



IFAJ Constitution – 2015 revised

Approved by the IFAJ Delegate Assembly on October 14, 2015 at the Annual Congress held in Hamilton, New Zealand.

PREAMBLE

The world's farmers and food producers depend upon agricultural media for timely, accurate information. The International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (IFAJ) is a politically neutral organisation that promotes ethics, freedom of the press and professional development for agricultural journalists and communicators worldwide.

IFAJ is committed to connecting professional agricultural journalists and communicators from all hemispheres.

Through education, networking, fellowship and communication across the industry, IFAJ supports the free flow of information that serves agricultural audiences and the wider public, and upholds high standards of professionalism and respect.

GENERAL

1. In addition to its primary focus on agriculture, the organisation has freedom of the press as a basic value, as defined by article XIX of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Dec. 10, 1948).
2. The organisation is known as the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (IFAJ), founded in November 1956 in Paris, France as a non-profit organisation, and is neutral in matters of politics and religion.
3. Members of IFAJ are agricultural journalist guilds or associations that comply with the standards of this constitution.
4.
 - a. An agricultural journalist is defined as a person who earns some or all of their livelihood through journalism, communication or photography in relation to the industries of farming, horticulture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, food production or rural affairs.
 - b. An agricultural communicator earns his or her livelihood producing written or oral or visual communications for print, broadcast, internet or other means of presentation on behalf of organisations, government agencies, businesses or other entities related to farming, horticulture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, food production or rural affairs.
 - c. Agricultural journalists and communicators can also include pensioners, teachers and students, according to the bylaws of their national guilds or associations.
5. The IFAJ's resources are derived from membership fees and contributions from sponsors, partners and other institutions. No source of income shall derive from organisations or other institutions that do not support freedom of the press.

6. The organisation's primary language is English. Alternative working languages may be defined by the Executive Committee to support specific events and/or communications.
7. No individual within IFAJ, including but not limited to members of the Presidium, Executive Committee or Delegates, and representatives of any member committees, assumes any liability, legal or otherwise, for IFAJ. IFAJ assumes no liability for members of the Presidium, Executive Committee or Delegates, nor representatives of any member committees.

OBJECTIVES

8. The objects of the IFAJ shall be:
 - a. To promote freedom of the press as defined in Article XIX of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: *Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers;*
 - b. To defend the right of the individual citizen to objective information and to defend the profession of the agricultural journalist;
 - c. To promote the highest possible standards amongst the organisation's members by promoting schemes for continuing professional development, highlighting successes, and sharing best practices and assisting in the training of agricultural journalists;
 - d. To promote the collection and distribution of information on the agricultural and food industries while maintaining high standards of journalistic ethics;
 - e. To create opportunities for agricultural journalists and communicators around the world to establish, maintain and further professional and personal contacts;
 - f. To encourage the flow of information that can help agricultural journalists and communicators serve their audiences.
9. To achieve these objects, the IFAJ shall have the following powers:
 - a. To publish an annual register containing the contacts for each Member Association;
 - b. To organise Congresses, conferences, training courses, meetings, awards and contests, and to arrange or participate in events or functions that further the above objectives;
 - c. To publicise the objectives, activities and functions of the IFAJ, and to stimulate interest in the organisation;
 - d. To help agricultural journalists obtain information about agriculture and journalism in other countries;
 - e. To contact and collaborate with international agricultural, journalistic and communications organisations;
 - f. To encourage and assist the formation of associations and organisations of agricultural journalists;
 - g. To appeal for, solicit, accept and receive donations, subscriptions, annuities and other payments, and to use those resources to further the goals and programs of the organisation;
 - h. To manage or invest any monies of the IFAJ in accordance with the wishes of the organisation;
 - i. To establish any corporate structures, etc., as may be required for the IFAJ to carry out its functions;
 - j. To do all such other lawful things for the purposes of attaining the above objects.

INCOME AND FINANCE

10. The income and property of the IFAJ shall be applied solely towards the promotion of its objects. True accounts shall be kept of the sums and monies received and expended by the IFAJ.
11. Subject to any reasonable restrictions as to the time and manner of inspection, such accounts shall be open to the inspection of the members.
12. The accounts shall be inspected annually by an elected auditor.

MEMBERSHIP

13. Full membership of the IFAJ is open to any national association of agricultural journalists that supports the principle of freedom of the press, as defined in Article 8.a. There is no provision for membership on an individual, personal basis. A full member is known as a Member Association. Membership of IFAJ does not constitute IFAJ's recognition of the member nation's freedom of the press.
14. Full members receive the following specific rights, benefits and privileges:
 - a. To be represented by delegates with voting rights in the Delegate Assembly
 - b. To be allocated a seat on the Executive Committee, in accordance with Article 15;
 - c. To nominate a member of their association for each of the IFAJ Offices of President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary General;
 - d. To assume and transmit to its individual members the following rights:
 - i. To take part in Special Interest Groups;
 - ii. To participate in the Annual Congress;
 - iii. To receive information about the activities and interests of the IFAJ;
 - iv. To participate in IFAJ Continuing Professional Development workshops, contests and other activities.
15. In a case in which a country has more than one Member Association, members from that country must select a single representative to represent the nation on the Executive Committee. If the country cannot select a single representative, the Executive Committee can vote by a simple majority to decide which Member Association from that country shall serve as a voting member of the Executive Committee.
16. Affiliate membership of the IFAJ is open to organisations that share with IFAJ the common interests in agriculture, professional development and international co-operation, but who cannot classify themselves as a 'national association of agricultural journalists' or are in some way unable to declare their support for freedom of the press.
17. Affiliate Members receive the following specific rights, benefits and privileges:
 - a. The opportunity to participate in the Annual Congress;
 - b. To receive information about the activities and interests of the IFAJ;
 - c. To engage in networking with Members of the organisation;
 - d. To attend the Delegate Assembly as non-voting guests;
 - e. To be invited to participate in other IFAJ activities such as the Executive Committee sees fit.
18. All applicants for full membership must declare formally, through written statement, their support for the IFAJ Objects and their willingness to work for the achievement of press freedom.

19. Any application for membership must be made in writing to the IFAJ Secretary General. The Executive Committee votes on the application and forwards its recommendation to the Delegate Assembly.
20. Any member shall be free to resign from membership of IFAJ at any time; notice of such intention should be sent to the Secretary General at least 6 months in advance.

COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS

20. The governing bodies of the IFAJ are:
 - a. The Delegate Assembly;
 - b. The Executive Committee;
 - c. The Presidium.

21. The **Delegate Assembly** is the primary authority in all IFAJ matters. It meets at least once in every calendar year, preferably during the Annual Congress.
 - a. The Delegate Assembly has the following responsibilities:
 - i. Election of the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary General and Auditor;
 - ii. To approve the Annual Report and IFAJ Budget;
 - iii. To determine the membership fees to be levied, as recommended by the Executive Committee;
 - iv. To consider and decide upon all other business submitted by the Executive Committee or Member Associations;
 - v. To receive and decide upon recommendations from the Executive Committee relating to a Member Association, including:
 1. Election
 2. Dismissal
 3. Change in status
 - vi. To consider and decide upon any proposed amendments to the IFAJ Constitution;
 - vii. To consider and decide upon any resolution to dissolve the IFAJ;
 - viii. To act in accordance with the requirements of article 47 in the event of a dispute arising within IFAJ.
 - b. The Delegate Assembly comprises Delegates appointed by Member Associations to represent, speak and vote on behalf of their association.
 - c. Each Member Association's number of delegates is determined by the number of individual members declared by the association, and for which membership dues were paid in the previous IFAJ accounting year. Executive committee members are entitled to serve as one of their country's allocated delegates (if not serving as a delegate, the executive committee member has no vote). The total number of votes for each Member Association is as follows:

- up to 100 individual members	two delegates
- between 101 and 200 individual members	three delegates
- 201 or more individual members	four delegates
 - d. If a Member Association is not present or has insufficient delegates present at the Delegate Assembly or any other specially convened Meeting of Delegates, it can exercise proxy. To exercise proxy, the Member Association must notify the global office not less than 48 hours before the Delegate Assembly that it will be authorising a specific member country to deliver its votes at the Delegate Assembly and indicate the name of that country to the global office.
 - e. A special Delegate Assembly may at any time be called by notice in writing, signed by a majority of the Member Associations, to the Secretary General.
 - f. A quorum is present when at least half of the Member Associations of the Delegate Assembly are present. Members' presence at the Delegate Assembly is accepted physically, by proxy or by any generally accepted technology.

- g. The Delegate Assembly is conducted according to the procedure laid out in the IFAJ Rules.
22. The **Executive Committee** is the administrative body of the IFAJ. It meets at least twice in every calendar year, with one meeting to be held during the Annual Congress.
- a. The Executive Committee has the following responsibilities:
 - i. To initiate and execute the programme of IFAJ activities and administer the general affairs of the IFAJ, including but not limited to the duties specified in this constitution;
 - ii. To instruct the Treasurer in the appropriate disbursement of IFAJ funds;
 - iii. To carry out decisions of the Delegate Assembly, provided they comply with this constitution;
 - iv. To submit to the Delegate Assembly recommendations for the admission of new members, or the suspension, dismissal or change of status of existing members;
 - v. To recommend to the Delegate Assembly any changes it considers necessary in the annual membership fees;
 - vi. At any time, to appoint any subcommittee or any member of the Executive Committee to undertake special duties and to report in due course to the Executive Committee;
 - vii. At any time, to appoint such Regional Vice Presidents as it sees fit;
 - viii. To allow matters requiring urgent attention to be dealt with by the Presidium, provided all members of the Executive Committee have been given 24 hours' notice by e-mail of the intention to act.
 - b. The Executive Committee is constituted from one representative appointed from each full member country, and the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary General and (when applicable) Immediate Past President. Members of the Presidium are not qualified during their periods of office to act as representatives of their Member Associations. The Member Associations from which these officers originate shall be entitled to representation by another appointee of their association's choice to the Executive Committee.
 - c. The Executive Committee is quorate when at least 50% or more of Member Associations are represented, with at least one-third present in person and the remainder represented by proxy.
 - d. Meetings of the Executive Committee are conducted according to the procedure laid out in the IFAJ Rules.
23. The **Presidium** is made up of the Executive Officers: the President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary General. It is entrusted with ensuring the fulfilment of the direction and decisions of the Executive Committee. The Presidium meets at least twice in every calendar year.
24. The Annual Congress of the IFAJ may take place in a different country each year, by invitation of the Member Association(s) from that country. Collaborative bids are also permitted. The Congress aims:
- a. To provide delegates from Member Associations with professional improvement, growth, experience and networking opportunities;
 - b. To serve as a forum to discuss and debate agriculture issues in the host country, as well as general trends in media and journalism;
 - c. To provide opportunities for participating journalists to report on the agriculture and food industries of the host country, and
 - d. To act as a forum for the annual business meeting of IFAJ, including meetings of the Delegate Assembly, Executive Committee and Presidium.

The Executive Committee's decision on accepting a Member Association's invitation is final.

OFFICERS AND STAFF

25. The officers of the IFAJ are the President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary General. These four officers form the Presidium.
26. Members of the Presidium are elected for a two-year term, and are eligible for re-election, except that:
 - a. The office of President can be held for no more than two terms, each term being two years;
 - b. The office of Vice President can be held for no more than three consecutive two-year terms;
 - c. The Executive Committee may terminate an officer's term should the person leave the profession (according to article 4), or cease to be a member of his or her Member Association;
 - d. Where a Presidium office falls vacant during a term, the Executive Committee shall elect a temporary replacement, who will serve until an election is held in the next Delegate Assembly;
 - e. Any time served by the Vice President in completing a departing President's term of office, or time served by a co-opted officer before election, shall not count towards his or her term limit;
 - f. Once a President has completed his or her terms, he or she may not be re-elected to the Presidium in any other role, save for the provision made in article 30.
27. The President and the Secretary General are empowered to sign all documents on behalf of the IFAJ. Any documents to be signed on behalf of the IFAJ must be signed by both the President and the Secretary General.
28. The duties of the Executive Officers are described in the IFAJ Rules.
29. Upon ceasing to hold the presidential office after completing at least one two-year term, an elected President of the IFAJ shall hold the office of Immediate Past President for one year.
30. The President, Vice President and Secretary General must each originate from different countries and/or separate Member Associations. A Member Association may, nonetheless, submit more than one candidate for the Presidium, but no more than one candidate for each Presidium role.
 - a. The IFAJ may appoint secretarial and administrative support, through a procedure established by the Executive Committee, to aid in the day-to-day functioning of the organisation, maintaining its principal office and providing support as described in the Rules. This support is referred to in the Constitution as the "Global Office."
31. With approval from the Executive Committee, IFAJ may create and fill other positions as it may think fit.
32. An auditor shall be elected by the Delegate Assembly to serve for a period of two years, after which he or she may stand for re-election. The Auditor shall be a member of a Member Association, but not drawn from the same Member Association nor the same country as either the President or Treasurer.

ELECTIONS

33. Elections are overseen by the global office and are to be held during the Delegate Assembly at the annual Congress.
34. Before the election takes place, three independent scrutineers shall be recommended by the Executive Committee and appointed by the Delegate Assembly. These scrutineers have no vote and may not be members of the guilds from which candidates for office have been nominated.
35. The Presidium is elected by the delegates. Each person shall be elected individually to the relevant office. The number of delegates is detailed in IFAJ Constitution Article 21.c.
36. Elections may only take place if a quorum is present, as defined in Article 21.f.

37. Elections are cast by secret ballot. A candidate for office is elected if he or she receives more than half of the votes cast. If multiple candidates are on the ballot and none receives a majority of the votes cast, the candidate receiving the fewest votes will be dropped from the ballot and another vote taken. The process may be repeated until a candidate receives a majority of votes. In the case of a tie vote, the Chairperson proposes how to proceed. Any such proposal to proceed can only be implemented if it is accepted by the majority of the delegates present.
38. The members of the Presidium are elected consecutively. Candidates for President are the first, followed by Vice President, Secretary General and Treasurer.
 - a. On the election of the President, candidates for Vice President and Secretary General who share the same countries of origin or the same Member Association as the elected President, must withdraw from the contest (in accordance with Article 30).
 - b. On the election of the Vice President, any candidate for Secretary General who is from the same country of origin or the same Member Association as the elected Vice President must withdraw from the contest (in accordance with Article 30).
39. Member Delegates may vote for the candidates of their choice, or choose to abstain from the vote by writing "Abstain" on their ballot.
40. The scrutineers are responsible for counting the number of votes (including delegates present and proxies) and the vote count for each candidate must be announced at the Delegate Assembly as soon as the scrutineers have come to agreement on the result. The names of the persons elected shall be posted on the IFAJ website on the day the election is finalized.
41. Ballots shall be archived for at least one year, held by the global office.

STATUTE AND AMENDMENTS

42. A copy of the IFAJ Constitution shall be issued to every Member Association upon its acceptance as a member of IFAJ.
43. Amendments to the Constitution may be proposed by Member Associations or the Executive Committee. Any such amendments must be circulated to all Member Associations at least 90 days before a Delegate Assembly and may be considered at the Delegate Assembly and voted upon. For an amendment to be approved at the Delegate Assembly the vote in favour must achieve a two-thirds majority.
44. The Executive Committee is responsible for the Rules of the IFAJ. Any alteration of the Rules must first be approved by the Executive Committee, with a two-thirds majority of delegates present.
45. Approved amendments to the Constitution or the Rules will be promptly supplied to representatives of all Member Associations.

SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES

46. To settle any dispute arising from any matter relating to the IFAJ or its activities, an arbitration committee may be established. The arbitration committee shall consist of one representative nominated by each of the parties concerned in the dispute, plus a neutral chairman recommended by the Executive Committee and confirmed by a majority vote of the Delegate Assembly. When agreement to a settlement is obtained in writing from each of the contending parties, the dispute shall be declared closed and the settlement shall be regarded as binding.

DISSOLUTION

47. A vote at a Delegate Assembly by two-thirds of the Member Associations shall be required for the dissolution of the IFAJ.
48. Winding up of the IFAJ shall be the responsibility of:
 - a. The Executive Committee OR
 - b. The President and Secretary General OR
 - c. Any two other persons appointed for this role by the Delegate Assembly.

49. All assets and property which remain after due settlement of the IFAJ's affairs shall be distributed to any number of public and non-profit making organisations concerned with journalism, as directed by the Delegate Assembly.

This DRAFT of the CONSTITUTION replaces and supersedes the earlier statutes adopted in Paris on November 16, 1956, by the founders of the IFAJ; amended in Vienna on June 19, 1961; in Rome on May 22, 1963; in Heidelberg on September 11, 1967; in Milan on September 29, 1975; in Bordeaux on June 19, 1985; in Weggis on August 28, 1989; in Bratislava on September 24, 1995; in Copenhagen on August 15, 1999; in Valencia on May 19, 2002; in Tokyo on September 18, 2007; and in Rosario on Sep 4, 2013.