

## Consortium receives \$7 million to empower women farmers



A consortium led by the University of Illinois College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES) has been awarded \$7 million from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to increase global food security and support effective rural development by empowering women to

better contribute to higher household incomes, increase agricultural productivity, and improve nutritional outcomes for family and community members.

The new project, “Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agricultural Extension Services” (INGENAES), aims to strengthen gender and nutrition integration within and through agricultural extension and advisory services and ultimately reduce poverty, improve food security, and reduce malnutrition.

“This is a program of action,” said Paul McNamara, INGENAES project director and associate professor in the ACES Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics. “We will be working in these countries to help improve women farmers’ access to extension services. We will also be using extension services to improve women’s access to critical inputs and helping extension services address nutrition concerns through their programs. We have committed to not just thinking and writing about these issues but to actually improving the situation; it is action-oriented scholarship and outreach.”

INGENAES is the latest of three associate awards that have followed the \$12 million, USAID-funded, ACES-led Modernizing Extension and Advisory Services (MEAS) project, which serves to define and disseminate good practice strategies and approaches to establishing efficient, effective, and financially sustainable rural extension and advisory service systems in selected developing countries.

“During our MEAS work, we’ve seen that especially for poor farmers, many of whom are women, access to services is a problem; and access to extension services, which, for example, may be able to help women get better access to fertilizer or improved seeds, is simply not available,” explained McNamara. “An additional component to INGENAES is the intersection of nutrition and agriculture and how agricultural extension programs can help promote practices that help improve nutrition.”

The INGENAES team will be working in at least eight countries that will be selected over the next couple of months. Led by McNamara, the team includes three associate directors: Andrea Bohn from the U of I College of ACES, who is also the project manager for MEAS; Kathleen Earl Colverson from the University of Florida; and Kristy Cook from Cultural Practice LLC, a Washington, D.C.-based consulting firm.

## Office of International Programs announces the 2014 Academy for Global Engagement



Eight faculty from the University of Illinois College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES) have been selected to form the class of 2014-2015 ACES Academy for Global Engagement (Global Academy).

The Global Academy training program encourages greater internationalization of the College by providing a platform and assistance to ACES faculty who wish to further their global research, teaching, and service engagements.

The scholars selected for the 2014-2015 ACES Academy for Global Engagement are:

**Dr. Patrick Brown, Department of Crop Sciences**

**Dr. Benjamin Crost, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Economics**

**Dr. Paul Davidson, Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering**

**Dr. Erik Sacks, Department of Crop Sciences**

**Mr. N. Dennis Bowman, Extension and Outreach**

**Dr. Nathan Schroeder, Department of Crop Sciences**

**Dr. Pawan Singh Takhar, Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition**

**Dr. Lulu Rodriguez, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences**

Participating in the Global Academy requires an academic year commitment to the program, which focuses on global activities at the college, campus, and national levels, and culminates with an international immersion experience.

The theme for this year’s program is climate change and food systems resilience and is building on existing partnerships with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and the University of the Philippines, Los

## ACES explores options for addressing food security in Myanmar

An ACES-led delegation recently visited Myanmar to explore possibilities for adapting the land grant model of teaching, research, and extension to address critical issues facing the country's agricultural and food systems.

"Myanmar, formerly Burma, was once the world's largest producer and exporter of rice. However, during decades of political instability and dictatorship, the agricultural sector was neglected. The country is currently undertaking some reforms and is making an effort to restore agriculture," explained Alex Winter-Nelson, director of the ACES Office of International Programs.

The trip to Myanmar during mid-September and a corresponding symposium hosted by Yetzen Agricultural University in Naypyidaw were sponsored by Wilmar International Limited, an agribusiness group based in Singapore. The Illinois delegation, in addition to Winter-Nelson, included Associate Chancellor for Corporate and International Relations Pradeep Khanna, ACES Associate Dean for Research Neal Merchen, ACES Associate Dean of Extension and Outreach George Czapar, ACES Associate Dean of Academic Programs Laurie Kramer, Professor and Director of the ADM Institute for the Prevention of Postharvest Loss Prasanta Kalita, and Director of Operations for the Office of Public Engagement Sarah Zehr.

Since the symposium, the Yetzen faculty have developed white papers on topics including agricultural policy, postharvest loss, crop breeding, teaching excellence, extension, climate and crop protection, and water quality/management. The Illinois group is currently reviewing the papers and will make recommendations to Wilmar on the most feasible areas to begin collaborations.

## ACES Matching Grants Awardees

The Office of International Programs with the support of the ACES Office of Research congratulates the winners of the inaugural ACES International Matching Grants Program, which funds research conducted by teams of ACES researchers and researchers from approved peer institutions outside of the U.S. The inaugural winners are:

**Hao Feng, Juan Andrade and Nicki Engeseth (Food Science and Human Nutrition) with Zhejiang University (China):** "Plant protein/plant cell wall polysaccharide complex nano-structures for loading, protecting, and controlled release of lipophilic compounds"

**Stephen P. Moose (Crop Sciences) with Autonomous University of San Luis Potosi (Mexico):** "Uncovering transcriptional networks underlying *Opuntia streptacantha* adaptation to extremes of temperature"

**Erik J. Sacks (Crop Sciences) with Yunnan Academy of Agricultural Sciences (China):** "Improving domesticated Asian rice, *Oryza sativa*, with genes from its wild African relative, *O. longistaminata*"

**Bryan White and Juan Loor (Animal Sciences) with Federal University of Paraiba (Brazil):** "Microbiome characterization and transcriptional profiling of milk and teat of goats affected by subclinical mastitis"

**Kent D. Rausch, M. Grace Danao, Richard S. Gates (Agricultural and Biological Engineering) and Hope Michelson (Agricultural and Consumer Economics) with University of San Luis Potosi (Mexico):** "Assessing potential for improving food security in San Luis Potosi and Tamaulipas (Mexico) through prevention and reduction of harvest and postharvest losses of soybeans"

**Elvira De Mejia (Food Science and Human Nutrition) with Federal University of Vicosa (Brazil):** "Effect of storage time on nutritional composition of common beans and anti-inflammatory and anti-atherosclerotic potential of bioactive peptides"

## ACES delegation visits Korea's Chungnam National University

To celebrate the new partnership between Chungnam National University (CNU) and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, CNU invited a delegation from Illinois to present at its Second International Symposium: Preparing Future Agricultural Science for Climate Change.

Representing the Urbana campus were Dr. German Bollero, head of the Department of Animal Sciences; Dr. Dokyoung Lee, associate professor in the Department of Crop Sciences; Ms. Suzana Palaska-Nicholson, associate director of the ACES Office of International Programs; and Jennifer Ewald, associate director of the Urbana-Champaign campus study abroad office.

The symposium included a lunch hosted by CNU's President Sang Chul Jung, who reiterated his dedication to the new partnership that will include faculty collaborations and student mobility.

"The purpose of our visit was to access the capacity of the institution for future faculty and student exchanges and engagements. In addition to the Symposium, we spent time visiting with faculty and administrators and touring their labs and interacting with students in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences," said Palaska-Nicholson. She noted three significant and direct outcomes of the visit: 1) Students from CNU will be joining the annual summer internship program hosted by the ACES Office of International Programs (previously limited to students from China's Zhejiang University); 2) the Department of Crop Sciences is moving forward with a 3+2 program with CNU, and three other departments (FSHN, ABE, and Animal Sciences) will likely follow with similar programs; and 3) the process of exploring undergraduate student exchanges is in process.

This October 2014 visit was a follow-up to CNU's visit to the Urbana campus in August 2014 when the delegation, led by President Jung, met with Chancellor Phyllis Wise and other Illinois faculty and administrators to sign a Memorandum of Understanding, which created a formal relationship to facilitate future collaborations and partnerships.

## Seed Grants - Fall 2014

The Office of International Programs congratulates its International Seed Grant winners for Fall 2014. The goal of the Seed Grant program is to support awardees in establishing a strong international relationship that will continue to expand and flourish into a larger and substantial international collaborative effort that will ultimately benefit departments, programs, the College of ACES, and the University of Illinois. The funding of the International Seed Grants program is made possible through support provided by the Arlys Conrad Endowment Fund, and the applications are reviewed by the College of ACES International Programs and Policy Committee. This semester's winners are:

**Dr. Paul Davidson, Agricultural and Biological Engineering:** "Controlled environment vegetable production to alleviate adverse environmental impacts and increase food security"

**Dr. Youngsoo Lee, Food Science and Human Nutrition:** "Hybrid pickering emulsion for encapsulation of light sensitive micronutrients"

**Dr. Rita Mumm, Crop Sciences:** "Evaluation of the West African Centre for Crop Improvement (WACCI) and its recently-developed PhD program in Plant Breeding to identify key factors for effective design and implementation of new MS programs in Crop Improvement"