

Board of Director William Masters, Tufts University



Will Masters is a Professor at the Friedman School of Nutrition and the Department of Economics, Tufts University, and was previously in Agricultural Economics at Purdue (1991-2010). His service with AAEA has been as chair of the International Section, the Food Safety and Nutrition Section, the Fellows and Gardner Award Committees, and many other roles. He received the Bruce Gardner Memorial Prize for Applied Policy Analysis in 2013, Publication of Enduring Quality Award in 2014, Quality of Research Discovery Award in 2019, and was elected Fellow of the AAEA in 2020. He also served as coeditor-in-chief of *Agricultural Economics* from 2006 to 2011. Recent work includes development of the global [food price and diet cost](#) metrics now published annually by FAO and the World Bank, and the new open-access textbook on [Food Economics: Agriculture, Nutrition and Health](#). Details at: <http://sites.tufts.edu/willmasters>.

What is the biggest concern / problem facing AAEA?

The most fundamental challenge for AAEA is the declining number of high school graduates entering higher education in the US. In my view the most appropriate response is to innovate in ways that reach beyond our traditional constituencies, as discussed in the session I organized for [ASSA 2025](#). A closely related problem is the stress on scientific publishing caused by the rise of new journals with lower editorial standards, alongside the rise of social media and loss of confidence in universities generally. I believe that the association can best serve our existing members through continued innovation in what we do, attracting a wider range of researchers not only to annual meetings but also to regional symposia and workshops that give opportunities for more people to present and discuss their work. A wide variety of people want to work in our domain, and the AAEA can reach them through our longstanding tradition of excellence in research, education and outreach.

What actions would you initiate to improve the situation described in your response to the previous question?

As a member of the Executive Board, the most important actions I would take are to listen, learn and respond to how recent initiatives are progressing. I would focus my efforts first on stewardship of what we have, and then to the pursuit of new connections through which to grow. My experience as chair and member of various AAEA committees as well as on the C-FARE board and many other academic leadership positions has taught me that success builds gradually, one step at a time towards long-term goals. Two specific actions by which AAEA members can reach new audiences are continued integration of our online presence with in-person meetings, and continued innovation in our academic publishing ventures. From my experience with AAEA and other organizations, I know that the most important step I can take is to reach out to our members and partners, so as to build on the AAEA's powerful legacy and fulfill our distinctive mission.

At the end of your three-year term, what changes/new initiatives would you have helped create?

I believe that the AAEA will continue to be the world's leading organization for applied economists working on issues related to agriculture, food and natural resources. Two specific domains in which I hope to sustain our leadership are our online presence, and our collaborations with other professional

associations especially in fields such as public health or urban planning that are increasingly concerned with agriculture and food systems but have not traditionally been close to the AAEA. I believe that these two efforts can help achieve increasing readership for our writing, increasing participation in our meetings, and increasing impact in terms of scientific research, student achievement and public policy. The steps needed to get there are already under way. As a member of the Executive Board, my focus would be to sustain the AAEA's success in our second century of support for agricultural and applied economics in the U.S. and worldwide.