

NZARES Annual Conference Awards Guidelines

New Zealand Agricultural and Resource Economics Society

1. Background

The principal objective of the New Zealand Agricultural and Resource Economics Society (NZARES) is to foster professional discussion among those involved in the economic analysis and business of agriculture, agribusiness, and natural resource economics and management. The NZARES Annual Conference is the main forum for the presentation, debate, and discussion of current research by academics, policy analysts, and professionals interested in primary industries, natural resources, and the environment.

To encourage excellence in the creation and communication of relevant research, NZARES presents awards at each Annual Conference. These awards recognise outstanding contributions across four categories, reflecting the diverse formats and career stages represented at the conference.

2. Overview of Awards

The following awards are presented at each NZARES Annual Conference:

Award	Recognises	Eligibility	Prize
Best Paper Award	Outstanding research paper	Abstract + full paper submitted and presented in general sessions	Certificate + \$200
Best ECR Paper Award	Outstanding paper by an early-career researcher	Abstract + full paper submitted and presented at the ECR session only	Certificate + \$200
Best First-Time Presenter Award	Outstanding presentation by a first-time NZARES presenter	First presentation at NZARES; first national/international presentation 12 months prior	Certificate + \$200
Best Poster Award	Excellence in poster communication of research	Poster presented at the conference	Certificate + \$200

3. General Provisions

The following provisions apply to all awards.

Selection Committee

Eligible entries for each award are evaluated by a Selection Committee appointed by the NZARES Executive Committee. Members of the Selection Committee must declare any conflict of interest and will recuse themselves from evaluating entries where their name appears as an author or where they have a close personal or professional relationship with the presenter.

Minimum Thresholds

A minimum of three eligible entries is required for a prize to be awarded in any given year. Where fewer than three eligible entries are received for an award category, that award will not be presented at that conference.

NZARES is under no obligation to award a prize in any category if, in the opinion of the judges, the papers/posters are not of sufficient merit.

Tie-Breaking

Where two or more entries receive the same total score, the entry with the highest score on the highest-weighted criterion shall be recommended for the award. If a tie remains, the next highest-weighted criterion is applied, and so on. If entries remain tied after applying all criteria, the Selection Committee shall make a final judgement.

Assessment Criteria

Separate assessment criteria and score sheets apply for each award, reflecting the different objectives and formats of papers, presentations, and posters. Score sheets are provided in Sections 4–7.

4. Best Paper Award

The Best Paper Award recognises outstanding research presented at the NZARES Annual Conference. It is intended for established and emerging researchers (outside the ECR session) who make a significant contribution to agricultural economics, agribusiness, or natural resource economics and management.

Eligibility

Any presenter at the NZARES Annual Conference is eligible for the Best Paper Award, provided that:

- The presenter has submitted an abstract to the conference organising committee.
- The presenter has submitted a full paper by the deadline as set by the organising committee.
- The paper is original work that has not been previously published.
- The presenter is not presenting in the ECR session. Presenters in the ECR session are eligible for the Best ECR Paper Award (Section 5) but are not eligible for the Best Paper Award.

The conference organising committee reserves the right to encourage authors of promising abstracts to enter the Best Paper Award competition, even if they did not initially express interest.

Process

Papers are reviewed and scored by members of the Selection Committee using the score sheet below. Each paper is scored by at least two members of the Selection Committee for Criteria 1–4. The session chair scores Criterion 5 (Oral Presentation). Scores are summed to produce a total, and the Selection Committee recommends the highest-scoring paper for the award.

Score Sheet for the Best Paper Award

Paper Title:	
Author(s):	
Reviewer:	
Criteria	Score
Originality and Research Contribution (0–35) <i>The paper makes an original contribution to a topic of importance to agricultural economics, agribusiness, or natural resource management. Innovativeness may be in theoretical development, empirical results, or policy development.</i>	0 – 35
Methodology, Logic and Reasoning (0–25) <i>The methodology is theoretically consistent and appropriate for the research question. The paper demonstrates critical awareness of limitations. For quantitative work, data is reliable and analysis is technically correct.</i>	0 – 25
Engagement with Existing Literature (0–20) <i>The paper demonstrates understanding of the relevant literature and is appropriately referenced. Conclusions are clearly stated, well supported, and of significant potential.</i>	0 – 20
Quality of Writing (0–10) <i>Accuracy, clarity, readability, and organisation of the written paper.</i>	0 – 10
Oral Presentation (0–10) <i>Clarity and organisation of presentation, including slides or visual aids, command of the topic, engagement with the audience, and timeliness.</i>	0 – 10
TOTAL SCORE (out of 100)	
Comments:	

5. Best ECR Paper Award

The Best ECR (Early Career Researcher) Paper Award recognises outstanding research presented in the NZARES ECR session. The ECR session provides a dedicated forum in which early career researchers present their work and receive detailed feedback from discussants.

The award acknowledges both the quality of the research and the quality of the oral presentation, recognising that early career researchers are developing their skills across both dimensions.

Definition of Early Career Researcher

For the purposes of this award, an early career researcher is defined as:

Eligibility

A presenter is eligible for the Best ECR Paper Award provided that:

- The presenter meets the definition of an early career researcher, namely either a currently enrolled postgraduate student, or a researcher who completed their studies, no more than three years before the date of the conference.
- The presenter has been accepted to present in the ECR session at the conference (entry to the ECR session is subject to capacity limits set by the organising committee).
- The presenter has submitted an abstract to the conference organising committee.
- The presenter has submitted a full paper by the deadline as set by the organising committee.
- The paper is original work that has not been previously published.

Process

Papers are reviewed and scored by members of the Selection Committee (and/or the ECR session discussants, as designated by the organising committee) using the score sheet below.

Score Sheet for the Best ECR Paper Award

Paper Title:	
Author(s):	
Reviewer:	
Criteria	Score
Originality and Research Contribution (0–30) <i>The paper makes an original contribution to a topic of importance to agricultural economics, agribusiness, or natural resource management. Innovativeness may be in theoretical development, empirical results, or policy development.</i>	0 – 30
Methodology, Logic and Reasoning (0–25) <i>The methodology is appropriate for the research question and is logically applied. The paper demonstrates awareness of key assumptions and limitations.</i>	0 – 25
Engagement with Existing Literature (0–15) <i>The paper demonstrates understanding of the relevant literature and situates the research within an appropriate academic or policy context.</i>	0 – 15
Quality of Writing (0–10) <i>Accuracy, clarity, readability, and organisation of the written paper.</i>	0 – 10
Oral Presentation and Engagement (0–20) <i>Clarity and organisation of the presentation, command of the topic, engagement with the audience, ability to respond to questions from the discussant and audience, and timeliness.</i>	0 – 20
TOTAL SCORE (out of 100)	
Comments:	

6. Best First-Time Presenter Award

The Best First-Time Presenter Award recognises the most outstanding presentation by an eligible delegate presenting at an NZARES Annual Conference for the first time. The award acknowledges that first-time presenters are at an earlier stage of their conference experience, and accordingly places greater emphasis on clarity of communication, engagement with the audience, and the potential demonstrated by the research, rather than the completeness or polish of the paper. The award is based on the conference presentation only.

Eligibility

A presenter is eligible for the Best First-Time Presenter Award provided that:

- The presenter declares that this is their first presentation at an NZARES Annual Conference or other NZARES event.
- The presenter's first presentation at any national or international academic conference was no more than 12 months before the date of this NZARES conference.
- The presenters' job does not entail regular public speaking, e.g. at lectures, seminars, field days

The conference organising committee reserves the right to encourage eligible first-time presenters to enter the award, even if they did not initially express interest.

Process

Presentations are evaluated by the session chairs, who score each eligible presentation using the score sheet below. A minimum of three eligible presentations is required for the award to be presented in any year.

Score Sheet for the Best First-Time Presenter Award

Paper Title:	
Author(s):	
Reviewer:	
Criteria	Score
Research Contribution and Originality (0–25) <i>The presentation demonstrates a clear and relevant research idea contributing to agricultural economics, agribusiness, or natural resource management. Assessment focuses on clarity and significance of the contribution, not the completeness of the work.</i>	0 – 25
Methodology and Analytical Approach (0–20) <i>The research question is clearly defined and the chosen methodology is appropriate and logically applied. The presenter demonstrates understanding of key assumptions and limitations.</i>	0 – 20
Engagement with Relevant Literature (0–15) <i>The presentation shows awareness of relevant literature and situates the research within an appropriate academic or policy context. Depth of coverage is not expected to match that of more experienced researchers.</i>	0 – 15
Quality of Communication and Structure (0–10) <i>The presentation is well organised with a clear structure and logical flow. Slides or visual aids are used effectively to support understanding.</i>	0 – 10
Oral Presentation and Engagement (0–30) <i>The presenter communicates ideas clearly and confidently, appropriate to their level of experience. Includes clarity of explanation, organisation and pacing, engagement with the audience, and ability to respond to questions.</i>	0 – 30
TOTAL SCORE (out of 100)	
Comments:	

7. Best Poster Award

The Best Poster Award recognises excellence in the visual and verbal communication of research presented in poster format at the NZARES Annual Conference. The award acknowledges both the quality of the research and the effectiveness of its communication through the poster medium.

Eligibility

A poster is eligible for the Best Poster Award provided that:

- The poster is presented at the NZARES Annual Conference in the designated poster session.
- The poster relates to a topic of relevance to agricultural economics, agribusiness, or natural resource economics and management.
- The presenter is available during the designated poster session to discuss their work with judges.

A minimum of three eligible posters must be submitted for the award to be presented in any year.

Process

Posters are evaluated by members of the Selection Committee and/or designated assessors during the poster session. Each assessor will complete a score sheet for each eligible poster. Scores are summed, and the highest-scoring poster is recommended for the award.

Score Sheet for the Best Poster Award

Poster Title:	
Author(s):	
Reviewer:	
Criteria	Score
Research Contribution and Relevance (0–25) <i>The poster presents a clear research question or objective and demonstrates relevance to agricultural economics, agribusiness, or natural resource management. The significance of the research is clearly conveyed.</i>	0 – 25
Clarity and Accessibility of Content (0–25) <i>The poster communicates key ideas, methods, and findings clearly and concisely. The structure allows viewers to quickly understand the purpose and main message.</i>	0 – 25
Visual Design and Organisation (0–20) <i>The poster is visually well organised, readable, and engaging. Layout, figures, and text are used effectively to support understanding.</i>	0 – 20
Methodological Soundness (0–15) <i>The research approach is appropriate and clearly explained at a level suitable for a poster format.</i>	0 – 15
Poster Presentation and Engagement (0–15) <i>The presenter explains the poster clearly, engages with viewers, and responds effectively to questions.</i>	0 – 15
TOTAL SCORE (out of 100)	
Comments:	