

Amy's interest in the agriculture and food sectors was sparked by being brought up on a farm in North Yorkshire. After working on various livestock and crop enterprises, she went on to study agricultural business management and Agricultural Economics at the University of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne.

Upon attaining her degree, her initial role was as an economist in the meat and livestock sector, with a particular focus on beef and poultry. Since 1998, Amy has served as an Economist with the London-based International Grains Council. Here, her main interest is the global markets for wheat and wheat-based foods.

**How would you explain what the International Grains Council do, to those who may not be fully aware of what your organisations aim is? How do you carry these jobs out?**

"With a history dating back 70 years, the International Grains Council (IGC) is an intergovernmental organisation that seeks to further international cooperation in grains trade.

We aim to promote expansion, openness and fairness, and contribute to grain market stability to enhance world food security. Improved transparency in international markets is pursued through information-sharing, analysis and consultation on market and policy developments.

We monitor market conditions and the latest developments in grains, rice and oilseeds on a daily basis, and member governments and subscribers are kept abreast of what is happening via regular reports and web-based information services."

**What drove your own, unique passion, for the raw materials and food production industries? How did you come to be involved in this industry?**

"The agriculture industry has been a way of life for me for as long as I can remember - I never considered another career direction. After being brought up on a farm in northern England and spending the first five-years of my working life in practical agriculture, it was a natural choice to study agricultural business management and agricultural economics at university.

My working career since then has not failed to deliver in terms of interest, whether it be in the meat sector during the height of the BSE crisis in the UK, or currently, when trade tensions are having such a marked impact on day-to-day activity in international markets."

**The IGC have their 2019 IGC Conference taking place this month, on 11-12th June in London, UK. What makes this unique so important for members of the food industry to attend?**

"This year's Conference marks the Council's 70th anniversary of successful grains trade cooperation. The conference itself is now in its 28th year and represents a unique opportunity for stakeholders, both from governments and the private sector, to meet and share their views and expertise on the latest industry and policy developments.

Since its inception, IGC has made efforts to provide industry participants with an improved range of services, and this includes the conference, which continues to evolve and for the first time will be held over two full-days."

**What various topics are the IGC trying to promote and raise awareness of more, and how are these being raised in the upcoming IGC Conference?**

"I believe the conference programme for 2019 is shaping up to be one of the most interesting in the event's history. A range of high-level speakers will give their perspectives on some of the key issues that face the agricultural sector today.

These include economic and trade policy uncertainty, the impact of new technologies and climate change, developments in trade finance, and potential opportunities from changing demand patterns in Africa.

The second day will feature a series of workshop sessions, with panels exploring such things as feed use of biodiesel bi-products, managing price risk in the rice trade, factors affecting the grains shipping sector, and pesticide MRLs in grains trade. My own particular interest will be a panel exploring the demand outlook for wheat-based food products."

**How important do you believe events such as these are for the future of the industry?**

"The conference is IGC's principal forum for public discussion and offers an opportunity to foster improved links between industry participants and government policymakers. At these events we aim to bring the full spectrum of stakeholders together to confront the issues facing the industry today and in the future."

**Your company has a very rich history in the food industry, and you clearly also hold a great deal of passion for the industry. How would you recommend young people get involved in this rewarding, and in some ways not very well advertised, industry?**

"I really believe our industry provides endless opportunities for young people to have a challenging and rewarding career. In order to confront the challenges of the future we must continue to attract high-caliber entrants to drive innovation in all areas of agriculture, food production and trade, in order to achieve sustainability and food security for growing populations."

**What do you think is the next big issue the agriculture industry will face in the next five years, and how can we combat and resolve this issue?**

"Trade tensions are one of the key issues of our times, and these are having wide-ranging impacts, not just on our industry, but on the welfare of the global economy. One of the Council's overriding aims moving forward will be to continue to promote the expansion of international trade, and to secure the freest possible flow of this trade, including the elimination of trade barriers and unfair and discriminatory practices.

Beyond this, climate change is already one of the key concerns of our times. Global grains and oilseeds supply and demand have been relatively comfortable for a number of years, but can we be sure that production will keep pace with demand in the future?

In a potentially more volatile future, the monitoring and forecasting of supply and demand, including identifying possible regional supply shortfalls and bottlenecks to trade, will take on an even greater importance.

**How can magazines like ours help promote events like yours, as well as your organisation? What help would you like to see by the media to help publicise both your events and your organisation?**

"Opportunities for out-reach to a wider audience are very important to the Council. Indeed, one of the medium-term priorities under our programme of work is to foster improved links with international grains trade participants. As well as promoting the conference, contributing to magazines such as yours helps to raise awareness of the broader activities of the Council."

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