

# AGEC 460

## International Agribusiness

Mid-November 2007

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### Introduction

These newsletters will be sent periodically to keep you informed about the course. In this newsletter, you will be given a lot of useful information. You will also be introduced to the professor, the trip coordinator, and the graduate teaching assistant who are going on the study tour.

### Countries we are visiting during the study tour

We will be visiting Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala.



## Scholarships

Office of International Programs scholarship

*Mid-March deadline*

College of Agriculture Scholarship

*Mid-February deadline*

Gilman International Scholarship Program

The Institute of International Education offers over 700 scholarships for study abroad

## Tentative Schedule

We will depart Saturday May 17<sup>th</sup> and return Saturday June 7<sup>th</sup>

The following schedule is tentative. We will keep you updated regarding changes that occur prior to the trip. Changes to the itinerary after departure will be posted on the class website. Parents and friends will be given access to this website in the near future.

Email availability for students will be in San Jose, Costa Rica; Zamorano, Honduras; Tegucigalpa, Honduras; Guatemala City, Guatemala; and Roatan, Honduras. Opportunities to do laundry will be at Zamorano University and in Guatemala City.

Saturday May 17<sup>th</sup>

Flight departs from Kansas City Airport. For those leaving on Saturday, transportation to the airport will be provided. Arrive in San Jose, Costa Rica. Stay in San Jose.

Sunday May 18<sup>th</sup>

Drive from San Jose to Pozo Azul (2 hours). 2<sup>nd</sup> group will arrive with chaperone. Visit Pozo Azul Reserve. Ride horses from the base to the mountain lodge. Tour a reforestation project and a pepper farm. Stay at Pozo Azul Mountain Lodge.

Monday May 19<sup>th</sup>

Tour a dairy farm followed by a canopy tour in the rainforest. After the canopy tour, we will depart for our Dole plantation visits. Stay near the Dole plantation. Two students will be arriving and met at airport.

Tuesday May 20<sup>th</sup>

Dole pineapple and banana plantation visits. Stay near the Dole plantation.

Wednesday May 21<sup>st</sup>

Drive through Nicaragua. Arrive at Zamorano University in the evening. Stay at the Kellogg Center at Zamorano University.

Thursday May 22<sup>nd</sup>

Case studies in the classroom with Zamorano students. Welcome supper with Zamorano students. Stay at the Kellogg Center.

Friday May 23<sup>rd</sup>

Case studies in classroom and participate in learning by doing with the Zamorano students. Stay at the Kellogg Center.

Saturday May 24<sup>th</sup>

Visit sugar cane plantation in the morning with Zamorano students. Visit cigar factory. Drive to Tegucigalpa (1.5 hours). Stay at the Marriott in Tegucigalpa.

Sunday May 25<sup>th</sup>

Church services in Suyapa and drive to Choluteca. Possible lunch with the embassy. Stay in Choluteca.

Monday May 26<sup>th</sup>

Drive through El Salvador. See shrimp and tilapia production. Stay in San Salvador

Tuesday May 27<sup>th</sup>

Drive to Guatemala. Stay in Guatemala City at Holiday Inn.

Wednesday May 28<sup>th</sup>

Visit Antigua cultural and tourist attractions. Stay in Guatemala City at Holiday Inn.

Thursday May 29<sup>th</sup>

Visit volcano and forest attractions in the region. Stay in Guatemala City at Holiday Inn.

Friday May 30<sup>th</sup>

Area tours of Cacao farm and Chocolate factory. Stay in Guatemala City at Holiday Inn.

Saturday May 31<sup>st</sup>

Drive to Copan Ruinas. Visit Tobacco plantation and cigar factory. Stay in Copan Ruinas.

Sunday June 1<sup>st</sup>

Visit Copan Ruinas (Mayan ruins) with ½ of group. Stay in Copan Ruinas. The other ½ of the group will go to the Finca El Cisne and will stay the night there. Activities at Finca el Cisne will include a half day on horseback to see the cattle herd, visiting a dairy, and the opportunity to help with chores on the ranch. After lunch with the owners, you will visit the coffee plantation. This day ends with some relaxation in natural hot springs before returning to the ranch for supper.

Monday June 2<sup>nd</sup>

Breakfast at the ranch prior to departure for Copan Ruinas. The two groups will switch to the other activities so they will both have the opportunity to visit Copan Ruinas and Finca el Cisne.

Tuesday June 3<sup>rd</sup>

After receiving the second group from the finca, we will drive to La Ceiba. Stay in La Ceiba.

Wednesday June 4<sup>th</sup>

Plantation visits and La Ceiba agricultural fair. Stay in La Ceiba.

Thursday June 5<sup>th</sup>

Take the ferry to Roatan. Roatan is an island off the coast of Honduras. The rest of this day is a free day to do recreational activities. (Some students may choose to kayak, snorkel, etc.)

Friday June 6<sup>th</sup>

Free day in Roatan.

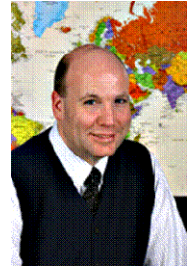
Saturday June 7<sup>th</sup>

Fly back to the U.S. Take the charter bus back to Manhattan.

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## Meet the organizers of the study tour

Michael Boland is a professor of agricultural economics and associate director of the Arthur Capper Cooperative Center. He is very detail-oriented and teaches a senior level agribusiness course. He speaks on international trade and competitiveness issues in his role as a Speaker for the US Department of State and has lectured / worked in more than 25 countries including almost every country in Latin America. This is the fourth study tour he has organized and he speaks Spanish. He is the oldest of 12 kids and really likes his job!



Alena Bosse is the coordinator of the study tour. She is a recent graduate from K-State agricultural economics MS degree program and is now in nursing school. Her thesis was related to the economics of food nutrition and least cost diets for Honduran children. Alena will also maintain the class website during the study tour portion of the course. Photos and updates will be posted so that family and friends can stay up-to-date on our activities during the study tour. This is the fourth study tour she has worked on with Dr. Boland.

Deborah Sanchez is currently an MS degree student in agricultural economics at K-State. Deborah is from Honduras and will serve as the graduate teaching assistant for the trip. This is Deborah's third trip in assisting Dr. Boland with the K-State agricultural economics department.



Other faculty may be coming along as chaperones and you will meet them in future newsletters.

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## Enrolling in Class

The classroom portion of this course will consist of several informative lectures, student presentations, guest speakers, and discussion of the details of the trip. The course will include one exam and several assignments. Two students from Zamorano in Honduras will assist with the class as part of their internship responsibilities in the spring. The Division of Continuing Education (DCE) is working on the class enrollment process. We will send you enrollment information as soon as they finish their part of the process.

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## Payment Information

As of right now the total trip fee is \$3,750. This figure may be lower once we lock in plane fares and other expenses. The first payment is due on or before Friday, November 30<sup>th</sup>. The first nonrefundable check should be written for \$1,500 and made out to Kansas State University. You can take the check to Deborah Sanchez (Waters Hall 303A) or Dr. Boland (Water's Hall 305D). Please see Dr. Boland if you have any cash flow problems. The second payment of \$1500 will be due the first week of school in January and the third payment of \$750 will be due in March. For those of you in

the College of Agriculture who apply for and receive the College of Agriculture study abroad scholarship, you will only need to pay \$250 at that time.

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## Financial Aid information

Tuition and fees associated with studying abroad are eligible for financial aid. We will do our best to provide information in this area. Please keep an open line of communication with us so we can make sure you receive the aid you are eligible for. You need to make an appointment with the Financial Aid office to discuss your particular options. Their number is 785-532-6420.

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## Scholarship Information

We will keep you updated as we hear about study abroad scholarships. You should also check with the study abroad office.

The Study Abroad office has an application you need to fill out to be eligible for scholarships through their office. The deadline is typically in March. They are located in Fairchild Hall, room 304. Their phone number is 785-532-5990. The earlier you apply for scholarships, the better off you will be. The application will be made available in January 2008 and we will let you know when they are available.

The College of Agriculture will again offer scholarships for students in the college of agriculture who study abroad. The details are still undecided. The scholarship is typically around \$500 and the deadline is usually around the middle of February. Don Boggs indicates they are anticipating greater numbers of applicants this year and they may not be able to award everyone a scholarship. When we get more information, we will let you know. The application will be made available in January 2008 and we will let you know when they are available.

Think creatively! Most people enjoy helping students especially if you can show them why you will benefit from this and agree to follow-up when you get back. You want to begin by writing a letter asking for support and describing what you are doing. Then indicate that you might be home for Christmas, Spring Break or some other time period and that you will follow-up with a personal visit or phone call. Dr. Boland is more than willing to read any letters you put together and provide constructive criticism.

About 1/3 of the students had their trip paid through scholarships, donations, and parents last year. Most of the others had part of the trip paid for through other means. We had one student whose mom made a quilt to raffle off to friends and relatives. That raised a significant amount of money to fund her trip. There were also students who got up to ten area businesses to contribute. These were businesses that worked with their family farm or other business.

Dr. Boland will be happy to write you letters of recommendation if you need them. He is also happy to write letters for scholarships in your local communities. All you need to do is ask!

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## Things we need from you

Throughout the preparation for the study tour, we are going to be requesting a lot of information/actions from you. Please do your best to answer these requests promptly to ensure the success of the study tour!

Our first information request is for your emergency contact information. (i.e., parents, guardians, family, etc.) We need names, phone numbers, and addresses for a minimum of two contacts for each of you. Please enter the information into the Excel spreadsheet attached to this email and email it back to Alena at [abosse@agecon.ksu.edu](mailto:abosse@agecon.ksu.edu).

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## Things to start thinking about

**Shots:** Contact Lafene Health Center and ask to set up an appointment with the travel consult clinic. Tell them you will be traveling to Costa Rica, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. At the appointment, they will tell you which shots you need. They can call me with any questions. My best guess (they will tell you officially) is that these shots will be hepatitis A and Yellow fever. Hepatitis A is a good one to have anyhow and Yellow fever is needed for tropical travel. You will not need malaria medication because we will not be anywhere near malarial regions. Don't wait till the last minute as some shots must be given over a period of several months. The number to Lafene is: 785-532-6544.

**Passports:** Passports must be obtained from the Post Office. You must call to set up an appointment. You can call them at 785-539-4754 to reserve a time. Their office is located at 500 Leavenworth St. You must take a passport-sized photo. These photos can be obtained at Walgreens or Kinkos. We have heard Walgreens is the cheapest place to go. We believe the cost is between \$10 and \$15. There may be other places in Manhattan too so search around and share your findings. The post office will tell you what else you need to bring when you call to set up the appointment.

**International Student ID:** You will NOT need an international student ID. You may be able to get student discounts for some extracurricular activities so it is recommended that you bring your KSU student id on the study tour.

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## Websites of interest

You can find information on each of the countries we are visiting on these websites.

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/>  
<http://worldatlas.com/aatlas/world.htm>

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## Packing List

For those of you thinking ahead...we have included the packing list. We realize this is early, but there may be some things you will want to request

this holiday season.

You will always . . .

- end up packing too much stuff!
- end up with a heavier bag than when you left.
- hate having to pack and unpack bags that are full.

You should . . .

- strive to keep things light weight.
- ask yourself whether you really need this as you pack each item.
- use packing cubes or zip lock bags to organize your clothes.

Remember that . . .

- you are in locations where you can do laundry every 7 days or so
- the temperatures will range from 70 to 100 degrees (day) and 60 to 70 degrees (night) depending upon elevation.
- you will be on an air conditioned bus every day.

Other thoughts . . .

- people have been known to wash some clothes in the sink!

Suggestions for items you might need:

- One pair sunglasses
- Extra pair of contacts or glasses
- Money belt/something to store valuables in under your clothes
- Secure fanny pack or daypack or small carry-on
- Deck of cards or head phones for music
- No need for water bottles, etc. (reuse a plastic water bottle down there)
- Swim suit/trunks
- Sunscreen
- Bug repellent
- Tissue
- Aspirin/Ibuprofen

Other Comments:

No laptops! You won't need one and it is one less thing to worry about. We will download pictures to Dr. Boland's lap top. Enough people will have cameras and we can share pictures if you don't own a camera.

You cannot bring glass bottles or aerosol cans in your bags.

**You are limited to one bag and one carry-on bag (backpack) and this WILL be enforced. You can pack a bag that can be used coming back to put souvenirs into.**

[www.Magellans.com](http://www.Magellans.com) and [www.travelsmith.com](http://www.travelsmith.com) are popular websites for travel things. The Manhattan Pathfinder is stocked with a large number of things as well.

The piece of advice Dr. Boland gives is that if you invest in anything, get some small cubes to organize your materials. There are a lot of handy-dandy travel things such as small bags. The reality is that most of them you will never use or you will find that they are not really needed! Pack as lightly as possible and use cubes or smaller bags to keep things organized. With a group this size it is likely that airport security will go through your bags.

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## Questions and Answers

Question: How much money should we plan to bring?

Answer: Most of your meals, travel expenses, lodging, standard gratuities, and similar items are paid out of your study tour fee. You should bring money for gifts, souvenirs, incidentals, refreshments, some meals, and snacks if you want them. The exact amount is up to you. We strongly urge you to just use your debit card (Cirrus or Plus networks) and withdraw funds in the local currency as opposed to using credit cards and carrying money and exchanging it. We will talk about this more at the meetings.

Question: Should we buy travel insurance?

Answer: Your health insurance coverage during the study tour is provided through the Office of International Programs; therefore, it is not necessary for you to purchase additional travel insurance.

Question: Should we be concerned for our safety in Central America?

Answer: Dr. Boland, Alena, and Deborah have a great deal of experience in traveling/living in Central America. Each of them is fluent or proficient in Spanish. We consider these countries to be safe places to travel. For additional reassurance, Dr. Boland contacted each of the American embassies in the countries we are visiting and has been reassured that it is considered safe to travel in the regions where we are visiting in these countries. Regardless of where you travel it is important to practice safe behaviors. Safety suggestions will be discussed during the classroom portion of the course.

We will stay on or near the Pan-American Highway and travel in the day. Individuals who "get in trouble" overseas typically do so because they do not practice safe habits which should be utilized in any country or city, including the United States. Alcohol is typically involved in many of these activities. During this study tour students will not be in locations where this will be an issue. Students will be in the group with chaperones the entire trip.

Kansas State University does not allow trips such as these to occur in regions where safety could be a problem. Students will discover that in many of these countries such as Costa Rica and Guatemala, tens of thousands of U.S. citizens are living there part of the year because of its climate and low cost of living.