

## Southeast Asian University Consortium launches its faculty and student grants for 2012

The Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources, or the University Consortium (UC) has announced its faculty and student grants for the year 2012. These grants aim to expand the academic and research opportunities available to UC faculty members and graduate students.

Faculty members and students from participating members of the UC are eligible to apply for these grants.

For the year 2012 the UC Faculty Grants have been divided into three sub-categories, namely: travel grant for research, travel grant for conference/seminar, and visiting professor program for teaching purposes.

On the other hand, thesis grants, travel grant for research, and travel grant for credit program are the three sub-categories under the 2012 UC Student Grants.

Application requirements, list of participating universities and other details about these grants and about the UC can be found in the website at [www.uc.searca.org](http://www.uc.searca.org).

Launched in 1989, the University Consortium was initiated by the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) together with five founding members in Southeast Asia as a sustainable strategy to pursuing regional agricultural human resource development by linking top agricultural universities in the region to facilitate free exchange of

The poster features a background image of a student in a lab. It is divided into two main sections: 'FACULTY' and 'STUDENT'. The 'FACULTY' section lists three grant types: Faculty Travel Grant for Research, Faculty Travel Grant for Conference/Seminar, and Visiting Professor Program for Teaching Purposes. The 'STUDENT' section lists three grant types: Thesis Grant, Student Travel Grant for Research, and Student Travel Grant for Credit Program. At the bottom, it provides a URL for more information: <http://www.uc.searca.org>.

information, facilities, and expertise.

Today, the University Consortium also includes reputable agricultural universities from Canada, Australia, Germany, and Japan.

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## Dr. Camacho is UC Coordinator for UP Los Baños



Dr. Jose V. Camacho, Jr., dean of the Graduate School has been designated as the Coordinator of UP Los Baños (UPLB) for the Southeast Asian University Consortium (UC). Dr. Camacho replaced Dr. Cristeta N. Cuaresma, as UPLB's UC Coordinator, effective 26 April 2012.

Prior to his current position in the UPLB Graduate School,

Dr. Camacho was the Associate Dean of the University's College of Economics and Management. His specialization and research focus are on the economics of education, labor and human resource, institutions, and political economy.

Dr. Camacho graduated with a master's degree in Economics of Development at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, Netherlands in 1995 and a PhD in Economics at Kyoto University, Japan in 2007.

## Dr. Shiwachi is TUA's new Director for International Programs



Effective April 2012, Dr. Hironobu Shiwachi succeeded Dr. Akimi Fujimoto as Director of Tokyo University of Agriculture's (TUA) Center for International Programs (CIP). Concurrently, he will serve as TUA's Coordinator for the UC.

Prior to his new role, Dr. Shiwachi was CIP's Deputy Director and affiliated with the Faculty of International

Agriculture and Food Studies, Department of International Agricultural Development in TUA. He developed yam and rice production technologies and authored a significant number of journal articles on these.

Dr. Shiwachi is an alumnus of Kagoshima University, Japan, where he obtained his master's (1995) and PhD (2000) degrees in Agricultural Sciences.

## Dr. Pratikno is new Rector of UGM

Prof. Dr. Pratikno, M.Soc.Sc., was elected Rector of Universitas Gadjah Mada for the period 2012-2017.

After garnering the highest number of votes in the election, Pratikno expressed his appreciation for the trust given to him by the Board of Trustees who had elected him. He likewise extended his gratitude to the students who supported the election.

The former Dean of Faculty of Social and Political Sciences promised to monitor the democratization process in the university and work with the academic community in determining a policy and resolving a problem together. "A Rector would have no meaning if he cannot work in synergy with others," he said.

Director General for Higher Learning, Djoko Santoso, representing the Minister for Education and Culture congratulated Pratikno and gave him the Minister's message to carry out and uphold the

mandate of UGM well. "Universitas Gadjah Mada is a very special university for Indonesia. It has special significance in the Indonesian history of leadership since the beginning and until now," Santoso said.

Pratikno gained his bachelor's degree in Government Studies from UGM (1985), and was later accepted as lecturer at his Faculty.

With his UGM affiliation, he was able to finish his master's degree in development administration from University of



Birmingham, UK (1991), and his doctorate from Flinders University, Australia (1997).

Source: UGM Daily News | 01 April 2012



## IPB promotes analog rice, participates in the “One Day No Rice (ODNR) Program”

Bogor Agricultural University (IPB) signed a collaborative agreement with the Local Government of Depok a city in West Java province, Indonesia - to support the government's program on food diversification. With the collaborative agreement, IPB will provide analog rice to meet the demands of the One Day No Rice (ODNR) program in Depok. Analog rice is made from corn and sago developed by the Faculty of Agricultural Technology in IPB.

According to Depok Mayor, Nur Mahmudi Ismail, the municipality has been running the program since February 2012. Its government offices practice ODNR every Tuesday by replacing rice with boiled crops such as maize, sweet potatoes, and potatoes. To be sustainable, the program should also offer a well-balanced and varied menu. Snack foods such as instant noodles and meatballs noodles, which are made from flour, also have to be replaced with local ingredients. In this regard, the city's partnership with IPB is very advantageous, with IPB's track record in food technology innovations such as non-wheat-based noodles.

During the signing of the agreement,



*“The One Day No Rice Program aims to lower the Indonesian public's dependence on rice as a food staple and promote food diversification.”*

IPB demonstrated how to cook fried analog rice. Aside from the cooking demo, a variety of dishes made from analog rice and corn noodles were also served.

Dr. Sam Herodian, dean of the Faculty of Agricultural Technology in IPB said that for starters, they can supply the amount of analog rice needed by the canteens within the local government of Depok.

Source: IPB News | 24 May 2012

## 150 Malaysian students follow the Step to the University Program

To expose and motivate the rural students about the importance of education, a total of 150 students from 17 secondary schools visited the Universiti Putra Malaysia as part of the Selangkahke Universiti 2012 Program or Step to the University Program.

The event, organized by Badan Amaldan Kebajikan Tenaga Isteri-Isteri (BAKTI) and UPM, gathered rural students from families who have never set foot in a university. Through this initiative, the program proponents believe that the rural youth can be motivated to study hard, break free from poverty and foster a culture of love for science.

During the visit, the students were given a glimpse of the campus life at the UPM by visiting the Faculty of Laboratory Medicine and Health Sciences Complex, Food Service, University Veterinary Hospital, Putra FM radio stations, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication and Motion Capture, Information and Development Centre Communication (iDEC).

Khairy Jamaluddin, member of Parliament for Rembau, Negeri Sembilan, said that through the program, the government can produce students that think critically and have a genuine appreciation of education. By exposing these students to the academe, they can help discover the career they want in the future.



Source: UPM News | 13 May 2012

## SEARCA awards 20 new graduate scholarships

In its continuous pursuit to produce high quality human resources in agriculture in Southeast Asia, the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) has conferred 20 scholarship grants to Southeast Asian nationals from eight countries, namely: Cambodia (3), Indonesia (2), Lao PDR (5), Myanmar (3), Philippines (2), Timor Leste (1), Thailand (2), and Vietnam (2).

The new scholars are:

Mr. Chim Chay, Lecturer, Royal University of Agriculture, Cambodia (PhD, food science, UPLB)

Ms. Ong Socheath, Research and Teaching Assistant, Royal University of Agriculture, Cambodia, (MS, plant pathology, UPLB)

Mr. Ulderico B. Alviola, Lecturer, Visayas State University, Leyte, Philippines, (MS, development communication, UPLB)

Ms. Ma. Theresa R. Sawit, Philippine Rice Research Institute, Nueva Ecija, Philippines (MS, community development, UPLB)

Ms. Fatimah, Pt Greenfields Indonesia, Java, Indonesia (PhD, animal nutrition and feed sciences, IPB)

Ms. Tika Tresnawati, SEAMEO Biotrop, Bogor, Indonesia (MS, communication of rural and agricultural development, IPB)

Mr. Kolakanh Chanthavongsa, Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Xiengkhouang Province, Lao PDR (MS, community development, UPLB)

Mr. Somphong Chanthavong, Lecturer, Savannakhet University, Lao PDR (PhD, environmental science, UPLB)

Mr. Phansamay Inphomma, Agriculture

See SEARCA awards, p. 5

# UPLB Biology Professor visits UBC through the UC Faculty Exchange Program

Through the Faculty Exchange Program of the Southeast Asian University Consortium (UC), Dr. Rita P. Laude, professor at the Institute of Biological Sciences in UP Los Baños (UPLB), completed her visit of the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver, Canada where she gained exposure on the various strategies, methods, and equipment in genomics and systems biology researches as applied to agriculture.

Dr. Isman Murray, dean of the Faculty of Land and Food Systems, and UBC's coordinator for UC welcomed Dr. Laude for her 10-day visit, which commenced on 1 May 2012. He likewise helped organize Dr. Laude's seminar entitled "Coconut Biotechnology: Gene Discovery of Fatty Acid/Triglyceride Biosynthesis, Cocosin Promoter, and Tissue-Culture-Transformation in Corn as a Model System," attended by food, nutrition, and health faculty and researchers.

The said program also gave Dr. Laude the opportunity to meet with the host scientists and to discuss future collaborative researches involving faculty members and researchers under the UPLB-Philippine Genome Center Program for Agriculture. Among them were Dr. Hennie van Vuuren, Dr. Justin Lin, Dr. Zhongli Luo, Dr. Christopher Walkey, and Ms. Lina Madilao of UBC's Wine Research Center who helped explain the various research activities of the center. In managing the laboratory, Dr. Van Vuuren has been engaging post-doctoral fellows. He says that this way, the Center has become more efficient



Dr. Rita P. Laude of the Institute of Biological Sciences in UPLB visits the University of British Columbia in Canada, through UC's Faculty Exchange Program.

and more productive, by allowing the Head to use his time more in resource generation activities.

Dr. Van Vuuren's team also showed Dr. Laude the Center's wine cellar - a collection of more than 1000 wines of different brands and ages - where she was able to have a taste of vintage wine identified by undergraduate students as part of their thesis with the Wine Research Center.



Dr. Laude with Dr. Michael Russello, head of the Conservation, Ecology, and Evolutionary Biology Laboratory, UBC Okanagan Campus

Part of Dr. Laude's itinerary was a visit to UBC Okanagan campus where she met Dr. Michael Russello, head of the Conservation, Ecology, and Evolutionary Biology Laboratory of the UBC Okanagan's Biology Department.

Established only in 2005, the Okanagan campus plays host to the productive and well-organized laboratory of Dr. Russello which now manages various research activities on crocodiles, kakonee salmon, and the American pika, a small rodent-like mammal that looks like a squirrel or guinea pig. To carry out

these researches efficiently, Dr. Russello has been involving his undergraduate and graduate students. With such a scheme in place, joint research involving UPLB graduate students is highly feasible, according to both Drs. Laude and Russello.



Dr. Laude with Wine Research Center head, Dr. Van Vuuren and his team at the Center's wine cellar, a collection of 1000 wines.



## UQ-developed portable technology can detect dengue-infected mosquitoes in the field

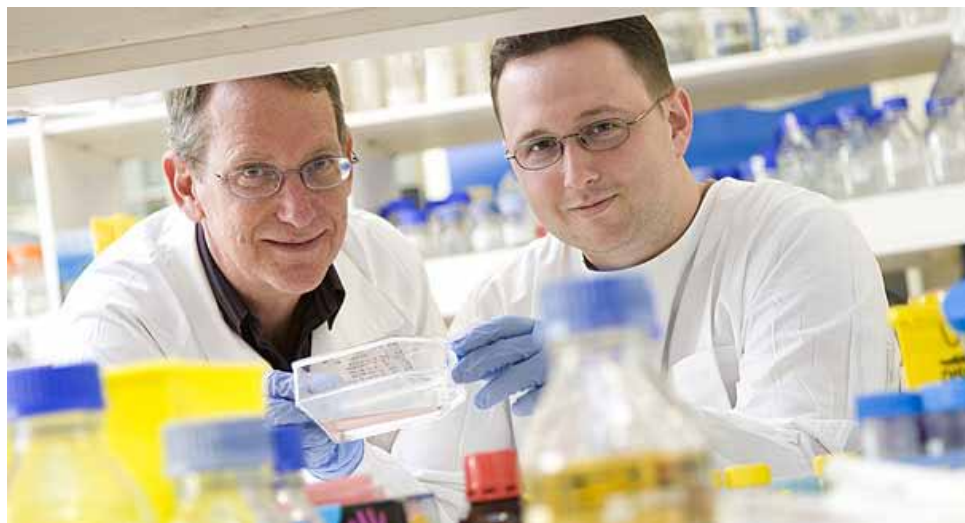


photo source: www.uq.edu.au

*Dr. Muller's initial study on the dengue fever infection, awarded the Rodger Dallas Morgan Postgraduate Research Travel, started when he was still pursuing his PhD at UQ.*

UQ's renowned virologist Professor Paul Young (left) with then PhD student David Muller

Each year, almost a million people, a large proportion of whom are children, require hospitalization for severe dengue. A new portable tool to detect dengue virus-infected mosquitoes aims to reduce the likelihood of human infections around the world. The simple diagnostic tool, developed by Dr. David Muller and colleagues from The University of Queensland (UQ) and research groups in Melbourne and South America, can now be used in the field to detect dengue infection in large numbers of mosquitoes.

"Unlike other approaches to mosquito surveillance, this new tool provides information on whether mosquitoes are carrying dengue," Dr. Muller said. "It is rapid, specific, and does not require

specialized equipment or personnel. This means it will be viable for use in developing regions of the world where dengue is a significant health and economic burden," he said.

Almost half of the world's population is at risk of contracting the virus which is transmitted to humans by the bite of an infectious female mosquito. In fact, over 100 million people each year are infected globally, resulting in mild debilitation or even life-threatening complications of dengue hemorrhagic fever.

Suppressing mosquito populations is one way that local authorities try to reduce transmission of the virus, and finding the location and incidence of infected populations allows a rapid response to

control the spread of the disease.

Professor Paul Young, leader of Dr. Muller's team at the Australian Infectious Diseases Research Centre, said that rigorous field testing was still being conducted. "The goal of this work is to provide the tools to not only assess mosquito numbers in the field but also their infection status," he said.

"This information could then be directly uploaded with GPS information via mobile devices to coordinating centers. The availability of real-time monitoring of dengue presence within the mosquito population would be a valuable addition to early warning monitoring programs and should result in more effective mosquito control responses by local health authorities," Professor Young said.

News of the new diagnostic tool has been published in the international Journal of Virological Methods.

Source: UQ News | 21 May 2012

### SEARCHA awards, from p. 3

and Forestry, Office of Khamkeut District, Bolykhamxay, Province, Lao PDR (MS, community development, UPLB)

Mr. Bounxou Xayxana, Northern Agriculture and Forestry College, Luangprabang Province, Lao PDR (MS, community development, UPLB)

Mr. Myo Win Maung, Assistant Supervisor, Myanmar Agriculture Service, Myanmar (MS, environmental science, UPLB)

Ms. Than Htwe, Assistant Supervisor, Seed Division, Myanmar Agriculture Service, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Myanmar (MS, agronomy, UPLB)

Mr. Antonio Joao Da Costa, Lecturer, Faculty

of Agriculture, Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e, Timor Leste (PhD, agricultural science, UGM)

Mr. Hoang Ha Anh, Lecturer, Department of Environment & Natural Resource Economics, Faculty of Economics, Nong Lam University, Vietnam (MS, environmental science, UPLB)

Ms. Iran Hoai Thao Trang, Lecturer, Hanoi University of Agriculture, Vietnam (MS, agricultural and resource economics, KU)

Ms. Chalinee Somthawin, Agricultural Extensionist, Department of Agricultural Extension, Thailand (MS, extension education, UPLB)

Ms. Pimnapa Khunpilueg, Agriculture Research Officer, Chiang Mai Field Crops Research Center, Department of Agriculture,

Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperative, Thailand (PhD, agronomy, KU)

Mr. Sambo Pheap, Research and Teaching Assistant, Royal University of Agriculture, Cambodia (MS, soil science, UPLB)

Mr. Kyaw Min Htut, Deputy Supervisor, Plant Protection Division, Myanmar Agriculture Service, Myanmar (PhD, entomology, UPLB)

Mr. Nouansisavad Sombounsack, Academic Officer, Savannakhet University, Lao PDR (MS, animal science, UPLB)

With these new scholarship awards, SEARCHA has now awarded a total of 1,322 scholarship grants since the program started in SY 1969/70.

# UPM and Subang Jaya Municipal Council develop technology on solid waste management

*With the help of researchers and faculty members from UPM, the Subang Jaya Municipal Council embarks on its first green project.*

Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) teamed up with the Subang Jaya Municipal Council (MPSJ) to launch a Vermicomposting and Biogas Anaerobic Digestion technology that can help address the problem of solid waste in the Seri Serdang public market. According to MPSJ President Dato Asmawi Kasbi, this is the first green project undertaken by the local government.

The National Solid Waste Management Department was able to provide MYR 200,000 for the Anaerobic Digestion Biogas component, while the Ministry of Education (MOE) covered the cost of the vermicomposting component of this technology developed by UPM researchers.

MPSJ expects local businesses as well as the residents of Serdang to benefit from this initiative.

The Anaerobic Digestion Biogas project has the capability to convert food waste into biogas. Anaerobic digestion of sludge from waste can also be used as fertilizer. Aside from good solid waste management practice, biogas technology is in line with Malaysia's National Renewable



Energy Policy and Action Plan which aims to increase the use of renewable energy for electricity from 1 percent to 5.5 percent by 2015.

On the other hand, vermicomposting refers to the natural decomposition process using vermin organisms (worms) to produce compost in 30 days. The vermicomposting

project, led by Dr. Azni Idris of the Faculty of Engineering in UPM, aims to promote a green community and improve the quality of life in Serdang. The project is part of a three-year pilot program that intends to develop the concept of urban biomass.

Source: UPM News | 23 April 2012

## PHOTO RELEASE



Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Kasetsart University and French organization CIRAD signed the Memorandum of Understanding creating the Regional Network on Management of Epidemiological Emerging Risk in Southeast Asia (GREASE) on 10 May 2012.

The GREASE Network is considered as another dimension of the regional cooperation among CIRAD and other potential partners from different countries namely the Philippines, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. It aims to promote high quality scientific research on "Ecology, Economy and Epidemiology of Transboundary" and "Emerging Animal Infectious Diseases." It also shares strategies regarding surveillance and control of such research areas in Southeast Asia.



## The University Consortium

The Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources is a network of institutions launched on 19 September 1989 by SEARCA.

The idea of having such a network was formed in August 1988 when SEARCA convened a meeting of deans of five leading agricultural graduate schools in the region. The deans noted a rising demand for graduate education across all agricultural disciplines and related fields, strong agricultural and demographic pressures, and tremendous growth in education, and agreed to the idea of establishing a University Consortium.

The objectives of the Consortium are:

1. To provide highly trained personnel in agriculture and natural resources for national development of Southeast Asian countries.
2. To promote mutually beneficial cooperation among agricultural universities in the region.
3. To utilize more fully and efficiently the scarce resources and expertise available in each country in the region for top-quality graduate education and research.
4. To stimulate freer sharing and exchange of information, facilities, and expertise among agricultural universities in the region.

SEARCA has served as the Consortium's Secretariat since 1989. Its founding members are Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) and 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. Four associate members have been admitted, namely: University of British Columbia (UBC) in Canada, University of Queensland (UQ) in Australia, Georg-August University of Göttingen (GAUG) in Germany, and Tokyo University of Agriculture (TUA) in Japan.

The vision of the University Consortium is 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 Southeast Asia.

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

*University Consortium* is the quarterly newsletter of the Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC). It can be downloaded from the UC website at <http://www.uc.searca.org>

Editor and Layout Design: Jesselle S. Laranas  
Advisers: Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr.  
Editha C. Cedicol

University Consortium accepts contributed articles on activities related to the Consortium programs. Send contributions to: The Editor, University Consortium, SEARCA, College, Los Baños 4031 Laguna, Philippines; Telefax: (63-49) 536 7164; Email: [jsl@agri.searca.org](mailto:jsl@agri.searca.org), [gsd@agri.searca.org](mailto:gsd@agri.searca.org)

### UC Contact Persons

#### Indonesia UNIVERSITAS GADJAH MADA

**Dr. Masyhuri**  
Director, Center for World Trade Studies  
Office of International Affairs  
Universitas Gadjah Mada  
Jl. Flora, Bulaksumur 55281  
Yogyakarta, Indonesia  
Tel: 62-274-555676  
Fax: 62-274-516656  
E-mail: [mmasyhuri@hotmail.com](mailto:mmasyhuri@hotmail.com) or  
[dr\\_masyhuri@yahoo.com](mailto:dr_masyhuri@yahoo.com)

#### INSTITUT PERTANIAN BOGOR

**Dr. Rineko Soekmadi**  
Director, Directorate of Collaboration  
and International Programs  
Institut Pertanian Bogor  
Gedung Rektorat, Lt. 2  
Kampus IPB Darmaga  
Bogor, Indonesia  
Tel: (62-251) 622-638  
Fax: (62-251) 622-638  
E-mail: [internas@indo.net.id](mailto:internas@indo.net.id)

#### Malaysia UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**Dr. Bujang Kim Huat**  
Dean, School of Graduate Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
4th Floor, Administration Building  
UPM 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia  
Tel: (60-3) 89466043  
Fax: (60-3) 89432509  
Email: [bujang\\_at\\_eng.upm.edu.my](mailto:bujang_at_eng.upm.edu.my)

#### Philippines UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES LOS BAÑOS

**Dr. Jose V. Camacho, Jr.**  
Dean, Graduate School  
University of the Philippines Los Baños  
4031 College, Laguna, Philippines  
Tel: (63-49) 536-3414; 536-2310  
Fax: (63-49) 536-2310  
Email: [anjoecon@yahoo.com](mailto:anjoecon@yahoo.com)

#### Thailand KASETSART UNIVERSITY

**Mr. Somsakdi Tabtimthong**  
Director, International Affairs Division  
Kasetsart University

50 Phaholyothin Road  
Chatuchak, Bangkok 10900, Thailand  
Tel: (66-2) 942 8171  
Fax: (66-2) 942 8170  
E-mail: [fro@nontri.ku.ac.th](mailto:fro@nontri.ku.ac.th)  
(Foreign Relations Office)

#### Australia UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

**Dr. Neal Menzies**  
Professor of Soil and Environmental Science  
Head, School of Agriculture and Food Sciences  
Dean of Agriculture  
University of Queensland  
Brisbane Queensland  
4072, Australia  
Tel: (61-7) 3365 2059  
Fax: (61-7) 3365 1177  
E-mail: [n.menzies@uq.edu.au](mailto:n.menzies@uq.edu.au)

#### Canada UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

**Dr. Mahesh Upadhyaya**  
Associate Dean, Graduate Studies  
Faculty of Land and Food Systems  
University of British Columbia  
270-2357 Main Mall  
Vancouver, B. C. V6T 1Z2, Canada  
Tel: (1-604) 822-6139  
Fax: (1-604) 822-4400  
E-mail: [upadh@interchange.ubc.ca](mailto:upadh@interchange.ubc.ca)

#### Germany GEORG-AUGUST UNIVERSITY OF GÖTTINGEN

**Dr. Uwe Muuss**  
Director, International Office  
Georg-August University of Göttingen  
Von-Siebold-Strasse 4  
37075 Göttingen, Germany  
Tel: (49) 551 3913585  
Fax: (49) 551 3914254  
Email: [uwe.muuss@zvw.uni-goettingen.de](mailto:uwe.muuss@zvw.uni-goettingen.de)

#### Japan TOKYO UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE

**Dr. Hironobu Shiwachi**  
Professor, Faculty of International Agriculture  
and Food Studies  
and Director, International Programs  
Tokyo University of Agriculture  
1-1-1 Sakuragaoka, Setagaya-ku  
Tokyo 156-8502, Japan  
Tel.: (8-13) 5477 2560  
Fax: (8-13) 5477 2635  
E-mail: [h1shiwac@nodai.ac.jp](mailto:h1shiwac@nodai.ac.jp)

#### Secretariat SEARCA

**Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr.**  
Director, SEARCA  
Los Baños 4031, Laguna, Philippines  
Telefax: (63-49) 536-7097  
E-mail: [gcs@agri.searca.org](mailto:gcs@agri.searca.org)

**Dr. Editha C. Cedicol**  
Manager, Graduate Scholarship Department  
SEARCA, Los Baños 4031, Laguna, Philippines  
Telefax: (63-49) 536-7164  
E-mail: [ecc@agri.searca.org](mailto:ecc@agri.searca.org)

# UP Los Baños echoes support for Bt Eggplant trial

The University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) has been at the forefront of biotechnology research and development in the Philippines with the establishment of the Institute of Plant Breeding (IPB) and the National Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology (BIOTECH). At present, it maintains its support for the multi-location field trials of the fruit-and-shoot-borer resistant Bt eggplant despite a petition filed against the experiment by Greenpeace Southeast Asia and other anti-GMO groups.

The UPLB administration stressed the importance of strengthening the trans-disciplinary scientific approach to research and problem solving of the University, and calls on other sectors to support the continuation of the Bt eggplant field tests.

The Bt eggplant project, already on its 10th year of implementation, is a priority project of UPLB in accord with its pro-people and pro-environment agenda. The current field trials are being responsibly and safely undertaken together with scientific organizations and partner state universities in compliance with the biosafety requirements and guidelines approved by national regulatory bodies such as the National Committee on Biosafety of the Philippines (NCBP) and the Bureau of Plant

*The field trials are in accordance with the biosafety guidelines which are compliant to the global biosafety standards under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, specifically the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.*



Industry of the Department of Agriculture.

The objective of the project is to help advance the welfare of small farmers, the consumers, and the environment. UPLB conducts the field trials in accordance with the biosafety guidelines issued by the NCBP and clearly stipulated in the Department of Agriculture Administrative Order No. 8 S-2002 which are compliant to the global biosafety standards under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, specifically the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

Ecological balance and environmental safety are non-negotiable core values of

the University in the conduct of research. Anti-GMO organizations must rest assured that the University is wholly committed in conducting responsible research on safe and beneficial technologies. While the University recognizes other people's right to their own opinion, the diversity of ideas and opinions which all modern democracies guarantee requires that the rights and freedoms, especially the academic freedom of a university like UPLB must be accorded the same respect and recognition.

Condensed from: UPLB News | April 2012

## IPB: Tomcat as natural enemy of brown planthopper and anti-cancer medicine

News about the outbreak of the tomcat beetle (*Paederus fusipes*) plaguing Surabaya, Madison, Pati, and Jakarta have spread all over Indonesia for a while now. The insect, which emits a strong poisonous liquid can cause severe itching and even blisters on the skin. However, that very same poisonous liquid is suspected to become a potent ingredient to help fight cancer.

According to Dr. Hidayat Purnama of the Department of Plant Protection,

Faculty of Agriculture, Bogor Agricultural Institute (IPB), the tomcat beetle is a natural predator of the brown planthopper, which is considered one of the most serious rice pests in Asia. In a day, a single tomcat beetle can eat seven brown planthoppers. But aside from its significant role in sustainable agriculture, it has been found to contain pederin which, has the potential to fight cancer.

The recent tomcat outbreak in several communities in Indonesia may have been



caused by the destruction of the insect's natural habitat. So that tomcat beetles will not invade your household, Dr. Purnama suggests reducing the number of lights used in the evening, instead of killing the insects.

Source: IPB News | 12 April 2012