

# AgAbroad Newsletter

## International Programs in Agriculture

### Incoming exchange student took travel to new level

Adventure has always been an integral aspect of Stine Peterson's life. Traveling the world is an understatement when it comes to this ambitious Denmark farm girl. Peterson grew up on a dairy and crops farm in southwest Denmark. However, she's lived in several different countries since she was 18 years old. After graduating high school, Stine lived in Austria for six months working as a horse rider and groomer. She then moved to Alberta, Canada as an agricultural exchange student on a farm for ten months.

"Both of these experiences were really good for my language skills, but even more so for my personal development," said Peterson. "It helped me understand the value of a dollar even more than I did already, and it made me appreciate going to college and grad school even more."



Her adventures abroad took off even further after these experiences. While attending the University of Copenhagen for her undergraduate degree, Stine knew she wanted to study abroad. Peterson decided to study at Purdue University for her master's degree focusing on plant breeding and genetics, as well as plant pathology. After two semesters at Purdue, Peterson had a 6-month internship with Pioneer in

Madison, WI. She followed that up by returning to Denmark to finish her master's thesis work.

Studying in a different language was a challenge at first. "I did have to get used to everything being taught in English while at a relatively high technical level," said Stine. "It often felt as if I couldn't comprehend everything immediately; I had to go home and look up words and definitions, and do some translation to fully grasp the things we had heard during class."

Peterson also attended North Carolina State University to complete her PhD in plant breeding. "I wanted to study in the U.S. again because of the more applied approach and high level of education within the field of plant breeding," said Stine.



During Stine's time at Purdue, she met her husband, John, who attended Purdue and received a degree in Software Engineering. John too had the travel bug; he studied abroad in Melbourne, Australia for a semester.

Adventure is still a vital part of their lives together, as they decided they wanted to move to Europe once Stine graduated. John and Stine now live in the Netherlands, where Stine is a tomato breeder for Monsanto. "I highly encourage anyone to work and/ or study abroad, as it can teach you a lot about yourself and others and put things into perspective," said Stine.



Stine says the best part about her experience has been "meeting so many wonderful and inspiring people during my time as a student in Denmark and the United States. From fellow students to professors, so many have been great people and today some of these are among my best friends."

"I would like to place a special thanks to Dr Herbert Ohm who was the wheat breeder and my mentor during my Purdue time," said Peterson.

# Prestigious scholarship, grad school abroad

Receiving the Churchill Scholarship is not something to take lightly. Each year, around 15 students receive this prestigious award, which pays for a one-year graduate degree at Churchill College at the University of Cambridge. Colleagues of Winston Churchill founded it in the late 1950s to foster academic ties between the U.S. and Great Britain. The majority of Churchill Scholarships awarded are to students studying mathematics, science, or engineering.

“I am still incredibly humbled to have been chosen for the Churchill Scholarship,” said Purdue Biochemistry Alumna Emily Erickson. “It was a validation of all that I had been working hard for during my time at Purdue. It was also a wake-up call for life ahead, promising many challenges and adventures, and a drastically different life than I had predicted for myself.”

Her international experience did not start when studying at Cambridge University, though. Erickson studied abroad during the spring semester of 2014 at University College Dublin in Dublin, Ireland. Erickson says, “the main motivating factors that inspired me to study abroad were to see more of the world beyond the Midwest and to learn more about myself through new experiences.”

“I established a great community at Purdue, but desperately wanted to explore the world outside of my circle of familiarity,” said Erickson. “I wanted to challenge myself to learn who I was in a completely foreign environment – one without the influence or support of my familiar home environment.”

Once she had the travel bug from studying abroad, adventure excited Erickson even more. Therefore, when she was awarded the Churchill Scholarship, meaning she got to travel to the United Kingdom, excitement did not even begin to explain her feelings. During her time studying at Cambridge University, Erickson studied breast cancer and received a Master of Philosophy degree in Pathology.

“Studying at one of the oldest and most prestigious universities in the world was a profound experience. This meant I had access to not only world-class resources and technology, but world-class thinkers, including my fellow Churchill Scholars and lab mates... I grew academically, transitioning into independent research. I also grew in many ways personally, learning more about myself and growing into an adult. This scholarship opened so many doors for me, and for that I am extremely grateful,” exclaimed Erickson. According to Erickson, the best part of studying at Cambridge University was by far the friendships and professional contacts that she made.

Because Erickson received the scholarship, she deferred her acceptance to Harvard when studying at Cambridge. She said, “researching breast cancer at Cambridge helped me refine my research interests and helped me change my path of study at Harvard. She is now in the Biological and Biomedical Sciences program at Harvard University studying in a cancer lab where students research how cancer cells develop resistance to chemotherapy.

After receiving her PhD from Harvard, Erickson is considering a few routes including teaching, academic research, or working for a biotechnology company. “Learning how to embrace whatever challenge comes your way is one of the most valuable skills I learned while abroad,” said Erickson.



*Written by: Rachel Flanders*

# Purdue students started internationally-focused club

## ICA Future: Internationally Connected in Agriculture's Future

### About the Founders:

Jackson Troxel graduated from Purdue in May 2013 majoring in Agricultural Economics and had a plethora of minors, certificates, and associates degrees along the way. He is now a Senior Marketing Manager for Hyde Park Venture Partners. He went on a Maymester study abroad in May 2010 to Costa Rica.

"I'm a firm believer in the change of pace and the change of place creating a change of perspective," said Troxel.

Cody Walburn graduated from Purdue in May 2017 majoring in Agribusiness Management. He is currently living in Atlanta, GA doing a two-year Leadership Development Program through Chick-fil-A. Although Cody did not participate in a study abroad program, he has been to Jamaica, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic.

"Seeing the developing world pushed me out of my comfort zones in many ways and allowed me to realize the importance of culture and relationships in any society," said Walburn.

### Founding ICA Future:

"Purdue in and of itself is an international ecosystem and I saw that first hand when I was president of Ag Council my sophomore year," said Troxel.

"I saw there was a divide between international students and domestic students, and I wanted to bring more collaboration and relationships between domestic and international students."

"Through my freshman year at Purdue I saw a great need to bridge the gap between domestic and international students within the Ag Department," said Walburn. "I wanted to provide an avenue for domestic students to easily branch out of their comfort zones and expand their perspective on culture and make new friends as well."

At the time of founding the club, Purdue was ranked #2 in number of international students of any public university. The goal of ICA Future is to build and foster personal and professional relationships between international and domestic students, uniting the global agricultural community.

### ICA Future Now:

Target members are anyone domestic and international, undergraduate or graduate that are passionate about agriculture and want to engage with international contacts. This club strives to close the gap between domestic and international students, build strong relationships, and form long-lasting friendships between members.

Currently, there are about 20 members, and they meet every other week on campus in a classroom designated by the current leadership team. The organization creates leadership opportunities for domestic and international students; the leadership team is set up to be half-and-half.

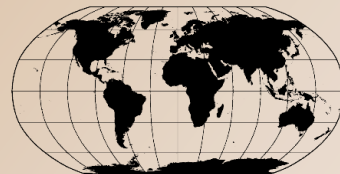
ICA Future members participate in several campus activities, such as an annual National IAAS Conference, the Hot Chocolate and Ice Cream Socials, farm and company tours, social get-togethers, and hosting guest speakers at their meetings.

Co-founder Cody Walburn says, "This organization will help students widen their horizons and set them up for success as they leave Purdue."

For students, professors, industry professionals, or AgAbroad alumni that would like to get involved with ICA Future, contact either Gary Burniske or Dr. Mark Russell, the club advisors.

Check it out on their [webpage](#).

**ICA FUTURE**  
internationally-connected-in-agriculture's-future



Connect with students  
from across the globe.

ICA  
future

Learn & embrace an  
international perspective  
of agriculture.

Meet new friends.

Learn about agriculture world-wide.

Gain leadership skills.

Help Connect Agriculture's Future.



Written by: Rachel Flanders

# Learn about unique Vietnam spring break abroad

Over Spring Break 2018, 11 students and four Extension Educators were given the opportunity to travel to Vietnam. They participated in a unique mentorship where the Extension Educators helped students with their projects and aided in their learning experience abroad as a whole.

Mark Kepler, Fulton County Extension Educator, mentored Emma Mendez, a junior studying Production in the department of Animal Sciences. Kepler mentored Emma's group, which focused on communal farming as their project. Kepler says the mentorship "was an opportunity to work with the students on their projects and make this a better learning experience."

Aside from combining students and Extension Educators, this study abroad was also unique because it was the first time Purdue agriculture students have traveled to Vietnam over a spring break. They also had cameras for students to take videos for a compilation after the trip.

"You get the opportunity to experience cultural diversity and understand there are not right or wrongs but just plain difference," said Kepler. The trip opened his eyes to many differences in how advanced the U.S. is in some things, yet behind in others, especially when looking at agriculture.

Mendez saw some of these agricultural differences first-hand during her study abroad experience. "In Vietnam, people buy meat off a table sitting in the sun and fish crowded in a plastic container," Emma said. "Americans don't realize how well we regulate our food system and how much goes into picking the actual item and having it placed in a grocery store. I'm very lucky to live in an area where I know where my food came from and how it got there."

Overall, the student-educator relationship worked well for this unique study abroad trip. "The Student-Staff interaction was excellent," said Kepler. "I appreciated the students and their perspective on various items. Their educations shined in some areas, and the educators experience shined in others."

*Written by: Rachel Flanders*



## Purdue Spring Fest 2018

**What:** Activities and events for the whole family around the Purdue campus — petting zoo, bug bowl, demonstrations, coloring, plant sale, food, & so much more

**When:** 10 a.m.-4 p.m. April 14-15, 2018

**Where:** Purdue University campus

**Why:** To educate the public about Purdue University

**How:** Interactive booths and events engage the whole family -- fun, family-friendly, & FREE

[Learn more](#)

PURDUE  
**Spring**fest

## Purdue Day of Giving 2018

**What:** Donate funds to your favorite campus, college, school, program, or student organization at Purdue — You can even give straight to Purdue Agriculture Study Abroad

**When:** April 25, 2018

**Where:** Anywhere that has access to the Internet

**Why:** To grant opportunities and transform lives by building a better, stronger, more affordable Purdue

**How:** Follow the link below. Select College of Agriculture — Other then type IPIA Exchange Program Scholarship (005261)

[Learn more](#)



## International Programs in Agriculture:

[IPIA Website](#) • AGAD 26 • (765) 494-6876 • 615 West State Street, West Lafayette, IN 47907 • [AgAbroad@purdue.edu](mailto:AgAbroad@purdue.edu) • Follow us on [Facebook](#)