

PRESS RELEASE

TWELVE STUDENTS BEGIN THEIR GRADUATE PROGRAMS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA AND LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY TO ADDRESS AGRICULTURAL CHALLENGES IN HAITI

May 15, 2017 Petionville Haiti

In an effort to increase the number of highly trained Haitian researchers and extension personnel, the U.S. Feed the Future initiative project “*Appui à la Recherche et au Développement Agricole*” (AREA) is training 20 Master Degree students at University of Florida (UF), University of Illinois and Louisiana State University.

A group of 12 students will be leaving Haiti on May 20th to attend English language training this summer to prepare for admission to their graduate programs at the University of Florida and Louisiana State University beginning this August. They will join two Haitian students who started their programs at UF in January. Some of the topics that the students will research include disease and pest management in rice and sorghum, optimizing water use efficiency, nutrient management and post-harvest technologies for major food crops, and climate smart production techniques to optimize crop productivity. The remaining six students are expecting to leave Haiti in the coming fall.



One of the students will be working under the supervision of two researchers from the Tropical Research and Education Center in Homestead to tackle major challenges (mainly disease and nematode) faced by banana growers in Cabaret, Archaie and Montrouis regions. The two researchers visited Haiti last month and met with the Vice Dean for research at FAMV and the Head of the plant production department at MARNDR to discuss their involvement in that research program.

During their graduate programs, the students will work with the public and private sector in Haiti to promote agricultural modernization, and provide research-based information and recommendations for farmers to improve food security in the country. Every graduate student will have a research professional from Haiti on their graduate committee who will provide guidance and support to their graduate research work. “*Through the student research projects, we will connect agricultural experts in Haiti to the experts at our U.S. university partners*” confirmed Lemane Delva, director of research for the AREA project. And according to Rose Koenig, a UF faculty member and interim director of IFAS Global : “*At the University of Florida our faculty looks forward to mentoring and interacting with these talented and dedicated students. Their research will provide solutions to some of the major food production challenges in Haiti and lead to improved household food security and livelihoods*”.

Feed the Future is the U.S. Government’s global hunger and food security initiative. With a focus on smallholder farmers, and particularly women who play a vital role in food production and household nutrition, Feed the Future supports partner countries in developing their agriculture sectors to spur economic growth and trade that increase incomes and reduce hunger, poverty and under nutrition. For more information, visit www.feedthefuture.gov.



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