

# AIMA Newsletter N°19

## CIMA 2023 in INDIA

### News from Members and Friends



Rice planted in mandala form

**Agriculture \* Food \* Environment \* People**

**International Association of Agricultural Museums  
Internationale Vereinigung der Agrarmuseen  
Международная ассоциация сельскохозяйственных музеев  
Association Internationale des Musées d'Agriculture  
Asociación Internacional de Museos Agrícolas  
(ICOM-UNESCO Affiliated Organisation)**



Photo by Paul Starkey' and his dedicated guide

# Contents

- ❖ *AIMA President's Message by Claus Kropp*
- ❖ *A Year on the Field in 2024 – POTATO!*
- ❖ *AIMA YouTube Channel for our WORLD DAYS series*
- ❖ *AIMA Online Articles from Seeds to Hard Histories*
- ❖ *Proceedings of the AIMA 2021 Virtual Congress hosted by the MERL (Museum of English Rural Life) "Past and Future Agricultures"*

## *News from AIMA's Members*

### *2023 Exhibits and Events*

- ❖ *The Slovene Ethnographic Museum in Ljubljana marks its 100th anniversary*
- ❖ *COMPA afma MUCEM Colloquium in Chartres: "Reflections on the Future of Agricultural Heritage and the Mission of Museums" 30 November-1 December 2023*

### *2024 Exhibits and Events*

- ❖ *The National Museum of Agriculture and Food Industry in Szreniawa, Poland, celebrates its 60th anniversary in 2024 (exhibits, conference and photo competition) and in 2025 the 150th anniversary of agricultural museology in Poland*
- ❖ *ERHFA European Rural History Film Association and its Online Portal + Rural History Yearbook*
- ❖ *Lauresham Open-Air Laboratory at Kloster Lorsch, Germany, hosts World Draft Cattle Symposium 7-10 March 2024*
- ❖ *The Livestock Conservancy Celebrates Devon Cattle in America*
- ❖ *News from EXARC – RETOLD the challenges of developing standardised workflow*
- ❖ *SARKA – the Finnish Museum of Agriculture: impacts of mechanization and memories of the countryside*
- ❖ *Estonian Agricultural Museum: "The washing machine made of beetroot" on DIY culture as sustainability in past and future + 2024 World Ploughing Championship*
- ❖ *t'Grom, Belgium: exhibit on CROP SELECTION 11 February-14 April 2024*

❖ *Special Report from Howell Living History Farm for  
ALHFAM Conference 7-10 June 2024*



# *India*

*Welcomes AIMA 2023 Congress*

- ❖ *AIMA Secretary General's Message by Debra A. Reid*
- ❖ *India and AIMA: a historical note by Debra A. Reid*
- ❖ *Souvenir photos from Barbara Sosič of the Slovene  
Ethnographic Museum*

*Coming Soon*

*More news from India: INTACH will celebrate its 40th anniversary*

## *How to JOIN the AIMA*

*Word from an AIMA Member*



## *AIMA President's Message by Claus Kropp*



Dear Members and Friends,

The still young year 2024 is characterized by global crises. These include wars, natural disasters, species loss as well as humanitarian catastrophes. At the same time, autocratic systems are on the rise. International organizations such as the UN are under enormous pressure and often give the impression of helplessness. For this very reason, it is imperative that organizations such as AIMA understand how to facilitate and intensify international networking across political borders. Our association's own



theme of agricultural museums, the constant discourse with our past, present and future, has the strength to uncover clear commonalities and develop new strategies despite all cultural diversity and different traditions.

One great example of what we, even as a small organisation are capable of and more importantly through the work of our committed members, was CIMA 2023 in India. For the first time, AIMA was able to leave a lasting impression among museums, universities and farmers in Asia. At the same time, it was not only about gaining visibility, but also to reach out to our colleagues there.

What brought me to AIMA a few years ago were the enormous resources and, above all, the enormous international expertise of many colleagues - all willing to share and learn from one other. It is part of our mission not only to educate the public about agriculture and our agricultural past, but also to assist small rural museums in creating the attention they deserve. It is our duty to help preserve and talk about traditional skills that are kept alive in these museums and by the farmers and craftspeople themselves.

In putting often marginalized topics such as draft animal use, traditional tillage methods or heritage grain varieties in a wider context, we have the chance and power to really change the perception of these within the public discussion. None of this is intended to sound polemical and we as an organization are still a long way from achieving precisely these goals. But what is always needed is a vision, and that is what I vouch for as President of this organization. The first important steps in this direction have already been taken: the AIMA-supported international network project “A Year on the Field” is a good example of this, as are the numerous AIMA lectures held on various world days. It is now up to us to intensify these activities and to constantly work on new concepts and strategies for international cooperation. As President of AIMA, I will be fully committed to this and thank you all for the trust you have continuously placed in me



## *A Year on the Field Project* **Potato**



A Year on the Field began with wheats of various kinds, followed in 2023 by flax and linen, and 2024 will be devoted to the **Potato**. Find out all about it and enjoy the wealth of information and visuals already collected from a variety of actors: museums, scientific experts, farmers.... Meet them all here

<https://www.yearonthefield.net/>



*Visit the AIMA YouTube Channel  
for our series of WORLD DAYS...  
and much more*



AIMA Lecture 2023 -  
International Seeds Day



Digital AIMA Lecture -  
Finding Common Ground



Digital AIMA Lecture - World  
Day of Food Loss and Waste

Interested in Sustainability, Soils, Donkeys in agriculture and development, Food loss and waste, Seeds, Bees as the Poetry of Agriculture, Women in agriculture, museum issues, and so much more? Join us at

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUrlamT\\_jd2-rBsp9btoOaw/featured](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUrlamT_jd2-rBsp9btoOaw/featured)



*AIMA Online Articles  
flag up the special subjects that interest  
our members and friends*

The AIMA Online Articles bring you the “best of” topics all in their own bundles. Some are classics drawn from the wealth of material in our Newsletters and many more are contributions specially requested from members and friends. You might well find contacts there for a project, be it on FOOD CULTURES, the relation between TOWN & COUNTRY or the wealth of material we have on DRAFT ANIMALS + many more. All articles are illustrated with slices of life from today and from historical documents in collections.



Fig. 6: Private collection (Photo E. Pettler)

Yoghurt Bashkir kayak by Albina Abdullmanova



Top picture shows a nice development story on this topic: The jay from Wilja Oberland, the 87C Bessera tractor and the 87G 240 in a row.



Agriculture in stained glass



Figure 12: Newe Scottish head yoke. Picture courtesy of New Ross Forgers



An spring under Galice mountains. Photo by Frank Sain

<https://www.agriculturalmuseums.org/articles/>



*Proceedings of the  
AIMA 2021 Virtual Congress hosted by  
the MERL (Museum of English Rural  
Life) “Past and Future Agricultures”*



The AIMA overcame the challenges of the pandemic, thanks to the dedication of the MERL and our cohosts, Ollie Douglas (AIMA President) and Isabel Hughes, to hold its triennial congress virtually and publish the proceedings online.



[https://usercontent.one/wp/www.agriculturalmuseums.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/AIMA\\_2021\\_Proceedings-TheMERL-published-June2023.pdf](https://usercontent.one/wp/www.agriculturalmuseums.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/AIMA_2021_Proceedings-TheMERL-published-June2023.pdf) Isabel and Ollie thank their many colleagues who assisted or participated in the virtual congress in the Introduction to the online volume. Although not all the communications made it over the hurdles to final written publication, the forty some original presentations, including the special exhibits, roundtables, keynotes and presentation of film archives are available on AIMA's YouTube channel at

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzTiN3Zhaqup8k6kQ1FYtZ8X6qxmli1So> Colleagues and friends joined together from around the world, literally, with Australia, Botswana, North America and India, with an expectedly strong contingent from Great Britain and Europe, so this meant participants from nearly twenty countries, all outlined in our AIMA Special Report N°4

[https://usercontent.one/wp/www.agriculturalmuseums.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/AIMA\\_SpecialRpt-N4-inc2021Congresses-GAs.pdf](https://usercontent.one/wp/www.agriculturalmuseums.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/AIMA_SpecialRpt-N4-inc2021Congresses-GAs.pdf)



## *News from AIMA's Members Exhibits and Events*



# 2023

### *The Slovene Ethnographic Museum in Ljubljana marks its 100th anniversary*



The SEM has been with us for 100 years. The story begins in 1923 when it received its first ethnographic collections from its predecessor, the Provincial Museum of Carniola. Sonja Kogej Rus, Adela Pukl, and Barbara Sosič collaborated with museum curators to create an exhibition entitled *The First 100*, which featured one hundred objects from the museum's treasury that represent the museum's first hundred years.

From 2023 to 2024, the SEM plans to open a new permanent exhibition, *Man and Time*, with the exhibition *The First 100* serving as the first part. 100 objects want to communicate with visitors, each with its own unique story that is related to people in some way, telling us about previous owners or ways of life, and finally, each of them lives a new life once it enters the museum. We believe the museum has remained young due to its consistent and active presence and pursuit of ever-new paths.



It is no coincidence that the cradle is the first, last, or central object in the exhibition, as it symbolizes not only the birth of a child but also the birth of a museum and its ongoing development. Curators, restorers, documentarians, librarians, museum educators, and communicators ask themselves different questions about the same object. In one hundred carefully selected objects, we reveal our primary mission: we are a museum about people, for people.



It is difficult to choose 100 items from 40,000 objects of Slovene and non-European cultural heritage that document life from the 17th century to the present, with the majority of the objects dating from the 19th and 20th centuries. The SEM's unique role is to connect the stories of objects to people's past and present experiences. Today, the SEM faces new challenges, such as identifying objects worth preserving for future generations in a consumer world.





COMPA



Mucem

## *Colloquium*

# *“Reflections on the Future of Agricultural Heritage and the Mission of Museums”*

*COMPA afma MUCEM*

*30 November-1 December 2023*

The Colloquium "Reflections on the Future of Agricultural Heritage and the Mission of Museums" took place at the COMPA Museum of Agriculture in Chartres, France, on November 30 and December 1, 2023, organized by the Compa (AIMA headquarters), the AFMA, the Mucem Marseille, and the DRAC Centre Val de Loire representing the Ministry of Culture and the Department of Eure-et-Loir which manages the Compa.

65 participants from each region of France, directors of museums, regional structures, and experts were able to exchange with the 19 speakers during the presentations, the three round tables, and the two visits to examine the museography of the Compa and one of its important reserves in Meaucé-la-Loupe.

There were four sessions, four themes in this colloquium: How to define agricultural heritage? What does it cover? How to exhibit agricultural heritage? Selection, museography and scenography. How can we comprehend agricultural heritage today in the light of contemporary societal issues? What "place" for agricultural collections?



One of the interventions was by live videoconference for 40 minutes with Renée Claude Goulet, scientific advisor of the National Agriculture Museum of Ottawa Canada, about the organization of this museum, its educational content and its access to schoolchildren based on the example of a recent exhibition on soils, its content and its animations.



Check out the full program at [https://www.museesagriculture.fr/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/20231024\\_programme-colloque\\_AFMA\\_com.pdf](https://www.museesagriculture.fr/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/20231024_programme-colloque_AFMA_com.pdf) All presentations will be published in a special issue of *Agrimuse*, the AFMA journal. After the conferences in Rennes and Chartres, the next edition of these itinerant events is currently being studied and should take place in the autumn of 2024 in Aveyron in the Center of France around the Museum of Traditional Arts and Crafts in Salles la Source (12) and the very new departmental reserves shared by several museums. Report and photos by Pierre Del Porto, President of the Afma



# 2024

## *Exhibits and Events*



### *The National Museum of Agriculture and Food Industry in Szreniawa, Poland*

 **MUZEUM NARODOWE ROLNICTWA**  
I PRZEMYSŁU ROLNO-SPOŻYWCZEGO W SZRENIAWIE



We have three events coming up in the next two years. In 2024, the Museum in Szreniawa celebrates its **60th anniversary**. As part of the celebrations, we are organizing: a temporary **exhibition** titled "A slave peasant? A story about serfdom", conservation conference and photo competition "**Village-City**". Its aim is to document photographically the life of the modern countryside and the changes taking place in its fabric and structure, as well as to record the moments when agriculture and gardening entered urban space. The main celebrations are planned for September.

In **2025**, we will be organizing a conference devoted to the **150th anniversary of agricultural museology in Poland**. This is related to the establishment of the Museum of Industry and Agriculture in Warsaw in 1875. The collection of agricultural machines and tools comes from this museum and was transferred to the Museum of Agriculture in Szreniawa in 1964. Hanna Ignatowicz, Curator.

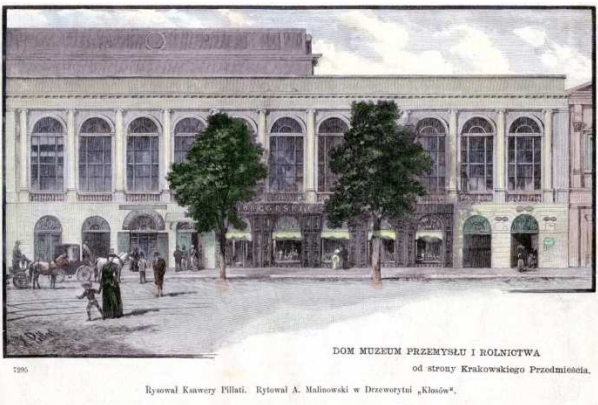


Illustration 1: The director of the Museum of Agriculture in Szreniawa tells guests about the construction of Cyrus McCormick's reaper - copy from 1931 made on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the reaper, August 1964.

Illustration 2: The building of the Museum of Industry and Agriculture in Warsaw, graphic from 1886.



# ***ERHFA European Rural History Film Association***



The European Rural History Film Association (ERHFA) is a non-profit organisation promoting the documentation, conservation and study of all aspects concerning films on rural history. The ERHFA maintains the European Rural History Film Database,



an Online Portal and publishes together with the Archives of Rural History the series “Video Essays in Rural History”. Members of the Association are archival and scientific institutions. The **Online-Portal** contains a range of the films digitized so far. They are grouped by the institutions which make them accessible. The thematic collections indicate the variety of topics which are covered in the more than 1000 films accessible online. Visit us here <https://ruralfilms.eu/ruralfilms/>



The topic of the next volume of the **Rural History Yearbook** is **films**. See the details here at [https://www.ruralhistory.at/en/publications/rhy?set\\_language=en](https://www.ruralhistory.at/en/publications/rhy?set_language=en)



***Lauresham Open-Air Laboratory at  
Kloster Lorsch, Germany, hosts  
World Draft Cattle Symposium  
8-10 March 2024***



**MARCH 8 - 10, 2024**

Following upon the success of the virtual “World Draft Animals, past, present & future” colloquium that brought a whole network of people concerned by innovating a future for agriculture and stockbreeding on the basis of a wealth of experience in animal power, Lauresham Open-Air Laboratory in the UNESCO World Heritage site of Kloster Lorsch, Germany, is holding the Symposium on Draft Cattle.

Expert participants from around the world – Africa, China, India, Europe and North America – will present archaeozoological, historical and economic perspectives while professional cattle breeders and handlers illuminate the congress with their own practical demonstrations. The meeting will be especially enriched by interventions on collections of yoke and harness for working cattle lent or presented by museum professionals with additional contributions on the valuable role of working cattle in cultural heritage, as well as in open-air, farming and living history museums around the world. See the video and preliminary program here <https://kloster-lorsch.de/freilichtlabor/tagungen/world-draft-cattle-symposium>



## *The Livestock Conservancy Celebrates Devon Cattle in America*



The Livestock Conservancy, the American Milking Devon Association, and the Red Devon USA are celebrating the 400th anniversary of the arrival of Devons in Colonial America. These cattle arrived at the Plimouth Colony (today's Plymouth), the first permanent English settlement in the future United States in Massachusetts in the early 17th century. The Devons arrived along with the Pilgrims who used them for milk, meat, and draft. The hardy cattle thrived in the Northeastern states which have remained their stronghold for all of these centuries. Some branched off from being a tri-purpose cow and became more of a beef type breed we know as the Beef Devon. Since their arrival at the Plimouth Colony, Milking Devons slowly declined in their native country of England. Today only the Beef Devon exists there and the US is the only place you can find Milking Devons.

As to their capacities as working animals, the Milking Devon is considered the "Cadillac of Oxen" because they have a faster walking pace than other breeds. This means you can plow more land in a shorter period of time. They are highly intelligent and need the hands of an experienced teamster to drive them for they "will not suffer fools easily" according to owners. A well trained pair of oxen is highly prized and sought after as the ultimate driving cattle amongst modern day teamsters.

There is a special story behind the Milking Devons and The Livestock Conservancy, because TLC owes its origins to the breed. In preparation for the American Bicentennial celebration in 1976, several living history museums in New England wanted to display traditional tri-purpose Milking Devon cattle since they were part of the early colonies. To the curators' surprise, none could be easily found where the cattle were once plentiful. Thankfully some old New England farm families persisted with the breed as their forefathers had before them. This event began the search for

other once common breeds. It soon became apparent that some American traditional breeds of livestock were on the edge of extinction. Subsequently an organization was formed to address this problem. It was called the American Minor Breeds Conservancy, which today is known as The Livestock Conservancy.

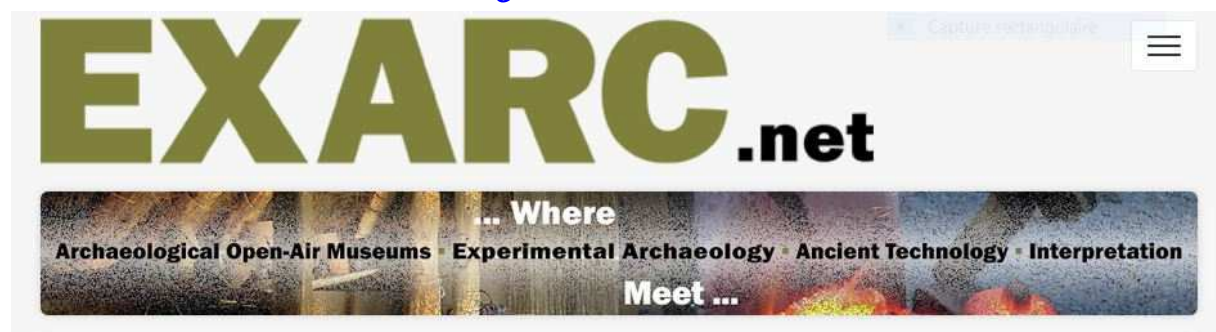


The anniversary celebration helped bring The World Devon Congress to the US this year. The event features a two week tour of historic sites and farms working with Devons. The tour starts in Florida and continues up the east coast with a final stop at Plymouth Plantation on May 1st and 2nd. Plymouth Plantation has been displaying and breeding Milking Devons for many years and the facility makes for an exciting and appropriate venue to end the Devon tour, running from 19 April to 3 May 2024. Jeannette Beranger. Check out the full program here

<https://rcdeventsworldwide.swoogo.com/worlddevoncongresstour2024/4622693>



## *News from EXARC*



EXARC's activities and publications in the realm of experimental archaeology open-air museums are so diverse that you simply must visit the website to get an idea -> <https://exarc.net> but here is a sampling of just one project that will interest museums facing the rewards and challenges of digitalisation. The **RETOLD** project will ensure that open-air museums can continue telling important cultural heritage stories to a diverse public by developing a standardised workflow to collect, digitise, and share data on buildings, crafts, and traditions. These data will be stored in an open access format so that museum professionals, researchers, and the public can access and use them freely. This will ensure better quality research through more comparable data, the preservation of tacit cultural heritage knowledge, and opportunities for more engaging and impactful story-telling about cultural heritage to the general public.



This is a brief outline of the plans, but a look at the challenges met is equally instructive, and you will find a frank discussion of the issues that have arisen: <https://exarc.net/history/retold-one-step-back-two-steps-forward>



## *SARKA – the Finnish Museum of Agriculture*



Sarka - The Finnish Museum of Agriculture is currently building a new exhibition which guides you through the impacts of mechanisation on the fields, the barn, the machine shed and on a farmer's everyday work. *What a machine!* is an introduction to the mechanisation of Finnish Agriculture.

In Finland, the mechanisation of agriculture began more than 150 years ago. The war postponed the breakthrough of mechanisation until the early 1960s, when the amount of work done by tractors overtook the work done by horses. The area under cultivation and the number of farm animals began to increase dramatically. At the same time, animal care became easier with the introduction of milking machines and automatic feeders, for example. Since the late 1980s, farmers have been required to invest more in machinery, to move to digital environments and to train and educate themselves more.

**What a machine! – exhibition will open during June 2024.**



*Photo1: Finnish tractor Valmet 33 Diesel from 1956. Valtra.*

*My Countryside* is another exhibition opening at Sarka Museum in 2024. It reflects on the countryside as an environment to grow up in from the 1950s to the present day. The exhibition addresses memories about the countryside – experiences, emotions and stories and what they mean to us today. What kind of memories do people have of growing up on a farm as children? What kind of possibilities did the countryside offer to young people? What are the historical and cultural factors shaping our relationship to the countryside?

The exhibition will be implemented in cooperation with the research project *My Countryside – Intergenerationality, Place and Gender in the Finnish Countryside*, managed by the History and Ethnology Department of the University of Jyväskylä. Maileena Vaajoensuu (Head of Exhibitions)

**My Countryside – exhibition will open during October 2024.**



Photo2: A lunch break. Sarka – The Finnish Museum of Agriculture



## *Estonian Agricultural Museum*

### *“The washing machine made of beetroot”*



This year we have one new exhibition opening. It is a **joint exhibition** called “Washing Machine Made of Beetroot” (the title refers to a parody song from the 1990s) with the Estonian Agricultural Museum, Estonian Road Museum and Tartu

City Museum) and is part of the Tartu 2024 European Capital of Culture program. It showcases DIY culture during the Soviet era, including self-built tractors and textiles as well as gardening, all of which highlight inventiveness, ingenuity, recycling, and a do-it-yourself mentality.

Of course, this is part of an important story affecting past, present and our future. “Made a washing machine out of beetroot” is an expression that dates back to the Soviet era. At that time, people were incredibly inventive, with great craft skills. Back then, the do-it-yourself mentality was associated with scarcity, yet today, it’s in fashion. In our culture of (over)consumption, people are into creating something with their own hands as opposed to always buying new things. Come and explore what these rich experiences can mean for our future at

<https://tartu2024.ee/en/peedistpesumasin/>



In fact, the National Museum is also having a **congress** on this:

**Sustainability in Practice: DIY Repair, Reuse and Innovation**  
**30 October–2 November 2024**

This conference aims to rethink ecological sustainability through an empirical perspective on sustainable do-it-yourself (DIY) practices, solutions and lifestyles shaped by culture, heritage and history. The conference proposes to consider the potential of various sustainable consumer behaviours in the past and present, instead of perceiving sustainability only as an economic and political endeavour in terms of the green transition and sustainable development.

The conference will discuss various topics, such as DIY repair and maintenance, domestic reuse and repurpose, vernacular innovation and invention, sustainable and resilient lifestyles and communities, heritage and applied heritage, forms of activism, and the role of museums and memory institutions in maintaining and promoting sustainability.

Venue: Estonian National Museum, Muuseumi tee 2, Tartu, Estonia

<https://enmconference.voog.com/sustainability-2024>





Another interesting event that takes place in Estonia this year is the **69th World Ploughing Contest** on August 16-17, 2024. We are not organizing it, only hosting competitors and will show them our museum, but we are very proud of this cooperation. [https://worldploughing.org/?page\\_id=182](https://worldploughing.org/?page_id=182) Mari-Liis Tamiste (Collection Manager-Researcher) and Monika Levkin



*t’Grom (Belgium) presents  
Exhibit on CROP SELECTION  
11 February-14 April 2024*



t’Grom is the museum of the Vegetable Region, from Aartselaar to Rotselaar and from Zemst to Ranst in Belgium close to major cities such as Antwerp, Mechelen and Brussels, and has been the cradle for many individual pioneers and their innovations in vegetable growing for 150 years. From the discoverer of chicory, to the inventor of the leek-punching machine, and on to the inventor of biological pollination.

Crop selection? It is a profession in its own right! A beautiful head of chicory, a sturdy leek stalk, a nutritious chickpea or a tasty beetroot. Growers who grow their own

seeds have control over many characteristics of their vegetables or (leg) fruits. To achieve this, they do crop selection.

What is that, and how exactly do they do it? The Center for Agricultural History set out with a camera to understand this craftsmanship. You will discover all about it in the exhibition 'Cultivation selection? A profession in its own right!'

The exhibition will be held from February 11 until April 14 2024 in 't Grom, Sint-Katelijne-Waver (Belgium). This exhibition is an initiative of the Center for Agricultural History (CAG) and was created as part of the Focus Craftsmanship project, an initiative of Bokrijk | Craftsmanship & Heritage in collaboration with CEMPER, CAG, ETWIE, FARO, Histories, PARCUM and Werkplaats Intangible Heritage, with the support of the Flemish Government. Maarten Jacobs / Directeur-Conservator. Visit us in Dutch or English at <https://www.tgrom.be/>



*Special Report from Howell Living  
History Farm for ALHFAM  
with Photo Essay*



The Association for Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museums

*ALHFAM Annual Meeting  
& Conference 2024 June 7-10  
and 9-10 September for a virtual  
symposium with papers and panels*

The ALHFAM Annual Meeting & Conference is the largest single gathering of the ALHFAMily and is being hosted this year at Howell Living History Farm, one of the AIMA's active members, represented by Pete Watson, whom AIMA members and friends have "met" many times in Newsletters through his eloquent (and often fun) photos, as well as in nearly all of our online events, special colloquia and, most recently, in AIMA's 2023 Congress in India.

<https://www.alhfam.org/2024-Annual-Conference>



**Howell Living History Farm**

a facility of the Mercer County Park Commission

Howell Living History Farm is in Titusville, New Jersey, USA, and has been a working farm for 285 years. During its 45 years as a property of Mercer County, the farm has grown from a 126-acre tract of donated farmland to a 267-acre historical park where the agriculture and lifestyle of earlier times is presented annually to more than 10,000 school children and 55,000 other visitors. As a living history farm, it continues to operate on a full, working scale by raising crops and livestock, and by using the house and barns as people did in earlier times. Dozens of horse-powered field and transportation operations are used to farm the 50 tillable acres where corn, oats, wheat and hay are raised using equipment representative of the period.

Among the renowned seasonal activities at Howell is the ice harvest, which enabled neighboring communities to keep dairy products through much of the following warmer season.



Howell is especially proud of its commitment to working animals, be it on the farm, in transport or in the forest. Here is just a taste of what we can show you and, remember, the best part of it all is doing it yourself, so be ready to learn to lend a hand. Find more about Howell Living History Farm and join us for the ALHFAM 2024: <https://www.howellfarm.org>



Veteran farmer Halsey Genung works with Howell Farm Assistant Director Kevin Watson to help insure that skills are transferred from one generation of staff to the next.





At Howell Living History Farm in Titusville, NJ, USA, succession planning includes teaching historical skills to multiple members of the farming staff.



Margaret Quinn teaches shearing methods to an apprentice farmer



Logging with horses will be among the workshops offered during ALHFAM's 2024 Annual Conference, held at Howell Farm in Titusville, NJ, USA



# *India*

## *welcomes*

### *AIMA 2023 Congress*



#### *AIMA Secretary General's Message by Debra A. Reid*

##### Twenty-Five Years of AIMA Engagement

I attended my first AIMA congress, hosted by the National Museum of Agriculture and Agricultural-Food Industry in Szreniawa, Poland in 1998. Twenty-five years later I had the pleasure of participating in the 2023 AIMA congress in India. Over these years I have attended eight triennial congresses, shared my research findings enthusiastically, and served as the U.S. representative (or alternate) to the AIMA Executive Committee, and as a vice-president and general secretary. I have learned so much about the value of agricultural museums because of this engagement, and AIMA's 20th triennial meeting in India reinforced why it's so important to engage in this work.



*Fig. 1. Debra Reid at the Taj Mahal, Agra, Uttar Pradesh, India. Pete and Mary Watson arranged this tour on the day after AIMA's remarkable 20<sup>th</sup> Congress, CIMA 2023, concluded. Photograph DAR.*

The following points out some of the many reasons why I value AIMA. All relate to AIMA objectives, itemized in the AIMA bylaws, available [here](#). In summary, AIMA exists to support and promote international cooperation in agricultural museum work. This includes research and public engagement that increases our understanding of agricultural techniques, food and food industries, forestry, viticulture, fishing and hunting among many other topics. AIMA's work grows through cooperation, on the local, national and international levels, with others involved in museology, conservation and restoration. Ultimately, we do what we do to increase public understanding of agriculture, its sciences and its history.

The 2023 AIMA Congress addressed all of these as attendees learned about work underway across India and beyond. Indian hosts and AIMA Executive Committee



members, Surajit Sarkar, Nerupama Modwel, and Vijay Aditya, coordinated a remarkable six-day conference at two sites in northeastern India. It drew hundreds of attendees including students from two universities – Shoolini in Solan, Himachal Pradesh, and Punjab Agricultural University in Ludhiana, Punjab – university faculty and administrators, public officials and delegates from across India and at least four other countries (Australia, England, Slovenia, and the United States). During formal sessions and field trips, we learned about connections between seed preservation and propagation, water management, agroecology and pastoralism as well as personal and policy action supporting these causes.



*Fig. 2 Dr. Devinder Sharma, food and trade policy analyst, presents “Background to Agricultural history in the Indian Sub-Continent,” during the keynote plenary session that launched CIMA 2023 at Shoolini University, Solan, Himachal Pradesh, October 13, 2023. Surajit Sarkar, left; Dr. Sharma, center, Vijay Aditya, right. Photograph DAR.*



*Veterinarian Dr. Nitya Ghotge, Founder-Director, ANTHRA, Pune, Maharashtra, India, presenting “Livestock: The Critical Link in Agroecology and Mixed Cropping,” October 15, 2023. ANTHRA is an organization founded by women veterinarians in 1992 to support pastoralists. You can read more about it here: <https://www.anthra.org/>. Photograph DAR.*





*The open-dining area at Shoolini University afforded opportunities to get to know delegates and discuss subjects in more detail. Attendees at this table included (left to right): Dr. Anupama Krishnamurthy, palynologist and palaeoecologist, India; Dr. Gita Dharampal-Frick, South Asian historian, Germany and India; Dr. R. Seenivasan, agricultural engineering, sustainable development and traditional water technologies, India; Anshul Rai, Rainbow Foundation India; Dr. Paul Starkey, animal traction specialist, England; Dr. Patrick Mulvany, agroecology and food sovereignty, England; Dr. Cameron Archer, agriculture educator, Australia. Two staff with the Keystone Foundation, Muhammad Rafi and P.B. Saneesh, are standing in the background, talking with other delegates. The Keystone Foundation began in 1993 with the goal of “empowering indigenous people and local communities by building socio-ecological resilience.” Rafi and Saneesh focus on sustainable rice cultivation and food diversity. You can read more about Keystone Foundation here: <https://keystone-foundation.org/>. Photograph DAR.*



*Pete Watson, Howell Living History Farm, New Jersey, United States, and Syed Shani Khan, organic farmer, India, stand in the Hall of Fame at Punjab Agricultural University, between portraits of Norman E. Borlaug and G.S. Khush. Photograph DAR.*

**During CIMA 2023, Punjab Agricultural University recognized Dr. Gurdev Singh Khush, rice breeder and geneticist and 1996 World Food Prize recipient by dedicating a museum in his honor. Gracious Indian hosts Sarkar, Modwel, and Aditya selected**

me to represent AIMA at the official ceremonies as Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) honored Dr. Khush. These included the inauguration of the G. S. Khush Institute and the Gurdev Singh Khush Museum, and the formal opening of the AIMA congress at PAU, all on October 16, 2023.



*Dr. Khush and his wife (both to my left) enjoyed the presentation of portraits to dignitaries at the inauguration. Patrick Mulvany shared this photograph of me receiving Dr. Khush's portrait.*

You can learn more about Dr. Khush, recognized by his colleagues at the University of California-Davis, as the “most decorated agricultural scientist in the world,” through this article that describes the donation of his papers to UC-Davis: <https://library.ucdavis.edu/news/dr-gurdev-khush-celebrated-rice-breeder-donates-papers-to-uc-davis-library/>.



*Dr. Khush and I had an opportunity to discuss agricultural universities in and beyond India as he taught at University of California-Davis, and I collected a particle delivery system, aka gene gun, from retired microbiologist Dr. Charles Gasser, who worked with soybean genetic modification research at Monsanto before taking the faculty position at UC-Davis. Dr. Gasser knew those working in tomato research at UC-Davis, and tomato genetics was another of Dr. Khush's research areas. Photograph shared by Cameron Archer.*



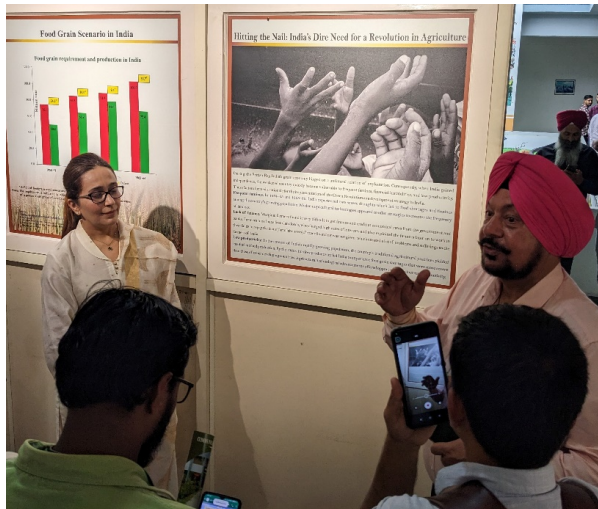


*The inauguration of the Institute and Museum included much ceremony, including PAU officials providing beautiful bouquets to the persons selected to represent organizations and universities. I had the pleasure of sitting next to the wife of architect Surinder Singh Sekhon, the person who designed the Rural Museum of Punjab, and of talking more with Dr. Khush’s wife (shown to the left, next to the banner “Heartiest Welcome.” Cameron Archer shared this photograph.*

Dr. Khush engaged with AIMA delegates for two days before he and his wife had to fly back to California. This included a conversation with Patrick Mulvany, Honorary Research Fellow at the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience at Coventry University in England. Mulvany presented a keynote address during CIMA 2023 focused on biodiverse agroecology, an undertaking that Mulvany describes as “working with Nature to secure future food.” You can view his HANDOUT here: <https://bit.ly/49I3ajU>. Mulvany considers biodiverse agroecology as “a science, a practice and a social movement, which not only supports sustainable, and resilient, local food webs but also enhances the heterogeneity of agricultural biodiversity, the sub-set of biodiversity in the areas where people live and work.” He reflected on Dr. Khush’s concerns that the higher yielding rice Dr. Khush developed became linked to higher levels of pesticide use and other Green Revolution practices that had long-term negative consequences.

Attendees also visited the Green Revolution Museum at Punjab Agricultural University. The combination of thoughtful conversations between and among researchers, organic and regenerative agriculture advocates, farmers and museum staff made for a thought-provoking experience. Contrasting approaches to agriculture co-exist, and we each must grasp the relationships to best convey how past practices inform current decisions and future directions on the path to food and environmental justice.





*A visit to the Green Revolution Museum at PAU indicated the numerous factors leading to famine in India and the “need for a revolution in agriculture” as the label reads. Here Gulneet Chahal (left) and Dr. T. S. Riar discuss the making of the exhibit, adding insights beyond label content. Photo DAR.*

The 20th AIMA congress in India affirmed the need for AIMA to remain committed to international exchange of information in numerous ways. AIMA makes clear the critical need of agricultural museums to respond to public interest in food access and agricultural practices, be they organic, regenerative, or self-destructive. All have lessons to teach us about the ramifications of agriculture to global health and planetary life. As Patrick Mulvany made clear (and I am paraphrasing) organic may have been “traditional” during the 1950s, but it became the antithesis of production agriculture. Mulvany argues that organic approaches can support production agriculture.

You can read more about AIMA’s 20th triennial congress, held for the first time in India, at: <https://www.agriculturalmuseums.org/2023/10/23/report-on-cima-2023-aimas-first-congress-in-india/>

AIMA, as an affiliated organization of ICOM (International Council of Museums) remains committed to international engagement around museum-related topics. We want to sustain conversations like this one between AIMA delegates and Punjab Agricultural Museum.



**Best wishes for 2024**

Debra A. Reid, AIMA General Secretary, Curator of Agriculture and the Environment, The Henry Ford, Dearborn, Michigan, USA



## Editor's Note

The AIMA website also has the preliminary report and souvenir photos from the India Congress up on its homepage here <https://www.agriculturalmuseums.org/> (scroll down to latest report), as well as two testimonies by other attendees. Cameron Archer was able to attend the Congress in person. You can see him in the pictures above and read his note of thanks here on the AIMA website:

<https://usercontent.one/wp/www.agriculturalmuseums.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Reflections-CIMA2023.pdf>

Cozette Griffin-Kremer was among the virtual attendees, see her note of thanks and reminder of some of the recent history of India's engagement with the AIMA here:

<https://usercontent.one/wp/www.agriculturalmuseums.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/CIMA-India-Griffin-Kremer.pdf>

Among the most heartening aspects of the congress was the impressive number of young people attending, several of them as dedicated helper/guides to the delegates from outside India. This screen shot by Cozette shows only a part of the audience in the main conference room – getting ready to pose for the congress photographer.



# *India and AIMA*

## *A historical note by Debra A. Reid*

The International Association for Agricultural Museums (AIMA) formed during a conference in October 1966 and launched its journal *Acta Museorum Agriculturae (AMA)* shortly thereafter. An attendee from India, Shri Bhola Nath, first participated in the third AIMA congress in 1971. Minutes published in *AMA* (1971) reported on the International Work Group for Paleoethnobotany (IWGP) meeting for the second time with AIMA. Shri (meaning Mr. not Dr.) Bohla Nath was a vertebrate zoologist



working for the Zoological Survey of India, stationed at the Gangetic Plains Regional Center in Patna, Bihar, India. His article on prehistoric domestication was among the communications, nearly half of the total presented at the second AIMA congress. His contribution addressed archaeobotanical and livestock domestication subjects. This paper did not appear in *AMA* because the wealth of material generated by IWGP overwhelmed *AMA*'s capability to publish.

The AIMA General Assembly elected to its governing body in 1971, P. D. Sud, museum curator at the Palampur Campus of Punjab Agricultural University, part of Himachal Pradesh University, India. Sud remained engaged and an article published in *AMA* (1980) indicated that AIMA influenced the formation of museums at agricultural universities in India and featured his project to build a new museum building in 1971 in Palampur, Himachal Pradesh, India.

The fifth AIMA Congress in 1978 drew Indian historian S. K. Sen to first participate. He presented "Social Change in Indian Villages (1900-1945)," published in *AMA* (1980). Sunil Kumar Sen was head of the department of history at Rabindra Bharati University in Calcutta, a respected and prolific scholar, and a fellow of the Institute of Historical Studies in Calcutta. The institute today presents the Sunil Kumar Sen Memorial Lecture each year.

Although no Indian delegates could attend the CIMA in Sweden in 1981, P. D. Sud and Sunil Sen remained engaged in the *AMA*. The seventh AIMA Congress in 1984 in France had two Indian delegates: V. B. Sawant, First Secretary of the Embassy of India in Paris, and Professor S. Sen. AIMA members recognized Professor Sunil K. Sen's involvement and status by electing him to its governing body to serve, 1984-1987. Sen's paper, "Agricultural Development and Peasants in Nineteenth-Century India," appeared in *AMA* (1986).

The eighth AIMA Congress in 1987 in Budapest featured Professor Sunil K. Sen speaking on "Women's Movement Social Change in India, 1950-1976." He was the only Indian delegate that appeared in the participant's list, but L. H. Patil submitted a paper on "Women in Agriculture in Maharashtra (India): Activities, Roles and Their Museum Presentation" for publication in *AMA* (1988).

Indian delegates did not participate again in AIMA congresses until 2014 and the seventeenth CIMA in Marseille when Surajit Sarkar attended, presenting "Crossroads for Agriculture Traditions in India." Members elected him to AIMA's governing body. This marked a real turning point in AIMA engagement in India as Sarkar hosted a meeting of the executive committee in New Delhi in 2018, and then organized the twentieth Congress in 2023 with his colleagues (and AIMA Executive Committee members), Nerupama Modwel and Vijay Aditya.

This paper, drawing only on AIMA publications and notes, indicates a long and rich involvement in the AIMA of Indian scholars with museum connections. We know (though not documented in publications) that AIMA President François Sigaut (†2012) of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris (EHESS) visited India for his own research and was a friend of the distinguished ethnologist Lotika Varadarajan, who enlisted Surajit Sarkar to participate in the Memorial Session for François in Marseille in 2014. We dedicate this preliminary survey on the engagement of Indian researchers in AIMA meetings to our Indian colleagues with our best wishes for strong connections between Indian scholars and museum staff with other AIMA members around the world. The full article with bibliography will appear during 2024 as a supplement on the AIMA website.





## *Souvenir photos from Barbara Sosič Curator of the Agricultural Collections at the Slovene Ethnographic Museum (SEM)*



Left: A (truly) dedicated helper was assigned to accompany each of us to facilitate life in and outside of the meetings. Right: One of the many breathtaking views from the halls of Shoolini University in Himachal Pradesh. (All photos by Barbara Sosič, except last)



Conference room at the Punjab Agricultural University. It is easy to see that AIMA attendees were surrounded by a sense of the history of Indian agricultures.





Visit to the farm machinery display hall at the Punjab Agricultural University in Ludhiana.



An example of beekeeping near orchards for pollination at Madhu Vatika organic farm.



Dragon fruit cultivation at Madhu Vatika organic farm, Punjab





Like Indian culture, Indian cuisine is delicious and diverse: a lunch with a lentil dahl and a salad of fresh seasonal vegetables.



Punjabi rice fields, harvest time is near.



The rice harvest is almost here at Punjab Agricultural University's experimental paddy fields.

**Barbara presented Slovenian beekeeping to  
Congress scholars and beekeepers  
So that the “poetry of agriculture” from East  
and West met in India**





Photo Franc Šivic, 2016



***Coming Soon  
More news from India  
But... here is a teaser...***



***“Foods of India” is among the many  
projects of INTACH and its 40th  
anniversary is in 2024***

INTACH (Intangible Cultural Heritage) was among AIMA’s co-hosts in India and they have a very rich year coming up. If you would like to see more about their many activities, from art restoration to architectural preservation, food cultures, and on to educational activities for all ages, check out the 13-minute introduction video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xjG70qwIBGc&feature=youtu.be>

If you attended AIMA 2023 in India in person or online, you will catch a glimpse of people you have already “met” and who will continue reporting on their work in ICH as well as their networking with stakeholders in agriculture and agricultural museums.



## Join the AIMA via PayPal or by bank transfer

Membership forms and bank transfer information or PayPal are available online in English, French, German, Russian and Spanish on the AIMA website  
Individual membership €10, Institutional membership €40.

<https://www.agriculturalmuseums.org/membership/application-forms/>



### *And a word from an AIMA member friend*

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Thank you so much for thinking along and helping with finding us participants. I do believe that it will be great exhibition and Conference.

Great to be part of something bigger! 😊

Ilze Salnaja-Värv

Näituste- ja Haridusosakonna juhataja

5301 3023

