Agricultural development and food security in Southeast Asia

Distinguished Harvard Emeritus Professor Peter Timmer conducts this Crawford School Masterclass on agricultural development trends in an increasingly affluent and globalising Southeast Asia and the emerging food security implications for the Asian Century.

Professor Timmer studies changes in the diet or calorific intake of Southeast Asia’s increasingly affluent middle class which he argues has major ramifications for the global food economy which require closer analytical and empirical analysis at the macro- and microeconomic levels.

**Date:** 9 to 5pm; Wednesday, 20th February 2013  
**Venue:** Crawford School, ANU  
**Cost:** $1100 GST-incl; LIMITED PLACES  
**Enrol:** T 02 6125 2154 E anipp@anu.edu.au

Course overview

**Session I** will explore the key issues. Defining food security in terms of availability, access and utilization at three separate levels: the micro or household level; at the macro or national level (urban markets) and at the global level (Malthus vs. Sen). Professor Timmer will also explain the distinction between chronic hunger and periodic food crises which require vastly different solutions. Food policy approaches with a focus on stability will be explored.

**Session II** will discuss the changing role of markets and market processes. The three basic transformation processes during economic development at the structural, agricultural and dietary levels. The role of markets in transforming products in time, space and form; providing arenas for price discovery and revealing "scarcity" and coordinate the allocation of resources and who gets what. How modern supply chains vary from traditional markets in “squeezing costs out of the system” (i.e. someone’s income); in non-market vertical coordination (transparency and price formation?) and providing staple food price stability as a private good (?).

**Session III** will explore the changing role of rice in SE Asia’s food security. It will look at the role of rice historically; changes in the determinants of household rice consumption income; rural/urban status; relative prices; tastes; the dietary transformation revolution taking place in Asia as affluent Asians take to higher protein diets and its implications for agricultural transformation.

**Session IV** will look at the future of food security at a regional and global level. What are the supply and demand drivers eg agricultural research for productivity gains; impact of bio-fuels; animal protein; population demands. What are the implications of climate change: is there flexibility to cope with increased instability? What happens to non-food agriculture? Rubber, beverages or palm oil. Why it is necessary to understand the behavioral political economy to understand policy options.
Masterclass Convenor
Professor Peter Timmer

Adjunct Professor Peter Timmer of ANU Crawford School is also Thomas D. Cabot Professor Emeritus at Harvard University, served as chief advisor to USAid on the NATSIOS strategy for growth and agriculture and is currently an advisor to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation on agricultural development and food security. Prof Timmer is also a non-resident fellow at the Center for Global Development (CGD), and Dean of the Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies at University of California, San Diego. In addition to faculty positions at three schools at Harvard, Timmer has also held professorships at Cornell and Stanford universities.

A core advisor on the World Bank’s World Development Report 2008: Agriculture for Development, Prof Timmer also works with several Asian governments on domestic policy responses to instability in the global rice market. In 1992, he received the Bintang Jasa Utama (Highest Merit Star) from the Republic of Indonesia for his contributions to food security.

Prof Timmer is one of the world’s pre-eminent agricultural economists and a leading expert on food policy. Nearly 30 years after its publication, his seminal book, *Food Policy Analysis* (co-authored with Falcon and Pearson), is still ranked as a ground-breaking work on understanding food economies. His work focuses on four broad topics: the nature of “pro-poor growth” and its application in Indonesia and other countries in Asia; the supermarket revolution in developing countries and its impact on the poor (both producers and consumers); the structural transformation in historical perspective as a framework for understanding the political economy of agricultural policy; and the functioning of the world rice market.