A LETTER FROM OUR DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about the Department of Agricultural, Food and Resource Economics (DAFRE) at Rutgers University. The key to our department’s success is threefold: impactful research, effective outreach and a quality integrated education. Our department has seen a growth in publishing in refereed journals, research grants and outreach over the past five (5) years as a result of our professors being current and relevant in dealing with the issues of our day. This has attracted some of the finest students and resulted in large grants from the private and public sector, peer reviewed publications and many public speaking engagements. It is an honor to be a part of the 250 years of Rutgers and 100+ years of DAFRE’s history.

Our future is brighter than ever as we grow in every aspect of our work: research, outreach and education. Our students are benefiting from our past, present and future with opportunity and jobs in the public and private sectors.

Ramu Govindasamy

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Cutting Edge Research

Our professors have global reach with local impact as well as local reach with global impact. Our ability to make a positive impact locally and globally comes from great professors who are awarded grants consistently to do programs research dealing with some of the most important economic and environmental issues of our time.

Dr. Tavernier’s research spans the breadth of the inclusion of a social clause in international trade negotiations to whether the U.S. should pursue regional trade agreements. These topics have resonance in the current political climate.

Dr. Bhuyan’s research focuses on the rapidly growing market for ethnic processed food and examines the opportunities it presents to food sector entrepreneurs to produce and market such food domestically. His research benefits both existing and potential entrepreneurs in the food and agricultural sectors in the U.S. who otherwise may not be aware of the market opportunities that exist in the rapidly growing market for processed ethnic food.

Water availability and quality has also become a big issue in recent years; as a result, Dr. Gottlieb and Dr. Brumfield have received a grant to assist small New Jersey nurseries understand the environmental, competitive and economic advantages of water recycling. Dr. Brumfield is part of teams to give farmers competitive business management skills in NJ through a USDA grant “Ultra-Niche Crops for the Progressive, New Farmer” and in Turkey, Germany, Spain, and Malta through an EU Erasmus+ KA2 grant “Empowering Women Farmers with Agricultural Business Management Training.”

Dr. Jin’s research employs cutting edge methodologies to investigate the impacts of environmental, socioeconomic, and behavioral factors that contribute to the obesity epidemic. Some of her research findings reach out to a much broader audience through newsletters and blogs such as Oxford University Press’s Academic Insights for the Thinking World. Her research provides insights to better understand causes of obesity as well as policy implications to intervention and prevention programs to reduce obesity.

Dr. Hochman regularly invites students to join his work on the political-economics of adopting clean-energy technologies, climate and energy policies, as well as bioenergy and the bioeconomy more generally. Recognizing the value of global and local perspectives, Dr. Hochman recently organized at Rutgers, an international workshop on the bioeconomy and invites students to join him in pursuing research on these topics.

Dr. O’Neill’s research explores financial practices of U.S. residents, relationships between personal health and finance behaviors, financial decision-making (student loans, home-buying, and retirement planning), and the impact of Cooperative Extension programs.

Dr. Pray has a grant to work with China, India and Africa understand the impact of genetically modified crops on the environment, health and society as a whole.
Dr. Schilling blends academic scholarship with Extension programming to inform agricultural policy and farm economic development. His USDA-funded research evaluates the outcomes associated with more than 30 years of farmland preservation in the state and region, offering insight into future program challenges and possible new directions. His work also explores farm- and industry-level opportunities for agritourism development.

Dr. Camasso’s current research focuses on the cultural roots of human and social capital development and youth unemployment. He is currently involved in several projects: a ten nation comparison of pathways to economic self-sufficiency funded by the EU; the prospects of French and U.S. adoption of the German vocational education model; a classical experiment entitled Nurture thru Nature conducted in New Brunswick public schools; and a study of human capital acquisition in high school students in Pennsylvania, Delaware, Ohio and New Jersey.

Dr. Govindasamy has a grant to help small farmers understand and capitalize on the growing organic food industry. He also works in Africa to help smallholder farmers produce and market African Indigenous Vegetables in Zambia and Kenya. He was voted to serve as the president-elect for the Food Distribution Society in October 2016. These are just a few examples of how DAFRE professors are helping policy makers, small farmers and society understand and improve our world and local communities.

For example, Gregory Dilalo graduated our department in 1977 and received his masters in 1979. He is now Director of Information Technology at Rutgers.

Bob Bruch graduated in 1969 and received his masters in 1977, both from our department. He explains that the New Jersey Department of Agriculture needed his critical thinking skills and the real-world context he received from our team of professors. He spent 38 years with the department.

Imran Majid graduated in 2005. His understanding of business and liberal arts education at DAFRE has allowed him to become a Vice President at Columbia Records in 11 short years.

Today’s students understand that DAFRE provides them with the skills they need to be competitive. As Erica Ligouri explained to Explorations, “My major is so comprehensive, I can honestly get a job in whatever part of the business world I choose.”

The DAFRE difference is research, outreach and a combined science, business and liberal arts education.