



Western Center for Agricultural Health and Safety • University of California, Davis

## Joint funding for ag health and safety projects in developing countries

By Andrea Sargis

The Western Center for Agricultural Health and Safety (WCAHS) is proudly partnering with the UC Davis Blum Center for Developing Economies to help impoverished communities around the world improve the health and safety of agricultural workers. WCAHS and the Blum Center are excited to announce joint funding of six undergraduate and eight graduate students to conduct agricultural health and safety related projects this summer both in the United States and abroad.

Undergraduate projects are centered in Latin America. Trent McGowan and Ariel Chavez will work to improve water quality and catchment in Chirinos, Peru, a small agricultural town that has outgrown its current water supply system.

Alex Thornton-Dunwoody will help build a low-cost pollen dryer for Colombian beekeepers to improve bee pollen storage.

Tracie Dang, Elspeth Fullerton and Greta Soos will travel to Sabana Grande, Nicaragua, a community that depends on dairy cows as its



Rebecca Landman from the UC Davis Blum Center, talks with a farmer from Nicaragua. Photo courtesy of the UC Davis Blum Center.

main source of milk and dairy products, but cattle nutrition suffers, due to a lack of crop growth during the dry season. The undergraduates will conduct community silage workshops and help build a silage chopper for the cows.

Graduate student projects range from North America, to Latin America to Asia. Michael Kato will help establish a “One Health” approach in Knights Landing, California,

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## WCAHS investigators release policy paper on improving health of agricultural workers

By Andrea Sargis

A policy paper titled, *Improving the health of agricultural workers and their families Across America*, was recently released by WCAHS Investigators Marc Schenker and Stephen McCurdy, along with public health experts Don Villarejo and Heather Riden. Farmworkers are a key component of California’s billion dollar agricultural economy. Despite this fact, they often have high-risk jobs with little access to necessary healthcare, few legal protections, low socioeconomic status, and higher rates of occupational injuries and chronic diseases than workers in other occupations.

The paper’s 11 specific policy recommendations to improve farm worker health outcomes were presented by Schenker at the UC Center in Sacramento on May 17. More than 85 people were in attendance, including California Governor’s Deputy Legislative Secretary Martha Guzman-Aceves, who voiced her support for farmworkers’ health. Other presenters included Gil Ojeda, director of the California Program on Access to Care, and Tom Coates, director of the UCLA Center for World Health. Three panelists,

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# A day to celebrate women, ¡Qué Viva la Vida!

By Maria Rangel

On Saturday, March 21, 2015, approximately 20 farm worker Latino women attended the Qué Viva la Vida conference in Esparto, Calif. The goal of the conference

was to address the women's physical, emotional and spiritual well-being, while providing them with necessary advice to improve their overall lifestyle. In Latino culture, mothers tend to sacrifice

themselves for their children while oftentimes neglecting their own welfare.

The conference was organized by RISE (Rural Innovations in Social Economics) Inc., Yolo County growers and community organizations and sponsored in part by the WCAHS. Teresa Andrews, WCAHS Outreach Specialist, was Master of Ceremonies and two UC Davis students assisted her.

Andrews, as well as other presenters in attendance, emphasized to the women

the tremendous importance of working towards and maintaining good health in order to better provide for their families. The women participated in icebreaker exercises, creating a safe space where they could comfortably get to know each other. The first presentation featured information about physical health and nutrition, such as the necessary components of a healthy and balanced meal. Examples of macronutrients, including proteins, carbohydrates and fats, and how they

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a predominantly agricultural-based community in which many of the residents are migrant, undocumented poor Latino workers with little access to health care. The One Health approach brings veterinarians and physicians together in one building to improve animal and human health through shared knowledge, while also educating the community about zoonotic diseases, animal husbandry and preventative vaccines.

Lisandra Ochoa and Kayla Carlson will also be taking a One Health approach to community development in Sabana Grande, Nicaragua. Their goal is to assess the health needs of the community and provide education about disease states and preventative health care, especially to the local youth, in order to

empower the next generation of leaders.

Laura Budd, Abigail Fosdick, Samantha Lawton and Sarah Tirrell will also travel to Sabana Grande, Nicaragua, to help improve poultry egg and meat production by training families on simple and inexpensive interventions, such as record-keeping, night housing and disease prevention to boost poultry output.

Lastly, Wendi Jackson and Jake Pry will study the role of pesticides and alcohol consumption in a kidney disease epidemic among the rural poor in Sri Lanka. The epidemic is especially prevalent in farming regions of the north central region of the county.

These hands-on opportunities allow students to gain fieldwork experience in establishing change to problems



Students in Nicaragua making a supplemental nutritional block for cattle. (Photo courtesy of the UC Davis Blum Center).

that they are passionate about solving.

As summed up by Blum Center Director Lovell (Tu) Jarvis, "The Blum Center is delighted to collaborate with the WCAHS to sponsor truly excellent UC Davis graduate and undergraduate students

who apply their knowledge, skills, and energy to improving the lives of others, and simultaneously learn from and enjoy those they meet and work with."

*Andrea Sargis, is a graduating professional writing intern and design major.*

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Christopher Paige, executive director of the California Human Development, Joel Diringer, past coordinator of the Farmworker Stakeholder Advisory Group, and Yissel Barajas, chief human services officer of Reiter Affiliated Companies (largest California strawberry grower) gave their thoughts on how farm worker health can be improved and steps to be taken to do so.

All speakers and panelists agreed that migrant farmworkers have a difficult time attaining healthcare, primarily due to social and economic factors. The policy recommendations outlined in the paper describe the need for expansion of health insurance and access to farmworkers; improved public health infrastructure, especially in agricultural areas; increased numbers of healthcare workers and occupational safety employees, such as nurses, family care physicians and *promotores de salud*; the establishment of fairness across the agricultural industry in terms of overtime pay, labor codes and minimum wage; improved living conditions (housing, food, water); and finally, promotion of agricultural safety and health education.



### Improving the health of agricultural workers and their families in California

Current status and policy recommendations

It is an advantageous time to make changes to farm worker healthcare as the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) has created a framework to provide health insurance and care for all people living and working in the U.S. Solutions can be made to provide health insurance to all farmworkers and their families, including enhancing workplace-based plans, not in conflict with the ACA.

The paper was supported by the UC Global Health Institute (UCGHI), a UC-wide institution that focuses on furthering the education and awareness of health and safety across the world. With the advancement of education in the field of health and safety in mind, the UCGHI along with the team behind this policy paper hope to see change in the field of accessible healthcare in the state of California for migrant farmworkers.

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affect the body were provided. The presentation ended with everyone doing Zumba dance.

The second presentation dealt with a sensitive topic – domestic violence. The presenter showed a YouTube video about what domestic violence looks like and the negative impact it has on families, specifically children. The attendees were at first reluctant to talk. However, after the first person shared an experience she faced with her father, questions slowly

but surely arose, such as how to assist their friends or family members in getting help. After the discussion, there was a stronger sense of community due to the realization that many of the women shared similar stories or situations.

Latin music was played during a lunch of frijoles, arroz, ensalada, and mole, and more than 20 service organizations were available for participants to meet and talk to during the break.

Afternoon presentations included an immigration lawyer who talked about residency or citizenship, deportation and obtaining a drivers license. The women asked several questions about their personal cases and appreciated receiving general legal help. The last presentation was about the importance of education, and opportunities for financial aid and scholarships. Participants were hopeful and excited to share college websites and information with their children.

At the end of the conference, each woman wrote their worries on white and purple balloons that they then released outdoors. Huge smiles were seen all around as the women watched their balloon fly away. Some of them began putting their arms around each other in support, as they felt empowered to “let go” of concerns preventing them from moving forward.

*Maria Rangel is an undergraduate student assistant for WCAHS.*

# Western Center for Agricultural Health and Safety people in the news

**WCAHS Associate Director Kent Pinkerton** recently published an article, “Women and Lung Disease: Gender Differences and Global Health Disparities” in the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine. A number



Kent Pinkerton

of pulmonary diseases affect women differently and with a greater degree of severity than men. One such disease

is chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which used to be found primarily in men but now affects men and women almost equally around the globe. COPD is associated with exposure to dust and biomass or vegetative burning, both of which are common in agriculture. The paper focuses on biological and socioeconomic factors that cause health disparities for women, such as lack of health care access and culture.

**Alex Castañeda, WCAHS graduate student**, and recipient of the John Muir Institute of the Environment’s White Family Fellows Graduate Student Award, presented his work on May 29, 2015, to the funder, Jerry White, at a presentation held at UC Davis. The White Family award supported some of Alex’s graduate studies on how Sacramento derived air pollution enhances the allergic/asthmatic response. Alex found presenting to Mr. Jerry White, the selection



Alex Castañeda

committee, and the other fellows of the program a very rewarding experience, as much of the work focused on addressing environmental justice issues in the California’s Central Valley. Mr. White was very encouraging and gave the fellows the confidence that it only takes one positive idea and the will to carry it out to change the world.

**WCAHS Director Marc Schenker** has just published *Magical Mexico: People, Tradition, Color/México Mágico: Gente, Tradición, Color*. The bi-lingual book showcases the vibrancy of 15 Mexican states through beautiful photographs and informational commentary.

The book extends across all facets of Mexican life and culture, including the local people, markets, food, festivals, art, religion and politics of each region.

Some of the book’s pictures were prominently exhibited in 2013 at the Consulate of Mexico in Sacramento to serve as a reminder for people walking through the building of their beautiful country, especially to those who had been away for many years. To find out more about the book, visit [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com).



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*AgHealth News* is published quarterly by the Western Center for Agricultural Health and Safety, University of California, Davis CA 95616-8757; phone (530) 752-4050; FAX 752-5047; e-mail: [agcenter@ucdavis.edu](mailto:agcenter@ucdavis.edu) <http://agcenter.ucdavis.edu>

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## WCAHS Seminars will resume in October

### Join the AgHealth e-mail listserver

The Western Center for Agricultural Health and Safety’s AgHealth e-mail discussion group is open to anyone interested in agricultural health and safety. We welcome and encourage participation by posting comments or questions about agricultural health and safety. Subscribe at the WCAHS homepage: <http://agcenter.ucdavis.edu>, click on “AgHealth email List.”

**NIOSH** National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health  
Grant #2 U54 OH007550-11

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