UNL is Technical Lead on African Soil Project

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is the lead technical partner on a new $5.65 million project to enable much improved profitability of fertilizer use for 13 sub-Saharan countries.

The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) recently awarded the grant for OFRA (Optimizing Fertilizer Recommendations in Africa). UNL will work with CABI-Africa and national agricultural research institutes in 13 countries: Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

In sub-Saharan Africa, fertilizer use is very low with only eight to nine pounds per acre applied to food crops. Crop production is primarily by poor, small-scale farmers with very little financial capacity. Fertilizer use needs to compete with basic needs in allocation of the small amount of money available. Therefore, net returns on investments need to be very high.

This project grew of UNL collaboration in Uganda where a national team of soil scientists did the field research to develop a total of 15 nutrient response functions encompassing six crops. It soon became obvious that some crop-
Calendar of Events

Oct. 11: Department Seminar, Dr. Archie Clutter, 3:30–4:30 p.m., 150 Keim, Pre-reception at 3 p.m.
Oct. 14: Departmental Staff Meeting, 9-10 a.m., 150 Keim Hall.
Oct. 14: IANR 3rd Quarter Outstanding Employee Recognition presentation for Mary Jo Haverkamp, 10 a.m., 150 Keim Hall.
Oct. 18: Dreier Lecture in Agronomy, Dr. Noel Vietmeyer, 3-5 p.m., Arbor Room, Nebraska East Union, Pre-reception at 3 p.m.
Oct. 25: Department Seminar, Dr. Ronnie Green, 3:30–4:30 p.m., 150 Keim, Pre-reception at 3 p.m.
Nov. 1: Department Seminar, Leah Sandall, 3:30–4:30 p.m., 150 Keim, Pre-reception at 3 p.m.
Nov. 9: Viticulture Fall Workshop, Nebraska City, topics and timing TBA.
Nov. 28–Dec. 1: Thanksgiving vacation, UNL is closed.
Dec. 18: “Adaptive Strategic Planning” for Agronomy & Horticulture faculty, all day, location TBD, Facilitated by Dr. Barton Wechsler, University of Missouri.
Jan. 7–9, 2014: Nebraska Turf Conference, LaVista Conference Center, LaVista, Neb.

Laborde Conducts Research in Nepal

Graduate student John Laborde recently returned from six months in Nepal conducting research for his master’s thesis.

John received a graduate research assistantship (GRA) from the Institute of Natural Resources (IANR) to begin a collaborative research project with the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT). The goal of the collaboration is to advance food security in a developing nation. He also won a U.S. Borlaug Fellows in Global Food Security Graduate Research Grant.

According to John, Nepal is a Feed the Future country suffering from extreme poverty and recovering from a 10-year civil war. Two out of three people suffer from food insecurity each year. Declines in agricultural productivity stem from a lack of economic and natural resources as well as weak markets and infrastructure. From an agronomic view, water scarcity is the greatest limiting factor to increasing food production.

One cropping system that has been widely claimed to preserve water resources is Conservation Agriculture (CA). There are three fundamental principles that must be adhered to in order for a cropping system to be considered CA: 1) zero or minimum tillage, 2) retention of crop residue on soil surface after harvest, and 3) crop rotation. His project includes various combinations of all three CA tenets.

“My time in Nepal has been transformative in my life and for my future career,” he said.

For more details, see his personal blog web page at http://johnisinnepal.wordpress.com. John is a student with Dr. John Lindquist.

UNL Stormwater Team Receives Gold Award

The University of Nebraska—Lincoln Stormwater Management Education Team received the 2013 Outstanding Team Gold Award from the Associate of Natural Resources Extension Professionals (ANREP) for Stormwater Management programming. This national award “recognizes achievements of interdisciplinary, interagency and/or other teams that exhibit leadership and excellence in planning, designing, delivering and evaluating an Extension natural resources program.”

Steve Rodie is one of the team members. Others recognized in the nomination include Kelly Feehan (NEREC and Platte County), Tom Franti and Dave Shelton (Biosystems Engineering), Katie Pekarek (SNR and NDEQ) and Bobbi Holm (Douglas/Sarpy County Extension).
**Calendar of Events**

**Jan. 7-23, 2014:** Crop Production Clinics. For details see [http://cpc.unl.edu/](http://cpc.unl.edu/).

**Feb. 27–Mar. 1, 2014:** 17th Annual Nebraska Winery and Grape Growers Forum and Trade Show, Kearney Holiday Inn, Kearney, Neb.

**Announcements**

**Condolences**

Sympathy is extended to the family and friends of Joan Frederick who passed away Sept. 20, 2013. Joan was a secretary in the Agronomy Department from 1973–1983, before transferring to International Programs where she was affiliated with the INTSORMIL program until her retirement in March of 2013. Please contact Charlene Wendt for the address to send a card.

**Department Seminars Veer from Traditional Format**

The Agronomy & Horticulture Seminar Committee is departing from its traditional research seminars, according to Keenan Amundsen, committee chair. The committee is using the series as an opportunity to prepare for the “Strategic Adaptive Planning Event” (retreat) for Dec. 18. The committee has invited administrators and peer group representatives to offer their perspectives on the department.

Continued from page 1

UNL is Technical Lead on African Soil Project

Mary Jo Haverkamp, HAPPI Business Center, received the 2013 third quarter Outstanding Employee Award through the Institute of Agriculture & Natural Resources (IANR). A reception will be held for her Oct. 14 at 10 a.m. in 150 Keim and everyone is invited.

In his congratulations letter, Dr. Ronnie Green said, “You have clearly demonstrated performance beyond that normally expected.”

Mary Jo received a pin and certificate for winning the award.

Congratulations Mary Jo!

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Maximize net returns per acre.

**Haverkamp Selected for Outstanding Employee Award**

The OFRA project is forming key partnerships to bring advanced technology to this initiative:

1. AfSIS (The African Soils Information Service) is using ground-level and remote sensing information to map African soils, and link with climatic data. OFRA and AfSIS will work to extend information on nutrient response functions across borders to areas with similar agro-ecological conditions.

2. GYGA (the UNL led Global Yield Gap Atlas) is fine-tuning extrapolation zones for Africa that will glean information.

3. The Grameen Foundation supports developing smartphone applications and will collaborate to develop the current computer-based optimization tool for use on smartphones, which are often used in African rural areas.

“This is an exceptional group of partners whose specialties and experience dovetail well,” said Rebbe Harawa, AGRA Soil Health Program.
Speakers for the next month include:
Oct. 4 – Steve Waller, Dean, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CASNR), Oct. 11 – Archie Clutter, Dean, Agricultural Research Division (ARD); Oct. 25 – Ronnie Green, IANR Vice Chancellor.

All seminars take place on Friday afternoons at 3:30 p.m. in 150 Keim. The pre-reception with cookies and coffee starts at 3 p.m.

Mackenzie Presents at Heuermann Lecture Sept. 30

Dr. Sally Mackenzie will present “Beyond GMOs to a more Honest Dialogue about our Food” on Monday, Sept. 30, as part of the Heuermann Lecture Series.

Dr. Mackenzie holds a joint appointment in the departments of Agronomy & Horticulture and in Biological Science. She is also the Ralph & Alice Raikes Chair for Plant Science in the Center for Plant Science Innovation at UNL. Her research focus is in plant genetics, epigenetics, genomics and organelle biology.

The lecture begins at 3:30 p.m. in Hardin Hall with a pre-reception at 3 p.m. See http://heuermannlectures.unl.edu/ for details.

Agronomy & Horticulture Employees Recognized

Congratulations to the Agronomy and Horticulture employees who received service awards on Sept. 17, 2013, at the Lied Center. The employees were recognized prior to the chancellor’s State of the University speech.

The employees and years of service to UNL are listed below.

20 Years
Janet Hygnstrom
Michael Livingston

15 Years
Stevan Knezevic
Maribeth Milner
Mitch Montgomery
Deana Namuth-Covert
Kathy Schindler

5 Years
Cheryl Bogenrief
Ben Lennander
Jeff Mower
Leah Sandall
Dipak Santra
Brian Waters

Mark Tester is Coyne Distinguished Lecturer

Dr. Mark Tester was the featured lecturer for the Dermot P. Coyne Distinguished Lectureship on Monday, Sept. 16, 2013, in the Beadle Center. Dr. Tester spoke on “Understanding and engineering salinity tolerance in crop plants.”

At left, he is pictured at the reception with Dr. Ann Coyne, wife of Dr. Dermot Coyne, longtime Agronomy & Horticulture professor.

Dr. Tester is a professor at the King Abdullah University of Science & Technology in Saudi Arabia.

Recommendation for more Efficient Meetings

When making meeting reservations for the conference rooms, please let the Office Pros know if you need a Polycom or another type of electronic connection. Contact Kathy Schindler at 2-1508, kschindler1@unl.edu, and she will assign an associate to be present at the beginning of the meeting. Having prior notice can assist staff in planning and can help meetings run more smoothly and effectively.
News from the HAPPI Business Center

Updating Contacts in Firefly

As the 2013-14 school year begins, now is a good time to update the emergency phone number and contact information that faculty and staff have listed in their Firefly account. This information is critical in emergency situations.

Please take a moment to review your personal emergency contact information listed in Firefly. The path to review and make changes to your Emergency Contact Information is: Firefly>Employee Self-Serve>Personnel Information>Address & Emergency Contacts.

For more information about updating your information, see Mary Jo Haverkamp or John Dillingham.

Changes to Comp Time

The Department of Agronomy & Horticulture recently underwent an audit of its personnel practices and procedures. From this audit, it has been recommended that compensatory time for temporary employees be discontinued.

Consequently, any temporary employee who has actual hours over 40 in a payroll week will be paid at the overtime rate of 1.5 times their hourly wage.

This change applies to temporary hourly employees only. Student workers are not eligible for compensatory time and will continue to received overtime pay for work over 40 hours.

For questions regarding this change, please contact John Dillingham.

Supervisory Seminars Set

The UNL Human Resources Department will be offering a brief overview of HR services, entitled “What HR Can Do For You.”

After this seminar, four additional seminars will be held. They include: “Communication in the Workplace,” “Performance Management,” “Creating and Managing Work Teams,” and “Making the Best Hire.” Supervisors may choose one or all seminars. Some of these seminars may also be helpful to academic supervisors. There is no cost to attend, but participants must register at http://training.unl.edu. Contact Nancy Myers in HR for questions.

Farewell to Ben Lennander

Ben Lennander, Financial Specialist with the HAPPI Business Center, announced Sept. 18 that he has taken a new position at the UNL College of Education and Human Sciences. His new position is Budget/Business Coordinator for the college.

“I feel very fortunate and want to thank you for the opportunity to work with such incredible people over the last five years,” Ben said. “You have made my time here not only enjoyable but I feel I have been a part of making the world a better place through all of your Teaching, Research and Extension efforts.”

Office Welcomes Hansen

The department is happy to announce the addition of Connie Hansen to the Office Pros work group on Sept. 23.

Most recently, Connie worked at the Center for Grassland Studies. She hold a bachelor's degree in Consumer Science from UNL and has been with the university for 22 years.

Away from work, Connie enjoys spending time with her family and friends, including her son, Nate, who lives in Austin, Texas. She also enjoys reading, cooking, traveling, and planning get-togethers for her family and friends. Welcome Connie!

Schindler Wins Award

The March issue of UNOPA Notes, edited by Kathy Schindler, won first place at the National Association of Educational Office Professionals (NAEOP) annual conference in July. Schindler edited the newsletter during the 2012-13 academic year for the University of Nebraska Office Professionals Association (UNOPA), a networking and educational group at the university. Past issues may be found at: http://unopa.unl.edu/membership/notesandreports.shtml.
NAIPSC Webinars Begin

Arrangements for the 2013-14 North American Invasive Plant Short Course (NAIPSC) Webinar Series are finalized, according to coordinator Steve Young. Webinar dates are:

- **Oct. 24** – Dr. Marnie Rout, University of Montana, “Grassland invasions through soil alterations implicate the root microbiome – a case study;”
- **Nov. 7** – Dr. Anna Sher, Univ. of Denver, “Tamarix – a case study of ecological change in the American West;”
- **Nov. 21** – Rich Walters, The Nature Conservancy, “Removal of a 300-mile Phragmites australis infestation – lessons learned, battle won;” and
- **Dec. 5** – Michael Forsberg, Michael Forsberg Photography, “Platte basin timelapse project.”

All webinars begin at noon (CST) and require registration for non-NAIPSC Online Community (OC) members. For details, see [http://ipscourse.unl.edu/](http://ipscourse.unl.edu/).

### Newsletter Contacts

The Department of Agronomy & Horticulture newsletter is produced monthly.

**Editors:** Kathy Schindler, Nesrin Vance  
**Design & Layout:** Kathy Schindler  
**Proofreaders:** Nesrin Vance, Fran Benne and Charlene Wendt.  
**Contact:** Please send news, announcements and photos to [nesrin.comez-vance@unl.edu](mailto:nesrin.comez-vance@unl.edu) or call 2-5138.

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### News For and About Graduate Students

The Agronomy & Horticulture Graduate Student Association (AHGSA) invites everyone in the department to attend the annual barbeque on Oct. 4, 11 a.m.–1 p.m. Bratwursts, potato salad, baked beans and drinks will be provided for $5. AHGSA is also sponsoring a dessert contest along with the barbeque. Anyone in the department is invited to participate. Please drop off desserts in 202 Keim from 8–10 a.m. Desserts should be accompanied by a list of ingredients in case of food allergies. The top desserts will win prizes. Empty dishes may be picked up from Keim 150 following the BBQ or in the Keim 150 kitchen later in the day.

Questions may be addressed to Ben Beckman at [bbeckman@huskers.unl.edu](mailto:bbeckman@huskers.unl.edu).

### Students Earn ARD and CASNR fellowships

ARD and CASNR have announced their annual fellowship recipients for 2013–14. These students will be recognized at a luncheon in October.

**Hardin Distinguished Graduate Fellowship:** Kevin Begcy Padilla (Advisor is Harkamal Walia) & Pamela Pena-Perdomo (Advisor is Thomas Clemente).

**Shear-Miles Fellowship:** Malleswari Gelli (Advisors are Ismail Dweikat and David Holding).

**Widaman Trust Distinguished Graduate Assistant Award:** Katherine Frels (Advisor is Steve Baenziger), Rodrigo Werle (Advisor is John Lindquist), Santos Rajput (Advisor is Dipak Santra, and Raghuprakash Kastoori Ramamurthy (Advisor is Brian Water).

**Moseman Fellowship:** John Laborde (Advisor is John Linquist).

**John & Louise Skala Fellowship:** Matthew Pedersen (Advisor is Roch Gaussoin).

### Department Welcomes Graduate Students Back

A graduate student reception was held Friday, Aug. 23, 2013. The goal of the reception was to greet new graduate students and to welcome back the department’s current graduate student. Pictures from the reception are above.