

# COLLEGE OF ACES Office of International Programs



Newsletter

Spring 2015, Volume 1

## Food Systems for Food Security Symposium highlights capacities of University of Illinois



*Dean Hauser opens the symposium.*

More than 100 attendees assembled at the ACES Library, Information and Alumni Center on the University of Illinois campus on Tuesday, February 10, 2015. Due to the symposium being filled to capacity, it was streamed-live to viewers in an overflow room and around the world.

Dr. Alex Winter-Nelson, director of the ACES Office of International Programs, said, "The symposium demonstrated the capacities of ACES with respect to international food security and the widespread interest in the topic across the campus and the state. Equally or more important, the event stimulated and helped to frame conversations on how we can work together to move forward with International Food Security at Illinois."

The videos and presentations from the symposium are available on the IFSI website at: <http://intlprograms.aces.illinois.edu/content/food-systems-food-security-symposium>.

The Food Systems for Food Security Symposium, a full-day event sponsored by Food Security at Illinois (FSI), highlighted the unique capacities of the University of Illinois to improve food systems and help ensure that all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to achieve their human potential.

## ACES to host Fulbright Junior Faculty Development Program for Lebanon

The College of ACES will welcome five Fulbright Scholars from Lebanon for a 10-week training program in rural and economic development for junior faculty during summer 2015.

The scholars will benefit from research mentoring provided by University of Illinois faculty as well as instructional training for teaching provided by the University of Illinois' Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning. They will also attend cultural events and interact with campus administration and community groups in order to gain a fuller understanding of American society and of our institutions of higher education. The scholars will arrive July 5.

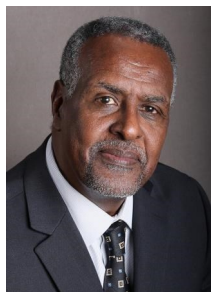
The scholars' visit and program is being coordinated by the ACES Office of International Programs.

The Fulbright program, awarded as part of a competitive process, allows for Lebanese scholars and their U.S. hosts to identify areas of cooperation and to develop long-term institutional relationships. The intent of the program is to equip scholars with the knowledge and tools needed to build the capacity of their home institutions and to advance the education of future generations.

The College of ACES previously hosted Fulbright scholars from Libya during the summer of 2013.

The Fulbright Junior Faculty Development Program for Lebanon is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), as part of its flagship Fulbright Program (<http://www.fulbright.state.gov>) and designed by the Council for International Exchange of Scholars, a division of the Institute of International Education in cooperation with ECA.

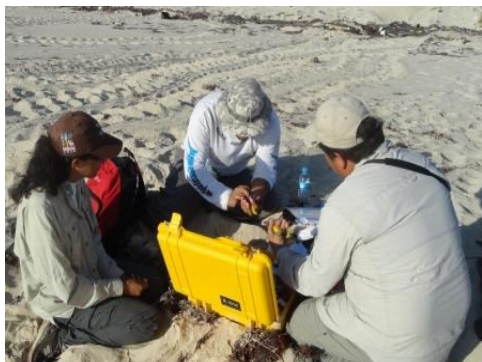
## Dr. Gebisa Ejeta to speak at ACES Distinguished International Lecture on April 7



The Spring 2015 ACES Distinguished International Lecture will feature Dr. Gebisa Ejeta, Distinguished Professor of Plant Breeding and Genetics and International Agriculture, Executive Director of the Center for Global Food Security at Purdue University, and The 2009 World Food Prize Laureate.

Dr. Ejeta will speak about "Building Functional Institutions for Global Development" on Tuesday, April 7, 2015, at 4 p.m. with a reception to follow at the Knight Auditorium, Spurlock Museum, 600 S. Gregory St., Urbana.

## Ward's collaboration with UNAM helps preserve habitats for migrating birds



*Tagging birds on Isla Contoy.*

A new collaboration between Dr. Michael Ward and a team from Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) aims to protect migratory bird species by understanding how the birds select and use habitats in the Yucatan Peninsula.

Ward, an assistant professor in the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences, has been using automated telemetry systems to track bird migration across the Gulf of Mexico since 2009. His latest collaboration, with UNAM's Dr. Luis Antonio Sánchez-González, has already provided valuable insight into how the birds refuel for the next leg of their journey and consequently how the habitats need to be managed.

"The Yucatan's habitats are being threatened by tourism development and proposed wind farms. There is interest in buying up habitat for conservation with the idea that any habitat is going to be high-quality habitat. But we know this is not true. We know some habitats are going to be better than others," Ward said.

To understand how the birds refuel in these habitats, the team monitored birds arriving in two separate locations in the Yucatan Peninsula during September 2014: Isla Contoy and the El Eden Ecological Reserve. The information gained is critical for resource management.

The collaborative work was funded through the new UIUC/UNAM joint research partnership program, coordinated by the Office of International Programs.

## International Graduate Grants winners announced - Spring 2015

OIP is pleased to announce the winners of the second round of the Graduate Student International Research Grants Program. These awards were made possible through a generous donation from Bill and Mary Lee Dimond and the Arlys Conrad Endowment fund.

- Kirsten Berding, PhD student in Nutritional Sciences advised by Dr. Sharon Donovan
- Jessica Brandt, a PhD student in Animal Sciences advised by Dr. Al Roca
- Gloria Casas Bedoya, a PhD student in Animal Sciences advised by Dr. Hans Stein
- Shashank Gaur, a PhD student in Food Science and Human Nutrition advised by Dr. Juan Andrade
- Antonio Celis Murillo, a PhD student in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences advised by Dr. Michael Ward
- Alex Park, a PhD student in Crop Sciences advised by Dr. Adam Davis
- Hermant Pullabhotla, a PhD student in Agricultural and Consumer Economics advised by Dr. Kathy Baylis
- Marin Thompson, a MS student in Agricultural and Consumer Economics advised by Dr. Kathy Baylis
- Xiong, a PhD student in Agricultural and Biological Engineering advised by Dr. Richard Gates

## Cardoso and Brazilian colleagues using enzymes to improve feedstuff for dairy cows

With the assistance of an International Seed Grant from the Office of International Programs, Dr. Phil Cardoso, assistant professor in the Department of Animal Sciences, has furthered his work to improve the digestibility of corn for dairy cattle while also providing a life-changing opportunity for a Brazilian PhD student, Naina Lopes.

During her nine-month stay at the University of Illinois, Lopes ran a matrix of experiments to evaluate the digestibility of flint and floury corn in two particle sizes (fine and coarse), three combinations of enzymes (including protease, amylase, and both), for three periods of time (1, 3, and 5 months). The results showed that protease and small particle size seemed to improve the digestibility of the corn. The next step, Cardoso said, is to give the different varieties to cows and see what they are happy with.

"Once we see what the cows like and prove this can work, of course we will see the biggest improvement in the Brazilian corn, but we in the U.S. can use the process to improve our feedstuff as well. In both countries, treated corn has great potential to improve farmers' profitability," Cardoso said.

Cardoso said the International Seed Grant he received from the Office of International Programs helped to pay for some of the experimental analysis and for Dr. Neves to visit for a week during Lopes' stay.

"As a young faculty, I was previously unaware and happily surprised about how much impact we as faculty and a university can have on people. The seed grant funding may sometimes seem modest, but not the outcome," Cardoso said.

## Pittelkow evaluates eco-efficiency of Uruguay's increased rice yields

Can a country increase its rice yields by 30 percent in just two decades without significant environmental impacts? Funded by the U.S. Fulbright Scholar program, Dr. Cameron Pittelkow, assistant professor in the Department of Crop Sciences, spent fall semester 2014 in Uruguay helping to answer this question.

"Uruguay wants to be able to document that it is a green supplier of rice," Pittelkow explained. He left Uruguay impressed and optimistic. "There are a few areas of concern, such as an increase in agricultural chemicals being applied, but overall the situation presents a good example of achieving higher yields with, in most cases, lower environmental impacts. The findings are relevant not only for Uruguay but for the global rice community as it searches for more sustainable food systems," he said.

He took much away from the opportunity. "In addition to being exposed to Uruguay's rice industry, I made several connections with researchers in other rice producing countries in the area including Colombia and Brazil that will be a good starting point for additional projects. The experience provided me with a concrete example of knowledge being exchanged and agricultural scientists learning from each other," Pittelkow said.