

Notes from the Editor:

This special issue of AJRS is focusing on the issues, policies and practices of the agricultural supply chain in Northern Australia and on linkage in agriculture supply chains as key drivers of the economic development of rural and regional Australia. This issue contains a wide range of topics include agricultural supply chain collaboration models, re-thinking supply chain policies and directions for agricultural development, prospects of inland rail, potentials of air-freight, feasibility of developing high value cropping industry such as sesame and supply chain assessment framework.

The export of high-value produce from Northern Australia, particularly Queensland to Asia has long been advocated for market diversification and growth of horticulture industries. However, it was not clear how can we facilitate small- and medium-scale producers for exporting their produce. In the first paper, Akbar and his colleagues investigated the stakeholders and networks that crucial for export supply chain development, and portrayed models of horizontal collaborations through a case study of mango industry in Queensland.

Technological disruptions, and very recently Corona virus pandemic have had serious impacts across all supply chains including agriculture. Based on an extensive literature review and stakeholder consultations, Babacan and colleague argue that 'business as usual' approach is not sustainable, and it is a high time to re-think supply chains to overcome the challenges of developing effective and resilient agricultural supply chains in northern Australia.

There are enormous opportunities for the growth of agricultural industries in Northern Queensland. However, how these opportunities can be utilized, and investors can be attracted to achieve the aspired development is not evident. Dale and colleagues found several dilemmas around agriculture sector and recommended that these dilemmas need to be addressed proficiently to achieve necessary investments and sustainable agricultural outcomes.

Existing north-south freight infrastructure is primarily based on road, which impacts regional producers and industries' access to efficient supply chain networks and hinders productivity and economic growth. Considering large scale rail projects of Hong Kong as an example, Mangioni assessed the opportunities, rationale and benefits of developing an inland rail infrastructure in Northern Queensland.

The very limited access of air-freight in Northern Australia has been reported as a major impediment for developing agricultural supply chain in the region. Using a mixed methodology approach, Rahman and colleagues assessed the feasibility of developing air-freight facilities in Central Queensland that can be connected to south and northern Queensland.

The agriculture sector of Australia has been grappling with over-production of low-value crops, higher production costs and low-profit margin along with adverse impacts of climate change. In search for a high-value crop, Rahman and colleagues studied the prospect of developing a sesame industry in Northern Australia by analysing demand for both domestic and international markets.

The final paper of this issue highlights a supply chain assessment framework developed by Schrobback and colleagues. This framework can be used to describe and analyse agri-food supply chains at an industrial level empirically.

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