

# The Syllabus

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A newsletter for Master of Agribusiness students, alumni & friends

## Southeast Asian MAB cohort takes shape

Since the Master of Agribusiness program began almost 14 years ago, interest from outside the U.S. has continued to grow. Due to the financial expense and time required to travel to Manhattan, KS, many international agribusiness professionals have not been able to join the program. Because of these reasons, the Master of Agribusiness program is developing a second cohort based in Southeast Asia. MAB is now accepting applications for the first Southeast Asian cohort, scheduled to begin with an on-campus session May 1 - May 6, 2011 at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) in Penang, Malaysia.

“Many agribusiness professionals have expressed a desire to obtain a masters degree to equip themselves with business and economic skills and an increased understanding of the food and agribusiness system on a global scale. They understand the need for quality education and admire the reputation that Kansas State University and the Master of Agribusiness program share. The new Southeast Asia cohort will provide international agribusiness students another option for continuing

**The new Southeast Asia cohort will provide international agribusiness students another option for continuing their education without making the time-consuming trip to the U.S. for on-campus sessions.**

their education without making the time-consuming trip to the U.S. for on-campus sessions,” Program Director Allen Featherstone said.

Featherstone and Coordinator Lynnette Brummett traveled to Malaysia and Singapore in late August to meet with individuals, companies and visit the USM campus.

“The response we received during our meetings with USM and also from those who attended the seminar in Singapore was overwhelmingly positive,” Brummett said. “We are encouraged by the interest shown in bringing the MAB program to Southeast Asia.”

MAB is working with industry partners including the National Renderers Association, U.S. Soybean Export Council, U.S. Grains Council, and U.S. Wheat to spread the word about the new cohort. Brummett and Featherstone are returning overseas in mid-November to conduct more informational meetings in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; Guangzhou, China; and Jakarta, Indonesia. They will also meet with officials at USM to finalize the

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Top to bottom: Front gate at Universiti Sains Malaysia, site of the new MAB Southeast Asian cohort.

MAB Program Coordinator Lynnette Brummett thanks a speaker at the Risk Management/Agribusiness Seminar in Singapore.

Participants listen to MAB Alum Tim Loh at the Risk Management/Agribusiness Seminar in Singapore.

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# Alumni Spotlight

## Cristina Mansfield

Class of 2004

International Development Consultant  
Manchester Center, Vermont



by Cristina Mansfield

*The Alumni Spotlight focuses on an MAB alum and is written by Cristina Mansfield, a 2004 graduate.*

### Consulting around the world

As the writer of many of the Alumni Spotlight profiles for the Syllabus Newsletter since 2006, the spotlight was bound to turn on MAB alum Cristina Mansfield sooner or later. Those who remember her will recall that Cristina entered the MAB program while living in Cambodia and running a non-profit organization, which she funded with her own consulting fees.

“The organization does not exist anymore, but we had a lot of fun and it is a pleasure to see my former staff doing so well today.”

Her MAB thesis, “Social Capital and Land Reform in Cambodia,” examined social capital theory and its relationship to economic growth and land reform in Cambodia. She hypothesized that decades of civil strife depleted social capital, negatively affecting institutional performance, equity of land distribution, and transparency of allocation of resources previously held in communal management.

After seven years in Cambodia, it was time to come home. With no idea of what to do, she “lucked” into a job researching recent immigrants to California for University of California-San Francisco. The fieldwork was rigorous and proved to be an eye opener. From the rich Coachella Valley to the strawberry fields around Watsonville, Cristina observed firsthand the appalling conditions to which undocumented immigrant workers are subject.

“Hidden behind affluent housing developments we found people living under trees, in plastic tents, in caves, and in windowless trailers. For me, the American dream would never be the same.”

In 2003, Cristina decided to transition back to the east coast. To all MAB students who have yet to complete their thesis, let it be known that the only reason she completed hers was that she spent two months glued to a desk in Manhattan.

“For me, it was the only way. Writing the thesis was one of the hardest, yet most rewarding tasks, I have ever done. I did not realize it then, but it set me on the path to becoming a researcher, part-time,” she said.

Back in Boston she took up international consulting. At first the demand was mainly for her to return to Cambodia. She became a regular consultant for the anti-corruption program of Pact (a US non-profit) there, returning every year to provide assistance. In July 2010 she helped facilitate a strategic planning process for 100 staff of the government’s Anti-Corruption Unit.

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In 2006 everything changed when she was asked to conduct advocacy training for local non-profits in Uganda and Palestine (Gaza and West Bank). The 20-day course is broken up into four one-week modules given over a period of one year. Participants learn about advocacy, lobbying, legislative and policy analysis, working with the media and maintaining coalitions. She has since applied the model in Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Honduras and Haiti, and again this year in Guatemala and Zimbabwe.

“The countries are very different and it is interesting to compare their political situations. For instance, Kyrgyzstan, Honduras and Zimbabwe have all had constitutional crises recently.”

Although her work is not directly related to agriculture or agribusiness, food and land ownership are consistent themes in Cristina’s work. In Guatemala, she is working with Plataforma Agraria, a federation of farm worker associations. In November, she will co-facilitate a workshop in Nairobi for the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance on a “Food for Africa” Campaign. Sadly, the 2009 FAO Report on the State of World Food Insecurity states that almost one billion people in the world are hungry



Alum Cristina Mansfield (left) with participants in Honduras.

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# Be watching for upcoming events

MAB will be conducting surveys before the end of the year to get input on two future events: the 2011 professional development event and the 2012 international trip. We appreciate hearing your comments and suggestions for both events.

Planning for the fourth professional development event and alumni reunion will soon begin. Previous events have been held in Kansas City and Manhattan and featured a variety of topics including biofuels, risk management, and cap & trade. If you are interested in being part of the planning committee to help determine topics and speakers for the event, please contact Mary at [mjbowen@ksu.edu](mailto:mjbowen@ksu.edu).

Previous international trips have been to South America

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agreement between the two schools.

Alum Tim Loh helped organize the informational meeting in Singapore and believes the new cohort offers a great opportunity for more agribusiness professionals to gain necessary business and economic skills.

“Having worked commercially in shipping and agricultural commodities trading in Southeast Asia for over 15 years, I wanted to upgrade my knowledge and skills in agribusiness when I learned of KSU’s MAB Program. The comprehensive curriculum and structure of learning offered a good balance between study and work. The highly relevant and up-to-date subjects nicely complemented the work that I was doing for the American Soybean Association International Marketing as its Marketing Director for Southeast Asia in Singapore,” Loh said.

MAB students in Southeast Asia will earn the same master’s



(Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay), Russia, Southeast Asia (Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam), and New Zealand & Australia. Where should we go in 2012? We need your help to decide, so be sure to cast your vote.

Students, alumni, advisory board members, faculty, co-workers and friends are welcome to participate in all MAB professional development events and trips. We will have more information about both events in the Winter Syllabus Newsletter. For more information about our previous trips and events, please go to [www.mab.ksu.edu](http://www.mab.ksu.edu) and click on Alumni.

*Be watching for emails with links to the surveys and please take a few minutes to add your input.*

degree from Kansas State University and have the same instructors as those in the original cohort. The only differences between the two cohorts will be the campus session dates and location.

Faculty will adapt the curriculum to address Southeast Asia’s business environment and students will learn about real

business situations through interaction with visiting K-State faculty, industry leaders and classmates. Not only an option for national companies in Southeast Asia, employees of multi-national companies may find this new cohort offers an even greater international education than attending the program in the U.S.

If you are interested in learning more about the Southeast Asia cohort, please contact Lynnette at [lynnett@ksu.edu](mailto:lynnett@ksu.edu).

*MAB Alum Tim Loh gives a presentation at a seminar in Singapore. His topic was Highlights of the World Agricultural Supply Demand Estimates (WASDE) August Report.*

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and malnourished. Development aid agencies that once distributed supplies or provided services are increasingly looking to advocacy as a strategy for relieving the poverty endured by marginalized communities.

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*Right: Participants in Mansfield’s workshop organized a demonstration for farmers to show their support of exporting agricultural products out of Gaza in 2007.*

*Left: During one of her interactive workshops, participants prepare slogans for a demonstration to protect a water source.*



# in the NEWS...

**Jim Zook, Michelle Adams & Sandra Alton**, all Class of 2006 Alumni, met in Lowell, Indiana on Labor Day for a get together. Jim resides with his wife Carol near Mason, MI and is President of his self-formed company, Innovated Concepts of Ethanol. Michelle resides in La Center, WA with her husband Rich and their 3-year old daughter Kylee and is currently working for Pacific Foods as Production Manager. Sandra resides in Moorefield, ON with her husband Sandy and their 11-month old son Gus and is working for Gay Lea Foods Cooperative as Supervisor of Member Relations.



*Adams, Zook and Alton enjoy a mini-MAB Class of 2006 reunion in September 2010.*

**Keith Kennedy**, class of 2005, and his wife Jeanne welcomed a new grandchild, Xavier Macaille Haines, into the world on August 4th.

**Kristen Greer**, class of 2012, has moved to Cleburne, Texas and now works as the County Extension Agent-4-H & Youth Development for Johnson County.

**Chad Bontrager**, class of 2009, and his family greeted a third daughter, Juliann Marie, into the family in March. He has also been promoted to Facility Manager of Cargill Dry Corn Ingredients in Indianapolis.

**Becky Bradwell**, class of 2009, was promoted to Transportation Supervisor for Long Motor Corporation.

**Philippe Steffan**, class of 2010, was appointed as the Managing Director of "Grands Moulins d'Abidjan."

**Scott Snider**, class of 2007, accepted the position of Strategic Accounts Manager for Alliant Energy in March of 2010. Since then he has been promoted to Regional Economic Development Manager. He lives in Moulton, Iowa with his family, including his three daughters: Audrey, 4; Sophia, 3; and Olivia, 1.

**John Brasington**, class of 2011, has

been assisting in Walgreen's project for fresh and healthy meal choices available at 20 stores. He has been contributing through testing packaging, ripening and shipping of products.

**Kate Duke**, class of 2008, was promoted to Senior Human Resources Administrator with a focus on

Training & Development at Farm Credit of the Virginias.

**Katlin (Anderson) Hall**, class of 2012, recently wed on August 14th and accepted a new position as Supply Chain Specialist for Cargill Animal Nutrition.

**Andy Smarsh**, class of 2005, and his wife are expecting a baby girl in October. Andy was also promoted to Regional Branch Manager for Helena last October.

**Dave Mace**, class of 2005, was promoted to the position of Assistant Director of the Wichita State University Kansas Small Business Development Center.

**Sarah Chess**, class of 2008, was joined in marriage to Eric Childress on July 17, 2010. They were married at Genesse, Colorado at Mount Vernon Country Club.

**Clint Pettit**, class of 2011, wed Stephanie Dorn on September 4th.

**James Arati**, class of 2009, has accepted the position of Dairy Education Manager for CRI in Shawano, Wisconsin.

**Leslie Svacina**, class of 2009, has been accepted to publish a paper from her thesis in the NACTA Journal.

**Virginia Guardia**, class of 2009, and her husband welcomed new baby girl, Milagros, into the world on May 28th.

**Ron Seeley**, class of 2004, was promoted to the position of Manager of Business Development with GEA Niro Soavi.

## MAB Calendar

### November 2

Deadline to have name printed in commencement program

### December 1

Scholarship applications for 2011 due

### December 1

Deadline to attend winter commencement - Approval to schedule final examination and diploma information forms due

### December 10

K-State fall commencement

### December 17

Final electronic copy of thesis due to graduate school

### January 2-7, 2011

Campus Session

### January 17-21, 2011

Thesis Campus Session

### March 20-25, 2011

Campus Session

### May 1-6, 2011

Southeast Asia Campus Session at USM in Penang, Malaysia

### May 2, 2011

Deadline to attend spring commencement - Approval to schedule final examination and diploma information forms due

### May 6, 2011

Final electronic copy of thesis due to graduate school to be spring grad

### May 13, 2011

K-State spring commencement

### May 20, 2011

Final electronic copy of thesis due to graduate school to be August grad

### June 12-14, 2011

Institute of Food Technologists Expo in New Orleans

### July 11-15, 2011

Southeast Asia Campus Session at USM in Penang, Malaysia