Dr. Chris Boessen wins Outstanding Adviser Award

Chris Boessen received the Outstanding Adviser for Undergraduate Advising honor. He earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees and Ph.D. in agricultural economics from the University of Missouri. He joined the University of Missouri in 2006 as a teaching assistant professor, and has served as a teaching associate professor since 2014. “Dr. Boessen is more than a teacher; he is a mentor and a friend to many students. He tells them what they need to hear, not what they want to hear. His teaching and mentoring initiatives have improved the quality of education in the Department, at the College level, and across the University of Missouri campus. Chris prepares students to succeed, whether it is in the area of agricultural finance, new products marketing, or international agribusiness,” said Joe Parcell, professor and department chair, agricultural and applied economics.

Ag Econ Student Maria Kalaitzandonakes named a 2016 Truman Scholar

Mizzou junior Maria Kalaitzandonakes has been awarded the Harry S Truman Scholarship, a nationally-competitive award that supports students dedicated to public service. Selections for the Truman Scholarship are chosen on the basis of their academic success and leadership accomplishments, as well as their likelihood of becoming public service leaders.

“I can hardly believe I was selected a Truman Scholar,” Kalaitzandonakes said. “Being selected is so emotionally overwhelming because it shows me how many people back me and my goals in food security, and that the national selection committee, Mizzou and CAFNR [MU’s College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources] believe in me.”

Kalaitzandonakes is a double major in agricultural economics and science and agricultural journalism. With the Truman Scholarship, she plans to pursue a master’s degree in public policy.

For more information regarding Maria and her achievements click here.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

The pages of the 2016 Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics Alumni Newsletter is filled with success stories of the past eight months. While it would be impossible to be on the MU campus and not be aware of the various issues, learning and research have gone forward with tremendous success. Department teachers and staff refused to allow distractions to detract the core of MU, learning and discovery. I recently had a student ask me, “will the campus events impact my career opportunities?” I responded, “Good question. The answer is no. Employers know MU agribusiness and agricultural economics students are respectful, intelligent, and hard working.” I am proud of all of the students. A degree from AAE is a valuable degree, and this value will remain. Best wishes to all in 2016.

Joe Parcell
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Emma Downing, Agricultural Economics Major wins Outstanding Freshman

Emma Downing, Warrensburg, MO., was named Outstanding Freshman of the Year. She is an active member of Sigma Alpha Professional Sorority, MU Collegiate Farm Bureau and MU Baptist Student Union. She is a conference assistant for Missouri FBLA-Phi Beta Lambda, planning for several state and district conferences. “Emma has always packed a quiet confidence that hinted at her openness to see what was out there and that same demeanor highlights her capable, committed and mature approach. She is a self-starter. It is not uncommon to see her put extra time and effort into tasks and goals she has set for herself,” said Kendra Stinson, Sigma Alpha president.

Spotlight on an alumna: Dr. Joan Cuka Kagwanja


Dr. Kagwanja is a Kenyan national and holds a PhD in Agricultural Economics from the University of Missouri. She has over 15 years experience in African development, having held several positions at the United Nations.

FAPRI Policy team wins big!

DASS faculty members Patrick Westhoff, director of the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute, and Peter Zimmel, program director of the Representative Farms Project for FAPRI-MU, recently accepted three important awards for their work. The DASS team accepted the Texas A&M Vice Chancellor’s Award in Excellence for their efforts to help farmers and policy makers understand the implications of farm bill choices. The FAPRI-MU team, in collaboration with the Agricultural and Food Policy Center at Texas A&M, created a computer program that helped over 40,000 farmers make more informed choices about farm program decisions under the 2014 farm bill.

Westhoff, Zimmel and FAPRI research associate Scott Gerlt were also awarded the Southern Agricultural Economics Association Extension Award for this work.

In addition, Westhoff received the USDA Economists Group Bruce Gardner Award for the analysis he and his colleagues have provided USDA and Congress.

OTHER FEATURED STORIES

Linda Sowers brings practical knowledge and expertise to the classroom
Read more here...

Garrett Riekhof, 2003 department alum, discusses how he makes family farming work on his farm
Read more here...

Alum Caleb Colbert recognized as one of Columbia Business Time’s 2016 20 Under 40
Read more here...

Department study finds small biomass power plants could help rural economies
Read more here...
On April 8th, students and department faculty visited four agribusinesses in the Columbia area. The first stop of the day was Missouri Pacific Lumber—a furniture grade lumber company that specializes in American Black Walnut Timber. Bucky and Ryan Pescaglia gave the students and tour and explained how black walnut wood must be steamed and dried before it is ready for sale. Missouri Pacific Lumber sells most of their lumber to furniture companies both within the United States and globally. After the stop in Fayette at the lumber company, the students ventured to Glasgow MFA. The students learned about how cooperative systems distribute their products and services like seed and fertilizer to customers in rural Missouri. The third stop of the day was Orscheln’s Farm and Home Retail Support Center. Chris Belden led the students through the huge distribution warehouse while explaining the process through which the products undergo before reaching the retail stores. The students finished their trip at Stanton Brother’s Eggs in Centralia. Stanton Bros Eggs is the largest independent cage free laying farm in the United States. The students toured the farm and experienced cage free chickens firsthand. Brothers Dustin and Austin Stanton informed the students that their chickens supply eggs to area grocery stores, the university, and even schools.

DEPARTMENT HOSTS SPEED NETWORKING EVENT

This year’s Agribusiness Tour was a well-rounded trip highlighting many different areas of agribusiness. Students and faculty walked away with a more diverse knowledge of the possibilities agribusiness contains.

The first "Speed Networking" event was held on September 21, 2015 at Memorial Union. There were 79 undergraduate agricultural and applied economics and agribusiness management majors and 22 employees in the agricultural sectors of sales, commodity merchandising, finance, insurance and policy in attendance. The event allowed undergraduate students the opportunity to network with employers and learn more about career opportunities with each sector. The students were given 10 minutes at each table relating to the different agricultural sectors. The professionals spoke with the students about what their jobs entailed and how to obtain a job in their field. After receiving good feedback from both the professionals and students, the department plans to make the networking event an annual event.
This year the National Agri-Marketing Association (NAMA) Conference was held in Kansas City, Missouri on April 12 through 15. Mizzou’s collegiate chapter of NAMA attended and competed in the student competition portion of the conference. The students developed a marketing plan and executive summary for the product they chose – a subsurface irrigation emitter for orchard producers in California. The students presented their summary in front of three judges and competed against twenty-nine other schools. While attending the conference, the student’s also had the chance to network with professionals in the agri-marketing field and attend a career fair and breakout sessions. After receiving much inspiration from other competitors and professionals, the students have already begun working on their project for next year.

Members of the Agribusiness Club competed and excelled at the Southern Agricultural Economics Association Quiz Bowl Competition in San Antonio, Texas. The Quiz Bowl had a record turn out of 140 students on 46 teams from 22 universities. The students are placed on mixed teams with students from other universities. At the end of the first day of competition, Mizzou was represented on three of the eight surviving teams. On the final day of competition, Mizzou students were on two of the four finalists and one student was a member of the second place team. The Quiz Bowl was a great showing for MU Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics and highlighted all the great things students learn in the department.

Morgan Beach has been named the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources’ Outstanding Senior for Spring 2016. Beach, from Pilot Grove, Missouri, graduated with a Bachelor’s of Science degree in agricultural economics with an emphasis in public policy. She also earned minors in international agriculture, rural sociology and leadership.

She was quoted as saying “I can sleep after I graduate!” Beach was involved in CAFNR through Agriculture Future of America, Collegiate Farm Bureau, Sigma Alpha, CAFNR Student Council, CAFNR Week Steering Committee, Litton Leadership Scholars, Dickinson and John Brown Scholars programs and Mizzou 4-H. She has also had internships both in state and out of state. Beach was also named CAFNR’s Outstanding Freshman in 2013.

A nominator stated, “While some seniors slow down to enjoy their last year, Morgan continues to push to maximize her CAFNR experience.” Beach is moving to Washington, D.C., after graduation and plans to become involved in the political scene.
Born in one of the biggest cities on the planet, my childhood was divided between two “worlds”. In the first, a typical urban lifestyle in São Paulo, a urban agglomeration marked by its multicultural influences. In the second, restricted to holidays and vacations, first-hand accounts of the routine of a Brazilian dairy farm. The raconteur: my grandfather. At 17 years old, faced with the need to decide what to study in college, the desire to learn about the hopes and concerns of people from different cultures led me to choose a career in International Relations. During the following four years, a third "world" would be revealed to me: the one "inhabited" by researchers. At the University of São Paulo, not only the frontiers of my worldview expanded, fostered by hundreds of pages and the exchange of ideas with several inspiring colleagues. For the first time, I found a dimension where my diverse influences and interests could all fit. Ask anybody who lives in the same "world": once you cross the gate, things will never be the same again! For each accomplished mission, dozens of new questions emerge.

It was the search for answers that took me to the PhD program at the University of Missouri. More specifically, I am interested in understanding how individuals organize their daily economic activities. Since 2012, I have worked under the supervision of Dr. Fabio Chaddad with the goal to identify the drivers of grape sourcing decisions in the U.S. wine industry. What comes next? Certainly a lot of exciting research puzzles to be solved. And, above all, insights that will help me to make sense of the many "worlds" I belong to.

Current visiting scholars assigned to work with Department of Applied Social Sciences and staff are (left to right):

- Erika Carnevale from Italy, working with Thomas Johnson
- Julien Cadot from France, working with Michael Cook
- Lijun Chen from China, working with Joe Parcell
- Hildo Meirelles de Souza Filho from Brazil, working with Fabio Chaddad
- Xinyu Gao from China, working with Hua Qin

Not pictured are Kija Bunyecha, Mary Carey, Xianping Jia and Kwang Sun Kim