



Office of International Programs *Monthly Newsletter*

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World Bank Visits ACES by Carly Rakes



World Bank delegation visits the John Reifsteck farm in southwest Champaign. Photo courtesy of David Riecks, ACES ITCS

The Department of Agricultural, Consumer and Economics (ACE) and the ACES Office of International Programs (OIP) hosted a delegation of 14 economists from the World Bank's Latin America and Caribbean Sustainable Development Department in late

October. This visit was also sponsored by the Department of Economics, the Lemay Center for Brazilian Studies, and the Center for International Business Education and Research.

The delegation's visit to the University of Illinois was part of its mission to visit the Corn Belt of the nation to better understand each stage in the agricultural process, from seed development to distribution of products at the store. During their stay on campus, they met with various faculty and groups and participated in a roundtable discussion with ACE faculty. They also presented a workshop on International Careers at the World Bank, for which over 250 people registered.

In addition, the Food and Agribusiness Management Program sponsored a reception where ACES faculty and graduate students had great conversations. "There was lively discussion about the role in international development of private agribusinesses, value chains, and agro-industrial clusters," said Dr. Peter Goldsmith, Associate Professor and Interim Director of the Food and Agribusiness Management Program.

The delegation also visited Champaign's Supervalu, where they learned about product distribution, in addition to John Reifsteck's grain farm. "Most of the visitors were international and this was their first time on an American farm. They were very impressed by its size and by the technology that John has adopted," says M. Andrea Martens, assistant professor in the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics UOTE here from Andrea".

After departing Champaign, the delegation visited Monsanto and Bunge in St. Louis, and OSI and the Chicago Board of Trade in Chicago. "The program of the trip offered excellent insight into the agricultural supply chain as a whole," said Javier Morales Sarriera, an Economist at the World Bank (Brazil). "The delegation expressed its strong intentions of strengthening relationships with the University of Illinois in the future.

Fall 2011 Seed Grant Winners

The Office of International Programs (OIP) congratulates its Seed Grant winners for Fall 2011. 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 Seed Grants program is made possible through support provided by the Arlys Conrad Endowment Fund. The 2012 Seed Grant winners are:

"Bioenergy, Food, and Global Environment: A Modeling System for the Agricultural Sectors of US, Brazil, India and China," submitted by Dr. Hayri Onal, Department of Agricultural & Consumer Economics

"Bacterial genome sequencing and data analysis as a tool for the Faculty Development Program at COMSATS Institute of Information Technology (CIIT) in Pakistan," submitted by Dr. Youfu (Frank) Zhao, Department of Crop Sciences

"Developing Interactions with Rwanda to Improve Soybean Production, submitted by Ms. Theresa Herman, Department of Crop Sciences

"Changing the course of Maize breeding for a changing world," submitted by Dr. Tony Grift, Department of Ag and Biological Engineering and Dr. Martin Bohn, Department of Crop Sciences

"Discussion of future collaborative projects and identification of potential candidate students for Exchange," submitted by Dr. Rodney Johnson, Division of Nutritional Sciences

"Collaboration for Research on Efficient Bioactive Compounds Delivery Systems Using Microencapsulation Techniques with Ewha Woman's University in Korea," submitted by Dr. Youngsoo Lee, Department of Food Science & Human Nutrition

"Comparative molecular analysis of microbial hydrogen metabolism in the rumen of *Bostaurus*, *B. indicus* and swamp buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis*)," submitted by Dr. H. Rex Gaskins, Department of Animal Sciences

Korban Elected Secretary to APLU-IAS

The results of an electronic vote of the Association of Public Land-grant Universities (APLU) – International Agriculture Section (IAS) were announced at the recent APLU Annual Meetings in San Francisco (Nov. 13-15), and Dr. Schuyler S. Korban, Director of OIP, won the election as Secretary of IAS. Korban will serve a four-year term as Secretary, Vice-Chair, Chair, and then Past-Chair.

Stein Collaborates with Aarhus University in Denmark on Carbohydrates Course



Dr. Knudsen (left) from Aarhus and Dr. Stein (right) with their students

Hans H. Stein, ACES professor of animal sciences, collaborated with Aarhus University in Denmark on an intensive graduate-level course on carbohydrate nutrition this past August. Six of Stein's graduate students traveled with him to Denmark to participate in the course, and Stein taught much of the course. This collaborative course allowed U of I students to experience different methods of learning and research while making international contacts and experiencing a different culture.

The course was attended by 13 students, including seven from Aarhus and other northern European universities. The format of the course, which focused on digestion, absorption, and metabolism of carbohydrates in humans and animals, was intensive, lasting only two weeks with lectures and lab work from 9 to 5 daily. However, the weekends offered the students opportunities to see more of Denmark and the area, including visiting Copenhagen and spending a day at the beach.

Stein, a native of Denmark, says this intensive format is popular in northern Europe. "For our students, this was much more than a carbohydrate course. They had the opportunity to interact with international students, see another country, and see more of Europe. The students also experienced a different model of learning with the intensive course, which is as effective as our semester-based models. Also, the northern European systems tend to emphasize the hands-on more than we do." Stein says he has received excellent feedback from the course evaluations, and that the intention is to offer the course again in the future if funding allows.

Although a well established university with an international reputation, Aarhus had only developed its agroecology program five years ago, and representatives from the university visited the U of I College of ACES last year to discuss possible collaborations. The idea for this particular course was born as a result of this initial visit, which was coordinated by the Office of International Programs.

Zhejiang University Visits UI

A high-level delegation from Zhejiang University visited the University of Illinois (UI) in late October. The 10-member delegation included the Dean from the Faculty of Agriculture, Life and Environmental Sciences, and Heads from four of its Departments. The delegation met with Dr. Robert Hauser, Dean of the College of ACES; Dr. Robert Easter, Dean Emeritus of the College of ACES; the ACES Department Heads, Dr. Wolfgang Schlor, Interim Associate Provost for International Affairs, as well as several other UI faculty and staff. The goal of the visit, which was organized by the College of ACES Office of International Programs, was to discuss expanding and strengthening the collaborations between Zhejiang University and the University of Illinois both in research and student exchange. Dr. Schuyler Korban, Director, Office of International Programs in the College of ACES, noted that the visit was a tremendous success, "Thanks to this visit, we will be hosting more high quality students from Zhejiang University in our undergraduate and graduate programs," he said.

Modernizing Extension and Advisory Systems (MEAS) Project Starts Strong



Dr. Burt Swanson leads extension training in Rwanda. Image courtesy of Paul Hixon.

A consortium led by the University of Illinois College of Agriculture, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES) is making significant strides towards modernizing and strengthening the agricultural systems of rural farmers in the world's poorest nations.

Since its selection in October 2010 as the lead institution for the five-year, \$9 million Modernize Extension and Advisory Systems (MEAS) project, granted by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the U of I along with its consortium partners have made notable progress towards project goals, which include the strategic analysis of activities and investments needed to strengthen the extension system in 20 developing countries.

Project Director Paul McNamara, associate professor of family and consumer economics, says the primary accomplishments of the MEAS project in its first year include developing training materials and programs for extension staff, completing case studies and pilot projects that have provided great insight into best practices, and finally, conducting in-depth assessments of the extension systems in the target countries. The project team from the U of I has been especially involved in completing these country assessments, which have so far included Rwanda, Bangladesh, Upper Egypt, Mali, and Liberia.

For example, during 2011, MEAS conducted a comprehensive extension assessment in Rwanda which has already been approved by the respective USAID mission and submitted to the USAID Development Experience Center. The assessment, led by Burt Swanson, ACES professor emeritus of rural development, details the important policy issues to be addressed if the pluralistic extension system in Rwanda is to be strengthened and makes recommendations for building capacity in extension education.

Two scoping missions remain for MEAS in 2011. Swanson is currently helping to complete the assessment and recommendations for extension and advisory services in Tajikistan, and in December, McNamara will be working with USAID/Nepal, the Government of Nepal and various local organizations to develop recommendations for modernizing extension and advisory services in this country.