Will Masters is a Professor at the Friedman School of Nutrition and the Department of Economics, Tufts University, and was previously in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Purdue University (1991-2010). His service with AAEA has been as chair of the International Section, the Food Safety and Nutrition section, and the Publications Committee, and he was awarded the AAEA's Bruce Gardner Memorial Prize for Applied Policy Analysis in 2013 as well as the Publication of Enduring Quality Award in 2014. He was coeditor-in-chief of Agricultural Economics from 2006 to 2011. Recent papers include "Measuring the affordability of nutritious diets in Africa" in AJAE (2018), "Agricultural transformation, nutrition transition and food policy in Africa" in JDS (2018), and an undergraduate textbook with George Norton and Jeff Alwang, "Economics of Agricultural Development: World Food Systems and Resource Use" (3rd ed., 2014). Details online at: http://sites.tufts.edu/willmasters.

What is the biggest concern / problem facing AAEA?
The most immediate financial challenge for AAEA is the rise of open-access publishing, drawing revenue away from profitable subscription journals like the AJAE. This change threatens our business model, but also creates new opportunities to reach larger audiences. A closely-related challenge is change in research funding and student enrollment patterns, leading to an increasing number and diversity of people working on food systems from outside our colleges of agriculture and natural resources. I believe that the association can best serve our existing members through continued innovation in what we do, attracting younger scholars not only to annual meetings but also to regional symposia and workshops that give opportunities for more people to present and discuss their work, as well as media outreach and online publications to attract new readers. An increasing number and variety of people want to work in our domain, and the AAEA can reach them through our longstanding tradition of excellence in research, education and outreach.

What actions would you initiate to improve the situation described in your response to the previous question?
As a member of the Executive Board, the most important actions I would take are to listen, learn and respond to how recent initiatives are progressing. I would focus my efforts first on stewardship of what we have, and then to the pursuit of new connections through which to grow. My experience as past chair of two AAEA sections and the AAEA’s Publications Committee, as well as journal editor, department chair, and in other academic leadership positions has taught me that success builds gradually, one step at a time towards long-term goals. Two specific actions by which AAEA members can reach new audiences are continued integration of our online presence with in-person meetings, and continued innovation in our academic publishing ventures. From my experience with AAEA and other organizations, I know that the most important step I can take is to reach out to our members and partners, so as to build on the AAEA’s powerful legacy and fulfill our distinctive mission.

At the end of your three-year term, what changes/new initiatives would you have helped create?
I believe that the AAEA will continue to be the world’s leading organization for applied economists working on issues related to agriculture, food and natural resources. Two specific domains in which I hope to sustain our leadership are our online presence, and our collaborations with other professional associations especially in fields such as public health or urban planning that are increasingly concerned with agriculture and food systems but have not traditionally been close to the AAEA. I believe that these two efforts can help achieve increasing readership for our writing, increasing participation in our meetings, and increasing impact in terms of scientific research, student achievement and public policy. The steps needed to get there are already under way. As a member of the Executive Board, my focus would be to sustain the AAEA's success in our second century of growth and development.