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China, FAMU Research Potentially Invasive Pests

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China, FAMU Research Potential Invasive Pest

Cover Story: China and FAMU Collaborate on Potential Invasive Pest Weevil Species Research

By Cynthia Portalatin

The groundwork for collaborative research between Florida A&M University (FAMU) and the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Institute of Zoology (CAS-IOZ) on potential invasive pest weevil species was initiated in July of 2013 by Muhammad Haseeb, Ph.D., and Charles O’Brien, Ph.D. (Emeritus Professor FAMU). Both travelled to the institute in Beijing, China for three weeks last summer.

“The project has several objectives. One is to train exchange students on the potential invasive pest weevil species using various commodities that has implication for trade, food security, and natural resources,” said Haseeb. “This is the work which we started that led to having an exchange student.”

Graduate student Chunyan Jiang, from CAS-IOZ, recently completed a six-month research exchange term at FAMU’s College of Agriculture and Food Sciences which began in October 2015.

“Internationally, we do good collaboration, because this really helps to recruit graduate students and strengthen the partnerships to carry out research work of mutual interests,” said Haseeb. “We are very active in the Caribbean basin, Central America, South America, and we have been collaborating the last three years with Runzhi Zhang, Ph.D., who is the IOZ Director and also Jiang’s major professor.”

FAMU has five-year, active Memorandum of Understanding with CAS-IOZ for collaborative research work and training exchange students and faculty.

Jiang received weevil taxonomy training at FAMU and was part of the surveys and collection work on the weevil species. She learned and gained hands-on experience with the terrestrial and aquatic ecology of Florida with respect to weevil species.

“There are currently opportunities for CAFS graduate students to travel to CAS-IOZ to carry out part of their research work in China, particularly during the summer months,” said Haseeb.

Jiang said the research methods used to identify pests in China are similar in how they identify and provide diagnosis to pest problems.

“The only difference is your (United States) studies are at a university, and my institute is like an agency, similar to USDA. In our institute, most students do only research. Here it’s different because of the course work,” said Jiang.

“FAMU’s course work has added a new dimension to Jiang’s studies, because it is combined with field, laboratory, and research work,” said Haseeb.

During her exchange training she has participated and presented her research findings, at the Entomological Society of America’s annual meeting held in Minnesota, and the Society of Florida Entomologists held in Fort Myers, Fla.

(Continued on page 3—Exchange Student Contributes to Global Entomology Research)
Jian said her favorite experience during her time at FAMU was meeting of the American Entomologists Society and presenting a poster at the conference, especially the student participation and competition.

“I like when students get together to do one thing. Collaboration is a powerful thing,” she said. “I’m very grateful to FAMU, to the Center for Biological Control and especially to Dr. Haseeb. They helped me a lot in the area of research.”

Her advice for fellow students in China: “First, that you should love your major. That is the most important thing. Second, be hard working and have patience. Patience, especially for taxonomy, is very important. And the third is have an open mind (and) open eyes. Students at (my) university or institute only major in research, and they should open their minds and eyes to learn other things that can create new ideas. Research needs new ideas.”

Jiang’s major – weevil taxonomy – allows her to conduct basic research that she hopes will help develop a solution to the problem of potentially invasive species and groups of pests from other countries. As she finds the commonalities between species of pests, the research she’s conducting will help better identify how many other species within the genus exist to better protect crops and keep them out of the country.

“They are coming in any way you can imagine. This is the work of our quarantine departments (in China) - for example, if you travel to another country, you like rice produced in your country. Maybe you go abroad for one year. So, you want to take your food there, and likely, maybe there are some eggs or larvae (in the food),” said Jiang.

She added that most eggs are microscopic, and in this manner pests can be transported accidentally from one country to another. The pests are so tiny, that they are sometimes not visible to the naked eye and can be carried to other countries on ships carrying plants and animals. The weevil insect can also spread through the air, as it is very good at flying, and is often transported with the wind.

“Any insect that can fly means it has more chance to invade the other areas,” said Haseeb. “And in China, rice is grown extensively; so food is everywhere. So it can go from one place to another in such space-affected com-

rice with varieties and cultivars.”

“In my native country this rice water weevil, this invasive pest, has already spread in most of the provinces of China,” said Jiang. She estimates that in China, it has spread throughout two-thirds of the country’s provinces. In the United States, it has spread to about 50 percent of the country.

“This species has many trade implications, because the United States exports (and) imports a lot of products we need to feed our population.

USDA APHIS inspectors intercept problem shipments and either fumigate or send them back to originating countries,” Haseeb explained.

Jiang is working toward earning her doctoral degree and has worked within this particular research group for two years. Eligible to graduate in 2018, she wants to conduct deeper research and therefore will extend her studies to 2019.

“When you become a professor, or an expert, you can help the quarantine department to identify, do some work to prevent this, or make a list (of invasive species),” said Jiang. “I want to find a job in the Institute of Zoology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, because in there you can be a

(Continued on page 4 — FAMU, China Collaborate on Invasive Rice Weevil Pest Research)
professor and you have more time to major on this genus or a similar genus.”

According to Jiang, a real entomologist needs 10 years of study. She plans to continue research to help prevent the genus from causing more harm or entering the country.

Muhammad Haseeb, Ph.D., has been a faculty member of FAMU’s Center for Biological Control for over 14 years as a research associate, research scientist and research entomologist. Haseeb teaches graduate level courses at FAMU and supervises undergraduate and graduate students in research for urban pest management and integrated pest management. He currently teaches three courses.

For more information on graduate exchange student opportunities contact:
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Florida A&M University
College of Agriculture and Food Sciences
1740 South Martin L. King, Jr. Boulevard
308 South Perry Paige Building
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Phone: 850-412-7060, E-mail: Muhammad.Haseeb@famu.edu
International Agriculture Programs Promote Economic Growth in Haiti

By Harriett Paul, Director OIAP

The Office of International Agriculture Programs (OIAP) is implementing a 12-month USAID Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance Farmer-to-Farmer Program in partnership with the Universite Caraibe and Food for the Poor, Inc. in Port-AU-Prince Haiti. Through these relationships, the OIAP is assisting the UC to develop a Small Enterprise Development Program that would require their students to establish and manage a successful small business enterprise. This program helps to better prepare UC students for entrepreneurial activities and self-employment.

"There is a need for post-secondary students in various disciplines of agriculture and the natural resources (ANR) to develop more real-world skills by applying their knowledge in actual business activities", said Harriett Paul, Principal Investigator and Project Director of the program.

Through an internship linkage with the Food for the Poor-Haiti for UC students, and the university-based agro-business projects, students are moving from theory to practice in the development and successful management of small group enterprises. Farmer-to-Farmer consultants who were engaged in the technical support are:

- Lydia Andrew, Retired Extension Specialist, Michigan State University (Financial Management training)
- Velma Gwishiri, Micro-finance consultant, North Carolina
- Les Harrison, Wakulla County Extension Director, University of Florida, IFAS
- Nick Miller, FAMU MBA, Agribusiness minor (Spring 2016 candidate).

Top Row: Congratulations to our own, Xavier Price, for his Second Place award in the Graduate Student Poster Contest at the 31st Annual Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS) National Conference held March 31 - April 2, 2016, in Jacksonville, Fla. Great Job Xavier! (Photos provided by Xavier Price) Below: FAMU CAFS students and staff served as hosts for this year's national MANRRS conference.
Pathways to Professions in Agriculture and Food Sciences Conference

For the second semester in a row, Florida A&M University’s College of Agriculture and Food Sciences (CAFS) has offered a free “Pathways to Professions in Agriculture and Food Sciences” conference to local high school and college students to help them learn about agricultural careers available in the private sector, federal agencies and state government. This semester’s event theme was: “Explore the many opportunities and paths to a livelihood in agriculture, food and related sciences.”

Held on Wednesday, April 6, 2016, at the Alfred Lawson Jr. Multipurpose Center, the day-long conference catered to students from local universities, community or junior colleges and local high schools. Participants experienced hands-on demonstrations and exhibits by FAMU CAFS’ faculty and staff in the following areas: Animal Science Program | Veterinary Technology Program | Food Science Program | Center for Biological Control | Entomology Program | Center for Viticulture and Small Fruits | Agronomy Program | Agricultural Economics and Business Program.

“Explore the many opportunities and paths to a livelihood in agriculture, food and related sciences.”

Top left: Belinda Bell, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) 1890 Program Manager, led the planning committee for both conferences. Top right, from left: Kendall R. Strickland, USDA NASS Agricultural Statistician and FAMU CAFS alumni (1890 Scholar, Agribusiness 2015) and Oghenekome Onokpise, Ph.D., FAMU CAFS Professor, at last semester’s Pathways to Professions in Agriculture and Food Sciences Conference.

Middle row, from left: Jasmine Hall, FAMU CAFS alumni (1890 Scholar, Food Science 2015) speaks with USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service representatives about career opportunities. (Kamir Carrillo, USDA FSIS Human Resources Specialist, is pictured on the right. Contact: Kamir.Carrillo@fsis.usda.gov www.foodsafetyjobs.gov)

Bottom: More than 200 High School students from Leon and surrounding counties participated in various group sessions during the conference to learn about academic program areas within the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences and gain exposure to different career pathways within agriculture and food science fields.
Thank You Sponsors! - Pathways to Professions in Agriculture and Food Sciences

Learn about Career and Jobs in Agriculture and Food Sciences in the Private Sector, Federal and State Government
Sample of Companies and Government Agencies available to talk to you

http://www.outreach.usda.gov/education/1890/

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/careers
Agricultural Careers, Opportunities Abound!

TCC2FAMU Golden Guarantee Program
Your best path to becoming a Rattler!
At Tallahassee Community College, you can guarantee your admission to FAMU. Find out more at: https://www.tcc.fl.edu/Future/GoldenGuarantee/TCC2FAMU

Jump Start Your Ag Career Search: www.usajobs.gov

Graduate Assistantship Available

Study carbon sequestration, soil and water conservation in sustainable agriculture with state-of-the-art techniques and innovative approaches.

If interested, please contact Dr. Y.P. Hsieh, Center for Water and Air Quality, College of Agriculture and Food Sciences, Florida A&M University at 850-599-3065 or e-mail yuch.hsieh@famu.edu.

www.facebook.com/CenterForWaterAndAirQuality/
Great Things Happen Every Day at FAMU!

Left: Robert W. Taylor, Dean and Director of Land-Grant Programs, FAMU College of Agriculture and Food Sciences. (Photos by Cynthia Portalatin.)

FAMU continues to prepare its students for global education and career opportunities. Congratulations to Agribusiness student Akilah George, who was selected for the spring 2016 study abroad program at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences-Vienna (BOKU) in Austria.

FAMU Food Science Program is now on Facebook!
Like us at: www.facebook.com/foodsciencefamu

FAMU News Bites

We Love Our Students!
Alumni Highlight – Keithly Jones, Ph.D., Agribusiness

Keithly Jones, Ph.D., began his studies at FAMU as an agribusiness major in the College of Engineering, Sciences, Agriculture, and Technology (CESTA), now known as the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences (CAFS). Our esteemed alumni is now a Senior Economist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Economic Research Service (ERS). More specifically, he coordinates Cross-Commodity Outlook Activities in the Animal Protein complex for the Animal Products and Cost of Production Unit within the ERS’ Market and Trade Economics Division. The program he leads serves stakeholders in public and private sectors with timely, in-depth analysis and information important to understanding and anticipating developments in the agricultural commodity markets.

Jones also served for six months as senior advisor for Agricultural Economics and Community Development at USDA Office of the Chief Scientist where he was involved in reviewing and evaluating a broad range of policy and program management issues and concerns, as well as, coordinating multiple program efforts to ensure appropriate representation and transmission of USDA plans and policies.

He joined USDA ERS in January 2000 and has served as economist and later senior economist in the Market and Trade Economics Division supporting priority projects and developing and maintaining expertise in meat trade issues. At that time, he led the agency’s research examining import and export demand for meat, poultry, fish and dairy products. His research looked at the influence of various factors, including exchange rates, quality, inputs, animal disease, country of origin labeling (COOL), and trade policy on animals and animal products. His principal responsibilities include analysis that provides a perspective of the economic situation and policy environment for meat and livestock trade. He has published more than 25 peer reviewed articles.

Jones also worked as a Farm Management Specialist with the Cooperative Extension Services at Florida A&M University between January 2004 and June 2005 providing advice and technical assistance to small farms in Northern Florida. He has earned numerous awards, notably the American Agricultural Economics Association Award in 2006 in recognition of outstanding leadership and counsel to the 2700 members of the association; the Secretary of Agriculture Honor Award for Excellence, twice in consecutive years—2011 and 2012; and the USDA Economist Group 2016 John E. Lee award for sustained excellence in team economic analysis for his outstanding efforts of working across agencies to analyze the trade impacts of country-of-origin labeling requirements for the livestock industry.

Jones holds a Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from The Pennsylvania State University, M.S. and B.S. degrees in Agribusiness from Florida A&M University, and an A.S. degree in Agricultural Sciences from the Eastern Caribbean Institute of Agriculture and Forestry, Trinidad, West Indies. He is also a graduate of American University’s Executive Leadership Program in effective policy implementation. The program has equipped him with skills in creating a leadership plan for the future, facilitating and team building, leading in the context of a constitutional government, leading organizational change, leading through strategic communication, program goal setting, monitoring and evaluation, and leading effective policy implementation.

CONTACT:
Keithly Jones, Ph.D.
Senior Research Economist
Economic Research Service
Jim Geritsen is an internationally-known, organic farmer and agrarian elder, who has experienced success in his vocation for over 30 years, Jim Geritsen and his wife, Megan, own Wood Prairie Family Farm in Maine. A frequent speaker at farmer conferences in the United States and beyond, he has cooperated in numerous on-farm research trials with scientists from the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and the University of Maine.

REGISTRATION: $25.00/person by April 19, 2016


This event is a collaborative effort of the community and FAMU StateWide Small Farm Program, IFAS/Cooperative Extension-Leon County, Sustainable Tallahassee, Florida Organic Growers, Local Small Farmers, and Indigo Organic Restaurant. For additional information contact: Jennifer.Taylor@famu.edu (850) 412.5260, Florida A&M University, College of Agriculture and Food Sciences, StateWide Small Farm Program/Cooperative Extension Programs.

WHEN:
APRIL 23, 2016
3:30 p.m. – Organic farming, growing the best potatoes
5:00 p.m. – Building Food Integrity in the Organic Community

WHERE:
Indigo Bistro Restaurant
1690 Raymond Diehl Rd.
Tallahassee 32308

TOPICS:
- Organic farming & growing the best organic potatoes
- Building resilient agriculture and food systems
- Threats to organic food security
- Organic food integrity
- Role of organic farms

EARTH DAY FEAST:
A delightful supper of seasonal locally sourced produce from our local farmers, deliciously prepared by Tallahassee’s Indigo Bistro Organic Restaurant.
The Growers’ Market  
(at Lake Ella)


For more information on this and other local sustainable development efforts, contact:

Jennifer Taylor, FAMU StateWide Small farm Programs-CE, Jennifer.Taylor@famu.edu
CAFS Presents Healthy Food Tips at National Nutrition Month Event

Florida A&M University students, staff and faculty participated in a National Nutrition Month event held March 16th at the Tookes Recreation Center. “Fat, Food and Fit Figures” was the theme of the free event. The following workshops were offered to participants:

- Facing the FAT — Top 10 Reasons you are not losing Weight (Presented by J. Robinson, Ph.D.)
- Favoring the Fresh — Growing Herbs and Spices (Presented by Linda Sapp, FAMU CEP)
- Forming the Food — Cooking Demonstration
- Framing the Figure — Chocolate Zumba (Jasmine Richardson-Sutton)

Multiple campus organizations also hosted display booths with health information.

Top left: J. Robinson, Ph.D., CAFS Food Science shares the “Top 10 Reasons You Are Not Losing Weight.”
Top right: Linda Sapp, FAMU Cooperative Extension Programs, demonstrates the value of growing herbs during Florida A&M University’s National Nutrition Month event held in March 16, 2016.
Below: FAMU Students receive a hands-on lesson on herbs and their many health uses.
FAMU & FSU Partnership Results in $2.1 Million Grant to Study Corn

Florida A&M University was the site of Rep. Gwen Graham's 2016 Farm Tour stop January 19, 2016, where more than 150 farmers, educators, researchers, and members of the local community gathered to discuss opportunities available to strengthen agricultural and rural communities -- in particular, high-poverty areas in northern Florida. Rep. Graham announced the formation of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) StrikeForce Initiative which includes rural, northern Florida.

FAMU President Elmira Mangum, Ph.D. welcomed Rep. Graham, USDA Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Krysta Harden, and distinguished panel members from the agricultural community to the event. FAMU CAFS faculty and staff were present to help farmers and residents learn what Cooperative Extension Programs and Research Initiatives are available to help them succeed in their farming and business enterprises.

FAMU CAFS Animal Science student Therus Brown spoke about his farming experience and his FAMU educational experience during a panel discussion held at the event.

Find more information online about the USDA StrikeForce at www.usda.gov/StrikeForce

Top photo, inset: Animal Science student Therus Brown. Middle: FAMU CAFS faculty and staff were present to help farmers and residents learn what Cooperative Extension Programs and Research Initiatives are available to help them succeed in their farming and business enterprises. Top photo, main: FAMU President Elmira Mangum, Ph.D. welcomed Rep. Graham (second from right), USDA Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Krysta Harden, and distinguished panel members from the agricultural community to the event. (Photos by Cynthia Portalatin)
Watch our local “Land Grant Today” show on TV-20 in Tallahassee, nightly, 8:00 – 8:30 p.m.