



## Office of International Programs *Monthly Newsletter*

April 2013

### Zeigler speaks on challenges and opportunities for future of world's rice production



The Office of International Programs welcomed Dr. Robert S. Zeigler as the guest for the spring 2013 ACES Distinguished International Lecture. As Director General of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Zeigler spoke about "Strategic Research for Food Security, Economic Growth and Environmental Protection: A Rice Case Study."

Zeigler warned there are tremendous challenges before us: "The rice we need for the future will have to come from less land, be farmed by fewer people, using less water. And we have to take into account global warming." However, Zeigler has reason for optimism due to the work of the IRRI and several new technologies, which he discussed in detail. He called for a "science-based, second green revolution," where we tap revolutions in genetics, molecular biology, and plant physiology.

He noted that the IRRI has 110,000 different rice lines in its collection, but less than 5 percent have been used thus far in crop improvement. Right now, hundreds of labs are moving towards a better understanding of rice genotypes. He said, "The ability to sequence a genome allows us to understand the gene bank. The cost of sequencing is now very affordable. We will be able to sequence our entire gene bank in a few years. This will be a game changer." He gave an example of transferring salt tolerance from *Oryza coarctata*, a wild species that grows well in brackish water, which is now growing in salt water, into cultivated rice, and said, "This is just a hint of what's to come."

Zeigler, therefore, has much reason for optimism due to the surge of new technologies. He closed by encouraging the younger generation: "You grad students have an opportunity to have a career that is so exciting, stimulating, and satisfying. We have all kinds of new ways to use technologies to transform the world. There is a role for the public sector, an important role. And private sector is more and more engaged, and it is up to us to make sure the young scientists are excited."

*The Office of International programs thanks its co-sponsors of this important lecture: the ADM Institute for the Prevention of Postharvest Loss, the Illinois Plant Breeding Center, and the Department of Crop Sciences. For more details on Zeigler's lecture, please visit: [http://intlprograms.aces.illinois.edu/zeigler\\_0413](http://intlprograms.aces.illinois.edu/zeigler_0413).*

### ACES Academy of Global Engagement Visits Washington, D.C.



Scholars of the ACES Academy of Global Engagement embarked on a three-day trip to Washington, D.C. during the month of February to visit and interact with funding agencies, and meet potential partners and various donors of international development work. The scholars' itinerary included visits to the offices of the United States

Agency for International Development (USAID), the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), and the National Science Foundation (NSF).

Scholars participating in the trip included Dr. Juan Andrade, Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition; Ms. Jan Brooks, Department of Human and Community Development; Dr. Mary-Grace Danao, Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering; and Dr. Barrett Kirwan, Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics. Accompanying the scholars on the trip were Suzana Palaska-Nicholson, program coordinator for the ACES Office of International Programs, and Richard Vogen, director of planning and research development for the College of ACES. In addition to the scholars listed above, the 2012 class includes Dr. Hans Stein, Department of Animal Sciences. Highlights of the trip included a full morning at USAID where scholars reconnected with Dr. J. Vern Long, a guest of the ACES -in-Action International Workshop sponsored by the Office of International Programs last semester, and later participated in highly individualized breakout sessions according to their research interests. Overall, the trip was a great opportunity for the scholars to make face-to-face contact with representatives from funding agencies who may aid them in future international projects.

The ACES Academy for Global Engagement program is designed to stimulate international engagement in areas of education, research, and outreach. Participating scholars are learning about various global activities and opportunities at the college, campus, and national levels, and also participate in an international immersion experience. The focus of this year's Academy is on "Food Security and Human Nutrition," and the international immersion experience took place in Ghana, West Africa during spring break.

**Save the Date: August 26, 2013**  
**International Agronomy Day, sponsored by the Department of Crop Sciences**  
**(prior to Farm Progress Show in Decatur, August 27-29)**

## ACES International Profile: James Sinclair, retired soybean pathologist who considers India his second home



For the full version of this interview, please visit: <http://intlprograms.aces.illinois.edu/node/1307>.

From eating lunch with Indira Gandhi to having tea in an igloo-like dwelling made of dung and mud, Dr. James Sinclair has experienced all facets of India. As the first and only appointed Professor of International Affairs in the College of ACES, Sinclair was hired in

1968 to assist with the development of soybeans in India as part of a five-year grant (211 d) the University of Illinois received from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Sinclair, whose specialty was soybean pathology, had previously attained full professorship at Louisiana State University and received his Ph.D. in Plant Pathology from the University of Wisconsin. He retired from ACES in 1998.

Although Sinclair's work with ACES took him to over 40 countries, his first and most treasured location is India. "I was the third interviewee for the 211-d position. The first thing you had to do after taking the job was go to India. The two previous interviewees had so much culture shock, they didn't make it." When asked why he remained in the job, Sinclair remembers, "When I arrived in India, an agricultural missionary took me on a month-long tour of the country. We traveled in a Land Rover. We didn't go see the Taj or other tourist attractions; instead we traveled across India from north to south. I was shown the country through the eyes of a man who had lived and worked there for many years. So I fell in love with the country and still consider it my second home."

At that time, the only soybean India had was a small black variety. The University of Illinois introduced the yellow soybean, which due to its daylight sensitivity, required different varieties at different latitudes. Sinclair worked on soybean pathology for this program. Sinclair notes that eventually India became competitive in the world market for soybeans, and this is a direct result of the ACES' work: "This is a story that is not told much. It's been forgotten."

Sinclair says, "I wasn't a typical professor because of my title. I was expected to do things international, and so I did. I've been to 40 countries professionally and that doesn't include where I've traveled personally." Sinclair himself is in awe of all his experiences and knows how lucky he has been: "I had lunch with Indira Gandhi, who was the Prime Minister of India. I've been hosted by the President of Thailand, been to a major banquet on the shores of the Nile River hosted by my former student, and had an audience with the President of Indonesia. I was director of the Illinois Tehran research unit, when we went to Iran to plan a four-year curriculum for their new agricultural college. As I sit here and remember these things, I know I've had a fantastic life, and no one could ask for anything more. I am the most fortunate man who ever lived." Of all these incredible experiences, Sinclair says the most interesting was when he visited a typical farmer in India: "He had his home, not as tall as I am, made of dung and mud, like an oversized igloo, and my host introduced me and did the translating so I could have tea with him and his family. I crouched down to go through the hole to sit in the one-room structure, and in the middle was mound of dung and mud, where they stored their seed for the next season. This was the most valuable thing in their house because they were subsistence farmers."

Though Sinclair has retired from his work in soybeans, he remains extremely active in campus and community activities such as serving on the Board of Directors for the Spurlock Museum and a former docent for the Krannet Art Museum. He is also active in the local Rotary and the Savoy Economic Development Committee.

## ACES signs letter of intent with Pakistan's University of Agriculture, Faisalabad



(l to r): Dr. Korban, Dr. Faqir Muhammad Anjum, Professor and Director General of the National Institute of Food Science and Technology, (Faisalabad), and Dean Hauser

Representatives from the top agricultural university in Pakistan, the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad visited the College of ACES on Apr. 9, 2013. During their visit, the group met with Dean Hauser and Dr. Schuyler Korban, director of the office of international programs, to sign a letter of intent for future collaboration with ACES. Dr. Elizabeth Jeffery, professor emerita of nutritional

toxicology and professor emerita of nutritional sciences, hosted the group. Drs William Helferich, Anna Dilger, and Elizabeth Jeffery have all hosted visiting students from the National Institute of Food Science and Technology at the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad.

## Shike judges Sydney Royal Easter Show and puts on judging clinic for Angus Australia



Dan and Jennifer Shike with the participants of the Angus Australia judging clinic.

Dr. Dan Shike, assistant professor in animal sciences, visited Australia during the end of March to judge Angus cattle at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. Additionally, Shike and his wife Jennifer Shike, assistant director for communications and

marketing for the College of ACES, put on a judging clinic in collaboration with Angus Australia. "It was an honor to judge a show of this magnitude in Australia," Shike says. "I was impressed with the caliber of cattle and the professionalism of their exhibitors." The Sydney Royal Easter Show is billed as Australia's largest annual event and attracts close to 900,000 people each year. Shike says the opportunity, which was his first international judging experience, came about through his work with the Angus Australia scholarship winners who come to the Urbana-Champaign campus each semester. In addition to the clinic and show, Shike also traveled to Armidale in NSW, headquarters of Angus Australia and home to the University of New England. Shike presented a guest lecture on feed efficiency, one of his main research areas. "My colleagues at the University of New England did some of the initial work on genetic selection for feed efficiency," Shike said. "It was a great opportunity to share the work I'm doing and visit with them about the work they've done in this area."