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The Center for Environmental Farming Systems Announces Recipients of 2017-2018 Graduate Student Fellowships

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Raleigh, NC: The Center for Environmental Farming Systems has announced the 2017-2018 recipients of its Graduate Student Fellowships. The CEFS NC State University Graduate Fellows Program was developed to provide financial support and recognition for the future leaders, researchers and contributors to sustainable agriculture and local food systems while they pursue academic research to further the field of study.

The Fellowship offers a one-year, \$5,000 stipend for Master's students and a two-year, \$5,000-per-year stipend for Doctoral students. This year, Compass Group USA sponsored a Graduate Fellowship specifically for MBA students who are interested in learning about local food supply chains and the sustainability of the food system.

"CEFS and Compass Group have enjoyed a dynamic partnership for more than a decade. We are proud to play a role in engaging the best, brightest and most well prepared graduates for a complex business environment," said Cheryl Queen, Vice President of Communication and Corporate Affairs for Compass Group and former chair of CEFS Board of Advisors.

"We are very excited to announce this year's fellows," said CEFS Director Dr. Nancy Creamer. "These dynamic, smart, and enthusiastic young people will certainly make their mark on agricultural sustainability and we are excited to support and promote their work through our fellowship program." The CEFS NC State Graduate Fellowship Program was made possible by an endowment from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation.

The 2017-2018 CEFS NC State University Graduate Fellows and their departments/research areas are:

Nicholas Basinger | *Ph.D. Student* | Horticultural Science | NC State University

Nicholas has a research focus on novel weed detection methods in agronomic and vegetable crop systems. His research focuses on utilizing specific light wavelengths, reflected off different plants to remotely distinguish weeds from crop species. One of his projects is to determine which wavelengths of light can be utilized for discriminating between plant species. His other project focuses on the impact various weed densities have on yields and the reflected wavelengths of light of soybean and sweet potato. Ultimately, the goal of these projects is to determine a remote weed detection method with the end result of managing weeds only where they are present.

Sam Ingram | *Ph.D. Student* | Animal Science | NC State University

Sam's research focuses on the renovation of toxic infected tall fescue pastures utilizing no-till smother (cover) crops. Soil health, agronomic performance and animal performance will be monitored during the renovation strategy and an economic analysis will be performed. Sam also has projects in finishing cattle in a pasture-based system and transitioning forested area to perennial forage pasture utilizing cover crops. All projects attempt to analyze the whole system in an effort to provide valuable information to the farmer about what takes place on their operation. Sam is involved in educational outreach, working with the Amazing Grazing program as well as the North Carolina Forage and Grassland Council and believes this outreach is an effective tool to assist farmers in adopting new practices.

Lisa Johnson | *Ph.D Candidate* | Horticultural Science | NC State University

Lisa's research brings the excitement surrounding food waste research to the often overlooked production level of the supply chain. Her interdisciplinary research focuses on understanding common farming practices and market policies that increase vegetable losses in the field, determining how much edible produce is left unharvested, and finding ways to increase the recovery of unharvested crops. Lisa completed her M.S. at the University of Georgia, also in Horticulture, where her research focused on the molecular physiology of fruit crops. She is rapidly becoming a national expert in on-farm food waste.

Eliot Lee | *MBA Candidate* | Jenkins Graduate School of Management | NC State University
CEFS Compass Group USA Graduate Fellow

Eliot's research is focused on understanding the current state of local, sustainable food value chains in the region to provide recommendations and possible solutions to developing more equitable and efficient processes. Eliot's focus has been on local grain supply chains and the different ways in which local grain products move throughout the value chain, and his research will identify alternative paths to profitability for North Carolinian grain farmers. He will also work with Compass Group to improve and expand their sustainability platform. Prior to graduate school, he was an intern on the Small Farm Unit at CEFS' Field Research and Outreach Facility at Cherry Farm in Goldsboro.

Marisol Mata | *Masters Student* | Horticultural Science | NC State University

In today's home gardening market, a large number of flower species are included in "pollinator-friendly" seed mixes but little is known about their actual nutritional quality for bees. Marisol's research project focuses on growing several species of these native flowers in a controlled environment so as to determine the protein content found within their granules of pollen. She is also interested in learning whether changes in environmental conditions, such as temperature, fertilizer and CO₂ levels affect the overall quality of the pollen.

For more information about the CEFS NC State University Graduate Fellows Program, please visit the [CEFS website](#).

The Center for Environmental Farming Systems is a partnership of NC State University, NC Agricultural and Technical State University and the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. CEFS develops and promotes just and equitable food and farming systems that conserve natural resources, strengthen communities, improve health outcomes, and provide economic opportunities in North Carolina and beyond. For more information, visit www.cefs.ncsu.edu.