

Association for International Agriculture and Research Development (AIARD) Summer Conference: Climate Change

The Association for International Agriculture and Rural Development (AIARD) hosted its 49th annual conference in **Washington, DC, June 2-4, 2013**. The title of this year's conference was "**Feeding the Future in a Changing Climate.**" Speakers and participants from around the world shared information about the potential impacts of climate change on global food security, with an emphasis on the most vulnerable populations in developing countries.

For more information on the conference, please visit the following [AIARD website](#).

The conference brought together leading experts to discuss climate change projections and the future of food security as the global population heads towards 9 billion by 2050. Topics included changing precipitation patterns and availability of water, impacts on crops and livestock, prevalence of pests and diseases, sustainable forest management, and balancing the needs for food, feed, and fuel. The conference also highlighted successful approaches to mitigating and adapting to climate change, including new technologies, international partnerships, and farmer-led initiatives that are already proving effective in Latin America, Africa and Asia. The final part of the conference, "An Urgent Call to Action," looked ahead to see what AIARD and its members can do to educate the public and communicate more effectively concerning climate change and its impact on food security.

Speakers represented the following institutions and shared their expertise at the conference: The International Food Policy Research Institute, Stanford University's Center on Food Security and the Environment, U.S. Agency for International Development, World Bank, EcoAgriculture Partners, CATIE (Costa Rica), U.S. Department of Agriculture, George Mason University's Center for Climate Change Communication, Global Harvest Initiative, Development Alternatives International, Total Land Care (Malawi), Michigan State University, University of Idaho, University of Missouri...and more.

AIARD is an association of professionals, practitioners, and students, representing universities, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, consulting firms, government agencies, and international organizations. The association seeks solutions to the problems of promoting effective development with a focus on the role that agriculture and rural development can play for inclusive and sustained economic growth.

International Science and Education Grant Project Director's Meeting

The Center for International Programs held a project directors (PD) meeting on May 7 for the International Science and Education (ISE) program. Fourteen PDs attended the meeting and gave oral presentations on the progress of their funded projects to date. Presentation topics ranged from a project focused on sustainable agriculture in Costa Rica to a project focused on "multiple stakeholder" education programs in China involving undergrads, graduate students, faculty, staff, agricultural business professionals and farmers.

In addition to reporting out on progress, the meeting allowed project directors to interact and discuss potential collaboration that will help enhance the impacts of their ISE projects. International engagement by universities is essential to building global competence and keeping America competitive—and ISE contributes to both. Although ISE is a small program, we believe that it has had a significant impact on developing global competence among faculty, staff and students at U.S. campuses.

For more information click [here](#).

U.S. —Canada Bilateral Meeting

Viondette Lopez represented NIFA's Center for International Programs in a U.S.-Canada bilateral meeting conducted by Catherine Woteki, Under Secretary for USDA Research, Education and Economics, and Associate Deputy Minister Siddika Mithani from Canada's Ministry of Agriculture and Agri-Food on May 6. The discussion focused on science and technology synergies and cooperation. One area identified for future engagement involves the bioeconomy. The parties will explore approaches on a *BioCenter of Excellence* to inform policy-makers and scientists about global bioeconomy developments. This engagement is based on a "Canada-U.S. Strategic Plan of Cooperation in Agricultural Research and Development." The participants recognize that the bioeconomy can contribute to rural revitalization and to multiple economic, social and environmental goals.

For more information click [here](#).

University of Florida Graduate Students visit Washington, D.C.

by Amy Harder, Associate Professor, Department of Agricultural Education & Communication, University of Florida

Since 2002, there has been a biannual northward migration of gators to the nation's capital — University of Florida Gators, that is. In April 2013, the most recent group of graduate students enrolled in a graduate course entitled "Overview of International Extension Systems" and faculty from the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication traveled for a weeklong trip to Washington, DC to visit with organizations and agencies actively involved in domestic and international extension education. This year, the group met with: NIFA program leaders, U.S. Agency for International Development, USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, National 4-H Council, Winrock International, Higher Education for Development, Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, and the Food and Agriculture Organization for the United Nations. The meetings were intended to help the students better understand agricultural development and extension throughout the world by interacting directly with key individuals responsible for leading such efforts. More specifically, the students focused on increasing their knowledge of: (a) systems and models of extension advocated by each organization to advance the livelihoods of the rural poor, (b) the methods of monitoring and evaluation used by each organization, and (c) the methods used to create and promote sustainable projects that continue once external funding expires. Additionally, the trip enabled students to learn about potential post-graduation careers. By providing opportunities to explore the application of topics learned in their coursework, this trip brought classroom learning to life for students. More informa-

tion on the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication and this course is [available online](#).

Perspectives from University of Florida's Graduate Students

from Genevieve Mendoza, master's student:

It was a privilege and an honor to meet with Mike McGirr and other leaders within NIFA. For that, I thank Mr. McGirr for giving us this opportunity. Their perspectives on international development were invaluable to me, both personally and professionally. His openness and hospitality made the trip even more memorable. Very few opportunities exist for graduate students to meet with leaders within international development, much less discuss the challenges facing it with such candor. Likewise, it was a great opportunity for him to meet with students to gain their perspective on where they may fit in the future of international development. He really did a remarkable job in organizing our visit. I know my classmates would agree that he went well above and beyond our expectations.

from S. Janine Parker, doctoral student:

The Washington, DC trip with the International Extension class was a once in a lifetime experience! I was able to meet some of the organizations and agencies I have considered for employment, allowing me to network with possible future employers. For example, we met with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, an international development organization that works in the Western hemisphere. From that meeting with high-level employees, several opportunities have already arisen; I am currently working with one of my professors on an application proposal for development work for the organization. This truly was a life-changing event, and I am completely satisfied with my experience.

Joint Conference: "Extension's Critical Global Role"

On April 17 NIFA hosted a first-ever meeting titled "Extension's Critical Global Role" between members of the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services leadership and colleagues from the U.S. Cooperative Extension System (CES). Several members of the CES participated in the meeting through webcast.

For more information on the discussed topics and results, or to request to view the recording of the session, contact us [here](#).

University of Georgia: Partnerships for Precision Agriculture

Hands Across the Water: CAES students and researchers partner with U.S., European colleagues to share latest developments in precision agriculture.
by [J. Merritt Melancon](#)

Thousands of miles may separate Georgia and Europe, but farmers on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean face similar problems: dwindling water supplies, rising expenses, increasing competition from the developing world and the need to produce more from their land while protecting the environment.

University of Georgia (UGA) students and researchers are working with their Euro-

pean colleagues to share the latest developments in precision agriculture under the umbrella of the TransAtlantic Precision Agriculture Consortium (TAPAC). Precision agriculture is an agricultural management strategy that helps increase the efficiency of food production.

TAPAC started 8 years ago as a way for students and researchers to gain common experiences, share ideas and promote mutual understanding. The consortium includes UGA, Auburn University, the University of Thessaly in Greece, the University of Padova in Italy and the Technical University of Munich in Germany.

NIFA's International Science and Education Program supports the project.

George Vellidis, a professor of crop and soil sciences with the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, coordinates the international effort.

"This partnership has allowed us to stay on the cutting edge of precision agriculture developments by constantly sharing what has been going on at our institutions and in our countries," Vellidis said. "It also has allowed us to train students who are technically skilled and culturally comfortable on two continents."

Vellidis and a group of researchers from the partner universities traveled together to Greece, Italy and Germany earlier this month to present their research to farmers, agricultural specialists and regional and national policymakers. Current and former exchange students also presented at the workshops, which promote the adoption of precision agriculture strategies that have been successful in Europe and the United States.

TAPAC initially focused on undergraduate student exchange internships but it has been focusing on graduate student exchanges since 2010.

Graduate students from UGA and Auburn are conducting their master's thesis work at the partner universities in Europe while European students are doing the same at the American partner universities.

Jay Bevington, an environmental engineering graduate student at UGA, currently is conducting his thesis research at the University of Padova where he is investigating saltwater intrusion into the agricultural region's groundwater. UGA faculty members on his committee include Vellidis, David Radcliffe from crop and soil sciences, and Christof Meile from marine sciences. Camden Lowrance, a new graduate student in crop and soil sciences, will head to the University of Thessaly in December, where he will be studying grape yield and quality in Greek vineyards. An Auburn graduate student will be going to the Technical University of Munich.

Currently, Vellidis is hosting University of Padova student Camilla Borgato, who is pursuing her master's degree in environmental sciences.

The workshops will be repeated in Alabama and Georgia at the end of January 2014. For more information on these workshops or for other information about this article, contact [George Vellidis](#).

Recent Visitors to CIP

CIP has recently hosted a number of visitors from various national and international universities and organizations, including:

—Dr. Joe Molnar, professor and coordinator of Auburn University's Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology and Office of International Agriculture

—Dr. Rick Koelsch, assistant dean, Extension, University of Nebraska--Lincoln

—Dr. Larry Jones, program development and evaluation, University of Wisconsin - Extension

—Dr. Jennifer Kushner, program and evaluation specialist, University of Wisconsin – Extension

—Dr. Tim Kock, assistant director, International Programs in Agriculture and Natural Resources (IPAN), University of Maryland

—Mr. Andre Zandstra, donor relations, International Center for Tropical Agriculture, Colombia

Other Newsletters

In this new section, we feature newsletters from colleagues and stakeholders that may be of interest. Please note that the opinions reflected in these newsletters do not necessarily reflect those of USDA or its affiliates.

[Global Update - Newsletter of Global Programs, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Iowa State University](#)

[Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services \(GFRAS\)](#)

[International Food Policy Research Institute](#)

Recent Webinars

[American Cooperatives and their Experiences Abroad](#)

featuring Paul Hazen from the U.S. Overseas Cooperative Development Council

[Bioenergy and Food Security: Approaches from FAO](#)

featuring Erika Ruth Felix from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization

To have your newsletter or funding opportunity featured click [here](#).

For archived copies of *Global Endeavors* click [here](#).

To view recordings of past webinars click [here](#).

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