

## Profile: Roger Coupal

*Professor, Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics*

We asked Roger Coupal a few questions about his work, especially now that he has stepped down as department head and is spending more time in the classroom and on research.

### **ItM: What projects are you involved in at the moment?**

I am currently involved in several projects that delve into the nexus between community economic development and natural resource policy. I have an on-going project on electricity markets and the transmission grid. We are looking at the impacts of renewable power integration on the Rocky Mountain Power transmission grid. I am also part of a new project that includes Montana State University and University of South Dakota looking at bioenergy crops and CO<sub>2</sub> reduction in the upper Missouri River Basin. Much of my work is also on the economics of reclamation and environmental bonds related to oil, gas, and coal development, as well as state and local government fiscal management. I continue to be involved in aspects of developing the capacity for payments for environmental services that could benefit agricultural producers in the region.

I have a project in Guatemala that I work on in Mayan communities. I was in the Peace Corps in Guatemala from 1979-81 and went back to the country after the civil war to figure out a way to bring my academic career into my personal interest in Guatemala. Finally, I am involved in several projects around the state related to local government finance, local economic development, and tourism and recreation issues, all as part of my Extension work.

### **ItM: Have you always wanted to be a professional economist? How did you get into economics?**

No, I came to economics after my undergraduate degree in the sciences at Utah State University. My interest has always been in the dynamics and understanding of the natural world. However, while at USU studying public land resource policy, and afterwards in the Peace Corps in Guatemala, I kept observing the close relationship that rural people have with the natural world, and the need to maintain both natural systems and human systems for the benefit of rural and urban users. That led me into economics.

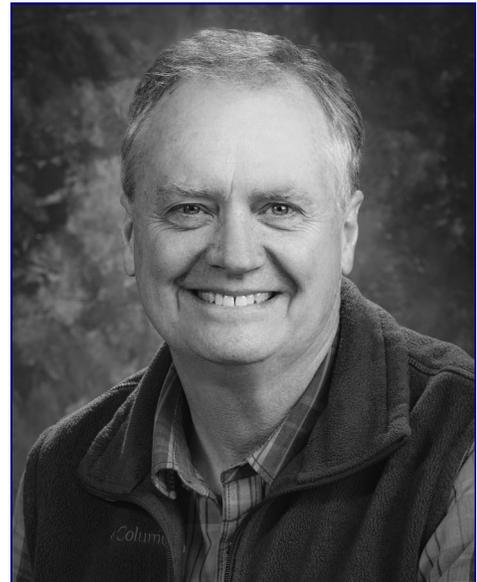
### **ItM: What is the best part of being an economist?**

I find the issues of how communities react to and make decisions around economic tradeoffs and resource policies, and

also economic behavior to be quite fascinating at the local level. How do people in communities make decisions about resource and consumer goods, both individually and collectively? It spans both conventional economics and concepts of economic anthropology that bring in reciprocity and mutualistic relationships.

### **ItM: What have been some of your favorite projects?**

My favorite projects were the Haub School's Open Spaces Initiative's projects, reclamation and environmental bonding, and electricity markets.



### **ItM: What has been the most satisfying part of your career?**

Working with community leaders on real projects and real problems.

### **ItM: What trends do you see in ag economics today?**

Increasingly Ag Econ will be studying implications of the resource base available, and be more international trade based. We are less isolated economically from both large urban areas and international markets, while at the same time confronting an increasing divide among people in understanding the drivers of change. They need to both understand markets and collective decision making, but also understand that the role that technology development plays will become more important.

### **ItM: What do you love to do other than economics?**

Walking in the mountains and deserts.

*Continued back page.*

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## Department Head Letter

Friends of AgEcon, I hope you are all enjoying a fun-filled summer wherever you are. It is already hot and dry (and smoky) in Laramie, but summer finds us as busy as ever. We ended the spring semester with a bang, graduating 35 undergraduate and four MS students. Let's all welcome them as the latest additions to our alumni and encourage them to stay in touch so we can fill future additions of *In the Margins* with stories of alumni successes.

Just as we say farewell to the class of 2018, we are busy recruiting and welcoming a new cohort of students. Our undergraduate program continues to thrive and grow. Undergraduate enrollments have increased nearly 60% over the past five years, and if the busyness of our summer orientation session is any indication, our enrollments are likely to grow yet again. Thanks to all of you and the faculty and staff around the College for continuing to get the word out about our excellent degree programs.

The other exciting news since the last newsletter is the completion of the Department's strategic plan. In conjunction with the University's and College's planning processes, we completed our strategic plan that will guide the Department's activities through 2022 to achieve our mission: *"Empower students and citizens to explore, discover, learn, grow and serve."*

The plan includes a range of ambitious activities under three broad goals:

- Goal One – Enhance Learning Experiences: *Ensure all learners – credit and non-credit – have ample exposure to the skills necessary for success in the contemporary economy and to build a foundation for lifelong learning*
- Goal Two – Provide Solutions: *Provide input, alternatives, and strategies for resolving the challenges facing agricultural enterprises, communities, households, consumers, and policy-makers across Wyoming and the region*
- Goal Three – Cultivate, Recognize and Renew our People: *Ensure our long-term effectiveness to deliver on the land-grant mission by sustaining a positive environment within which all can study, work and live*

We will need your support to put this plan into action. In particular, we plan to develop new activities for our students to interact with alumni and industry representatives that can provide engagement and learning opportunities both inside and outside the classroom. So don't be surprised if we contact you soon asking for your expertise to ensure our students' get exposed to the practical experiences they need to be successful after graduation.

You can read the full strategic plan on our website: [www.uwyo.edu/agecon](http://www.uwyo.edu/agecon).

~ Ben Rashford, Department Head



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## Ag Econ MS Student Awarded Outstanding Master's Thesis Awards

Congratulations go to Sachintha Mendis, former AgEcon graduate student, for being awarded Outstanding Master's Thesis by the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association (AAEA) and the Western AgEcon Association's (WAEA) Outstanding Master's Thesis Award. Her investigation of the structure of food demand in China contributes to our understanding of the demand for food quality and has implications for marketing US food products in China's ever expanding consumer market.

Sachintha is originally from Sri Lanka, where she completed a BS in Agribusiness and an M.Phil. in Agricultural Economics. She completed her MS in Agricultural and Applied Economics at UW in 2017, during which she was awarded the Glenn P. Roehrkasse scholarship. Sachintha is currently pursuing a PhD in Agricultural and Resource Economics at Colorado State University. A manuscript from her thesis research has been accepted for publication in *Agricultural Economics*. Her thesis committee was comprised of Drs. Vardges Hovhannisayn (chair), Chris Bastian and Alexandre Skiba.

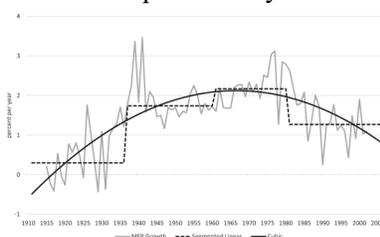


The AAEA is the largest and most prestigious professional association for agricultural and applied economics. Each year the association selects a maximum of three outstanding MS theses from amongst nominations representing the best graduate student research across the country. This is the second UW Ag Econ student selected for this award in the last four years – Anna Scofield (MS 2014) received the honor in 2015. The WAEA primarily serves those with an interest in ag-economics in the western United States and Canada. ■

## Agricultural Productivity Work Shows Slowdown in Growth

New work led by AgEcon's Matt Andersen uses a range of data and methods show a slowdown in U.S. farm productivity growth. They see technological progress through the middle of the twentieth century—reflecting the progressive adoption of various mechanical innovations, improved crop varieties and animal breeds, and synthetic fertilizers and other chemicals—and high rates of growth from the 1960s to the 1980s. But the progress has now slowed.

The authors see a couple of risks in this: first that American agriculture will fall behind the productivity of other countries unless those countries experience a comparable slowdown. And second that, if all countries experience a decline in productivity, then growth in supply may not match the growth in demand as the world population increases. Published in the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, the article "A Century of U.S. Farm Productivity Growth: A Surge Then a Slowdown" can be found online. ■



## Donor Recognition

Thank you, 2017 donors! The Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics is grateful for the contributions of our generous donors. Because of their support we have been able to offer increased academic scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students, fund student travel, fund materials and equipment for student and faculty research, and provide improved facilities in which to work. The following recognizes those individuals who gave in calendar year 2017.

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**Milton Geiger**

**Dennis Leman**

**Heber Hoggan**

## *Congratulations!*

### Spring 2018 Graduates

Chelsea Anglen

Carson Averill

Jessica Bruegger

Taylor Bush

James Caro

Tate Chamberlain

Morgan Cortez

Kristy DeGering

Stefani Del Toro

Bobby Dorvall

Ty Espy

Laura Fereday

Jessica Gordon

Andrea Graff

Kaylee Greenwald

Lane Hageman

Lynnell Hanson

Conner James

Clara Lien

Jaymie Litzel

Danae McGarvin

Quinn Merrick

Kylie Mertens

Brett Miller

Cody Negri

Quade Palm

Garrett Peterson

Abbey Shelton

Tyler Shockley

Brett Spencer

James Sturgeon

Taylor Surber

Brayden Vogel

Alysia Walsh

Eli Worrall



### Glen Whipple Retirement

University of Wyoming Extension Director Glen Whipple retired April 30, after 33 years in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. He was a faculty member, and head, of AgEcon department (twice!). A retirement farewell was April 27 — the photo shows him with a gift presented by Department Head Ben Rashford. We thank him for his many years of service. □



### Graduates from the AgEcon Master's of Science program, 2018

Graduates from left to right are Kaila Willis, Haylee Gobert, Karsyn Lamb, and Timur Ibragimov. Congratulations!



# Conference Report: International Farm Management Congress

The International Farm Management Congress is a professional organization for farmers, academics, educators and service providers who are interested in farm management from all over the world. The dues are moderate, and the Congress (conferences) are extremely interesting. My first congress was last year in Scotland, and it has recently been to Quebec, the US and New Zealand. In 2019 it will be in Tasmania (Australia).



There is nothing like stepping onto an ag operation to get a sense of the issues and resources agriculturalists work with, and the IFMA pre-tour doesn't disappoint. A weeklong trip through United Kingdom agriculture started in London and ended in Edinburgh showcasing 1) the importance of a tourist culture to those operations within striking distance of London (shooting at £60 per bird), 2) different approaches to farm management, like companies hired to provide complete farm management, 3) dealing with a cool and damp climate, 4) implications of Brexit for an agriculture used to fairly high support, 5) and examples of applications of technology (to dairy goat genetic selection) and on-farm robotics.

Land ownership in Scotland is fascinating and complicated. Most of the land in the highlands is owned by the National Trust for Scotland and Richard Scott, Duke of Buccleuch. Amazing is hardly the word, but it's a good place to start in describing the Duke of Buccleuch's estate, which includes an immense manor house dating to 1708. His family farms thousands of hectares "in hand," meaning doing it themselves. Many tenant farmers care for the rest, including many that have been farming on the estate for generations. If an estate wants to reclaim a tenant farm for any reason, they have to buy out the tenant farmer or provide a comparable replacement farm.

The IFMA conference itself consisted of 350 agriculturalists

from all over the world. UW AgEcon was well represented. John Hewlett presented on his work with succession planning (aglegacy.org) and risk scenario planning. Cole Ehmke talked about the Annie's Project program, getting the most out of oil and gas leases, and starting a CSA (community supported agriculture) venture. Mariah Ehmke presented about the market for honey and pollination services.

A feature of the IFMA Congress is plenty of informational sessions — the international perspective on farm, ranch and forest management is excellent — and there are two full days of farm tours within the main conference (plus the option of pre- and post-tours).

A tour to the Highlands visited the University of Edinburgh's Highland Research Station. The main



crops are barley, wheat, oilseed rape and potatoes. The research station is near some very scenic locations and has put up wigwams that are rented out to hikers to supplement agricultural income.

In a nutshell, an IFMA Congress highlights first rate management in agriculture, and provides excellent insights on ag and rural policy, plus the chance to exchange business cards with remarkable people. It would be a valuable experience for farmers/ranchers, businessmen, academics, and students. Information for the Tasmanian congress in March 2019 is at <http://ifmaonline.org> ■

*Cole Ehmke is a Senior Extension Specialist in the AgEcon Dept. and will be taking UW students to Scotland in summer 2019.*

## Ty Shockley Named to All-American Team

Ty Shockley, member of the University of Wyoming Livestock Judging team, was one of 11 college seniors named All-Americans at the 112th National Collegiate Livestock Judging Contest at the North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville, Kentucky, November 14.

The All-American program recognizes students who have made a commitment to livestock judging and have excelled in academics, university and industry activities and community service. Shockley, from Wheatland, Wyoming, judged competitively at both Casper College and UW.

Along with owning and managing his own cattle company, he has served as president and adviser for the Wyoming Junior Angus Association. On campus, he serves as a justice with the University of Wyoming Judicial Council and was named outstanding senior in the College of Business. Shock-

ley is also the treasurer of Alpha Kappa Psi, accounting tutor for Beta Alpha Psi and member of UW transfer student advisory committee.

Shockley served during summer 2017 as a White House intern for vice presidential operations. After graduating in May 2018 with bachelor of science degrees in accounting and agricultural business, he hopes to become a certified public accountant.

His further goal is to continue his education with a joint MBA/JD degree and pursue a career in politics in Washington, D.C.

The University of Wyoming was one of only five universities to have a team member named as an All-American. In 2016, BW Ochsner became the first named from UW. ■



# Farm Credit Recognized

Farm Credit Services of America has been recognized as the 2017 Community Development partner of the year by the Wyoming Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (WACDEP).

WACDEP is a group based in UW Extension of people who assist communities by increasing capacity in leadership, governance, money management and entrepreneurship. FCSA is a leading lender and a provider of risk management services to ag producers in Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming.

The award recognizes that Farm Credit has supported the Annie's Project program: a long-running national effort that fosters problem solving, record keeping and decision-making skills in farm/ranch women.

Since 2011 UW Extension has provided the Annie's Project program in Wyoming. The format is 18 hours of class – usually six three-hour sessions with topics on the five risks (production, market, human, financial and institutional) which emphasize discussion (to facilitate peer learning and relationship building). Its ultimate aim is to strengthen women's roles in the modern ag enterprise. It has been offered in 10 counties plus the Wind River Indian Reserva-



Casper Farm Credit Services representatives accepting the Friend of Community Development Award: Benjean Braun, Tyler Kane, Julie Volker, Esther Clark, and Jim Palm.



**Farm Credit Services  
of America**



**ANNIE'S PROJECT**  
EMPOWERING WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE



tion. FCSA has contributed \$36,500 over the last six years and provided speakers to numerous Annie's Projects in the state. WACDEP representative Hannah Swanbom said "Farm Credit is a strong supporter of Wyoming and UW — and our communities have truly benefited from it."

Farm Credit also provides the Farm Credit Services of America Scholarship at UW, has employed numerous UW Ag College graduates, and Doug Stark, their retiring CEO and president, is an alum of the AgEcon department. ■

## Wyoming First Grains Project

By Tom Foulke, Project Director

The Wyoming First Grains project is off to a good start. We have just planted spelt (12 acres) and emmer wheat (17 acres) at three of the four UW research stations in Wyoming. It was a challenge for the team to get the seed in time. Various factors including weather, business, and transportation issues seemed to stand in the way of procuring seed. We imported our spring spelt variety from Canada, and we had a number of challenges getting it across the border.

For those who are not aware of the project, this is a vertically integrated research and economic development project designed to build capacity in Wyoming's ag sector. The project is centered on what we are calling "first grains", early less-hybridized versions of wheat (emmer and a close relative, spelt), some-



times called "ancient grains". Our goal is to capitalize on the health-conscious market with premium varieties of malted grains for craft brew-pubs and flours for bakeries and restaurants.

This is year one of a five-year project that will (hopefully) result in the spin-off of a privately held company. This year we are testing production viability of our crop varieties and developing products and logistics pipelines. We have partnerships with a malting company, a restaurant and a bakery in Wyoming and should have more before our first products are ready in the fall.

We have trademarked the Neolithic brand, 'Wyoming grown first grains' and will be building a marketing campaign around this brand. Our ultimate goal is to grow this niche industry in the state and then try to branch out to the front-range of Colorado with a network of Wyoming producers, and processing capacity centered around the brand. ■



## Recent Master's Candidate Presentations

Timur Ibragimov

*Economic Benefits from Adopting Genomic Technology in the U.S. Beef Industry: A Case Study of Feed Efficiency*

Haylee Gobert

*The Effects of Household Characteristics on Early Human Capital Development: Evidence from New Zealand, M.S., Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics*

Karsyn Lamb

*Designing Habitat Exchanges: Effects of Non-attainment Risk Mitigation on Conservation Market Outcomes*

## UW Millgate Engagement Award Recognizes Hansen Project

A new award recognizes individuals and groups at UW who have rendered exceptional engagement with Wyoming communities. The inaugural Community Partnership Award was awarded to Kristi Hansen and her Wyoming Conservation Exchange (WCE) partners.

The WCE was a partnership between UW Extension faculty, the Environmental Defense Fund, Sublette County Conservation District, the Wyoming Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, and the Wyoming Stock Growers Association. This unique partnership was a grassroots effort to develop a cutting edge payment-for-ecosystem-services market to provide financial incentives for landowners to engage in environmentally beneficial activities. The award recognizes the patient legwork undertaken by the partners in the WCE to build a coalition of stakeholders with a shared, common understanding of what conservation mitigation could be in Wyoming.

We are extremely proud of Kristi and the WCE partners for their well-deserved recognition. 📍

## Seminar Series Completed

Our seminar series last fall offered a tremendous array of engaging speakers on topics related to food, land management, policy, and markets — thank you to organizers Kristi Hansen, Vardges Hovhannisayn and Mariah Ehmke. They've provided a good way to get diverse people together to learn about current efforts.

**Tex Taylor** presented “Economic Impacts to the Wyoming Economy of Sage-Grouse Management.”

**Kristi Hansen** presented “Who Gets to Drink?: Water Amid Growing Populations and Environmental Demands.”

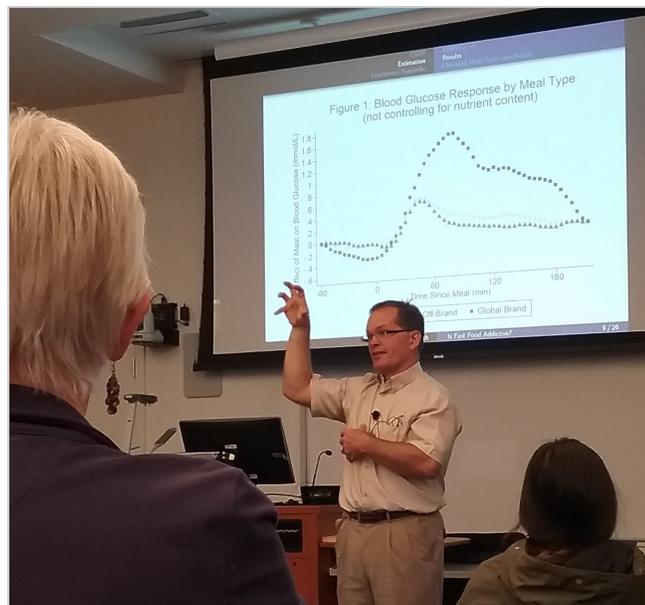
**Simanti Banerjee** of the University of Nebraska at Lincoln presented “Information Provision and Communication in a Spatial Conservation Auction.”

**Chris Bastian** presented “Sellers’ Prospects in an Agribusiness Supply Chain Evolving to More Negotiation: An Experimental Inquiry.”

**Mariah Ehmke** presented “The Implications of Global Food Fraud for Local and National Food Supply Chains.”

**Trent Smith** (pictured at right) of the University of Otago (New Zealand) presented “Is Fast Food Addictive: Evidence from an Experiment Utilizing Continuous Glucose Monitoring.”

**Brian Lee** presented on the 14<sup>th</sup> Wyoming Leadership Education and Development (L.E.A.D) class and his trip to South Africa.



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The Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics enjoys excellent support for its core research and Extension program through the Experiment Station and UW Extension, through research funding opportunities and travel and programming funds, and the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources supports the teaching program through faculty salaries, graduate stipends and other funding.

While that support is critical to developing and maintaining Extension, research and teaching programs, the level of support is often not sufficient to provide the extra resources to move these programs to the next level. Private financial support from our alumni and friends is becoming an ever more important source of revenue to enhance existing programs and begin new initiatives in the department.

Your contributions support the programs of the department through

- Student study abroad and experiential learning,
- Faculty and staff development,
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- Department cultural events, including our seminar series.

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And don't forget that planned giving through your will, trust and life insurance will help this department remain relevant for future generations in the same way it serves Wyoming and the West today.

Ben Rashford  
AgEcon Department Head

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SOMETHING  
THAT  
OUTLIVES  
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# *In the Margins*

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*In the Margins* is the semiannual newsletter of the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics at the University of Wyoming in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The editor is Cole Ehmke.

To make a contribution or find out how you can help the department, contact Ben Rashford, Associate Professor and Department Head: [brashfor@uwyo.edu](mailto:brashfor@uwyo.edu) or (307)766-2386.

*Continued from front page.*

### **ItM: What advice would you give to new ag business students?**

Look at how your community makes decisions, how international and national drivers affect local markets as well how rural areas affect international communities, and, learn a foreign language!

### **ItM: What advice would you give to new graduates?**

Never stop learning. Learning requires one to be outside the comfort zone. Relish it!

### **ItM: What do you look for in your students?**

A willingness to learn and understand new things, and introspectiveness on ones' own preconceptions and beliefs. ■

Roger can be reached at [coupal@uwyo.edu](mailto:coupal@uwyo.edu) and (307) 766-5539.



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## **AgEcon Researcher Receives Fellowship**

It's the last round of the game and a beautiful spring day in Powell, Wyoming—clear skies, virtually no wind—and Alex Marchal just has one question: How many tokens will mothers invest in the private account of his public goods game?

Marchal, an incoming senior majoring in Economics and minoring in Mathematics, is the newest research fellow in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics. In April, Marchal received a prestigious INBRE (Idea Network for Biomedical Research Excellence) Undergraduate Research Fellowship to further his research on how parental economic behavior measures predict immunization decisions for their child. Throughout the 2017-2018 academic year, Marchal worked with Associate Professor Mariah Ehmke to collect data from nearly 200 Wyoming families in the Casper, Powell, Sheridan, and Laramie communities. The objective of the project is measuring parents' risk preferences, altruism, and cooperative tendencies using economic experiments and relate those measures to their decisions and beliefs around child immunization. The INBRE fellowship allows Marchal to work through the next phase of the project, analyzing the data and writing up the results for publication throughout the summer term. Soon, he will be able to predict what a parent in Powell might contribute to a public account in an experimental economics game, controlling for clear skies, low wind, and a host of socio-economic factors. ■