Happy 113th Birthday Plant Pathology!

- Established in 1910 due to need to control cabbage black rot
- Growers contacted the UW for help and Dr. H. L. Russell discovered that a bacterial pathogen was the cause of the losses. Dr. Russell became Dean of the College of Agriculture in 1907, and one of his first actions was to establish Plant Pathology.

The department was born from the needs of the growers, and this important relationship between faculty and growers’ needs continues to be a major strength.

- Current members of the department are dedicated to advancing basic knowledge of plant-microbe interactions while maintaining commitments to plant disease ecology and management.
- Our peers recognize our department as a place where research is used effectively to advance basic knowledge and resolve practical problems in agriculture and global health. They seek out our graduates as future leaders in research, extension, instruction, and leadership.
Plant Pathology People Overview

- **Number of Faculty: 15**
  - 5 extension funded faculty
  - 7 affiliate faculty
  - 2 highly engaged emeritus professors
  - 2 newly hired assistant professors to start next year!

- **Academic Staff/Teaching Staff: 14**

- **Undergrad Students in Spring ’23: 12**
  - ~3.7 years to degree
  - 25+ undergraduates working in Plant Pathology labs but not in major
  - ~10 undergraduates engaged in 152 research projects in Plant Pathology labs

- **Graduate Students (currently enrolled): 43**
• We formally welcomed Dr. Nancy Keller as a faculty member in Plant Pathology in August of 2022!
• Professor of Medical Microbiology & Immunology (75%) and Plant Pathology (25%)
• We will welcome Dr. Emile Gluck Thaler in September 2023!
• Assistant Professor of Plant Pathology
• We will welcome Dr. Peter DiGennaro in January 2024!
• Assistant Professor of Nematology here in Plant Pathology
Welcome Jack Mouradian!

NEW TEACHING SPECIALIST HIRED JAN 2023 TO SUPPORT PLANT PATHOLOGY LAB COURSES – WE APPRECIATE JACK’S ENGAGEMENT IN INSTRUCTION AND ACROSS OUR DEPARTMENTAL COMMUNITY EFFORTS!
Plant Pathology Graduations 2023
Graduates

2022-2023 Graduates – Congratulations!

Doctoral Graduates: Meareg Amare, Adam Bigott, Shane Hansen, Vicky Lason Harrod, Wade Webster, and Zach Zalewski
Graduates

Spring and Summer 2023 Graduates – Congratulations!

Masters Graduates: Ariana Abbrescia, John Hammel, and Owen Washam
Congratulations to our Plant Pathology graduates!

Daniel Avery
Megan Broome
Alexander Lawrence
Griffin Vizgirda
Plant Pathology Awards 2023
Graduate Student Awards 2023
Congratulations to our Plant Pathology Student Travel Scholarship Winners of 2023!

Megan Dixon
Elizabeth Lane
Aaron Lowenstein
Eithan Pozas Rodriguez
Ana Vazquez Catoni
Afona Irabor
Evan Lozano
Peihan Shu
Shane Hansen
Miette Hennessy
Madeline Bondy
Casey Trickle
Jeysika Zayas Rivera
Sydney Stroschein
Austin VanDenTop
Nathan Kolbow
Hailey Louw
Jose Sanchez Gallego
Kathleen Thompson
Olee Hoi Ying Lam
Matthew Pereyra
Bryce Alex
Zoltan Banyai
Courtney Cameron
Maxwell Chibuogwu
Mariama Carter
Congratulations to Daniel Hayden, co-advised PhD student working with Drs. Richard Lankau and Erin Silva who was awarded a USDA AFRI predoctoral fellowship award!
Congratulations to Ariana Abbrescia, co-advised MS Agroecology student working with Drs. Amanda Gevens and Russ Groves who was awarded a Roger Blobaum Student Travel Fund award. This travel fund supports organic farming conference travel for College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS) graduate students that are engaged in organic research in CALS.
Congratulations to PhD student Meareg Amare, on her receipt of the Genetics Society of America’s DeLill Nasser Award for Professional Development in Genetics! Congrats Meareg!

This award supports attendance at meetings and laboratory courses. The award is named after DeLill Nasser, a long-time GSA supporter and National Science Foundation Program director in Eukaryotic Genetics.

Meareg is advised by Dr. Mehdi Kabbage in Plant Pathology and this award will support her presentation entitled: Leveraging conserved inhibitor of apoptosis proteins to characterize the programmed cell death pathway in fungi.
• PhD student of the Smith Lab, Maxwell Chibuogwu, was awarded an I.E. Melhus Graduate Student Symposium Award for the upcoming 2023 Plant Health meeting in CO. His presentation will focus on his work in mycotoxicology in silage corn systems. Congratulations, Maxwell!

• Maxwell was also selected to participate in the Farm Bureau Fellowship Program at the 2023 FUSION Conference to network with farmers, ranchers, and agriculturalists from across the country.
Co-advised by Phil Townsend (FWE) and Amanda Gevens, PhD student Olee Hoi Ying Lam was awarded a travel scholarship from the Potato Association of America (PAA) to support her participation in the annual PAA meeting to be held on Prince Edward Island in Charlottestown, Canada during July 23-27, 2023.

Olee will be presenting components of her doctoral research work in an oral presentation entitled: Pre-symptomatic detection of early blight in potato crops using imaging spectroscopy.

Olee was also awarded the George Kress Award for contribution to the mission of the Forest and Wildlife Ecology Department and scholastic aptitude.
PhD student co-advised by Matt Ruark (Soil Science) and Amanda Gevens, Afona Irabor was the 2nd place winner in the Graduate Oral Research Division I contest at the 37th Annual Training Conference and Career Expo of Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences (or MANRRS) in Atlanta Georgia.

Afona presented a portion of his work in the area of the effects of conventional and biological fungicides on disease control and microbial communities in potato systems.
• PhD student Ana Maria Vazquez-Catoni in the lab of Leslie Holland received a ROOT & SHOOT MANNRS/SACNAS Travel Award to attend APS Plant Health 2023.
PhD student Jeysika Zayas Rivera in the lab of Andrew Bent received a ROOT & SHOOT MANRRS/SACNAS Travel Award to attend APS Plant Health 2023.
PhD student Susana Ferrer Orgaz in the lab of Andrew Bent received a ROOT & SHOOT MANNRS/SACNAS Travel Award to attend APS Plant Health 2023.
MS student co-advised by Leslie Holland and Christelle Guedot (Entomology), Casey Trickle received a North Central Regional SARE Graduate Student grant to support his research on cranberry false blossom disease.
Dr. Vicky Lason Harrod, recent graduate of Drs. Jeri Barak and Russell Groves, was awarded the WI initiative for Science Literacy Award.

Congratulations, Vicky!
Congratulations to Natalie Wieber, PhD Student co-advised by Jeri Barak and Paul Koch for receiving the Midwest SETAC travel award.
Congratulations to students of Dr. Claudia Solis Lemus’ program: Nathan Kolbow and Evan Gorstein for passing the MS Statistics exam this semester!
Congratulations to Megan Dixon, PhD student of the lab of Jeri Barak!

- She was successful in garnering a research grant from the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Funding in the Graduate School for professional development
- She also was awarded a Schreiber Foods Graduate Student Scholarship
- & a 2023 International Association for Food Protection (IAFP) Student Travel Scholarship to attend the meeting in Toronto, Canada
Congratulations to “What’s Eating My Plants?” on their 2023 Equity and Diversity Award from the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

This award was established by the college’s Equity and Diversity Committee to recognize contributions to activities and programs that advance the academic and professional climate of diversity, respect, inclusion and equity in CALS.
Staff Awards 2023
Congratulations to our Plant Pathology Staff & Post Doc Travel Scholarship Winners of 2023!

Jolene Spurgeon
Hannah Francis
Brooke Babler
Deepak Haarith
Shan Shan

Department of Plant Pathology
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON
Congratulations to Brooke Babler, Associate Program Director of the Wisconsin Seed Potato Certification Program on her well-deserved award from the Wisconsin Seed Potato Improvement Association in honor of her outstanding industry support, service, and leadership!
Congratulations to Brooke Babler, Associate Program Director of the Wisconsin Seed Potato Certification Program on her successful coordination of a potato virus Y (PVY) tuber diagnostic workshop during April 4-6, 2023 in WID and beyond!
Amanda Gevens, Interim Administrative Director of WI Seed Potato Certification Program

• I want to acknowledge the hard work and positive strides of our WI Certified Seed Program Partners during this past year. With Brooke Babler in a key leadership position, we did big things!

• Move the tissue culture lab from the Biotron to the Wisconsin Crop Innovation Center
• Build capacity and automation in modified hydroponic minituber production
• Restructure staff to address several departures including former Administrative Director Renee Rioux
• Establish a new public-private partnership between our public Lelah Starks Seed Potato Farm and the newly formed Wisconsin Potato Coalition in Rhinelander.
Much appreciation to Dr. Brian Hudelson for continuing to lead and serve the UW Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic!
Congratulations to the Holland Lab was awarded UW Extension and UW CALS funding for summer interns through the Wisconsin Idea Internship Program and the CALS ARS summer internship!
Congratulations to Dr. Leslie Holland!

- Awarded Researcher of the Year by the Wisconsin State Cranberry Growers Association!
- & for leading a competitive NIFA SCRI grant to explore cranberry fruit rot!
Congratulations to Dr. Damon Smith on his Vilas Faculty Mid-Career Investigator Award presented by the University of Wisconsin Madison Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs for excellence in research and teaching!

We also value Damon’s leadership with the Nutrient and Pest Management Program for another year!

& his participation in LEAD21 during 2022-23
• We congratulate and appreciate Dr. Aurelie Rakotondrafara of UW-Plant Pathology for her leadership and service as the faculty co-director of the UW-Madison Women in Science and Engineering Program!
We congratulate Dr. Erin Silva of UW-Plant Pathology as the recipient of the first recipient of the Clif Bar Endowed Chair in Organic Agriculture and Outreach.

& we congratulate Erin on her promotion from Associate Professor to Professor!

Congratulations!
• We congratulate Dr. Erin Silva of UW-Plant Pathology for her leadership and service to the UW-Madison Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems and the

• Organic Agriculture Certificate Program!
We congratulate Dr. Claudia Solis Lemus of UW-Plant Pathology & Wisconsin Institute for Discovery for her leadership in developing and offering El Zoominario programming.

Congratulations to Claudia for earning an NSF Career Award!
Congratulations to Dr. Caitilyn Allen and colleagues for launching a successful partnership with Tennessee State University! Minority-Serving Institution and 1890 school. Goal: to increase success of and graduate applications from under-represented groups in plant sciences and build research collaborations between faculty. Supported by the UW Graduate School and the Depts of Plant Pathology and Hort and in collaboration with Dr Yiquin Wang (UW Hort). The partnership involves: a) exchange of faculty visits/seminars, b) paid summer research internships at UW-Madison for 4 TSU undergraduate students in 2023/24. Plant Pathology PhD candidate Mariama Carter and Allen visited TSU in 2022 to teach a class, present research seminars, and network informally with plant sciences undergraduate students. During this visit we also met with TSU academic leaders and administrators and planned next steps for the partnership.
Much appreciation to Dr. Paul Koch for continuing to lead and serve the Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab!
• Much appreciation to Dr. Jeri Barak for her service to CALS as Associate Director of the Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station (WAES) during 2021-2023! WAES is the official designation of the college as the state of Wisconsin’s federally-funded, university-based agricultural research program. Each state in the U.S. has at least one agricultural program that receives this designation, which allows CALS to receive federal Hatch Act multi-state agricultural research funding.
Congratulations Paul!

Paul Ahlquist continues to hold the endowed Steenbock Professorship in Microbiological Sciences (2016-2026) at UW and the endowed John and Jeanne Rowe Chair in Virology at the Morgridge Institute.

We appreciate Paul’s leadership across so many research activities of campus!
We congratulate Dr. Jo Handelsman on her election as a member of the National Academy of Sciences!

This is a highly prestigious award that recognizes scientists for their distinguished and continuing achievements in original research.

Membership is a widely accepted mark of excellence in science and is considered one of the highest honors that a scientist can receive.
We congratulate Dr. Jo Handelsman on her election as a member of the National Academy of Sciences!

Jo is a Vilas Research Professor and Howard Hughes Medical Institute Professor, served as a science advisor to President Barack Obama as the associate director for science at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy between stints on the faculty at UW–Madison and Yale University.

She holds 23 patents, is a molecular biologist with more than 250 scientific publications. Her scholarship includes transformative studies in microbial communication and metagenomics, as well as contributions to science education and diversity in science. She received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring in 2011.
We congratulate Dr. Jo Handelsman on her election as a member of the National Academy of Sciences!

UW-Plant Pathology has had the honor of celebrating 7 National Academy of Sciences members during its life from 1910-current. Our members have included:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jo Handelsman</td>
<td>2023</td>
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<td>Paul Ahlquist</td>
<td>1993</td>
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<td>Luis Sequeira</td>
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<td>LR Jones</td>
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Thank you to our generous donors for supporting Plant Pathology!

We further acknowledge our Department and Russell Labs Administrative Staff for supporting all we do within the building and beyond!
Plant Pathology Awards, Honors, Graduations 2023