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For this issue of the newsletter, I thought I would share with you some of the many award winners from the Department of Applied Economics over the past few months. I have recently had the opportunity to attend a number of awards ceremonies, and it continues to open my eyes to the many ways that departmental students, staff, and faculty contribute. Here are a few highlights!

**Lawrence Karongo** was a recipient of a 2014 Scholarly Excellence in Equity and Diversity (SEED) Award. Lawrence is a senior studying Applied Economics. Outside of his studies and work in CFANS, Lawrence maintains a strong commitment to equity and diversity, having previous volunteer experience with Big Brothers Big Sisters, continuous involvement in the History Day mentoring program, and an established leadership role in the Black Men’s Forum. He is featured on page 9.

**Aine McCarthy** received the University’s Mary A. McEvoy Award for Public Service and Leadership. Aine’s dissertation research focuses on explaining differences in fertility rates across Tanzania. As part of this research, she and others launched a family planning program in 2013.

**Yu Na Lee, Jeta Rudi, and Adan Silverio Murillo** were the first recipients of the Department’s awards for distinguished teaching assistance. Yu Na and Jeta were recognized for their contributions to the undergraduate program; Adan was recognized for his work in the graduate program.

**Sadie Brendalen** received the Civil Service/Bargaining Unit Staff Award for her contributions to the department. If you’ve seen our social media pages (or the newsletter you’re currently reading), you’re familiar with her! Her lighthearted approach makes it fun to be part of the ApEc Community—go ahead, join us on social media and see!

**Diane McAfee** is the new owner of the Little Red Oil Can, a CFANS award to recognize helpfulness. She is knowledgeable, highly-skilled, patient, and always willing to help where needed. Diane really makes things run smoothly for our undergraduate students—and there’s nothing more critical to our University than that.

**Jim Hammill** was selected to receive the 2014 Alumni Service Award for the University of Minnesota. Jim graduated with a bachelor’s degree in 1957 and a master’s degree in 1962. His passionate involvement with the Minnesota Council on Economic Education has helped make the Council into one of the University’s strongest outreach programs.

**Jay Coggins** was recognized for his outstanding contributions to postbaccalaureate, graduate, and professional education. Jay’s creativity and infectious enthusiasm have helped to launch a number of graduate students in the professional careers, and his classes always receive rave reviews.

**Terry Roe** received the Award for Global Engagement from the Global Programs and Strategy Alliance. Terry was recognized for his contributions in dynamic modeling of multi-country general equilibrium frameworks, the theory of information, and the impact of government interventions on growth outcomes. Terry wasn’t at the awards ceremony—he was in Morocco, working with two of his former students on a UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) project.

And for the grand finale and sneak peek—**Richard Todd**, of the Federal Reserve Bank, was just selected as the 2015 outstanding alumnus from the Department Applied Economics. Dick earned his PhD from the department in 1983. Keep your eye out for an announcement and an invitation to come celebrate his achievements!

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Frances Homans
Department of Applied Economics
The Department of Applied Economics, in association with the Minnesota Department of Revenue (each operating under these and numerous predecessor labels), have been tracking farm real estate prices in the state for a long time—over 100 years now. This gives us a wonderful glimpse of the ups and downs of the state's rural land base.

Since 1990, we've posted farm and timber land sales on Minnesota Land Economics (landeconomics.umn.edu). Plenty of data there, including stuff on soil quality and property taxes. I've compiled all these decades' price reports into a single table, showing both the statewide and region-wide averages.

A brag for our Department: in 1922, George Caspar Haas, an MS Student, used land values in Blue Earth County to examine the locational and agronomic drivers of farmland prices. This is the first hedonic valuation study known to the economics profession, for any asset, for any location.

Of course, Minnesota is a state with a wide variety of soils, terrain, and growing conditions, so it's a stretch to talk about "the" price of land, as if we were talking about a single commodity with a single market price. But that's what most folks are used to talking about, and I'm not going to try to resist the temptation here.

Figure 1 captures the story. Since 1910, on both a nominal and an inflation-adjusted basis, the state has seen long sweeping price movements, except for one event: 1980. To be sure, average prices declined after World War I and through the Great Depression, but the drop following the 1980 Recession was far more dramatic, if less sustained. Figure 2 shows that the declines of the 1980s were unprecedented and not (to date) repeated.
Figure 3 separates out the statewide average into a couple of regional subsets. Each region’s prices have recovered from the 1980 bust, but the southwest has been more vigorous than the northwest, even when we account for the overall lower prices in the latter region. The east central region saw a dramatic rise in prices between 1995 and 2005, but those increases stopped dead with the onset of the Great Recession.

I’ve recently been looking at variations in sales prices within the year, in the anticipation of a new price reporting protocol that we’ve been working on with Department of Revenue experts. (Watch MLE for developments.) Figure 4 hints at some of the information we’ll be able to present within the next few months. Over the past several years, the number of sales and the average price of those parcels sold has always been greatest during the fourth quarter of the year, sometimes dramatically so. Look, for example, at 2010 where the number of sales more than doubles that of any other quarter. Or consider 2012, where the average price in the fourth quarter is over half again as large as that in any other quarter. I’ve got some theories—well, speculations—about why this might be, but there is not enough space in this margin…

The recent and so-far unabated climb in prices stimulates the same question: is this a bubble? Will next year’s numbers show us that the market has cooled down? I don’t know. We’re not very good as a profession, by and large, at spotting bubbles until after they burst. You’ll probably want to judge for yourself. You can perhaps aid your thinking by using data from Minnesota Land Economics. We can be reached at landeconomics.umn.edu.
LITTERTMAN FELLOWSHIP
Joel Cuffey, Ph.D.
Yu Na Lee, Ph.D.
Jin Qi, Ph.D.
Dr. Mary Litterman and Dr. Robert Litterman, both graduates of the University of Minnesota, strongly believe in encouraging and fostering graduate students. This fund will provide supplemental support for a graduate student studying in the Department of Applied Economics.

HSIEH FELLOWSHIP
Akinori Kitsuki, Ph.D.
Lindsey Novak, Ph.D.
The Hsieh Graduate Fellowship fund was established by the children of the late Sam Chung Hsieh, who received his Ph.D from the University of Minnesota in production economics. It serves both to honor and celebrate his extraordinary legacy, as well as provide funding for full-time graduate students enrolled in the Applied Economics graduate program at the University of Minnesota.

COCHRANE FELLOWSHIP
Yuan Chai, Ph.D.
The Willard W. Cochrane Fellowship was created to honor and celebrate the life of notable agricultural economist and University of Minnesota Alumni, Dr. Willard Cochrane. This fund provides financial support to full time graduate students enrolled in the College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resource Sciences who are studying Applied Economics.

SCHUH FELLOWSHIP
Rodrigo Lovaton Davila, Ph.D.
Maria Ignez Schuh created this fund in 2008 in memory of her husband Edward Schuh. The fund supports Ph.D. students in the Applied Economics Graduate Program who have an interest in international food and agricultural policy.

KINSEY FELLOWSHIP
Jeta Rudi, Ph.D.
Jean Kinsey created this fund in 2010. It supports full-time graduate students in the Applied Economics Graduate Program who have demonstrated exceptional potential in their field, primarily those whose research focuses on the economics of consumer behavior or food consumption, marketing, demand, or health relationships.

WILLIS L. AND DOROTHY L. PETERSON GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP
Yu Na Lee, Ph.D.
Created by Dorothy L. Peterson in 2006 to celebrate the legacy of Willis and Dorothy Peterson, the fellowship supports graduate students in the Department of Applied Economics.

COBANK SCHOLARSHIP FUND
Adam Donkers, B.S. AFBM
Nicholas Reps, B.S. AFBM
The CoBank Scholarship Fund accepts annual gifts from CoBank for undergrad scholarships in the Department of Economics for students studying Agribusiness, Cooperatives or a related discipline.

ROUTHE-CHRISTIANSEN SCHOLARSHIP
Matthew Matejka, B.S., APEC
Robert Sexton, B.S., AFBM
Margaret Jennissen, B.S., APEC
Elizabeth Stickler, B.S., AFBM
The Routhe-Christiansen Scholarship provides annual scholarships to undergraduates and graduate students who are studying Ag Financial Management or Public Policy.

WILLIS PETERSON UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP
Christopher Pfarr, B.S. AFBM
Jeremy Schwebs, B.S. APEC
This fund is intended to help fund college expenses for up to ten students per year and to support travel expenses for up to ten students per year, allowing them to participate in the international experience that complements their degree program. By establishing this fund Willis and Dorothy Peterson wish to celebrate the legacy of Willis by helping deserving students continue their education and honor Willis’ teaching at the University of Minnesota.

YOST FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP
Crystal Siemers-Peterman, B.S. AFBM
Created in 2014 by Michael and Sandra Yost, this fund supports undergraduate students at the College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences who are studying applied economics and plan to pursue careers in production agriculture or agri-business. It is especially intended for incoming freshman who graduated in the top quarter of their high school classes from rural Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, South Dakota, or North Dakota.

APPLIED ECONOMICS CENTENNIAL UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP FUND
Joseph Carl, B.S. APEC
The purpose of this fund is to support undergraduate student scholarships in CFANS. Preference is given to students with an interest in pursuing applied economics as a course of study.
The first recipient of the Jean Kinsey Graduate Fellowship for Consumer Economics or Food Systems Research in Applied Economics and The Food Industry Center has been named for the fall semester of 2014. Her name is Jeta Rudi, a third year PhD student in the Applied Economics Department. Jeta is originally from Kosovo. She received her BA in Economics and Mathematics at Berera College in Kentucky and her MS in Agricultural and Applied Economics at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Her dissertation advisors are Dr. Paul Glewwe and Dr. Metin Cakir, with her area of interest being consumer choice and household economics with a special focus on time allocation and food and health choices.

The Jean Kinsey Graduate Fellowship for Consumer Economics or Food Systems Research in Applied Economics and The Food Industry Center was established in 2010 upon Dr. Kinsey’s retirement. It extends her passion to understand consumer behavior as it relates to food consumption and the functioning of the food system from field to fork.

The goal of the endowment is to fund graduate students who are dedicated to conducting thesis or dissertation research on the economics of consumer behavior and/or food consumption/marketing/demand/health relationships. This fellowship is designed to attract highly qualified students who will go on to be future leaders in this field in colleges or universities, public service or the private sector and who will have a working knowledge of the food industry.

As the costs of graduate school increase, and funds available for traditional research assistantships and teaching assistantships shrink, graduate students and their departments face increasing challenges in funding graduate research. Graduate fellowships ultimately help students achieve their academic and career goals, but also help recruit top students to the University of Minnesota.

When fully funded, this fellowship will fund a graduate student for an entire year. The initial funding was from Dr. Kinsey, two food companies, several faculty, and many alumni and friends. A University endowment fund matches the payout for fellowships when they are granted.

The fund is still growing with generous ongoing contributions from dedicated donors. If you are interested in contributing to this vital area of graduate study, please go to www.giving.umn.edu/giveto/kinsey.
Kelly is a senior at the University, majoring in Applied Economics and minoring in Management and Corporate Environmental Management, following the Honors program path. Her thesis centers around environmental economics, looking at how factors like amount of product produced, weather, type of product produced, etc. drive energy and water use at Land O’Lakes dairy manufacturing plants. Kelly has been interning with Land O’Lakes as a sustainability intern since May 2014 and hopes to secure a full time position after graduation.

On campus, Kelly works as a peer mentor for the President’s Emerging Scholars program—talking with students and helping them find resources to accomplish their academic, personal, and career goals, and serves as Vice President and Head of Recruitment of the CFANS Ambassadors. Kelly participates in Marching Band, Men’s Hockey Band, and the Minnesota Herald Trumpets.

When asked what she likes about the U, Kelly responds enthusiastically that, “I came here for the people, and that’s what still amazes me every day.” She credits the great community within CFANS, specifically the Applied Economics program, as well as the PES program and Land O’ Lakes.

“My advisors, professors, friends and coworkers have all helped me to grow as an individual,” she says. “With the help of my Honors advisor Tom Fitzgerald, academic advisor Gary Cooper, faculty advisor Joe Ritter and thesis advisor Rob King, I’ve chosen classes that have interested and challenged me….and will help me grow in the field of econometrics.”

When choosing her field of study, Kelly confesses it wasn’t Applied Economics that was her career passion from the beginning. “I started out Animal Science, and realized it wasn’t for me pretty quickly,” she comments. After taking a few introductory economics courses, Kelly credits the support of her professors in macro and micro, as well as spending a summer working in the business field to truly honing her interest in the field. “I wanted Applied Economics over any other business major because of the connections I had with faculty, as well as the ability to make the degree my own.”

Kelly describes her goals with a fresh, optimistic approach. Short term, she’d like to graduate with Latin honors, with her academic success (3.95 GPA and summa cum laude) being her greatest accomplishment as an undergrad. “I’ve always strived to accomplish the highest, and I want my college story to reflect that,” she states.

Kelly credits her family, friends and advisors for providing her with this success, “When I’ve had difficulties or roadblocks with classes or the thesis, my professors are always there to help me over office hours, my family gives me new perspective, and my friends/coworkers that I often see in between the classes provide a necessary break, allowing me to re-approach my work with a fresh mind.”

Long term? She takes a view many of us could use in our daily perspective as well. “Who knows what I’ll be interested in, or where I’ll be five or ten years down the road, but if I enjoy my life and wake up each day knowing I can make a difference I’ll definitely be happy.”
Lawrence Karongo is a senior at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, majoring in applied economics and minoring in political science. His research interests include the analysis of social disparities, the assessment of impacts of policy implementation, the causes of income and racial inequality, the study of urban economic development, as well as the determinants of economic development in sub-Saharan Africa.

Lawrence credits his decision to study Applied Economics to his advisor, Gary Cooper, who taught his introductory applied economics course and assisted in motivating Lawrence to understand and pursue the major. “The biggest thing…about the University of Minnesota is the support I get from staff and faculty members. I think it goes a long way to say that I know a handful of faculty and staff that I can sincerely ask for advice,” Lawrence states.

As Lawrence continues into the future, he hopes to pursue a Masters in Public Policy and establish himself in an organization that is committed to doing research that seeks to further the economic growth of inner cities across the country; one that strives to understand inequalities through policy and economics. Being the recipient of the Scholarly Excellence in Equity and Diversity Award (SEED) Award and a participant in the University’s McNair Scholars Program, his solid background in the classroom and community should allow him opportunity and continued success in an organization of this sort.

“My interest in understanding how policy and economics play a role in different communities across the nation is really what compelled me to make the decision to continue my education and a Ph.D in economics,” Lawrence says. “[I] have affirmation of my work in the classroom and the community.”

As a bright and dedicated student, Lawrence has many goals but when asked what the immediate focus is, his answer is simple:

“To leave my mark as an undergraduate student here at the University of Minnesota. I think every college student wants to leave some kind of stamp on their University. My goal is to continue to positively impact my peers and the University as a whole as much as possible.”

As Lawrence continues towards graduation in May of 2015, it is certain that the impact he leaves as an undergraduate, both for his own class, and those of the future is one that will be noted in years to come.
Our very own Robert P. King was chosen as a Fellow of the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association (AAEA) in 2014, the AAEA’s most prestigious honor. Rob is a multidimensional leader in the agricultural and applied economics profession. Throughout his career, he has made exemplary, continuous contributions in research, teaching, extension, administration, and service to the profession. His research has focused on the use of quantitative tools and empirical analysis in addressing managerial decision problems, including: the economics of decision making under uncertainty, the role of information and management information systems in decision making, and the economics of food supply chain organization and management. His research output has influenced the methods agricultural and applied economists use for decision analysis, and he has contributed to outreach efforts designed to ensure that his results are actually applied in a farm and agribusiness decision setting.

Known as a dedicated, talented teacher and an effective mentor, he has made lasting impacts on undergraduate and graduate programs at the University of Minnesota, not only through in-class teaching but also through program design and management. Finally, his service has helped shape the agricultural and applied economics profession. As AAEA President, he worked to make AAEA a welcoming professional home for members at all points in their careers, and he extended the Association’s international reach through expanded AAEA Trust programming.

Rob credits his mentors at Michigan State, his students at Colorado State and Minnesota, and his family for helping him achieve this prestigious accomplishment. In addition to these, he cites his early love of food, experiences on a farm outside of Pittsburgh and his need to learn how to cook (his parents left him to his own devices for two weeks!)

We are so thrilled with the Association’s recognition of Rob’s career of accomplishment. Congratulations, Dr. King!
CoBank is a proud supporter of agricultural research and education at land grant universities and other institutions throughout the United States. In 2012, the organization announced a $5 million fund to support these efforts at select universities. CoBank identified the University of Minnesota as a vital partner serving agricultural cooperatives and agribusiness.

“We describe the University of Minnesota as a valuable partner in our various educational efforts,” comments Sherry Johnson, Corporate Social Responsibility Manager at CoBank.

“In addition…we are intrigued by Dr. Boland’s research and the opportunities it will provide to CoBank and the industries we support… the innovative case studies and seminars he is developing have the potential to create tremendous value for participants [and] we recognize that the University of Minnesota is providing the agricultural sector with a wealth of high-quality potential employees who will become the future leaders of our industry.”

As a background, CoBank is a $102 billion cooperative bank serving vital industries across rural America. The bank provides loans, leases, export financing and other financial services to agribusinesses and rural power, water and communications providers in all 50 states. The bank also provides wholesale loans and other financial services to affiliated Farm Credit associations serving farmers, ranchers and other rural borrowers in 23 states around the country.

CoBank is a member of the Farm Credit System, a nationwide network of banks and retail lending associations chartered to support the borrowing needs of U.S. agriculture and the nation’s rural economy. Headquartered outside Denver, Colorado, CoBank serves customers from regional banking centers across the U.S. and also maintains an international representative office in Singapore.

CoBank describes its mission is, “To serve as a dependable provider of credit and other value-added financial services to agriculture and rural infrastructure businesses for the benefit of rural America. CoBank shares the University’s commitment to research, education and the sharing of knowledge not only with your students, but with the community at large.”

“We believe that today’s students are tomorrow’s leaders,” Sherry remarks. “They will become our customers, our employees, our board members and, ultimately, they will shape the industries we serve for years to come. We are proud to play even a small role in developing these future leaders.”

The conditions and reasons for giving are personal and confidential, “but we believe that one of the best ways for CoBank to return value to rural America is by giving to academic institutions that are engaged in agricultural research and training the next generation of rural business and civic leaders. It’s an investment that will continue to pay dividends for generations to come.”

CoBank encourages students and alumni to give serious consideration to CoBank when looking at future career opportunities. For more information, visit the bank’s website at www.cobank.com.

CoBank graciously agreed to share why they choose to give to the University of Minnesota. If you would like to be featured in one of our upcoming reports, please contact Sadie Brendalen at will1945@umn.edu.