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Tropical News

“Newsletter for
FTA Friends”

DECEMBER 2021

Find in this issue news and opportunities for further cooperation with the Faculty

A Word from the Dean



Dear students, colleagues and FTA friends, alumni and 'supporters'!

Although 2021 was slightly better than the previous year, Covid-19 again forced us to further think out-of-the-box and modify our teaching and overall interaction ways.

However, virtus marcet sine adversario (Seneca), and it is indeed my feeling that these challenging times bring out the best in most of us. Feelings of solidarity, mutual support and voluntarism combine to yield a

more empathic and 'against-all-odds' atmosphere, and I am happy to see that the latter continues to prevail in our faculty. In the midst of this turmoil, the good news, however, is also that over the last year, we have been able to continue to deliver high-quality education and R&D results as testified by student evaluations and our publication output, amongst others.

Our new faculty building has become a buzzing hub for 'all-things-tropical' and not only allows the different departments to interact better but also charms visitors/newcomers and has become an inspirational meeting place and a breeding ground for interdisciplinary innovative research initiatives and also more informal gatherings.

I am confident that we will 'wave' (pun intended) through the new year and make this another inspiring one.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Prof. Patrick Van Damme

FTA 60th Anniversary

Celebration of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the FTA was held in the brand-new Tropical AgriSciences pavillion.

The Belgian-born Dean, Prof. Patrick Van Damme, launched the celebration, and the event featured VIP guests; the Belgian Ambassador Grégoire Cuvelier, alumna of the FTA Karolína Bartošová from the Ministry of Agriculture and Michal Broža on behalf of the UN.

A Student Conference was held, and international organizations based in the Pavilion, such as [YPARD](#), [Agri-natura](#), [IUAF](#) and [Derbianus Conservation](#), introduced themselves.

Visitors also had the chance to visit a chilli pepper exhibition at the FTA's **very own Botanical Garden.**

Our Successes

FTA Tackles Climate Change

The UN Climate Change Conference ([COP26](#)) brought parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Dean of the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences, Prof. Patrick Van Damme, participated in



**UN CLIMATE
CHANGE
CONFERENCE
UK 2021**
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY

the conference wherein world leaders agreed to promise ending deforestation by 2030.

Best Workplace Solution

The Pavilion of Tropical AgriSciences **won the best workplace solution** category in the [Adaptterra Awards contest](#) among projects adapted to climate change.



„We are very pleased with this award. The „green“ I pavilion, was designed with respect for the environment from the very beginning, „commented FTA’s head of the Dean’s Office, Dr. Lucie Ackermann Blažková.

“Nondiscriminatory practices and approaches“

FTA provides an extension of the lectures online and in English, thanks to the great success of the previous trainings. Implemented within the project Quality improvement of studies at CZU Prague, reg.CZ.02.2.69 / 0.0/0.0/18_056/ 0013123, co-financed by the European Union.

Project ESCAPAdE

in cooperation with the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, was successfully finished in Alnarp, Sweden.

Erasmus+ International Credit mobility

Contributing to the improvement of existing study programmes and increasing the quality of education at the university.

Tropical Biodiversity Research Group

The Tropical Biodiversity Research Group led by Prof. Bohdan Lojka focuses its research mainly on the role of agroforestry in biodiversity conservation by comparing various land use systems, Agroforestry tree domestication and neglected/underutilized plant species.

Molecular markers are used for researching the genetic diversity of wild and cultivated populations of crops and trees throughout tropical areas for conservational and domestication purposes. Currently, we are focusing on underutilized trees (baobab, bitter kola in Africa, camu-camu in Peruvian Amazon), local landraces of rice in Myanmar, landraces of cocoa in Ecuador and Guatemala, and Guatemalan avocado varieties.



Cooperative Research Group

The main focus of the Research Group led by Dr. Jiří Hejkrlik is on profit-making cooperatives as tools for improving market access for small farmers.



The research topics include the economic and social impact, leadership and social capital, motivation of farmers, their impact on gender and youth in rural areas, adoption of Sustainable Agricultural Practices, and typology of various forms of farmers' cooperation. The topic of community-based decision-making, extension and sharing of information through farmers' networks are covered as well. The research priorities are framed by the EU policy of due diligence for supply chains (especially in the cocoa sector) and the European Green Deal strategy.

International Cooperation



Mission under FAO

The mission within the FAO funded **project on climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies in the agricultural sector in Azerbaijan** allowed us to have first direct contact with the actors in the field. Within a few days, the FTZ team met the Azerbaijani partners Dalga and FAO representatives. Find more info about the mission [here!](#)

Project in Zambia



FTA experts: Ing. Jan Staš, Dr. Radim Kotrba, and Dr. Petr Pudil started the **final phase of the project "Integrated Farming II"** in Zambia by conducting the monitoring harvests of the fish-ponds.

All four project's ponds, which are part of the integrated agricultural system, are working, fish (*Oreochromis andersonii*) are successfully reproducing so the farmers can continue with the next production period.

Two MoUs in Kenya

FTA has extended its presence and [partnership in Kenya](#).

Dr. Jiří Hejkrlík and Dr. Jana Mazancová extended and formalized the cooperation between FTA and **The Cooperative University of Kenya** in Nairobi (CUK). The FTA vice-deans were accompanied by two students Gospel Iyoku (PhD candidate) and Barbora Růžičková (BSc student), who had a chance to stay longer and get familiar with teachers and their CUK peers.

During the same visit, a second memorandum was signed. FTA/CZU has had a long-term collaboration with the local university especially due to the joint activities within the EU V4 development project focused on cashew production and value chain development, which will be extended to other areas of the research and joint mobilities.

Sharing Best Practices

[The project SIMPLE](#) was selected and included in the two-day CBHE Virtual Fair, i.e., an online event aiming to raise awareness on how the results of CBHE projects can improve the higher education sector in the partnering countries.

Cooperation in Albania

FTA representatives met in person with **Assoc. Prof. Drini Imami and Dr. Edvin Zhllima** and their teammates, as well as the dean of the **Faculty of Economy and Agribusiness from the University of Tirana**.

Face-to-face meetings resulted in a proclamation to continue mutual-cooperation in prioritizing common research topics, cooperation in teaching and curriculum development, and preparation of projects proposals on **agricultural and agri-food chain development in Albania and the neighbouring countries of the Western Balkans**. Find more [info](#).



Academic issues / Alumni



Congratulations to:

- > **Associate professor title**, Assoc. Prof. Tersia Needham
- > **Associate professor title**, Assoc. Prof. Hynek Roubík
- > **Josef Hlávka Award**, Dr. Tereza Slámová
- > **Prof. Vlček award**, BSc. student Ginny McAllister

Alumnus at FTA

Vojtěch Havránek, [Titbit s.r.o.](#)

Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences proudly welcomed alumnus, Dr. Vojtěch Havránek, founder of the successful company Titbit, who focuses on importing exotic fruits and vegetables to the Czech Republic. On the 4th of November 2021, [the Alumnus lectured](#) on his long-term experience in business at our FTA pavilion.

Students of the course „Tropical Products Marketing“, led by Dr. Petra Chaloupková, had the opportunity to discover the secrets of a successful company.



Students at FTA's 60th Anniversary

FTA students prepared the International Fair Party, where they introduced us to their culture and prepared tasty traditional meals. The programme was full of interesting presentations, in addition to singing and dancing performances. This year's event included contributions from Cambodia, Colombia, Ghana, India, and Nigeria. The event was organised by our student organisation, [BeFair](#), in cooperation with the [Student Ambassadors](#).

A new platform for CZU students, alumni and friends - *Network ČZU* will be available in the coming year 2022.

Meet our Alumni

Markéta Antonínová, Inspiring agricultural professional



Dr. Markéta Antonínová - the executive director of Friends of the *Arabuko-Sokoke Forest*, non-profit, non-government organisation protecting Arabuko-Sokoke Forest for nature and people.

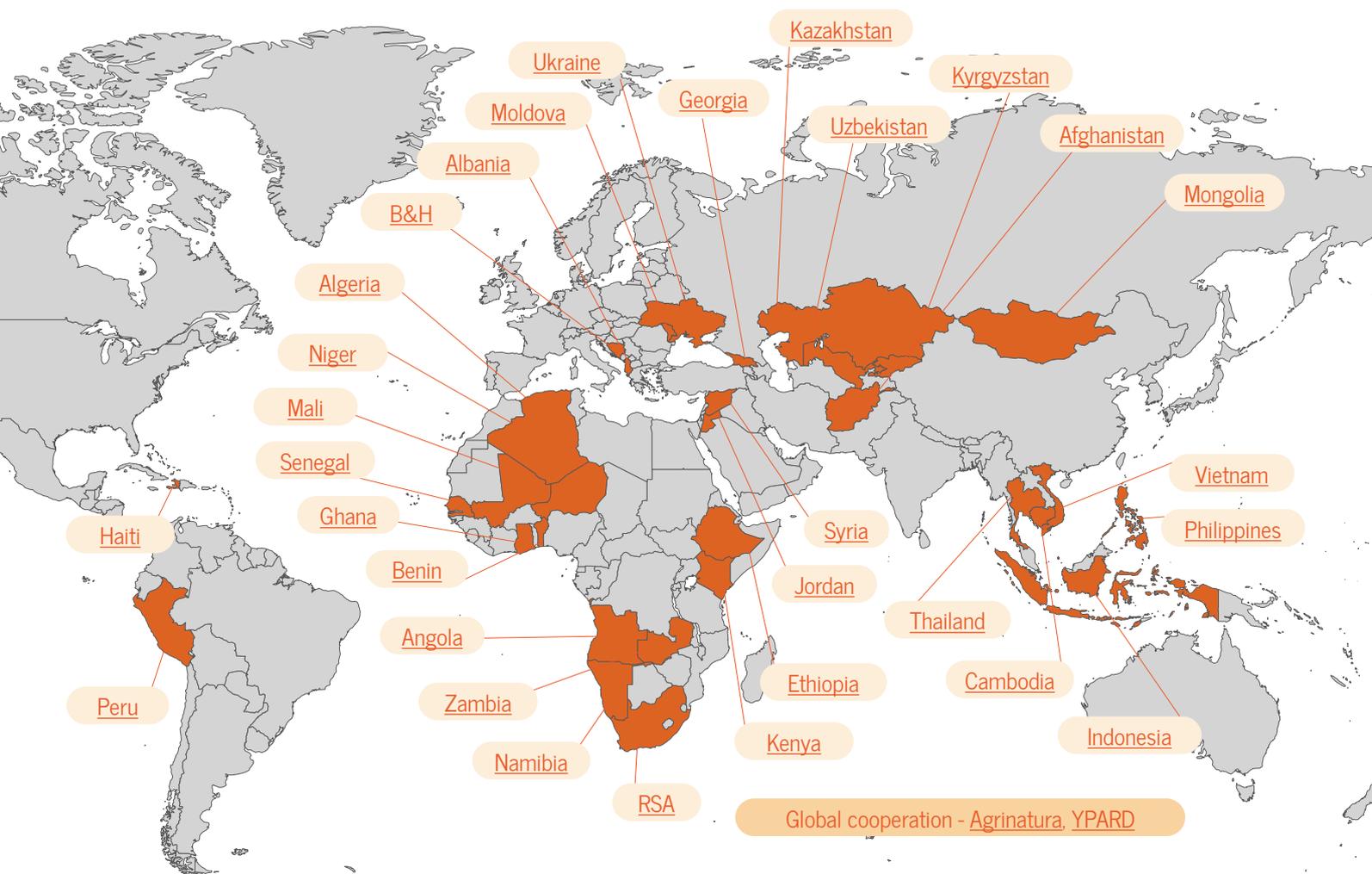
Dr. Antonínová has a passion for conservation, experience in protected areas management, as well as law-enforcement and wildlife management (from different African countries); this has made her a real professional in developing long-term organisational strategies and management of various non-profit projects to protect unique fauna. Find more about Friends of the *Arabuko-Sokoke Forest* [here](#).

We are proud of our alumni! We want to cooperate! FTA Alumni register [here](#) :)

Join our team and contact us at alumni@ftz.czu.cz

FTA Projects and Partnerships

As a Fair Trade Faculty, we support responsible consumption and sustainable development.



Do you want to cooperate with the FTA?

We are interested in cooperation on

- > Research
- > Projects
- > Guest lectures
- > Internships
- > Sharing experiences
- > Other

We look forward to hearing from you!



Contact

- > Please visit <https://www.ftz.czu.cz/en/>
- > Follow us     
- > Contact us! Newsletter and FTA Alumni contact person:
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