

# DOCTOR OF PLANT MEDICINE PROGRAM

**UF** IFAS CALS  
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA



## NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2015



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- Amanda Hodges, DPM Director
- Elena Alyanaya, DPM Program Assistant

# DPM NEWS

*Volume VI, Summer 2015*

## Greetings!

<http://ufplantdoctors.org/>



## Welcoming Remarks!

Dear Students, Faculty, Alumni, and Friends:

The success of the DPM Program depends upon our outstanding students, faculty mentors, and alumni!

In this edition, we are pleased to feature School of Forest Resources and Conservation faculty mentor Dr. Jason Smith and our alumni spotlight, Dr. Sam Glucksman, Crop Management Specialist and Account Manager with Glades Crop Care, Inc. We are also pleased to welcome our three new summer students - Blaire Colvin, Arjun Khadka, and Cory Penca.

Furthermore, we extend our congratulations to DPM alumnus Dr. Raj Singh for receiving a 2015 Distinguished Service Award from the Louisiana County Agricultural Agents Association. Thank you for your support of the University of Florida, DPM Program!

*~ Amanda Hodges, DPM Program Director*

## Faculty Highlight: Dr. Jason Smith

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**D**r. Jason Smith is the Co-Director of Emerging Threats to Forests Research Team, Associate Professor of Forest Pathology, and State Forest Health Extension Specialist at the University of Florida. Dr. Smith has been employed at UF since 2006.

The focus of his research program is to provide a better understanding of the underlying mechanisms and biology of interactions between tree hosts, pathogens, their vectors and the environment to reduce the impact of disease on trees in the context of global change. Current research focuses on: 1.) Exotic tree disease detection and management; 2.) Phylogeography and pathogenicity of tree pathogens; and 3.) Management of diseases affecting rare, endangered or relict tree species in a changing climate. In addition to serving as the Principal Investigator of the Forest Pathology Laboratory, Dr. Smith teaches several graduate and undergraduate courses and carries out forest health extension activities including advanced tree diagnostic services.



Continued from page 3...

Professionally, Dr. Smith is active in the American Phytopathological Society, American Conifer Society, and serves as associate editor of the journal *Forest Pathology*.

"It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see."

- Henry David Thoreau

Dr. Smith's career combines academia and extension. The pursuit of these combined interests stemmed from his enjoyment of the research/problem solving interface. Additionally, his passion for education echoes in his extensive involvement at UF and with the DPM Program. Dr. Smith has served on the supervisory committees of several DPM students, including: Keumchul Shin, Don Spence, Carmen Collazo, Lacey Mount, Lanette Sobel, and Greg Kramer.

In response to the question: "How would you qualify the effectiveness of the DPM program at training students for careers in academia and extension?", Dr. Smith stated, "My experience has been that DPM students fare quite well post-graduation. I am amazed at the diversity of career paths that are available and how readily DPM graduates obtain these positions." Dr. Smith also offers a few words of wisdom for his students:

***One must remember that graduate school is about more than receiving another diploma. To be successful, you need to really embrace your discipline and go beyond the minimal expectations for graduation. Try to take every opportunity you can to experience new things and acquire new skills.***

***When asked what can interested students expect while working in his lab, Dr. Smith replied:***

"We work with trees and forests and the scale of problems ranges from landscape to molecular. Being adaptable, willing to learn new skills and being able to think critically are the most important attributes for a student, I think. We work on both the pathogens and hosts and carry out basic and applied research, though most of our work focuses on solving tree health problems. Students in our lab carry out field, greenhouse and lab work that involves isolating, identifying and characterizing pathogens, inoculating hosts to assess pathogenicity, evaluating management strategies in the field and also do a fair share of data analysis and writing.

## NEW STUDENT PROFILES

Welcome to our new  
Summer 2015 students!



*Blaire Colvin*

### Academic Credentials:

- B.S. in Plant Science with an Agronomy Specialization - University of Florida, Gainesville, FL
- M.S. in Agronomy - University of Florida, Gainesville, FL
- Co-enrolled in Ph.D. in Agronomy and DPM

### Why DPM?

I have been a part of agriculture from a young age since my family owns and operates a small peanut farm in Marion County. I enjoy working outside and the satisfaction of seeing a crop go from seed to final product. While working on my undergraduate degree I had the opportunity to work in agricultural research across various disciplines. After receiving my B.S. in 2013, my experiences drove me to complete a M.S. in Agronomy in 2015. While trying to decide what path I wanted to take after graduating with my master's degree I discovered the Doctor of Plant Medicine Program. The DPM Program immediately appealed to me due to its hands on, practical, and interdisciplinary nature. It seemed to be a perfect fit for me. I am excited for the further practical plant health knowledge that I will obtain in the program to be able to help growers solve the problems they deal with on a daily basis. I am particularly excited about expanding my knowledge of plant pathology and entomology. The broad knowledge base that you obtain in the DPM program is exactly what is needed to help provide practical solutions to crop production challenges.

"Farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil, and you're a thousand miles from the corn field."

- Dwight D. Eisenhower

*Arjun Khadka***Academic Credentials:**

- B.S. in Agriculture – Institute of Agriculture and Animal Sciences, Chitwan, Nepal
- Co-enrolled in M.S. Entomology and DPM

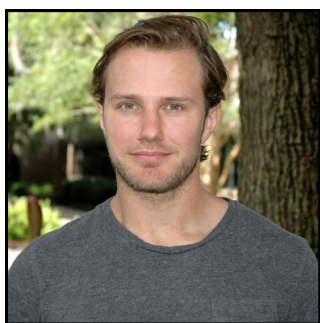
**Why DPM?**

Since time immemorial, pests and diseases always have been foes of farmers. As a student of agriculture, plant protection (Entomology and Plant Pathology) fascinates me a lot. After completion of my B.S., I enrolled myself in a 3 month long volunteer program in the Entomology Division of Nepal Agriculture Research Council (NARC), Lalitpur, Nepal. The volunteering was based on rearing of egg and larval parasitoids of Potato tuber moth. I also worked as a Technical Officer in Agriculture Research Station (ARS), Vijayanagar, Jumla, Nepal for one year. I was involved in various research trials of various agronomic commodities and during the data collection I observed all the aspects of a research field. The DPM program was a perfect fit for my search as I was looking for a degree that would incorporate holistic plant protection knowledge. Dual enrollment in an M.S. of Entomology is a bonus. It will be a great learning curve for me. After the completion of my degree, I want to engage in additional research activities focusing on plant protection.



“When a person really desires something, all the universe conspires to help that person to realize his dream.”

– Paulo Coelho,  
*The Alchemist*

*Cory Penca*

“Be joyful though you have considered all the facts.”

– Wendell Berry

**Academic Credentials:**

- B.S. in Botany – University of Florida, Gainesville, FL
- M.S. in Natural Resource Policy & Administration – University of Florida, Gainesville, FL
- Co-enrolled in Ph.D. in Entomology and DPM

**Why DPM?**

I have been interested in the intersection of plants and insects for a long time. After studying botany as an undergraduate I worked at a botanical garden where I found myself lacking adequate knowledge regarding plant pests. I then began working as a lab technician at FDACS-DPI in Gainesville, Florida where I was exposed to a variety of projects working on invasive plant pests. During my time at DPI I began taking courses in entomology at UF, including a biosecurity course taught by Dr. Hodges. The combination of work and educational exposure sparked an interest in the regulatory side of entomology and its role in helping growers as well as strengthening and protecting our food system. As I neared completion of my master’s degree in resource policy I felt I would be better served by attending school full time. The DPM program covered all my interest areas and was a logical next step in my professional development. I am looking forward to gaining practical knowledge in several fields related to plant health and taking these skills out into the world.

## *PROGRAM NEWS & DEVELOPMENT*

You can find additional details on each of the following stories and stayed informed of the most recent events and important announcements regarding the DPM program, by checking out our Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/UF-Doctor-of-Plant-Medicine-Program/179188882121511>

If you are interested in previous semester editions of “*DPM News*”, you can read them through the DPM Program website at: <http://dpm.ifas.ufl.edu/news.html>.

The website provides further information about the history of the program, its mission, curriculum, as well as current students and involved faculty. Our website also highlights other opportunities to learn more about how to apply for enrollment or simply support the DPM program.



You can also tune into our IFAS blog, updated regularly by Dr. Amanda Hodges, available at: <http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/plantmedicine/>.

# Louisiana County Agriculture Association: “2015 Achievement Award”



The Louisiana County Agricultural Agents Association members presented awards and installed the 2015-2016 officers during their annual conference in Monroe, May 31-June 4.

The “Achievement Award” recognizes an agent who has dedicated less than 10 years of service to the LSU AgCenter. This year’s recipients were Raghuwinder “Raj” Singh and Mariah Simoneaux.

Dr. Singh is a DPM alumnus and was featured in our “Alumni Spotlight” in the Spring 2014 edition of *DPM News*.

Photo Caption (*above*): Award winners, left to right, Ronald Levy, soybean specialist; Raghuwinder “Raj” Singh, plant pathologist; Mariah Simoneaux, horticulture agent; and Kurt Guidry, agricultural economist. *Photo by Brandy Orlando*

Source: [http://www.lsuagcenter.com/news\\_archive/2015/June/headline\\_news/County-agents-group-honors-members-elects-officers.htm](http://www.lsuagcenter.com/news_archive/2015/June/headline_news/County-agents-group-honors-members-elects-officers.htm)

## NEW COURSE OFFERING!

The DPM Program offered a new 2-credit course for Summer A 2015-  
**Scouting and Survey Methods for Plant Health Professionals!**

The course was held at the UF, Everglades Research and Education Center (EREC) in Belle Glade, Florida during the week in between the spring and summer semesters. Students had opportunities to practice field scouting and identification techniques on a daily basis. Students prepared an insect, weed, and plant pathogen collection, and several other reports during the course. Dr. Gregg Nuessly, Dr. Richard Raid, Dr. Calvin Ode-ro, and Dr. Amanda Hodges served as course co-instructors.



Photo Captions

*Top:* DPM students had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Chuck Obern, C&B Farms in Clewiston, Florida.

*Bottom:* Dr. Raid Instructing DPM Students during the Summer 2015 course entitled “Scouting and Survey Methods for Plant Health Professionals.”

## STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS!

The following DPM students are co-enrolled MS in Entomology and Nematology students and were recognized in the MS student competition at the Florida Entomological Society Meeting in Sanibel Harbor, Florida from August 2-5, 2015: **Chris Kerr** (left), 1st place and **Eric LeVeen**, 2nd place (right).



## 2015 APS Conference

Photo Caption (*below from left to right*): DPM Alumni Lacey Mount (2010) and Raj Singh (2004) at the 2015 APS Conference.

The University of Nebraska Doctor of Plant Health (DPH) Program and the University of Florida DPM Program co-hosted an informational booth at the recent American Phytopathological Society (APS) conference in Pasadena, California from August 1-5, 2015. At the event, DPM and DPH program personnel answered professional questions about Plant Doctor training.



## Alumni Spotlight - Dr. Sam Glucksman *by Nicole Casuso*



**Q. Please describe your academic background.**

**A.** I received my B.S. in Botany at the University of Florida in 2007. I then enrolled in the DPM Program and completed my degree in August 2011.

**Q. What is your current occupation and how has your DPM degree aided you in the tasks and responsibilities associated with your position?**

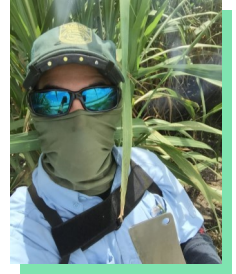
**A.** Crop Management Specialist-Account Manager with Glades Crop Care, Inc. My DPM degree has aided me in my current occupation by giving me the knowledge and skill set for identifying and controlling pests, diseases, and other issues that affect plant health. My internships with the Doctor of Plant Medicine Clinical Trials and the UF Plant Disease Clinic have contributed greatly to my success as a principle investigator for large scale grower demonstrations, and field diagnosis of pests and diseases.

**Q. What prompted you to pursue your current career?**

**A.** I wanted a position that would allow me to utilize all the skills and knowledge gained from the program including trial work and contract research.

**Q. Why did you choose the DPM program?**

**A.** I love working with plants in the field, greenhouse, and laboratory, but wanted more than a research experience. A practicing degree allowed me to utilize the information gained in research, and apply it to real world scenarios.



**Q. On a personal level, how has your DPM degree influenced you?**

**A.** Besides all the science, my degree has influenced my personal life in many ways. It has taught me the importance of discipline and hard work, networking and social development (maintaining good relationships). Most of all, admiration and respect for the agricultural industry and community.

**“Do or do not, there is no try.”**  
– Yoda

## If the shoe fits... why DPM might be right for you! *By Nicole Casuso*

Wondering if the DPM program is an appropriate path for you? Take a quick moment to participate in this brief self-survey and determine if the shoe fits!

1. Do you enjoy learning about any or all of these topics: plant disease management, agronomy, insects, or soil and water science?
2. Are you interested in practical, hands-on experiences that would allow you to work both in the field and in a lab, and acquire internships with local businesses or federal agencies?
3. Seeking a future career in academia, private industry, or government?
4. Do you value community outreach and extension, networking, and attending professional development workshops, seminars, and scientific conferences?
5. Do you prefer application-based science and multidisciplinary studies?

If you answered **yes** to most of the questions listed above, then we highly recommend that you explore your graduate career options with the University of Florida DPM Program! Already enrolled in a graduate degree program? Contact program for information about potential dual-enrollment!



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**Nicole Casuso**, Editor

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**Questions, comments, or submissions?**

Email: [ncasuso@ufl.edu](mailto:ncasuso@ufl.edu) | [achodges@ufl.edu](mailto:achodges@ufl.edu)

**UF UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA**  
The Foundation for The Gator Nation



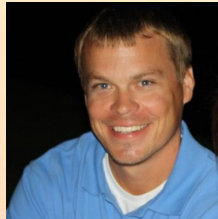


## DPM Students

Interested in learning more about our current DPM students?  
Visit our website at: [http://www.dpm.ifas.ufl.edu/current\\_students.html](http://www.dpm.ifas.ufl.edu/current_students.html)



Rebecca Barocco  
Arkansas, USA



Jamey Betts  
Georgia, USA



John Bonkowski  
Delaware, USA



Morgan Byron  
Florida, USA



Nicole Casuso  
Florida, USA



Theresa Chormanski  
Florida, USA



Blaire Colvin  
Florida, USA



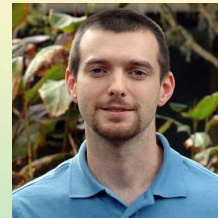
Wael Elwakil  
Egypt



Lisbeth Espinoza  
Ecuador



Christopher Ferguson  
Kentucky, USA



Christopher Kerr  
Florida, USA



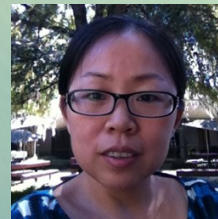
Arjun Khadka  
Nepal



Greg Kramer  
Florida, USA



Eric LeVeen  
South Carolina, USA



Yansu Luo  
China



Daniel Mancero  
Ecuador



Cory Penca  
Florida, USA



Keumchul Shin  
South Korea



Lanette Sobel  
Florida, USA



Bruce Stripling  
Georgia, USA



Iris Strzyzewski  
South Carolina, USA



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Florida, USA



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*2nd Year DPM*  
*Student*

*Thank you  
for reading!*

