

# UNIVERSITY CONSORTIUM

A newsletter of the Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources

## 18<sup>th</sup> Executive Board meeting crafts vision for a revitalized Consortium

“To be a leader in implementing collaborative strategies for excellent graduate education and cutting-edge research in agriculture, environment, and natural resources for the benefit of the Southeast Asian region”—this is the vision of the revitalized University Consortium (UC) as crafted by the participants of the 18<sup>th</sup> University Consortium Executive Officers and Coordinators Meeting held on 19 August 2005 at the Palm Garden Hotel, IOI Resort, Putrajaya, Malaysia.

Tan Sri Dato’ Dr. Mohd. **Zohadie Bardaie**, Vice Chancellor of Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), officially opened the meeting. In his opening remarks, Prof. Zohadie stressed that “the active participation of the members of the UC is a testimony that the UC is still a relevant and important network for the promotion of agriculture and sustainable environment.”

Dr. **Arsenio M. Balisacan**, SEARCA Director, underscored the challenge on the UC to effectively intervene and create a positive impact by producing highly trained professionals who could contribute to the development of their respective countries’ policies and other mechanisms that promote rural development. On the other hand, Dr. **Aini Ideris**, Dean, School of Graduate Studies and UC Executive Officer, UPM, emphasized the need for the UC to

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The participants of the 18th University Consortium Executive Officers and Coordinators Meeting held on 19 August 2005 at Palm Garden Hotel in Putrajaya, Malaysia.

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## Four UPLB faculty get SEARCA professorial chairs

Four faculty of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) were awarded the SEARCA Professorial Chair for academic year 2005-2006.

The awardees, their colleges and titles of research are: Dr. **Arnold R. Elepaño**, College of Engineering and Agricultural Technology, "Development of a small-scale processing system for the production

of semi-refined carrageenan;" Dr. **Ernesto J. del Rosario**, Colleges of Arts and Sciences, "Recovery of growth hormones in coconut water using micellar-enhanced ultrafiltration;" Dr. **Jose M. Yorrobe, Jr.**, College of Economics and Management, "The cost of biosafety regulation for rice in the Philippines;" and Dr. **Cleofe S. Torres**, College of Development Communication,

"Enhancing compliance with environmental quality standards in the Laguna de Bay region through public disclosure."

The four new awards bring to 88 the total number of SEARCA professorial chairs awarded to UPLB faculty. Since 1989, SEARCA has awarded a total of 115 professorial chairs to faculty of UPLB, Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) and Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) in Indonesia, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), and Kasetsart University (KU) in Thailand under the University Consortium. (LLDDomingo)

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stand on its own, grow stronger together, and give the network a new brand and meaning.

The UC Executive Board reformulated the mission and objectives of the UC, redefined the roles of the members and the Secretariat, and modified the organizational structure of the network. The mission of the UC is to promote collaboration among UC members to enhance graduate education and research in agriculture, environment and natural resources for the benefit of Southeast Asian region. Its objectives are to a) provide highly trained personnel in agriculture, environment and natural

collaborative research projects, and faculty and student exchange programs.

*the mission of the UC is to promote collaboration among UC members to enhance graduate education and research in agriculture, environment, and natural resources for the benefit of the Southeast Asian region*

The UC Executive Board approved the revised organizational structure of the network to reflect a two-tiered hierarchy of functions such that the Executive Board serves as the policymaking body of the UC while the UC Coordinators serve as the Working Group, as recommended by the UC Coordinators that met on the 18<sup>th</sup> of August 2005, a day before the meeting of Executive Officers. The UC Board also approved the following: a) revised guidelines on UC Membership; b) the revised Memorandum of Agreement on the Funding Scheme; c) the revised grants administration guidelines and the suspension of the UC Research Fellowship and UC Professorial Chair Programs; d) the operational plan and budget for 2005-2006; and e) the conduct of the 19<sup>th</sup> UC Executive Officers Meeting at Kasetsart University (KU), Thailand in mid-November 2006.

Participants of the meeting were: Dr. **Gulam Rusul Rahmat Ali**, Deputy Dean, School of Graduate Studies and UC Coordinator, and Dr. Ideris, both of UPM, Malaysia; Dr. **Syafrida Manuwoto**, Director, Graduate Studies Program and UC Executive Officer, and Dr. **Ma'mun Sarma**, Director for International Programs and UC Coordinator, both of Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB), Indonesia; Dr. **Susanto Somowiyarjo**, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, Dr. **Edhi Martono**, Vice Director for Graduate Studies Program, and Dr. Ir. **Masyhuri**, Chairman, Master of Agribusiness Management Program and UC Coordinator, all of Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), Indonesia; Ms. **Phacharavadee Paerattakul**, Director, International Affairs Division and UC Coordinator, KU, Thailand; Dr. **Roger Swift**, Executive Dean, Faculty of Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Veterinary Science, UC Executive Officer, and Director, Gatton Campus, University of Queensland (UQ), Australia; Dr. **Mahesh Upadhyaya**, Associate Dean and UC Coordinator, Graduate Studies, Faculty of Land and Food Systems, University of British Columbia (UBC), Canada; Dr. Balisacan and Dr. **Editha C. Cedicol**, Manager, Graduate Scholarship Department, SEARCA, Philippines. (ECCedicol)

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*the challenge to the UC is how to intervene and create a positive impact by producing highly trained professionals who could contribute to the development of their respective countries' policies and other mechanisms that promote rural development*

resources for the development of the Southeast Asian region; b) promote mutually beneficial cooperation among UC members by optimizing the utilization of scarce resources and expertise; and c) develop strong and dynamic linkages among UC members through

## UC Coordinators tackle organization and management concerns at Yogyakarta workshop

The University Consortium (UC) should come up with a new organizational structure and redefine the roles of its members and Secretariat. This was one of the major recommendations of the UC Coordinators during the 4<sup>th</sup> UC Coordinators Workshop held at the Novotel, Yogyakarta, Indonesia on 12-14 April 2005.

The Workshop was held in response to the need to immediately address the issues on grants administration as well as review, discuss and recommend further action on organization and management concerns expressed in the evaluation study on the UC conducted by Dr. **Ledivina Cariño** in 2004.

The Workshop aimed to 1) review and refine guidelines for UC funding and operating procedures in grants administration; 2) come up with a draft of the revised policies and guidelines in the implementation of activities for approval of the UC Executive Board during the 18<sup>th</sup> UC Meeting to be held in Malaysia within the year 2005; and 3) come up with the operational plan and budget requirement for the fiscal year 2005-2006 for approval of the UC Executive Board.

The Workshop participants expressed their observations that graduate education in agriculture is still a very important focal concern and that the UC is one modality to address development needs in Southeast Asia through HRD and capacity building. They felt that since

the past efforts of the UC focused on capacity building to enhance graduate education, the restructured UC should put more focus on research projects, which may be able to generate more funds for the network in addition to the membership fees.

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It is also the Coordinators' opinion that in order to be more relevant to agriculture and poverty alleviation, and raise the UC's own identity, the UC should develop collaborative research projects in order to attract donor funds. In addition, the UC should develop a mechanism to assist non-member universities in Southeast Asia in capacity building.

Among the recommendations for presentation to the UC Executive Board during the 18<sup>th</sup> UC Executive Officers Meeting in Malaysia in August 2005 are: 1) The revised policies and guidelines on funding scheme, student and faculty exchange, and thesis grants; 2) operational plan and budget for FY 2005-2006; 3) The construction of a UC Website by the UC Secretariat; 4) the production of the UC Newsletter in electronic form

to be uploaded in the UC Website; 5) the production of the UC brochure in printed form for marketing purposes; and 6) the development of a degree program in tropical agriculture to be jointly offered by the UC members.

Participants of the Workshop were **Dr. Edhi Martono**, Vice Director for Graduate Studies Program representing Dr. Irwan Abdullah, Director of Graduate Studies Program and UC Executive Officer, and **Dr. Ir. Masyhuri**, Chairman, Master of Agribusiness Management Program and UC Coordinator, both of Universitas

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Gadjah Mada (UGM), Indonesia; **Dr. Syafrida Manuwoto**, Director, Graduate Studies Program and UC Executive Officer, and **Dr. Ma'mun Sarma**, Director for International Programs and UC Coordinator, both of Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB), Indonesia; **Dr. Gulam Rusul Rahmat Ali**, Deputy Dean, Faculty of Science and Engineering and UC Coordinator, School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM),

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Participants of the "4th UC Coordinators Workshop" held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia on 12-14 April 2005. (Photo courtesy of SEARCA)

# Malaysian Prof develops airborne hyperspectral imaging for precision agriculture

*airborne hyperspectral imaging has great potential for surveying large areas in near-real time*



Dr. Kamaruzaman mounts a complete UPM-Aeroscan's AISA sensor system on a Sabah Air GAF Nomad N22B, the small aircraft used by his team to conduct airborne hyperspectral imaging. (Photo courtesy of Dr. Kamaruzaman)

Precision agriculture (PA) refers to techniques, technologies, and management strategies aimed at addressing within-field variability of parameters (e.g., topography, water availability, soil type, weed pressure, plant nutrient levels, soil organic matter) that affect crop growth. Developing countries have been slow to adopt PA because it is commonly perceived that its benefits are insufficient to justify the costs.

Prof. Dr. **Jusoff Kamaruzaman**, Professor of Forest Engineering Survey (Remote Sensing) at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) and Consulting Advisor to Aeroscan Precision (Malaysia) Berhad, has led the team that developed a hyperspectral remote imaging technology that incorporates global positioning system (GPS) and “ready-made” geographic information system (GIS) data.

This joint project of UPM and Aeroscan Precision (M) Sdn Nhd (APSB) produced the UPM-APSB's AISA Airborne Hyperspectral Imaging for PA,

a relatively economical but powerful analytical tool for PA.

Hyperspectral remote sensing is an emerging technology that produces hundreds of narrow wavebands to create a continuous spectrum of a scene that captures a more complete data set than multispectral data. According to Dr. Kamaruzaman, airborne hyperspectral imaging offers a great potential for surveying large areas as per user or client demand in near-real time and for the early detection of growth anomalies.

On 6 December 2005, Dr. Kamaruzaman, who holds a Professorial Chair under the University Consortium, delivered a seminar at SEARCA on the results of an evaluation that his team conducted on the use of UPM-APSB's AISA Airborne Hyperspectral Imaging primarily for oil palm and rice paddy precision agriculture.

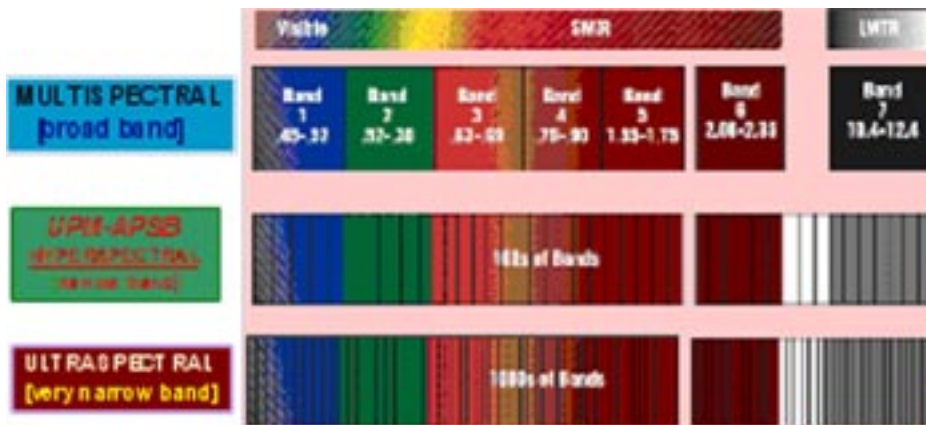
The ground validation segment of the program was focused on two oil palm plantations in Semporna and Sabah and

two rice fields Kelantan, measuring their non-time critical characteristics prior to flight.

On the day of flight, time-critical parameters were measured in all fields. A hand-held Analytical Spectral Device FieldSpec spectroradiometer was used to monitor spectral characteristics of both crops spectrum from 350-1,050 nanometer (nm). Customized software interpreted the spectral reflectance data and assigned it GPS coordinates, then translated the geospatial information into a thematic map of the crops' status. The UPM-APSB's hyperspectral data sets were processed and analyzed using ENVI 4.0 software and focused on the validation of spectral matching and spectral un-mixing methods for crop and field discrimination.

The evaluation results showed that UPM-APSB's AISA Airborne Hyperspectral Imaging has the potential to provide near-real time analysis of the attributes of the growing oil palm and rice paddies that can assist in making timely management decisions that affect the outcome of the current crop.

Dr. Kamaruzaman noted, however, that for this hyperspectral imaging technology to be successful, it must be accompanied by a good conventional scouting program and the benefits of the improvements in management must outweigh the cost of technology. (LLDDomingo)



Comparison between multispectral, hyperspectral, and ultraspectral bands (Image courtesy of Dr. Kamaruzaman)

## SEARCA offers PhD research scholarships

SEARCA now offers PhD Research Scholarships, which provides financial support to a limited number of qualified PhD students whose researches are relevant to the priority thrusts of SEARCA.

The research scholarship aims to 1) provide PhD students the opportunity to use the resources and facilities available at SEARCA and its network of universities for their research; 2) help PhD students produce quality research papers for publication; and 3) enable them to work with SEARCA's R&D personnel on mutually identified areas of interests in agriculture and rural development. The research scholars are required to spend two months at SEARCA and present a seminar related to the research.

Any Southeast Asian graduate student pursuing a PhD in agriculture or related sciences is eligible to apply for the scholarship. The applicant's research must focus on any of SEARCA's priority thrusts under the broad themes of promotion of agricultural competitiveness and natural resource management. For details on the priority thrusts, applicants may download SEARCA's Eighth Five-Year Strategic Plan from the SEARCA website.

The application requirements are: 1) Filled out Application Form (may be downloaded from the SEARCA website); 2) Letter of application for the research scholarship; 3) Recommendation letter from the Dean of Graduate School of the university where the student is pursuing his/her degree program; 4) Dissertation research outline/proposal

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## KU opens a new campus



KU Chalermprakiat campus.  
(Photo courtesy of KU)

Thailand's Kasetsart University has a new campus located at Chalermprakiat Sakon Nakhon Province. The opening ceremony was graced by His Royal Highness Crown Prince **Maja Vajiralongkorn**.

The new campus is part of the Thai government's plan to develop Sakon Nakhon Province as the educational center and career development in the country's upper northeaster region.

Kasetsart University is the foremost agriculture university in

Thailand. It was established on 2 February 1943 with the prime aims of promoting subjects related to agricultural sciences. The university has expanded and currently its various curricula cover a wide range of subject matters in the sciences, arts, humanities, education, engineering, architecture, and more recently medicine and health sciences. Altogether, it has seven campuses located in all regions of Thailand. At present, it has 23,000 students. (LLTallafer/Nonsee Newsletter)

## KU, Asia-Pacific aquatic network sign MOU

Kasetsart University (KU), through its Faculty of Fisheries, and the Network of Aquatic Centers in Asia-Pacific (NACA) signed in November 2005 a memorandum of understanding to cooperate in a regional program on genetics and biodiversity for aquaculture and inland fisheries management.

Prior to the MOU signing, KU and NACA had begun molecular genetics-related work which included establishing a regional information platform on the NACA website and Aquaculture Asia, co-authoring articles for publication, collaborating in

research activities, and initiating the development of a training manual.

NACA is an intergovernment organization that promotes rural

development through sustainable aquaculture. (LLDDomingo/NACA News)



KU and NACA officials present at the signing of the MOU between the two institutions. (Photo courtesy of NACA)

## UPM is center of excellence for agricultural education

An official of Malaysia's Ministry of Education underscored the key role that Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) plays in the country's research and development, particularly agricultural development.

Y. Bhg. Dato' Dr. **Zulkefli bin A. Hassan**, Deputy Secretary General (Development) of the Ministry of Education of Malaysia, said that UPM has taken pro-active measures to contribute a lot more toward the development and modernization of Malaysia's agricultural sector through teaching, research and development as well as professional services activities.

Occasion was the opening ceremonies of the *51<sup>st</sup> Governing Board Meeting* of SEARCA held in August 2005 in Langkawi, Malaysia.

*UPM has been designated as a center of excellence for agricultural education by Malaysia's Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi*

The Malaysian official shared that UPM has been designated as a center of excellence for agricultural education by Malaysia's Prime Minister Datuk Seri **Abdullah Ahmad Badawi**. He added that "UPM has maintained its reputation for receiving the highest allocation for research under IRPA grant. In the 8th Malaysia Plan, UPM received a total amount of US\$44 million for 498 research projects. Out of 498 research projects, 121 projects are in the agro-industry sector, which is the largest sector."

Dr. Zulkefli stressed the importance of the agriculture sector to the national economy of Malaysia. Citing the agriculture sector's contribution to the national income and

export earnings and creation of employment, he added that "the sector is also a major supplier of food as well as raw materials to resource-based industries."

He described this sector as characterized by a dualistic structure, with the export-oriented plantations/ large farms, on one hand, and the smallholders characterized by old age, small farm size, and lower levels of education and technology use, on the other. He said that among the issues and challenges besetting the industry is the less than encouraging response of the private sector in food production and negative perceptions of the youth toward earning a livelihood from agricultural activities.

Dato' Dr. Zulkefli that the Malaysian government undertakes adjustment measures to expedite the competitiveness of the sector to enable it to face new challenges both at domestic and international levels. He said that the Eighth Malaysia Plan (8MP) and the Mid-Term Review of the 8MP have broken down the broad objectives of the National Agricultural Policy (NAP) into detailed policy guidelines particularly for medium-term implementation of programs and objectives. "The role of agriculture is revamped and upgraded as the third engine of growth, after the manufacturing and services sectors. As

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such, the agriculture sector is in line for new growth in view of the government's commitment to revitalize the sector," he added. He shared that the Budget 2005 focuses on generating greater



UPM campus.  
(Photo courtesy of UPM)

dynamism of the agriculture sector, and has the twin objectives of increasing income and reducing dependence on imports, particularly food.

He reported that the Malaysian government has allocated large funds for research aimed at developing new products and technologies and that UPM continues to play a key role in research and development in Malaysia.

UPM, formerly known as Universiti Pertanian Malaysia, was founded in 1971 through the merger of Faculty of Agriculture, University Malaya and Agriculture College in Serdang. In 1994, it acquired its present

*See next page*

## UQ creates innovative education tool for plant industries

*A certificate program that uses the CD-ROM platform to maximize learning outcomes for students in rural areas and countries with farming-dependent economies*

The University of Queensland (UQ) has produced an innovative CD-ROM intended to help education in plant protection keep abreast of the rapid expansion of crop and horticulture industries.

Launched in April 2005, the CD format of the UQ Graduate Certificate in Plant Protection enables workers in rural areas, both in Australia and overseas, to study plant protection without having to leave home. The CD-ROM offers an alternative mode of direct training in plant protection to people who work in agricultural areas.

The Graduate Certificate in Plant Protection CD-ROM is an extension of UQ's existing Graduate Certificate Program, teaching the four key areas of plant protection science, namely: diseases, insects, weeds, and integrated management.

The degree uses a CD-ROM platform to maximize learning outcomes for students, particularly students in rural areas and countries with farming-dependent economies.

The UQ Graduate Certificate in Plant Protection on CD-ROM was developed by UQ in cooperation with the Cooperative Research Centre for Tropical Plant Protection (CRCTPP).

Dr. **Margaret Schneider**, Education Program Leader at CRCTPP and UQ lecturer in entomology, said plant protection education in Australia is not keeping up with the increasing demands of the growing plant industries. She said the most critical problem is that the professionals who investigate plant problems are not being replaced by young people at a rate that can keep up with the expansion of the plant industries.

name in support of the strategic move to make UPM into a versatile, higher learning institution and in support of its aspiration to be "the University of the Next Millennium."

*to become a leading university, UPM focuses on developing its graduate programs as these will assist in producing the most advanced research and enriching the search for knowledge*

With a total enrolment of more than 30,000 students, including postgraduates from over 50 countries, UPM is now considered among the biggest universities in Malaysia.

"UPM has the vision to be a world class university, i.e. a community of the learned and intellectuals who are of international standing, which shall be the pride of the nation in view of its contribution through academic writings and research findings which continue to provide new dimensions to the progress, growth and development of the nation and the world." says Prof. Dato' Dr. **Mohd Zohadie Bardaie**, UPM's Vice Chancellor. He added that in order to become a leading university, UPM focuses on developing its graduate programs because these will assist in producing the most advanced research and in enriching the search for knowledge. (LLTallafer)

### SEARCA PhD Research Scholarships, continued from p. 5

approved by the Advisory Committee and Dean of Graduate School; 5) Budgetary requirement for the entire research duly attested and recommended by the major adviser and Dean of Graduate School; Letter from the student certifying that he/she is not receiving any other research grant from any other institution; and 7) Research timetable indicating the activities involved in the research, the expected date of defense and expected date of seminar paper presentation.

Applications should be addressed to the Manager, Graduate Scholarship Department, SEARCA.

For PhD scholarships for school year 2006-2007, the deadline for applications is 1 April 2006. (LLDomingo)

The rapid growth of the plant industries, including grain, rice, cotton, sugar, wine, nurseries, and horticulture in recent years has made them Australia's most valuable agricultural industry, far ahead of the livestock industries. (LLDDomingo/UQ Online News)

### UC Coordinators, from page 3

Malaysia; **Dr. Richard Williams**, Coordinator, Faculty International Programs, Faculty of Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Veterinary Science and UC Coordinator, Gatton College, University of Queensland (UQ), Australia; **Dr. Gode Gravenhorst**, Director, and UC Executive Officer, Center for Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture and Forestry (CeTSAF), Germany; **Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit Jr.**, Deputy Director for Administration, **Dr. Editha C. Cedicol**, Manager, Graduate Scholarship Department, and **Ms. Zacyl A. Rivera**, Graduate Scholarship Specialist, all of SEARCA, Philippines. (ECCedicol)

## SEARCA invites applications for graduate scholarship in agriculture

SEARCA is inviting applications from qualified Southeast Asian nationals for graduate scholarship (MS and PhD) in agriculture and related fields focusing on the promotion of agricultural competitiveness and natural resource management for school year 2007-2008.

Applicants may submit their applications to their countries' respective Ministry of Education (Ministry of Higher Education in Malaysia and Commission on Higher Education in the Philippines). The Ministries then submit the list of applicants accompanied by the complete set of requirements to SEARCA not later than 30 July 2006.

Scholars may study at the University of the Philippines Los Baños, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Kasetsart University in Thailand, Institut Pertanian Bogor or Universitas Gadjah Mada in Indonesia, University of the Philippines Diliman, or University of the Philippines Visayas.

The list of requirements for application as well as all the required forms for scholarship application and admission to the graduate study programs of universities where SEARCA scholars may study may be obtained from the Ministry or downloaded from the SEARCA website at <http://www.searca.org>.

The topic of the research that the applicants plan to conduct for their thesis must be in line with the thrusts of SEARCA (i.e., promotion of agricultural competitiveness, sustainable land use and water management, and biodiversity conservation by addressing economic and institutional constraints, expanding access to productive resources and technology, and strengthening local governance capability to deliver agricultural services). For details on the priority thrusts, applicants may download SEARCA's Eighth Five-Year Strategic Plan from the SEARCA website.

Interested parties may also contact the Graduate Scholarship Department of SEARCA via email at [gsd@agri.searca.org](mailto:gsd@agri.searca.org) or [ecc@agri.searca.org](mailto:ecc@agri.searca.org).

### UC Member Update

## Degraded tropical forests can still be restored - UQ rainforest ecologists

*simply creating national parks in degraded forests is not enough... this can even be detrimental to poor farmers*

About 850 million hectares of tropical forest was estimated to have been cleared or degraded in the past century, but there is hope yet according to a pair of rainforest ecologists from the University of Queensland (UQ).

Dr. **David Lamb**, Associate Professor, and Dr. **Peter Erskine**, Research Fellow, both of the UQ Integrative Biology School, believe that some of the degraded or partially cleared tropical forests in Asia, Latin America, and Africa can be restored.

They say the first step is to learn more about the condition and biodiversity of secondary forests. The second step is to assess which native trees could be grown on degraded land.

"This involves trialling many different native species, including higher valued timber species to

diversify income for local farmers," Dr. Lamb said.

"Farmers need to buy short- and long-term insurance in the form of having a variety of tree species in their farm plantations. They might be species that produce timber as well as fruit and nuts or it might be fast-growing trees mixed with a slow-growing tree," Dr. Lamb explained.

He added that the reforestation programs could benefit individual farmers and also improve biodiversity and regional water supplies. The challenge was to conserve the remaining diversity in the world's most species-rich areas while also improving the livelihood of poor farmers who live in these areas.

The UQ ecologists say that simply creating national parks in degraded

forests is not enough. Sometimes, this can even be detrimental to poor farmers who have had to leave these new protected areas.

The alternative identified by Dr. Lamb and Dr. Erskine is to strategically reforest degraded areas both in and around nature reserves. This method differs from traditional reforestation methods that have relied on monoculture plantations of acacia, pine, or eucalyptus.

Of forest restoration work around the world, Dr. Lamb says most people tend to focus on big industrial scale plantations which do little to conserve biodiversity and are often of limited benefit to rural communities.

"But in Asia and many other parts of the tropical world," he averred, "there's also an enormous number of small farmers who are planting trees for a whole variety of reasons."

The findings of Dr. Lamb and Dr. Erskine were based on several years of studying forests in northern Queensland, Lao PDR, Vietnam, and Thailand. (LLDDomingo/UQ Online News)



## UBC opens Asia-Pacific office

University British Columbia's latest international foray capitalizes on its substantial strengths in the Asia-Pacific region for stronger partnerships and more opportunities for students, faculty and alumni to thrive in today's competitive world.

The Asia-Pacific Regional Office (APRO), which opened on 3 May 2005 in Hong Kong, marks the first time a Canadian university has established a permanent presence of this magnitude in the region. It will address UBC's various needs in the region, including student services and recruitment, development and alumni relations.

"APRO is a testament to UBC's appreciation of the extraordinary growth and resolve in working with the region's private, public and academic sectors," said **Ken McGillivray**, Director of the Office of UBC International and Acting Associate Vice President, International.

"It is also closely aligned with the internationalization pillar of Trek 2010,

*the Asia-Pacific Regional Office in Hong Kong marks the first time a Canadian university has established a permanent presence of this magnitude in the region*

the university's mission statement. It's so critical because it ties into the pre-eminent concept of promoting global citizenship.

"UBC is Canada's leading university in Asian Pacific issues," says McGillivray, who will host President **Martha Piper**, Vice President, Students, **Brian**

## UBC researchers discover ocean viruses

*"a teaspoon of seawater contains a billion viruses, and we know very little about most of them"*

University of British Columbia (UBC) researchers have discovered five groups of previously unknown viruses living in a wide range of ocean environments.

The discovery, recently published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, shows that a wide range of ocean environments contain previously unknown viruses that are distant relatives of viruses that attack bacteria in the human digestive system.

"On average, a teaspoon of seawater contains a billion viruses, and we know very little about most of them," says Dr. **Curtis Suttle**,

Professor at UBC's Department of Earth and Ocean Sciences and Associate Dean at the Faculty of Science.

Samples for the study were taken from many parts of the world including the coastal waters of British Columbia, the Gulf of Mexico off Florida and as deep as four kilometres below the surface of the Arctic Ocean.

Suttle's research continues to focus on the discovery of unknown and unusual viruses in the ocean, understanding their biology, and deciphering their role in the global ecosystem. (*UBC Reports* Vol. 51, No. 11)

**Sullivan**, several deans, selected faculty and alumni from the entire region at the official opening.

"By establishing a permanent presence in the region, we're extending our academic and research expertise and strong alumni links to support UBC's various efforts in the area, as well as creating new opportunities that will help our students become global citizens."

In addition to establishing the Asia-Pacific Alumni Network, collaborating with regional universities through linkages such as Universitas 21 and the Association of Pacific Rim Universities, the APRO will also continue to work with local and regional organizations, businesses, non-governmental organizations and governmental agencies to identify opportunities for experiential and service learning for UBC students in the Asia Pacific.

"The aim is for even more UBC students to incorporate the international

experience, through service learning, co-op placement or mobility exchange programs, into their post-secondary experience," said McGillivray.

While a small existing office — established in 1999 and one of the most active UBC alumni chapters around the world — has served as an excellent portal to UBC's activities in the region, a larger permanent presence is important given the cultural context of the region which places so much emphasis on relationship building, McGillivray added.

"The 'drop-in' approach of sending delegations there a few times a year is not the way to do business in the region," said McGillivray. "Part of the strength — and more importantly, the expectation — of the region, is the development of relationships, particularly personal relationships. It really places the UBC stamp in the hearts and mind of our clients." (*UBC Reports* Vol. 51, No. 4)

## German officials conduct evaluation of DAAD-SEARCA Scholarship Program

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Evaluation Team, headed by Mrs. **Hannelore Bossman**, Chief, Section of South and Southeast Asia, DAAD, visited SEARCA on 25-27 July 2005 to conduct an evaluation of the DAAD-SEARCA scholarship program.

The other members of the DAAD Evaluation Team are Dr. **Uwe Muuss**, Managing Director, Center for Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture and Forestry, Georg-August

University of Goettingen, Germany; and Prof. Dr. **Heinz-Ulrich Neue**, Head and Professor, Department of Soil Sciences, UFZ Centre for Environmental Research Leipzig-Halle in Germany.

The DAAD Evaluation Team conferred with the SEARCA Directorate, and staff of the Center's Graduate Scholarship Department and finance units regarding the administrative and academic issues that concern the DAAD scholarships administered by SEARCA. They also met with Dr. **Ernesto V. Carpio**,

Vice Chancellor for Instruction of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) to clarify some matters pertaining to the UPLB Graduate School policies and procedures. The Team also convened all the DAAD scholars studying at UPLB and met some scholars' advisers and SEARCA fellows.

Since 1975, the DAAD has funded 274 (135 MS, 139 PhD) SEARCA scholarships, 31 (13 MS, 18 PhD) of which are still ongoing. (LLDDomingo)

### CeTSAF co-organizes, from page 12

Reinforced with Bamboo Strips" by **Wang Ge** and "Studies on Processing Properties of Plantation Poplar Wood" by **Qin Daochun**. Both presentors were from the International Center for Bamboo and Rattan in China;

### Forestry and Policy

The session on forestry and policy was keynoted by Dr. **Klaus Merker**, Director General, Forestry Department, Lower Saxony, Germany with his paper titled "Strategy, Concept, Organization, Vision, and Goals Towards Efficient Economic and Ecological Sustainable Forest Management."

Other papers presented on the topic of forestry and policy were:

- "Challenges of Forest and Plantation Forestry in Iran" by **Mohammad Hassan Asareh**, Iran;
- "Forest Plantations of Perhutani, Java, Indonesia" by **Sadhardjo Siswamartana**, Indonesia;
- "Challenges of Forest Management

and Plantation Forestry in Ceylon" by **Sarath Fernando**, Sri Lanka;

- "Forest Plantation in Indonesia: An economic view" by **Bahruni**, Indonesia; and
- "United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) position on Forestry Plantations in Iran" by **Adel Salili**, Iran.

### Forests and Environment

The session on forests and environment was keynoted by Prof. Dr. **Cecep Kusmana**, Dean, Faculty of Forestry, Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB), Bogor, Indonesia with his paper titled "Challenges of Forestry and Forest Plantations in Indonesia."

Other papers presented on the topic of forests and environment were:

- "The Challenge of Forest Plantations and Plantation Forest Development in Aceh, Indonesia" by **Irfan**, Indonesia;
- "The Impact of Lowering Cutting

Diameter Limit on Residual Stands Damages and Ground Exposure at Production Forest Concessionaire Areas in Papua Province, Indonesia" by Dr. **Bambang Nugroho**, Lecturer, Faculty of Forestry, Universitas Papua, Indonesia, and SEARCA fellow;

- "Export of Beech Logs from Germany to China, Timber Export from Europe to Asia" by **Pu Chen**, Germany;
- "Stability of Rainforest Margins in Indonesia (STORMA): A joint project of the universities Goettingen, Bogor, and Tadulako" by **Adam Malik**, Indonesia; and
- "Land Use Change in Lore Lindu National Park, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia" by **Tridiati Antono**, Bogor (Indonesia).

Between seminar sessions, the summer school participants went on several visits to relevant research facilities, university and government offices, and a forest nursery. (LLDDomingo/CeTSAF news online)

# The University Consortium

The Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education and Natural Resources, or University Consortium, provides another avenue for SEARCA to enhance agricultural human resources in Southeast Asia. Since 1989, SEARCA has served as the Consortium Secretariat.

Today, the University Consortium is an effective network linking strong universities in Southeast Asia, Canada, Australia, and Germany. Its founding members are Institut Pertanian Bogor and Universitas Gadjah Mada in Indonesia, Universiti Putra Malaysia in Malaysia, University of the Philippines Los Baños in the Philippines, and Kasetsart University in Thailand. Its associate members are University of British Columbia in Canada, University of Queensland in Australia, and Georg-August University of Goettingen in Germany.

“To be a leader in implementing collaborative strategies for excellent graduate education and cutting-edge research in agriculture, environment, and natural resources for the benefit of the Southeast Asian region”—this is the vision of the revitalized University Consortium.

The mission of the University Consortium is to promote collaboration among UC members to enhance graduate education and research in agriculture, environment, and natural resources for the benefit of the Southeast Asian region.

The Consortium's objectives are to:

- 1) Provide highly trained personnel in agriculture, environment, and natural resources for the development of the Southeast Asian region;
- 2) Promote mutually beneficial cooperation among Consortium members by optimizing the use of scarce resources and expertise; and
- 3) Develop strong and dynamic linkages among Consortium members through collaborative research projects, and faculty and student exchange programs.

SEARCA has served as the Consortium's secretariat since 1989. Its founding members are Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB), both in Indonesia; Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) in Malaysia; University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) in the Philippines, and Kasetsart University (KU) in Thailand. Three associate members have also been admitted: University of Queensland (UQ) in Australia, University of British Columbia (UBC) in Canada, and Georg-August University of Goettingen in Germany.

The Consortium has five components, namely: student exchanges, faculty visits, research fellowships, professorial chairs, and thesis grants.

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## CeTSAF co-organizes summer school in plantation forestry in Asia and Europe

The Center for Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture and Forestry (CeTSAF) co-organized a Summer School on “Chances and Challenges of Plantation Forestry in Asia and Europe” at the Georg-August University of Goettingen in Goettingen, Germany on 26 September to 8 October 2005.

The summer school was organized by Tropenzentrum Goettingen in collaboration with CeTSAF and the Lower Saxony Competence Network for the sustainable use of wood (NHN). It was supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), and the Georg-August University of Göttingen.

The summer school tackled five major topics, namely: plantations, Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and chain of custody; wood technology, forestry and policy, and forests and environment.

### Plantations

The session on plantations was keynoted by Dr. **Daniel Baskaran** Krishnapillay, Senior Director, Biotechnology Division, Malaysia and Dr. **Joseph Jawa Kendawang**, Director of Forest Plantation Division in Sarawak, Forestry Department, Malaysia with their paper titled “Plantation forestry in Malaysia and Southeast Asia.”

Other papers presented on topic of plantations were:

- “Application of Hydrogel in Afforestation in Dry-Hot Valley in Southwestern China” by **Ma Huanchen**, China;

- “Mangrove forests in the Province of Nangroe Aceh Darussalam and the East coast of Sumatera, Indonesia: Their ecological, socioeconomic aspects and role in coast protection by **T. Chairun Nisa Bahruin**, Indonesia;

- “Java Teak Plantations: Challenge or opportunity” by **Lies Bahunta**, Indonesia;

- “Indonesian selective cutting and strip planting system: An alternative to rehabilitate logged over forest in lowland area” by **Prijanto Pamoengkas**, Indonesia;

- “Developing a Framework and Methodology for Plantation Assessment Using Remotely Sensed Data” by **Djafar Oladi**, Iran

- “An Overview of Plantation Forestry in Lao PDR” by **Chanhsamone Phongoudome**, Laos; and

- “Plantation with Fast-growing Species” by **Mahdir Rahmati**, Iran.

### CDM and Chain of Custody

The session on CDM and chain of custody was keynoted by Prof. Dr. **Alois Hüttermann**, Institute of

Forest Botany, University of Goettingen with his paper titled “The Kyoto Process: An attractive basis for foreign direct investment in developing countries.”

Other papers presented on the topic of CDM and chain of custody were “Carbon Sequestration and Energy Plantations” by Prof. Dr. **Dieter Murach**, University of Applied Sciences, Eberswalde, Germany; and “Tracing Timber by Analyzes of Isotopes” by Dipl. Ing. **Joerg Lickfett**, AGROSOM, Germany.

### Wood Technology

The session on wood technology was keynoted by Mr. **Burkhand Rüther**, Coordinator of the Competence Network for the Sustainable Use of Wood (NHN), Germany with his paper titled “The Competence Network for Sustainable Timber Utilization: Projects in cooperation with the wood industry.”

Other papers presented on the topic of wood technology were “Plantation Wood Composites

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