



THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

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'International Technology Transfer Project Connects Central Georgia & Central America Using Distance Diagnostics System'

Statement

- **Title** : International Technology Transfer Project Connects Central Georgia & Central America Using Distance Diagnostics System
- **Brief Title** : [International Technology Transfer Project](#)
- **Author** : Walter, Jean
- **Year** : 2006
- **State Issue** : Agrosecurity
- **County** : Jasper
- **Group** : Northeast District
- **Scope** : International

Summary

The County Agent as part of a Central American DDDI Consortium (formed in 2003), has provided vision, visibility, and leadership to expand this technology transfer project to now several other Central American countries as well as two more secondary school sites (Jasper County High School and Indian Creek Middle School/Newton County). The Consortium has also been successful in 2006 winning a \$130K USAID/HED federal grant to extend and expand the original pilot project in Honduras- to now include undergraduate students at the Griffin campus as well as more County Agents & specialists from around the state.

Situation

Distance Disease Diagnostics technology, developed by the Center for Internet Imaging and Database Systems at UGA, has afforded rapid educational support for agricultural problems in Georgia for over 6 years. In the first 24 months of use, distance diagnostics saved Georgians over \$17 million through rapid diagnoses of plant diseases. Eight other universities now contract with UGA for Distance Diagnostics systems because of the program's success. Now, this technology has been extended to an international audience and secondary schools for the first time.

Response

In 2003, a project was initiated by Dr. Jean Walter, Jasper County Extension Director, to link youth in Honduras with 4-H youth in Jasper County using Distance Diagnostics. Besides producing a meaningful international learning experience for rural Georgia youth, and youth in Honduras, the project this year has grown to include the Zamorano Pan American School of Agriculture and their selected three "remote" sites which includes the international plant and animal inspection service (similar to our USDA APHIS) namely, O.I.R.S.A, a large fish pathology lab in southern Honduras, and the village of San Francisco; the Honduras Outreach Inc. Rancho Paraiso, in the remote Agalta Valley of Olancho of the Honduras; and others with philanthropic and educational interests.

Development of a distance diagnostics system for citizens and educational institutions in Honduras has been a unique opportunity to expand use of modern technology for improving lives of people in rural areas of the country. The system provides rapid access to educational information about various agricultural problems, delivered from universities throughout the country.

Missy Wilson, the Jasper County- Piedmont Academy Science teacher, says, "We wanted to do something that would

make them realize how exciting science is and how fun it is. If we can get them interested in it and excited about it, the learning will come."

Impact

Three years ago, the first virtual "diagnostic samples" consisting of images and environmental data were transmitted between youth at Piedmont Academy, Jasper County, Georgia, and the Zamorano Pan American School of Agriculture, Zamorano, Honduras. Approximately seventy-five youth were involved including 4-H members, other Piedmont Academy students, and students at Zamorano.

In 2004, private, external project funding expanded the project's now three year budget to approx. \$.5 million (which includes UGA matching/in-kind funds). Specialists at Zamorano and OIRSA have been trained on the use of the system and microscopes and computers have been delivered and set-up at all sites. The impact so far is that all participants have been exposed to some of the latest technological tools and disease diagnosis for agriculture, and have learned something of students in cultures much different from their own. Over time, this project will be used to help teach students as well as adult farmers and scientists about plant and animal disease diagnosis and prevention, including aquaculture, plant pathology, horticulture, and others. Clients in rural areas gain benefits of expertise otherwise available only to those living near sites where such expertise resides. Rapid problem evaluation reduces crop and thus financial losses since solution can be applied before greater damage-or spread-occurs. Fewer chemicals can be applied to smaller areas, further reducing financial effects and potential negative environmental impacts. In addition, identification of such things as toxic plants and animals can at times dictate life-saving treatments for rural clients encountering them.

And, as part of each system, an archive of information and images is accessible for documentation, review and educational use. This archive can be made universally if desired, or restricted on user characteristics.

Program Function(s)

- Extension

Program Area(s)

- Agriculture & Natural Resources

Topic(s)

- Agronomic Crops
- Animal Sciences/Forages
- Aquaculture
- Economics/Risk Management
- Food Science
- Forestry Resources
- General ANR
- Horticulture
- Poultry

Keyword(s)

- Food Safety
- Entomology
- Plant Pathology
- Fish Production
- Economic Development
- Agricultural Security

Funding Source(s)

- County Funds
- Federal Grants
- Private Grants
- Private Gifts

Collaborator(s)

CAES Collaborator(s)

- Fonseca , Marco T.
- Hamilton , Robert D.
- Kanemasu , Edward T.

Non-CAES Collaborator(s)

- Robert R. Fowler, III
- Honduras Outreach, Inc.; Beth Barnwell, Dr. Fred Engle, Dr. Bill Sell
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