

# CAES Awards 2015-2016

## Outstanding Masters Thesis Award

The Outstanding Masters Thesis Award recognizes excellence in the Masters program and encourages the study of agricultural economics, resource economics and farm management at the Masters level.

This year there were two co-winners.

**Co-Winner:** Megan Egler, Department of Food, Agricultural And Resource Economics University of Guelph, for the thesis entitled, "*The Effects of Emergency and Non-Emergency Food Aid Flows on Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa*" supervised by Rakhil Sarker.

### **Selected Reviewer Comments:**

*The thesis looks at the important issue of the efficacy of food aid flows in reducing poverty sub-Saharan Africa. Using appropriate econometric methods including fixed effects and IVs, and a large dataset, the study finds that nonemergency food aid has a significant poverty reducing effect in autocratic leaning countries and a potential negative effect in democratic leaning countries. The results also point to the importance of disaggregating emergency and non-emergency food aid and proper targeting of aid. Given the general nature of the economic problem examined here, the applications of the findings and the methodological lessons learned are going to be widely applicable in recipient developing countries and with equally important implications for developed country donors. In my opinion the thesis is very well written, has an excellent review of the literature, uses novel methods and has clear and immediate policy implications. I suspect that only few MSc theses have this breadth and depth of analyses and the experience of completing this work must set the student up very well for a career in policy analysis or for further graduate training.*

*This thesis meritoriously contributes to the empirical literature on food aids. It demonstrates high-quality methodological work, and significant findings. The thesis is well-written and well-structured, and includes a thorough overview of relevant literature. The empirical analysis is competently executed, the econometric methodology is appropriate, and the econometrics issues are well-tackled. The results are clearly displayed and discussed. I expect that this thesis would pave the way to future studies aiming at better understanding the relationships between food aids and poverty in developing and least-developed countries. The findings in this thesis imply that future studies should distinguish between emergency food aids and non-emergency food aids when examining the impacts on poverty. They should also account for various developmental and political attributes of recipient countries to comprehend the efficacy of food aids in reducing poverty. I believe that this thesis is a very strong candidate to receive the Canadian Agricultural Economics Society's Outstanding Master's Thesis Award.*

**Co-Winner:** David Thibodeau, College of Agriculture, Dalhousie University, for the thesis entitled, "*Two Essays on the Estimation of Agricultural Trade Flows: Model Selection and Endogeneity of Trade Agreements*" supervised by Stephen Clark.

### **Selected Reviewer Comments:**

*This thesis addresses a number of econometric issues that have plagued studies using the gravity model to estimate impacts of trade agreements. The first essay provides evidence that the use of a Box-Cox double hurdle model can address the issues of zero trade and heteroscedasticity, while the second essay provides evidence that endogeneity may have biased the estimated impacts of preferential trade agreements in previous studies.*

*In this thesis, Thibodeau demonstrates a sound understanding of gravity models and the econometric issues associated with these models. He points out how these issues may have biased estimated impacts of trade agreements in previous studies and proposes an innovative approach to address these issues and minimize*

*the resulting bias. This work can make a solid contribution to the literature. Overall, Thibodeau's grasp of econometrics and the advances proposed in this thesis are well beyond the Masters' level.*

*Overall, I found the research questions interesting, and I would like to commend the student for undertaking a thorough and careful analysis of empirical/econometric issues that are of interest to agricultural trade economists. The thesis has potential for publication in peer reviewed agricultural economics journals.*

## Outstanding Journal Article Award

The Outstanding Journal Article Award recognizes achievement in agricultural economics, resource economics and farm management for articles appearing in the *Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics* in 2015.

This year there was one winner and two honourable mentions.

**Winner:** Andres Silva, Lindsey M. Higgins and Mohamud Hussein. 2015. An Evaluation of the Effect of Child-Directed Television Food Advertising Regulation in the United Kingdom. *Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics* 63(4): 583–600 (December 2015)

### **Selected Reviewer Comments:**

*A thorough analysis, nicely positioned within the literature. The authors do an excellent job of motivating their analysis and explaining the changing nature of advertising regulations in the UK market. The novelty of the paper lies in the comparison of three periods of different regulatory approach: no regulation, self-regulation and co-regulation, affording somewhat of a natural experiment. The QUAIDS approach seems appropriate as a standard empirical approach to this type of question. The paper could perhaps have had a more extended discussion of policy implications since the assessment of the effectiveness of co-regulations, self-regulation and no regulation is an interesting dimension of the paper, but otherwise a strong analysis.*

**Honourable Mention:** Nicholas Rivers and Brandon Schaufele. 2015. The Effect of Carbon Taxes on Agricultural Trade. *Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics* 63(2): 235–257 (June 2015)

### **Selected Reviewer Comments:**

*This paper scores highly on both originality and contribution to a relevant policy or economic issue. The ex post analysis of the effect of the BC carbon tax on international trade in the agriculture sector is original and pertinent.*

*Economists, as well as policymakers, will be interested in the results and the approach taken as they are relevant to agriculture but also say something about the impact of environmental regulations in general. I see it garnering interest and citations.*

*The paper is well written and I particularly like the way in which the authors guide the reader logically through their analysis, pointing out pitfalls and remedies...rather than just presenting the empirical results and a brief recap, the authors take the time to dig into a broader interpretation of their results and discussion of policy implications.*

*This work examined carbon taxes on agricultural trade taking place in BC but the implications can be easily drawn on other Canadian provinces and beyond. The authors used credible empirical methods and derived a conclusion that is rather different to the "conventional wisdom" but is nevertheless interesting. The nexus between agriculture and the environment often generates heavy debates in international trade negotiations. The work by Rivers and Schaufele brings a breath of fresh air to the debates.*

**Honourable Mention:** Houtian Ge, James Nolan and Richard Gray. 2015. Identifying Strategies to Mitigate Handling Risks in the Canadian Grain Supply Chain. *Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics* 63(1): 101–128 (March 2015)

### ***Selected Reviewer Comments:***

*Two of my benchmarks in assessing papers in the shortlist are the originality of the analysis as well as the contribution the paper makes to a relevant, topical economic or policy issue (particularly in a Canadian context). This paper scores well on both counts. It deals with an important change to the grain handling system in Canada, with the replacement of KVD (kernel visual distinguishability) with a varietal declaration system. This was a significant change and as such economic analysis of the implications of this change is a valuable contribution. The application of agent-based modelling is also a novel approach to examining segregation and grain handling strategies. This is a very thorough piece of research indeed, innovative in both approach and application. If I had to point to a minor negative, the paper is rather long.*

## **Publication of Enduring Quality Award**

This award is given for a publication by a CAES member (in the CJAE or elsewhere) that has had a significant impact on Agricultural, Environmental or Resource Economics in Canada and has been available for 10 years or more. Entries are judged on the basis of the enduring quality of their effect on agricultural, environmental and resource economics in Canada.

***Winner:*** Hobbs, J.E. (1997) Measuring the Importance of Transaction Costs in Cattle Marketing, *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 79 (4): 1083-1095.

### ***About the Author:***

Jill Hobbs is a Professor in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at the University of Saskatchewan. Dr. Hobbs is author of numerous book and publications in the area of food policy; supply chain economics; consumer behaviour. The most recent was *Regulating Health Foods: Policy Challenges and Consumer Conundrums* was published by Edward Elgar Publishing in 2014. She was co-editor of the *Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics* from 2013-2016 and has served as President of the Canadian Agricultural Economics Society in from 2003 to 2004. She is also a Fellow of Food Policy in the Institute for the Advanced Study of Food and Agricultural Policy at the University of Guelph, Canada and holds an Honorary Chair in the School of Management and Business at Aberystwyth University, UK

### ***Rationale for the winning publication:***

This publication is a seminal article on transaction costs in agriculture; has been widely cited and continues to attract interests and citations after almost 20 years since publication. It has been cited a total of 285 times (google scholar) including 18 citations in 2015, 29 citations in 2014 and 22 citations in 2013. The complete citation history for the article is attached. The information on the number of downloads is equally impressive – 2265 downloads since 2010 – 535 in 2015, 469 in 2014, 444 in 2013, 411 in 2012, 117 in 2011 and 298 in 2010. The complete information on downloads for 2010-2015 is attached. The methodology laid out in the article has been adapted by a large number of researches and it remains the standard analytical approach for these types of research questions.