

Call for Papers

‘The External Cost of Meat; an Interdisciplinary Exploration’

A workshop organized by the
Faculty of Economics and Business Administration of Ghent University
November 17-18, 2016

Keynote Speaker; **David Robinson Simon**, author of ‘Meatonomics (2013)’

What we eat has a strong impact on our health and on the environment. The modern diet with an emphasis on (processed) meats, refined fats and refined sugars significantly contributes to the increasing incidence of obesity, Type II diabetes, coronary heart diseases, some cancers and other chronic diseases. Especially the connection between processed and red meat and cancer incidence has been highlighted in 2015. While the prevalence of some chronic diseases takes ‘epidemic’ proportions, an increasing number of large studies confirms the health benefits of diets with a low consumption of meat, other animal products and refined fats and sugars. A transparent debate on the link between nutrition and health is needed. The energy-intensive production of meat significantly contributes to global CO₂-equivalent emissions. Without mitigation measures, global meat consumption and meat-related CO₂-equivalent emissions are predicted to rise further. Some estimates even predict a 60% increase of meat-related greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. From a climate policy perspective, this outcome should be avoided. The meat industry furthermore heavily contributes to water scarcity, water pollution, land clearing, (tropical) deforestation and biodiversity losses.

The staggering health costs of the modern diet, nor the environmental burden of meat production, are included in the price of meat products and are thus externalized. Current and future generations enjoy low food prices but face high and increasing health and environmental costs. Market prices reflecting the true cost of meat production can (partly) internalize the external cost, reduce overproduction and create welfare gains.

Our meat consumption has a significant external health and environmental cost but a comprehensive and compelling overview to mobilize policymakers is still lacking. Our understanding of some of the dimensions of the external cost of meat consumption and livestock production did strongly improve in the last 15 years while other external costs dimensions are still poorly defined. The goal of the interdisciplinary workshop at Ghent University is to explore the different scientific approaches and methodologies to assess and quantify the total external cost of global meat consumption and livestock production.

We particularly invite contributions on the following topics;

- Evolution of meat consumption and production (global and regional)
- How to explain the demand for meat?
- The efficiency of livestock production
- External costs: environmental costs
- External costs: health costs
- Optimal prices for meat products
- Policies to improve dietary choices and to lower externalities

Interested contributors can mail their extended abstract (approx. 1 page) or full paper to Désirée Vandenberghe (desiree.vandenberghe@ugent.be) **before September 15th, 2016**. Authors of accepted abstracts and papers will be notified before October 1st, 2016. An edited book with a collection of workshop papers will be offered to an international publisher.

The conference location is the culture and congress centre of Ghent University Het Pand (Onderbergen 1, 9000 Gent). Het Pand is a former Dominican Monastery, situated beside the Leie river in the historic center of the city of Ghent (<http://www.ugent.be/het-pand/en>).

Practical information about the workshop will be available at;
<http://www.ceem.ugent.be/en/index.htm>

For your questions about the workshop, please contact Désirée Vandenberghe;
desiree.vandenberghe@ugent.be / Tel +32 (0)9 264 42 09

For more information about keynote speaker **David Robinson Simon** and his book 'Meatonomics (2013)', please consult; <http://meatonomics.com/the-book/>