

FROM THE HISTORY OF IAAS

*М.И. Крель, Д.С. Тибекина, 2 курс
Научный руководитель – Т.Л. Ляхнович, к. ф. н., доцент
Белорусская сельскохозяйственная академия*

The International Association of Students in Agricultural and Related Sciences (IAAS) was founded in 1957 in Tunis by 8 countries. IAAS is at the moment one of the world's biggest student organizations and one of the leading agricultural student associations. IAAS gathers students studying, majoring or researching in agriculture and related areas like environmental sciences, forestry, food sciences, landscape architecture, etc. Its committees are now spread in universities in over 40 countries worldwide, for example in such countries as Austria, Denmark, France, Greece, Germany, Spain and the Republic of Belarus.

IAAS is a place where agricultural students from all over the world meet each other, experience new mentalities and cultures, travel and see new places and learn about all aspects of agriculture together with their future colleagues.

The aims of IAAS are to promote the exchange of knowledge, information and ideas among students, and to improve the mutual understanding between countries and cultures. To do this, the association organizes activities like seminars, working camps, international meetings, exchange weeks, international exchange programs, small-scale development projects, etc.

The most important activities of IAAS are Annual World Congress, Director's Meetings and Regional Meetings, Seminars and conferences, Exchange Program, Exchange weeks and Art Festival.

Annual World Congress consists of the General Assembly and seminars. It is the yearly meeting of the governing body of the IAAS. This meeting attracts IAAS' members from all over the world, and is usually organized in July-August and lasts for three weeks.

Director's Meetings and Regional Meetings. IAAS member countries are divided into different regions. Within these regions meetings with different educational topics are held every year. Director's Meetings usually last longer and deal with important issues. Regional Meetings are more informal gatherings.

Seminars and conferences are held by local committees around the world to facilitate learning on a certain educational topic. You can even earn credits by attending some of their high-quality seminars.

Exchange Program has for years been the backbone of IAAS. It enables students to get practical experience working as an intern in a farm, organization or a company around the world. It broadens your horizons and fulfills your compulsory internship abroad - or you can gain priceless experience by learning more about life sciences!

Exchange weeks are an excellent way for an IAAS committee to learn more about another country. The method is simple: two or more countries express their interest towards having an exchange week – the rest is up to the countries. A theme is chosen, and usually the participants only pay travel costs and sometimes a small participation fee.

Art Festivalis a new concept developed by IAAS-Turkey and has now been hosted twice. It is an event that combines agriculture and arts in a very interactive way.

The Headquarter of IAAS is placed at the wonderful Campus of the Bioscience Faculty of the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium. It is situated at the main faculty building and is well connected to the university facilities. It is supposed to be the working office of the Executive Committee and is also shared with the Local Committee of Leuven. [1]

We want to share with you some interesting information about the participation of the Republic of Belarus in this organization. Agriculture is an important part of our economy. It is a pity that IAAS-Belarus is not very active at the moment, but we have a possibility to do something about it.

The Republic of Belarus became an IAAS member in 1999 and the first National Committee was based in the Belarusian State Agrarian Technical University. At that time, our country actively participated in IAAS' work. The sub-regional meeting of the North-Eastern European region of IAAS was held in Belarus in March, 2000. This meeting explored protected areas and national parks. 55 students from 16 countries were very happy to be the first foreign IAAS members to bring knowledge and experience of IAAS to our country.

The next time that a meeting of the European region took place in Belarus, was in December, 2003–January, 2004. Different topics for examplesuch as the activity of students' organizations and their influence on students' future professional career were discussed therewith 123 students from 23 countries. Belarus was glad to meet so many new friends from all over the world and welcomed them with open arms!

The next important event which was held in the Republic of Belarus was the 51th World Congress in Minsk in 2008. This congress was organized by the representatives of the institutions of higher education of Minsk. The discussion of rural tourism was not only interesting for guests, but also very important for Belarus itself.

Unfortunately, it went downwards after that. That could have different reasons: some students became graduates and had to leave IAAS, others married and did not have enough time. The number of active Belarusian IAAS members extremely reduced. Did IAAS disappear in "the country of blue lakes"?

Fortunately no! In 2011 Yahor Vetlou, a student of the Belarusian State Agricultural Academy (BSAA), heard something about the IAAS. He and his friends, who were also interested, started to look for the Belarusian IAAS committee because they wanted to join it. When they could not find anything, Yahor decided to visit the European Directors' Meeting in Slovenia (2011-2012) to ask for some information. That event changed everything! It became the start of his long and wonderful (and sometimes difficult) travel through "the world of IAAS". The next step was to register the group "IAAS-BSAA" (IAAS-Belarusian State Agricultural Academy). And that was just the beginning of a new era...

The election of Yahor Vetlou as the new vice-president of finance of IAAS was another milestone in the history of IAAS-Belarus. It was the first time that a Belarusian got such a position within IAAS! The other "founding members" of IAAS –BSAA did not stop working either. They helped to introduce the Belarusian State Agricultural Academy to IAAS.

IAAS-BSAA did not want to stop. They organized the conference "IAAS New Generation", which took place at the Belarusian State Agricultural Academy from 22 to 24 November, 2012. IAAS New Generation gathered all agrarian universities of Belarus together. The representatives of the IAAS Executive Committee and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Staffs of the Republic of Belarus took part in the event as well. And finally, at this conference, the National Committee of Belarus was officially elected. Raman Anfimau and Siarhei Hauryichenka, students at the BSAA's Faculty of Economics, were elected as National Director and Exchange Coordinator respectively. Of course, the good atmosphere at the meeting helped to discuss many important questions: about the debts, the creation of the Belarusian IAAS Constitution, the Exchange Program, the cooperation between universities, etc.

Now it is time to jump on a new level of IAAS development in Belarus! [2, p. 40-41]

Список использованных источников

1. Official Webside of the International Association of Student in Agricultural and Related Sciences/www.iaasworld.org[Электронныйресурс]. – Режимдоступа: <http://www.iaasworld.org/>– Датадоступа:07.03.2013.

2. IAAS Annual review.2012 International Association of Students in Agricultural and Related Sciences. – IAAS Headquarters: Faculty of Bio-science Engineering, Kasteelpark Arenberg 20 – B-3001 Heverlee(Leuven) – Belgium. –52 p.