



**California/Nevada Section
Bimonthly Update
May 3, 2010
Twenty-Sixth Edition**

- * Annual International Meeting in Pittsburg, PA
- * Iowa State University ASABE Club Visits California
- * 1-2-3-4-5 Member Highlight - Dr. Balaji Sethuramasamyraja, CSU Fresno Industrial Technology
- * Agricultural Engineering Exam Review & Financial Assistance
- * Western Chapter of the International Erosion Control Association (IECA)

* Annual International Meeting in Pittsburg, PA
The ASABE AIM is fast approaching this June 20-23 in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. More information is available at www.asabemeetings.org.

The ASABE Foundation is requesting silent auction items to be auctioned at the meeting. Money raised will benefit the General Fund this year. If you have items to donate on behalf of our section, please let me know so we can get the details of your item(s) to headquarters. Popular items range from logo items from universities and companies to homemade wares. This is an excellent opportunity to share the beauty of California and Nevada through local artwork and agricultural products. Donor forms are available from Linda Young at young@asabe.org.

- * Iowa State University ASABE Club Visits California



A group of Iowa State University students and a faculty member at Paramount Citrus in Delano, California (l-r: ABE faculty member, Lloyd Snell; ABE students Andy Smith, Caleb Bashore, Michael McCall, Phil Sibenaller, Andy Jennet, Brian Balvin, Alyse Herr, Peter Horne, Levi McClimon, Travis Ohms, and Wry Hurt)

On Friday, February 5, 2010, eleven ISU ABE students and one ABE faculty member departed Ames for a five-day tour to experience agriculture and engineering in California's Central Valley. Student-developed objectives included learning about ag-related issues outside the Midwest, gaining insight to a diverse farming culture, and promoting Iowa State University. Upon completion of the trip, the students agreed that the overall experience and magnitude of what they learned would be beneficial to them in their future careers and educational ventures. There is optimism that the ASABE Club will continue this initiative in the future to promote and support broader learning experiences outside of the classroom or university setting.

* 1-2-3-4-5 Member Highlight - Dr. Balaji Sethuramasamyraja, CSU Fresno Industrial Technology

Dr. Balaji Seth has been an Assistant Professor at California State University, Fresno since 2006. Balaji moved from Nebraska as a young professional from a state with three crops to a state that has crop diversity beyond comprehension. He received his B.S. in Mechanical Engineering in 1999 at University of Madras, India, an institution that has several Nobel laureates in its alumni list. He started his career as a Reliability Engineer with Caterpillar Earth Moving Equipment Division whose machines were widely used in major mining and construction projects in the Indian subcontinent. After two years of extensive field experience, he decided to pursue higher education and subsequently got his M.S. in Industrial Engineering from University of Cincinnati, Ohio in 2003 and PhD in Agricultural and Biological Systems Engineering at University Nebraska-Lincoln in 2006.

Balaji appreciates the diversity of his education and professional career, in both industry and teaching, which has enriched his perceptions - valuable for an inquisitive mind. His favorite part of the job has been challenging students to truly better themselves through problem solving, writing, and presenting their work.

One - piece of advice I'd give new graduates:

1 - It is more about your team than just about yourself.

Two - things I learned on the job that I didn't learn in college:

1 - The importance of documentation - be it data collection or archiving records for future reference.

2 - The value of a mentor in charting one's career.

Three - concepts I learned in college that I use regularly:

1 - There are no alternatives to discipline and simplicity.

2 - Always expect the unexpected in the field.

3 - The art of differentiation - finding a niche for yourself.

Four - favorite technical aspects of my job:

- 1 - Challenging myself to add technical innovation to everything that I do, however little my contribution.
- 2 - Field data collection - managing spontaneous uncertainties.
- 3 - Geospatial Data Processing and Analysis to find intriguing spatial patterns, trends, and inferences.
- 4 - Gratification of working "hands on" building equipment for data collection.

Five - places I've been or things I've seen in my career:

- 1 - San Joaquin Experimental Range in the Sierra Nevada foothills
- 2 - Land of Endless Enchantment - Sri Lankan tea, coconut, and rubber farming
- 3 - Vineyards in the Central Valley of California
- 4 - Tehri Dam in the Himalayas, the world's fourth biggest dam
- 5 - Homestead National Monument, Nebraska

* Agricultural Engineering Exam Review & Financial Assistance

If you're planning on taking the Agricultural Engineering Professional Engineering exam next October and you need study help, check out ASABE's Professional Engineers' Institute website at <http://www.asabe.org/pei/PEwebinar.html>.

Additionally, PEI and ASABE have partnered to provide an incentive to candidates by reimbursing October 2010 exam registration fees up to \$300 on a first-come, first-served basis. Candidates must be first-time Agricultural PE test takers who have not attempted to take a PE exam in any discipline prior to the October 2010 administration, must pay all up-front costs for the application and administration of the exam, and must request reimbursement for state application fees and NCEES test administration costs not exceeding \$300 upon receiving a letter from one's respective state board of licensure with the results of the October 2010 exam. Those wishing to take advantage of this offer must submit their name and statement of intention to Mark Crossley at crossley@asabe.org no later than July 1, 2010. More details are available at http://www.asabe.org/pei/AgPE_IncentiveProg.pdf.

* Western Chapter of the International Erosion Control Association (IECA)

Does your work involve erosion control, hillside runoff, or streambank or shoreline protection? Check out the Western Chapter of the International Erosion Control Association (IECA) at <http://www.wcieca.org/> and their recent newsletter at http://www.wcieca.org/newsletter/pdf/WCIECA_Spring_2010.pdf. WCIECA hosts a number of interesting workshops, meetings, and events throughout Arizona, California, Hawaii, and Nevada that you may find quite interesting. Additionally, IECA publishes a magazine called Erosion Control through Forester.net available at <http://www.forester.net/ec.html>.

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- For previous editions of the Update, please visit www.asabecanv.org.
- If you have questions or comments, feel free to contact Carolyn at 707-252-4189x114 or carolyn.jones@ca.usda.gov.
- If you have ideas for Update items or would like to get involved in the leadership group, please let us know.