

What's Happening in AERS

Department of Agricultural
Economics and Rural Sociology

University of Idaho

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A Note from Dr. Makus



Let me start this greeting with some quick updates. The AERS Department has started the process of interviewing candidates for a new Department Head. Cathy Roheim from Rhode Island visited in late March. Maureen Kilkenny from Nevada will be here in mid-April, and Al Wysocki from Florida will be here in late April. We have some excellent candidates, and are excited about the opportunity for new leadership in AERS.

I am always a little surprised and awed as spring comes again, and we approach the end of another semester. One would think maturity would lessen such surprises in life, but we can all be thankful that is not true and change continues to offer excitement. One of the exciting aspects of working at UI is that approaching the end of one academic year marks the beginning of a new “crop” of students. This year, UI is having four Vandal Friday’s where we welcome and register incoming freshmen and transfer students, and that process has already started. So far, it looks like we have good enrollment numbers, and some excellent students.

As the 2010/2011 academic year approaches its close, we send our graduating class into the workforce to begin a new career. Graduation at UI takes place on Saturday, May 14 and this is truly an exciting day for AERS and the UI campus community. Job prospects for all of our graduates are positive, and we are proud to send an outstanding group of Bachelors and Masters students toward new and exciting opportunities. Truly a time when all of those involved can feel good about the contributions we make.

As always, I hope this newsletter keeps you informed about what is going on in the AERS Department. Good health to everyone, and I hope your plans for summer can include some time for fun and relaxation. Our professional meetings are in Banff, Alberta and Pittsburgh, PA this year and our faculty and students will be participating in a variety of ways. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions about the Department. Take care.

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Upcoming Seminars

April 15 – Scott Benson from AERS will present “National Park Visitors, who they are and what they want.”

April 29 – Erin Stuen from the Department of Business will present “The Impact of Nutrient Availability on Household Fertility Decisions: Evidence from Vietnam.”



\$20 Million Grant for Climate Change Research

The AERS Department is excited to announce the involvement of several faculty members in climate change research that is part of a USDA grant awarded earlier this year to College of Agriculture faculty member Sanford Eigenbrode. This five-year, \$20 million grant is the largest single grant in the history of the University of Idaho. The research team will include researchers from Idaho, Washington State University, Oregon State University, and the USDA Agricultural Research Service.

Goals of the project include:

- Develop and implement sustainable agricultural practices for cereal production within existing and projected agroecological zones throughout the region as climate changes.
- Contribute to climate change mitigation through improved fertilizer, fuel, and pesticide use efficiency, increased sequestration of soil carbon, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions consistent with NIFA's 2030 targets.
- Increase the number of scientists, educators, and extension professionals with the skills and knowledge to address climate change and its interactions with agriculture.
- Develop the regional capacity for continued, long-term research, education, and extension efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- Determine how various factors, such as crop & energy price volatility, agro-climatic changes, emergence of ecoservices-based incentive systems, and characteristics of the operation affect the willingness and ability of producers to adopt new practices.

In order to meet these objectives, **Dr. Wulfhorst** and the **Social Science Research Unit** will conduct in-depth longitudinal interviews, key informant interviews, and a regional survey of producers. Coupled with spatial data about climate and agronomic potential, we expect to generate a spatial representation of adoption likelihood that incorporates socioeconomic variability. The models will also include socio-geographic functions to account for shifts in energy and water-use inputs due to policy, agroecosystem, and climatic factors. **Kate Painter's** research will consist of interviewing approximately 40 growers distributed across the Idaho, Washington, and Oregon study area. Growers' practices will be analyzed each year in order to study how winter wheat practices and profitability are changing across time and space. Many of these growers are using precision agriculture and direct seeding practices.

Trips & Meetings



January

Paul Patterson attended the Western Farm Management Extension Committee Annual Meeting in Tucson, AZ, Jan. 5-7, 2011.

February

Joe Guenther and **Gina Greenway** attended the 22nd Annual Midwest Organic Farming Conference in La Crosse, WI February 24-26. They met with organic farmers to collect data for an organic potato research project funded by USDA OAREI (Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative).

Farm Bureau Discussion Meet Winners Head to Florida

Discussion meet is a competition sponsored annually by the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation for young farmers and ranchers (YF&R). There are two separate competitions one for YF&R who are between the ages of 18 and 35 and a second competition (Collegiate Discussion Meet) for YF&R who are attending college.

Farm Bureau's strength depends on its members' ability to analyze agricultural issues and decide on solutions that best meet their needs. The Discussion Meet is an activity designed to build these crucial skills in young, active farmers and ranchers. By participating, members build basic discussion skills, develop a keen understanding of important agricultural issues and explore how groups can pool knowledge to reach consensus and solve problems.

Five agricultural topics or issues are chosen by a national committee each year and these topics become the foundation for that year's discussion meets held in most states. Participants in discussion meet are given the topics and allowed to study them well in advance, but are not informed until the beginning of each round of discussion which topic will be discussed. Competitions at the state and national levels can feature up to 5 rounds of discussion depending on the number of contestants.

The Idaho State Collegiate Discussion Meet was held at UI on November 9, 2010 and this competition was only open to college students and the two winners were Erica Louder, first place, and Ben Slaybaugh, second place. The runner up (third place) was Brian Heitstuman who is currently the Vice President of Collegiate Farm Bureau at UI.

Erica Louder is a sophomore at the University of Idaho majoring in Animal and Veterinary Science: Business option. Erica is a member of the Collegiate Farm Bureau, Collegiate FFA, and the Agribusiness Club. She is also currently an Ambassador for the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. Erica is from New Plymouth, Idaho where she was raised on a farming/ranching operation.

Ben Slaybaugh is a senior at the UI in Agribusiness and Crop Science and is a member of the Collegiate Farm Bureau. He is the 6th generation to grow up on the family farm in Pomeroy, Washington which is owned and operated by his father and his two brothers. They farm approximately 3000 acres of dry-land wheat and barley and also run around 150 head of Angus cows.

Congratulations to Erica and Ben as they earned an all-expense paid trip to the National YF&R Leadership Conference in Orlando on February 3 -5, Florida where they competed against the top collegiate discussion meet winners in the U.S. Students from UI have qualified for the final round of 16 the last two years. Last year (2010), Joel Zwainz an accounting student from UI made it to the semifinal round of 16 in Tulsa Oklahoma, and Alex Vigil, an Agribusiness major, landed in the semi- final round of 16 in Sacramento in 2009.

AERS Seminars

March

Chen Chen and **Stephen Cooke** presented:
"Wage Divergence between Idaho and Colorado:
Measures and Sources."



March 2011

Presentations

February

Liang 'Jimmy' Lu, under guidance of **Levan Elbakidze**, presented: "*Evaluation of Vector-Virus-Crop Interaction Under Climate Change using Simultaneous Equation Estimation*" at the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Program (RAMP) 2011 meeting at the University of Idaho on Feb 2nd, 2011.

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Awards



Alex Vigil, B.S. graduate May 2010, stopped by the department in February. Alex received two UI awards at the Student Achievement Awards in Leadership and Service last April, and Alex received the department's 2010 Outstanding Senior Award and was nominated as for Outstanding Senior award in the college. He was President of the UI Collegiate Farm Bureau, among his many accomplishments. Alex came to us as a transfer student in August 2008 from California. Upon graduation, he was a Herd Health Manager for Alfadale Stock Farms, LLC. in El Reno, OK, until mid-January. This year, from February 17-June 3, Alex will be with the International Agricultural Internship Program, USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, US Embassy in Hanoi, Viet Nam, Office of Agricultural Affairs. He's very excited about this opportunity. Fall 2011, Alex intends to seek his M.B.A. at either Harvard Business School or Price School of Business, University of Oklahoma. While Alex was looping through the area, he let us know how much AERS and the UI meant to him, and we are thrilled to hear how well he's doing. We love seeing our students and seeing where they've launched from UI.



Above: **Alex Vigil** Below: **Dr. John Foltz**



Other members of AERS that have been recognized are:

- Jeff Luckstead, Seung Mo Choi, **Stephen Devadoss**, and Ron Mittelhammer: "A decomposition of China's productivity through calibration of the neoclassical growth model," Outstanding Poster Award (First Prize) Poster Competition, School of Economics Science, Washington State University, 2011.
- **Margaret Soulen Hinson**, an advisory board member, was elected president of the American Sheep Industry Association at their convention in Reno on January 22nd. She is only the second woman in the 146 years of the association to hold this office.
- **Dr. John Foltz**, former AERS faculty member, associate dean and director of academic affairs for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at the University of Idaho received the Regional Co-op Award from the Northwest Regional Cooperative Conference. This award recognizes an individual who has impacted the future of cooperatives throughout the Northwest. He was also appointed to the USDA advisory committee on agricultural statistics. Foltz will join the 20-member advisory committee at its next meeting in February in Washington, D. C. This committee advises the Secretary of Agriculture and the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) about the census and surveys.

Congratulations to everyone!!

Ambassador Spotlight



Student ambassadors are selected to represent CALS to future students and the public at receptions, activities, and functions. Ambassadors are selected through an application and interview process after having been nominated by their professors, faculty, staff, or peers for outstanding achievement and student leadership. College ambassadors have an important responsibility in visiting high schools in Idaho and neighboring states, representing CALS at college fairs and career fairs, and by hosting the annual Ag Days event on campus. The AERS department is proud to have several outstanding students from our department serving as CALS Ambassadors this year.

Jesse Smit

Sophomore: Major in Agribusiness



My favorite thing about the UI is the number of extra-curricular opportunities that are offered. Even though it is a smaller university, Students can fill up their schedules with various clubs & organizations that provides skills & experiences that will benefit them later on in life. The University of Idaho is not just about going to class, it is about meeting new people, doing new things, & enjoying your time at college.

I have lived on campus for a little over a year now, & it has helped me connect with the college a lot. It is very important for every student to live on campus at least their first year. This makes a person interact with many new people & adapt to a new environment very quick. Social interaction & cooperation is very important in the career world & on college campus living is a great way to start.

For a 2nd year student, I have been very active. I joined the Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity my freshman year. Since then I earned the position of Recruitment officer & have participated in many of the fraternity's activities. I am a member of the Student Idaho Cattleman's Association & help with many campus-wide events.

Julie Obermeyer

Senior: Double Major in Agribusiness and Accounting



What I love about the UI is that it offers a high quality education for an affordable price. The professors truly care about their students, and will work with students individually to help them succeed. The campus is beautiful, and it has a friendly, welcoming feel that is hard to achieve on a campus the size of the UI. It is easy to become involved in a wide variety of organizations and activities, and there is always someone who is willing to guide and help me become successful as I work toward my degrees. **What do you like best about your degree?** I love my Agribusiness degree because I will be able to learn a wide range of topics, which will enable me to apply for and perform a large variety of jobs after graduation. The variety of topics taught to obtain this degree will allow me to be

employable to a large number of companies. **Career goals:** I hope to graduate with degrees in both Agribusiness and Accounting. After graduation, I hope to obtain my Certified Public Accounting certificate. I hope to find a job working as an accountant for a major agriculture firm.



Publications

Paul Patterson. Analyzing Your Farms Financial Performance. Presented at the University of Idaho Potato Conference, Pocatello, ID January 20, 2011.

Paul Patterson. Idaho Potato Production Costs in 2010, Historical Trends, and Forecast for 2011. Presented at the University of Idaho Potato Conference, Pocatello, ID January 20, 2011.

Paul Patterson. Potato Storage Economics. Presented at the University of Idaho Potato Conference, Pocatello, ID January 19, 2011.

Paul Patterson. "2010 Idaho Potato Production Costs and Changes from 2009." Presented to the Potato Cost of Production Advisory Committee, Pocatello, ID, January 18, 2011.

Paul Patterson. "Strip Tillage Economics." Presented at the University of Idaho Sugarbeet Conference, Twin Falls, ID January 14, 2011.

Christy Dearien and Priscilla Salant. "Idaho At A Glance; Hispanic and Education." February 2011.

Christy Dearien and Priscilla Salant. "Idaho At A Glance, Hispanics: An Overview." June 2010.

Christy Dearien and Priscilla Salant. "Idaho At A Glance; Hispanics: Labor Force & Economy." November 2010.

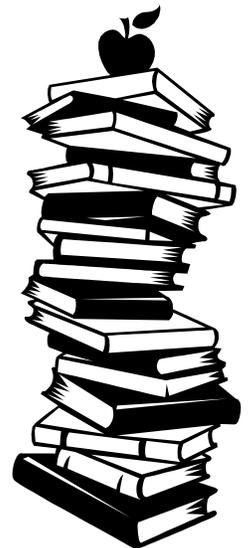
Devadoss, S. and M. Kuffel. "Is the U.S. Import Tariff on Brazilian Ethanol Justifiable?" Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics, 35(3) 2010: 4760-488.

Noteworthy News

Come and see the newly remodeled AERS Library!!

This February, we were able to add a fresh coat of paint to the AERS Library. We excitedly took this opportunity to rearrange the furniture and file cabinets, giving it a new look and creating more study space. Also, we have a white board that can be used to study or for small meetings. So, if you haven't already, come stop by the library to see the remodel!!

See you there!!



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We're on the Web!
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If you have information you would like to include in our next newsletter please contact the editor(s), Jessica Reynolds, reyn1344@vandals.uidaho.edu, or Rachael Ashley, ashl1343@vandals.uidaho.edu, or at the department address to the left.

Clubs

The Agribusiness Club

Alec Oliver, President
Aaron Johnson, Advisor

The Agribusiness club recently held new officer elections and installed a leadership team for the coming school year. The new officers are excited to implement changes this year that will help the club become more active in the AERS department, as well as focus on recruiting and involving new students. The new officer team for the 2011-2012 school year is: President: Jessica Reynolds, Vice President: Jessie Smit, Secretary: Rachael Ashley, Treasurer: Travis Chase, and AgSAC Representative: Devin Patton.

In addition, we will be hosting two fun events in April, so keep your eyes open for these special opportunities! On Wednesday, April 13th we will be having an end of the year party with a Faculty vs. Students softball tournament starting at 5:00pm and a BBQ at 6:30pm. Finally, our annual Golf Scramble Fundraiser will be on Saturday, April 23rd. For more information on the Golf Scramble, contact Jessica Reynolds at reyn1344@vandals.uidaho.edu or Alec Oliver at jaoliver@vandals.uidaho.edu. See you there!

The Collegiate Farm Bureau

Tyler Johnson, President
Joe Guenther, Advisor

The collegiate farm bureau has experienced a great growth in membership throughout this school year, while continuing to be involved on campus and in Idaho Farm Bureau events. Club members traveled to Idaho Falls to attend the Idaho Young Farmers & Ranchers leadership conference in January, and benefitted greatly from the workshops, presentations, and tours of local businesses. The club also hosted a Poker Night in late March, which was well attended and a lot of fun. Prizes included gift certificates to Tri-State for \$50-\$100. Members are looking forward to working more closely with WSU's Collegiate Farm Bureau club in the future, and planning an end of the year bowling party.

