

AGRIS MUNDUS

QUARTERLY

Table of Contents

- Introduction to AM Quarterly
- Global Representative Introduced
- Interview With First Year Students
- Senior Students Talk About Their Thesis Work
- Introduction to the Board of the Agris Mundus Association
- Additional News from AgrisMundus Students & Alumni

Introduction to AM Quarterly

The Agris Mundus Quarterly Newsletter is published by the AM communications committee with submissions from current and former AM students. The AM Quarterly will be published four times per annum. The purpose of the AM Quarterly is to serve as a platform for Agris Mundus students and alumni to share experiences, new research and developments, as well as stories and anecdotes from their work and academic lives. On behalf of the AM Quarterly, we would like to welcome you to AMQ's first edition of the 2010-2011 academic year. Please continue to follow the AM Quarterly to stay informed and stay connected.

Emails will be sent out periodically calling for contributions for the quarterly.

If you have any questions or would like to get involved please email: amacommunications@agrismundusalumni.org



Group picture of M1 & M2 students together during the orientation week in Sète.

Global Representative Introduced

Hello Agris Mundus Students and Alumni!

I'd like to introduce myself, my name is Patrick Dimanin and I have had the pleasure of being elected the new Global Representative of the Agris Mundus Association. My fellow students and I have recently returned to our studies following a marvelous introduction week in Sète, France that found us meeting both old and new friends and beginning to prepare for the new academic year; as well as kayaking through oyster farms, bicycling to vineyards, snorkeling for seahorses and soaring through the tree-tops! The previous year's representatives and board have done a great job of getting things up and running with their work in creating the statutes and laying the groundwork to have the Association formally recognized. Their hard work will allow us to be able to secure new sources of funding and become even more relevant in the lives of all Agris Mundus Alumni and Students. That being said, we still have a busy year ahead of us! The working groups are excited to build upon what was accomplished last year in addition to implementing new ideas and projects; luckily the new organizational structure allows us to put our faith in our newly elected President, Berdi Doornebosch. There is much to be done and much to accomplish so watch this space in the newsletter for updates. With your newly elected and extremely capable team working hard to reach our goals, I know that we will see continued success from the Agris Mundus Association. My best is given to everyone and I am certain that we will all have a fantastic year!

Cheers!

Patrick Dimanin

E-Mail: PDimanin(a)yahoo.com | Skype: Patrick.dimanin

Interview With First Year Students

We had the first year students answer some questions about their experiences from their first lecture, local food, student housing, and their impressions of the city. This is what they had to say:

From Copenhagen:

So far, classes have been good. We just take 2 classes for 9 weeks, so there's a lot of intense learning on just one subject (methods development and tropical crop production). We have a lot of group work projects which have been good (or at least my groups have been!) but it means you always have to coordinate your life around about 6 other people which can be a bit much sometimes! But all in all, things are still going as well as can be.

For food definitely bakery pastries!!! Looked for the legendary 'danish' pastries, but just got really good buttery pastries instead. With coffee, it's the best breakfast ever! I got my place through the housing department, so I've had a place since August. Food I can afford and understand. It's still hard to know if I'm buying milk or buttermilk and to know where to find things in the supermarket!

Isabelle Boittin, Agricultural Development (Copenhagen – Montpellier)

From Wageningen:



My first lecture was very pleasant. Ahmed and I arrived in Amsterdam around midnight and since my first lecture was at 8.30am we took the first morning train to Wageningen. Once here, I arrived to my place and I went straight to sleep. I WAS EXHAUSTED! So I had a very enjoyable first class in my bed, but did I wake up on time for my afternoon one.

So far this is totally different from the Spanish system, lots of group work, lots of group meetings and less individual work. But I really enjoy it. I really feel like I am in an important university. Everything is organized around the university in this city and it makes you feel very connected to the city itself. I love Wageningen so far.

About best Dutch food? This is a joke, right? Am I really force to choose one?

Wageningen has a shortage of rooms, so around 120-140 students have been placed in temporary apartments in a building called The Wing. We are in shared rooms. As well, we all share the toilets and showers (which are few in number) and one kitchen. The showers are outside in a kind of bungalow, with no space for toiletries. The water temperature in the showers cannot be regulated. Therefore, showers on the right have boiling water, and the ones on the left have cold water, you choose. Now the press is coming to The Wing! We have been on a TV show, on radio stations, and in the newspapers. We will keep on fighting.

Well first I need to know where home is for me- if it is Hungary, I miss the Körso sör (a half a litter of Hungarian beer for a euro). I could use that here! From Spain, what I miss the most is for sure my nephews and nieces. I feel I am missing them grow up, which only happens once. I tried to ask my brothers and sisters to make them stop growing up, but it did not work.

Jesus Oiza Solano Water Management Operation and Design (Wageningen – Copenhagen)

From Cork:

My first lecture was with Stephen Onakuse, we started with an introduction to some basic economics which was a good way to help us settle in. I really enjoyed his lecture and the way he approached issues. I think it is going to be an interesting course with a lot of challenges.

Unfortunately, I have been in Cork for a little over 3 weeks now and I haven't tasted any local delicacies. This is mainly because I haven't been out much. I also prefer my food back home so I prepare a lot of my own food here. From what I have seen though, the main food here is basically potatoes be it fried, mashed, or roasted. It looks good, but it may take me some time to adjust to the taste.

Accommodation in Cork is quite easy to find if you know where to look. There is an accommodation office at UCC to help and there are some websites listing accommodations at good prices. There are a wide range of options ranging from student apartments to private apartments and anything in between. It took me about four days to find an accommodation that met my requirements, and although it is on the more expensive side, I think it was the best alternative to home.

All things considered, I will say that cork seems like a very nice city with all the benefits of a bigger city but none of the hustle and bustle - except for the unpredictable weather! Less I forget, there are a lot of pubs and night clubs and beer is in abundance not to mention Guinness, so for you lovers of nightlife, I think you will be at home here.

Frederick Horlali Tsa, Food Chains and Development (Cork – Copenhagen)

Senior Students Talk About Their Thesis Work

Harun Ar Rashid – Safe production in horticulture (Copenhagen/Catania):

In which country did you do your thesis fieldwork?

Malaysia

What is the main question of your thesis?

To develop an appropriate technology for improving the maturity, shelf-life and quality of papaya by reducing the post harvest loss without affecting the nutritive value.

What was the most memorable experience during your fieldwork?

I have visited some very nice agricultural farms and beautiful touristic places in Malaysia.

Naomi Kenmogne – Livestock systems management (Catania/Montpellier):

In which country did you do your thesis fieldwork?

The Netherlands (Wageningen University and Research Center)

What is the main question of your thesis?

I looked at the effect of low dietary protein and acidifying calcium salts on ammonia emission from houses of growing-finishing pigs. The problem addressed was the environmental pollution from pig production, and the objective was reducing ammonia, odour and greenhouse gases emissions from pig buildings.

What was the most memorable experience during your fieldwork?

I lived through the emotions of the world cup (joy and disappointment).

Lensa Sefera – Safe production in horticulture (Copenhagen/Catania):

In which country did you do your thesis fieldwork?

I went to Tanzania where I did the field work in collaboration with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA-TZ), which is one of the sister organizations under the CGIAR umbrella (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research-CGIAR).

What is the main question of your thesis?

The title of my thesis project is "Host Range of Whiteflies (*Bemisia tabaci*) that Transmit Cassava Mosaic Geminiviruses in Tanzania" and the main objective was to assess the abundance of *B. tabaci* and identify its various alternative hosts in North western Tanzania, which is an area newly affected by a pandemic of severe Cassava Mosaic Disease.

What was the most memorable experience during your fieldwork?

Travelling for hours and hours in the amazing natural settings, bushes and jungles of beautiful Tanzania using maps, GPS and personal judgements to reach Cassava fields was exciting. When we finally reached the cassava fields, we greeted the farmers explained why



we were there. The challenge and excitement started once again as we counted the tiny whiteflies which are very fast to fly away the moment one turns over the leaf (as they are found in the underside of the leaf). And before we realized we were surrounded by farmers' kids wondering what a group of strangers were doing in their field looking underside of leaves using hand lenses. We saw them learning very fast and they were trying to do their own research by turning over a leaves nearby, looking for

whiteflies just as we did, asking us questions and looking for answers to the strange things they found in their fields. And... at times we received sugarcane, ground nuts and cassava roots from the farmers which was also great.

In hindsight, is there anything you would have done differently?

I think I would have stayed in Tanzania for six months if possible, because to undertake such a study

related to cassava which is a perennial crop, I must admit that one needs relatively more time.

Timothy Abeikis – Food chains and development (Cork/Copenhagen):

In which country did you do your thesis fieldwork?

Tanzania

What is the main question of your thesis?

Overall objective of my thesis was 'to evaluate the contribution of Fairtrade certification to the livelihoods of certified coffee producers'

What was the most memorable experience during your fieldwork?

Most memorable experience during my fieldwork was going to the field and finding that my theoretical research design was not suitable to the organisation and structure of the project where I was to carry out my fieldwork; I had to change most parts of my design.

In hindsight, is there anything you would have done differently?

Yes, I would have searched a little bit more information about the background of the project before going to the field to match the research design and the practical conditions in the field in order to avoid wasting time in changing the design while in the field.

Daniel Agbetiameh – Safe production in horticulture (Copenhagen/Catania):

In which country did you do your thesis fieldwork?

I did my research work with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in Ibadan-Nigeria.

What is the main question of your thesis?

My objective was to compare the strain profile of members of *Aspergillus* section *Flavi* with respect to the strain composition, distribution and their aflatoxin-producing abilities across three agro-ecological zones and identify endemic atoxigenic strains of potential value for use in biological control of aflatoxins in crops in Burkina Faso.

What was the most memorable experience during your fieldwork?

Every aspect of my research work was unique to me since it offered me the opportunity to work and study under the supervision of renowned and experienced researchers in a CGIAR institution. Learning and doing research by myself within the laboratory required ethics to isolate fungi and identify fungi from different sample types, inoculating fungi on substrates, extraction of toxin and quantification of same were all great learning experiences.

In hindsight, is there anything you would have done differently?

Given the opportunity, I would not do anything different but rather evaluate the efficacy of all the atoxigenic strains that I have identified.

Jens Treffner - Water management & rural development (Wageningen/Montpellier):**In which country did you do your thesis fieldwork?**

The Kingdom of Cambodia

What is the main question of your thesis?

How do (irrigation) water management interventions inspired by international experiences influence Cambodian irrigation governance and how does this affect user communities?

What was the most memorable experience during your fieldwork?

People helping me to fix my motorcycle everywhere I came - and a general lack of curiosity in my person for the rest of the time. There are more than a million NGOs in Cambodia, and students, project people and donors from abroad come to even the remotest places... So, nothing new for the villagers - but a lot of learning and understanding for me.

In hindsight, is there anything you would have done differently?

I would have done several things differently, despite the overall positive experience.

1. Stick to M1 teachers for RESEARCH thesis possibilities (not necessarily the French "stage"-type of fieldwork) and get them organised on time;
2. Find a relevant research question yourself OR have one asked by the people sending you to the field. Don't develop things out of the blue, if you don't know the context;
3. Don't get too distracted with M2 - integrating approaches and methods during your thesis is a nice aim, but makes getting things done a lot harder;
4. Keep on asking questions to yourself (in the absence of someone doing so) about your fieldwork, progress, usefulness, difficulties, frustration, results.

Introduction to the Board of the Agris Mundus Association

During the orientation week in Sete, the new board members of the Agris Mundus Association (AMA) were elected. The board is composed of the President, the Global Representative, the Treasurer and the Secretary who are responsible for the general management of the Association. The board works with a representative from each

university (Regional Representative) who are also responsible for one of four working groups (communication, career development, fundraising, student affairs and curriculum).

Berdi Doornebosch (batch 2) from the Netherlands is the new President of the AMA. This position exists to increase exchange and communication between alumni and students.

Patrick Dimanin (batch 5) from the USA is the Global Representative. He is the representative for the association in all external affairs such as interactions with the Natura network or the Erasmus Mundus Association.

Aimable Uwizeye (batch 5) from Rwanda is the Secretary and Catania representative and also works on the career development working group.

Marine Tallon (batch 4) from France is the Treasurer and is responsible for managing the association's budget and accounts and carrying out fundraising to support its activities.

Iván Taboas (batch 5) Spain will share the position of Webmaster with Mohamed Mouiche Moctar (batch 4) from Cameroon. They are responsible for updating the AMA website content.

The following six Regional Representatives represent each of the six universities.

Renske Aarnoudse (batch 5) from the Netherlands is the Cork Representative and is head of the communication working group.

Daniella Blake (batch 5) from New Zealand – Wageningen representative and is also responsible for the communication working group.

Byron Moyano (batch 4) from Ecuador is the Montpellier representative and is head of the fundraising working group.

Isabelle Boittin (batch 5) from France is the Copenhagen representative and is responsible for the career development working group.

Guillaume Lamarre (batch 5) from Canada is the Madrid representative , students affairs and curriculum development working group.

This board will work throughout the year to carry out the activities as written in the association statute which can be found on the AMA website. They can be contacted by email or through the AMA facebook website.

Additional News from AgrisMundus Students & Alumni

Dear all,

It is a good pleasure to share with you the publication on my thesis book on Climate change et animal husbandry. This book is available in French on Amazon web site. This is the link where you can find it.

http://www.amazon.com/gp/search/ref=sr_nr_seeall_1?rh=k%3Ales+changements+climatiques+et+les+productions+animales+aimable+uwizeye%2C%3Astripbookskeywords=les+changements+climatiques+et+les+productions+animales+aimable+uwizeye&ie=UTF8&qid=1285227634

Good reading.

Dr Aimable UWIZEYE MUCYO

Hello all,

I'm writing to all friends and professional contacts to promote my new article on the Goodeater blog. It's a follow-up to my prior article about slash and burn agriculture:

<http://www.goodeater.org/2010/07/23/slashlaos-and-vimeo-tape-controversies-of-swidden-agriculture/>

I'm also taking advantage of this email to publicize a tour to Colombia that I'm organizing. I've attached an ad for the tour to this email. Feel free to contact me with any questions. You may be asking yourselves what exactly sustainable agriculture has to do with tourism. I address that question in another blog, here:

<http://agrarianideas.blogspot.com/2010/07/tenza-and-tourism.html>

Gregory Vaughan

Raj Chongtham (Batch 1, India) published an article about his thesis research: Assessment of the strategies of organic fruit production and fruit drying in Uganda, read it here:

<http://www.jarts.info/index.php/jarts/article/view/186>

Agris mundus renewed for 5 years and PhD programme on track. For more information check the Agris Mundus website:

http://www.agrismundus.eu/agris-mundus/news.php?act=detail&novinka_id=82

The European Alliance on Agricultural Knowledge for Development (AgriNatura) has a new website:

<http://www.agrinatura.eu/index.html>

AMA Newsletter - September 30, 2010

AgrisMundusAlumni The mission of the Association is to serve the interests of Agris Mundus Students and Alumni, notably by providing a forum for networking, communication and collaboration, and by promoting Agris Mundus as a European program of excellence in international education.

www.agrismundusalumni.org