

11th AGROTECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE



February 17, 2023

Modern Agrifood Systems in a Circular Economy Framework:
Unlocking the Future



Speakers' Bios

Organizer



AMERICAN-HELLENIC
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Dr. Yiannis Ampatzidis is an associate professor in the Agricultural and Biological Engineering Department of the University of Florida (UF). He leads the Precision Agriculture Engineering program at Southwest Florida Research and Education Center (SWFREC). His current research focus is on smart and digital agriculture, artificial intelligence (AI), UAVs, machine vision for plant stress and disease detection, mechatronics, automation, robotics, precision agriculture and machine systems with a special interest in development, implementation, and evaluation of agricultural machines and control systems for high-value crops.

Yiannis Ampatzidis

Associate Professor
Agricultural and Biological Engineering
Department
University of Florida



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Dr. Georgios F. Banias is a Senior Researcher (Grade B) in CERTH/iBO. He graduated in 2005 from Aristotle University's Mechanical Engineering Department. In 2009, he was granted with a PhD in Mechanical Engineering from Aristotle University Thessaloniki in the field of Environmental Informatics and Waste Management. Since 2005, he has been involved in National and European Research Projects and in educational activities of the Aristotle University 's Mechanical Engineering Department. He is the author of more than 90 scientific publications. His research interests focus on the area of Circular Economy and Sustainability, Environmental Impact Assessment, Life Cycle Analysis, Environmental Informatics and Decision Support Systems, Environmental Management Systems, Waste Management and Bio-economy. He has participated in 31 funded research projects (4 as a Coordinator and PI, in 7 as a PI and 13 as WP leader). Dr Banias is the chairman of the CERTH/iBO's Scientific Committee and General Secretariat of the Executive Committee of the Technical Chamber of Greece / Section of Central Macedonia.

Georgios F. Banias

Senior Researcher
Institute for Bio-Economy and
Agri-Technology (iBO)
Centre for Research and Technology-
Hellas (CERTH)



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Avital Bechar

Head

Institute of Agricultural Engineering
Agricultural Research Organization-
Volcani Center

Prof. Avital Bechar is a senior research scientist and the director of the Institute of Agriculture Engineering (IAE) at the Agriculture Research Organization (ARO), Volcani Institute in Israel. He was appointed adjunct professor in the school of IE at Purdue University, USA, in the years 2011-2012. He holds a B.Sc. degree in Aerospace Engineering and a M.Sc. in Agricultural Engineering, both from the Technion, Israel, and a Ph.D. in Industrial Engineering from Ben-Gurion University, Israel, on agricultural robotics and human-robot integrated systems. Prof. Bechar is the founder and head of the Agricultural Robotics Lab at IAE, where he is conducting fundamental and applied research in robotics for agriculture, human-robot collaborative systems, sensor technologies and developing new concepts and approaches for the operation and development of agricultural robots and proximal sensing. He is the author of more than 100 articles in peer reviewed scientific publications. He authored several book chapters, edited a book on robotics and precision agriculture and has led and participated in more than 50 local and international research projects. Prof. Bechar is the former chairman of the Israeli Society of Agricultural Engineering (ISAE), a co-founder of the Israeli Robotics Association (IROB), an IEEE senior member and a member of the IEEE Robotics and Automation and IEEE SMC Societies, a member of the IEEE Technical Committee on Agricultural Robotics and a member of the CIGR Section V committee (Systems management).



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Stella Bezergianni

President

NOESIS Science Center and Museum of
Technology

Stella is a research director and hydroprocessing group head in the Centre for Research & Technology Hellas (CERTH), focusing on the development and intensification of novel technologies for the production of low carbon fuels and chemicals, as well as efuels. Her research activities are supported by competitive European and National research projects, and direct service contracts with EU and non-EU industrial partners. She is the author of numerous scientific publications in technical journals, conference proceedings and monographs. Stella is the president of the Science Center and Museum of Technology (NOESIS) of Thessaloniki, and member of several scientific and technology committees and associations including the European Technology and Innovation Platform and the Agrobiotechnology Committee of the Greek-American Chamber. Stella is a Chemical Engineer with a PhD from Lehigh University USA, with significant industrial experience obtained from ExxonMobil, FMC Incorporation and Air Liquide.



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Ioannis Chaniotakis

Senior Director

Agricultural Sector Operations Development

Piraeus Bank

Ioannis Chaniotakis is a banking professional with over 25 years of experience. He has a diverse experience in all aspects of financing agricultural operations and –as the Senior Director of Agricultural Sector Operations Development of Piraeus Bank– is now leading the bank’s financing activities for farmers and small agri-enterprises. He has a BSc in “Agricultural Economics”, an MSc in “Agricultural Economics – Agricultural Products Marketing” and a PhD in Business Administration. He has been tutor in marketing in Greek Universities. His publications appear in journals such as: Journal of Product and Brand Management, International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management, Journal of Food Products Marketing, Managing Service Quality, etc.



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Aphrodite Chrysochoou was born and raised in Thessaloniki. She is an experienced Journalist with a demonstrated history of achievement in the Media industry and especially in the field of writing, reporting and broadcasting across a variety of platforms, including print, television, radio and online media. Skilled in Breaking News, Journalism, Media Relations, TV, Radio, and Corporate Communications. Strong media and communication professional she is organizing meetings and press conferences about significant anniversaries and events. She is currently the correspondent for Central and West Makedonia matters at “Ypaithros Hora”, a specialized newspaper for the Agricultural Development. Additionally, she is the owner and the Digital Editor of the health issues website “Healthnet.gr”. She holds a Master's degree in Journalism and New Media from School of Journalism & Mass Media Communication, Auth. She speaks English and French.

Aphrodite Chrysochoou

Journalist
Ypaithros



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Constantinos Constantinidis

CEO
PELOPAC

Constantinos Constantinidis is the CEO of PELOPAC since 1996. PELOPAC is one of the leading Greek exporters of table olives and other Greek and Mediterranean specialties. The company specializes in developing and producing top quality products for leading brands and retailers worldwide, including the USA, Australia, UK and Europe. PELOPAC has received multiple awards, including “Greek Export Awards” for Top Manufacturing Company (Silver) and Top Exporting Company (Bronze) and “Greek Values Awards” for Outstanding Medium Size Company, Export Excellence and Innovation. PELOPAC’s products have received 28 Great Taste Awards (UK) and have been featured at Innovation Expositions at SIAL and PLMA. Since 1988 he has been involved in new ventures in textiles production, sportswear, garment retail, building materials production and several real estate developments in Greece. He was a founding partner of Mt.Vikos and Big Picture Foods, both food import and marketing companies in the USA. Since 2020 he is the Chairman of the Board of the AgroTech Export Cluster in Central Macedonia. He is a member of the Advisory Board of the Institute of Applied Biosciences of CERTH, the Agrotechnology Committee of AmCham, the Executive Committee of SEVE, the Board of FIG, the Board of Trustees of Anatolia College and the Chair of the Oversight Committee of the Anatolia High School in Thessaloniki. He holds an MBA from Columbia Business School, and a BSc (ENG) in Mechanical Engineering from Queen Mary College, University of London.



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Vasileios Diamantis

Co-Founder
ACT4ENERGY

Dr. Vasileios Diamantis holds an MSc (2002) and PhD degree (2006) in the field of anaerobic wastewater treatment (Department of Environmental Engineering, Democritus University of Thrace). Since 2009 he is a member of the Laboratory and Teaching Staff of the Department of Environmental Engineering (DUTH) with a specialization in wastewater management and treatment technologies for energy and water recovery. He participated in more than 30 research projects as principal investigator or member of the research team. Vasileios Diamantis has field experience in the design of wastewater treatment facilities for municipal, industrial and agro-industrial effluents, and the execution of environmental impact assessment studies. He developed environmental technologies for biogas production (TRL7) and biological oxidation of hydrogen sulfide (TRL8) and since 2018 he co-founded the spin-off company ACT4ENERGY P.C. (www.act4energy.com) providing R&D services in the field of environmental and industrial biotechnology. He is a member of the Technical Chamber of Greece, member of the Board of Directors of the Hellenic Association of Biogas Producers, and member of the Board of Directors of the Hellenic Association of Environmental Engineers.



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Dr. Finkenstadt serves as a National Program Leader at the National Institute of Food and Agriculture for the United States Department of Agriculture (NIFA-USDA). NIFA is the extramural funding agency of the USDA with over \$1.2B/year in research assets. Before joining NIFA, Dr. Finkenstadt served as a Research Scientist for the USDA in-house Agricultural Research Service for 22 years engineering new bioplastics from agricultural commodities with over 80 peer-reviewed publications. As part of the Institute for Bioenergy, Climate and the Environment, Dr. Finkenstadt manages an extramural research portfolio of over \$200M with programs spanning the entire bioeconomy from agricultural production, biomass, conversion, biomanufacturing, and recycling.

Victoria L. Finkenstadt

National Program Leader
National Institute of Food and
Agriculture
United States Department of
Agriculture



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Georgios Georgantas is Minister of Rural Development and Food, having previously served for the period July 2019 - February 2021, Deputy Minister of Digital Governance, responsible for the Simplification of Administrative Procedures. He is a Member of Hellenic Parliament for Kilkis. Minister Georgantas studied Law at the Democritus University of Thrace and worked as a trial attorney for twenty years before entering politics. He has been serving as Member of the Hellenic Parliament since 2012, elected with New Democracy party in four consecutive general elections. Deputy Minister Georgantas has been an active parliamentarian, having played a key role as member of the Committee of Inquiry into the health scandals during the years 1997-2014 and of the Preliminary Examination Committee on the Novartis case. He also served as Deputy Minister of Education and Religious Affairs in 2014 and as Shadow Minister for Administrative Reconstruction between 2016 and 2019. He is married and father of two.

Georgios Georgantas

Minister

Ministry of Rural Development & Food



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Vassilis Kafatos

Vice-President
American-Hellenic Chamber of
Commerce

Vassilis Kafatos (Equity Partner) is Deloitte Greece Clients & Industries Leader and President of the Deloitte Alexander Competence Center. He specializes in corporate & digital strategy, innovation, business model transformation, financial restructuring and mergers & acquisitions. Vassilis has over 20 years of advisory experience in various sectors including travel, hospitality, investment management, consumer business and manufacturing. He serves as Trustee of the Board of Anatolia College, as Vice President of the American - Hellenic Chamber of Commerce, as President of the Advisory Board of the Council on Competitiveness of Greece, as Vice President of the Board of Directors of the Federation of Industries of Greece and as member of the Board of Directors of the Foundation for the Museum of Macedonian Struggle. He holds a degree in Economic Science from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, an MBA in Corporate Strategy from the University of Texas at Austin and postgraduate diplomas in Business Leadership from IMD, Lausanne.



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Theodoros Kallitsis

Farm Manager
American Farm School

Theodoros Kallitsis is the Farm Manager at the American Farm School of Thessaloniki and Adjunct Instructor at Perrotis College of the American Farm School of Thessaloniki. Before joining the American Farm School, he worked for over 20 years in the food industry, mainly in the area of product development and quality and later as a food safety and food product development consultant. He is a Research Associate at the School Veterinary Medicine, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Theodoros earned his Ph.D. degree in Food Science – Food Microbiology at the University of California, Davis, and his M.Sc. in Food Science – Food Process Engineering from the same university. His undergraduate degree is in Veterinary Medicine from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.



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Georgios Katsaros

President and CEO
E. Katsaros

Georgios Katsaros holds a Ph.D in Electronic Engineering and a Master of Research (MRes) Degree in Telecommunications from the University College London, University of London. He also has a Master's of Engineering (MEng) Degree in Communication Engineering from the Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London.

EMPLOYMENT:

- 2001-Present: E. Katsaros SA, Managing Director of Family owned business. Exclusive distributors in Greece of tractors and agricultural machinery.
- 2004-Present: Marathon Invest Srl, Bucharest Romania, Director of Real Estate Company holding significant assets in Romania.
- 2007-Present: Marathon Invest KFT, Budapest, Hungary, Director of Real Estate Company holding significant assets in Hungary.
- 2005-2007: STTS North Ltd Director of Satellite and TV equipment trading company. Distributors of the Fraccaro and Alcad products.
- Summer Session of 1995-1999: Barclays de Zoete Wedd, London UK (City) Investment bank of Barclays Group. Worked in the Debt Capital Markets (DCM) as assistant to senior trader.
- 2006: Hellenic Navy (PN) National Service.

He is Member of the Agrotechnology Committee of the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce, Member of Working Group of the Greek Technical Chamber (TEE) overseeing Energy matters and Information & Telecommunication matters. In addition, he is Associate Member, Institution of Electrical Engineers (AMIEE) and Member Institution of Electronic & Electrical Engineers (MIEEE).



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Phoebe Koundouri

President
European Association of Environmental
and Resource Economists (EAERE)

Phoebe Koundouri is Professor at the School of Economics and Director of Research laboratory on Socio-Economic and Environmental Sustainability – ReSEES at the Athens University of Economics and Business, Professor at the Department of Technology, Management and Economics at Denmark Technical University, Director of the Sustainable Development Unit (SDU) and the EIT Climate-KIC Hub Greece at ATHENA Information Technology Research and Innovation Center, President of the European Scientific Association of Environmental and Natural Resource Economists (EAERE), Member of the World Academy of Arts and Sciences (WAAS), Member of the Academia Europaea, Member of the Nominating Committee for the Nobel Prize in Economics Sciences and member of the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP) Board. She is also Chair of the UN SDSN Global Climate Hub, co-chair of SDSN Europe & SDSN Greece, Member of the National Climate Change Committee of Greece, of the Ministry of Energy and the Environment, Member of the writing team of the Pissarides Report (10 year Greek Development Plan) and President of the Alliance of Excellence for Research and Innovation on Aephoria (AE4RIA). Prof. Phoebe Koundouri included in the 1% of most-cited women economists in the world, with 15 published books and more than 500 published peer reviewed scientific articles. Prof. Koundouri acts as a scientific advisor to the European Commission, World Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, OECD, UN, NATO, WHO, as well as national governments around the world, and has directed more than 100 research projects.

Personal website: www.phoebekoundouri.org



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Efthymia Koutsomitropoulou

Product Innovation-R&D Manager
Barba Stathis

Efthymia Koutsomitropoulou is a Dipl. Chemical Engineer who graduated from the Faculty of Engineering of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki awarded an EITCHID Research and Development scholarship for research in the field of polymers. She has attended post graduate courses at FITR, of Reading University on Food Safety. She has many years of experience in the food sector and at the same time maintains research cooperation with various organizations in Greece and abroad. She has worked in managerial positions regarding Quality Assurance, Research & Development of new products as well as Marketing in companies such as MEVGAL, CRETA FARMS and DODONI. Since February 2022, she holds the position of Product Innovation-R&D Manager in BARBA STATHIS. She is experienced in the management and support of research programs, patent registration, sensory evaluation, food law enforcement and labelling as well as the full development of innovative products from initial concept to market launching. She is registered with the Technical Chamber of Greece, the Panhellenic Association of Chemical Engineers as well as the Interdisciplinary Society for Food Hygiene Assurance. Finally, she participates in the SEVT working group on labelling and nutrition legislation as a coordinator, as well as in the EBETH working group for the formulation of proposals to improve legislation on Intellectual Property rights within the framework of the IPMED project. She has participated in many scientific conferences and workshops with speeches and publications.



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Laura Lawson

Executive Director
New Jersey Agricultural Experiment
Station and Executive Dean
School of Environmental and Biological
Sciences
Rutgers University

Laura Lawson is Executive Dean of the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences (SEBS) and Executive Director of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES) at Rutgers University. In these roles, she is responsible for 15 departments with approximately 310 faculty, 3200 undergraduate students, and 425 graduate students, and also for the delivery of programs and technical services through cooperative extension offices in every New Jersey County. Dr. Lawson is a Distinguished Professor in the Department of Landscape Architecture. She joined Rutgers in 2010 to serve as chair of the Department of Landscape Architecture and continued her administrative leadership as the Faculty Director of Rutgers Gardens, SEBS Dean of Agriculture and Urban Programs, and SEBS Dean of Academic Programs. Dr. Lawson is an established author and is known for her scholarship on urban agriculture, community gardens, open space, and participatory design. She is author of *City Bountiful: A Century of Community Gardening in America* (2005), co-author of *Greening Cities, Growing Communities: Urban Community Gardens in Seattle* (2009) and *Design as Democracy: Techniques for Collective Creativity* (2017), and has numerous publications in academic journals, edited books, and popular media. She is also a dedicated teacher who has taught undergraduate and graduate studios and courses on social and cultural issues in design and planning. Dr. Lawson received her Ph.D. in Environmental Planning and Masters of Landscape Architecture from the University of California, Berkeley, and her Bachelors of Arts from the University of California, Santa Cruz.



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Effie Lazaridou

CEO

New Agriculture New Generation

Effie is leading 'New Agriculture New Generation', a non-profit organization established under the initiative and with the founding support of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF) in 2018. 'New Agriculture New Generation' supports employability, entrepreneurship and innovation across the agrifood value chain in Greece. The organization has supported 17.200+ beneficiaries to date and 100+ small or family-owned agrifood SMEs and startups and reached a total of 29.600+ agrifood professionals. It creates a 3.6 leverage effect for the Greek economy and has contributed to the establishment of new producer groups and cooperatives as well as to the development of numerous new agrifood products. She is an experienced professional in the fields of strategic marketing and branding, specializing in the Agrifood sector, Culture and Tourism and has a successful track record for implementing complex international projects in SE Europe. Among others, Effie has led landmark projects of national importance, such as Destination Greece's brand and marketing strategy, the largest communication consultancy project ever initiated in the country, and Greece's Wine Sector's first ever international branding & strategic marketing initiative. She has also directed numerous demanding projects for multinationals companies, cooperatives, and SMEs in Southeast Europe. She has a diverse academic background, holding an Integrated Master in Chemical Engineering from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, a Master in Cultural Management from the City University of London and Professional PGDip in Marketing from the Chartered Institute of Marketing of London. She is a member of the Agricultural Technology Committee of the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce and of the Agricultural Economy Committee of the German - Hellenic Chamber of Industry and Commerce. Effie is also a trainer and certified business coach, an Associate of the Chartered Institute of Marketing London and an Associate Certified Coach by the International Coach Federation. In 2017 she was selected as mentor at the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women's Mentoring Women in Business Program. She plays the flute, is a volunteer with Make-A-Wish Greece and a regular speaker on women empowerment.



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Aristidis Makris

Sales & After Sales Manager
Agricultural Machinery
Massey Ferguson

Aristidis Makris joined Saracakis Group of Companies 5 years ago, as Thessaloniki Branch Manager of Commercial Vehicles & Machinery Division for the first 4 years, and as Sales and After Sales Manager of Agricultural Machinery from April of 2022. He began his career at the Greek Dealership of Caterpillar, where for 16 years he held vital positions in the Sales Department of Industrial Division (Generating Sets, Lift Trucks and Hydraulic Cranes). He holds a bachelor's degree in Physics from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, a master's degree in Business Administration from the American College of Thessaloniki ACT and a Master of Science in Art History & Conservation of Works of Art from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.



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Mr. Ioannis Mavroudis is a founding member and shareholder of NEUROPUBLIC S.A. From the establishment of the company in 2003 until 2011 he held the position of Chairman of the Board of Directors. Between 2011 and 2018 he was the NEUROPUBLIC's CEO. Mr. Mavroudis was born in Piraeus. He studied Management at the American College of Greece and holds a BSc in Master Science, Major in Management and a Master's Degree in Global Master in Management. From 1998 to 2003 he served as Export Manager at Emporiki Group, responsible for developing the company's export network in 26 countries. He has many years of experience in the IT sector, having participated in the implementation of many projects. He is a member of the Alumni Association of the American College of Greece, of AWS, and until 2013 he was a member of the SEEC eGovernment Committee. He speaks English, German and Spanish. He is married and has a son and a daughter.

Ioannis Mavroudis

Board Member-
Business Strategy & Extraversion
Executive
NEUROPUBLIC



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Annie Michailides

President & Managing Director
EVYP

Annie Michailides was born in Thessaloniki and graduated from “Anatolia College”. She studied Economics in A.C.S. American College of Switzerland, as well as Graphic Design in the Vacalo School of Arts and Design in Athens.

In 1980 she entered the family business EVIE A. Michailides S.A.

- 1986-1993 Marketing and Public Relations Director “Uncle Stathis S.A.”
- 1993-2016 Executive Vice President EVIE A. Michailides S.A.
- 2008-2015 Managing Director EVYP LLP, Production of hydrolyzed plant proteins and amino acids for use in organic and conventional farming.
- 2016-present President and Managing Director EVIE A. Michailides S.A. and EVYP LLP

Honorary Consul of Portugal at Thessaloniki

Member of the General Council of the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (S.E.V)

Honorary Vice President of the Hellenic Association of Entrepreneurs (E.EN.E.), President of the Thessaloniki Industrial Area Enterprise Union and Member of the Agrotechnology Committee of the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce. Founding member of the Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art and member of the Board from 1993 to 2009. Member of the Board of the Philanthropic Association “Storgi” for children with neo-plasmatic illnesses for 4 years.



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Nicolas Moussiopoulos

Professor

Sustainability Engineering Laboratory
School of Mechanical Engineering
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Born in Athens, Greece 1956, Nicolas Moussiopoulos studied Mechanical Engineering at the Universität Karlsruhe (now Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, KIT), where he also received his doctoral degree. In the period 1982-1989 he taught at the German Universities of Kassel and Karlsruhe. After the completion of his postdoctoral lecture qualification ("Habilitation") in 1989, he was appointed Full Professor at the School of Mechanical Engineering of the Aristotle University Thessaloniki (AUTH). Since 1990 he is also the Head of this University's Sustainability Engineering Laboratory (formerly Laboratory of Heat Transfer and Environmental Engineering). In addition, since 1996 he is a Honorary Professor at KIT's School of Mechanical Engineering. In the periods 1997-1999 and 2003-2007 Professor Moussiopoulos chaired Aristotle University's School of Mechanical Engineering. From September 2006 until August 2010 he was the Dean of the University's Faculty of Engineering. From October 2010 until March 2016, he served as the Vice President of the International Hellenic University (IHU) and Dean of its Faculty of Economics & Business Administration (until 2013). In the periods 2014-2017 and 2019-2021 he was the Head of the Energy Department, School of Mechanical Engineering of AUTH. Since 2020 he is Vice President of the Teloglion Foundation of Art AUTH. Professor Moussiopoulos has consulted several Greek government officers, represented Greece in numerous international committees and has a wide research management experience. Since 2002 he is a member of the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina. In the same year he was awarded the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany. In 2012 the Royal Society appointed him Associate Editor of Philosophical Transactions A, the world's longest running scientific journal. In the period 2015-2018 Professor Moussiopoulos was the General Secretary of the Hellenic Chapter of the Club of Rome. From June 2018 until April 2021 he was an elected member of the Scientific Council of the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation, responsible for Engineering and Technology Sciences. Since October 2021 he is elected Vice President of the Hellenic Solid Waste Management Association, responsible for international relations. He received several awards and prizes, among them the Gerhard Hess Award of the German Research Association, the Heinrich Hertz Award (1990) and Aristotle University's Excellence Prize (2008). The research work of Nicolas Moussiopoulos addresses several issues in the broad field of energy and the environment. In the last 35 years he participated in numerous competitive, mostly EU funded research projects with a total budget of approx. 25 million €. He supervised 43 PhD candidates and postdoctoral researchers in Greece and five other countries and is the author of more than 900 scientific publications, including about 220 papers in peer-reviewed journals (Google Scholar: 10,400 citations, h-index: 53).



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Divine N. Njie

Deputy Director

Food Systems and Food safety Division
Food and Agriculture Organization of
the United Nations (FAO)

Divine Njie earned a Ph.D. degree in Engineering from the University of California, Davis, USA, specializing in Food and Agro-processing Engineering. He also holds B.Sc and M.Sc degrees in Agricultural Engineering from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He joined FAO in 2004 and currently is the Deputy Director, Food Systems and Food Safety at FAO. Previously at FAO, Mr. Njie led the Agro-food industry Group and served as Deputy Director of the Rural Infrastructure and Agro-industries Division, supporting FAO member countries in the areas of post-harvest handling, agro-food processing technologies, agro-industry development and other related domains. He has also served as the Deputy Leader of FAO's Food Systems Programme. Prior to joining FAO, Mr Njie worked in the private sector in food manufacturing in the USA, and taught agro-processing technologies at the University level in Cameroon and the USA.



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Nikolaos Ntavos

Co-Founder and Manager
Bioeconomy & Environment Cluster of
Western Macedonia

Nikolaos Ntavos is a Dipl. Energy Engineer of the University of Western Macedonia and a c. PhD in the green hydrogen field. Since 2007 he has been involved as a Project Manager in different EU Programmes (Horizon, BBI, MED, Interreg, LIFE). Part of his competences are:

- Proposal writing, consortia creation, project management and implementation of EU competitive projects.
- Creation of technology and knowledge transfer initiatives.
- Creation of partnerships and establishment of collaborations to promote innovation and entrepreneurship.

He is also an energy consultant and expert in the fields of renewable hydrogen and bioeconomy & bioenergy. He is currently the Co-Founder and Manager of CluBE – Cluster of Bioeconomy and Environment of Western Macedonia. CluBE's mission is to strengthen collaboration between entrepreneurship and research while increasing regional knowledge, promoting innovation and synergies between regional stakeholders. CluBE is developing R&D and business activities since 2014 in different fields to reinforce green, smart, and circular economy in the region and the neighbouring area. CluBE currently implements more than 30 EU, National, Regional and Strategic Private Consulting projects in the below sectors with more than 30 highly qualified and diverse personnel:

- bioeconomy and social innovation,
- clean technologies and hydrogen,
- circular economy and energy saving and,
- digital transition and climate policies.



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Bennie I. Osburn

Dean Emeritus UC Davis School of
Veterinary Medicine and Director of Out
Reach and Training at WIFSS
UC Davis

Bennie Osburn is a veterinarian with advanced degrees in comparative pathology and developmental immunology. As a veterinary pathologist with interests in comparative health of animals and people and a background in production agriculture his career path has been primarily in academia as a faculty member, Associate Dean for research and graduate education as well as Dean of the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of California, Davis. His experience in agriculture production has been as a partner in calf raising and almond farming operations. Following retirement as Dean, he has been serving as Director of Outreach and Training for the Western Institute for Food Safety and Security (WIFSS) at UC Davis with a focus on the application of the One Health concept for food systems. One Health represents health issues at the interface of people, animals, plants and the environment. He has served on a number of committees for the US Department of Agriculture including chair of the first Agricultural Biotechnology Research Committee, as consultant and instructor for the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization and Co-chair of the Bluetongue and Related Orbiviruses Symposium for the World Organization of Animal Health. Currently the programs he oversees at WIFSS includes educational development of applying One Health approaches to food systems from farm to fork. This encompasses understanding of food/feed supply chains beginning with soils, plants, animals and people living in their respective environmental/ecosystems and the impact of disruptive forces leading to foodborne illnesses and/or food insecurity. The impact of these complex issues are to address the United Nations Food Sustainability goals for 2030 and beyond as our populations reach 10 billion people. Currently the emphasis is to build capacity through education and research to address these complex issues.



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Nikos joined the Commercial Service, U.S. Department of Commerce, International trade administration in 2013. He is leading the SelectUSA program, and he is responsible for the Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Safety and Security, Packaging and Agribusiness sectors. Nikos holds an MBA degree from St. John's University, New York, and a B.Sc. from the State University of New York on Computer Science & Applied Mathematics. He has worked for 24 years holding managerial positions with American companies in Greece on various sectors including Information and Communications Technology, Consumer goods, and Apparel.

Nikos Papachryssanthopoulos

Commercial Specialist
Foreign Commercial Service
International Trade Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce



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Theofanis Pappas

Owner
Traditional Pytia

He was born in Thessaloniki in 1977. He is a Graduate in Accounting & Finance from the School of Administration & Economics of Serres, with a Master's Degree in "European Integration & Governance" from the University of Macedonia. He served his military service as a Cadet Reserve Lieutenant of Infantry. He was involved from a young age with the public life, Local Government, Central Politics and Administration, as he was, among others:

- Candidate - 1st Deputy Member of Parliament of the 2nd electoral district of Thessaloniki,
- President of O.P.E.K.E.P.E. (Organization for Payments and Control of Community Aid, Guidance and Guarantees),
- Deputy Regional Governor of Central Macedonia (with portfolios: Agricultural Economy, Entrepreneurship, Environment),
- Mayor of Sochos, Thessaloniki,
- President of the Development, Innovation & Agricultural Economy Committee of Central Macedonia Region,
- Vice-President of the Regional Advisory Committee on Development Law (Private Investments) of Central Macedonia,
- Managing Director of Development Company of Thessaloniki (AN.E.TH. S.A.),
- Ordinary member of the Board of Directors of the Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia.

From 2002 until today, he is the owner of a model craft enterprise in the agro-food sector, which operates with the EFET-certified production and processing of cheese-making enzymes (Traditional "Pytia"), in modernized facilities based in Sochos, Thessaloniki. It is an authentically traditional activity started by his parents since 1972, which since then until today keeps alive family knowledge and passion, combined with innovative practices, guided by tradition and quality. The "rennet" is a complex of enzymes used in the coagulation of milk for the production of cheese. The nomenclature derives from the ancient Greek word pytia < pyetia < pyos: colostrum. The production of rennet enzymes is an essential "circular economy" activity since it concerns the collection of slaughter by-products (stomachs) of young milk ewes, which after a natural process and laboratory processing are converted into a form of pulp which is used as an enzyme for making traditional feta cheese or the cephalograviera.



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Eleftherios Pavlou

Milk Zone Director
MEVGAL

Dr. Eleftherios Pavlou is a graduate of the Agricultural School of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (A.U.Th.). He holds a master's degree and a doctorate degree from the Agricultural School of A.U.Th. with expertise in physiology of reproduction of farm animals. He has long experience in management of ruminants, reared in different farming systems, and routinely applies specialized practices on reproduction, nutrition, production performances and genetic improvement of ruminants using different biotechnological methods (e.g. artificial insemination). He has teaching experience in higher education (Greek Universities), and in professional adult education (American Farm School of Thessaloniki, IIEK, Perrotis College). He participates in European and National programs concerning the improvement of livestock sector in Greece. Since 2017 he is an external research associate (postdoctoral researcher) of CERTH (INAB). Since 2021 he is milk zone director of dairy industry MEVGAL.



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Liisa Pietola

Leading Specialist
Sustainability Solutions
Sitra

Liisa Pietola received her Ph.D in soil and crop sciences in 1995 and serves also as an adjunct professor (docent) at the University of Helsinki in Agricultural Chemistry and Physics since 1998. She has published close to 100 scientific papers and led courses on soil structure, hydrology and plant nutrition over 20 years. She has her feet on the ground as an active farmer and round wood producer. Her family grows cereals and grasses for biodiversity and carbon capture on the family farm in South-Western Finland. Forests include both conservation areas and wood production areas. Dr. Pietola has been internationally active along her whole career starting at academia at University of Helsinki and continuing through private sector, in fertilizer industry R&D (2006-2011) and in Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owner in Finland (MTK, 2011-2022/8) as head of environmental affairs, to her current position in the Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra (www.sitra.fi/en) as leading specialist on sustainability solutions in transition of agriculture and forestry sectors. Dr. Pietola is a new member of the Advisory Board for the Horizon Europe Mission Soil Deal for Europe.



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Athanasios Savvakis

CEO
Biosolids

Executive Director of BioSolids SA (soil improvement products). Shareholder of National Can Hellas SA. Member of the General Council of the Bank of Greece. Member of the Managing Committee of the Athens Stock Exchange. C Deputy Chairman of the Foundation for Economic & Industrial Research (IOBE). Secretary General of the Greek Competitiveness Council. Member of the Board of Directors of the Hellenic Production – Industry Roundtable for Growth. Member of the Board of Directors of the Hellenic Association of Business Parks (HELABP). Vice-President of the Board of Directors of the Business and Cultural Development Centre (KEPA). Member of the Board of Directors of the Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI). Member of the Advisory Committee of the Institute of International Relations. Member of the Advisory Committee of Delphi Economic Forum.

Academic qualifications

MBA from the University of Stirling (UK). BSc in Business Studies & Economics from the University of Surrey (RIHE). Certified Lead Assessor for BSEN ISO systems from the Scottish Quality Management Center of the University of Stirling. INSEAD Executive Education Program (Negotiation Dynamics & Strategic Management). International Federation of Purchasing & Supply Management – Certificate in Purchasing and Supply Chain Management. Mr. Savvakis speaks English and Italian.



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Elias Spirtounias

Executive Director
American-Hellenic Chamber of
Commerce

After graduating from the School of Mathematics of the University of Athens, Elias Spirtounias completed his graduate studies at the School of Electrical Engineering (M.Sc. degree and pre-Ph.D. studies) at Boston University. During his residence in the United States, he participated as a Research Engineer in several research programs in co-operation with other organizations and companies such as NASA, MIT, UNH in the fields of analog and digital electronics, circuits design and applications. He returned to Greece in 1992 and after completing his military service in 1994, he held the position of Technical Director for the subsidiary of the Italian company Citec SpA., a company specialized in the design, production and application of voice and image processing systems. From 1997 until February 2009, he worked for the Foundation of the Hellenic World, a major Greek private non-profit cultural organization, starting as a Construction Supervisor and continuing as a Managing Director of the brand new then Cultural Center, Hellenic Cosmos an innovative, based on new technologies, theme park. During his tenure, he contributed significantly to the expansion, development and operation of the Center and its establishment as one of the most known technology-driven cultural theme park in Greece and abroad. From March 2009, he holds the position of Executive Director of the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce. Along with his colleagues and in cooperation with the Board have managed, in the midst of the economic crisis, to increase significantly the number of activities, undertake important initiatives, retain in high level the memberships, foster the advocacy level, expand further the presence of the Chamber in US and contribute to the evolution of the Chamber into one of the leading dynamic and reliable business organization in Greece. He serves as Treasurer of the American Chambers in Europe (ACE) Executive Committee.



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Begoña Pérez Villarreal

Director
EIT Food South

Before becoming Director EIT Food CLC South, she was the Interim Director of Innovation at EIT-Food. Since 1987 she has been involved in R&D&I activities and technology transfer to the food industry, particularly in the SME area, concerning quality issues and product development. Her research interest the last years has been focused on authentication, traceability and sustainability of the food chain. She has been the Business Director of the Food Research Division at AZTI for 15 years and a management team member of 15 European projects and external evaluator in the Food, Nutrition & Health area for DG Research-European Commission and Coordinator of two European projects of the 7FP. She has been the chair of the Executive Board of the European Association for Food Safety formed by 15 research organisations (www.safeconsortium.org), and is member of several EU Technological Platforms: European Aquaculture Technology and Innovation Platform (EATIP); European Fisheries Technology Platform (EFTP). She has been responsible for 100 research projects, has published 75 articles dealing with research in food and fisheries and is co-author of 5 new food products patents. She collaborates with different organizations and governments departments on strategic plans for R&D for the food industry and is member of different scientific committees: Spanish Society of Microbiology, European Sensory Science Society.



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Saskia Visser

Coordinator

European Joint Program Agricultural
Soils under Climate Change
(EJPS SOIL)

Wageningen University & Research

Dr. Saskia Visser(f): Land use, agri-food and sustainable Bio-economy Orchester at Climate Kic. She has 23 years of experience in both execution and management of sustainable land use research. Saskia works on multidisciplinary research topics like Circular agriculture, Sustainable Food Production, Climate Smart Land Management and Land Use optimization. Saskia is responsible for actively orchestrating the application of the Deep Demonstrations methodology in national, subnational and international contexts to achieve decarbonisation, climate adaptation and regeneration of (agri)biodiversity through integrated landscape design, forestry, agricultural practices, water management and circularity. Saskia builds and holds senior stakeholder relationships over time while convening, connecting, and facilitating actions on the ground, working with and through innovation partners, local teams, community members and key stakeholders. In her role as program director of the knowledge development program: Circular and Climate Neutral Society (Wageningen-UR), Saskia developed a vision and implementation strategy, called for research projects and steered the knowledge development by stimulating research to collaborate across projects. In her work Saskia builds partnerships that jointly seek for circular and climate neutral solutions that contribute to the realization of the SDGs. She makes use of the theory of transition management for the large-scale implementation of circular and climate neutral solutions. Saskia organised the Circular@wur conference, which with 450 international participants is a great example of the progress in knowledge development that can be made through partnership, strategic steering on collaboration and addressing the right knowledge needs. In her part-time position at Wageningen Research, Saskia is the co-coordinator of the European Joint Program on Agricultural Soils under climate Change. In that role Saskia facilitates the development of a Europe wide network of Soil researchers, supports strategic partnerships of EJP SOIL with both European and worldwide initiatives.