

Innovating for our sustainable future

CIAS 2015 annual report



beginning farmer training



innovative research



student support



food system outreach



***Center for Integrated
Agricultural Systems***



**College of
Agricultural & Life Sciences**
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

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Rick Adamski, Full Circle Farm, Seymour, WI
David Andrews, Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, East Troy, WI
Kat Becker and Tony Schultz, Stoney Acres Farm, Athens, WI
Andy Diercks, Coloma Farms, Coloma, WI
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Vanessa Herald, Farm to school
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Matt Raboin, Perennial systems

CIAS Faculty Associates

49 faculty members in 23 departments across the UW-Madison campus

CIAS Associate Staff

CIAS works closely with staff members in campus departments and UW Extension

From the CIAS Director



Dear Friends,

Welcome to this report on our recent accomplishments at the UW-Madison Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems. CIAS serves as a catalyst in the sustainable agriculture community by bringing people together to spur innovation and opportunity. We are fortunate to collaborate with sustainable agriculture leaders from across Wisconsin who serve on our Citizens Advisory Council.

Sustainable cropping systems research has long been an important priority for CIAS. In 2015, we stabilized the 26-year-old Wisconsin Integrated Cropping Systems Trials by providing an administrative and fundraising home for this project. Stay tuned for the launch of a CIAS organic research and outreach initiative in 2016.

CIAS continues to build on its strong track record in innovative food systems work. We are hosting the National Farm to Cafeteria Conference in June, and our work on sustainable food freight will be featured in the June 2016 issue of the College of Agricultural & Life Sciences *Grow* magazine.

CIAS programs for beginning farmers, which emphasize sustainable, organic and grass-based production, grew and flourished in 2015. Our new school for beginning organic grain producers was a huge hit, attracting 45 participants on campus and through distance education. Thanks to our generous donors, we are able to offer scholarship support for beginning farmers attending our schools. In early 2016, we launched a new scholarship program for people needing assistance to attend the Wisconsin School for Beginning Market Growers.

CIAS provides support for university students pursuing education and careers in sustainable agriculture through our mini-grant program. In the fall of 2015, we collaborated with the Aldo Leopold Foundation to offer a Leopold Leadership Training for our mini-grant recipients, which was well received by our students and is now an annual event at CIAS. One of our student participants wrote, "Thanks to the amazing presenters for helping me to make historical and contextual connections with my research. Seeing the evolution of Leopold's philosophy about what works for inspiring the land ethic in farmers was especially revelatory."

CIAS continues to support the F.H. King Students for Sustainable Agriculture and their student garden on campus. We are also working closely with the Agroecology Masters Program to provide opportunities for their students in research and public practice.

CIAS would not exist without our extensive community of friends working toward the common goal of sustainable food and agriculture. Thank you for being a part of CIAS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Bell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael Bell, CIAS Director

The 2015 CIAS summer Citizens Advisory Council meeting included a visit to Michael Fields Agricultural Institute's organic grain research plots. Here, Jim Stute explains the cropping system.



Highlights of our 2015 accomplishments



Student research and experience

Funded **nine graduate student researchers** with CIAS summer mini-grants for projects on pollinator habitat, woodlands grazing intensity, wild rice and more.

Supported the **F.H. King Students for Sustainable Agriculture** and their student-run organic garden.

Led **10 UW-Madison undergraduates** in a service learning course in South Africa.

New and diverse farmers

Trained **110 beginning farmers** through the CIAS grower schools in grass-based dairy and livestock farming, and sustainable apple, grape and fresh market vegetable production.

Received funding, along with other partners, to launch a school for **beginning organic grain farmers**.

Food and agriculture research and innovation

Became the home for the **Wisconsin Integrated Cropping Systems Trial**, a long-term project that compares organic and conventional crop and forage systems.

Documented growth and challenges in **Wisconsin's organic industry** in *Organic Agriculture in Wisconsin: 2015 Status Report*, and helped organize the inaugural Organic Agriculture Research Symposium at the 2015 MOSES Organic Farming Conference.

Received funding to carry out research on advancing the **regional cider industry**.

Produced **"Chop! Chop! Culinary Skills for Wisconsin-Grown Produce in School Meals"** training videos for school food service staff.

Participated in a multi-state study of **sustainable, perennial grass-based biofuel and bioproducts systems**.

Established a **silvopasture** listserv and led six workshops on integrating livestock, forage production and forestry.

Co-hosted the **Northern Nut Growers Conference** and published a report for emerging tree nut businesses in the Midwest.

Hosted the **Wisconsin Farm to School Summit**, with over 200 attendees.

Coordinated the **Midwest Menu event**, with school lunches comprised of all local food items served to nearly 500,000 school students; and organized the **Great Lakes Great Apple Crunch**, with over 600,000 students and supporters learning about and enjoying local apples.

Secured a major research grant to investigate **domestic fair trade** for mid-scale farms and food businesses.

Lead workshops on **sustainable regional food freight** and published a report on agriculture, transportation and climate change used by mayors at the Paris Climate Talks.

Financial

Administered **\$1,553,373 in grants**. CIAS staff served as principal or co-principal investigators on grants totalling an additional \$1,187,737.

Raised **\$44,835 from donors**. Additionally, the Wisconsin School for Beginning Dairy and Livestock Farmers raised \$18,000 from the annual Ride to Farm, and \$10,000 in gifts.



Many thanks to our 2015 CIAS supporters

Rick Adamski and Valerie Dantoin
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David and Ann Zimrin

CIAS makes its best effort to include all donations made between January 1, 2015 and December 31, 2015. If your name has been omitted, please contact us so we may properly show our appreciation. Thank you to our past and present donors for your generous support!



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