

DBT IAgRE Student e-Newsletter 2023 Spring

Droning on..... Robotically

Alan Plom, Secretary to the Douglas Bomford Trust (DBT) reflects on the theme running through the latest (Spring) issue of IAgRE's Landwards and highlights several relevant articles and other recent DBT-sponsored trips relating to the use of drones and developments in robotics.



Look out for Drones

Josie Lynch (PhD, University of Worcester) described in her Landwards article how she is using drones to monitor the effects of conservation tillage on soil erosion.

Another interesting 'left-field' (in fact, 'battle-field) use of drones is covered in DBT's article 'A Conflict of Interest'. This describes how the Trust is funding training (being provided by the Royal Agricultural University) for Ukrainian specialists to assist in identifying contamination and remediation of the soil in the war-torn fields of Ukraine.

The Robots are coming.... [But not without Agricultural Engineers!]

Another DBT-related article in Landwards mentioned one of our Trustees (Prof Simon Pearson, Head of the Lincoln Institute of Agri-Food Technology) who spoke at the Oxford Farming Conference debate in support of the motion: "Humans will not be needed on farms in a generation".



The 14 members of Harper Adams' Engineering Society who attended the 7th World FIRA (Robotics in Agriculture) held at Toulouse in February (helped with a DBT Travel Grant) may well agree with this proposition?

Another strong advocate is ex-HAU student Thomas Beach who also received a DBT Travel Award to participate in a study tour of users of 'robots' in California and to attend the FIRA event held in Fresno, USA, in October 2022. These on-site FIRA

events bring together global experts specialising in the “new revolution facing agriculture”. Look out for their comprehensive reports on our website soon.

Feedback from these international events and other updates will be shared during IAgRE’s Robotics Special Interest Group ‘International Forum’ webinar on Tuesday 28 April (11:00-12:00hrs). *Information on how to book is under the Events section in this newsletter.*

[We hope to see some of you there. Don’t forget to register.](#)

The Trust is also funding a short project at Cranfield University, involving a group of ‘non-engineering’ MSc students to review ‘the current knowledge and potential for robotics and autonomous systems in agriculture’ (particularly for ‘broad-acre’ farming). This will help the Trust identify and prioritise projects we can support in future too. Look out for the launch of our new Strategy, coming soon.

Student Membership

Don’t forget that the DBT funds your student membership of IAgRE – so make the most of it by attending local IAgRE Branch meetings and visits, as well as the monthly online webinars. These are all great opportunities to enhance your CPD and to enjoy mixing with other (budding and experienced) agricultural engineers, whilst expanding your network of contacts - and potential employers!

What else can the Douglas Bomford Trust do for you?

In her Landwards article, Josie Lynch kindly added some complimentary words about the value of the personal support and advice given to her by Trustees, as well as DBT’s sponsorship. If you wish to find out more about how the Trust can help you to develop your career in agricultural engineering, read the various ‘testimonials’ from several recipients of DBT Scholarships and research funding, [on our ‘50th Anniversary’ news page.](#)