

# DPM NEWS

Volume I, September 2013

## Greetings!

Dear Friends, Alumni, and Prospective Students:

Welcome to the first edition of the biannual DPM news! Our newsletter will focus on student and alumni highlights as well as general program updates. Thank you for your support of the University of Florida, DPM Program!

Amanda Hodges, DPM Program Director

## Breaking News:

### BASF DPM is a Gator!



Visit <http://agwired.com/2013/08/15/basf-dpm-is-a-gator/> for the full interview!

Recently on AgWired: News from the World of Agribusiness, Cindy Zimmerman (co-founder of the company) interviewed DPM alumna Dr. Brianne Reeves (left). Here are some highlights of that memorable moment.

Brianne got her Bachelor's degree in agronomy from UF and then went on into the Doctor of Plant Medicine program. "It was right up my alley," she said. "Very multi-disciplinary graduate program that really covers anything that would affect a plant's growth ... so it really set me up for success in a career in agriculture."

Brianne says her education continues with BASF.

**"You don't have to be a farm girl or a farm boy to want to do agriculture"**

## In Other News...

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Here are a few links to other recent news events highlighting the achievements of DPM students, alumni, and faculty.

- [New Bugs In Florida Stymie Researchers, Threaten Crops](#), *Greg Allen, NPR*
- Visit the new DPM website to browse the list of possible faculty mentors, download the new DPM graduate handbook, or check out the latest students going to the [2013 Entomological Society of America Meeting](#), November 10-13 in Austin, TX.
- Also, stop by and visit DPM students at the [UF CALS TailGATOR](#) event on October 5th!
- DPM alumni Dr. Stephen McLean and Dr. Jodi White-McLean recently accepted Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection agricultural specialist positions in Miami, FL

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# NEW STUDENTS PROFILES

The DPM Program would also like to welcome the following new 2013 students!



"Dance as though no one is watching you. Love as though you have never been hurt before. Sing as though no one can hear you. Live as though heaven is on earth." - Alfred D'Souza

## *Nicole Casuso*

### Academic Credentials:

- B.S. in Environmental Science, Soil and Water Science Minor - University of Florida, Gainesville, FL

### Why DPM?

While other branches of environmental and life sciences tend to remove the human element, what leads me to better appreciate the DPM Program is the fact that it does quite the opposite. Whether in the field or at the table, this multidisciplinary degree seeks to elucidate the complex relationships which connect multiple species, pathways, and factors – anthropogenic and non alike. I hope to take advantage of the possible opportunities for research, restoration, conservation, and management that are continuously available to those willing to step outside their comfort zones, think outside the box, and dream with an open mind in the world of plant medicine.

## *David Hardy*



"Nature does nothing uselessly." - Aristotle

### Academic Credentials:

- A.S. in Horticulture and Landscape Technology - Miami Dade College, Miami FL
- M.B.A. in International Business and Marketing - University of Toledo, OH
- B.S. in Marketing - Deree College / American College of Greece, Athens, Greece

### Why DPM?

Horticulture is a second career for me after I decided to leave the business world in 2010 and follow my lifelong passion for plants and nature. Having come to this profession late in life I feel that I need to learn as much as I can and as fast as possible to be at a career and knowledge/experience level I would be if I had started out early. The DPM program is the best fit for me because it is so comprehensive in its scope and adaptable to my needs to learn about every aspect of horticulture at a high level while working full-time as a horticulturist at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Gardens and building on my experience.

## *Keumchul Shin*



"The Journey is the Reward" - Steve Jobs

### Academic Credentials:

- B.S. & M.S. in Forest Mushroom Cultivation and Forest Diseases - Kangwon National University, Gangwon-do, South Korea

### Why DPM?

While I was performing mushroom research, two important forest diseases occurred in South Korea - pine wilt and oak wilt. I was involved in research projects for management of these diseases. Through these experiences in research activities, I had an opportunity to work on Laurel wilt with Dr. Jason A. Smith, a UF forest pathologist. Although my major interests were focused on forest pathogens, I wanted to understand broader agricultural areas affecting plant health and management. The multidisciplinary Doctor of Plant Medicine program was a perfect fit. Intensive coursework and internships within various agricultural fields will make it possible for me to be a well-trained plant health specialist.

## *Lanette Sobel*



"All the world old is queer save thee and me, and even thou art a little queer." - Robert Owen

### Academic Credentials:

- B.S. in Commerce with double concentration in Finance and Management Information Systems - University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia

### Why DPM?

I chose the DPM program because I really appreciated the interdisciplinary approach to learning about plants. I subscribe to holistic and sustainable growing practices, especially those that are based in Permaculture, and my goal is to gain an in-depth understanding of how everything is interrelated. In my recent previous life, I was an earthworm farmer and broker and co-founded an environmental non-profit known for promoting composting efforts in Miami called the Fertile Earth Foundation. Our "educational with a twist" 2013 calendar called the "Ladies of Manure" received international attention this past year.

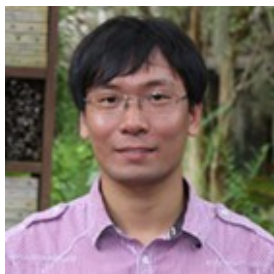
*Kayla Thomason***Academic Credentials:**

- B.S. in Environmental Management in Ag and Natural Resources, Management and Sales in Agribusiness Minor - University of Florida, Gainesville, FL

**Why DPM?**

I want to be able to help the agricultural industry in the future. I chose DPM because of the diversity that you learn and how well rounded the material is that you learn. I would like to do a joint degree and do a thesis-based masters program as well.

**"Strive not to be a success, but rather to be of value" - Albert Einstein**

*Lin Xing***Academic Credentials:**

- M.S. in Entomology - University of Florida, Gainesville, FL
- B.S. in Plant protection - China Agricultural University, Haidian, Beijing, China

**Why DPM?**

During my previous degree study, I spent a lot of time doing research and that made me have a professional attitude towards my works. After that, I wanted to take more classes to broaden my knowledge. Based on my current interest about farm managing, I chose the plant medicine program, which offers different disciplinary courses about soil science and plant pathology, etc. I believe the broad knowledge understanding would benefit my future professional career.

**"Change your thoughts and you change your world."** - Norman Vincent Peale

## PROGRAM NEWS & DEVELOPMENT

For more details on each of the following stories and to stay informed of the most recent events and important announcements regarding the DPM program, be sure to check out our Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/UF-Doctor-of-Plant-Medicine-Program/17918882121511>



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

## NEW Workspaces!

*Carla Burke, 4th Year DPM Student*

The new Plant Disease Clinic opened adjacent to Fifield Hall on UF's campus in January, complete with DPM student workspace. DPM students now have two workspaces, one in the Plant Disease Clinic and one in Steinmetz Hall.

These workspaces provide students with computers and printers to work on projects, microscopes, bench space for projects such as pinning insect collections, proximity to peers and professionals, and meeting space for DPMSO events.

Having two workspaces is a boon to students since some are primarily based in Steinmetz Hall and some spend the majority of their time in Fifield Hall and the Plant Disease Clinic.



For more info on the PDC visit: <http://plantpath.ifas.ufl.edu/clinic/>

# CONFERENCES

*Nicole Casuso, 1st Year DPM Student*

The mission of the University of Florida, Doctor of Plant Medicine program is “to provide premier professional doctoral training for plant scientists”. Considered to be one of the key components of the DPM program, our students and faculty aim to increase their involvement within the scientific community all the while keeping in mind the importance of networking and research. DPM has been well-represented at several conferences recently.

- American Phytopathological Society and Mycological Society of America Joint Meeting, Austin, TX, August 10-14, 2013
- Florida Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Conference, Kissimmee, FL, August 2-4, 2013
- Southeastern Branch of the Entomological Society of America Annual Meeting, Baton Rouge, LA, March 3-6, 2013
- National Association of Independent Crop Consultants Annual Conference, Jacksonville, FL, January 24-26, 2013
- Southeastern Fruit and Vegetable Conference, Savannah, GA, January 10-13, 2013
- Entomological Society of America Annual Meeting, Knoxville, TN, November 11-14, 2012



*From Left to Right:* John Bonkowski, Carla Burkle and Alicyn Ryan

## APS & MSA Joint Meeting, Austin, TX

DPM students held an informational booth at the conference, handing out reusable shopping bags, carabiners, note pads, and pamphlets that promoted both the DPM and DPH program. There were employers in industry that were specifically interested in hiring Plant Doctors (both DPM and DPH graduates.)

**“I think it's safe to say we were one of the busiest booths at the meeting and got to talk to a wide array of people.”**

**- Alicyn Ryan, 3rd Year DPM Student**

## FL Small Farms & Alternative Enterprises Conference, Kissimmee, FL

The DPM program had the privilege of interacting with small farms producers at this conference where students held a booth. The students had the opportunity to meet and talk to many dedicated, inspiring small farms producers and other conference attendees.

*From Left to Right:* Eric LeVeen, Annika Minott, and Carla Burkle





**National Association of Independent Crop Consultants Annual Conference, Jacksonville, FL**

For this conference, DPM students Bonnie Wells, Carmen Collazo, and Carla Burkle teamed up with the Doctor of Plant Health program from the University of Nebraska. At the booth and dialogued with crop consulting and contract research professionals about career opportunities for plant doctors.

*Below:* Eric LeVeen and George Fox attended the Southeast Regional Fruit and Vegetable Conference

**D**r. Amanda Hodges, DPM Program Director, and Dr. Greg Hodges, FDACS-DPI co-organized a symposium entitled "Multi-disciplinary Graduate Programs: Doctor of Plant Medicine and Master of Plant Protection and Pest Management Degrees." Bonnie Wells and Eric LeVeen were invited to deliver internship-focused presentations as a component of the symposium. DPM alumnus Dr. Raj Singh also delivered an invited presentation entitled "Plant Doctors as Diagnosticians: Challenges and Successes."

As a component of the meeting, Eric LeVeen also participated as a member of the Florida Linnaean Games team for the conference.

During the conference DPM student Eric LeVeen and DPM Director Dr. Amanda Hodges visited the lab of Dr. Raj Singh, D.P.M.. Dr. Singh is the LSU Plant Disease Clinic Director and an Assistant Professor in the Plant Pathology and Crop Physiology Department.



*Left:* Dr. Amanda Hodges and Dr. Nick Singh, a DPM and director of the LSU Plant Disease Clinic.

*Bottom Left:* From Left to Right: Eric LeVeen (DPM student) Lucas Carnohan, Aaron Pomerantz, and John Zukows



**ESA Annual Meeting, Knoxville, TN**

Tatiana Sanchez (*right*) won this book, *The Insects*, when both she and Nina Zagvazdina attended the conference. They held a booth and even answered questions from attendees based on their entomological studies with the DPM program.



## FUNDRAISING

*Carla Burkle, 4th Year DPM Student*

We also had our third annual Valentine's Day rose sale, which has been very successful all three years. Thanks to the hard work of our DPM students, florist quality long-stemmed roses were tied into beautiful bouquets and sold out quickly. Currently the proceeds from the rose sale support social DPMSO functions and help buy student supplies. We plan to expand this fundraiser in future years and hope to offer competitive travel grants for professional development and scholarships.



**Top:** DPMSO Treasurer Rebecca Barocco and Vice President Alicyn Ryan at the DPMSO vegetable sale

**Left:** DPMSO Secretary John Bonkowski and President Eric LeVein at the DPMSO Rose Sale



**"Fundraising has helped us maintain solidarity between the rest of the DPM students as well as pay for equipment that may help other students meet their goals within classes."**

*- John Bonkowski,*

*2nd Year DPM Student*

## OTHER EVENTS

*Carla Burkle, 4th Year DPM Student*

UF's Office of Student Activities and Involvement held a student activities fair in January on the Reitz Colonnade. This fair informed UF students of ways to get involved with various clubs and organizations on campus. DPM students Bonnie Wells, Carla Burkle, and Eric LeVein represented DPMSO at the fair. The DPMSO officers had the opportunity to speak with several interested students about the DPM program and the plant medicine career. This event was attended by thousands of UF students who were able to walk away with a little more knowledge of our program.

**CALS**  
**CAREER**  
**expo**

Additionally, the CALS Career Expo held at the J. Wayne Reitz Union Grand Ballroom on February 13 was well-attended by CALS students seeking information about graduate programs available at UF. The DPM program had a booth at the Expo and DPM students Annika Minnott, Eric LeVein, and Carla Burkle interacted with many CALS undergraduates that day who showed strong interest in the program.

# *Congratulatory Remarks for our Graduates*

Congratulations to our recent DPM Graduates!

We wish you the best of luck in your careers as plant doctors. We're proud of you!

## Summer 2013

- Courtney Buckley
- George Fox
- Annika Minott
- Daniel Tompkins

## Spring 2013

- Bill Lester

## Fall 2012

- Kenneth L. Johnson, Jr.
- Todd Leeson

*“The miracle isn’t that I finished. The miracle is that I had the courage to start.”*

*— John Bingham*



**Above:** Courtney Buckley

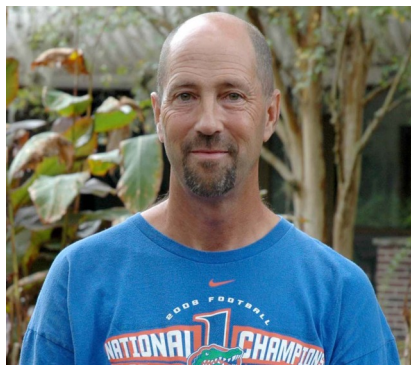
**Top right:** George Fox

**Left:** Annika Minott

**Bottom left:** Daniel Tompkins

**Below:** William (Bill) Lester

**Bottom right** (from left to right):  
Kenneth Johnson & Todd Leeson



# Alumni Spotlight

Lacey Mount, DPM Alumna, Dellavalle Laboratory, Inc., Fresno, CA



**Adam J. Silagyi** became the world's first Doctor of Plant Medicine in 2003. He also holds a Master of Science in Entomology from Purdue University, but he elected to make D.P.M. the end of his academic training.

Currently, as an Agricultural Development Officer for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Dr. Silagyi helps with the implementation of the U.S. Presidential Initiative Feed the Future in Guatemala. Prior to USAID, Dr. Silagyi also worked for such agencies as the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) Division of Plant Industry (DPI), and the USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Plant Protection & Quarantine (PPQ) Department.

Delving further into his past, we find Dr. Silagyi conducting research as an intern at the Tropical Agricultural Research

and Higher Education Center (Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza, CATIE) in Costa Rica Coca-Cola World Citizenship Program in Bolivia. Dr. Silagyi also spent time in the Peace Corps in Paraguay.

So, what made him choose the D.P.M. over a traditional Ph.D.?

"Personally, I learned a lot during my master's degree; conducted agricultural research in the field, understand its importance. But I did not want to continue with a Ph.D., which is purely research. When I was walking down the hall at Purdue I saw a poster advertising and describing the newly formed D.P.M. program at my alma matter. I hold a B.Sc. in Agronomy from the University of Florida. I immediately spoke to my wife about this great opportunity to continue my education that was holistic and practical, and would take us back to Florida and family."

**"I am able to use my agricultural training to help make a difference in the lives of human beings all around the globe"**

## If the shoe fits... why DPM might be right for you!

*Nicole Casuso, 1st Year DPM Student*

**Education is not  
the filling of a pail,  
but the lighting of a fire.**

**William Butler Yeats**

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Want to know if the DPM program is the path you want to pursue? Ask yourself the following questions and see!

1. Are you passionate about the environment, agriculture, epidemiology, or insects?
2. Are you interested in hands-on experience, internships with local businesses or federal agencies, field work, and multidisciplinary studies?
3. Do you want to work in the field of academia, private industry, or government?
4. Do you like community outreach, networking, and attending scientific conferences?
5. Do you prefer application-based science?

If you answered **yes** to most of these questions, then we strongly encourage you to explore your options with the University of Florida DPM Program!

**Nicole Casuso**, Editor

*DPM Student - University of Florida*

**Amanda Hodges**, Ph.D., Co-Editor

*DPM Director - University of Florida*

**Questions, comments, or submissions?**

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