

NORAGRIC ELECTRONIC BULLETIN

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The Noragric Electronic Bulletin is produced 2-3 times a year and gives a summary of Noragric's activities during the intervals between each Bulletin including information on staff and visitors, seminars, projects, etc. The Bulletin is sent by e-mail to our networks and partners but is also available on the Noragric website, www.umb.no/noragric.

We hope you find the information in the Bulletin useful and we are always interested in suggestions for improvement or other comments. Please forward this Bulletin to contacts who may be interested in Noragric's activities. If you do not wish to receive the Bulletin by e-mail, or would prefer receiving notice by e-mail when a new issue is available on our website, please send an e-mail to the Editor.

To reach staff by e-mail, write <firstname.lastname@umb.no>. An overview of staff names, telephone extensions and e-mail addresses can also be found on the Noragric website (Staff).

This issue of the Bulletin summarizes Noragric's activities since September 2008.

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Students

The number of students at Noragric has surpassed all earlier numbers. There are 112 students enrolled in the Bachelor in Development Studies programme; 77 in the Master in Development Studies; 53 in the Master in International Environmental Studies; and 27 PhD students. Noragric took on 8 new PhD students in 2008, of which 6 started in August. These are Progress Hanzwida Nyanga (Zambia) with thesis topic 'Reversing household food insecurity through conservation agriculture: socio-economic impact of conservation farming practices among small scale farmers in Zambia'; Bridget Bwalya Umar (Zambia) with thesis topic 'Reversing environmental degradation in Zambia through conservation agriculture'; Marianne Aasen (Norway), thesis topic 'Can a combination of policy instruments increase the effectiveness and public acceptability of environmental policies?'; Nani Raut (Nepal), thesis topic 'Impact of agricultural intensification on biodiversity loss, soil quality and climate gas emission: a comparative study from Nepal and India'; Victoria Moshy (Tanzania), thesis topic 'Social-Ecological changes affecting the livelihoods of fishing communities in the current epoch of globalisation: A case study in Mafia island, Tanzania'; Lydia Gaspare (Tanzania),

thesis topic 'The effects of increased fishing pressure on the ecological resilience of targeted groupers (Serranidae) and analysis of impacts on livelihoods in fishing communities of Mafia island, Tanzania'; Lars Kåre Grimsby (Norway), thesis title 'Biofuel Production in Africa'; Øyvind Eggen (Norway), thesis topic 'The impact of foreign aid on state formation in Malawi'. A new PhD student, Marit Heller (Norway), started in January 2009 and is linked to the 'Environmental Policy and Human Action' project.

Teaching goes E-tech

A new course 'World Issues Journalism' in collaboration with Madison Area Technical College (MATC) is being run this spring semester and conducts all teaching through video conferencing. The online lectures ("E-tech") are given by Larry Hansen at MATC and students (12 from Noragric and 12 from MATC) follow these on a large screen in the classroom. Students engage in news reporting assignments that relate to world issues, such as water, energy, and war. Noragric contact: Dr Kjell Esser

Career steps for 2 former PhD students

Former PhD student Dismas Mwaseba (Tanzania), who defended in December 2005, has become Head of the Department of Agricultural Education and Extension in the Faculty of Agriculture at Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania. The department offers programmes in agricultural education and extension at both undergraduate and postgraduate (MSc and PhD) levels. Since its launch in 1998, the department has trained over 300 undergraduate students.

Bahadar Nawab (Pakistan), who successfully defended his thesis "Ecological, Socio-cultural and Institutional Challenges in the Provision of Safe Water and Improved Sanitation in NWFP, Pakistan" in November 2006, has been appointed Head of the Department for Development Studies at COMSATS, Pakistan. The department is located at the Abbotabad campus of the Institute of Information Technology (COMSATS). Among others, it offers a two-year Master's programme in Development Studies.

UMB celebrates a century-and-a-half

In 2009 the university turns 150 which will be celebrated throughout the year with a range of events. The formal opening was held on 9 January in the presence of the ministers of Research and Higher Education and of Agriculture and Food. Various themes and research activities at the university departments', including Noragric, will be highlighted in the Norwegian media and on the website during the course of the year.

Publications, articles, presentations at seminars

2008 was a productive year for Noragric with a total of 191 entries in Forskdok. This included 33 peer reviewed articles, 15 chapters in scientific anthologies, 16 interviews of a popular scientific character, and 4 articles in newspapers.

Since the full list of publications and presentations produced by Noragric staff is too long to include in this Bulletin, we refer readers to the Noragric website, Publications, and further to All Publications, Forskdok, <http://www.umb.no/9428> The website also lists publications in the Noragric Reports and Working Papers series.

Seminars, meetings and travel

Head of department, Dr Gry Synnevåg, and Dr Trygve Berg travelled to Sudan in September to visit Juba University where Noragric has a 5-year collaboration agreement under the NUCCOOP programme. During their visit they met with the leadership of Juba University and representatives from relevant ministries to review and discuss plans of collaboration under the NUCCOOP project. Trygve also travelled to Malakal for similar meetings at Upper Nile University.

On 19 September Noragric was invited to celebrate the launch of the Thor Heyerdahl professorship at the Thor Heyerdahl Institute in Larvik. Participants were informed about the mandate of the professorship, a presentation was given by the incumbent, Prof. Arild Vatn, and Thor Heyerdahl Jr. spoke on behalf of the Heyerdahl family.

A workshop was organised from 20-25 September at UMB under the Norwegian Programme in Agriculture Forestry and Veterinary Medicine to South Eastern Europe/West Balkan (SEE/WB) to contribute knowledge to the partners from Bosnia & Herzegovina about the work on genetic resources in Norway and experience with the production of healthy berry/fruit plants. The Noragric coordinator for the programme is Dr Mensur Vegara. Dr Vegara also participated at a meeting in Bosanska Krupa, Bosnia & Herzegovina, from 19-21 December for the opening ceremony of a fish hatchery. This meeting was organized by Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU), of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO).

Gry Synnevåg travelled with UMB rector Knut Hove, Veterinary College rector Lars Moe and his colleague Associate Professor Marit Nesje, and project coordinator Lars Olav Eik to Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), Tanzania from 8-15 October for the annual meeting and steering committee meeting of the PANTIL project. Meetings were also held with Ivar Jørgensen, Counsellor, Environment and Climate Change, at the Norwegian embassy to discuss the new Climate Change project.

As Board member of NOMA (Norad's programme for Master Studies), Gry Synnevåg attended the NOMA project coordinator and administrative seminar on 4-5 November and the NOMA Programme Board meeting on 7 November in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Prof. Bishal Sitaula also attended the seminar.

The President of the Republic of Mali, Hon. Amadou Toumani Touré, visited Norway on 21 October upon invitation of the Norwegian Minister of Development Cooperation Erik Solheim. Gry Synnevåg and Jens Aune held discussions with the Malian Minister of Environment exploring possibilities to establish research collaboration between the Malian *Institut d'économie rurale* and Noragric within, among others, adaptation to climate change, and conservation agriculture.

The president of the Republic of Burundi, Hon. Pierre Nkurunziza, visited UMB on 7 October with an interest in collaboration and academic support to Burundi's institutions of higher education. Presentations about Noragric's research and education activities were given by Dr Gry Synnevåg, Prof. Shanmugaratnam, Dr Kjell Esser, and Dr Jens Aune.

With the imminent merge of the Norwegian School of Veterinary Science (NVH) and UMB, a one day meeting was held off-campus on 29 October which was attended by UMB rector, heads of the UMB departments, the UMB Board, the interim Board (overseeing the merge),

elected representatives from the unions and representatives from NVH to discuss the implications of the merge. The Norwegian parliament decided in early 2008 that these two institutions should become one university, situated at Ås, within the foreseeable future.

On 10-11 November, Prof. Shanmugaratnam presented a seminar and conducted a workshop at the Centre for Developing Areas (CEDAR), Dept. of Geography, University of London. The workshop was jointly hosted by CEDAR and PERG (Politics and Environment Group). The topic of the seminar was 'Militarisation, ethno-territoriality and livelihoods in the north and east of Sri Lanka' and the workshop focused on Conflict, post-conflict and development.

Noragric staff Dr Randi Kaarhus, Dr Darley Kjosavik, Dr Espen Sjaastad and PhD student Simon Pahle travelled to the Instituto Socioambiental (ISA), Sao Paulo, Brazil on November 24- 30. Discussions focused specifically on two joint research projects and terms for a second exchange of staff through the Peace Corps arrangement.

Dr. Cassandra Bergstrøm and former Noragric Master's student Sandra Umbach attended the International EcoHealth Conference held in Merida, Mexico from 1-5 December. Together they presented a paper "Deciding to Flush: Identification of Motivators and Barriers to Toilet Construction in the Western Region of Nepal". Together with Dr Ingrid Nyborg and Dr Bahadar Nawab (COMSATS, Pakistan) they also presented a poster entitled "Sustainable sanitation: consideration for revision of the Millennium Goals". The EcoHealth approach brings together veterinarians, natural and social scientists in trans-disciplinary approaches to health. Over 800 people attended this year's event.

From 11-12 December, Prof. Arild Vatn travelled to Bangalore, India, where he gave a lecture at the University of Agricultural Sciences on 'Payments for Environmental Services: An Institutional Analysis'. Lectures were given for PhD students at the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment (ATREE), Bangalore, on 'Institutions and the Environment' and 'Environmental policy – a global perspective'. On 15 December he was invited to present a keynote speech at a symposium in honour of the 60th birthday of Prof. Dr. H.C. Konrad Hagedorn at the Faculty of Agriculture and Horticulture of the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. The title of the presentation was 'Sustainability, Institutions and Behavior'.

Prof. Bishal Sitaula visited Tribhuvan and Kathmandu universities in December and gave a presentation at an information sharing workshop organised by the Centre of International Relations, Tribhuvan University, and an international conference on 'Challenges of Governance in South Asia'. He also gave a guest lecture to the NOMA Master's programme on "Conflict, Peace and Development Studies (CPDS)" at Tribhuvan and "Environment Education and sustainable Development" at Kathmandu University.

In September, Prof. Paul Vedeld travelled to Uganda for meetings with partners in the PAPIA research programmes and a field visit to Bwindi National Park, CARE Uganda, local government officials in Kabale, and the Uganda Wildlife Authority headquarters, as well as the Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation (ITFC) concerning issues around protected area management and local people. In November, Prof. Vedeld travelled to Dar es Salaam and Morogoro, Tanzania, to visit partners in the PAPIA, Ekosiasa and Pantil programmes at the Institute for Resource Assessment, University of Dar es Salaam and at Sokoine University of Agriculture, Morogoro. From 12-19 January, a visit was paid to ATREE, Bangalore and Delhi, India. The purpose was to meet with partners in the PAPIA research programmes on biodiversity and climate change issues and give lectures in the PhD programme at ATREE.

Dr. Tor A. Benjaminsen travelled to Tanzania and Uganda in October to visit students carrying out field work linked to the PAPIA and EKOSIASA projects. From 12-17 January, he visited ATREE to help set up a course in Political Ecology and to give the first three lectures in the course. He also gave a public seminar on 'Community-Based Wildlife Management in Tanzania' during his stay.

Dr Synnevåg and Dr Stein Moe visited Hawassa University, Ethiopia 10-17 January to discuss the third phase of collaboration between UMB and Hawassa and Mekelle universities in Ethiopia. They also attended the annual institutional collaboration meeting at the Norwegian embassy in Addis Abeba.

Staff

Dr Gry Synnevåg took over as Head of Department on 1 September, succeeding Prof. Ruth Haug who held the position for seven years. Gry spent the last four years as Country Representative for Norwegian Church Aid in Afghanistan and was Noragric's Head of Education before leaving for Kabul. Among others, Gry is Board member of ICRISAT (International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics) and NOMA (Norad's programme for Master Studies).

Prof. Ruth Haug was appointed Pro-rector Research for UMB, a 50% position which she fills in addition to the 50% position as researcher at Noragric. She also fills the temporary vacancy as director of the university's central research department until early February.

Noragric was deeply saddened by the death of Professor Carl-Erik Schulz on 30 November who lost his life in a hiking accident in Cape Town, South Africa. Prof. Schulz started at Noragric on 1 September as Professor in Development Studies and was responsible for the Master's programme in Development Studies. Carl-Erik was a highly respected colleague who will be missed by Noragric staff, students and many other colleagues at UMB.

Prof. Arild Vatn became board member of a newly established strategic forum for climate research called 'Klima21' which will contribute its expertise to the development of an effective policy related to climate change for the Norwegian government. Klima21 will focus mainly on development and changes in climate, consequences of and adaptations to climate change, climate policy, and measures to cut emissions.

Prof. Ruth Haug, Dr Stein Bie and Dr Trygve Berg contributed to the update of the Norwegian government's Action Plan 'Fighting Poverty through Agriculture'. The contribution focuses on the challenges posed by climate and high food prices in the fight against poverty.

PhD candidate Boku Tache Dida (Ethiopia) successfully defended his thesis on 5 September. The title of his dissertation is "Pastoralism under stress: Resources, institutions and poverty among the Borana Oromo in southern Ethiopia". The dissertation's Abstract is available on the Noragric website.

PhD candidate Hassan G. Roba (Ethiopia) defended his thesis on 12 September. His dissertation is called "Global goals, local actions: A framework for integrating indigenous

knowledge and ecological methods for rangeland assessment and monitoring in northern Kenya". The abstract can also be found on Noragric's website.

PhD candidate Ayele Tessema (Ethiopia) successfully defended his thesis on 18 December. The title of his dissertation is "Livelihood Adaptation, Risks and Vulnerability in Rural Wolaita, Ethiopia".

Dr Ingrid Nyborg is taking a one-year sabbatical at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex, U.K. until August 2009. Dr Randi Kaarhus has returned from sabbatical at IDS.

Dr Darley Kjosavik was instated as Associate Professor in the autumn.

Prof. Ian Bryceson has accepted the role as deputy head of Noragric's education committee and Dr Tor Arve Benjaminsen is deputy head of the research committee. Heads of these committees are resp. Dr Kjell Esser and Prof. Shanmugaratnam.

Nicole Grynning Rezende joined Noragric on 2 February as coordinator of the Bachelor's programme in Development Studies. Nicole comes from the University of Oslo.

Professor Odd-Helge Fjellstad will be joining Noragric on a 10% basis in March/April and will teach for the Master's course on Human Rights based Development and take over some of the teaching of the Political Ecology course. The position is divided 50/50 between teaching and research. Fjellstad heads the 'anti-corruption resource centre aiming at promoting an informed approach to anti-corruption' at the Chr. Michelsens Institute, Bergen.

Dr Lyla Mehta, Research Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex, U.K., will be joining Noragric in a Prof. II position in August. Dr Mehta spent some months at Noragric as guest researcher in 2006 and returned for the remainder of her sabbatical in 2007.

Noragric staff, some PhD students and student representatives of the Master's programmes spent 2 days off-campus early January to work on the new Strategic Plan 2009-2012. Follow-up during the coming months will result in a final strategy by the summer.

Applicants to the 20% Prof. II position in Health, Environment and Development based at Noragric will be considered by an evaluation committee that will finish its work by the end of April. The position is supported 50% by UMB's Health and Development programme and 50% by Noragric.

Likewise, applicants to the position of Associate Professor in Climate Change and Development are under consideration by an evaluation committee. Details about the incumbent will be included in a later Electronic Bulletin.

Visitors

On 8 September, Adriana Ramos from the Instituto Socioambiental (ISA), Sao Paulo, Brazil visited Noragric to discuss collaboration which includes exchange of Peace Corps participants, development of two joint research projects, and hosting of Noragric Master's students at ISA.

Late November 2008, Professor Mustafa Suliman from Upper Nile University, Sudan, visited Noragric. Prof. Suliman is involved in the NUCCOOP project, which includes Noragric, Upper Nile University and Juba University in Sudan. Dr Trygve Berg is project coordinator from Noragric's side.

A delegation from Sokoine University of Agriculture including former PhD student Dr Dismas Mwaseba visited UMB and Noragric on 11 December. The visitors spent the day in meetings related to the PANTIL programme and collaboration under NUFU.

On 21-22 January, Dr Ivan Bond and Dr Maryanne Grieg-Gran from IIED visited Noragric and the Department of Economics and Resource Management to develop a joint research proposal for Norad under REDD (Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation). Noragric contacts: Prof. Arild Vatn and Prof. Paul Vedeld.

Dr. Binod Bhatta, Director of Research, Alliance Nepal, Kathmandu, gave a guest lecture on 28 January focusing on 'Use of Research Evidence in the Policy Making Process in Nepal'.

Under the NUCCOOP project (Noragric coordinator: Dr Trygve Berg) in collaboration with Juba University, Sudan, Mr. James Oriho Ahase, is spending a "mini-sabbatical" of 2-3 months at UMB. He will be focusing his studies on land use planning and will spend much of his time at the Department of Mathematical Sciences and Technology and the Department of Landscape Architecture and Spatial Planning.