture (ISPA), the European Conference on Precision Agriculture, the Latin American Conference on Precision Agriculture, and the Scientific Conference on Precision Agriculture and Agro-informatics in Hungary. The MOU recognizes the regional conferences as affiliated to the ISPA and the need for the chairs to work collectively under the auspices of ISPA. It establishes a partnership and cooperation framework for mutual coordination and promotion of events worldwide. This MOU was seen as a major step for organizations interested in the science of precision agriculture around the world to enhance their respective and collective impacts at all levels. Other important partners are expected to join soon.

Advanced notice of two positions at Massey University, New Zealand

Massey University through its newly formed Massey Agritech Partnership is looking to fill two new research and development positions. These will be in the following areas. GIS Analyst/ Developer, and Statistical Modeller Programmer.

The requirement is to work in the area of hyperspectral imagery. The unit operates an aircraft mounted Fenix VIS/NIR/SWIR pushbroom sensor from Specim used to generate hyperspectral information. Further laboratory based VIS/NIR/SWIR imaging equipment is also utilised. Experience, knowledge and a level of proficiency in the following would be expected; R, Python, MySQL, ENVI, ArcGIS and ArcPro. Further computing languages, statistical packages and methodologies would also be an advantage.

One vacancy will be concentrated on developing automated workflows for handling hyperspectral imagery. The second is to provide greater support around statistical analysis and modelling of hyperspectral data. Both positions are contracted for a two year period.

The positions will be posted on Massey University's web site within the next 10 days. Those interested could also contact Prof. Ian Yule, i.j.yule@massey.ac.nz as a first step.

Regional Meetings at 14th ICPA

Monday evening at the 14th ICPA several regional meetings were held. Below are the brief notes from these meetings.

Canada

The Canadian Community was invited to a meeting in the evening of June 25, 2018 from 6:30-8:00 PM. The meeting started by a welcome and an introduction by Athyna Cambouris. Thirty three participants attended the meeting with roughly 35% from government agencies, 40% from academia

and 25% from industry. All the participants introduced themselves. Dr Cambouris led discussion on ideas, plans, and expectations for the next two years. She provided information on the role of Country Representatives at the ISPA. Dr. Louis Longchamps from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Dr. Asim Biswas from University of Guelph were nominated as Country Reps for Canada. Discussions then took place on the possibility to develop a Canadian network for PA research via the ISPA Canadian Community.

USA

About 15 people attended this short session. One topic of discussion was to suggest USA country representatives, as that position is currently vacant. Several good suggestions were received and will be pursued.

Community Meetings at 14th ICPA

Tuesday evening at ICPA several community meetings were held. Below are the brief notes from these meetings.

On-Farm Data Sharing (OFDS) Community at ICPA

The meeting started at 6:35 pm with 11 people in attendance. After introductions, a discussion occurred about changing the focus of the OFDS Community from sharing of field-scale trial data collected on production farms to methods, protocols and analysis of on-farm experimentation. An important goal for the new Community could be to publish a compendium of methods for on-farm experimentation on the ISPA community web site within 2-3 years. Collectively, the suggestions amount to the following possible targets to work toward until the next Community meeting: 1) starting the construction of an "OFE Wiki" including definitions, projects 1-pager descriptions, scripts, expertise contacts and software recommendations, exercises with (training/non real) databases, repository of protocols and existing farmer/extension guides; 2) developing a message board for Community members to post specific needs, connect people swiftly and conveniently (demand/offer), and provide a platform for rapid feedback on emerging directions. Myrtille Lacoste from Curtin University, Australia and Daniel Kindred from ADAS, UK volunteered to become the Presiding Leader and Vice Leader for the new On-Farm Experimentation Community. Tom Morris and Nicolas Tremblay will help to obtain ISPA Board approval and make the transition from the OFDS Community to the On-Farm Experimentation Community. The complete minutes of the meeting are available on the Community website.

Pedometrics/PSS Community Meeting at ICPA

The primary objective for this meeting was to discuss and refine plans for two specialty conferences to be held in North America in 2019. Pedometrics 2019 will be held in Guelph, Ontario, Canada June 4-7, 2019, hosted by Asim Biswas and colleagues from the University of Guelph. The 6th Global Workshop on Proximal Soil Sensing will be held in Columbia, Missouri, USA May 28-31, 2019, hosted by Ken Sudduth and colleagues from USDA-ARS at the University of Missouri. A good discussion provided the conference organizers with ideas related to session topics, field tours, and program planning. The group also discussed the potential of forming an ISPA community focusing on sensor systems. A few ideas were proposed, but further discussion will be needed before moving forward.

Precision Nitrogen Management Community Meeting at ICPA

The PNM Community organized a business meeting in the evening of June 26, 2018 from 6:40-7:30 PM. The meeting started by a welcome and introduction of PNM community by Yuxin Miao, the current

community leader. Then all the participants introduced themselves. Yuxin Miao then gave an update on the sessions organized by PNM community in ECPA 2017 and ICPA2018, and the special issue on Remote Sensing for Precision Nitrogen Management in the journal of Remote Sensing. Although the deadline is Dec. 31, 2019, accepted papers will be published continuously in the journal (as soon as accepted) and will be listed together on the special issue website. After the updates, the community conducted an election of vice leader. Dr. Athyna Cambouris from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada was elected. Dr. Raj Khosla will be the community leader for 2018-2020, and he led discussions on ideas and plans for the next two years. At the meeting, the community pointed out the need to have a choice in the ISPA website for ISPA members to select one or more communities for them to join.

Precision Agriculture Definition

Precision Agriculture is a management strategy that gathers, processes and analyzes temporal, spatial and individual plant and animal data and combines it with other information to support management decisions according to estimated variability for improved resource use efficiency, productivity, quality, profitability and sustainability of agricultural production.

The International Society of Precision Agriculture (ISPA) is a non-profit professional scientific organization.
The mission of ISPA is to advance the science of precision agriculture globally.

Contact newsletter@ispag.org to suggest content for future newsletters or visit www.ispag.org for more about the Society