

Editorial

Preface of the International Conference on Industry 4.0 for Agri-food Supply Chains: Addressing Socio-economic and Environmental Challenges in Ukraine (IC4AFSC 2023) [†]

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The first edition of the International Conference on Industry 4.0 for Agri-food Supply Chains: Addressing Socio-economic and Environmental Challenges in Ukraine (IC4AFSC 2023) was held in hybrid form in Leicester, United Kingdom, from 24 to 25 July 2023.

The IC4AFSC 2023 conference has, as its underlying motivation, the aiding of Ukraine in the war against Russia by specifically addressing how Industry 4.0 technologies could benefit agri-food supply chains in terms of alleviating the socio-economic and environmental challenges precipitated by Russian aggression. The interdisciplinary conference serves as a forum for the exchange of novel ideas and presentation of the latest advancements and technological applications related to Industry 4.0 in agri-food supply chains from engineering (electric and electronic engineering, mechanical engineering, manufacturing engineering, and environmental engineering), business, and management perspectives, welcoming the global academic community and relevant industry into the discussion on current progress.

The scientific program of the conference consisted of six distinguished keynotes providing insights into recent developments and future prospects:

- Professor Louise Manning, University of Lincoln, UK, “Being resilient in challenging times in food supply chains”;
- Professor Samir Dani, Keele University, UK, “Developing an agenda for Interdisciplinary Research within food risks and sustainability”;
- Professor Wayne Martindale, University of Lincoln, UK, “A Vision of the Food System, 2045 CE—*re-set, rethink, re-do*”;
- Professor Michael Bourlakis, Cranfield University, UK, “Blockchain and SC 4.0 in agri-food supply chains: Challenges and Opportunities”;
- Professor Liudmyla Chip, Poltava State Agrarian University, Ukraine, “Features and prospects of Industry 4.0 in the Agrarian sector of Ukraine in wartime: economic and accounting aspects”;
- Professor Olena Kopishynska, Poltava State Agrarian University, Ukraine, “Application of modern ERP systems for Agri-food Supply Chains as a strategy for reaching the level of technology 4.0 for non-manufacturing organizations”.

The scientific program of the conference consisted of four themed plenary sessions across the two days alongside breaks for poster presentations and capacity building meetings, which were designed to stimulate further discussion and collaboration. Research abstracts were organized by theme and presented either in-person or online via Teams using a Logitech Rally Bar Mini All-in-One Video Conferencing System for authors of accepted abstracts who were unable to attend in person.



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Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to Research England for the grant administered by Universities UK International, which made this conference possible. We would also like to thank the conference's Organizing Committee and Scientific Committee, as well as both the University of Leicester, UK, and Poltava State Agrarian University, Ukraine, as partners under the UK-Ukraine R&I twinning grants scheme. Special thanks go to the conference chairs, session chairs, reviewers, and volunteers for their efforts in making this conference a success, which was no small feat within the 5-month grant window.

Several Special Issues are collecting full-length papers based on the submitted abstracts:

- *Discover Food* (Springer) Special Issue: "The Role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Food Security" <https://link.springer.com/collections/jaibdfaibi>;
- *Sustainability* (MDPI) Special Issue: "Sustainable Supply Chain and Lean Manufacturing" https://www.mdpi.com/journal/sustainability/special_issues/5HY24R6111;
- *International Journal of Industrial Engineering and Operations Management* (IJIEOM) (Emerald) special issue "Digitizing Food Supply Chains: A Path to Ensuring Food Security" <https://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/calls-for-papers/digitizing-food-supply-chains-a-path-ensuring-food-security>;
- *International Journal of Food Science & Technology* (IJFST) (Wiley) Special Issue: "Digital Technology to Combat Food Fraud in the Agri-Food Supply Chain" https://ifst.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/hub/journal/13652621/cfp_digital_technology_combat_food_fraud_agri_food_supply_chain;
- *International Journal of Logistics Management* (IJLM) (Emerald) Special Issue: "Transforming Food Supply Chains: Harnessing the Potential of the Digital Era" <https://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/calls-for-papers/transforming-food-supply-chains-harnessing-potential-digital-era>.

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Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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