IAgrE

Issues and Policy Matters Raised by Members

Background

Over the summer there has been an influx of comments and requests from members. They view IAgrE has having the ability and influence to shape policy. These include:

1. A published paper from Bruce Grieve and Simon Pearson on **"The challenges posed by global broadacre crops in delivering smart agrirobotic solutions: A fundamental rethink is required"** This paper suggests that supply of engineers and technologists needs to be very different in the future if the needs of the industry are to be met. As much as anything it is challenging education to think differently. The full paper is included.

2. A discussion paper from Daniel Hefft on **"Food Process Engineering and the Food Industry – Quo vadis?"** This is billed as a "White Paper" and challenges the role of IAgrE in promoting professional registration and associated membership to those working in this sector. It also challenges education and training in this respect. The full paper is included

3. A suggestion from Alastair Tulloch suggesting:

   "It seems to me that there is perhaps room for discussion about the future markets in agriculture. My experience both professionally and socially shows that few family farming businesses have any succession, or at least none which want to follow the previous generation. Consequently, these traditional farming operations are becoming part of larger units, most of which are being managed by some very smart people, with perhaps more emphasis on the enterprise as a business than just a traditional farm. This also follows the economies of scale and is looking for opportunities to save costs, in order to make best advantage of what seems to be an inevitable reduction in the margins available. Brexit or no Brexit, the future of agriculture is bound to come under more pressure as governments withdraw the support subsidies, which have actually worked well for many years, in achieving food at a good value for the consumer. I wonder therefore, if it would be sensible to invite one or two of these really good agricultural business managers to speak to the IAgrE, in order that everyone can get a flavour of their experience, together with their views on what kind of markets will be available in the future. There will of course be a number of possibilities as to how agricultural engineers can adapt to these markets and perhaps agricultural business managers would be helpful with some of their ideas and proposals. I do realise that many engineers in our industry are already fully engaged with this as a matter of their daily work and the natural evolution in our industry, but nonetheless suggest the exercise could be beneficial in sharing views and ideas, over both the short and long term thinking."

4. Alex Keene has made some very useful observation on the recent Climate Change Commission reports and challenge IAgrE to contribute to the plans going forward in the same was as it did with the Foresight Report – The two reports from Alex are included.

5. A plea from Mark Moore for IAgrE to take more of a lead on the Agritech agenda. Mark says:

"I sense this is going nowhere in terms of enhancing the strategy to think across sectors and systems. There was a positive meeting in London on 29th April 2019, but this seems have resulted in no progress. It is recognised that engineers are the ideal systems integrators, because of the overarching role we play in agriculture – in other words we touch every part of the of food production systems, but don't necessarily drive or own it. I know many of the large OEM's are struggling to understand how they can contribute to UK AgriTech, which is a shame because we bring a lot to the table on integration, distribution and support. So my question to the IAgrE is whether this is something the organisation wants to get involved in and help drive? Or is this something that we just let die? As an AGCO employee I am reaching the end of the road with UK AgriTech – I cannot move mountains!!. So may be the opportunity to help guide the strategy should sit with the IAgrE as a professional independent organisation."

Council Discussion topic:

"How should the IAgrE formulate and promote its position on Agri-tech issues?"

- How best can the IAgrE strengthen its position with influencing organisations (such as the Royal Academy of Engineering) so that the informed opinion of the IAgrE is sought on a regular basis?
- How should we inform the IAgrE membership about relevant policy initiatives and requests for papers?
- How can we ensure that the papers supported by the IAgrE are aligned to the IAgrE vision?
- What are the risks to the Institution in taking such a position?