



Tropical News

"Newsletter for
FTZ friends"

July 2025

FIND IN THIS ISSUE NEWS AND OPPORTUNITIES
FOR FURTHER COOPERATION WITH THE FACULTY

Intro by the new Dean

Dear colleagues, students, partners, and friends of FTZ,

It is a great honour for me to address you in this new role as Dean of the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences.

I sincerely thank the Academic Senate and the broader faculty community for your trust and support. Following the deanship of Prof. Patrick Van Damme and Prof. Jan Banout, we now continue to build on a strong foundation, guided by our shared vision: Leading Excellence in Tropical AgriSciences.

As this newsletter highlights, FTZ continues to thrive in its international collaborations, student engagement, and research excellence. From fieldwork in Central Africa and the Amazon to new Erasmus+ partnerships in Fiji and the Central African Republic, our faculty's global footprint is not just expanding, but it is deepening in quality and impact.

I am especially proud of our recent participation in events like the Society for Ethnobotany Annual Meeting, the Open House Prague festival, or the Garden Party at CZU. These moments remind us of the importance of connection, not only among scientists, but across generations, cultures, and disciplines. As well as I am amazed by already 25 Years of Antelope Conservation at our faculty.

Now, on a personal basis, I will take also this opportunity to announce the release of our new book, Sustainable Biotechnology and Environmental Protection, offering innovative insights into bio-based solutions for a more resilient and sustainable planet.

In addition, let me also warmly invite all researchers to join us at the 6th International Multidisciplinary Conference for Young Researchers (MCYR 2025) to share your ideas, discoveries, and vision for a sustainable future.

This summer, I encourage all of you to take a well-deserved moment to recharge, reflect, and also take pride in what we have achieved together. My sincere thanks go to all academic staff for their dedication, to our students for their energy and ambition, and to our technical and administrative staff for the critical support you provide every day.

A special congratulations goes to our new round of graduated students, now graduates. As I was telling our new graduates during the graduation ceremony: "Be curious. Be courageous. Be kind." And I believe, it applies to us all.

As we look ahead to the next chapter, I am excited for the opportunities we will create together. Let us keep pushing boundaries, staying rooted in our values while growing globally as a faculty of excellence, responsibility, and purpose.

LEADING EXCELLENCE IN TROPICAL AGRISCIENCES

With warm regards,

HYNEK ROUBÍK

In This Issue

1 / Intro by the new Dean

2 / Academic Issues

4 / Our Successes

7 / Events at FTZ

8 / International Cooperaton

11 / Botanical Garden

12 / Alumni

13 / FTZ Projects and Partnerships

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).

Academic Issues:

New leadership at the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences, Czech University of Life Sciences Prague

On Thursday, January 9, 2025, the Academic Senate of the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences at CZU in Prague elected a new dean for the upcoming term 2025–2029.

In the first round of a secret ballot, **Assoc. Prof. Ing. Hynek Roubík, Ph.D., was elected to lead the faculty.** He took over the position from prof. Dr. Ir. Patrick Van Damme, whose term ended on April 25, 2025.



On May 5, 2025, the Academic Senate of the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences (FTZ) approved the Dean's nominations for **the new faculty leadership:**

- Vice-Dean for Science, Research and Doctoral Studies – Assoc. Prof. Johana Rondevaldová, Ph.D.
- Vice-Dean for Education and Quality – Assoc. Prof. Klára Urbanová, Ph.D.
- Vice-Dean for International Relations – Ing. Petra Chaloupková, Ph.D., dr.h.c.
- Vice-Dean for Faculty Development – Mgr. Martina Komárková, Ph.D.
- Ing. Mgr. Lukáš Pacek, Ph.D. has been appointed as the new Faculty Bursar.

All new members presented their visions and goals for the upcoming term.

We wish them every success in their new roles!



State Final Exams and Graduation at FTZ

In May and June 2025, FTZ held state final exams and graduation ceremonies for both bachelor's and master's programs.

BACHELOR'S LEVEL:

- 54 candidates completed exams in Tropical Agriculture and ICARD.
- Rector's Award: Adéla Kohoutová, Anna Pražáková
- Dean's Award: Barbora Dobroruková, Marie Gotvaldová, Swe Zin Myint Mo, Jan Müldner, Klára Siegllová
- Best Thesis: Jan Müldner

MASTER'S LEVEL:

- 48 candidates were examined across six tropical programs, with international committee participation.
- Rector's Award: Andrej Skok
- Dean's Award: Juliana Walterová
- Best Theses: Lukáš Machek (MoA Prize), Rebecca A. Lessler (Rector's Prize), Buntheng Ly (Dean's Prize)

Congratulations to all our graduates!

Podcasts Full of Life

The Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences has joined the Full of Life Podcast series, which features interviews with experts on sustainability, food security, fair trade or tropical crop research. So far this year we have produced four inspiring episodes with our academics, and the first two are now available to listen to on Spotify, Apple Podcasts and YouTube.

With Jiří Hejkrlik on Fair Coffee and Global Responsibility

What stories are hidden behind a banana, a bar of chocolate, or a bouquet of flowers? In this episode, Ing. Jiří Hejkrlik, Ph.D., coordinator of the bachelor's program ICARD and one of the key founders of Fairtrade Czech Republic and Slovakia, shares why it matters to know the origin of everyday products. He also discusses the role of FTZ in promoting sustainable farming practices and responsible consumption.

With Johana Rondevaldová on the Secrets of Tropical Plants

Assoc. Prof. Johana Rondevaldová, Ph.D., has long focused on tropical crops and their potential to improve nutrition and health. In this episode, she introduces lesser-known fruits and vegetables that could help combat malnutrition and lifestyle diseases. You'll also hear about the practical side of research, the challenges scientists face, and the discoveries that could shape the future of agriculture and food.

Both episodes offer a compelling and accessible look into the work of our scientists — and show how each of us can contribute to a better world.

Listen now on your favorite podcast platform – **Podcast Full of Life** <https://zivauni.cz/podcasty/>.

National Development Day – We and the World



The Day of International Partnerships organized by Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the beautiful garden of the Czernin Palace was full of inspiration, knowledge-sharing, and meaningful encounters.

FTZ took part in the event as a member of the Crendes platform. Together with our Vice-Dean for International Relations, Petra Chaloupková, we introduced visitors to study opportunities in global development and sustainability. Our students also shared their experiences from field research in Senegal, Zambia, and Cambodia. We also presented the activities of Antelope Conservation.

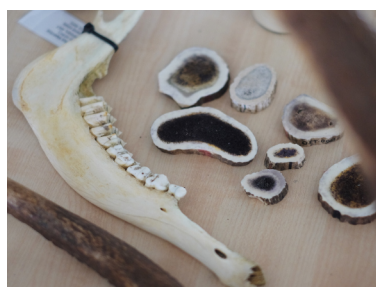
Student Ambassadors in Action: Supporting International Community at FTZ

In the summer semester 2025, FTZ [Student Ambassadors](#) have been actively involved in a variety of events aimed at supporting both new and current students.

They started their activities with a sustainable **SWAP event**, giving students a chance to exchange clothes and items. They also contributed to faculty activities, such as **Open Days**, helping prospective students learn more about FTZ through their own personal experiences and promoting their activities.



A major highlight was the newly organized [Communication Workshop](#) – "Bridging Cultures: Mastering Communication in a Multicultural Environment", led by Head Ambassador Mataa Nda. With expert speakers, including communication specialist Dominik Ježek from SAP, and engaging interactive sessions, the workshop helped participants enhance their intercultural skills and build new connections. The workshop was met with very positive feedback and strengthened the faculty's multicultural atmosphere.



Ambassadors also played a key role in the "What to do after the admission exam?" webinar, supporting newly admitted international students with visa-related questions and sharing practical advice. Their presence was highly appreciated, and they remain available to assist new students. A follow-up webinar in September will provide guidance on arrival and cultural adaptation.

BeFair Picnic in Front of FTZ: Fair Snacks, Fresh Air, and Good Vibes

On Wednesday, April 30, the lawn in front of the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences turned into a cozy picnic spot during the BeFair Picnic.



From 8:30 to 10:30 AM, students and staff were invited to enjoy fair snacks, take a break outdoors, and learn more about sustainable and fair practices. The event was organized by the Be Fair initiative, which promotes fairness towards people and the planet.



Our Successes

Assoc. Prof. Hynek Roubík Ranked Among Top 0.5% of Scholars Worldwide by ScholarGPS

We are proud to share that **Assoc. Prof. Hynek Roubík** has been recognized as a **2024 Top Scholar** by **ScholarGPS**, placing him among the **top 0.5% of scholars globally**. This prestigious recognition highlights his outstanding research, strong publication record, and the global relevance of his work.

ScholarGPS rankings assess academic excellence across disciplines, based on both lifetime achievements and recent research output. In the **"Rural Area"** category, Dr. Roubík achieved an impressive **#52 global ranking** over the past five years—demonstrating his commitment to sustainable development, rural innovation, and applied bioeconomy.

This distinction follows the 2023 ScholarGPS recognition of **Prof. Ing. Ladislav Kokoška, Ph.D.**, who was ranked among the top scholars in *Plant Sciences*. Together, these honors underscore the exceptional level of research conducted at the **Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences, Czech University of Life Sciences Prague**.

Fieldwork at the Heart of Africa: Central African Republic

In March 2025, two researchers from FTZ CZU, Associate Professor Karolína Brandlová and Professor Pavla Hejčmanová, embarked on a unique journey deep into the untouched savannah of Central Africa. Invited by African Parks, they travelled to the remote Chinko Reserve in the Central African Republic — a stronghold for the eastern Derby eland, where few outsiders have ever ventured.



This is no new partnership. For over 20 years, FTZ CZU has collaborated with African Parks, a global leader in biodiversity conservation. Thanks to this partnership, numerous FTZ students and alumni have conducted field internships,

completed theses, and in many cases, secured long-term conservation careers in African national parks.

From aerial wildlife surveys in Senegal's Niokolo Koba to pangolin research in Congo's Odzala National Park, our students have left their mark across some of the most challenging conservation terrains. The Chinko Reserve is the latest chapter, where our students — since 2016 — have been actively involved in Derby eland research and management.

We are proud that FTZ-trained wildlife professionals now serve as valuable team members in protected areas throughout Central Africa. The door remains open for future students to follow in their footsteps.

25 Years of Antelope Conservation at CZU

A quarter of a century. That's how long the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences at CZU has been involved in protecting the majestic antelopes of West and Central Africa. It all started in 2000, when then-PhD student Pavla Hejčmanová set out to Senegal to study the last remaining individuals of the critically endangered western subspecies of the Derby eland. From her doctoral research, an internationally respected team was born — now the only one in the world exclusively focused on the conservation of African antelope species in this region. Over the years, the team has expanded its activities to multiple antelope species and now operates across a vast stretch of savannah, from Senegal to the Central African Republic.



Despite being a small team with a limited budget, the Wildlife Ecology Lab at FTZ stands alongside global partners such as the Zoological Society of London, Panthera, African Parks, and the Giraffe Conservation Foundation. We are proud to mark not only 25 years of fieldwork and research but also the 15th anniversary of the nonprofit organization Antelope Conservation.



We thank all who have supported us on this journey — it hasn't always been easy, but the African fauna needs our help now more than ever. And we're here to stay.

New Erasmus+ Collaboration with Université de Bangui

Since 2024, the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences at CZU has been building a new academic bridge to the Central African Republic through the Erasmus+ programme. Our institutional partner: Université de Bangui, located in the country's capital, just across the river from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.



This academic exchange focuses on teaching and training in biodiversity conservation and the sustainable management of natural resources — with a strong emphasis on large mammals. In October 2024, two professors from Bangui visited CZU: Dean of the Faculty of Science, Prof. Lucie Aba Toumnoou, and lab head Dr. Solange Patricia Makatia Wango. In March 2025, two members of the CZU academic staff,

Prof. Pavla Hejcmanová and Assoc. Prof. Karolína Brandlová, travelled to Bangui to continue the collaboration.

The Erasmus+ programme will also provide opportunities for selected students from Bangui to join study and training placements at CZU in the upcoming academic year.

We are honoured to be part of this new connection, helping build capacity for biodiversity protection in one of the most ecologically valuable — and geopolitically complex — regions of the world.

Four-Year AfroGrow Project Officially Launched in Nairobi



In March 2025, the World Agroforestry campus in Nairobi, Kenya, hosted the launch conference of **AfroGrow** — a four-year Horizon Europe project focused on sustainable agroforestry in Africa.

With 25 partner institutions from Europe and Africa, the project will implement innovative agroforestry approaches in six "Living Labs" across Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Zambia, and Botswana.

The Czech University of Life Sciences Prague (CZU) is actively involved in the project through:

- **Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences (FTZ)** as the lead partner (Prof. Ing. Bohdan Lojka, Ph.D., Ing. Radim Kotrba, Ph.D., Ing. Marie Kalousová)
- **Faculty of Environmental Sciences** (Mgr. Tomáš Jůnek, Ph.D.)
- **Faculty of Agrobiolgy, Food and Natural Resources** (Markus Dettenhofer, Ph.D.)

AfroGrow bridges science, innovation, and local knowledge to strengthen climate resilience, biodiversity, and rural livelihoods.

Learn more: afrogrow-project.eu



A Wild Comeback: Przewalski's Horses Return to Central Kazakhstan

In June 2025, the endangered Przewalski's horses made a remarkable return to the wild steppes of Kazakhstan for the first time in centuries!

This milestone was made possible through the joint efforts of Prague Zoo, the Czech Army, the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan, and many dedicated partners. After a year of careful acclimatisation in the "Golden Steppe" of central Kazakhstan, stallion Zorro and five mares — two of them equipped with GPS collars — cautiously stepped into their new life of freedom. At the same time, seven more horses were successfully transported from the Czech Republic and Hungary.

Our team members Martina Komárková (FTZ CZU & Prague Zoo) and Anna Bernátková (Prague Zoo) were there to witness this extraordinary moment! They continue to monitor the horses closely as part of a long-term research project focused on their adaptation, behaviour, and social organisation.

Their study also explores how individual horse personalities influence survival in the wild, examines shifts in gut microbiome composition, and assesses the diversity and nutritional value of their food sources — all in collaboration with both Czech and international experts. A huge step forward for conservation and science!

CZU Leads BIO-CAPITAL Project Linking Private Finance to Biodiversity Conservation

The Czech University of Life Sciences Prague (CZU), via its Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences (FTZ), coordinates BIO-CAPITAL — a major international project uniting 17 partners from 13 countries to develop innovative financial tools supporting biodiversity preservation.

Using Earth observation, the project monitors biodiversity at five pilot sites across Europe and aims to create practical funding solutions to protect and restore ecosystems amid climate change.

In April, the CZU hosted the project's kick-off meeting, bringing together the international team and local stakeholders. This effort highlights FTZ's leading role in applied research for sustainable development and global environmental challenges.

New Publication in the Green Energy and Technology Series!

Dr. Yelizaveta Chernysh, Dr. Viktoriia Chubur, and Assoc. Prof. Hynek Roubík from the BRT team at FTZ CZU have published a new book: *Sustainable Biotechnology and Environmental Protection: A Four-Pronged Strategy*.

The book offers a roadmap for advancing sustainable bioeconomy practices—from waste prevention to innovative resource recovery.

CZU Joins OSIRIS Project to Improve Research Reproducibility in Europe

The Czech University of Life Sciences Prague (CZU) is proud to be part of the OSIRIS project (Open Science to Increase Reproducibility In Science), funded under Horizon Europe. The project aims to tackle the reproducibility crisis in research by embedding reproducibility practices into scientific design, policy, and communication.

Running from 2023 to 2026, OSIRIS brings together 10 institutions from 7 European countries, coordinated by University Medical Centre Utrecht. CZU leads Work Package 6 (Dissemination and Communication), in partnership with YPARD Europe, and contributes to cross-cutting activities such as designing interventions for funders, journals, researchers, and institutions.

The CZU team is led by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hynek Roubík, with co-leader Dr. Stacy Denise Hammond and researcher Ing. Jan Staš.

CZU Leads Key Work Packages in COMUNIDAD Project

CZU is actively contributing to the Horizon Europe project **COMUNIDAD**, which aims to develop a digital platform that integrates Copernicus Earth observation data and EGNSS for sustainable agriculture and forestry in **Chile and Colombia**.

OUR UNIVERSITY LEADS TWO MAJOR WORK PACKAGES:

- **WP5: Platform Development**, focused on building and testing the COMUNIDAD platform based on regional needs, and
- **WP6: Dissemination and Exploitation**, which aims to ensure visibility, stakeholder engagement, and alignment with EU–CELAC initiatives.

The project involves **8 partners** from Europe and Latin America. CZU's team, led by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hynek Roubík, brings expertise in platform integration, communication, and knowledge sharing.

FTZ Supports Creation of a Model Sustainable Farm in Central Africa



FTZ expert Ing. Jan Staš has assessed **Carmel Farm** in the Central African Republic, aiming to transform an old oil palm plantation into a **sustainable agroforestry system**. The initiative, in cooperation with NGO **SIRIRI**, will support **food security, student education, and research** in tropical agriculture.



The project reflects FTZ's mission to promote **sustainable solutions** in tropical regions and offers learning opportunities for students and local communities alike.

Events at FTZ

FTZ Welcomed Nearly 300 Visitors During Open House Prague Festival

For the very first time, the **Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences** joined the **Open House Prague festival** – an annual celebration of architecture and hidden gems of the city.

On the weekend of **May 17–18**, FTZ opened its doors to the public, offering guided tours, insights into tropical research, and a look behind the scenes of university life. Nearly **300 visitors** took this unique opportunity to explore the faculty's spaces and learn more about our mission.

The 10th edition of **Open House Praha** ran from **May 12 to 18** and featured over **125 usually inaccessible buildings**, accompanied by lectures, discussions, and special programs across the city.

We thank all visitors for their interest and hope to see many of you again soon!

FTZ Hosted the Annual Conference of the Society for Ethnobotany

From June 8–12, 2025, the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague welcomed the annual meeting of the Society for Ethnobotany (SEB) – held for the first time in the Czech Republic. The event brought together dozens of experts, researchers, and students from around the world to explore traditional plant knowledge, sustainable use of biodiversity, and the deep relationships between people and nature.

The conference featured a rich program of academic lectures, panel discussions, workshops, and field excursions. During the "Teaching Tuesday," participants explored ethnobotany through virtual reality, exchanged teaching practices, and discussed innovative approaches to education. Poster sessions and interdisciplinary workshops further enriched the experience.



The conference officially opened on the evening of June 8 and concluded with thematic excursions after three days of engaging presentations.

The Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences would like to thank all speakers, partners, and volunteers who made this exceptional event a success.

6th International Multidisciplinary Conference for Young Researchers (MCYR 2025): Science and Innovation for a Sustainable Future

The Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences invites young researchers to submit abstracts for MCYR 2025, focusing on interdisciplinary science



and innovation for sustainability. The conference offers a platform to share research, network, and address global challenges.

Key Themes:

- Climate and Sustainability
- Technology and Innovation
- Plants and Agriculture
- Animals and Ecology
- Society and Culture

All accepted abstracts will be published online with an ISBN.

More info and submissions: mcyr.ftz.czu.cz/en

FTZ co-organized the Czech Evaluation Society Annual Conference 2025

On June 12, 2025, the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences (FTZ) actively participated in organizing the Czech Evaluation Society's Annual Conference held at CZU Prague. The conference, titled "Evaluation in a Dynamic World," featured expert panels, interactive workshops, and discussions on new evaluation methods, AI use, and development projects.

FTZ representatives Petra Chaloupková and Jana Mazancová presented on evaluation approaches in Erasmus+ projects, sharing insights from the ADVALUE project and highlighting factors affecting evaluation effectiveness.

The event also celebrated FTZ students Adéla Kohoutová, Joshua Brejcha, and Klára Siegllová, winners of the student evaluation competition.

Sex, Gender, and Females in Zoology – Past and Upcoming Lecture

The Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences hosted a lecture by Assoc. Prof. Ing. Karolína Brandlová, Ph.D., on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, in the CZU Aula. The lecture offered a fresh perspective on reproductive behavior, behavioral ecology, and the cultural contexts shaping our understanding of femininity and gender.

Participants explored questions such as how to biologically define a female, what strategies females use in mate selection, and what fairy tales reveal about gender stereotypes. The event was part of the international AGRIGEP project (Horizon Europe), focused on promoting gender equality in agricultural and natural science universities through inclusive Gender Equality Plans.

Upcoming Lecture Invitation (in English)

We also warmly invite you to a follow-up lecture by Assoc. Prof. Karolína Brandlová titled "Sex, Gender, and Females in Zoology."

This lecture will present intriguing insights into sex, gender, and female behavior in the animal world—and beyond.



- **OCTOBER 16, 2025**
- **3:30–5:00 PM**
- **CZU AULA**

Speaker: **Assoc. Prof. Karolína Brandlová**

The lecture will be held in English and is open to the general public.

International Cooperation



Strengthening Academic Cooperation Between CZU and Prince of Songkla University

Dr. Olga Leuner recently visited Prince of Songkla University (PSU), Thailand, as part of an international credit mobility exchange. She led a workshop on "How to Design Your Scientific Poster," helping students enhance their research presentations.

Following this, Dr. Petra Chaloupková presented study opportunities at CZU's Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences, highlighting the Tropical AgroEcology online program and the new Double Degree Master's program, which allows students to study one year in Prague and one year at PSU.

She also shared information on scholarships available through the International Credit Mobility 2023–2026 program, enabling Thai students and faculty to study at CZU.

This collaboration, ongoing for 15 years, is supported by Erasmus+ projects and continues to strengthen international partnerships in tropical agriculture.

FTZ Establishes Cooperation with Fiji National University

In April 2025, Assoc. Prof. Johana Rondevaldová, Ph.D., from the Department of Tropical Crops and Agroforestry at the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences (FTZ), Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, visited Fiji National University (FNU) under the Erasmus+ KA171 academic mobility program.

The visit focused on the Koronivia campus of FNU's College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry on Viti Levu island. Assoc. Prof. Rondevaldová delivered two well-received lectures on neglected and underutilized tropical crops and sustainable agricultural systems, sparking engaging discussions with students.

In addition to teaching, she held strategic meetings with FNU experts on potential joint research projects, particularly concerning Fiji's lesser-known crops and their role in sustainable agriculture and local food systems.



Discussions with FNU leadership also explored academic mobility, student and staff exchanges, summer schools, and formal partnership agreements to strengthen institutional collaboration.

This trip deepened mutual understanding of South Pacific biodiversity and traditions and laid groundwork for enhanced academic cooperation between FTZ and FNU.

Agroforestry, traditional knowledge & university cooperation along the Silk Road



FTZ team – Iva Kučerová, Zbyněk Polesný, Ayat Ullah & Vladimír Verner – visited Kyrgyzstan to strengthen academic partnerships and explore local sustainability efforts.

The 10-day journey included meetings with the University of Central Asia and its Mountain Societies Research Institute in the mountainous city of Naryn. The team also visited research sites developed in collaboration with Germany's Rhein-Waal University, supported by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

In Bishkek, they held discussions with the Kyrgyz National Agrarian University, with whom FTZ has maintained cooperation since 2006. Together, they evaluated the impact of a joint project (2008–2010) in the Leylek district, which aimed to enhance sustainable agriculture and smallholder incomes through agroforestry development, fruit production, and food processing.

The expedition also visited project sites in the Kulundu administrative area, last studied in 2012 as part of FTZ's research on medicinal plants and traditional knowledge in southern Kyrgyzstan. FTZ proudly continues the Czech tradition of supporting this region since the 1920s. The trip was made possible thanks to the Erasmus+ KA171 programme.

Strengthening Ties with Cameroon: Long-Term Academic Cooperation with the University of Dschang

Since 2016, the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences has maintained a fruitful partnership with the University of Dschang (UoD) in Cameroon. Supported by the Erasmus+ KA171 programme, this collaboration has enabled multiple staff and student exchanges focused on renewable energy, food processing, and gender equality as key drivers of rural development.



In total, six academic and two student mobilities from UoD to CZU and four mobilities from CZU to Cameroon have been realized. Special attention is given to biogas technology and its application in local contexts.

In May 2025, the cooperation was further strengthened through the teaching visits of Jana Mazancová and Jiří Hejkrlik at the Faculty of Agriculture and Agrisciences and the Faculty of Economics and Management. These activities included engagement with the private sector in aquaculture and energy, as well as joint fieldwork with local researchers.

This long-standing partnership is a testament to the impact of international cooperation on academic careers, research, and sustainable development.

Research trip to Laos: plants for science and student research

In April 2025, Prof. Ladislav Kokoska, researcher Markéta Houdková, and MSc student Mikuláš Středa from the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences, Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, went on a field



research expedition to Laos as part of Erasmus+ KA171. Their mission: to collect medicinal and edible plants and to strengthen cooperation with Savannakhet University. The samples are now being analysed in the Laboratory of

Ethnobotany and Ethnopharmacology. The results will be published in scientific journals and serve as the basis for thesis projects focused on medicinal and aromatic plants of Southeast Asia and their potential in treating respiratory diseases and colon cancer-related infections.

FTZ Strengthens Academic Cooperation to Support Moldova and Ukrainian Refugees

The Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences (FTZ) at Czech University of Life Sciences Prague continues its impactful projects in Moldova, led by Assoc. Prof. Tatiana Alexiou Ivanova, Ph.D., prof. h.c., funded by the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

One project focuses on modernizing agricultural higher education in Moldova, enhancing teaching quality and aligning studies with labor market needs. The other supports Ukrainian refugees through academic collaboration between Moldovan and Czech universities.

Recent activities included the Alumni Meetup Moldova 2025 at the Czech Embassy in Chişinău, expert participation in the Technical University of Moldova's Open Doors Day, and a training session hosted by FTZ for representatives of Moldovan partner universities.

A highlight was a meeting with CZU Vice-Rector Prof. Michal Lošťák, discussing experiences integrating Ukrainian students and academics displaced by the 2022 conflict. These initiatives demonstrate FTZ's ongoing commitment to development cooperation, education, and regional support.

FTZ ICARD Students Conduct Research in the Amazon



Jan Müldner and Anna Pražáková, bachelor students of the ICARD program at FTZ, carried out their thesis research in the Brazilian Amazon, focusing on deforestation, sustainable farming, and local palm species. Their work supports the TRACE research team's goal to enhance food security and promote agrobiodiversity in vulnerable agricultural communities.

During their stay in Manaus, they visited key sites like the Museu da Amazônia and the Federal University of Amazonia, gaining valuable insights into the region's

ecology and traditional farming. The students overcame logistical challenges and connected with local farmers to understand their relationship with the forest and sustainable practices.

Anna and Jan's experiences deepened their appreciation for the Amazon's biodiversity and the urgent need to protect it—knowledge that enriches their academic work and future careers.



The ICARD program offers students hands-on international experience and training in sustainable rural development, preparing them for impactful careers worldwide.

Academic cooperation with Bhutan

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hynek Roubík, Dean of the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences, recently returned from a successful academic mission to Bhutan supported by the Erasmus+ KA171 programme. Hosted by the Royal University of Bhutan – specifically the College of Science and Technology and the College of Natural Resources – Dr. Roubík delivered expert lectures and held strategic meetings focused on sustainable agriculture, circular economy, and future collaboration.

This visit marks an important step in CZU's internationalization strategy and opens new opportunities for joint research and student mobility.

SmartAgriCambodia Project Launches in Battambang to Promote Sustainable Agriculture

The SmartAgriCambodia project officially kicked off on May 16–17, 2025, at the National University of Battambang (NUBB), marking a new chapter in sustainable agricultural development in northwestern Cambodia. The two-day event brought together academic partners, local cooperatives, NGOs, government officials, and international stakeholders. Highlights included opening remarks from NUBB's Rector, the Czech Deputy Ambassador to Cambodia, and the Governor of Battambang, followed by the signing of a collaboration agreement between CZU and NUBB, establishing a strong foundation for long-term cooperation.

CZU experts, including Dr. Kristina Heráková, Prof. David Herák, and Dr. Petra Chaloupková, presented the project's goals to modernize farming practices, improve livelihoods, and strengthen institutional capacity. Local partners such as the Faculty of Agriculture and Food Processing at NUBB, Baide, LHCO, and Tasey Samaki Agricultural Cooperative were introduced.

The launch also established the project's governance bodies and featured focus group discussions with diverse stakeholders to shape future activities.

Supported by Czech Aid, SmartAgriCambodia aims to deliver smart, locally tailored agricultural solutions with lasting impact in the Battambang region.

CZU and Prince of Songkla University to Launch Joint Double Degree Master's Program

Czech University of Life Sciences Prague (CZU) and Prince of Songkla University (PSU), Thailand, are launching a joint Double Degree Master's program titled "Agricultural Development – International Development and Agricultural Economics." This program combines the strengths of both universities, offering students expanded module choices, cross-cultural academic experiences, and dual supervision for research. FTZ representatives visited PSU to finalize the cooperation agreement and held workshops on food security, forest product commercialization, study program promotion, and scientific poster design. This new program marks a significant step in enhancing academic collaboration and opportunities in tropical agriculture.

Collaborative Innovation for Sustainable Value Chains (CI4VC) and Green Plate Forum 3.0

The CI4VC project, involving BOKU, CZU, and SLU universities, connects students across disciplines to develop case studies on sustainable value chains from East African countries, including Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Uganda, and Tanzania.

Students analyze food systems from production to consumption, culminating in presentations at the Green Plate Forum 3.0 held on June 24, 2025, at BOKU Vienna. The forum featured international students and staff sharing research and tasting sustainable dishes inspired by global cuisines.

FTZ students presented case studies on bean, sorghum, and mango value chains, contributing to discussions on sustainable agriculture, food security, and nutrition. The event showcased the power of interdisciplinary collaboration and cultural exchange in advancing sustainable agri-food systems.

Celebrating 15 Years of Collaboration between FTZ and Royal University of Agriculture, Cambodia



In March 2025, the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences (FTZ) celebrated 15 years of successful collaboration with the Royal University of Agriculture (RUA) in Cambodia. The occasion featured a photo exhibition and thematic seminar highlighting joint projects, summer schools, research, and experiences of students and staff involved in this long-term partnership.



The event included presentations from key experts such as Ing. Petra Chaloupková, Ph.D., Ing. Olga Leuner, Ph.D., and others, as well as contributions from Cambodian students and interactive activities. The exhibition showcased milestones and introduced a new project for 2025–2027. Many FTZ researchers and students contributed to this fruitful cooperation, with special thanks to Miloslav Petrtyl for his photography documenting the partnership.



Botanical Garden

FTZ Botanical Garden in 2025: A Year of Growth, Education, and Recognition



The **Botanical Garden of the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences (BZ FTZ)** has had a dynamic and impactful year in 2025, expanding its role in public outreach, education, conservation, and expert engagement.

PODCAST SERIES "IN THE GREENHOUSE WITH..."

BZ serves as the recording site for the podcast *Ve skleníku s...*, hosted by **Assoc. Prof. Ladislav Miko**, environmental advisor to the President of the Czech Republic. The series features insightful conversations with renowned personalities, including **Dana Drábová**, **Tomki Němec**, and FTZ's own **Anežka Daníčková**. The project is supported by the **Ministry of the Environment**.

PUBLIC TOURS & EVENTS

BZ welcomed the public during several unique occasions:

- **Valentine's Night Tour:** Evening guided visits lit only by fairy lights.
- **Open Garden Weekend** (June 8) and **University Garden Party** (June 14): Featured guided tours, exotic fruit tastings (e.g., passion fruit, papaya, dragon fruit), and interactive activities.

NATIONAL COLLECTIONS

In 2025, BZ proudly announced its third official National Collection – Subtropical Crops – joining the existing collections of Citrus and Tropical Crops. These are considered national and even European treasures under the Nagoya Protocol framework.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & RECOGNITION

- BZ received a **grant from the City of Prague** to launch a new environmental education programme for schools: *"Tropical and Subtropical Treasures: A Path to Sustainability"*, starting in autumn 2025.
- Recognised as an official **Environmental Education Centre (EKOCESTRUM)**, BZ now supports a wider range of visitor groups and can apply for additional grants.
- **Ing. Anežka Daníčková**, Head of BZ, was elected to the **Board of the Union of Botanical Gardens of the Czech Republic**, a role that shapes national strategy for plant conservation and education.

WORKSHOPS, EXHIBITIONS & OUTREACH

- **Herb Day Workshop** (at the National Agricultural Museum): Visitors created their own herbal tea blends for blood sugar balance.
- **Exhibitions:** Hosted two panel exhibitions – *"Poisonous Season"* and *"Plants and Sugars"* – in cooperation with Prague and Třeboň botanical gardens.

BOTANICAL GARDEN DAY (MAY 22)



BZ opened its tropical and subtropical greenhouse, showcased the *"Plants and Sugars"* exhibition, and offered plant sales (chili varieties, herbs, and balcony plants) grown by students.

EVENT DECORATIONS & SUPPORT

BZ contributed flower arrangements and plants for university events such as the Open Day, Miss Agro, Graduation Ball, and official conferences.

SEED EXCHANGE

In 2025, BZ published the **53rd Index Seminum**, offering **663 seed items**. Through global seed exchange, BZ enriches its collections of annuals, useful, medicinal, and technical plants. Seeds are offered to over 200 botanical institutions worldwide.



Alumni

Ing. Panayiota Sofocleous, Head of Sector at Cyprus Ministry



We are proud to introduce Ing. Panayiota Sofocleous, who has been serving as the Head of the Agrochemicals and Feeding stuffs Sector at the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development, and Environment of Cyprus since 2002. In her role, she oversees the legislation related to Plant Protection Products, Biocides, Fertilizers, and Animal Feeds. Ms. Panayiota Sofocleous chose FTZ for its high-quality education and the opportunity to study abroad.

During her studies, she gained crucial knowledge in agricultural sciences, particularly in Plant Protection, which continues to support her professional career. She cherishes the friendships formed with classmates from around the world, fondly remembers her time at FTZ, and considers the Czech Republic her second home.

You can read the full interview [here](#).

Ing. Lenka Kružíková, Leading HR



Meet FTZ honourable graduate Ing. Lenka Kružíková, who has built a successful career in HR and the IT sector. After transitioning from IT roles to HR in 2002, she joined innogy (formerly RWE) in 2010, where she currently leads HR for Czech operations, managing a team of 40 specialists. She oversees the full HR agenda - from employer branding and recruitment to employee training, benefits, and payroll. Her studies at FTZ, particularly in languages and economics, greatly shaped her approach to working with people. Lenka values the

international environment and practical experiences gained during her time at the faculty. We truly appreciate her involvement in the CZU alumni platform, network.czu.cz, and her ongoing support and contributions to our faculty.

You can read the full interview [here](#).

Welcoming Our Alumnus

DR. EDUARDO ALBERTO LARA REIMERS

It was a pleasure to welcome Dr. Eduardo Alberto Lara Reimers - an esteemed FTZ graduate from a prestigious university in Mexico "Universidad Autónoma Agraria Antonio Narro" - back to our faculty and to strengthen our long-term collaboration. Dr. Eduardo Reimers, who specializes in plant sciences, particularly ethnobotany, in vitro techniques, and agroforestry, actively collaborates with Prof. Eloy Fernández Cusimamani and maintains strong ties with FTZ and its network of graduates.



During his recent visit, Dr. Eduardo was warmly welcomed by the new Dean of the faculty, Assoc. Prof. Hynek Roubík and received updates on current developments, ongoing projects, and new opportunities at FTZ. We sincerely thank Dr. Eduardo Reimers for his continued support, inspiring work, and valuable contribution to our academic and research environment. We look forward to further collaboration in the future.

Garden Festival: A Celebration of Generations at CZU

On June 14, the Czech University of Life Sciences (CZU) welcomed summer with its annual Garden Fest, gathering alumni, students, staff, and the local community. The event featured faculty tours, interactive science stations, and fun activities for children, creating a lively atmosphere throughout the day.

During the silver graduation ceremonies, FTZ alumni were honoured and received their commemorative diplomas, celebrating 25 years since they completed their studies. Vice-Rector Michal Lošťák highlighted the university's global success, noting its ranking among the top 3% of universities. The fest continued with delicious food, drinks, and a showcase of local start-ups, reinforcing the strong connections and pride shared by all generations of the university community.

Join the CZU Alumni Club!

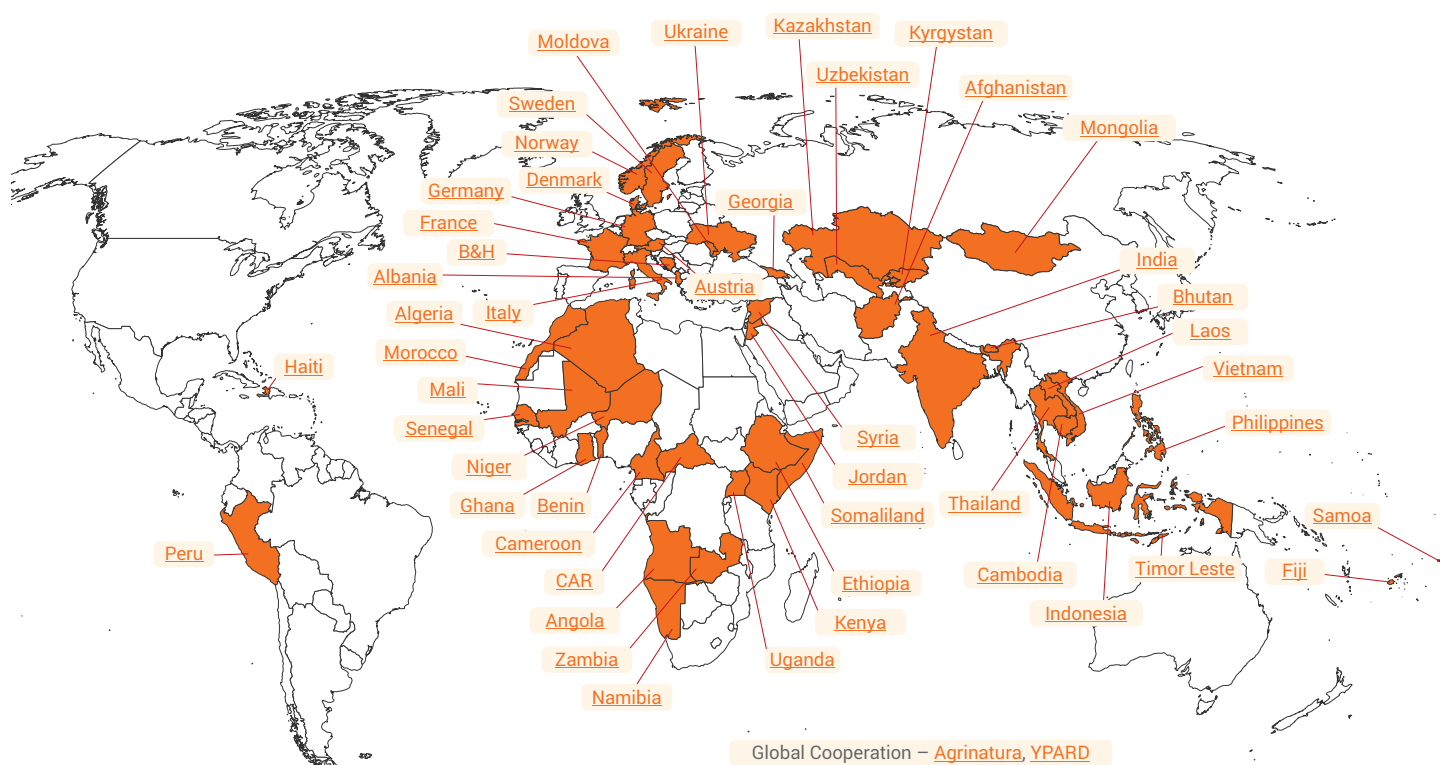
Stay updated on campus news, find job opportunities, internships, and connect with alumni, students, and professionals. Expand your network today!

Sign up now: network.czu.cz

FTZ Projects and Partnerships

The Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences (FTZ) at the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague (CZU) is a unique institution in the Czech Republic with over fifty years of expertise in tropical agriculture, rural development, and sustainable natural resource management. FTZ is dedicated to educating Czech and international students and is actively engaged in research that addresses the specific needs of tropical and developing regions.

The faculty's mission is to transfer cutting-edge knowledge and technology between the Czech Republic, the EU, and tropical regions, while respecting local traditions and development levels. This global engagement is reflected in FTZ's numerous projects and partnerships across various countries, as shown on the accompanying map.



Do you want to cooperate with the FTZ?

We are interested in cooperation on

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

We look forward to hearing from you!

Contact

- Please visit our [homepage](#)

■ Follow us     

CONTACT US!

Newsletter contact person:

Lucie Grošaftová grosaftova@ftz.czu.cz

FTZ Alumni contact person:

Jana Mandíková mandikova@ftz.czu.cz