

# What's Happening in AERS

Department of Agricultural  
Economics and Rural  
Sociology

University of Idaho

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## A Note from Dr. Van Tassell



It is always great to look back and reflect on a year gone by. While 2009 held some challenges, overall it was another great year for AERS.

We continued an amazing trend of having faculty, staff, and students be recognized by the college, university, and professional organizations for their wonderful accomplishments. But most of all, it was very rewarding looking back with fondness on the interactions we had with alumni and constituents during 2009. We appreciate everyone that took time out of their busy schedules to provide feedback on our alumni survey, to come to campus to guest lecture or assist with a special project, or to serve on our advisory board. You are definitely part of our accomplishments.

Here's hoping 2010 is a great year for each of you. We look forward to our continued interactions.

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## Sabbatical

**Joe Guenther** was on sabbatical leave as a Visiting Professor at the University of Wisconsin fall semester 2009. He was in the Department of Agricultural & Applied Economics where he graduated in 1974 and his grandfather was a student 100 years ago. While at UW, Guenther researched the history of potato cooperatives in the UW Center for Cooperatives.

It was a great experience and Joe is eagerly anticipating teaching and being back with the department as the Spring 2010 term begins in January.



## Awards

"Contributions to Immigrant Farmworkers to California Vegetable Production," by **Stephen Devadoss** and **Jeff Luckstead**, has been selected for the 2009 Outstanding Journal Article in the *Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics*. They are planning to attend the February meeting in Orlando for it.



# Presentations & Trips

## October

**Aaron Johnson** attended the Food Distribution Research Society Annual Meeting, October 31-November 4 in Broomfield, CO. Aaron took over the reins as President of the Society.

**Levan Elbakidze** presented a co-authored paper with A. Egbendewe-Mondzozo, "Modeling and Economic Evaluation of Effectiveness of Avian Influenza Mitigation Options", *Program of Research on the Economics of Invasive Species Management*, ERS, USDA, in Washington, DC, in October.

**Joe Guenther** went to Malawi, Africa in October as a volunteer on a USDA Farmer-to-Farmer program. He worked with a potato growers' cooperative in Ntcheu on their potato growing, storing, and marketing. The cooperative launched a new enterprise in potato chip processing and marketing.

## November



**Joe Guenther** went to Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, China in November. He made two presentations about potato marketing at the First Annual Inner Mongolia Potato Conference. Inner Mongolia is China's top potato producing province. Unlike in the United States, demand for potatoes in China is increasing rapidly.

**Abelardo Rodríguez** visited the Julian Samora Research Institute (JSRI) at Michigan State University in East Lansing for coordination meetings of the North Central Education/Extension and Research Activity *Latinos and Immigrants in Midwestern Communities* and gave a presentation entitled "Wage and Self-Employment of Latinas in Idaho" at the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the JSRI, November 5-7. As an excellent opportunity to network with extension and research staff in

12 Midwest land-grant universities, a cross-fertilization of research approaches between sociologists and economists will enrich Latino economic development programs in the Midwest and Pacific Northwest regions.

## December

**Abelardo Rodríguez** presented "Economic Development: the Community Business Matching Model" for the Nez Perce Tribe Economic Development Planner, Ann McCormack, the Tribal Liaison at the UI, Arthur Taylor, and UI Extension staffers on December 7 at Michigan State University in East Lansing. The purpose was to introduce the CBM model as an educational process that can be adapted to the needs of the Nez Perce Tribe. This model has been developed by a consortium of three universities (Nevada, Montana, Hawaii) and it has been successfully implemented in Arizona, California, Montana, and Nevada. If this educational process is implemented with the Nez Perce and UI Extension, it would be the first in Idaho and the first among the Federally Recognized Tribes in the country.

**Joe Guenther** presented a seminar on the Economics of Organic Potato Production & Marketing at the University of Wisconsin Department of Plant Pathology in December.



## SSRU Research

Community Level Impacts of Idaho's Changing Dairy Industry. 10/23/09. **Salant, P., J.D. Wulforst, S.L. Kane**, with **C. Dearien**. Available at: [http://www.uidaho.edu/cals/town\\_and\\_dairy](http://www.uidaho.edu/cals/town_and_dairy)

## AERS Seminars



## Awards

Seminars presented end of year include:

- **Dr. Aaron Mamula**, Research Economist with NOAA Fisheries Southwest Fisheries Science Center, “Economics of the Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement,” November 6
- **Kelly Cobourn**, Assistant Professor at Boise State University, "The Role of Harvest Timing in Pest Management: A Bio-economic Model of Olive Fruit Fly Infestation," November 13.
- **Kate Painter**, AERS Agricultural Economics Analyst, “Can Carbon Credits Enhance Profitability of No-Till in the Palouse?” December 4.

Two AERS students received the Alumni Award for Excellence. Awards are earned on outstanding academic record, campus accomplishments, and community involvement, and for graduate students, also on quality and potential impact of research/performance activity within their field.

**Tim Nadreau** was selected as one of twelve Graduate students receiving this recognition, along with his honored faculty **Stephen Devadoss**.

**Tricia Crump**, who has been this year’s ASUI Vice President, received Undergraduate recognition, along with her honored faculty **John Foltz**.

*“Where Agriculture Means Business”*



Seminars focus on current issues being analyzed in AERS, present the research process, and provide an opportunity for faculty, students, and agribusiness leaders to interact. Please join us!

\* Seminars are connected off-campus through Adobe Connection

## Student Internship: Feedlot Management



Pictured is **Guthrie Newell** on a Fall 2009 AgEc 398 Internship: Feedlot Management. Guthrie is from Horseshoe Bend, ID, and is a senior majoring in Agribusiness and the Business Option in Animal Science. **Neil Rimbey**, AERS faculty member in the Caldwell R&E, visited with Guthrie and his supervisor on site, Michael Archibald with Agri-Beef at Boise Valley Feeders. Neil tells us of the Guthrie’s experience which we pass on in part here:

“Guthrie is thrilled with his experience and is working on a project to come up with a maintenance plan for the feedmill. This large commercial feedlot is one of the more technologically advanced in the northwest--state of the art with computerized feed mixing, environmental issues being addressed, and a number of other learning experiences for Guthrie. Agri-Beef sends most of the finish cattle to Toppenish for processing and

Guthrie will be going there soon to see that end of the process. He is getting a mix of jobs and experience that will be invaluable to him as he pursues a career in animal agriculture.

Michael is pleased with the quality of UI students they have received and spoke very highly of Guthrie. Another call will go out for Agri-Beef interns in January. The take-home message for AERS is to keep sending them good students. Attached is a picture of Guthrie in his natural environment with a pen of black cattle.”

# Ag Ambassadors Spotlight

We have eight students who are CALS Ambassadors in the College, which features at least two of them in the “Ambassador Spotlight” each month. The November and December issues featured three of our students, **Erinn Argo**, **Tricia Crump**, and **Andy Line**. Here’s a few snippets in their words:

Erinn has been involved in the Agribusiness Club, served as an AgSAC Representative and Vice President, and is the Collegiate Farm Bureau secretary. She also works in our office and manages the AERS library. In the Spotlight, she mentioned the recent field trip to the Willamette Valley (AERS Quarterly Newsletter June 2009) and that it exposed students to different kinds of agriculture.

Tricia has been active in ASUI for three years, where she served both as a Senator and as the Vice President. She spoke of her Internship for Syngenta Seed Company the summer of 2008, and not being from a farming background, it gave her significant knowledge in a specific industry. What a fantastic opportunity to learn.

Andy is involved with the family farm, Line View Farms Inc., and started his own, Envision Farms, to help the expansion process. He says that CALS gets students involved in activities and ensures they will have the skills necessary for a lifelong career. He chose Agribusiness because it gives him practical expertise on a broad range of farm management-based careers in virtually every form of business.

CALS ambassadors represent the College and the UI to prospective students at events around the state. Through their personal contact, high school students “see” themselves as future UI students doing the same kinds of activities and loving it. And it gives these potential students great insight into extended learning opportunities, like internships, field trips, and club activities, and how they enhance their career goals.

The CALS Ambassadors program develops exceptional leaders through unique opportunities, and these ambassadors provide an invaluable service to recruitment and the UI/CALS reputation. Their commitment is stellar.

## More about CALS Ambassadors

CALS ambassadors represent the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences of the University of Idaho to prospective students at events around the state. For more information about the ambassador program, contact [Rachel Halsey](#).

<http://www.uidaho.edu/cals/people/ambassadors/meetthecalsambassadors.aspx>

*You can develop exceptional leadership and communication skills through the Ambassador program.  
You can share your collegiate experience with others while earning credit and valuable experience?*



One of the highlights for the Collegiate Farm Bureau this year has been that discussion meet winners **Alex Vigil**, Joel Zwains, and Collin Longworth continued on to the Young Farmers and Ranches discussion meet in Idaho Falls December 1-3. Alex is the club president and an AERS major.



In October, the Rodeo Club took 17 members to compete at Treasure Valley Community College Rodeo where **Sylvan La Cross**, Matt Rice, Jackie Owens, and Coti Fuller all gained points toward individual and regional standings. Sylvan is club president and an AERS major.

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**We're on the web:**

**<http://www.ag.uidaho.edu/aers>**

## **Noteworthy News**

### *The Agribusiness Club*

The October meeting focused on presentations by two student interns from last summer. **Shea Nesbitt** shared her experience with Syngenta Roger Brothers Seed in the Treasure Valley area. **Samantha Perez's** internship was with Wada Farms in southeastern Idaho. Both students had great educational experiences and got other students thinking about similar internship opportunities. Mid-October, Club members **Dustin Kreger, Samantha Perez, Katy Wunsch, and Mac Reynolds** dined with the AERS Advisory Board and did an excellent job of providing information to them about the Department from a student perspective. For the November meeting, Cynthia Mica from UI's Career Services office gave a presentation on their extensive services. At the final meeting in December, in addition to an superb potluck, the Club challenged a faculty team of Drs. Cooke, Foltz, and Watson to a Quiz Bowl. The students won both rounds, although the second game was very close when Dr. Van Tassell joined the faculty team. Regardless of the outcome, everyone had fun and the food was great.

◇ **Larry Makus & Aaron Johnson**, Club Advisors

### **SSRU**

Through a telephone survey, the SSRU completed an evaluation of the Mississippi Women in Agriculture Project conducted for Mississippi State University, which had a response rate of 64%. Also, the SSRU completed an evaluation of the Family Support 360 Project for the UI's Center on Disabilities and Human Development, with a response rate of 59% among participating families and 84% among service providers.

◇ **Stephanie Kane**, Project Manager

