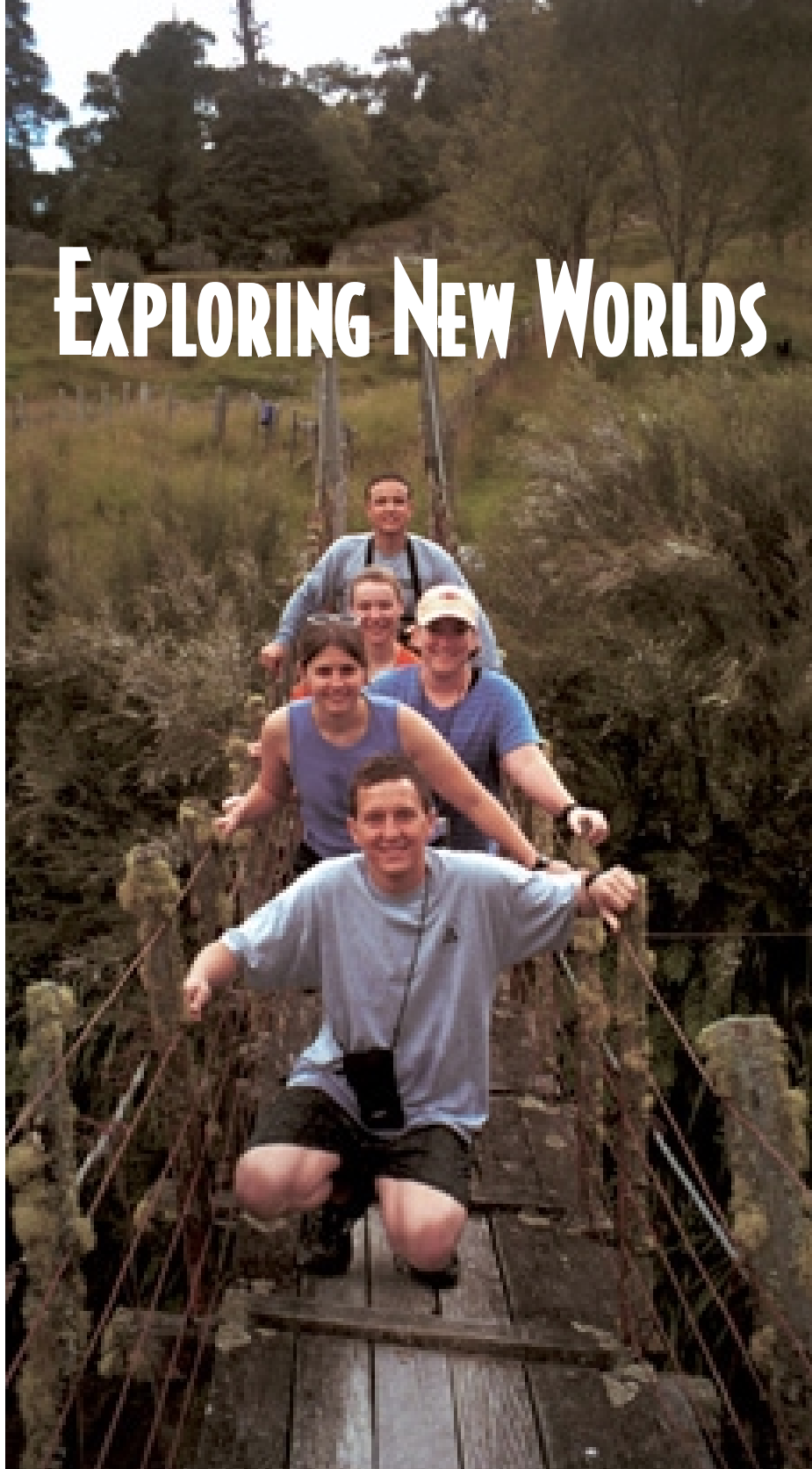


EXPLORING NEW WORLDS



Courtesy of Yancy Wright

Vamos ver el mundo! (Translation: Let's go see the world!) OSU students Bart Fischer (top), Andrea Pellegrini, Melissa Rickey, Regina Rowe and Yancy Wright enjoy the New Zealand countryside.

While most Oklahomans were trapped in their homes last December with snow and ice covering the ground, seven students stepped off an airplane into sunshine and 85-degree weather.

The students from the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources

at Oklahoma State University spent 10 days exploring Australia and New Zealand to learn more about international agriculture as part of one of the many study-abroad opportunities within the college.

With CASNR's International Programs in Agriculture quickly expanding, agricultural students have more study-abroad

opportunities available to them now than ever before.

The college offered six study-abroad trips last year, including trips to Japan, Mexico, Turkey, Honduras, Australia and New Zealand.

"In the back of his mind, everybody has somewhere that he'd like to visit," said Bart Fischer, agricultural economics, accounting and finance senior who was among the seven who visited Australia and New Zealand.

"There's got to be somewhere on earth you'd like to go, and with the expanding opportunities, you'll be able to go there one day," he said. "There might already be a program for you, and if there's not, I'm sure the international programs office would work with you if it was a good idea and other people wanted to go also.

"When I came to OSU, I didn't realize you could travel like this. I know most students don't realize it either," Fischer said. "Most students have never thought about it, and it's so extremely easy to get involved. There are so many opportunities and so much to gain."

By studying abroad, students are becoming more culturally diverse and in higher demand by employers, said David Henneberry, CASNR assistant dean of international programs in agriculture.

"International experience is highly valuable," Henneberry said. "It is such a memorable experience that allows students to grow and learn, and it's a definite advantage when they begin looking for jobs."

Plant and soil sciences senior Yancy Wright has taken full advantage of CASNR opportunities, traveling to Mexico during Christmas Break 1999 and to Australia and New Zealand during Christmas Break 2000.

"At first I thought I was crazy for investing in these trips," Wright said. "I took out a loan and used some of my scholarship money to go.

"But I am so glad I went. You just get a whole new perspective on the world when you get out of the country and see different things.

"If it weren't for these trips, I probably would have never gotten out of the country," Wright said. "Now I realize how easy it is to get a plane ticket and go."

Fischer said he never dreamed about getting to travel internationally before he came to OSU.

"No one in my family has gone anywhere overseas," Fischer said. "I've gone to four countries now, and I'm only 20 years old.

"Getting to visit other places and learn about their cultures and what they go through every day is so interesting. Even



Left: Tribal performers entertain CASNR students at a luau in Hawaii. **Right:** CASNR Associate Dean Ed Miller feeds a baby kangaroo at a zoo in Australia.

though there are some similarities, there are a lot of differences, too.”

CASNR Associate Dean Ed Miller said without an international experience, students do not realize how different the rest of the world is from the United States.

“Traveling abroad broadens your view on how the world works. You learn how people in other parts of the world think and behave,

as well as how other cultures operate,” Miller said.

Exploring different countries is especially important if you’re pursuing a career in agriculture, said Dan Tilley, agricultural economics professor and leader of a CASNR trip to Turkey.

Tilley said students need to understand different cultures because agriculture is truly international.

“So much of U.S. agriculture involves international trade and development as a source of markets,” Tilley said. “I think it’s extremely important that students have an international experience.”

Henneberry said students learn a lot from seeing the different applications of agriculture overseas. Students who have experience abroad are valuable to employers because agriculture is such an international industry.

“It’s an assurance for employers to hire a graduate who’s had an international experience,” said Henneberry. “Employers see an experience, a new sense of culture and responsibility.”

Wright said he believes employers will take a special interest in him because he has studied abroad.

“Most companies deal internationally, and they are going to look favorably upon those of us who have experience in different countries, especially in agriculture,” Wright said.

On the study-abroad trips, students have the opportunity to tour livestock operations, agronomic and horticultural operations, and processing plants. They also visit local farms and successful agricultural enterprises and learn about the country’s culture and history.

“It was interesting to see how farming practices in Australia and New Zealand compared to Oklahoma,” Fischer said. “We got to see what everyday life was about there, and I really liked that.

“We stayed at a working farm, which was really neat. They treated us like part of the family,” he said. “We were able to learn about their crops, growing seasons and government support.”

However, for CASNR students it’s not just work and no play. They always find time to squeeze some fun into every trip.

On their way back to Oklahoma, the Australia and New Zealand group stopped in Hawaii for three days where they sailed, snorkeled and learned to hula dance at a luau. While in Hawaii, Miller impressed the group with his surfing abilities.

The group also visited a small island near Australia, where they were surrounded by more than 70 miles of open, white-sand beach.

“The beach on the island was beautiful. There weren’t any other people there, so it was so natural and pretty. And there were kangaroos everywhere,” Fischer said. “We chartered an eight-man plane and flew around the island and landed back on the beach.”

A group traveling to Tur-

key this summer spent some time relaxing on the Mediterranean coast and visiting museums with art and historic monuments dating back to 3,000 and 4,000 B.C.

For CASNR students, experiencing a similarly memorable and beneficial trip abroad is easier now than ever before, Henneberry said. The international program is growing and continues to offer more travel opportunities each year.

Miller and Henneberry said they are trying to stimulate international experience within the college and recently set a goal that 25 percent of CASNR students have some kind of international experience before they graduate.

Any student is eligible for a CASNR study-abroad trip and may earn up to three credit hours for participating.

Interested students may participate

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—BART FISCHER
CASNR SENIOR



Yancy Wright learns to hula dance at a luau in Hawaii.

Bart Fischer

in a variety of trips. CASNR offers annual trips such as the Mexico and Honduras tour, as well as trips that occur only once such as those to Japan, to Peru, and to Australia and New Zealand.

Henneberry is currently working to schedule trips to Tanzania and Costa Rica.

Henneberry said he is always looking for a new travel opportunity for the students and tries to create new trips almost every year.

If student demand increases, some of the “onetime only” trips may be scheduled again.

Agribusiness senior Melissa Rickey also was among the students who visited Australia and New Zealand. She said she was scared to go at first, but she is glad she went.

“I didn’t know a single soul going on the trip,” she said. “But I got to know everybody, and it was really neat meeting new people.

“It was also neat getting to know Dr. Miller, who was one of the advisers on the trip. Without him and Nancy [his wife],



Barf Fischer

Students board a charter plane to fly around Fraser Island in Australia.

the trip just wouldn’t have been the same.

“Visiting Australia was one of my lifetime goals. And seeing the agriculture was just a plus,” Rickey said. “I never thought I’d have the opportunity to actually do that.

“I always thought a study-abroad course was over a semester. I never realized you could just take a short two-week trip. I probably wouldn’t have gone if it lasted the whole semester.”

Most trips within CASNR’s international program last from two to three

weeks and cost from \$1,000 to \$4,000.

Currently, only minimal financial assistance is available for students. Each student who traveled to Australia and New Zealand received a \$500 scholarship. However, Henneberry and Miller said they are working to develop additional funding so more students will have the opportunity to travel abroad.

Fischer said he encourages any students who are thinking about participating

to seize the opportunity.

“Regardless of who you are, you should travel abroad,” Fischer said. “Everybody should travel to another country some time in his life, and the sooner the better. It’s just a great experience.”

To all CASNR students who are now ready to take advantage of the college’s study-abroad opportunities, “Hasta luego amigos!” *Ej*

By Jo Lynn Enlow
Kellyville, Okla.

To learn more about international agricultural opportunities, students should visit Henneberry in 139 Agricultural Hall or call (405) 744-5339.