



Tropical News

“Newsletter for
FTA Friends”

JANUARY 2024

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

Welcome

Dear students, colleagues, alumni, and FTA friends!

Welcome to this new issue of Tropical News, our faculty newsletter. It's the first one of 2024, which will hopefully be a more peaceful and successful one than the previous year. Indeed, after having successfully fought the Covid virus (which is now indeed become an 'ordinary' flu), the world has been facing global unrest with the Middle East again in turmoil, and Ukraine still suffering from the Russian aggression. Sigh. With elections coming up in a number of key countries in the world, it remains doubtful that any of these crises might be solved in any near future, but let us keep our fingers crossed.

In the midst of all this, our faculty remains devoted to and active in teaching and research that address some of the key issues that preoccupy us all: food safety, food security, clean water provision, health, and the overarching problems of climate change and biodiversity (and vegetation restoration). Against the more direct

problems caused by the above-mentioned wars, these latter have been relegated to the background but remain the issues that need to be studied, and structurally addressed. Rest assured that our faculty's staff and students will keep their focus on the latter, and continue to contribute to make this a better world!

With this, I wish you all the best for the new year 2024.

Prof. dr. ir. Patrick Van Damme

In This Issue

1. **New Discovery**
2. **Projects at the FTA**
3. **International Cooperation**
4. **Meet Our Alumna**

Alumni Club SIGN IN

- > Get up-to-date information on what's going on in your alma mater.
- > Find a job, internship or personal mentor.
- > Connect not only with CZU alumni and students but also with employers, employees, and supporters of the university (CZU).

Our Successes



Strengthening Diplomatic Bonds

Belgium's new ambassador, His Excellency Mr. Jurgen Van Meirvenne has previously been representing Belgium in South Africa, Ethiopia, Mali, etc. The ambassador was particularly interested in getting in touch with his fellow Belgian citizen, Prof. Patrick Van Damme as he was curious about what the faculty has to offer in the field of tropical agronomy.

Issues discussed during the meeting covered the Czech education environment, international relations of the CZU, and more specifically, the faculty's involvement with Africa. Follow-up meetings have been scheduled, fostering a fruitful partnership between Belgium and CZU. Learn more [here](#).

Tropical Greenhouse

The Tropical Greenhouse ([FTA Botanical Garden](#)) has celebrated its 50th anniversary since its establishment. This milestone serves as a tribute to the longstanding work and achievements of the greenhouse, which has become an important center for the study and research of tropical plants.

Reducing Food Waste

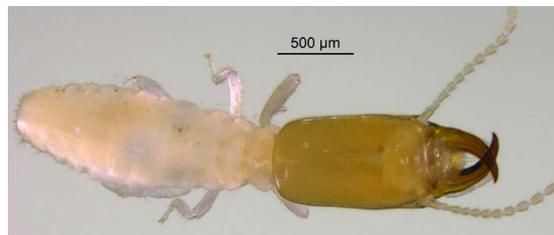
[The competition](#), themed "Youth Hackathon for Reducing Food Loss and Waste", is the fruit of the collaboration between the FAO, the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS), and the Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD). The FTA team, NOSATOR-FLOW, secured a place in the top 3 with their project proposal called "Novel systemic advisory tool to reduce food loss and waste in Cambodia" in the category of New Services. If you are interested in Youth Hackathon 2024, [contact us](#) for more information.

Veterinary Assembly at the FTA

The FTA had the honor of hosting [the annual general assembly of the "Vétérinaires Sans Frontières International"](#) network. The FTA coorganized a practical session to share project results titled "Veterinary Medicine Matters for SDGs".

New Discovery

Scientists from FTA described a [new termite subfamily](#). A significant achievement was accomplished by the international research team led by Prof. Jan Šobotník. Based on newly collected material from Cameroon, scientists have described a new termite subfamily, Engelitermitinae. Description of the new subfamily, genus, and species was accepted for publication by the prestigious journal Systematic Entomology, ranked as the fifth best among hundred entomological periodicals included in the Web of Science database.



Horizon Projects at the FTA

[AGRIGEP](#) - "Assessment and implementation of Agriculture and Life Science Universities' first Gender Equality Plans in widening countries".

[OSIRIS](#) - "Open Science to Increase Reproducibility in Science" aims to facilitate this shift by systematically gathering knowledge on the underlying drivers, testing effective evidence-based solutions, identifying incentives for reproducibility by stakeholders, and embedding reproducibility in research design.

[New Horizon Project - COMUNIDAD](#) - "Combined use of EGNSS and Copernicus data to develop innovative downstream services for the users from Chile and Colombia".

Sustainable Insight

As part of the European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW) 2023, FTA hosted a lecture by Mr. Michal Broža, Director of the [United Nations Information Centre](#) Czech Republic. His lecture "The Role of the Global System in the Transition to Sustainability" was open to all FTA students and staff, and it was an exceptional opportunity to gain deeper insights into international efforts towards sustainable development.



International Cooperation



ERASMUS+ International Credit Mobility

As part of the first year of ERASMUS+ international credit mobility from the 2022 call, the FTA facilitated five mobilities. Thanks to the European Commission's ERASMUS+ KA171 international credit mobility program, our employees, students, and participants from partner universities, had the opportunity to share their knowledge, experience, and good practices across disciplines.

Among other activities, we accepted students from Algeria, our researchers visited Cambodia and Fiji and we plan many more in the year 2024.



Network in Algeria

The Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility KA-107 project between the CZU and the **Université 8 Mai 1945 Guelma in Algeria, 2020-2023, has been successfully completed.** This project allowed us to make valuable contacts, and initiated collaborative efforts on numerous topics of common interest, involving students from both institutions, guaranteeing that this will be a long-term cooperation. Find more information [here](#).

Cooperation with Thailand

Representatives from **KMITL Business School, Local Personnel Development Institute, Ministry of Interior** and **Executives group** from Pak Kret City Municipality Office met with FTA representatives. Among the main topics of discussion was also waste management and various options, which could be further utilised by the municipalities in Thailand, which was discussed by Group leader of Biogas Research Team (Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hynek Roubík).

Success in Development

Last year's development projects successfully concluded with innovation and impact in:

- > **Cambodia** - "Development of Study Programs and Research in Sustainable Agriculture and Aquaculture", learn more [here](#)
- > **Ukraine** - "Strengthening Scientific Capacities and Cooperation of Ukrainian Universities in AgriSciences", learn more [here](#)
- > **Zambia** - "Through Biogas Technology Towards Higher Resilience of the Communities in Western Province of Zambia" learn more [here](#) and "[Integrated farming III](#)"

New Cooperation in Norway

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hynek Roubík has established [cooperation with the esteemed Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research \(NIBIO\)](#). With a primary focus on **biogas technology and waste management**, this visit aimed to foster knowledge exchange and create new ways of collaboration through collaborative research discussions, laboratory visits, and exploration of remarkable facilities.

Students Collaboration Across Universities

FTA students won applause at the ELLS conference (Euroleague for Life Sciences). The [special workshop session](#) provided a unique opportunity to share the outline of the project "Food Systems Transformation through Transdisciplinarity and Cooperation" , and to receive feedback from a broader audience on the collaborative results created by master students at three universities (SLU, BOKU, CZU). This session was highly valued by this year's participants.

Academic issues / Alumni

Congratulations

We are extremely proud to announce that:

- > **Dr. Veit Ny** received the Professor Stoklasa Award, the most prestigious award in the country for doctoral theses.
- > **Rohit Bharati**, Ph.D. student was awarded with Rector's Award for Excellent Publication Output and the prestigious Josef Hlávka Award, given to candidates who have demonstrated exceptional ability and creative thinking in their field of study.
- > **Giri Prasad Kandel**, Ph.D. student received recognition as a foreign student who exceptionally represented our university through the extraordinary scholarship of Prof. Miroslav Vlček
- > **Dr. Barbora Černá Bolfíková** and **Ing. Iva Bernáthová** for the research article in the prestigious scientific journal Science. "[Genomic analyses reveal poaching hotspots and illegal trade in pangolins from Africa to Asia](#)"



Conference for Young Researchers

The Multidisciplinary Conference for Young Researchers in the field of Energy, Sustainability & Society was held at FTA in October 2023. The conference provided a platform for early career researchers to present diverse work and engage in meaningful discussions. The Book of Abstracts is available [online](#).

Summer School in Thailand

FTA representatives co-organized [summer school](#) at the Prince of Songkla University (PSU) in Thailand in August 2023. Students from CZU and PSU came together to learn about Value Chain Management. Practical training, learning, and sharing international experiences further strengthened the participants' understanding of real-world value chain challenges.



Meet Our Alumni

Dr. Anna Maňourová - Inspiring Professional

We proudly introduce our colleague Dr. Anna Maňourová, coordinator of [PlantLink](#) at SLU Alnarp, Sweden, and R&D project coordinator at Mendel University in Brno, Czechia. With a rich academic background in tropical agriculture, agroforestry, and ethnobotany, Dr. Anna Maňourová has a particular interest in discovering creative solutions to bridge the gap between science and development. Learn more at this [link](#).

Students Elevating Faculty Life

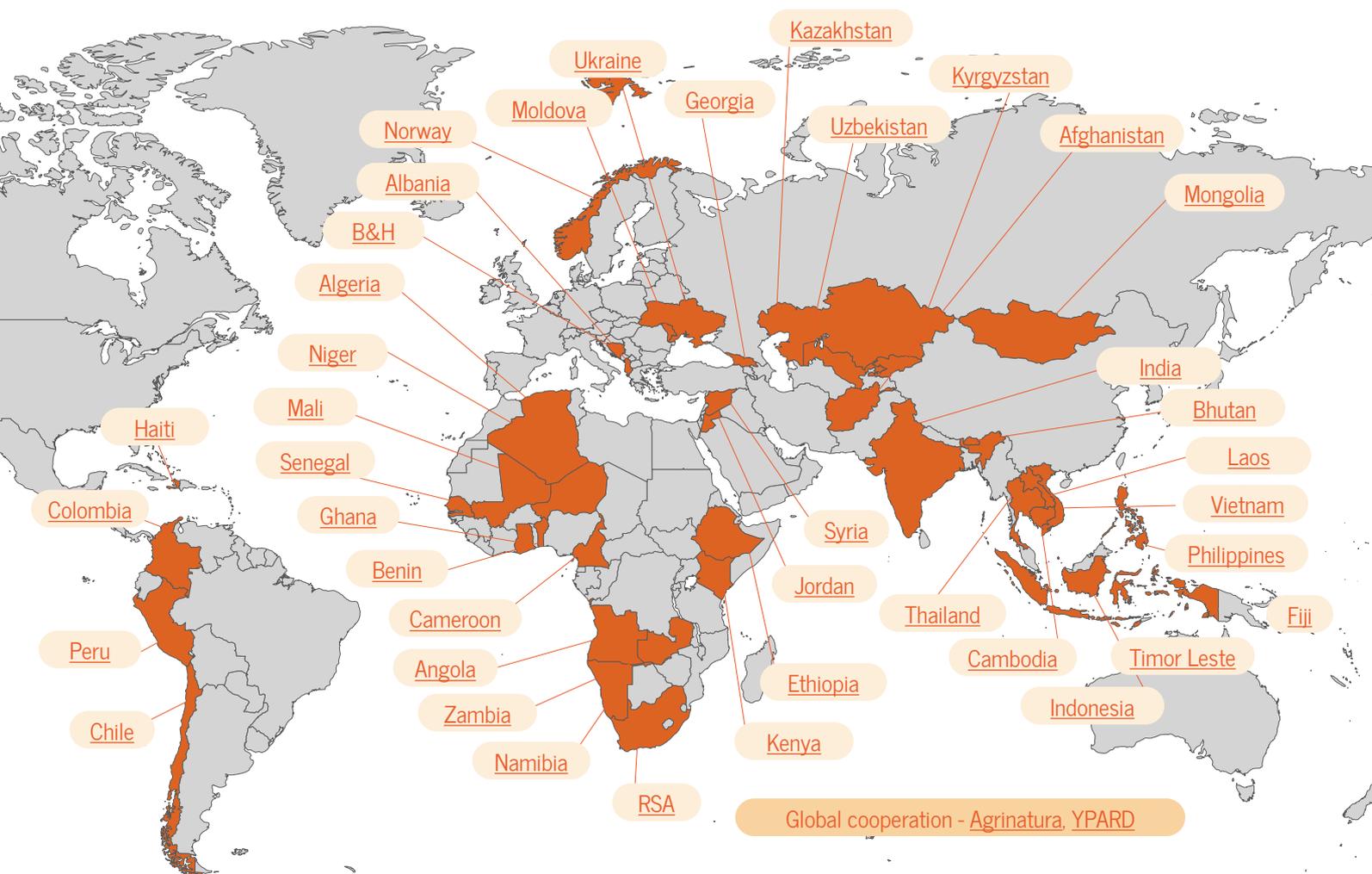
A warm appreciation goes to [FTA Student Ambassadors](#) and the [BeFair](#) team for a last semester filled with exciting activities! Students actively participated in orientation activities, fostering bonds with their peers and creating a friendly atmosphere – during the Welcome course, elegant Ball, and workshop for unlocking career potential. A heartwarming tradition that embraced the spirit of giving and sustainability was Christmas SWAP. The festive Christmas party marked a joyful end to the semester, highlighting the friendly community within the faculty.



Stay tuned for a new interactive map, prepared by our Student Ambassadors, showcasing where our students come from. Join us for an upcoming Learn and Discuss event, as we continue to build a thriving and supportive academic community in 2024!

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:
Dr. Jana Mandíková mandikova@ftz.czu.cz



EUROPEAN UNION
European Structural and Investment Funds
Operational Programme Research,
Development and Education



Implemented within the project Improving the Quality of
Study at CZU, reg. C. CZ.02.2.69 / 0.0 / 0.0 / 18_056 /
0013123, co-financed by the European Union.