Congratulations!

Dr. Cesar Escalante, AAE Professor, receives the prestigious 2022 Ketchum Prize from the FINRA Investor Education Foundation in recognition of his pioneering research and advocacy to advance financial inclusion and alleviate racial and gender bias in agricultural lending. “Professor Escalante’s rigorous and influential work related to equity in farm lending and his strong commitment to mentoring young scholars in the field of financial capability embody the ideals celebrated by the Ketchum Prize,” said FINRA Foundation President Gerri Walsh.

Read More and See Video

Brian Stacy, 4th year Agribusiness and Army ROTC, was honored at the UGA v. Ga Tech game for being a Distinguished Military Graduate. A national recognition given to the top 20% of all ROTC graduating students.

Brunswick Healthy Neighborhood:
A Community Affair

Dr. Susana Ferreira, AAE Professor, led an interdisciplinary research team in the pre-seed grant ACRE: Addressing Compound Risk and Exposure to Contamination and Climate Change. The objective is to build resilience to compound environmental risks in disenfranchised communities. As part of the pre-seed and in collaboration with researchers at Emory and community leaders in Brunswick, they organized a community fair in Brunswick, GA. The goal of the fair, “Brunswick Healthy Neighborhoods: A Community Affair,” was for the community to connect with local science professionals and support environmental efforts aimed to keep neighborhoods healthy.
Colleagues:

It is that time of the year to look back and express gratitude! My heartfelt thanks to you all for your support during my time as Interim Head.

I am delighted that our recruitment efforts are beginning to show some results. We are interviewing for the Extension/CAED Coordinator position now, and the remaining four positions close at the end of this month. Periodic updates from the Search Committees indicate that we have a good pool to work with!!

One of our signature events, the J.W. Fanning Lecture, happened earlier this month with Dr. Nathan Kauffman from KC Federal Reserve as our speaker. Thank you all for making that event a great success. As we recover from the pandemic, look for more in-person signature events next Spring.

Congratulations to Dr. Cesar Escalante for winning the Ketchum Prize from the FINRA Foundation, awarded in recognition of his pioneering research and advocacy to advance financial inclusion and alleviate racial and gender bias in agricultural lending. On the personnel side, we are glad to have Dr. John Bergstrom back as our Undergraduate Coordinator, thank you John!

We had 94 undergraduates and 36 graduates complete their programs last Fall, Spring and Summer! Congratulations Graduates!

I am committed to and value contributions in all our mission areas – Teaching, Extension and Public Service, and Research. Look for many of these contributions in the next few pages. This Fall, we have a few visitors to the Department, consistent with the College’s vision to engage the international community! A hearty welcome to them!

Along with UGA and CAES, AAE has a long history with very supportive alumni and friends! We are grateful for their continued contributions in support of the AAE mission!

With very best wishes,

Dr. Gopi Munisamy
Interim Department Head
Following a devastating year in 2020 for the hospitality and travel industry, our Hospitality and Food Industry Management (HFIM) and Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development (CAED) piloted the Hospitality & Travel Economic Snapshots (HTES) for Georgia Counties. This resource is a user-friendly, online interactive graphic launched in response to the lack of industry-specific indicators available at the county level. The gap prevented stakeholders from understanding the relative importance of the travel sector and informing their community partners of the magnitude of the economic contribution.

Built upon the success of the CAED Ag Snapshots series for the food and fiber sectors, the inaugural edition of HTES was created and released, immediately receiving attention from leaders directly or indirectly related to the hospitality and travel industry.

The team were recipients of CAES Dean’s Office seed funding and completed the expanded version of the Hospitality and Travel Snapshots for Georgia Counties, which opened the door for further enhancement to meet the user demand, and included trainings and presentations to economic development professionals, county officials, and Extension agents/specialists. Outreach efforts provided a full understanding of the data applicability for the local community and promoted the resource tool using social media and other methods of contact. This version continues to be well-received with high rankings on posts and website views. The additional funding gave the team the opportunity to refine the data to continue to meet the needs of stakeholders, and there are plans for a data update early in 2023.
Ellen McCullough, Ph.D., came to UGA in 2016 to begin a tenure-track position pursuing her primary research interest: understanding the role of agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa and identifying policies to improve agricultural growth. During this time, she received a substantial grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the UK’s Foreign Commonwealth Development Office to pursue an exciting new stream of research on identifying which crops play the biggest role in improving African consumers' diet quality. For this research, Dr. McCullough partnered with fellow AAE faculty member, Dr. Chen Zhen, a global expert in modeling consumer demand, who joined the department shortly before her. Along with three Ph.D. students, Drs. McCullough and Zhen have modeled how African consumers' diet in six Sub-Saharan African countries respond to changes in income and the prices of many different foods using state-of-the-art demand modeling tools.

"With this funding, we have been pursuing high-impact research that brings the consumer’s perspective into agricultural R&D priority setting. R&D priorities usually start with farmers, ignoring a massive, and historically important, group of beneficiaries – consumers,” Dr. McCullough said. As their project nears its conclusion, the research team is busy finalizing research manuscripts and sharing their findings with policymakers.

Policymakers have been very receptive to the project's findings which include information regarding prices and consumer diet. Consumers diets are more sensitive to the prices of staple food than they are to the prices of foods that are more nutrient rich, like fruits and vegetables or animal source foods. Diets are especially sensitive to staple food prices in countries where one staple food item dominates consumers diets, such as in Malawi or Tanzania where maize is a critically important staple or Niger where millet is the key staple. In other countries like Ethiopia, Uganda and Nigeria, where consumers are used to switching between many food staples like rice, wheat, maize, teff, cassava and yams, no single food’s price is a strong determinant of diet quality. The team also found that diet quality improves dramatically when poor consumers' total incomes rise. Furthermore, they found that cash transfers would improve diet quality for low income households without exacerbating the risk of chronic disease burden arising from dietary imbalance such as excessive fat intake.

Dr. McCullough recently returned from a whirlwind trip to Nigeria, Malawi, Rwanda and Tanzania where she presented research findings to national and regional policymakers.
Amanda Harker Steele, Ph.D. '19, has been working as a research economist with the US Department of Energy’s National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL) since May 2022. Within this role, she supports the Strategic Systems Analysis and Engineering Directorate's Energy Markets Analysis Team. Prior to joining NETL, Amanda worked for KeyLogic, an economic and engineering consulting firm located in Morgantown, W.V. "I had originally planned to pursue a career in academia following graduation, but ...I think I ended up right where I needed to be. I've grown significantly over the past three and a half years and I've learned a lot about economics within the energy space," said Harker Steele.

Her most recent published paper "Why is it still too warm or cold in my house? Examining the relationship between energy efficient capital and household energy insecurity," is available in Energy Research & Social Science. This paper provides an examination of the relationships between access to and utilization of energy efficient capital technology and household energy insecurity in the United States.

Dr. Harker Steele's research interests center on understanding the economic efficiency and distributional equity implications of changes in the way society produces and consumes energy resources.

Currently, she is exploring research related to the impacts of different strategies for achieving decarbonization, specifically how strategies compete in terms of their influence on energy and environmental justice and equity.

"Personally, the accomplishment I am most proud of is being the first member in my immediate family to go to college. I truly believe the decisions to go to college changed the trajectory of my entire life." said Harker Steele.

Her advice for current students is to, "Enjoy the ride! Graduate school is tough. There is no doubt about it. But it is the best, and in some cases, maybe the only time you have to explore research topics you are passionate about. Take advantage of that. You have a department that will help support you not only now, but beyond these years." She thanks members of the AAEC Department, in particular, Dr. John Bergstrom, her advisor, and Drs. Craig Landry, Greg Colson, and Wesley Burnett.

"Health threats of new social media trends: the effects of frequent mukbang watching on overweight and obesity"

By Kwanghun Yeon
Ph.D. Student
Applied Economics Letters

Mukbang is defined as a show that can be pre-recorded or live streamed in which an individual eats a large quantity of food for the viewer. The trend began in South Korea in 2008 and has become a global phenomenon. Some argue that watching mukbang can lead to overweight and obesity, however there are few studies that have fully investigated this. This study estimates the effects of frequent mukbang watching on overweight and obesity among Korean adults using individual level quasi-panel data from the 2018, 2019, and 2020 Consumer Behaviour Survey for Food conducted by the Korea Rural Economic Institute. The instrumental variable is used to address the endogeneity problem. The results show that frequent mukbang watching increases the likelihood of being overweight by 7.4–7.6%. As a result, the government should consider informational campaigns for awareness and/or introduce regulations on mukbang to prevent and reduce the associated risks leading to overweight.
Summer Trainings Move the Needle Toward a More Sustainable Farming System for Nigeria

by Alaina Dismukes, Communication Specialist, Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Fish

Esendugue Greg Fonsah and Gary Burtle from the University of Georgia, U.S., went to Nigeria in July 2022 as a part of the work being done by the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Fish activity on Integrated Agriculture-Aquaculture as Farm Diversification Strategy. They joined the host country research partners, to hold trainings for the promotion of sustainable and cost-effective rice-fish systems in rice-producing communities. “The training was so well received that other fish and rice farmers who were initially not sure about our new technology started donating their farms to be used for the training for free,” Fonsah said. “Their interest and acceptance to adopt the integrated fish-rice production system increased when they watch the videos of harvested fish and rice presented during our training session by Omitoyin.”

International Workshop on Climate Change and Human Well-being

Dr. Susana Ferreira

On September 26, 2022, Dr. Susana Ferreira, Professor, along with co-organizer, Dr. Andrew Oswald (University of Warwick) convened an international workshop on climate change. The workshop was motivated by the fact that despite efforts to mitigate the extent of climate change, exposure to extreme events such as heatwaves, floods, and hurricanes will become more prevalent for the entire world's population. In addition to causing damages to the environment and human health, climate change as well as adaptation to global warming pose challenges for the functioning of society and of labor markets. In particular, this raises questions about the implications of climate change for a range of well-being and labor market outcomes, among others health, income, happiness, productivity, human capital formation, migration decisions, and much else. The workshop brought together researchers analyzing these and other implications of climate change or climate change adaptation. The Institute for Labor Economics (IZA) sponsored the event.
Getting to know – Fulbright Visiting Scholar, Dr. Balaji S. Janarthananan

What brought you to UGA?
The technical expertise at the UGA Ag & Applied Economics on research relating to agriculture diversity and a supportive research environment are the appealing factors at UGA.

What are your particular research interest?
I work on the macroeconomics aspects relating to agriculture growth and transformation, rural non-farm employment, and rural poverty, focusing on India. The specific interest lies in Government policies that influence farmers at a large-scale, investment strategies, and subsidy support.

What are some of the achievements you are most proud of?
The receipt of the Fulbright–Nehru Postdoctoral Research Fellowship in which I’m currently at UGA is a great honor. I was a Visiting Fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington D.C. I received R.T. Doshi Award in 2021 and 2018. Young Agricultural Economist Award in 2020. Uma Lele–AERA (India) – AAEA Mentorship Award in 2018, and Best Research Paper Presentation Award in 2015. I was part of the research team at ICAR–National Institute of Agricultural Economics and Policy Research, New Delhi– contributing to the Committee on the Doubling Farmers' Income of the Government of India.

What will you be doing here at UGA and what do you like doing best?
As a Fulbright Fellow, I’ll be working on the means of achieving inclusive income growth in agriculture and reducing poverty among Indian farmers. I'll be focusing on spatial income disparities in particular, and will be developing a model to explain how technology, resource use, market, and policies shall enhance farmers' income across space, notably the poor.

Meet Fulbright Scholar, Thulani Ningi, in our upcoming Spring 2023 newsletter

Join us for an adventure of a lifetime as we study abroad in CUBA in May 2023! This program is open to any student (undergraduate or graduate) and is a wonderful opportunity to see and experience Cuban culture in Havana and the surrounding cities. Applications are due December 1st!
Dikshit Poudel - Enjoying his best life!

Second year Ph.D. student and President of the Graduate Student Association (GSA), Dikshit Poudel, is fulfilling his dreams by leading and inspiring other students with his position and experience. “I enjoy being a leader and a teacher since I started early by teaching my younger brother growing up and he just graduated with a computer science degree and recently started a job as a Developer,” said Poudel.

Dikshit was born and raised in the foothills of Himalayas in Nepal. After he completed his undergraduate degree in Agriculture and Animal Sciences in Nepal, he searched for a university to further his educational studies. He focused on UGA because of the positive reputation of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. After the great response from the department's professors, especially Dr. Gopi and Dr. Ramirez, he made his decision to make Athens home for at least a few years.

This year has been a busy one for Poudel, not only getting his master’s and continuing his Ph.D., he has also received three renowned fellowships;

- Youth Fellow 2022, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Washington, D.C. – Food Security, Climate Change, and Inflation
- Adam Smith Fellow, Economics at Mercatus Center at the George Mason University, Virginia – International Development and Political Economy
- Future Leader Fellow, Association of International Agriculture and Rural Development (AIARD)

“Pursuing my career in trade, development, food, nutrition and political economy is special to me because it touches almost every dimension of our life. Working in conjunction with pure science and social science does have a big impact to be exposed to both rural and marginalized communities, which will give me the opportunity to help those less fortunate than me.” said Poudel.

His advice for students beginning their graduate degrees is to make sure you enjoy life to the fullest, get involved, take advantage of every opportunity, and be prepared to study hard!
Grants Received, January 2022–present

Mike Adjemian
- “Implication of Recent Surging Ocean Transportation Rates on the Markets for Certain Agricultural Products,” $250,000 (PI), USDA AMS. Received $100k this year as an amendment to the original cooperative agreement; we are studying the determinants of food price inflation
- “Fiscal Notes for the State of Georgia Office of Planning and Budget,” $16,000 (PI), GA OPB. Received $16k this year to estimate the impact of various bills on the GA State treasury

Yukiko Hashida
- “Evaluating Risk of Tidal Marsh Inundation and Monetizing Services to Prioritize Management Actions” funded by the NOAA Effects of Sea Level Rise Program. This inter-disciplinary project will be collaborating with wetland ecologist (Lori Sutter, UNC), biochemist (Nat Weston, Villanova), and a geographer (Deepak Mishra)
- “Assessing the Socio–Economic Value of Salt Marsh Ecosystems for Climate Resilience Financing in Georgia” funded by the GA Sea Grant. This joint project will be with civil engineer (Matt Bilskie, UGA) and the Nature Conservancy

William Secor
- Research and extension AFRI grant from USDA–NIFA with PIs at Auburn University and the University of Maryland looking at Sustaining Farm Operations in Extreme Negative Financial Positions. The total grant funding is $650,000 over five years

Travis Smith
- "The Cost of a Healthy Diet and the Effect of Food Prices on Diet Quality" from the Gifford Center for Population Studies at UC Davis as part of the Promoting the Purchase to Plate Tools for Food Demand and Diet Quality Research, $74,982

Chen Zhen
- The Impact of WIC on Food Purchases, Diet Quality, and Market Prices
  Funding agency: USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture
  Award amount: $617,194 PI/Co–PI: Xiaoyong Zheng (North Carolina State U)/Chen Zhen (UGA)

Awards, Recognition & In the News

- Susana Ferreira ~ Appointed Research Fellow @ IZA ~ Institute of Labor Economics and Editor of the Journal Ecological Economics
- Cesar Escalante ~ "Inflation Control, Farm Interest Rates, and Farmland Values" and "Alternate FSA’s Lending Programs for Beginning Minority Farmers" Southern Ag Today Farm Management/Finance Wednesdays
- Mike Adjemian received the John J. Jack Barriger Research Award, presented by the Transportation Research Forum and the University of Southern Missouri’s Supply Chain Risk and Resilience Research Institute
- Graduate Student Association Outstanding Faculty Award: Professor Craig Landry and Outstanding Staff Award: Laura Alfonso

Have a story idea?
Contact: Lynn McDermott
lynn.mcdermott@uga.edu
Recent Publications

Michael Adjemian


Gregory Colson

Cesar L. Escalante


Susana Ferreira


Yukiko Hashida


Berna Karali

Recent Publications, continued

Berna Karali (cont.)


Genti Kostandini


Nick Magnan

Ellen Mccullough

Will Secor

Travis Smith


Graduate Students
Dikshit Poudel


Kwanghun Yeon
The 37th Annual J.W. Fanning Lecture was held on Wednesday November 9, 2022 at the Georgia Center for Continuing Education on the Athens campus. Over 75 people attended in-person and online to hear Dr. Nathan Kauffman of the Federal Reserve in Kansas City speak about the rebound in the agricultural sector over the past two years and various pressures facing the sector in the future.

The Graduate Student Association hosted a celebration in honor of Diwali. Known as the "festival of lights," the holiday celebrates the triumph of good over evil. Dr. Manpreet Singh, Department Head and Professor of Food Science & Technology, opened the event with an explanation of the meaning and traditions of Diwali. Everyone enjoyed a few authentic dishes.