

WELCOME TO IIFET 2000

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Past IIFET conferences have focused on the economics of the world's fisheries, at both the harvest and market levels. Papers at those conferences have drawn upon and extended the pioneering work of some in this audience. There have been some real successes.

This year we are experimenting. In particular, we are hypothesizing that those of us who work as fishery economists can learn from creative people in other branches of economics and in other disciplines entirely, who may or may not have fisheries interests. In addition, the conference organizers have made a serious effort to involve policy-makers and industry participants in the hope that they will share with us their insights and, in addition, will provide a forum in which we can test some of our own ideas.

We hope that this conference, like past conferences, will be characterized by the exchange of valuable ideas and experiences and that you will hear things that are new to you and cause you to say, "I never thought of it that way." We will feel this conference has been successful if it leads to collaborative activity among individuals who might not otherwise have realized the potential benefits of working together. And even in cases where such collaboration is not feasible, we hope that you will leave here with some new ways of looking at things and that you will feel comfortable with exploring how your own work can be strengthened through borrowing from the approaches of the other sciences as well as the perspectives of those in industry, government and other user groups.

I really hope you will take advantage of conference sessions that outline the perspectives of indigenous peoples, of the world's religions, of people who operate day-to-day in a commercial environment, of behavioral psychologists and the many other backgrounds that are represented here. This is not an attempt to be politically correct. I hope it is an opportunity to learn about the frameworks others use in order that we can better understand the bases of their ideas and perspectives. To repeat myself, we hope that you will be motivated to incorporate those ideas into your own thinking. Look at the number of breakthroughs in economics that have resulted from using the insights of other disciplines

If you haven't already done so, take a look at the March, 1998, edition of the *Journal of Economic Literature*, one of the academic journals of the American Economic Association. In it you will find articles that carry titles such as "Psychology and Economics," "Emotions and Economic Theory," "The Cultural Consequences of Markets," to name a few. Imagine the richness of these collaborations. I believe that economics in general, and fishery economics in particular, continues to demonstrate over and over that it has much to offer to other disciplines, to long-term decision-making in the private sector and to the policy process, from resource management to international trade. It is clear, however, that economics, which has benefitted so much from listening to - not arguing with - other disciplines is now even more open to expanding its horizons. The organizers of this conference hope that fishery economics will follow suit and we thank the many who are joining us for lending a helping hand.

I recognize, however, that we all have our specialties and that an important reason for coming to a conference such as this is to learn from others with similar specialties. We have structured the conference in a way that, we hope, provides something of relevance to your special interest throughout the conference. Those of you with interest in consumer behavior will be able to move from discussions of "Food, Tastes and Culture" to sessions on "The Health Benefits of Seafood Consumption," to presentations on risk and food safety. From there you can travel to discussions of consumer responses to advertising, to how consumers view various attributes of food and to how they react to eco-labeling. Similar journeys are available to those with interest in fishery management, with sessions that address actual practices or advance theoretical perspectives. Those with interest in markets, in international trade, in aquaculture, in small-scale production, recreational fishing and non-market valuation, in how biology and the social sciences can interact, can all trace out pathways that will expose them to a variety of perspectives. For reasons that I have already outlined, however, please be sure to step off your chosen path to check out some of the other scenery. I hope you enjoy the trip.