

J. Fielding Reed PPI Fellowships Awarded to Six Graduate Students

Six outstanding graduate students have been announced as the 2003 winners of the “J. Fielding Reed PPI Fellowship” awards by the Potash & Phosphate Institute (PPI). Grants of \$2,500 each are presented to the individuals. All are candidates for either the Master of Science (M.S.) or the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree in soil fertility and related fields.

The six winners for 2003 are:

- Soraya Alvarado, University of Kentucky
- Pedro Barbagelata, Iowa State University
- Dennis L. Coker, University of Arkansas
- Kristy Gibson, Brigham Young University
- Myron P. Kroeker, University of Manitoba
- Matías Ruffo, University of Illinois

“Since these awards began in 1980, a total of 141 graduate students have now been awarded Fellowships by the Institute. Each year, it is reassuring to identify and recognize such excellent individuals in agronomic sciences,” said Dr. David W. Dibb, President of PPI.

Funding for the Fellowships is provided through support of potash and phosphate producers who are member companies of PPI. Scholastic record, leadership, and excellence in original research are among the important criteria evaluated for the Fellowships. Following is a brief summary of information for each of the 2003 recipients.

Soraya Alvarado, a native of Cañar, Ecuador, graduated with a B.S. from the Higher Polytechnic School of Chimborazo in 1997. She is presently pursuing the M.S. degree at the University of Kentucky. Her thesis, “Chemistry and Fertility of Basic Nutrient Cations (potassium, calcium, and magnesium) in Acidic Ecuadorian Andisols”, is studying the chemical status and behavior of macronutrients in the acidic, volcanic ash soils of



Ecuador. Ms. Alvarado was recognized as the best graduate student, 1997-98, at the Faculty of Sciences Doctorate Program at the Chemistry School, Higher Polytechnic School of Chimborazo. She received a Scholarship from the Ecuadorian Government’s National Agricultural Modernization Program to carry out her graduate studies in the U.S.

Pedro Barbagelata was born in Paraná, Entre Ríos, Argentina. He graduated from the National University of Entre Ríos in 1996 with a B.S. Following graduation he worked as a teaching assistant at the National University and most recently as a researcher at the National Institute of Agriculture Technology (INTA) in Paraná. He was recognized with an Honor Title for academic excellence at his undergraduate university, received a Research Fellowship for Professionals from INTA, and in 2002 was awarded a Fellowship from INTA to pursue graduate studies at Iowa State University, where he has entered a Ph.D. program. The title of his dissertation is “Field Calibration of Soil Potassium for Corn and Soybean Using Traditional Plots and Field-Scale Trials Based on Precision Agriculture Technologies.” His graduate work will evaluate four potassium soil test methodologies and compare their ability to predict response of corn and soybeans in Iowa.



Dennis L. Coker, a native of Coleman, Texas, received his B.S. degree from Tarleton State University in 1989 and his M.S. degree from Texas A&M in 1992. Dennis has been the recipient of the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo scholarship; the Tarleton



Academic scholarship; the Spooner Scholar Award of the Crop, Soil, and Environmental Sciences Department at University of Arkansas; and other recognitions. Following his graduation from Texas A&M, Dennis worked as a research specialist and technician, and in the retail fertilizer industry. He began working on a Ph.D. in Crop Physiology at the University of Arkansas in 1998. His dissertation is titled "Effect of Water Deficit Stress on Potassium Partitioning and Efficiency of Foliar-Applied Potassium." Its objectives are to evaluate the effects of water stress and potassium deficiency on the yield and quality of cotton, as well as various plant physiological characteristics.

Kristy Gibson was born in Tucson, Arizona. She received her B.S. degree from Brigham Young University in 2002 and then entered the M.S. program at Brigham Young. Kristy has received the Brigham Young University Graduate Assistantship and Scholarship, the National Merit Scholarship, the Casa Grande Foundation Scholarship, and other awards. She is a member of the Golden Key National Honor Society. Her M.S. thesis is titled "Simplified Soil Testing Methods for Use in Developing Countries." Its goal is to develop soil testing methods appropriate for use in third-world countries that are easy to use and calibrated against established procedures in the developed world.



Myron P. Kroeker grew up in Rosenort, Manitoba. He completed his B.S. in 1998 at the University of Manitoba and began his M.S. program at the same institution in 2002. Myron has been the recipient of numerous awards, including a Natural Science and Engineering Research Council



Scholarship, the Zeneca Agro Achievement Award, and the University of Manitoba Faculty of Agricultural and Food Science BSA Medal. His thesis title is "Agronomic Evaluation of Homogeneous NPS Fertilizer." The objectives of this research are to determine the availability of the phosphorus and sulfur in a new homogenous granular fertilizer product relative to other commercial fertilizers.

Matías L. Ruffo, a native of Buenos Aires, Argentina, received his B.S. degree from the University of Buenos Aires in 1998 and his M.S. degree from the University of Illinois in 2001. He is currently working on a Ph.D. at the University of Illinois where he is studying the "Site-Specific Nitrogen Response Functions for Maize." The objectives of his doctoral research include studying the profitability of variable-rate fertilization using on-farm experiments. Matías has received the University of Illinois Fellowship, the College of ACES Graduate Student Research Award, and the M.B. Russell Award. Papers from his M.S. research have been accepted for publication.



The PPI Fellowships are named in honor of Dr. J. Fielding Reed, who served as President of the Institute from 1964 to 1975. Dr. Reed, who passed away in 1999, was well-known for inspiring advanced study and for encouragement of students.

The Fellowship winners were selected by a committee of PPI scientists. Dr. Tom W. Bruulsema, PPI Eastern Canada and Northeast U.S. Director, served as chairman of the selection committee for the 2003 Fellowships. [BC](#)

(Information about applications for the 2004 J. Fielding Reed PPI Fellowships will be available at the website: www.ppi-ppic.org).