



Tropical News

"Newsletter for
FTZ friends"

December 2025

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

A Word from the Dean

Dear colleagues, students, alumni, and partners,

as we approach the end of 2025, I would like to take a moment to reflect on an extraordinary year for the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences. This has been a period of growth, innovation, and renewed purpose - a year that demonstrated what our community can achieve when guided by our new motto: **"Leading Excellence in Tropical AgriSciences."**

From groundbreaking research missions and international collaborations, to strengthening ties with our partners across continents, the past twelve months have shown that excellence at FTZ is not only an aspiration - it is a daily practice lived out through your work, your ideas, and your dedication. Whether through empowering young researchers at MCYR 2025, supporting rural communities abroad, promoting sustainable technologies, or enriching our academic life here on campus, you have embodied the spirit of our values: **Be curious. Be courageous. Be kind.**

This year also marked important internal milestones. The Academic Senate approved the new names of two of our departments - the **Department of Wildlife and Animal Sciences** and the **Department of Food and BioResource Technology** – helping better reflect their evolving missions and identities. We also welcomed many new colleagues into our FTZ family, including **four new postdoctoral researchers**, whose energy and expertise will further strengthen our research and teaching capacities.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you – staff, students, alumni, and partners - for your hard work, creativity, and commitment. FTZ continues to thrive because of the people who believe in its mission and move it forward every day.

As we look ahead to 2026, I invite all of you to carry our values proudly. Continue exploring boldly, engaging openly, and supporting one another with kindness. Together, we will keep shaping a faculty that leads not only in research and education, but also in humanity and global responsibility.

On behalf of the entire leadership team, I wish you a peaceful and joyful end of the year. May 2026 bring new discoveries, new collaborations, and continued success!

With regards,

HYNEK ROUBÍK

Dean
Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences
Czech University of Life Sciences Prague

In This Issue

1 / A Word from the Dean

2 / Academic Issues

5 / Our Successes

7 / Events at FTZ

9 / News from the Botanical Garden

10 / International Cooperaton

13 / Alumni

14 / 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

Dean's Awards 2025: Recognizing Excellence at FTZ

The Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences proudly celebrated outstanding achievements in teaching, research, outreach, and long-term academic contribution during the 2025 Dean's Awards ceremony held on 10 December 2025.

Prof. RNDr. Pavla Hejčmanová, Ph.D. received the *Dean's Award for the Best Publication / Science Popularization Piece of 2025* for the photographic exhibition **"25 Years of Antelope Conservation."** The project highlights a quarter-century dedicated conservation work and its impact on protecting vulnerable antelope species across tropical regions.

In the category of innovative teaching, the *Dean's Award for the Best Moodle Course – 1st Place* was presented to **Ing. Tereza Pilařová, Ph.D.** for her course **Migration and Development**. The course was recognized for its outstanding structure, interactive tools, and engaging approach that helps students explore current global migration trends and their development implications.

The *Dean's Award for the Best Moodle Course – 2nd Place* went to **doc. Ing. Karolína Brandlová, Ph.D.** for her long-term development of the course **Introduction to Wildlife Management**. The course was acknowledged for its practical focus, up-to-date content, and valuable digital learning environment supporting the next generation of conservation professionals.

All awards were presented by **doc. Ing. Hynek Roubík, Ph.D.**, Dean of the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences, Czech University of Life Sciences Prague.

Outstanding Achievements of Our Students and Young Researchers

The Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences is proud to highlight several remarkable accomplishments by its students and early-career researchers, whose work contributes to scientific advancement, international cooperation, and the vibrant academic community at CZU Prague. Their successes reflect the faculty's commitment to high-quality education, impactful research, and global engagement. Below, we share stories of award recipients whose dedication and achievements continue to elevate the reputation and mission of FTZ.



MSc. Seyma Celina, Ph.D. from the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences, CZU Prague, has received two prestigious honours – the Josef Hlávka Award and the Prof. Stoklasa Award.

Her research focuses on the molecular and ecological dynamics of the Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever virus and its main vector, *Hyalomma marginatum*. In the context of climate change, this topic plays a crucial role in surveillance and preparedness within a One Health framework.



On 10 November 2025, **MSc. Neha Gupta, Ph.D.** was honored at the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague for her exceptional doctoral research titled "Effect of Artificial Polyploidization on the Biological Activities of Medicinal and Ornamental Plants."

She completed her PhD at the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences within three years, demonstrating remarkable determination, innovation, and scientific excellence. For her

significant contribution to agriculture, forestry, and environmental sciences, she received the **Minister of Agriculture Award for the best doctoral research**.

Her work brings new insights into plant biotechnology and opens promising opportunities for future applications. The faculty is proud to support young researchers whose work drives the field forward.



Bc. Beenzu Munkombwe Muzyamba, a student of the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences (FTZ) from Zambia, has been awarded the prestigious **Professor Miroslav Vlček Extraordinary Scholarship**. This recognition highlights her exceptional contribution to the international community at CZU Prague through her active role in the **FTZ Student Ambassadors**, support for incoming students, participation in academic and intercultural initiatives, and dedicated representation of the university at faculty and international events.

Her long-term commitment, leadership and enthusiasm make Beenzu an inspiring member of the FTZ community.

Congratulations on these outstanding achievements!

FTZ Launched the University of the Third Age Program

The Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences at CZU Prague launched a two-year University of the Third Age (U3V) program, "*Conservation and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources in the Tropics*". The program was designed for seniors interested in environmental protection, global challenges, and understanding different cultures and regions.

Experts from all faculty departments delivered thematic lectures, complemented by excursions to research and educational facilities, including the FTZ Botanical Garden, herbarium, laboratories, and the moose and guanaco research station.

For more information, **contact Mgr. Martina Komárková, Ph.D.:** komarkova@ftz.czu.cz.

Science in Action for High School Students

The Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences at CZU Prague brings science closer to high school students through lectures, workshops, and excursions that enrich biology, geography, ecology, and social sciences. Our students and young researchers will share insights from their fieldwork in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, showing that science can be an adventure.

Programs can be held at your school or on our campus—in classrooms, labs, or the botanical garden. English-language sessions are available, led by Czech and international PhD students. Topics include wildlife and plant studies, sustainable technologies, food security, and bioeconomy. Excursions offer hands-on experiences in our labs, botanical garden, and research stations.

Contact: Ing. Libuše Mercl, Ph.D. mercll@ftz.czu.cz – we can provide the current lecture offer or tailor a program to your curriculum.

FTZ Faculty Day Took Place on 17 October

Our Annual Academic Community Meeting, Student Conference and Faculty Day took place on 17 October. The afternoon began with the Academic Community Meeting and student presentations, followed by outdoor activities, games and a barbecue with Traktor Bistro. Students and staff enjoyed international snacks prepared by BeFair and the Student Ambassadors, took a group photo in front of the faculty, and closed the day with an Angolan Kizomba dance performance.



Student Ambassadors: A Semester Full of Activities and Community Building

The FTZ Student Ambassadors have been actively involved in strengthening international student life throughout the semester. Alongside welcoming six new ambassadors from Cambodia, Ghana, India, Myanmar, Turkey, and Zimbabwe, the team took part in a range of faculty events focused on peer support, diversity, and sustainability.

Key activities included a Pub Quiz and international food tasting during Faculty Day on 17 October 2025, which brought students and staff together in an informal, friendly atmosphere. At the Open Day on 21 October 2025, Student Ambassadors hosted an information stand, sharing their experiences and explaining how they support



prospective and newly admitted students. From 2 to 12 December 2025, they also organised the Christmas Swap – a now traditional initiative promoting sustainability and community spirit through the exchange of books, clothes, and other items.

Through these activities, the Student Ambassadors continue to create a welcoming, inclusive environment and help students feel connected and supported within the FTZ community.

The Menza Collective – Advancing Sustainable Food Procurement

The **Menza Collective**, one of the winners of the **Menu for Change Challenge 2025**, is developing the *SustainMap* project to promote more sustainable food procurement in university cafeterias. Supported by **EIT Food**, the **Seeding The Future Foundation**, the **Young Professionals Platform**, and **YPARD**, the team is piloting the initiative at **CZU Prague**, where they collect insights from students, staff, and faculty to propose practical steps and indicators for more responsible sourcing.

The project is led by:

- **Ing. Martin Richter** – Coordination & Implementation
- **Bc. Luisa Maïke Buss** – Marketing & Communication
- **MSc. Luisa Pereira Goss** – Monitoring & Evaluation
- **Ing. Petra Chaloupková, Ph.D.** – Mentoring

Contact: menzacollective@gmail.com

Biowaste Sorting at FTZ Continues!

The pilot phase of biowaste sorting, which ran from May to September at the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences, has been successfully completed. Biowaste sorting is now part of daily life at FTZ. Containers remain in common areas and kitchens – everyone can join in and help make our faculty more sustainable.

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. During the second half of the year we prepared 3 interviews. Two of them are already available:

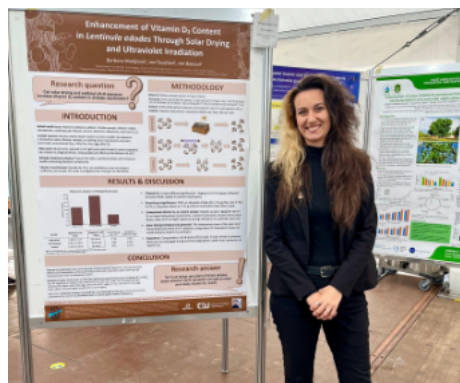
- We released a new episode of Podcast plný života featuring **Ing. Markéta Houdková, Ph.D.** from the LEE Lab at FTZ. She shared insights from her research in Indonesia, exploring the connection between tropical plant aromas, traditional medicine, and the development of natural antibiotics.
- We released a new episode of Podcast plný života featuring **Doc. Ing. Tatiana Alexiou Ivanova, prof. h. c., Ph.D.**, head of the Biofuel Laboratory and the BioEnviro Research Team at FTZ. She discussed the role of biomass in tropical and subtropical regions, the advantages of biofuels, and how research in renewable energy and waste management supports both local and global sustainability efforts.

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

On the Road to Knowledge: FTZ Summer Photo Challenge 2025

This summer, the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences (FTZ), CZU Prague, invited students and staff to participate in the photo challenge “*On the Road to Knowledge*”, showcasing their research and field experiences worldwide. A total of 24 submissions came from countries including Lithuania, Uganda, Ecuador, Croatia, and the Central African Republic.

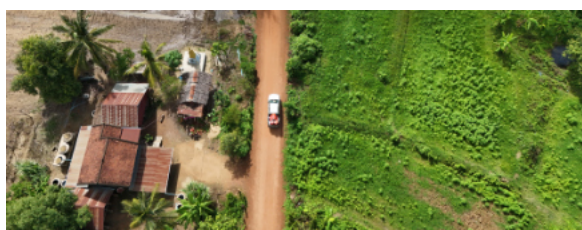
Twelve standout photos have been selected for the FTZ 2026 calendar, featuring diverse projects – from Erasmus+ research in Lithuania and invasive species studies in Croatia to animal behavior in Ecuador, traditional knowledge in Uganda, and agroforestry initiatives in the Central African Republic. A new round of the challenge opens November 2025–April 2026, inviting students and staff to share high-resolution photos from their travels, research, or study programmes.



Our Successes

From Biomass to Biochar: BRT Team Launched Sustainable Training in Cambodia

At the turn of May and June 2025, experts from the BioResources & Technology (BRT) Division – PhD student and Project Manager Jan Staš and Postdoctoral Researcher Chama Theodore Ketuama – carried out a five-day training mission in Pursat Province, Cambodia, as part of the V-BIOCHAR project. The initiative builds on the previous V-SOIL project and introduces low-cost, locally adaptable biochar technologies designed for rural conditions.



Together with ADRA Cambodia, the team delivered a programme combining theory and hands-on practice, demonstrating how agricultural waste can be transformed into biochar and integrated with vermicomposting to improve soil health and reduce reliance on chemical fertilizers. Local trainees, including agricultural extension officers and representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, actively engaged in the sessions and even improved barrel-type kilns to enhance production efficiency.

This first mission marked an important step towards empowering rural communities to adopt sustainable soil-enrichment technologies.

The V-BIOCHAR project is implemented by UNDP with financial support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, and coordinated by ADRA Czech Republic, ADRA Cambodia, and the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences, CZU Prague.

Waste as an Opportunity: Czech Expertise Shared in Cambodia

In August 2025, Assoc. Prof. Tatiana Alexiou Ivanova from the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences (CZU Prague) led a five-day training at the National University of Battambang within the SmartAgriCambodia project supported by CzechAid.

The course introduced practical, sustainable waste-management solutions, showing how biomass can be transformed into energy, fertiliser, or other value-added products. Participants explored technologies such as briquetting, pelleting, composting and biochar, with a focus on approaches suitable for Cambodian conditions. Field visits

to local facilities further highlighted how simple improvements can boost efficiency and environmental benefits.

The mission underscored a key message: waste should not be viewed as a burden, but as an opportunity. By sharing Czech know-how, the project supports cleaner environments and more resilient rural communities in Cambodia.

25 Years of Czech-Senegalese Cooperation in Nature Conservation

On 22 October 2025, a ceremony at the National Assembly of Senegal in Dakar marked 25 years of cooperation between Senegal and the Czech Republic in nature conservation and biodiversity protection. The event, organized by the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Dakar, celebrated long-term achievements in protecting the Western Derby eland (*Tragelaphus derbianus derbianus*) – the world's largest antelope and a symbol of the Senegalese savannah.

The Czech scientific community was represented by Prof. Pavla Hejcmanová and Assoc. Prof. Karolína Brandlová from the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences, Czech University of Life Sciences Prague (FTZ CZU) and the non-profit organization Antelope Conservation. In their presentations, they highlighted the outcomes of long-term research and fieldwork, as well as Czech-Senegalese cooperation that has contributed to the protection of this endangered species and the sustainable management of the savannah ecosystem.

The programme also included a roundtable on biodiversity protection and sustainable development and the opening of the exhibition "25 Years of Antelope Conservation." The President of the Senegalese Parliamentary Network for the Environment (REPES), Mr. Samba Dang, emphasized the importance of green diplomacy and praised the Czech Republic for its continued partnership in promoting conservation, ecotourism, and environmental policy development in Senegal.



New Book by the BRT Research Team

The **BioResources and Technology (BRT)** research team at the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences has published a new expert book in the prestigious **Springer Green Energy and Technology series**. The publication *Sustainable Biotechnology and Environmental Protection: A Four-Pronged Strategy* is authored by **Dr. Yelizaveta Chernysh, Dr. Viktoriia Chubur, and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hynek Roubík**.

The book presents a four-pillar approach to addressing environmental challenges through biotechnology—from preventing waste generation and reducing toxicity to improving waste management and transforming waste into valuable resources. It highlights how biotechnological innovations can drive sustainability, environmental protection, and the development of a circular bioeconomy.

Bioeconomy as a Tool for Climate Action: FTZ Dean Presented in the Czech Senate

On 23 September 2025, **Assoc. Prof. Ing. Hynek Roubík, Ph.D.**, Dean of the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences (FTZ) at CZU Prague and Director of the BRT Research Team, presented in the Senate of the Czech Republic on using bioeconomy to address climate change.

He highlighted bioeconomy's practical impact—transforming energy, agriculture, industry, and waste management, creating jobs, and supporting sustainable rural development. Drawing on European and African examples, he emphasized the political responsibility to invest in bioeconomy for climate leadership, competitiveness, and energy security. His key message: *"The future will not be fossil. The future will be bioeconomical."* The presentation sparked discussion on advancing the Czech National Bioeconomy Strategy and aligning with the European Green Deal.

FTZ at the ELLS General Assembly & CI4VC Project Presentation

Representatives of the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences took part in the ELLS 2025 General Assembly and Forum in Sweden on 13–15 November. Colleagues from the International Office and Study Administration joined sessions on student services, best practices, and strengthening collaboration within the Euroleague for Life Sciences network.

A key highlight was the presentation of the project **"Collaborative Innovation for Sustainable Value Chains: A Case Study Approach (CI4VC)"**, jointly developed by BOKU, CZU, and SLU. The initiative links students across universities and study programs, enabling them to analyse sustainable value chains in selected East African countries. Courses involved in the project span value chain management, plant protection, project evaluation, scientific communication, and food processing technologies.

Project outcomes were presented by **Ing. Petra Chaloupková, Ph.D.** and **Ing. Olga Leuner, Ph.D. (CZU)**, **Dr. Andreas Melcher (BOKU)**, and **Dr. Anna Maňourová (SLU)**, who shared insights into organising transdisciplinary activities. Students contributed feedback and produced short videos summarising their case studies.

FTZ Students at the ELLS Scientific Student Conference 2025

Alongside the General Assembly, the **17th ELLS Scientific Student Conference** took place on 14–15 November in Uppsala under the theme *"Living the ELLSperience – Cultivating Scientific Innovation."* The event brought together students from across Europe to present their research, expand knowledge, and engage in scientific dialogue. Awards for the best poster and oral presentations highlighted the high quality of student work.

FTZ was represented by PhD students **Ing. Simona Tomanová, Ing. Martin Richter, and Ing. Faithful Finney Adubofour**, who presented research grounded in their Master's thesis topics. Their active participation underscored the strong international engagement of FTZ students within the ELLS network.

Launch of the New Double Degree Master's Programme with Prince of Songkla University

FTZ successfully held the launch event for the new Double Degree Master's Programme in Agricultural Development – International Development and Agricultural Economics, developed in cooperation with Prince of Songkla University (PSU), Thailand. The sessions took place on 23 October and representatives from PSU and FTZ introduced the structure of the programme, its focus on tropical agriculture and sustainable agri-food systems, and the opportunities it offers for gaining two master's degrees in two academic environments. Students also had the chance to ask questions during an open Q&A session.



Events at FTZ

FTZ at Země živitelka

Researchers from the Animal Physiology and Behaviour team represented the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences at the 51st Země živitelka agrosalon. Visitors learned how scientific methods – from analysing antlers or blood samples to observing how a calf nurses – help us better understand animals, protect them, and improve their welfare.

The team presented their work on Saturday, August 23, at the CZU booth in Pavilion T2. The showcase was prepared by Mgr. Martina Komárková, Ph.D., Vice-Dean of FTZ and member of the research team.

Harvest Festival at CZU Lány 2025

On Friday, September 5, 2025, CZU celebrated the end of the harvest season in Lány. Visitors enjoyed demonstrations of agricultural machinery and farm animals, university presentations, sales of CZU products, children's activities, and an evening concert. FTZ offered an engaging program combining education and fun: workshops on herbal teas for blood sugar balance, quizzes on tropical and subtropical plants, guided tours of antelopes and llamas, and activities by the Antelope Conservation Society. It was a great opportunity for families and the public to explore the university, enjoy the outdoors, and learn about FTZ's research and conservation efforts.

Researchers Night

On Friday, 26 September, the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences joined the nationwide **Researchers' Night** with a programme that attracted a large number of visitors to explore the fascinating world of science.

Guests had the opportunity to take part in a **guided tour of the FTZ Botanical Garden** – *Hidden Treasures: Rare Spices and Their Stories* – visit **open laboratories of Plant Explants and Molecular Genetics**, and explore the **FTZ Herbarium**.

The evening also featured a **lecture and quiz by Prof. Pavla Hejčmanová** on the diversity of life in African savannas, accompanied by a **photo exhibition** capturing *25 years of antelope conservation*. The high attendance and lively discussions confirmed that **science can be both engaging and inspiring**.

Thank you to all colleagues and students who contributed to making this event a success!

Exhibition on Trees: Invisible Thorns at FTZ

From **October 4–11, 2025**, the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences (CZU Prague) hosted the **Invisible Thorns** exhibition in collaboration with the student association **BeFair**. The exhibition highlighted the hidden social and environmental costs of cut flowers from Kenya, including low wages, poor working conditions, and environmental impacts, while showcasing the positive role of **Fairtrade** in supporting producers.

Part of the **Week for Decent Work**, the event engaged students and visitors in reflecting on sustainability, ethical supply chains, and the importance of fair work worldwide.

FTZ Hosted the ERSCP Conference

From 15 to 18 September 2025 FTZ CZU Prague hosted the **European Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production (ERSCP 2025)**. The conference brought together experts from academia, business, the public sector, and civil society to discuss collaborative approaches to sustainability. The modern FTZ Pavilion provided an ideal setting for sharing knowledge, fostering international cooperation, and exploring solutions for sustainable development in tropical and subtropical regions.

Agrigep Final Conference

The AGRIGEP project concluded with its Final Conference hosted by the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, bringing together experts from across Europe to reflect on the first generation of Gender Equality Plans in agriculture and life sciences. In the opening remarks, **Katharina Buse** (European Commission) highlighted AGRIGEP's contribution to Horizon Europe and the importance of leadership in driving institutional change. Keynote speaker **Marcela Linková** (Czech Academy of Sciences) emphasised the crucial role of change agents and the need for institutional support, recognition and cultural transformation.

Throughout the conference, participants discussed lessons from GEP 1.0 and priorities for the next phase, including stronger support for gender equality officers, long-term sustainability, and more robust monitoring. **Jana Mazancová** (FTZ CZU) stressed the importance of stakeholder engagement, while **Margreet van der Burg** (Wageningen University) underlined the relevance of integrating gender perspectives into agri-food research and teaching. The event closed with a shared commitment to advancing more inclusive, safe and equitable academic environments across Europe.

Sex, Gender, and Females in Zoology – Lecture in English

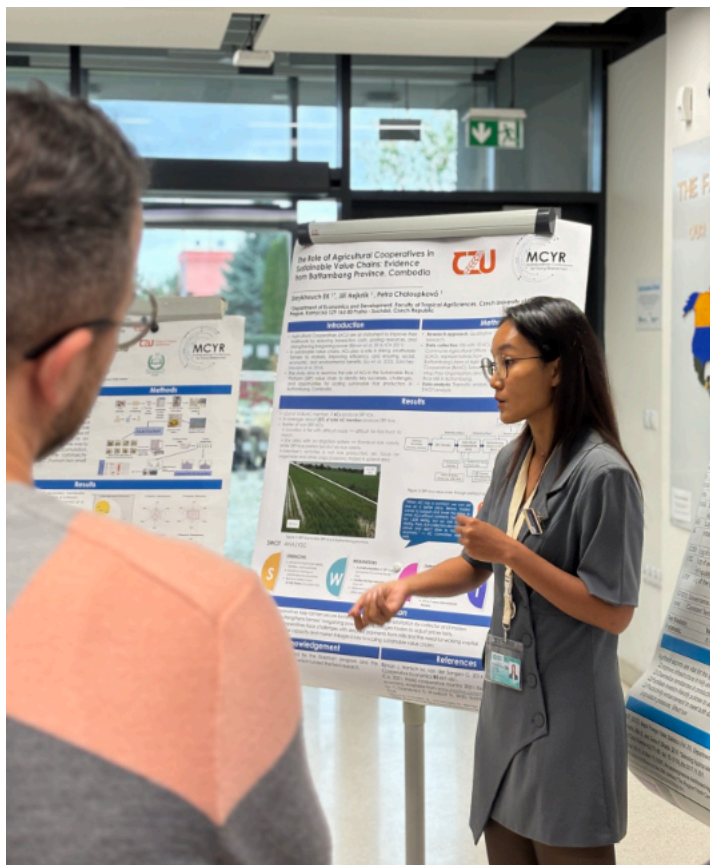
The Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences hosted a lecture by Assoc. Prof. Ing. Karolína Brandlová, Ph.D., on October 16, 2025, in the CZU Aula. The lecture offered a fresh perspective on reproductive behavior, behavioral ecology, and the cultural contexts shaping our understanding of femininity and gender.



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.

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

The Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences invited young researchers to submit abstracts for **MCYR 2025**, focusing on interdisciplinary science and innovation for sustainability. The conference provided a platform to share research, network, and address global challenges, covering themes such as climate and sustainability, technology and innovation, plants and agriculture, animals and ecology, and society and culture. More information was available at mcyr.ftz.czu.cz/en.



FTZ Open day in November

The Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences (FTZ) at CZU Prague held its Open Day on Friday, 21 November 2025, welcoming prospective students, parents, and the public. Visitors explored study programmes, toured laboratories and the Herbarium, and enjoyed guided visits of the CZU Botanical Garden. Exhibitions by research teams, Student Ambassadors, and the BeFair organisation highlighted current projects, giving participants insight into FTZ's work in sustainable agriculture, nature conservation, food security, animal welfare, and rural development.



News from the Botanical garden FTZ

Book Launch: Botanical Gardens and Arboreta of the Czech Republic



On 22 October 2025, the Botanical Garden of the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences (FTZ), Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, hosted the launch of the updated guide *Botanical Gardens and Arboreta of the Czech Republic*. The book, published by Academia, presents over forty botanical gardens and arboreta across the country, with contributions from the staff of each institution.

The guide was officially inaugurated by ecologist and environmental advisor to the Czech President, doc. RNDr. Ladislav Miko, Ph.D. Visitors and readers can now explore comprehensive information about plant collections, visitor access, and seasonal highlights, complemented by beautiful photographs.

"Botanical gardens are no longer just for scientists – they are vibrant centers for environmental education and public engagement," says Anežka Daničková, Head of the FTZ Botanical Garden. The garden offers hands-on programs for schools and the public, showcasing the fascinating world of tropical and subtropical plants and their importance for sustainability.

The book launch took place in the subtropical greenhouse of the FTZ Botanical Garden in Prague-Suchbát, celebrating the collaboration of Czech botanical institutions in promoting science, education, and conservation.

Autumn Chilli Exhibition in Botanical Garden FTZ



The Autumn Chilli Exhibition 2025 brought a vibrant mix of colours, flavours and aromas to FTZ from 21–25 October. Visitors explored new chilli varieties from around the world, tasted a range of chilli-based products and joined guided tours showcasing the diversity of the *Capsicum* genus. The event also included a small sale of our homemade chilli pastes. The exhibition once again highlighted the long-term expertise of FTZ in tropical crops and attracted both the university community and the public.



Greenhouse Podcast Series Continues

The Tropical Greenhouse served as the backdrop for new episodes of the popular *Ve skleníku* podcast over the summer. Doc. RNDr. Ladislav Miko, Ph.D., natural scientist and environmental advisor to the President of the Czech Republic, welcomed distinguished guests including photographer Tomki Němec, nuclear engineer Dana Drábová, and singer Zdenka Tichotová.

Study Trip to Slovakia and Hungary

In August, representatives of the Czech Union of Botanical Gardens, including FTZ Botanical Garden Head Ing. Anežka Daničková, took part in a study trip to Slovakia and Hungary. The delegation visited botanical gardens in Nitra, Vácrátót, and Fűvészkert, sharing

International Cooperation



Agricultural Cooperatives Drive Change in Cambodia

The SmartAgriCambodia project, supported by CzechAid, is helping agricultural cooperatives in Battambang become stronger and more sustainable. Led by Ing. Petra Chaloupková, Ph.D. and Ing. Jiří Hejkrlik, Ph.D. (FTZ, CZU Prague), with contributions from PhD students Ing. Sreykhouch Ek and Ing. Simona Tomanová, and experts Ing. Olga Leuner, Ph.D. (FTZ) and Ing. Václav Novák, Ph.D. (Faculty of Engineering, CZU), the team mapped active cooperatives, analysed value chains, and provided hands-on training on food waste management. Collaborations with local start-ups and practical demonstrations – from briquetting rice husks to improved irrigation – showed how Czech expertise can transform waste into resources and empower farmers as drivers of development. More informations [here](#).

AgriSci-UA: AgriSciences Platform for Scientific Enhancement of HEIs in Ukraine

The AgriSciences-UA Platform, founded and coordinated by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hynek Roubík, continues to play a vital role in supporting young teachers, researchers, and students in agricultural sciences across Ukraine. AgriSci-UA was built on years of collaboration between CZU and Ukrainian universities, starting as early as 2015. Supported this year by the Czech Republic Development Cooperation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, the platform connects young teachers, researchers, and students through a network of partnerships, mobility opportunities, and knowledge-sharing. Through joint research, interdisciplinary networking, and access to funding opportunities, AgriSci-UA has become a space where young academics not only grow professionally, but also contribute meaningfully to Ukraine's agricultural transformation.

Academic Solidarity in Times of War: Supporting Ukrainian Students

The project "Supporting Ukrainian Refugees through Academic Collaboration between Universities in Moldova and the Czech Republic", coordinated by doc. Ing. Tatiana Alexiou Ivanova, Ph.D. and funded by CzechAid, helps Ukrainian students continue their studies and adapt to new academic and cultural environments.

In September 2025, Ing. Petra Chaloupková, Ph.D. and Ing. Olga Leuner, Ph.D., together with Ing. Kseniia Paramonova, led six interactive workshops at the international conference Higher Education: Traditions, Values, Perspectives in Chişinău. Students practiced skills essential for academic and professional success – preparing CVs, cover letters, scholarship applications, and interview techniques – while receiving personalised feedback and guidance.

The initiative not only strengthened students' confidence and competencies but also deepened collaboration between CZU Prague and three Moldovan universities, demonstrating how education can serve as a tool of solidarity and support in times of crisis.

Strengthening Academic Ties between Thailand and the Czech Republic

The Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences (FTZ), CZU Prague, recently welcomed representatives from Prince of Songkla University (PSU), Thailand as part of the Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility project coordinated by Ing. Petra Chaloupková, Ph.D., dr. h.c. During their visit, Mrs. Pilaiwan Prapruit, Mrs. Rungrat Sae-Yang, and Asst. Prof. Chutima Tantikitti, Ph.D. delivered guest lectures, presented the new Double Degree Master's Programme in Agricultural Development, and shared insights into tropical agriculture and market systems in Southeast Asia.

The programme allows students to earn two Master's degrees in two years—one from PSU and one from CZU—while gaining international academic and cultural experience. The visit further strengthened the long-term partnership, fostering student mobility, intercultural understanding, and joint research in sustainable agriculture and rural development.



FTZ CZU at Education Fairs in Cambodia and Thailand

In mid-November, representatives of the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences (FTZ), CZU Prague travelled to Cambodia and Thailand to present study programmes and research activities, meet prospective students, strengthen partnerships, and reconnect with alumni. In Cambodia, Ing. Jan Staš, Ph.D., Ing. Simona Tomanová, and Ing. Lucie Grošaftová participated in the Study in Europe Fair 2025 in Phnom Penh and met alumnus Raksmei Phoeuk from the Royal University of Agriculture. In Thailand, Assoc. Prof. Ing. Vladimír Verner, Ph.D. and Lucie Grošaftová presented FTZ programmes alongside Dr Rungrat Saeyang, Asst. Prof. Dr Khwunta Khawmee, and Asst. Prof. Dr Kobchai Worrapimpong from Prince of Songkla University at the OCSC International Education Expo 2025 in Bangkok, also joining a Czech Alumni Meet Up organised by the Czech Embassy.

The visits strengthened international cooperation in education and research and inspired young people exploring study opportunities abroad. The participation in the expos and the development of the Master's Double Degree programme were supported by the NPO Green Deal project – NPO_CZU_MSMT-2125/2024-4.



Field Mission in Laos: Launching the Baseline Study on Single-Use Plastics



A two-week field mission in Savannakhet and Thakhek provinces officially kicked off our baseline study on single-use plastic (SUP) waste in Lao PDR. The project, led by Assoc. Prof. Hynek Roubík, Dr. Jan Staš, and Antoine Bercy from the BioResources and Technology division, is carried out in collaboration with Savannakhet University, Caritas Czechia, and Catholic Relief Services (CRS).

The team trained local students as enumerators, refined survey tools, and began data collection in urban and rural communities. Early results highlight heavy reliance on plastic, limited waste collection, and strong interest from local authorities in improving waste management. This study will provide the evidence base for realistic, community-driven solutions to tackle plastic pollution in Laos.



Research on the Only African Deer: Insights from FTZ CZU



Assoc. Prof. Francisco Ceacero Herrador, Ph.D. from the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences (CZU Prague) is leading research on the **Barbary deer**, the only native deer species in Africa and a critically endangered subspecies surviving in small, fragile populations in

Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. His team focuses on the species' biology, threats, and conservation needs, highlighting the urgency of protecting a population numbering only a few dozen individuals.

The cooperation with Algerian partners—supported through **Erasmus+ KA171 mobility projects** — has enabled joint research on deer, amphibians and broader biodiversity topics, involving several master's

and PhD students. Despite challenges such as poaching, limited data and restricted access to border areas, Ceacero sees strong potential for long-term collaboration and conservation impact: "If all goes well, future generations of young scientists will save this species," he says.



Growing Partnership between CZU and the Technical University of Moldova

In 2025, the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences deepened its cooperation with the Technical University of Moldova (UTM) through an Erasmus+ mobility visit and the launch of a new didactic vineyard.

During the Erasmus+ KA-171 visit (May 3–11), CZU welcomed **Prof. Sergiu Popa**, **Prof. Mihai Moroz**, and **Dr. Andrei Zbanca**, opening new opportunities for joint research and mobility. The programme was coordinated by **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tatiana Alexiou Ivanova**.

In June 2025, UTM introduced a 4.8-hectare didactic vineyard in Criuleni, supported by the government, the European Investment Bank, and CZU. The facility offers students hands-on training in viticulture and climate-resilient technologies, with plans to expand further later this year. These activities mark another step in strengthening long-term academic collaboration between CZU and UTM.

Summer School in Moldova: Culture, Nature & New Connections

From 23 June to 4 July 2025, a Summer School on Moldovan Culture and Environmental Education brought together Ukrainian refugee students from USM, USPC and UTM for two weeks of learning, exploration and community building. The programme took place within the Czech Development Cooperation project supporting Ukrainian refugees, coordinated by **Assoc. Prof. Tatiana Ivanova Alexiou, Ph.D.** from the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences, CZU Prague.

Students explored Moldova's cultural and natural heritage — from **Orheiul Vechi** and **Cricova Winery** to **water quality testing on the Bâc River**, creative workshops and a traditional welcome in **Vorniceni**.



Alumni

Alumnus Spotlight:

PAVEL BURIAN – FROM PAPUA NEW GUINEA BACK TO FTZ



Ing. Pavel Burian, Ph.D., a graduate of the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences (FTZ) at CZU Prague, has dedicated his career to international development and global food security. He currently serves as Senior Field Programme Officer and Deputy Programme Coordinator for the EU-funded flagship program EU-STREIT PNG, implemented by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Papua New Guinea. The program supports rural entrepreneurship, investment, and trade, collaborating with local farmers, government authorities, and international donors.

Meet Our GLOFOR Graduate

MOHAN KRISHNA CHOWDRY AVILINENI



In September 2025, Mohan Krishna Chowdry Avilineni successfully defended his thesis with *Excellence and Honours* at the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences, becoming the very first graduate of the Erasmus Mundus Global Forestry (GLOFOR) programme at CZU Prague. During his studies, he completed company internships, was a research member of the EU Horizon Invest4Nature project and presented his Nepal field school research at the Tropentag 2025 conference in Bonn, gaining valuable international experience across several European universities. Today, he has already started his professional journey as a Carbon Project Manager in Prague. In his interview, he shares his study experience, career path, and advice for future GLOFOR students.

More informations [here](#).

Join the CZU Alumni Club!

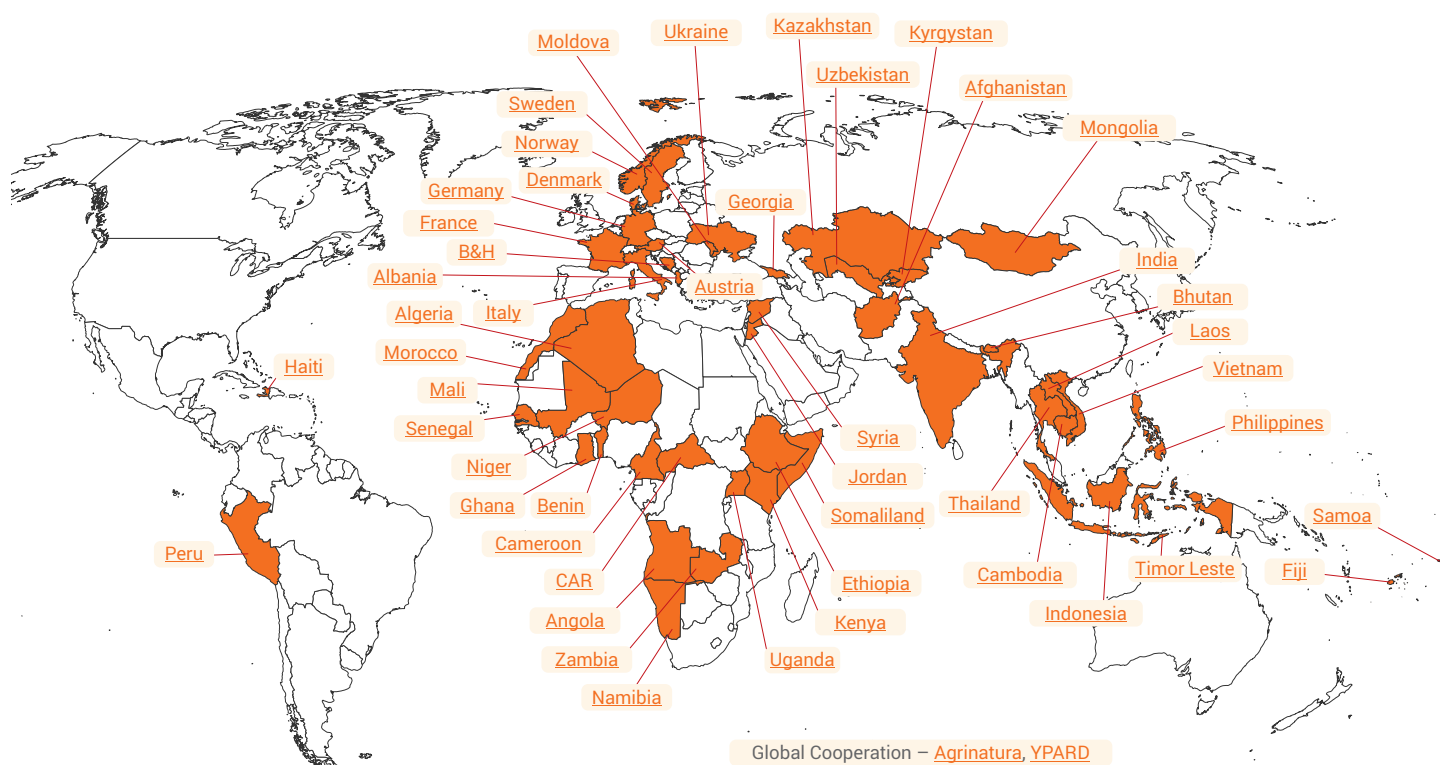
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FTZ Projects and Partnerships

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!

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