

on the move

Preparing. Finding. Implementing solutions.



SAES research puts international trade into Tarheel economics

The International Trade Center at SAES is gradually prying open new markets in the Far East for small-scale agricultural producers in North Carolina.

“We see our role as facilitating,” said Osei Yeboah, interim director. “Through research, through our contacts in China, and through international student exchange agreements with Nanjing University that we are now developing, we can open doors.”

Duplin Winery represents one of the center’s recent successes. The 30-year-old farmer-owned corporation, famous for its muscadine grape vintages, began exporting grape seed to Taiwan in recent years, thanks in part to business connections fostered through the center. The seeds used to be thrown away, before it was discovered that they are rich in antioxidants, said David Fussell, a co-founder of the winery. The trade center was “very important” in making the overseas deal happen, he said.

China has now moved to the forefront of center’s interest, both because of the magnitude of its market — 1.4 billion people strong — and because

it dropped many trade barriers since joining the World Trade Organization in 2001. The center uses research to find good fits between overseas consumer preferences and North Carolina products. One such study indicated good potential in pork offal (tongues, feet, organs, intestines etc.). Offal is far more popular with Chinese consumers than with those in the United States. Yeboah said the study showed pork offal can retail from between 50 cents and \$2 a pound in China, provided it is cut and packaged to specifications. On the basis of those findings, the center hosted a trip to North Carolina from a Chinese import-export company that is seeking suppliers of offal and other agricultural products. Although no contracts have yet been signed, the visit gave two North Carolina producers food for thought about the potential.

Chatham Hill Winery owner Marek Wojciechowski discovered that China could be a future source for inexpensive wine bottles.

“Teaming up with other wineries would probably be more realistic,” he said.

Red Gate Farms, a company which markets premium pork raised by small scale pork farmers in North Carolina, found the visit informative.

“I learned a huge amount about the opportunity there sometime in the future,” said John Adams, a Red Gate spokesman. The venture could be feasible if pricing and logistics could be worked out, he added.

According to John Jenkins, international trade specialist for the N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, there is reason for small producers to be cautiously optimistic about the potential in offal, provided they are aware of the pricing and competition from large producers, who are already exporting the product to China.

“There is opportunity there, but realistically, it is going to be challenging to meet the price requirements, but there is certainly a huge demand for offal products in China, and for all pork products, not only in China but in Korea and throughout the East,” he said.

Yeboah believes the most realistic option is for small producers to form a cooperative, and inviting small-scale hog farmers who are interested to contact him at (336) 334-7056.

North Carolina A&T State University
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Newsletter

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Dr. T’s Moment

The latest edition of our research magazine, *Re:search*, should have reached your mailboxes by now. In a few months you will get a copy of our impact document called *Solutions for North Carolina*. These two documents are the signature pieces for SAES Agricultural Research and The Cooperative Extension programs.

Our faculty and staff work hard developing the programs and doing the kind of research that’s needed in this state. And our communications staff works so you can see the depth and breadth of that work.

Most people look at these two pieces and think we’ve done a good job of branding our programs. They are almost right. But branding is more than just a look. Branding is also how you think and feel about our SAES programs and whether or not we are able to deliver what we say we can deliver.

We’ve branded ourselves with the SAES motto: “Preparing. Finding. Implementing Solutions.” We promise that our students will graduate prepared for the world of work or to continue their education. In our research program, we promise to find the answers to those problems plaguing our citizens. And as part of Cooperative Extension, we promise our citizens that they will be able to understand and implement the solutions we have developed.

This is our promise to you as students and as citizens of this state. We are doing all we can to be true to our brand. Hold us to high standards.

— Dr. Alton Thompson
Dean, SAES



Dr. Ahmedna, right, and Brian Greene, a graduate student, look for the presence of pathogens in samples collected on a microplate.

SAES food scientist honored for helping Third World

An SAES food scientist has been named the first recipient of the George Washington Carver Agricultural Excellence Award from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), in recognition of his research on peanuts.

Dr. Mohamed Ahmedna was cited by the development agency for research conducted in collaboration with the peanut industry in Senegal. The award was established this year for a researcher at a minority-serving institution, African university or research center whose agricultural research has helped improve the quality of life for people in developing countries. Ahmedna was presented a medal and a check for \$5,000 at a ceremony in Washington Nov. 17.

Ahmedna's research has given rise to new processes and uses for peanuts and peanut byproducts that enhance food safety and crop value. Now, four years after the collaborative project first began, the West African nation is seeing the impact. Village peanut industries in Senegal are using an inexpensive process Ahmedna developed to render spoiled batches of peanuts

safe to eat by breaking down toxic compounds, known as aflatoxins, which are produced by a mold. The government there is also working to move some of Ahmedna's peanut-based meat substitutes from the research phase into development. Meanwhile, a high-protein infant formula made from peanuts is now in the research phase at Ahmedna's lab at A&T, where he is training a Senegalese graduate student in the technology as a part of a training and exchange program designed to enhance local expertise. Peanut allergies have

also come under scrutiny in Ahmedna's lab, resulting in a new process that removes many of the worst allergens. Research is ongoing to improve the process further. Ahmedna's team has also isolated potent antioxidants from red peanut skins for potential use in functional foods and dietary supplements.

One of the first products to arise from the project was a high-protein, low-fat meat substitute made from defatted peanut flour, which is an underutilized byproduct of peanut oil production. The product, which has won two national awards, is appropriate for developing countries where protein deficiency is an issue, as well as for the developed world where cardiovascular diseases are prevalent and overweight and obesity are at epidemic levels.

The A&T researcher became interested in peanuts because they are a versatile legume, and an economically important crop in both West Africa and the southeastern U.S. North Carolina has the nation's fifth largest peanut

crop, worth \$70 million a year. The Senegalese government is helping to bring Ahmedna's research into development, and some U.S. industries have also shown an interest in some of his innovations.

"Our objectives are to enhance safety, and add value to the peanut industry," he said. "In many instances, these are overlapping objectives. Some are more in line with the needs of consumers and industry here and some are in line with the needs there. Low-fat vegetarian foods, reducing allergens, and functional food ingredients fit our needs. Others, such as the infant formula and the high-protein aspect of the meat substitute and aflatoxin control, fit the needs in Senegal and other developing nations."

"It is a great honor to be recognized with this award, particularly because it is named for George Washington Carver, whose contributions to agricultural research have no equal in this nation's history," Ahmedna said.



Small Farms Week set to turn 20

The recognition and celebration of small-scale agriculture hits a milestone next year, when the annual Small Farms Week activities turn 20.

Scheduled for March 19 – 25, the 20th Annual Small Farms Week will culminate with the presentation of the Small Farmer of the Year Award set for March 22 during Small Farmer Appreciation Day activities on campus. The annual observance is sponsored each year by The Cooperative Extension Program at A&T.

The Small Farmer of the Year Award honors the small farmer who exemplifies prudent stewardship of the land and advantageous use of Extension in a manner that befits the award's namesakes, Gilmer L. and Clara Y. Dudley, patriarchs of the founders

"By bestowing this award, it says to a farmer that you can be small and that we appreciate you and accept you where you are, and appreciate what you do."

of the Dudley family hair-care and cosmetics company based in the Triad. "So often, small farmers have been lost in the larger, grander picture of large scale agriculture in this country," says Dr. M. Ray McKinnie, associate dean and administrator of The Cooperative Extension Program. "By bestowing this award, it says to a farmer that you can be small and that we appreciate you and accept you where you are, and appreciate what you do."

The recipients of the 2005 award are Nathaniel and Kirby Maram, owner/operators of a Christmas tree farm in Watauga County. As is traditional, the kickoff ceremony for the upcoming Small Farms Week celebration will be held in the county where the previous year's award winners are from. Watauga County Extension officials will host the opening ceremonies on March 20. "This observance is our continuing effort to support and appreciate the hard work and diligence of the small farmers in the state," McKinnie says. "Their operations contribute significantly to local economies as well as to the state's overall gross economy."

Nominations for the Small Farmer of the Year must be made or postmarked by Dec. 20. For a nomination form or more information, please visit: http://www.ag.ncat.edu/agedispatch/archives/2005/10/dudley_deadline.html.



At the annual University Farm Field Day on Oct. 20 research into pastured pork and cabbage-fed poultry were showcased, and (far left) samplings of new processing methods for goat meat were served up. N.C. State Senator Katie Dorsett (right) was among the dignitaries who welcomed visitors to the University Farm.



Dr. Rosemarie Vardell joined the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences this fall. Vardell comes to the SAES from Beloved

Community Center in Greensboro, where she was the coordinator for Training and Development. Vardell also has taught courses in child development and other subjects in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at UNCG since 1992, first as an instructor and then as a faculty adjunct. She received her doctorate in Curriculum and Teaching with a concentration in cultural studies from UNCG, and a master's in Human Development and Family Ecology from the University of Illinois. Throughout her career Vardell has been interested in promoting leadership and influence among early childhood teachers. Her international experience includes training for early childhood teachers in Guatemala.



Dr. Nancy A. Oliver also has joined the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, as part of the Fashion Merchandising

and Design Program faculty. Oliver received her doctorate at the University of Tennessee and her undergraduate degree from Appalachian State University. During her career, Oliver has worked as a marketing researcher at Fisher-Price and spent almost 20 years in higher education at universities in Arizona, North Carolina and Texas. Her research interests include the social psychology of clothing — clothing selection as a reflection of the social, political, economic and technological factors in society.

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*Cooperative Extension Program officials are
using these posters to recruit more young
farmers to the industry.*

Mark Your Calendar

- 1890 Scholars Program application deadline for 2006: Jan. 15
- Research Apprentice Program application deadline for 2006: Feb. 15
- Small Farms Week 2006: Mar. 19 – 26
- 1890 Land-Grant Universities Association of Research Directors 14th Biennial Research Symposium: Atlanta, April 1 – 5, 2006

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