

## UC members and regional experts convene for food security consultation workshop

With food security as an overriding development concern in the Southeast Asian Region, governments use different approaches to address it, and considering their specific country contexts and varying levels of development, many countries are facing and will face the same challenge of assuring food security in the coming years. With such multiplicity of factors and the complex nature of food security, and as the Region moves toward greater regional trade and economic integration, it is believed that food security can be best achieved through collective regional action and active collaboration by development



Participants, resource speakers, panelists, organizers and facilitators of the Regional Consultation Workshop: Umbrella Program on Food Security for Southeast Asia

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actors within and outside the region.

With this in mind, the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) conducted the regional consultation-workshop for developing the Umbrella Program on Food Security for Southeast Asia. The workshop was held from 25 to 26 July 2013 at SEARCA headquarters in Los Baños, Laguna. It was a joint undertaking of SEARCA, the Food Security Center (FSC) of the University of Hohenheim in Germany, and the Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources or University Consortium.

The workshop aimed to develop an Umbrella Food Security Program for Southeast Asia that will harness and direct the expertise of the University Consortium, and partner research institutions, networks and universities towards a food-secure Southeast Asia. It was attended by 25 participants from the University Consortium, regional and strategic partners of the FSC, and

partner universities in countries within the Greater Mekong Subregion, relevant government agencies from SEAMEO-member countries, and SEARCA.

At the end of the consultation workshop, participants had a more focused perspective and understanding of food security in the context of Southeast Asia or ASEAN; levelled-off on a conceptual framework for collaborative research, capacity development and knowledge management on food security in the region; discussed and prioritized food security issues and gaps in which to focus the collaborative work; determined how best for the UC, SEARCA, FSC and other partners could jointly make a substantive contribution to food security in the region; initiated the development of the umbrella program on food security for SEA; and analyzed the expertise, priority areas and interest for collaboration of the UC and partners within the framework of the

## IPB appoints new Director of Collaboration and International Programs



Dr. Edy Hartulistiyoso has been appointed Director for Collaboration and International Programs of Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) effective 5 July 2013. He replaced Dr. Rinekso Soekmadi who will move on to be the University's Director for Student Affairs. Concurrently, Dr. Hartulistiyoso will also be IPB's Coordinator for the University Consortium.

Before his appointment as Director for Collaboration and International Programs in IPB, Dr. Hartulistiyoso served as the Agricultural Attache at the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia to the Kingdom of Belgium, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, and the European Union in Brussels, Belgium for three years. However, even before his international stint, he was already affiliated with IPB as Director of Facility and Property (2004 to 2007) and Vice-Head of the Department of Agricultural Engineering (2001 to 2004). He is likewise an alumnus of IPB, having completed his Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Engineering in 1987. He completed both his Master's and PhD degrees at the Institute of Agricultural Engineering, Georg-August University of Goettingen in Germany in 1994 and 1999, respectively.

## UC awards first two grants for 2013



Two graduate students from the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) are the first recipients of the 2013 University Consortium Student Thesis Grant. Mr. Aeron D. Mayor (MS Environmental Science) and Ms. Lorena B. Loma (PhD Environmental Science) each received the student grant that will provide support for their respective researches.

Mr. Mayor's thesis will cover an ecological assessment of the freshwater clam *Batissa violacea* (Lamarck 1818) in Cagayan River,

Northern Philippines. On the other hand, Ms. Loma's dissertation will look at the impacts of climate change and variability on livelihood perspectives in Koronadal City, South Cotabato, Philippines.

The University Consortium through SEARCA is still accepting applications for its various Student and Faculty Grants from UC member universities. Details about the grant can be found in the UC webpage at [www.uc.searca.org](http://www.uc.searca.org). Inquiries can also be addressed directly through the UC secretariat: [ecc@agri.searca.org](mailto:ecc@agri.searca.org) or [gsd@agri.searca.org](mailto:gsd@agri.searca.org).

## KU concludes workshop on Assessing and Evaluating the Diversity of Plant Genetic Resources

The Kasetsart University (KU) conducted the Workshop on Assessing and Evaluating the Diversity of Plant Genetic Resources at the Department of Agronomy, Faculty of Agriculture on 15-19 July 2013. This workshop was a collaborative activity of KU's Faculty of Agriculture and the Food Security Center (FSC) of the University of Hohenheim, Germany with the support of German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

Dr. Rubens Onofre Nodari, Professor at the Federal University of Santa Catarina, Brazil served as the main lecturer of the workshop. Aside from lectures, lab workshop and group discussions, the learning event also included a visit to the Sirindhorn Plants Museum.

(Source: KU News | July 2013)



# UPM scientist develops test kit for leptospirosis



A Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) scientist developed a simple rapid test kit to diagnose leptospirosis infection in human. The test kit, LeptoScan2, can detect the presence of the spirochaete bacteria *Leptospira* spp. in the patient's blood in less than 15 minutes, even in the early stages of the disease. This is contrary to other products in the market which can only provide the results based on the antibodies produced after 7 days or more of the infection.

Prof Dato' Dr Abdul Rani Bahaman, the inventor of the rapid test kit is a senior lecturer from the Department of Veterinary Pathology and Microbiology of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of UPM. In a media conference held at UPM, he said that LeptoScan2 is an improved version of LeptoScan, a rapid DNA-based detection kit for leptospirosis which he also invented back in 2006.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), more than 500,000 people are infected with leptospirosis every year, with 23 percent mortality rate. Leptospirosis is usually carried by rats, but can also be transmitted by cattle, dogs, and pigs, and is excreted through the animal's urine. People contract the disease either by swallowing contaminated food or water, or through open wounds and mucous membranes in eyes, nose and mouth. The symptoms of the disease include severe fever, muscle pain, conjunctivitis. It is often misdiagnosed, as its symptoms are similar to influenza, dengue, and malaria. Severe cases of this bacterial infection may cause organ failure.

In Malaysia, there is also very high prevalence of leptospirosis in animals with

economic and public health importance evidenced by infertility, low milk production, and abortions or weak calves in the cattle.

Prof Rani's interest in studying leptospirosis began when he worked on the bacteria for his Master's dissertation in Massey University in New Zealand. He continued his focus on leptospirosis and obtained his PhD from UPM in 1988. According to Prof Rani, his work on LeptoScan2 started with a research grant of MYR 170,000 from the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI) in 2007 with his PhD student, Dr Arivudainambi Seenichamy.

The disease is not new as it was first diagnosed in the Institute of Medical Research of Kuala Lumpur in 1926 following an outbreak in the country. Recently, Malaysia's Deputy Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Hilmi Yahaya announced that there were 2,262 reported cases of leptospirosis in the country with 22 deaths in the first months of 2013.

Source: UPM News | 1 August 2013



Photo courtesy of [www.upm.edu.my](http://www.upm.edu.my)

UC members, from p. 1

umbrella program.

In his welcome remarks, SEARCA Director Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. recalled that as early as 2009, ASEAN-member nations already adopted the ASEAN Integrated Food Security (AIFS) Framework and that ASEAN and SEAMEO were already discussing collaboration to address issues of common concern, including food security. This was in light of, and in preparation for, the targeted achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in 2015. Dr. Saguiguit also mentioned that while there are many food security research initiatives in Southeast Asia, these are mostly national in scope and dispersed across the region. Hence the need for an umbrella program that will mobilize collective efforts and resources needed to address common food security issues and relevant food security thrusts of the ASEAN.

Dr. Paul S. Teng, Dean of Graduate Studies and Professional Learning at the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University in Singapore and SEARCA Senior Fellow on Food Security, served as resource speaker and overall workshop Chair. Other resource persons were Dr. Mei Rochjat Darmawiredja, Secretary for Food Security Agency of the Indonesia Ministry of Agriculture; and Dr. Dinah Pura T. Depositario, Associate Professor at the College of Economics and Management of the University of the Philippines Los Baños and SEARCA Adjunct Fellow. The members of the panel who provided their comments and suggestions for improvement of the workshop outputs were SEARCA Senior Fellows --- Dr. William G. Padolina, President, National Academy of Science and Technology, DOST Philippines, and Dr. Ma. Concepcion C. Lizada, Professor Emeritus in Food Science, UP Diliman; Ms. Sonny P. Tababa, Director, Biotechnology Affairs, CropLife Asia; and Ms. Rosalie M. Ellasus, Board Member, Asian Farmers Regional Network and Philippine Maize Federation, Inc.

SEARCA's Research and Development Department (RDD) and Graduate Scholarship Department (GSD) spearheaded this activity. (Bessie M. Burgos & Henry M. Custodio)

# Minister woos new UPM students towards careers in agriculture

*Most of the world's poor people earn their living from agriculture, so if we knew the economics of agriculture we would know much of the economics of being poor"*

Theodore Shultz  
1979 Nobel Prize in Economics

Agriculture is a lucrative career option. This was relayed by Malaysia's Agriculture and Agro-based Industries Minister, Dato' Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob to the new students of the Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), during a friendly get-together with the "Mentor Minister" held during the University's orientation week for the 3,291 new UPM students for the 2013/2014 c session.

Dato' Sri Ismail said he hopes to influence younger generation or the so-called "gen Y," to provide new and creative ideas on how to modernize the nation's agriculture sector. "UPM which was founded on agriculture, is the most important institution in the country in producing the moving force to develop the national agriculture sector," he added.

However, the youth's current perceptions about agriculture make it an unappealing career option for the youth, which in turn hampers agricultural development.

The food crisis experienced in 2008, according to the Minister, has shown how important and relevant is the agriculture sector because agriculture produces food. As such, developing the agriculture sector is a huge responsibility that requires the support of all the people that can ensure the success of the national agenda of adequate food production that is also safe for consumption.

Agriculture is a science that has to keep up with technology and innovation because these are the elements that will make agriculture a modern sector, said Dato' Sri Ismail. He also told the new students that the agriculture sector is not only for those who hold degrees in agriculture.

"To ensure that the agriculture sector can progress, its value-chain involves other courses, as well. For instance, agriculture involves engineering, biotechnology, finance and business, ICT, and even law. This means that any courses of study chosen

by the new students of UPM can play a role in developing the agriculture sector of the nation," said the Minister.

To further promote the agriculture sector to the youth, the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-based Industries is currently drafting a policy focussing on the creation of the best environment for these youths to join the agriculture sector.

"The ministry will prepare the best integrated package that will help the youths to be involved in agriculture, that is, capital or sponsorship, expertise in agriculture, courses and also marketing.

"This sort of package is badly needed to ensure that the youths involved can have guaranteed income and promising future, and that agriculture as a career is a profitable one," said Dato' Sri Ismail Sabri.

Source UPM News | 4 September 2013

*"UPM which was founded on agriculture, is the most important institution in the country in producing the moving force to develop the national agriculture sector."*

Dato' Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob  
Malaysian Agriculture and  
Agro-based Industries  
Minister



# 50 SEAMEO nationals awarded SEARCA scholarship

A total of 50 Southeast Asian nationals from eight countries have been awarded the SEARCA scholarship and began their respective graduate programs in agriculture and related sciences for the period August 2012 to October 2013. These graduate scholars come from Indonesia (1), Cambodia (11), Lao PDR (7), Myanmar (4), Philippines (2), Thailand (2), Timor Leste (5), and Vietnam (18).



Seven graduate scholars are supported by the German Academic Exchange Program (DAAD) while 27 scholars will pursue their graduate study programs under the IDRC project titled Southeast Asian Upland Agriculture Fellowships, which started in March 2012. The 16 scholars are under SEARCA's full scholarship program.

These scholars are studying at the Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB), Indonesia; Kasetsart University (KU), Khon Kaen University (KKU) and Chiang Mai University (CMU) in Thailand; and University of the Philippines Los Baños. They are the following:

## **Cambodia:**

Ms. Chin Hunlay, Contract Officer, Pailin Provincial Department of Agriculture, Phnom Penh (MS Animal Science, UPLB)

Ms. Chheun Sreyneang, Assistant to the Dean/Research Assistant, Royal University of Agriculture, Phnom Penh (MS Agricultural Economics, UPLB)

Mr. Eng Chheanhong, Advisor on Decentralization Reform, National Committee for Democratic Development Secretariat (NCDD-S), Ministry of Interior, Phnom Penh (MS Applied Nutrition, UPLB)

Mr. Long Huot, Project Manager, Samaritan's Purse, Phnom Penh (MS Agricultural Economics, UPLB)

Mr. Nget Raby, Lecturer Assistant/Research Assistant, Royal University of Agriculture, Phnom Penh (MS Agronomy, UPLB)

Mr. Thea Sive, Research Facilitator, Kyoto Field Station, Royal University of Agriculture, Phnom Penh (MS Agronomy, UPLB)

Ms. Theavy Srey, Lecturer, Faculty of Agro-Industry, Royal University of Agriculture, Phnom Penh (MS Food Science, UPLB)

Ms. Thoung Sodany, Lecturer, Royal University of Agriculture, Phnom Penh (MS Environmental Science, UPLB)

Mr. Ung Putheany, Research Officer/Admin Assistant, Royal University of Agriculture, Phnom Penh (MS Animal Science, UPLB)

Mr. Var Sophal (MS Agronomy, UPLB)

Ms. Vong Pisey, Research Assistant, Centre for Livestock Development Studies, Royal University of Agriculture, Phnom Penh (MS Animal Science, UPLB)

## **Indonesia:**

Mr. Riza Firmansyah, Team Leader, PT. Exsamap Asia, Jakarta (MS Natural Resource & Environmental Management, IPB)

## **Lao PDR:**

Mr. Bouavonh Biachampah, Deputy, Livestock Division, Dongkhamxang Agriculture Technical School, Vientiane (MS Agriculture-Agricultural Systems & Management, CMU)

Mr. Khamniem Phongtady, Technical Staff, Clean Agriculture Development Center, Department of Agriculture, Vientiane (MS Rural Development Management, KKU)

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Mr. Lyfong Yalao, Teacher, Northern Agriculture and Forestry College, Luangprabang (MS Agriculture - Animal Science, CMU)

Ms. Pathumpone Sonemany, Community

and Environmental Services Co. Ltd, Thongkhankhame Village, Chanthaburly, Vientiane (MS Agronomy, KKU)

Mr. Veokham Vilaysane, Lecturer, Water Resources Engineering Department, National University of Laos, Vientiane (MS Agricultural Engineering, UPLB)

Mr. Xayasin Somanay,

Researcher, Horticulture Research Center, National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute, Vientiane (MS Agricultural Systems Management, CMU)

## **Myanmar:**

Ms. Myat Moe Hlaing, Demonstrator, Yezin Agricultural University, Nay Pyi Taw (PhD Botany, UPLB)

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Ms. Phyu Lay Myint, Assistant Supervisor, Department of Agriculture, Myanmar Agriculture Service, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Nay Pyi Taw (MS Agricultural and Resource Economics, KU)

Mr. Ye Min Htwe, Assistant Supervisor, Cotton and Sericulture Enterprise Department, Myanma Industrial Crops Development Enterprise, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Nay Pyi Taw (MS Botany, UPLB)

## **Philippines:**

Ms. Edelweiss E. Sajise, Science Research Specialist II, Philippine Rice Research Institute, College, Laguna (PhD Plant Breeding, UPLB)

Ms. Maria Anabelle D. Gerona, Instructor III, Department of Development Communication, Visayas State University, Leyte (PhD

See 50 SEAMEO p. 6

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Development Communication, UPLB)

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As of June 2013, SEARCA has awarded a total of 1,552 scholarships to nationals of the 11 SEAMEO member countries namely Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste and Vietnam.



For further information and inquiries, about the conference, please contact:

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## The University Consortium

The Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources is a network of higher education 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 joined the network, 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 program components, namely: student exchanges, faculty visits, research fellowships, professorial chairs, and thesis grants.

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# UBC-UC-SEARCA Faculty Fellowship

The UBC Faculty of Land and Food Systems will offer one fellowship in the amount of C\$7500 to a faculty member of a SEARCA/University Consortium member university to come to UBC for a minimum of six weeks and a maximum of 12 weeks. Faculty members intending to visit UBC for a period of less than six weeks will receive an amount prorated on the basis of the duration of their stay. While all faculty members of UC-SEARCA member universities are eligible to apply for this fellowship, preference will be given to junior faculty members.

The UBC-UC-SEARCA Fellow will be expected to present a seminar on their research, and give at least two guest lectures in one or more of our existing courses. At least one of these lectures should be in an undergraduate course. The balance of the time can be spent meeting with Faculty colleagues to enrich the fellow's research and teaching experience.

## Application Procedure:

Applications for this fellowship should be sent directly to:

*Dean*  
Faculty of Land and Food Systems  
Suite 248 - 2357 Main Mall  
University of British Columbia  
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z4  
Canada

The application should include:

1. A cover letter describing applicants teaching and research interests and experience, activities intended during the tenure of the Fellowship at UBC, and any interaction or correspondence of the applicant with a faculty member in the Faculty of Land and Food Systems.
2. Detailed curriculum vitae of the applicant.

## Application Deadline:

Deadline for all applications will be on 1 January 2014  
The selected fellow will be informed by 1 April 2014 and will be expected to visit UBC between 1 September 2014 and 31 August 2015.



**Faculty of Land and Food Systems**  
Grounded in Science | Global in Scope

## University Consortium GRANTS

For guidelines, application procedures and requirements, please visit

<http://www.uc.searca.org>



### FACULTY GRANTS

#### Faculty Travel Grant for Research

Conduct research in another participating UC member.

#### Faculty Travel Grant for Conference/Seminar

Participate and present a paper in a conference/seminar organized by another participating UC member.

#### Visiting Professor Program for Teaching Purposes

Teach a graduate course in his/her field of discipline at another participating UC member.

### STUDENT GRANTS

#### Thesis Grant

Assists the UC graduate student to develop and finish his/her thesis.

#### Student Travel Grant for Research

Travel for a semester in another participating UC university to conduct his/her research or a portion of it.

#### Student Travel Grant for Credit Program

Spend a semester in another participating UC university to take courses for credit to his/her program.