

AG RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT



Farzad Taheripour

"The controversial multidisciplinary topics always need more work, more research."
Farzad Taheripour, Research Associate Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics;
Associate of the Center for Global Trade Analysis (GTAP)

The Ag Research Spotlight shines each month on an individual whose work reflects our commitment to the six strategic themes that guide Agricultural Research at Purdue. Our spotlight for August 2015 underscores the theme, "Facilitating informed decision making to improve economic and social well-being."

THE RESEARCHER: As a young man during the revolution in his home country of Iran, Farzad Taheripour observed how "everyone was talking about the economy." Motivated by debate on the subject, he decided to study economics at Shiraz University. He then earned a master's degree in economic systems planning from Isfahan University of Technology and went to work in the Plan and Budget Organization of Iran and its think tank institute (IRPD). To improve his skills, he came to the U.S. in 1999 to pursue a doctoral degree in agricultural economics at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he was involved in several research and teaching activities and earned his degree with an outstanding dissertation award in 2006. He then came to Purdue as a postdoctoral research associate before serving as an energy economist from 2009 to 2012, when he joined the faculty.

THE RESEARCH: "Currently I am working on the links between energy and agriculture," Taheripour says. As an energy economist, he analyzes and quantifies the economic and environmental consequences of certain activities and policies. The tools of his trade are computer models that he develops and uses to evaluate impacts—at micro and macro levels and from farm/firm to regional, country, and global scales. Such timely topics as measuring the economic and environmental impacts of using shale oil and gas resources, evaluating the consequences of restricting

GMO crops, examining the land use impacts of biofuel production, and analyzing the adverse economic impacts of water scarcity and climate change are on his radar.

GTAP-BIO: The Global Trade Analysis Project (GTAP) offers a highly respected computational equilibrium model developed at Purdue. Taheripour has been key in developing GTAP-BIO, a modification in GTAP that has been used by independent researchers, governmental agencies, and international organizations to study the economic and environmental impacts of biofuel production and policies. "We do research to inform many people in this society, but policymakers are the main users," he says. "I would like to know how we can use our scarce economic resources to improve the welfare of the whole society."

TEAM PLAYER: Purdue offers Taheripour "a unique set of synergies," he says—the multidisciplinary community of experts in agricultural and energy economics, engineering, and biological and physical sciences who help enrich his research agenda. "I am a team player, and that's what we do here. If you look at my papers, I have three, four, or five collaborators," he adds. "If I have questions, I go knock on a door."

SPREADING THE WORD: Publishing is critical to Taheripour in disseminating his research—"the major vehicle we have to inform others." By targeting different types of journals, he speaks to others in his profession or, in simpler language, to policymakers who need to understand the broader concepts. Long days are the norm for the self-admitted workaholic: "My work is my hobby," he says. He does, however, enjoy hiking, biking, running, and swimming.