

Meet the Staff: Holger Matthey

Regular readers of the *Iowa Ag Review* are no doubt familiar with the *U.S. and World Agricultural Outlook*, published by the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute (FAPRI), a CARD affiliate, in the spring of each year. The FAPRI outlook is a series of baseline projections for the U.S. agricultural sector and international commodity markets. Holger Matthey is the international oilseeds analyst at FAPRI. His work involves updating market projections and analyzing supply and demand relationships, agricultural trade policies, and interactions of major oilseed crops with grain and livestock markets.

As part of a routine assessment of the outlook projections, the group took their preliminary results to Washington, D.C., in December for review by a panel of government and industry experts. Holger says that the fact that his model functioned well and held up in these reviews gives him a great sense of accomplishment. "I usually spend a long time building a model, which is not too thrilling, but then seeing it perform a certain task is the interesting part."

Holger says the appeal of agriculture as his chosen discipline probably can be traced to his father's position at a state veterinary and food safety institute in Germany. "As a teenager, I had a few

summer jobs at his place. Before going to the university, an internship is required. I went to milk cows for a few months."

Holger was a noncommissioned officer in the East German Army from 1985 to 1988, where he served as leader of a group of 15 maintenance and repair specialists in the motor pool of a missile brigade. He received an Ambassadorial Scholarship from the Rotary International Foundation in 1992 to study in the United States.

He received his master's degree in agribusiness at the University of Nebraska in 1994, where he was named Outstanding M.S. Student. In 1995, he was graduated from the University of Leipzig, Germany, with a master's degree in Economic and Social Science of Agriculture. He completed his Ph.D. in agricultural economics at the University of Nebraska in 1999. Following a research position at the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority, he joined the economics department at Iowa State University, where he heard about the opportunity at FAPRI. He joined the staff in June of 2000.

"I like the field of policy analysis," he says. "The position was attractive to me because its focus is international. It allows me to interact with people from around the world."

This past summer, Holger contributed to a study on the



Holger Matthey

accession of China to the World Trade Organization, and he helped to model the effects of a reduction in U.S. area planted to commodity crops, a study requested by Senator Tom Harkin's office. These projects represent some of the "real world" challenges that he most enjoys.

"In grad school starting out, I worked on theoretical problems," he says, "which are fairly dry. But I can identify more with studying the impact of political decisions or market movements on actual observable variables."

After staring at a computer for hours at a stretch, it comes as no surprise that Holger's endeavors outside of the office emphasize physical over mental exertion. "I try to make it to the mountains in Colorado or at least to the Minnesota slopes," he says. "Most things I do have to do with sports or outdoor activities." ♦

Recent CARD Publications

BRIEFING PAPER

Babcock, Bruce A., and Chad E. Hart. "Construction of a 'Green Box' Countercyclical Program." Briefing Paper 01-BP 36, October 2001.

WORKING PAPERS

Batres-Marquez, S. Patricia, Helen H. Jensen, and Gary W. Brester. "Salvadoran Consumption of Ethnic Foods in the United States." Working Paper 01-WP 289, October 2001.

Beghin, John C., and Jean-Christophe Bureau. "Quantification of Sanitary, Phytosanitary, and Technical Barriers to Trade for Trade Policy Analysis." Working Paper 01-WP 291, December 2001.

Corrigan, Jay. "The Effect of Future Availability of Information on Willingness to Pay." Working Paper 01-WP 290, December 2001.

Lence, Sergio H., and Dermot J. Hayes. "Response to an Asymmetric Demand for Attributes: An Application to the Market for Genetically Modified Crops." MATRIC Working Paper 01-MWP 5, November 2001.

Schneider, Uwe, Bruce A. McCarl, and Richard Woodward. "Harvesting the Greenhouse through Altered Land Management: Economic Potential and Market Design Challenges." Working Paper 01-WP 288, December 2001.

STAFF REPORT

Fuller, Frank, Dinghuan Hu, Jikun Huang, and Dermot J. Hayes. "Livestock Production and Feed Use by Rural Households in China: A Survey Report." Staff Report 01-SR 96, November 2001.