

What's Happening in AERS

Department of Agricultural
Economics and Rural Sociology

University of Idaho

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A Note from Dr. Roheim



Another typical early spring in Moscow, with sunny, warm weather that teases the trees to bud and bulbs to bloom yet then follows with days when snowflakes whirl through the air. Early spring also brings new Vandals to campus to explore their majors and meet their advisors to prepare for registration for fall classes. AERS welcomed approximately 40 new freshmen and transfer students during two separate Vandal Fridays this year, with

many more students anticipated to arrive in the fall who were unable to attend Vandal Fridays.

Also arriving in this fall will be Dr. Jason Winfree, our new Assistant Professor who will teach and conduct research in food and agricultural markets and industrial organization. A native of central Washington, and a graduate of the Ph.D. program in Economics from Washington State University, Dr. Winfree has been on the faculty at the University of Michigan for several years. He, his wife Nikki and two children look forward to returning to the Northwest, and we're delighted to welcome him to the department!

As we approach the end of another academic year, we look forward to the CALS Annual Spring Awards Banquet to be held on April 29. Shortly after that, commencement will be held on May 11. We are very proud that our seniors are securing excellent jobs at a variety of exciting companies well in advance of graduation. This is hardly surprising when you see the quality of our students – see inside this newsletter for three excellent examples of AERS students Travis Chase, Kaycee Royer and Mark Nebeker!

Enjoy the rest of spring!

Cathy

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Upcoming Seminars

- Joe Guenther, April 12
- Dustin L. Pendell, April 26

AERS Student Attends the 2013 USDA Agricultural Outlook Forum Student Diversity Program

Travis Chase, a University of Idaho Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology Department Junior, had the opportunity to attend the USDA's 2013 Agricultural Outlook Forum. Out of many applicants, only 30 agricultural university students were selected to attend this for based on their responses to the essay titled, "Agriculture as a Career."

The Outlook Forum was held February 21-22, 2013 in Arlington, Virginia and speakers included Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, Deputy Agriculture Secretary Kathleen Merrigan, Chief Economist Joseph Glauber, and former Senator Thomas A. Daschle. The topics of discussion surrounded the future of U.S. Agriculture. These included: Food Price & Farm Income Outlooks, Risk Management, International Trade, Food Safety Modernization, Conservation, Commodity Outlooks, Specialty Crops and Nutrition. Having this variety provided the attending students a chance to pick the topics they were most interested in and learn more about each throughout their time at the meeting.

By attending the Agricultural Outlook Forum and listening to these speakers, Travis was given the chance meet many industry professionals as well as broaden his outlook towards agriculture. This opportunity not only opened many doors for Travis' future, but also provide him with a network of influential industry leaders. Congratulations to Travis for being chosen to attend the 2013 USDA Agricultural Outlook Forum Student Diversity Program!



AERS Welcomes Chinese Visiting Scholar



The AERS Department has had the pleasure of working with a Chinese visiting scholar, Xin (Cindy) Wang, this past year. Cindy is from Northern China and received her Agricultural Economics Degree at the Northwest Agriculture and the Forest University in China before she came to the University of Idaho this past fall.

While she is here, she is researching Social Capital and Irrigation with the help of Professors Chris McIntosh and Phil Watson. Cindy is learning about the different irrigation systems utilized in the U.S. to learn the benefits of each. With this information, she hopes to determine the best irrigation system for Chinese agriculture and use this knowledge to help the farmers in China. According to Cindy, many farmers have a limited income and face many difficulties in regard to irrigation management. Currently, their goal is to form a cooperative of farmers who work together on establishing a useful irrigation system and split the cost of the water. This would help all of them have the availability of water to farm as well as lower the cost to purchase this resource. Since irrigation is one of the largest concerns for the agricultural industry, Cindy's hope is to learn as much about the different systems that she can to help the farmers in her country.

Cindy's favorite thing about Moscow is, "everything!" She enjoys the friendliness of the people in town and loves working with the AERS faculty and staff. Through working with the department, she has not only learned a lot about her research, but also improved her research skills. When she's not working on her research or writing papers, she enjoys getting out and learning about the culture of Moscow.

Cindy is done with her research at U of I in October and plans on returning to her home University to finish her PhD, and later find a teaching and research position in China.

AERS Welcomes New Faculty



Dr. Jason Winfree accepted the position of Assistant Professor in the AERS Department. Jason is currently working at the University of Michigan, but is excited to begin his new job at the University of Idaho. His official start date is August 11 and we are looking forward to further get to know him and work with him this fall!

Makus named Interim Associate Dean



Dr. Larry Makus was named the Interim Associate Dean for Academic Programs in CALS and started his new position on February 1. Even though we are excited for Larry in his new position, we miss him being around the department. Congratulations and best of luck!

Guenthner helps African farmers increase potato production

Joe Guenthner has worked on two projects in Africa this year.

In December he went to Kenya on an extension project with the USDA Farmer-to-Farmer (FTF) program. FTF arranges for volunteers with agricultural expertise to work with farmers in developing countries. Guenthner worked with the newly-formed National Potato Council of Kenya (NPCK) on potato storage development and education. Kenyan potato farmers grow two potato crops each year during the rainy seasons. During the dry seasons potatoes become scarce in many areas where hunger is a serious problem.



In March Guenthner went to Ghana for two reasons. He participated in an agricultural biotechnology conference. He also began working as a team member on a research/extension project regarding biosafety. In cooperation with faculty at Michigan State University, and with funding from the Templeton Foundation, the team will study agricultural biotechnology regulations in six African countries: Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa and Uganda.



Spring Seminars

Eric Stuen gave a seminar titled "University Reputation and the Disclosure of Academic Discoveries: Evidence from Nano-scale Science and Technology" on February 1.

Xin (Cindy) Wang gave a seminar titled "Water Use Efficiency in Small-scale Irrigation Cooperative and its Determinates from the Perspective of Social Capital Heterogeneity-the Case of Northwestern China" on February 15.

Steve Cooke gave a seminar titled "An Analysis of the Evolution of the Idaho Economy over the past 50 years: Using a Dynamic Cooke Index to Measure Changing Competitive Advantage" on March 1.

AERS Student Summer Intern



Kaycee Royer

Junior, Agricultural Economics

Who are you working for this summer?

I will be working for Farm Credit Services Southwest as a summer intern

Where will you be living?

I will be living in Tempe and Gilbert, Arizona

What does your job/internship entail?

Completing two commodity studies, participating in FCSSW events, job shadowing, working with FCSSW's agricultural partners and customers, presenting progress in internship and staff meetings, filling out profit and loss statements, demonstrating understanding of basic ratio analysis, and making simple farm projections based upon past performance, explaining the marketing plan of the association, observing the FCSSW business atmosphere, reading and studying the manuals of instruction, submitting a final written report reviewing all intern program activities.

What are your future career goals?

I hope to one day work in the field of agriculture as a lawyer. It is my ultimate goal to help farmers and ranchers with anything that they need to keep their business running and profitable.

How will this position help you accomplish these goals?

Farm Credit Services Southwest is an organization that is dedicated to working with farmers and ranchers and getting them the loans and help that they need to keep their business running. I think that I will learn valuable skills such as customer relations, farm analysis, and business ethics while at this job.

What attribute of this job/internship are you looking forward to the most?

I am really looking forward to the agricultural atmosphere that this job is going to offer. I feel like I will get a really good chance to learn a lot about the agricultural industry in Arizona and that I will be able to gather a lot of information and hopefully bring it back to Idaho and apply it.

Do you feel that the courses and your involvement in the AERS Department have helped prepare you for this job/internship? If so, how?

Definitely, without the great professors and students in AERS I do not think that I would be prepared to take on an internship such as this one. Courses such as Farm Management, Agricultural Marketing and Agricultural Policy have helped me learn how to do some of the things that will be critical for my success in this position. Also, AERS has given me a great support system and I know that without that support system I would have never received this internship!

Update on AERS Graduates

The Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology Department offers two B.S. programs — Agribusiness and Agricultural Economics, along with Minors in Natural Resource Economics and Agribusiness, and an M.S. program in Applied Economics. The department has helped prepare hundreds of young adults for their future careers or further education.

Stella Rwiza graduated from the University of Idaho, Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, with a M.S. in December 2003. She is from Tanzania and moved back to the country in 2005. Since graduation, she has been working with local and international organizations that help the poor African farmers improve their income and food security through farming and livestock keeping. Currently, she is visiting farmers that are supported in the villages with a delegation from the UK Department for International Development (UKAID/DFID) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA.)

Stella attributes a lot of her career success to Larry Van Tassel and J.D. Wulfhorst, who “coached, supported and mentored” her intensively during her time as a graduate student. She also wanted to express her appreciation to the department for the great job all the faculty does at educating students and strongly encourages undergraduates to get there degree in this program.

“With an Agribusiness or Agricultural Economics degree you can work anywhere in the world. Students shouldn't be limited to working in the US. There are huge opportunities with the USAID, UN, etc., that they can always apply for internship in those organizations and later might end up working for them. “

AERS Scholarship Recipient



Mark Nebeker

Freshman, Agricultural Economics & Animal Science-Production Option Double Major
Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology Alumni Scholarship Recipient

Please tell us a little about yourself.

I am from Kuna, ID, where I grew up on a row crop farm and beef cattle operation. I was heavily involved in both 4-H and FFA throughout my years of school. In 4-H I raised market steers and did misc. projects and leadership. In FFA I served as a chapter officer and was on multiple National CDE teams. I raised my own commercial cows and have started my own purebred Hereford & Angus cowherd.

Why did getting a degree in Agribusiness or Agricultural Economics appeal to you?

I became interested in economics after being on the winning 2011 National FFA Farm Business Management CDE Team at National FFA Convention. I had taken a class in high school and enjoyed learning about running a business and the economic principals applied to a farm or ranch operation.

What are your future career goals?

Upon graduation, with degrees in Ag Econ and AVS, I hope to obtain a job in an economic field for an agricultural company, preferably a livestock firm. I then would like to purchase some ground so that I can build my registered Hereford & Angus cowherds selling quality beef bulls and heifers. I also plan to keep a small commercial herd based off of the herd that I have built over the past 13 years, which currently consists of 37 head.

How do you think your education will help you accomplish these goals?

With a good education from U of I, I hope to be able to get a job that I will enjoy. I will be able to use the skills I learned in school to apply them to my own business and I will know about current or new technology that I can use to be more successful.

What clubs/extracurricular activities have you been involved in?

Block & Bridle: Red Bluff, Yakima Fair; CFFA: State FFA Convention; SICA; Agribusiness Club; Idaho Junior Hereford Association: Vice President-President elect, Mentor, Board of Directors, National Director candidate, Leadership Training

What is your favorite thing about being a Vandal?

I like that fact that all staff I've worked with are easy and great to get along with and work well with students. They also try to get to know every single individual on a personal level which helps build long-lasting, working relationships with students.

AERS Endowments and Scholarships

"Thanks to all the alumni and friends who have supported the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology (AERS). Your gifts make it possible to fund scholarships, professional development and experiential opportunities for our students. Every gift makes a difference and is sincerely appreciated." — Cathy Roheim

Endowments and Scholarships

Described below are individual funds that have been established to support AERS activities. You can contribute any time by mailing a check payable to *University of Idaho Foundation, Inc.*, 875 Perimeter Drive MS 443147, Moscow, ID 83844-3147. Please include to which scholarship or endowment you would like your donation designated. You may also contribute online at the UI Gift Website: www.uidaho.edu/give.

Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology Alumni Scholarship: Scholarship contributed to by alumni and friends.

Supports full-time undergraduate students of any class standing seeking a degree in Agribusiness or Agricultural Economics. AERS department faculty focus awards based upon academic achievement and leadership potential.

Dennis J. Conley Award for Excellence in Agricultural Economics Endowment: Awarded to an undergraduate student, a group of students, a professor, a group of professors, or to the Dept. of Ag Econ & Rural Sociology at the UI. Recognizing or promoting Excellence in Ag Economics shall be the primary consideration.

Robert & Mark Jones Scholarship: Scholarship awarded to students from a Twin Falls County high school or College of Southern Idaho with a preference for students majoring in agribusiness.

If you are interested in establishing your own scholarship or endowment, please contact Kim O'Neill at 425-359-2411 or kimoneill@uidaho.edu.

AERS Students Visit Idaho Legislature

Written by Blas Lord.

The Spring 2013 Agricultural Economics Public Policy Tour (AgEc 410) was a huge success this year. It provided eleven university students with the opportunity to travel to Boise to observe the Idaho Legislature in February. Since the legislature was in session while we were there, we had the chance to watch a few committee meetings and actually see what goes on “behind the scenes” of Idaho’s legislative process. A large portion of our time was spent with lobbyists. We had the opportunity to watch lobbyists address both current issues and bills that would be later discussed in committee meetings.



A huge thank you goes out to Rick Waitley, who was key in helping this trip run smoothly for the students during their time in Boise. Rick is a great mentor when it comes to being in a professional setting. His guidance taught all the students learn how to dress and conduct themselves appropriately while talking to legislators. He also provided great ideas about how to prepare to present yourself. Rick is an excellent resource to our department as well as this annual field trip, and we appreciate him taking the time to meet with us.

After going on this trip, I would highly recommend other students to take this class during their time at the University of Idaho. It was a valuable learning experience and excellent way to network with professionals in the agricultural industry.

Faculty Presentations

Paul Patterson:

- Presented “The Economics of Seed Potato Production” at the National Potato Council’s Potato Expo 2013 in Las Vegas, NV on January 10, 2013.
- Gave three presentations at the University of Idaho Potato Conference in Pocatello, Idaho on January 23, 2013, including:
 - “Zebra Chip Control Costs in Idaho for 2012”
 - “2012 Idaho Potato Production Costs and Changes from 2011”
 - “Cost of Production: What’s Ahead?”
- Presented with **Garth Taylor** and **Ben Eborn** “Idaho Agricultural Financial Condition and Outlook to the House and Senate Agricultural Affairs Committee in Boise, Idaho on January 28-29, 2013.

Cathy Roheim:

- Presented with Julie I. Santos ““Mislabeling Seafood Product Weight: Estimates of Economic Costs of Fraud,” at Aquaculture America in Nashville, Tennessee on February 24, 2013.
- Presented “Improving Sustainable Seafood Lists and Consumers’ Ability to Choose,” in the featured session “Seafood Cards – Have They Impacted the Aquaculture Industry?” at Aquaculture America in Nashville, Tennessee on February 23, 2013.

Publications

Lewin, P., Weber, B., and Holland, D., 2013. “Core-Periphery Dynamics in the Portland Oregon Region: 1982 to 2006.” *Annals of Regional Science*.

Patterson, Paul E. 2013. An Unbiased Estimate. *Potato Grower Magazine*, January 2013, pages 40-41.

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If you have information you would like to include in our next newsletter please contact the editor, Jessica Reynolds, at our new mailing address to the left or at reyn1344@vandals.uidaho.edu

We're on the Web!
www.uidaho.edu/cals/aers



Don't forget to "like" our
Facebook page!

Agribusiness Club

The Agribusiness Club is excited to wrap up the year. They had a large recruitment opportunity at both Vandal Fridays and just elected the new officer team for the 2013-2014 year. The new officers are:

President: Anna Rodriguez
Vice President: Katie Vandenberg
Secretary: Heidi Jamison
Treasurer: Mark Nebeker

Congratulations to these students!

Collegiate Farm Bureau

On March 26th, CFB had their annual Poker Night. This year's tournament had a great turnout of students from the College and everyone who attended had a great time and enjoyed the free dinner and poker game. The lucky winners of the poker tournament were Shelby Forest, Melisa Stilson, and John Hansen who all received some awesome Tri-State gift cards!

In addition to the poker tournament, the club is setting up a tour to see the Port of Lewiston on the morning of April 11. Many of the club members are excited to attend this trip and see some of the local entities.

We will be electing the 2013-14 officer team soon and are excited to wrap up this year.