



# Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics

## Newsletter

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The Department has had a busy semester and it's hard to believe that it has come to a close so quickly. We have reached near-record highs for undergraduate enrollment, with our ranks swelling to 100+ majors.

The graduate program has seen an increase in applications, and we look forward to nine graduate students joining us next year

from around the world. Our faculty continues to be recognized for their outstanding contributions to teaching, research, and extension.

One of our alumni, Bill Finch '79, was the commencement speaker for the College's ceremony on May 9, 2009. Now the mayor of Bridgeport, Finch is using his undergraduate degree in Resource Economics in a variety of ways. In his speech at commencement, Finch encouraged graduating seniors to embrace the forthcoming green collar economy.

I wish you a relaxing summer.

**Rigoberto Lopez, Professor and Department Head**

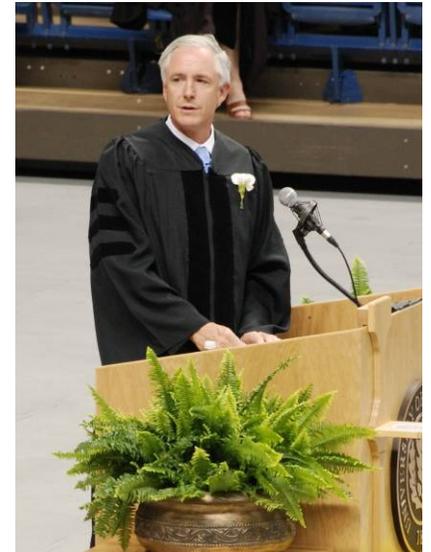


photo: Brielle Murphy

*"There is no free lunch when it comes to saving the planet and how we live our lives."—Bill Finch '79 at Commencement 2009*



Professor Boris Bravo-Ureta has returned to the Department following 10 years as the Executive Director of the University's Office of International Affairs.

Always a believer that international travel and activities are an essential part of the educational experience of students and the continued research and field experience of faculty—he has

## Boris Bravo-Ureta rejoins Department

visited an estimated 60-70 countries himself and wants to see more—Bravo-Ureta committed himself to raising the University's international profile while still continuing his research activities in ARE (he jokes that he called his office across campus at International Affairs "AgEcon South") and advising graduate students.

A sought-after speaker around the world in his fields of specialization (Production Economics, Resource Economics, Agricultural and Economic Development and Project Evaluation), Bravo-Ureta has worked on a variety of research projects including agrarian structure in Latin America, project monitoring and evaluation,

supply response, and productivity analysis, among others.

He is director on a variety of projects, including recent work in East Africa to improve livelihoods of farm households in peanut-based farming systems.

His recent work with LID (Learning for International Development) has brought people from around the world to the Department for international training—recent visitors included members of Kenya's Department of Finance.

Bravo-Ureta says that he is enjoying being on "this side" of campus, and returning to the classroom, something he is passionate about. "Being in administration", he says, "I missed being with students in the classroom and I'm happy to be back teaching"

## Student Profile: John Tortorella '09



*"UConn has been a great overall environment—especially in the Department. I wasn't expecting it coming to a big school."*

—John Tortorella '09

Resource Economics major John Tortorella knew that he was interested in the environment and wanted to pursue a career in the field from as early as he can recall.

After his acceptance to UConn's Honors Program, he signed up as an Environmental Science major and began taking classes to fulfill his General Education requirements.

John says that he started out looking at the big picture of Environmental Science, but after taking ARE 1150, he soon saw the ways that the field of Re-

source Economics could apply his interests to real-world situations.

Guided by Rob Johnston, Associate Professor, Agricultural and Resource Economics (2005–2008), John worked on a survey project that assessed residents of the Saugatuck River watershed on land use.

A 2008 internship through UConn in Capetown, South Africa allowed John to work with rural South Africans at a disadvantage for job opportunities due to their remote location in the Western Cape Province. John, in conjunction with the Capenature Conservation, helped residents with business development skills.

John says "UConn has been a great overall environment—especially in the Department (of Agricultural and Resource Economics). I wasn't expecting it coming to a big school.

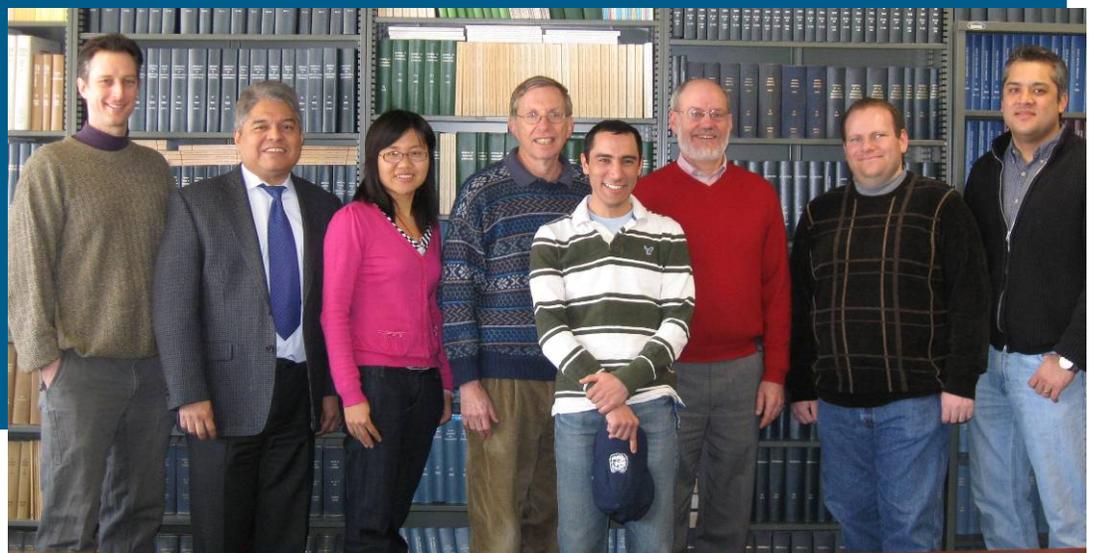
John has enrolled in Duke University's graduate program in Environmental Sciences Management and hopes to go on to a career in sustainable development, energy, or at an NGO where he can meet real-world challenges through a combination of analytical and communications skills.

## Sylvie Tchumtchoua wins awards

Congratulations to Sylvie Tchumtchoua, (Ph.D. '09) on receiving the Pi Kappa Phi Award. Sylvie will be awarded funds in research support and a Phi Kappa Phi Medal. Sylvie is also the winner of the 2009 Mitofsky Awards for Excellence in Public Opinion Research for "Modeling Associations Between Multivariate Longitudinal Categorical Variables in Survey Data." Her faculty sponsor was Dipak Dey. The award provides graduate students \$1200 to conduct research during the summer using data in the Roper Center archives. She is continuing on to her second Ph.D.—this time in statistics.



**Jerry A. Hausman, Professor of Economics at MIT, spoke at UConn on February 6, 2009 at the Dodd Center Auditorium on "A Bayesian Mixed Logit-Probit Model for Multinomial Choice". He is pictured here fourth from the left with graduate students and faculty members in the Department.**



## Graduates speak to Resource Economics Club

Resource Economics alumni Rob Montesi '92 and Paul Luciano '06, MBA '08 spoke to the Resource Economics Club on Thursday, March 26, 2009. Rob Montesi has had a successful career in sales, marketing, and new media at television stations in Connecticut, and is now Vice President and a commercial real estate broker with The New Haven Group.

Montesi spoke to students about his career path and the ways that he's used the degree to develop analytical skills, the ability to think creatively, and to work as part of a team. The area of green building, Montesi said, is growing and encouraged students to explore careers in that area. Paul Luciano continued directly into UConn's MBA program after graduating in 2006. A former manager of UConn's student managed fund, Luciano discussed how he used resource economics in finance and discussed his work with a biofuels company. He is currently pursuing a career in finance and aided students with his suggestions on how to seek out opportunities in the field.

Led by Professor Linda Lee, the Resource Economics Club provides majors with the opportunity to hear speakers from the field of agricultural and resource economics, learn about career opportunities, and network with fellow majors. For more information, please contact Linda Lee at [linda.lee@uconn.edu](mailto:linda.lee@uconn.edu).



From left: Rob Montesi '92, Linda Lee, and Paul Luciano '06, MBA '08



photo: Brielle Murphy

## Congratulations May 2009 Graduates!

**Bachelor of Science:** Dale Brannon, Scott Cohen, Bianca Fratarcangeli, Peter Frizell, Jr., Nichole Gales, Stephen Gray, John Johnston, Daniel Kingsbury, Raymond Meisch, Sanjay Pai, Andrew Petardi, Akeem Priestley, Valerie Pulver, Cassandra Schick, John Tortorella, and Jaclyn Yoder.

**Master of Science:** Alexandre De Almeida, Mohammed Bouras, Elena Castellari, Deep Mukherjee, and Minjuan Zhao.

**Doctorate:** Yoon Lee, Xiaou Liu, and Sylvie Tchumtchoua.

## Faculty News

Linda Lee oversaw the Farm Credit Fellows program, an internship program held this semester to introduce students to careers in the Farm Credit System. Pictured left: Linda Lee, ARE majors John Johnston, Chelsea Williams, and Peter Frizell, and Economics major Justin Speers. Far right: Nick Celentano '07, now employed with Farm Credit, internship coordinator. A report prepared by the Department for the Connecticut State Legislature examined the Connecticut Dairy industry and its scope and impact on the economy of the state and proved that it is a major player, providing nearly \$1 billion in statewide sales and 4000 jobs through supplier and interrelated sectors.

**Robert Pomeroy** was the 2009 winner of the College's Excellence in Outreach Award for his work and research on fisheries and coastal management in Southeast Asia through SeaGrant at UConn's Avery Point campus. He is also the author of the number 3 of the top 10 most cited articles in the journal *Ocean and Coastal Management* and the numbers 5 and 10 of the top ten most cited articles in the journal *Marine Policy*. **Syma Ebbin** was a winner of UConn's 2008-2009 Environmental Leadership Award with the Avery Point Campus Environmental Awareness Team for their dedication and contributions to making UConn and environmentally sustainable campus. **Boris Bravo-Ureta** has recently returned from the University of Oviedo in Spain, where he served on a graduate committee for Alan Wall's Ph.D. thesis "Essays on Production Risk." **Rigoberto Lopez** has recently returned from the University of Foggia in Italy, where he gave a keynote presentation and presided over three Ph.D. defenses. **Ronald Cotterill** and graduate research assistant Adam Rabinowitz provided testimony to the Connecticut Legislature Environment Committee on the need for new milk pricing policies.



## Dorothy Goodwin Fund for International Experiences



Dorothy Goodwin with University President John Casteen in 1988.  
photo: University Archives

A spirit of adventure and a commitment to giving back are qualities that Dorothy Goodwin, UConn's first Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics, embodied. Her legacy lives on through the Dorothy Goodwin Fund for International Experiences that supports students from the Department in research, project development, training, and educational experiences outside of the United States.

Her passion for international travel and experiences was developed following her graduation from Smith College in 1937, when she worked for organizations including the Department of Economic Warfare and the U.S. Foreign Agriculture Organization. Following completion of her Ph. D. in the Department, she worked at UConn for twenty-two years as a professor and assistant provost before retiring in 1965. She was elected to the Connecticut House of Representatives in 1974 and served five terms until 1984 when she was appointed to the state Board of Education where she worked until 1980.

She passed away at age 92 in 2007. Always committed to public service, Goodwin said "*The greatest satisfactions in life come out of doing something useful for somebody other than yourself.*" This quote is now engraved at the entrance of the Mansfield Elementary School that bears her name.

Several awards from the Dorothy Goodwin Fund for International Experiences are granted per year from \$2,500 up to \$5,000 to cover research expenses, travel, communication and supplies.

The following articles highlight the five recipients of the award and their plans for study, research, and travel in summer and fall 2009.

### Umi Muawanah: West Papua and Tanimbar Kei, Indonesia



"Tradition is decaying...

The infiltration of modern technologies into the rural areas is destroying tradition."

—Umi Muawanah

Do traditional ways of managing natural resources with an eye towards sustainability work better than modern methods that ONLY employ scientific data?

Umi Muawanah, a graduate student in the Department, will be using funds from CESE and the Dorothy Goodwin Fund for International Experiences to survey the effectiveness of using *sasi*, a centuries-old method of seasonable openings of fisheries to both conserve the natural resource and fish stock in Indonesia's coastal villages.

Reliant upon subjective knowledge of villagers and tradition rather than hard science, *sasi* has fallen out of favor in response to modern technologies and the use of Marine

Protected Areas (MPAs), "a clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated, and managed, through legal or effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem service and cultural value (International Union for Conservation of Nature)."

Muawanah says that the current move towards creating more and more MPAs in Indonesia—100,000 km<sup>2</sup> is targeted to become MPAs before 2010—and elsewhere is a great way to conserve the environment, but may not have the most beneficial effect on those that depend on the natural resource being conserved.

Overfishing is a problem around the world, and especially in Java and Sumatra in

Indonesia, and she feels it is important to consider coastal fisherman's welfare. With the help of Professor Robert Pomeroy, her cross-disciplinary research will begin in West Papua in June, 2009, where she will work with LMMA (Locally Managed Marine Protected Areas) to streamline her secondary data. She will then head to an island off Tanimbar Kei of Molucca to begin her studies while living with the villagers.

Muawanah says that she can't wait to begin her research and believes she has found the perfect place in which to do it. "Tradition is decaying", she says. "The infiltration of modern technologies into the rural areas is destroying tradition."





## Anthony Ortiz: Penang, Malaysia and Aceh, Indonesia

Ortiz’s experience in Indonesia began in 2004 following the devastation of the tsunami. Hired by NGOs to coordinate media efforts between non-Indonesian speakers and local stakeholders, Ortiz used his Indonesian fluency to secure positions with influential news agencies around the world.

Now in the U.S. working on a graduate degree in ARE, Ortiz is seeking to find out if the microgrants—small, one-time loans—given by NGOs around the time of the tsunami are making a difference. Examples of such loans might include buying nets for fishermen or buying a cow for a family.

Ortiz wonders if any long-term benefits are being reaped from such loans, and working with Professor Bob Pomeroy and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), he started his research in Penang, Malaysia on May 24, 2009 to begin discussions with WorldFish, a NGO. He will organize his research methods and find the best places to study the effectiveness of microgrants and will then head to Aceh through August 30, 2009.



## Tsvetan Tsvetanov: Cremona, Italy

A first year graduate student in the Department, Tsvetanov will be using funding from the Dorothy Goodwin Fund for International Experiences to travel to Cremona, Italy in June, 2009 to attend a 12-day workshop entitled “Quality Differentiated Markets in the Food System.”

Taught by University of California-Davis professor Richard J. Sexton, the course will focus on imperfect competition and quality-differentiated markets in the food sector and will emphasize analytic models and address the role of geographical indicators and related producer organizations in creating product differentiation and influencing quality. Tsvetanov is looking for a research topic and hopes that this class will solidify his interests in an applied area of Agricultural and Resource Economics while experiencing the Italian culture and networking with Italian colleagues.



## Chelsea Briggs: Florence, Italy

Undergraduate student Chelsea Briggs will be joining Animal Science Professor Sheila Andrew and a group of other students on an exciting academic experience in Fall 2009 in Florence, Italy. The program, UConn Agriculture in Florence, will expose students to a variety of agriculturally-based businesses, including a dairy farm, a beef operation, an olive orchard, and a vineyard for one week each, followed by a written project where students will investigate the Italian approach to animal nutrition, economics, organics, biodiversity, and the relationship between society and food. In addition, students will take classes in animal nutrition, the history of food and agriculture in Italy, and a comparison of Italian farming and sustainable agricultural practices. Briggs says she has always wanted to go to Italy but found that most programs were usually humanities-based. Finding this opportunity with Dr. Andrew that directly tied in to her work in Resource Economics was, she says, just what she was looking for. Hoping to gain language skills as well, she has already begun studying Italian.

## Kendall Erskine: Granada, Malaga, Cadiz, and Seville, Spain



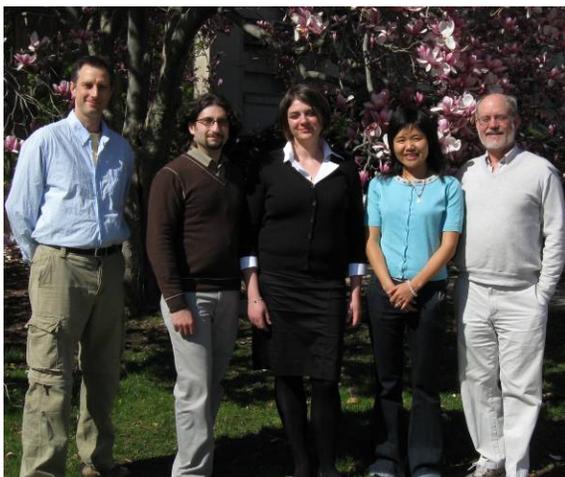
Undergraduate student Kendall Erskine will both study and gain hands-on experience in the agricultural field through a six-month program in several locations in Spain. She will spend June, July, and August 2009 volunteering on organic farms in Granada, Malaga, and Cadiz through World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOF). She will then travel to Seville, where she will spend the fall semester studying Spanish, international trade, finance, and marketing, the European economy, and business writing. A double major in Resource Economics and Spanish, Kendall is passionate about travel and hopes to broaden her international perspective on business and economics.



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## Alumni News



Graduate student Charles Rhodes, Alessandro Bonanno (Ph.D. '07), Elena Castellari (MS. '09), Assistant Professor Rui Huang, and Professor Ronald Cotterill, Food Marketing Policy Center Director following the defense of Castellari's thesis, "Consumer Fluid Milk Market in Italy: Consumer Behavior and Industry-level Brand Competitiveness."

**Alessandro Bonanno** (Ph.D. '07) visited the Department in April for the defense of Elena Castellari's master's thesis. He is Assistant Professor of Agricultural Economics at Pennsylvania State University.

**Gianluca Nardone** (Ph.D. '94) is a Professor and Director of the Agecon Department and Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Foggia in Italy. He is also working as the General Manager of a Technological District that promotes innovation in the Food Industry in Italy.

**John Mott** (M.S. '00) recently returned from a one-year voluntary assignment to Afghanistan with the USDA to help rebuild the country's agricultural sector. An agricultural economist with the USDA's Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration in Denver, CO, John served as a USA Provincial Reconstruction Team agricultural advisor in the Khost Provincial Reconstruction Team.

**Tae-Hee Yoon** (Ph.D. '67) is the founding chairman of Korea Economic Intelligence (KEI), a firm that provides strategic business consulting services for clients. He is also a senior advisor to the International Finance Corporation, a private sector development arm of the World Bank Group in Washington, DC. He represented Korea at the 2003 Davos World Economic Forum with the article "Turning Adversity into Opportunity" in *Global Agenda*, the official magazine of the Forum.

**Xiaoou Liu** (Ph.D. '09) has accepted an Assistant Professor position at Shandong University in China, one of China's top ten universities. She will focus on teaching and research and will begin her new position in August, 2009.