ACES is international

ACES pursues research, education, and outreach around the world to promote food and water security and to positively impact human lives, human livelihoods, and the world's environment.
The College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES) at the University of Illinois has a distinguished history of involvement around the world. With significant support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), in the early 1960s the college embarked on major institution-building projects in countries including India, Pakistan, Honduras, Kenya, Nepal, Sierra Leone, and Brazil. This international work required ACES faculty to live abroad for extended periods, applying their expertise in these emerging institutions of research and higher education. At the same time, ACES began hosting many foreign scientists, teachers, and students, many of whom became leaders in their home countries.

Looking back...

These experiences laid the foundation for the college’s current international preeminence.

Today, the college maintains a strong international focus in many ways:

- More than half of ACES faculty are internationally engaged, in more than 120 countries.
- ACES maintains 108 Memoranda of Understanding with universities in 43 countries.
- ACES partners with major agricultural research institutes and non-governmental organizations around the world.
- One of every three ACES undergraduates studies abroad.
- ACES fosters international activity among faculty through its Academy for Global Engagement.

For more information on the breadth of ACES’ international activities, visit intlprograms.aces.illinois.edu.
ACES faculty work with Brazilian colleagues to address a wide range of issues:

- reducing postharvest losses
- studying insect resistance to soybean defenses
- sharing information on soybean production and germplasm
- optimizing allocations of additional grain storage facilities
- studying child and adolescent development in conditions of poverty and homelessness
- improving cattle genetics through embryo transfer and in vitro embryo production
- designing and ventilating hen houses for tropical and subtropical climates
- implementing ACES-developed technologies such as FarmDoc and Marketmaker for use by Brazilian ag agencies

ACES’ ties to Brazil date back to the 1890s, when Dean Eugene Davenport brought an international vision to campus after spending several months in São Paulo working to establish what is now the Escola Superior de Agricultura “Luiz de Queiroz” (ESALQ). Davenport’s connections launched decades of extensive student exchanges and faculty collaborations with Brazil.
Today’s work by ACES faculty in Latin America and the Caribbean includes:

- promoting the use of soy protein for improved nutrition and economic growth
- studying the migration of birds across the Gulf of Mexico
- combating obesity and diabetes development
- producing new sustainable cash crops, such as Jatropha curcas in Haiti
- developing point-of-consumption nutrition fortification technologies for low-income populations in Honduras

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, ACES faculty helped to expand the agricultural industry in Latin America by offering courses on farm production and processing technologies in Peru and Colombia.
ACES leads two major USAID projects in Africa:

- establishing sustainable production and utilization of the soybean in Africa
- modernizing extension and agricultural services in Africa’s 12 Feed the Future countries

Additional initiatives in Africa focus on improving crop, livestock, and dairy production, including:

- improving fertilizer use in Tanzania
- training Rwandan scientists on in vitro and embryo-transfer technologies
- measuring the impact of livestock placement in Zambia
- designing rainfall harvesting systems in Sierra Leone

ACES instituted its involvement in Africa in 1964, helping to establish Sierra Leone’s Njala University. A generation later, ACES was awarded a USAID grant to strengthen Kenya’s Egerton University, then a two-year technical institution, into a four-year university.
In 1959, ACES helped establish India's G.B. Pant University and Madhya Pradesh Agricultural University (now Jawaharlal Nehru Agricultural University). More than 90 Illinois faculty traveled to India, and the university hosted 250 Indian students for advanced degree programs and helped train more than 800 Indian staff.

ACES works in India to improve food security, nutrition, and health, including these initiatives:

- increasing agricultural projection and food security in the Indo-Gangetic plain as a partner on the Agricultural Innovation Project (AIP), funded through USAID
- implementing new technologies for corn bioprocessing
- developing new agricultural curricula for six Indian universities based on changing needs and market trends
- measuring the effects of women’s empowerment groups on children’s nutrition in rural India
- developing appropriate technologies for prevention of postharvest losses
- advancing water security
Beginning in the 1980s, ACES faculty worked with Chinese colleagues to increase the litter sizes of pigs and to collect soybean germplasm native to China. During the 1990s, ACES helped China modernize its agricultural extension system.

ACES works to empower China’s agricultural community, which faces the challenges of a burgeoning population and urban sprawl into farmland. Recent collaborations with Chinese colleagues include:

- increasing corn yields in the Jilin province
- using traditional Chinese herbal medicines to combat cancer
- studying household demand for credit and investment opportunities
- analyzing supply chains for fresh produce

ACES has also established “3+2” programs with several educational institutions in China, which allows qualified students to earn a bachelor’s degree in China (3 years) and a master’s from Illinois (2 years). ACES also hosts an annual summer internship program for Zhejiang University.
The Office of International Programs (OIP) is the nexus of international activities in the College of ACES.

OIP supports the global research, education, and outreach of ACES faculty and staff. Among its activities, OIP is:

- helping ACES faculty, staff, and students procure international funding
- building linkages with key international institutions, organizations, and centers
- administering educational opportunities, including the Academy for Global Engagement
- hosting and organizing international training programs, workshops, lectures, and visits

Learn about ACES global engagements at intlprograms.aces.illinois.edu.