

COLLEGE OF ACES Office of International Programs



Newsletter

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ACES and IFSI host U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack



From left to right: German Bollero, head of Crop Sciences; Tim Mies, manager of the U of I's 240-acre energy farm; U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, and ACES Dean Robert Hauser.

The United States Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack spoke to more than 400 people at the Alice Campbell Alumni Center on the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign campus Thursday, Sept. 10 about the university's role in addressing international food security. You can view the recorded lecture at: http://go.illinois.edu/Vilsack_video.

Vilsack expressed his admiration for Illinois' existing initiatives, outlined the great challenges associated with climate change and the world's growing population, and inspired the students to do whatever they can to make sufficient, safe, nutritious food accessible to everyone. In reference to existing work on food security at U of I, he said, "You have a remarkable set of initiatives. As I speak about what we are doing [at the United States Department of Agriculture] you will be mentally checking off a list of the

extraordinary work you are simultaneously doing." Speaking about alleviating hunger in the context of a changing climate, Vilsack said, "We will need to change everything we know, including the crops we grow, where we grow them, and growing seasons. We will need to consider double planting. Additionally, we will be embarking on a series of strategies to reduce greenhouse gases."

Vilsack envisions a world where the food produced is stored and managed properly and where farmers are fairly compensated. Mentioning food waste several times, Vilsack said he wanted to campaign against this issue in the same way they did against littering during his childhood. "We put all these inputs in and one third of our food doesn't get used as intended. This is not acceptable," he said.

Vilsack then took questions from the audience, not leaving until all of the questions were answered. To some controversial questions, he added, that unfortunately "too often in this country we don't have conversations, we have debates."

In his answers, he continued to refer to the capacity of U of I. Reflecting on his earlier tour of the campus Energy Farm, he said, "There's not a citizen in this country who wouldn't be impressed by what I walked through today." Vilsack concluded by admitting he had never known hunger, even when he was adopted from an orphanage as a "plump boy." He urged the audience to think of those who do know hunger and inspired the students in the audience to meet the challenge global hunger presents.

"There are so many opportunities for bright young people," he said. "It's a great time to be a part of something that will save and change the world. Being here at this university right now is not just an opportunity but a responsibility. Your generation can become the first generation to ensure food security here and abroad."

The event was hosted by the International Food Security at Illinois (IFSI) initiative and the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences.

International Summer Immersion Program offers outstanding experience while deepening ACES' strategic partnerships



Twenty-four undergraduate students hailing from both China's Zhejiang University and South Korea's Chungnam National University successfully completed the 2015 International

Summer Immersion Program (ISIP) on August 14.

The five-week ISIP program coordinated by the ACES Office of International Programs included a research apprenticeship with an ACES faculty member as well as a series of topical seminars, language classes that focused on English for graduate students, and cultural field trips. The program culminated with a poster session, where the students had the opportunity to showcase their research experiences.

The ISIP evolved from the annual summer program formerly known as the Zhejiang University Research Apprenticeship Program. The program expanded this year to include students from Chungnam National University (CNU) as a result of the growing ties between ACES and CNU, which were reinforced by Associate Director Suzana Palaska's visit last fall. The program will likely include students from additional universities in the future. In the past six years, more than 120 students have graduated from this unique program.

OIP is thankful for our ACES faculty mentors and their graduate students without whom this program would not be possible: **Agricultural & Biological Engineering:** Dr. Xinlei Wang, Dr. Kaustubh Bhalerao, Dr. Rabin Bhattarai and Dr. Richard S. Gates, Dr. Alan C. Hansen, Dr. Prasanta Kalita; **Animal Sciences:** Dr. Juan Loo; **Crop Sciences:** Dr. Erik Sacks, Dr. Youfu 'Frank' Zhao, Dr. Maria Villamil, Dr. Cameron Pittelkow, and Dr. Mohammad Babadoost; **Food Science and Human Nutrition:** Dr. Zeynep Madak-Erdogan, Dr. Juan Andrade, Dr. Hao Feng, Dr. Keith Cadwallader, Dr. Pawan Takhar, Dr. Yong-Su Jin, Dr. YoungSoo Lee and Dr. Elvira DeMejia; **Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences:** Dr. Jeffrey Wayne Matthews.

For more information about the ISIP, visit: <http://intlprograms.aces.illinois.edu/content/international-summer-immersion-program>.

ACES faculty working to reduce postharvest losses around world

In Brazil: ACES faculty are investigating the perceptions of Brazilian farmers – both large and small holders – towards postharvest loss with the goal of helping the country maximize its agricultural production. Two separate studies showed that while large-scale farmers accept some postharvest losses to maximize overall production, smallholders may require revised incentives to further minimize their losses.

Dr. Pete Goldsmith, associate professor in the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics (ACE), surveyed some of the world's largest farmers in Mato Grosso while Dr. Mary Arends-Kuenning, associate professor in ACE, examined Brazilian smallholders' perceptions of postharvest loss.

Another ACES research team from the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering including Grace Danao, Richard Gates, and Marvin Paulsen, collaborated with three universities in Brazil to measure and document postharvest losses of soybeans and corn.

In India: ACES economists and engineers are working together to reduce postharvest losses and increase farmers' value in Bihar, one of the most populous and poorest regions of India.

Kathy Baylis, associate professor in ACE, is leading a team that is currently surveying 50 households in each of 64 villages in Bihar as well as all traders active in those villages to get a complete picture of the region's grain economy. The survey results will help inform which technologies a team of engineers, led by Kent Rausch, associate professor in the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, will test and demonstrate in this area to mitigate postharvest losses.

These studies are funded by the ADM Institute for the Prevention of Postharvest Loss.

Allan Mustard named Ambassador to Turkmenistan



Allan Mustard, alumnus of the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics, is now serving in his first year as Ambassador to Turkmenistan—a country a little larger than California that shares borders with Iran and Afghanistan.