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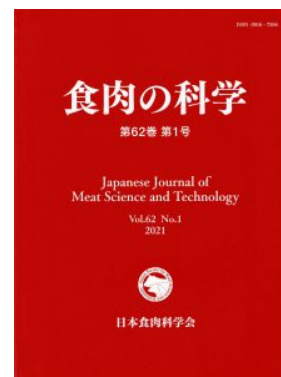
【Short Review】

The International Congress of Meat Science and Technology (ICoMST) – A global science-based forum for meat scientists in a time of need

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ICoMST: A brief history

The main objective of International Congress of Meat Science and Technology (ICoMST), an annual meeting around the world, is to enhance the cooperation and scientific information between academic and industry-based researchers in the field of meat science and technology. The Congress meetings focus on presenting the latest findings in specific scientific disciplines, providing critical reviews of the work performed in the various fields, as well as up-dating the latest knowledge on the current issues most relevant to meat as food. This is the unique international scientific congress in the field of meat science that gathers the international meat scientist community to enhance discussions between the researchers, irrespective of their country of origin, experience or scientific career, thus providing a forum for the exchange of scientific knowledge and ideas, planning of joint research and other co-operative initiatives.

The first Congresses were organised from 1955 (Hämeenlinna, Finland) onwards under the name 'European Meeting of Meat Research Workers' (EMMRW). At the EMMRW of the Contact Persons in Albena, Bulgaria, in 1985 it was decided to change the name to the "International Congress of Meat Science and Technology (ICoMST), to take effect in 1987. This was a more global designation for a meeting that attracts and welcomes meat scientists from every continent of the world. This change of name was inevitable since increasing numbers of non-European scientists and technologists had been attending and in fact the Meetings in 1972 and 1980 were held outside Europe. The increasing international nature

of these conferences is shown by the fact that the 1988 and 1990 meetings will also be held in non-European centres, Australia and Cuba, respectively.

The first Meeting gathered 22 meat scientists from August 4 – 8, 1955 and was hosted by the Research Institute of the Meat Industry at Hämeenlinna, Finland. It was organised by Dr. F.P. Niinivaara (Figure 1). The history of the European Meetings of Meat Research Workers 1955-87 was edited in a book that traces the history of these Meetings from their inception in 1955 to 1986 by D. M. Kinsman, F. P. Niinivaara & M. Jul. in Helsinki [1].

The symbol of ICoMST is a cow bell which is used to open and to close each Congress. The Congress Bell is handed to the Chairman of the Organising Committee during the closing ceremony. This is exemplified in Figure 2.

The organisational body of the Congress is the 'Contact Persons'. Each country can send one representative to the Meeting of Contact Persons. Currently 42 countries are represented (Algeria, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Honduras, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, UK, Uruguay and USA). The way in which this representative is elected is freely chosen by each country. The Meeting of Contact Persons takes place annually during the ICoMST congress. At this meeting, the hosting countries for future meetings



Figure 1. Opening of the first European “European Meeting of Meat Research Workers” (EMMRW) in 1955 by Dr. F.P. Niinivaara [1].



Figure 2. The bell is ringing for the next congress taking place in Helsinki, Finland in 1987 (ICoMST 33). Three chairman of consecutive meetings: left: Dr. Walker, Australia, 1988, middle: Dr. van Hoof, Belgium, 1986 and right: Pr. E. Puolanne, Finland, 1987.

for five subsequent years are decided, as well as other issues necessary for the continuity of the Congress. Options for further future hosting beyond this time may be suggested. The Contact Secretary is elected at this meeting for a five year term. All details about the “Contact Persons” is available at <https://icomst.ie/national-contact-persons/>.

ICoMST business is carried out in English and the congresses are organised in principle to take place every second year in Europe and in a location elsewhere in the world, outside of Europe, on alternate years. ICoMST has a Contact Secretary, who provides a permanent address for ICoMST (<https://icomst.ie/>) to facilitate co-operation and contacts for past and future meetings. The ICoMST Contact Secretary from 1985-2018 was Professor Eero Puolanne (University of Helsinki, Finland) and the current ICoMST International Secretariat is led since 2019 by Declan J. Troy (Teagasc Food Research Centre, Dublin, Ireland). The function of the Contact Secretary is also to establish contacts with people and organisations outside ICoMST and assist the organisers of the meetings and scientific content/topics.

A country willing to organize an ICoMST Congress should make an application for the Contact Persons Meeting. The application should cover (i) a description

of the meat science in the hosts country, including information of the persons involving, (ii) persons responsible (chairman, scientific secretary, persons responsible for economic affairs, persons responsible for accompanying persons program), (iii) provisional program and (iv) economical aspects of the Congress, including guarantee for economy and other respective aspects given by an legal responsible institution in the host country. In general it is seen as an honour to host ICoMST and in doing so the meat science commun

Brief description of the format of ICoMST and structure

Overall, the organizing committee has the freedom to organize the Congress according to their best knowledge. ICoMST is in general organised in August during 5 days to cover several topics. Some general guidelines are given by ICoMST International Secretariat in order to have a consistency and maintain the scientific and economical rights of the participants. The organizing committee is recommended to discuss with the chairpersons of the previous meetings and coming meetings as well as with Contact Secretary. An international scientific advisory group has been used for many ICoMST meetings to maintain to ensure the scientific quality of the meetings

and excellent organization.

During recent years, most congress organisers have provided a Doctoral School linked to the Congress. The Doctoral Schools have proven to be very useful and is well-liked by the participants. The organisers have the full freedom to design the Doctoral School as they like. The Meat Science and Technology community will only survive if we are able to draw new, talented generations to the field and give them the best possible education for the scientific work particularly in meat science and technology research. Therefore, it is recommended to organise a Doctoral School each year linked to the ICoMST. The main purpose would be to take the benefit of having most prominent meat scientists from all over the world gathering to their annual meeting. Superb command in the area of meat science and technology as well as charismatic ways of presenting their knowledge characterises them as teachers.

Themes of recent ICoMST conferences

The chairperson and ICoMST International Secretariat ensure that a certain variability of themes of the Congresses is respected. Each congress has its own theme (Table 1). Also, invited speakers should cover wide range on expertise, and unnecessary or accidental repetition of limited topics are in general avoided. However, certain

areas are always expected to be addressed at ICoMST meetings, they are related to: Muscle biology & biochemistry; Animal welfare & environment; Meat safety; Meat processing; Quality of meat and meat products and Consumer topics. 21:00

In Table 1, a summary of the last 12 annual conferences held by the ICoMST in the period 2010–2021 on a range of themes in meat science/technology, meat biochemistry, muscle biology, meat safety, animal welfare, omics, sustainability, valorisation, meat and health, carcass properties, consumer aspects and related sensory areas, etc.

DigICoMST: a unique worldwide resource indexing meat science and technology proceedings

Abstracts and short papers (proceedings) of ICoMST conferences are freely accessible (open access) at DigICoMST (<https://digicomst.ie/>). The DigICoMST site (database, Figure 3) is the unique worldwide database in the field of food sciences indexing for free the meat science and technology research abstracts and short papers of EMMRW and ICoMST conferences since 1955 (<https://digicomst.ie/>). It usually provides the printed materials of ICoMST of the years 1955 – 2020 (the last 67th ICoMST – 2021 proceeding is under progress). Following each congress, the proceedings are uploaded to this website.

Table 1. Themes/titles, location and number of indexed abstracts/short papers in DigICoMST site of ICoMST conferences during the last decade (2010–2021)

Year	Location	Theme/Title	Total abstracts in DigICoMST ¹
2010 – ICoMST 56	Jeju Island, South Korea	Meeting of the East and West in Meat Science and Culture	350
2011 – ICoMST 57	Ghent, Belgium	Global challenges to production, processing and consumption of meat	379
2012 – ICoMST 58	Montreal, Canada	The Healthy World of Meat	310
2013 – ICoMST 59	Izmir, Turkey	The Power of Meat in the 21st Century	366
2014 – ICoMST 60	Punta del Este, Uruguay	Nature & Innovation with due respect	275
2015 – ICoMST 61	Clermont-Ferrand, France	Think meat, Think healthy	371
2016 – ICoMST 62	Bangkok, Thailand	Meat for Global Sustainability	287
2017 – ICoMST 63	Cork, Ireland	Nurturing locally, Growing globally	444
2018 – ICoMST 64	Melbourne, Australia	Quality and Integrity for Global Consumers	368
2019 – ICoMST 65	Potsdam/Berlin, Germany	Meat for Diversifying Markets	419
2020 – ICoMST 66 ²	Orlando Florida, USA	Where Science and Inspiration Meet	315
2021 – ICoMST 67 ³	Cracow, Poland	Shaping the future of meat science	NA

¹ DigICoMST: proceedings of past ICoMST conferences freely accessible (open access) at <https://digicomst.ie/>

² Held online due to Covid-19 pandemic and jointly with the Reciprocal Meat Conference (AMSA 73rd RMC).

³ Held hybrid (online and in person).



Figure 3. DigICoMST web page (<https://digicomst.ie/>) gathering the proceedings, by year, of the previous EMMRW and ICoMST meetings since 1955 to 2020 freely accessible.

The DigICoMST project was initiated and enthusiastically led by Pr. Eero Puolanne (ICoMST Contact Secretary 1985–2018) from University of Helsinki, Finland thanks to the support of several meat research units and organisations from many countries all over the world as well as by individual persons giving the support from their own resources. The material is open access, but when using this digital material it is expected that the citation should, in addition to the normal bibliographic data, includes also “source: www.digicomst.ie”. The DigICoMST was done to honour Dr. F.P. Niinivaara, who started the congress series, and the many other esteemed scientists who have contributed to meat science and ICoMST congresses over years.

ICoMST as a science-based forum to overcome the future global challenges of the meat sector and society

The role of ICoMST in supporting the future role of meat science in underpinning a global sustainable meat industry while accelerating innovation is significant. At a time when the important role of animal based protein as a source of food is constantly under the spotlight, it is critical that science forms the basis for such debate and not “emotions” or vested interests. Meat has been and will continue to be a major societal food source globally not only in providing essential nutrients but also in providing sustainable livelihoods on farms and in industry.

ICoMST will continue contributing to the next generation of knowledge and leadership ensuring that meat will continue to play a critical role in our lives globally.

Cited references

- [1] History of the European meetings of meat research workers 1955–1987: Edited by D. M. Kinsman, F. P. Niinivaara & M. Jul. University Press, Helsinki, 1987. ISBN 951-45-4338-6. 155 pp.