

Editorial

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Special issue on CERNAS 2020: Message from the Editor

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The CERNAS – Research Centre for Natural Resources, Environment and Society is a research unit recognised by the Portuguese National Funding Agency for Science, Research and Technology (FCT). It involves researchers from three Institutions of Higher Education in the centre of Portugal: Polytechnic Institute of Coimbra (IPC), Polytechnic Institute of Castelo Branco (IPCB) and Polytechnic Institute of Viseu (IPV).

The aim of CERNAS is to conduct research in the fields of Agriculture, Food Science and Engineering, Environment and Society, promoting sustainable development on a regional basis as part of a global intervention. At present, it established three research groups as follows: *Agriculture Science Research Group* – research areas include forestry, agriculture and livestock. *Food Science and Engineering Research Group* – research related to the valorisation of food products, the development of novel products and processes, valorisation of by-products and residues for waste minimization, as well as studies of human nutrition and food habits. *Environment and Society Research Group* – investigates questions linked to rural development, ecosystem conservation, environmental services, eco-efficiency tools and solutions and the judicious use of natural resources, including land use planning and the measurement of the societal response.

I, as coordinator of the Management Unit of CERNAS at the Polytechnic Institute of Viseu, proposed to the

group of researchers from this branch to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the IPV together with the first year of joining the CERNAS Research Centre, by preparing scientific works aimed at editing a Special Issue of the journal Open Agriculture, because this publication covers the different areas of intervention and research of the group CERNAS-IPV. Hence, the defined topics for inclusion in the special issue titled **CERNAS 2020 – Natural Resources, Agriculture and Food for Society** were as follows: • Sustainable Agriculture, • Animal Science, • Environment & Society, • Food Science & Technology, • Nutrition & Eating Behaviours.

The role of sustainable agriculture to the general wellbeing of the human race, while preserving the environment and ecosystems, is unquestionable, so that sustainability assumed a pivotal role in The Sustainable Development Agenda of the United Nations. New developments in agricultural practices and animal science are also highlighted as important actors of the food chain. The concept “from farm to fork” encompasses the primary productive sector and the industrial transformation of the agricultural and animal products into foods, going also beyond that, i.e. to their final usage as well as disposal of the wastes and packaging materials. The questions linked with rural development and agro economy are also covered in this special issue that culminates into some research works devoted to studying eating habits and aspects linked with human nutrition.

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