



A CHRONICLE OF GROWTH,
ACHIEVEMENT, AND
CONNECTION

AGRI-VIBE

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

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Faculty of Agriculture
University of Ruhuna

AGRI-VIBE

*The official newsletter of Faculty of Agriculture,
University of Ruhuna*

Inaugural Issue | 2025



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Message from the Editor-in-Chief

It is with great pleasure that we present the inaugural issue of *Agri-Vibe*, the newsletter of the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna.

This newsletter marks the beginning of a new platform to share the achievements, activities, research, innovations, and inspiring stories that shape our Faculty community. Through *Agri-Vibe*, we hope to celebrate the contributions of our academic and non-academic staff, students, alumni, and partners, while strengthening our sense of connection and belonging.

As we embark on this journey, we look forward to making *Agri-Vibe* a vibrant reflection of the Faculty—its people, ideas, achievements, and aspirations.

We warmly invite all members of our Faculty community to be part of this journey by sharing your stories, achievements, and experiences with us.

Welcome to the first issue of *Agri-Vibe*!

Dr. Dananjali Gamage
Editor-in-Chief
Agri-Vibe

HEADLINE HARVEST



**THE BIGGEST YIELD OF THE SEASON:
OUR TOP STORY**



Main Story



ACADEMIC SESSIONS AND VICE CHANCELLOR'S AWARDS 2025
University of Ruhuna

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University of Ruhuna

Faculty of Agriculture Hosts the University of Ruhuna Academic Sessions and Vice-Chancellor's Awards 2025

The Faculty of Agriculture had the honour of hosting the University of Ruhuna Academic Sessions and Vice-Chancellor's Awards 2025 on 4 June 2025, under the theme "Innovating Across Boundaries: Bridging Knowledge for Global Impact." The prestigious event brought together academics, researchers, students, and professionals to celebrate academic excellence, research, innovation, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

The inauguration was graced by Snr. Prof. P.A. Jayantha, Vice Chancellor of the University of Ruhuna, and featured a keynote address by Snr. Prof. Rangika Halwatura, Faculty of Engineering, University of Moratuwa, titled "Past Forward: A Cross-disciplinary Road to Sustainability." The invited oration, "Pharma-Nature Fusion: Integrated Approaches for Effective Healthcare," was delivered by Dr. P.W.D. Wasana, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences.

The Vice-Chancellor's Awards further celebrated excellence in research and scholarship. The Faculty of Agriculture proudly congratulates Snr. Prof. Disna Ratnasekera, recipient of the Most Outstanding Scholar Award, and Dr. Dushan Kumarathunga, recipient of the Most Outstanding Young Researcher Award. The UOR Tier 4 Star Award was presented to Prof. Subashi De Silva of the Faculty of Engineering, while Best Presenter Awards recognized outstanding contributions from the previous Academic Sessions.



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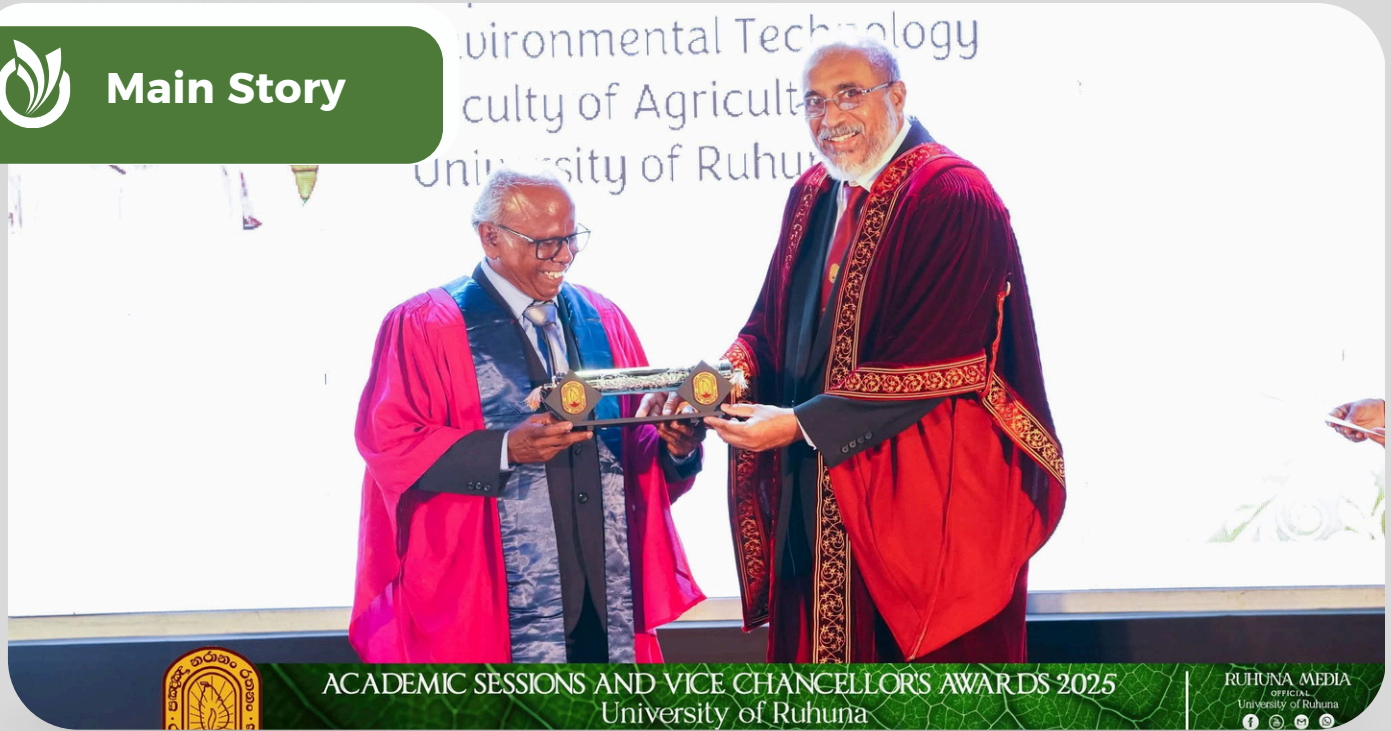
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Main Story



A major highlight was the conferment of Emeritus Professorships on Snr. Prof. P.L.A.G. Alwis and Snr. Prof. Mangala De Soyza of the Faculty of Agriculture, and Snr. Prof. Sarath Lekamwasam of the Faculty of Medicine, in recognition of their distinguished academic contributions.

The successful organization of the event was made possible through the dedication and collective efforts of the organizing committee, academic and administrative staff, technical officers, support staff, and student volunteers of the Faculty of Agriculture. The organizing committee was chaired by Prof, Menaka Fernando, with Dr. Chathura Perera serving as Secretary. Their leadership, together with the unwavering commitment of numerous contributors, ensured the smooth execution of this landmark university event.

Hosting the Academic Sessions and Vice-Chancellor's Awards 2025 was both a privilege and a responsibility for the Faculty of Agriculture. The event provided an opportunity to showcase the Faculty's commitment to academic excellence, research innovation, and service to the University community.



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CULTIVATED IDEAS



**ACCESSIBLE ACADEMIC INSIGHTS:
CULTIVATED FROM OUR DEPARTMENTS**



More Than News: A Chronicle of Growth, Achievement, and Connection

In every academic institution, countless stories unfold each day—stories of discovery, perseverance, innovation, service, and success. While many of these moments shape the lives of individuals and communities, they often remain confined to classrooms, laboratories, field sites, and offices. A faculty newsletter serves as a bridge that brings these stories together, transforming individual achievements into a collective narrative of progress and purpose.

A newsletter is far more than a medium for sharing information. It is a reflection of an institution's identity, values, and aspirations. By documenting milestones, celebrating accomplishments, and highlighting initiatives, it creates a lasting record of the Faculty's journey. Each edition captures a moment in time, preserving the experiences and achievements that contribute to the growth and evolution of the institution.

For a Faculty of Agriculture, where teaching, research, outreach, and innovation are deeply intertwined, a newsletter provides a valuable platform to showcase the diverse contributions of its community. It enables students, academic staff, administrative personnel, alumni, industry partners, and well-wishers to remain connected to the Faculty's activities and accomplishments. Through this shared platform, readers gain a deeper appreciation of the collective efforts that drive academic excellence and societal impact.

The importance of a newsletter extends beyond communication. It fosters a sense of belonging and strengthens the bonds that unite a faculty community. By celebrating achievements, recognizing dedication, and sharing experiences, it reminds us that we are part of a larger academic family working toward common goals. It also serves as a source of inspiration for students and young professionals, who can learn from the journeys and successes of those who came before them.

Newsletters also play a vital role in preserving institutional memory. Universities are built not only on infrastructure and academic programmes but also on the contributions of individuals whose efforts shape their legacy. Through features on distinguished alumni, retired academics, student leaders, researchers, and community partners, a newsletter helps ensure that these contributions are remembered, appreciated, and passed on to future generations. In an increasingly interconnected world, communication has become essential for fostering collaboration and engagement.

A faculty newsletter creates opportunities to strengthen relationships with alumni, industry stakeholders, policymakers, and the wider community. It highlights areas of mutual interest, encourages partnerships, and demonstrates the Faculty's commitment to addressing contemporary challenges through education, research, and outreach.





More Than News: A Chronicle of Growth, Achievement, and Connection

As we launch this inaugural issue, we envision this newsletter as more than a publication. It is a chronicle of our collective journey—a platform that celebrates achievements, documents progress, preserves memories, and strengthens connections. It belongs to every member of our Faculty community: past and present students, staff, alumni, collaborators, and friends who have contributed to our growth and success.

May these pages serve not only as a source of information but also as a testament to the spirit, resilience, and excellence that define our Faculty. As we look toward the future, we invite all members of our community to share their stories, celebrate one another's achievements, and continue building a legacy that will inspire generations to come.

Faculty Newsletter Committee
Faculty of Agriculture
University of Ruhuna



FACULTY IN FOCUS



**OVERVIEW OF KEY DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN
DEPARTMENTS OF THE FACULTY**



Bridging Continents Through Learning: University of Ruhuna–University of Amsterdam Collaborative Study Programme 2025

The Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, successfully organized the Sri Lanka–Netherlands Collaborative Study Program 2025 from 7th to 18th March 2025 in collaboration with the University of Amsterdam and the Young Researchers Network (YRN). The program brought together final-year undergraduate students and young researchers from Sri Lanka and the Netherlands, providing a valuable platform for academic exchange, collaborative learning, and intercultural engagement.

The program commenced at the Faculty of Agriculture, where participants explored contemporary challenges and opportunities in agribusiness, cooperative development, and rural livelihoods. Through interactive discussions and knowledge-sharing sessions, students exchanged perspectives on agricultural systems, economic development, and cultural contexts in both countries.

As part of the field-based learning experience, participants visited Sri Lanka's central highlands to gain firsthand exposure to the tea plantation sector. Educational visits to tea estates and the Tea Research Institute enabled participants to learn about tea cultivation, processing technologies, sustainability practices, and the socio-economic conditions of plantation communities. Students also received practical training in research methodologies, including interview and observation techniques, and engaged directly with estate workers and cooperative members to better understand community dynamics and resilience.





The final phase of the program was conducted in Mannar, focusing on fisheries, aquaculture, and cooperative development. Through field visits and interactions with local fishing communities, participants gained insights into issues related to resource management, sustainability, livelihood challenges, and the impacts of policy interventions on coastal communities.

The program concluded with group presentations and reflection sessions, highlighting the knowledge gained through field experiences, collaborative research, and cross-cultural interactions. The Sri Lanka-Netherlands Collaborative Study Program 2025 exemplifies the commitment of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness to fostering international collaboration, experiential learning, and globally relevant agricultural education and research.





From Ideas to Ventures: Nurturing Future Agripreneurs

The Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, continues to nurture entrepreneurial thinking and innovation among undergraduates through the Business Startup course module (EC 3207) offered under the BSc in Agribusiness Management degree programme.

During the first half of 2025, third-year students of the 44th batch engaged in a series of business planning, product development, market analysis, mentoring, and preparatory activities aimed at transforming innovative ideas into viable agribusiness ventures. Through workshops, field-based learning, and guidance from academics and industry professionals, students gained practical exposure to key stages of developing and preparing a business for launch.

The students worked on a diverse range of agribusiness concepts, including value-added agricultural products, sustainable business models, and technology-based farming solutions. These activities provided an experiential learning environment that strengthened their entrepreneurial skills, creativity, teamwork, and understanding of real-world business development.

Through the Business Startup course, the Department continues to equip undergraduates with the knowledge and practical competencies needed to develop innovative and sustainable agribusiness ventures and contribute to the future of Sri Lanka's agricultural sector.





Bonsai Workshop: Art, Science, and Sustainability

The Department of Crop Science, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, successfully conducted a Bonsai Workshop on 8th June 2025, providing participants with a valuable opportunity to explore the art and science of Bonsai cultivation.

The workshop attracted enthusiastic participation from undergraduate students, academic staff, and individuals interested in horticulture and environmental conservation. Through a series of interactive sessions, participants were introduced to essential Bonsai techniques, including pruning, wiring, shaping, and plant maintenance. Resource persons with expertise in Bonsai cultivation shared their knowledge and demonstrated best practices, emphasizing the balance between artistic expression and scientific management.

The hands-on nature of the programme enabled participants to apply newly acquired skills under expert guidance, while developing creativity, patience, and a deeper appreciation for plant care. The workshop also highlighted the importance of sustainable horticultural practices and environmental stewardship.

This initiative reflects the Department of Crop Science's commitment to enriching the student learning experience through practical training opportunities that complement classroom instruction. By organizing such activities, the Faculty continues to support the development of well-rounded graduates equipped with the knowledge, skills, and innovative mindset required to contribute to the advancement of agriculture and environmental sustainability.





Inaugural ceremony of Master of Science in Crop Production Technology (MSc in CPT) and Master of Crop Production Technology (MCPT) programmes—7th Batch

The Department of Crop Science, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, in collaboration with the Faculty of Graduate Studies, has been offering the Master of Science in Crop Production Technology (MSc in CPT) programme since 2013, with the aim of strengthening postgraduate education in sustainable crop production systems. Continuing this academic tradition, the Department successfully inaugurated the 7th batch of the Master of Science in Crop Production Technology (MSc in CPT) and Master of Crop Production Technology (MCPT) programmes on 25th January 2025.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by distinguished academics and invited guests, including Snr. Prof. Mangala De Silva, Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies; Snr. Prof. K.K.I.U. Arunakumara, a founding member of the programme; Prof. W.G.D. Lakmini, Head of the Department of Crop Science; Mrs. Thulani Amarasinghe, former programme coordinator; and Dr. Niluka Nakandalage, Coordinator of the 7th batch. The event was further enriched by the participation of representatives from the 6th batch and the newly enrolled postgraduate students.

The ceremony marked the beginning of another cohort of advanced learners dedicated to enhancing their expertise in crop production technology and contributing to sustainable agricultural development in Sri Lanka.





Agricultural Machinery Training Programme 2025

The Department of Agricultural Engineering and Environmental Technology, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, successfully conducted a five-day Agricultural Machinery Training Programme from 24th to 28th March 2025 in collaboration with Browns & Company PLC. The programme provided practical training for 60 third-year students enrolled in various BSc (Hons) degree programmes. Students gained practical knowledge in machinery operation, maintenance, safety practices, and project planning while working with a range of agricultural equipment, including tractors, ploughs, seeders, transplanter, weeders, and harvesters. Participants also explored the application of drones in precision farming through classroom sessions and field demonstrations, gaining exposure to modern agricultural technologies.

The Department extends its appreciation to Browns & Company PLC for its continued support in strengthening industry-academia collaboration and preparing graduates for the evolving agricultural sector.





Building Climate-Resilient Livelihoods through Agro-Tourism



The FOUNTAIN Project successfully organized a one-day workshop on “Agro-Tourism for Sustainability” on 19th February 2025 at gapHQ, Colombo. The event brought together students, researchers, entrepreneurs, and industry practitioners to explore innovative approaches for integrating agriculture and tourism to support sustainable development.

Through interactive discussions, practical exercises, and collaborative group activities, participants examined the potential of agro-tourism to enhance rural livelihoods, promote environmental conservation, and diversify income opportunities. Several innovative concepts were proposed, including farm-based tourism experiences, community-managed eco-tourism ventures, and farm-to-table initiatives that showcase local agricultural heritage and products.

The workshop also facilitated knowledge sharing among stakeholders from diverse sectors, encouraging the development of partnerships to advance sustainable and climate-resilient agro-tourism models. As a key outcome, participants agreed to establish collaborative working groups to further develop and pilot selected initiatives in different regions of the country.

The event highlighted the growing importance of agro-tourism as a tool for fostering economic opportunities while supporting environmental sustainability and community development in Sri Lanka.





ICSD 2025 Advances University–Industry Collaboration for Sustainable Development



The Second International Conference on University–Industry Collaborations for Sustainable Development (ICSD 2025), popularly known as the Colombo Conference, was successfully held on 9th–10th May 2025 at gapHQ, Colombo. Organized under the FOUNTAIN and SECRA projects and coordinated by the University of Peradeniya, the conference served as a dynamic platform for fostering collaboration among academia, industry, and research communities.

The conference brought together academics, researchers, entrepreneurs, policymakers, and industry representatives to discuss innovative approaches and strategic partnerships that contribute to sustainable development. The opening ceremony featured distinguished speakers and guests who highlighted the importance of strengthening links between universities and industry to address emerging societal and environmental challenges.

The two-day programme included technical sessions, expert presentations, panel discussions, and the Global Agro–Industry Forum. While the first day was conducted in a physical format, the second day was held online, enabling broader international participation. More than 150 research papers and case studies were presented, covering a wide range of topics including climate-smart agriculture, agro-industrial development, sustainability, and digital innovation.

The conference also provided valuable opportunities for networking, knowledge exchange, and the development of future collaborative initiatives. By promoting dialogue among key stakeholders, ICSD 2025 reinforced the role of university–industry partnerships in driving innovation, enhancing research impact, and supporting national and global sustainability agendas.





Bridging Academia and Industry through University–Industry Exhibition



The Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, under FOUNTAIN Work Package 5, successfully organized the University–Industry Exhibition as a featured event of the Colombo Conference. The exhibition served as a dynamic platform for showcasing research outputs, technological advancements, and innovative products developed by universities and industry partners.

The event hosted a range of dedicated industry stalls, featuring organizations such as the State Timber Corporation, Guidance Overseas Education Centre (Pvt) Ltd., Sathuta Fertilizer (Pvt) Ltd., Sathuta Ceylon Exports (Pvt) Ltd., and AgriOne Solutions (Pvt) Ltd. These exhibitors engaged with participants through networking sessions and career-oriented interactions, providing students and graduates with direct access to industry professionals and recruitment opportunities across multiple sectors.

The exhibition successfully met its key objectives by strengthening university–industry linkages, highlighting innovative solutions, supporting student and graduate employability, and encouraging entrepreneurship through advisory services and innovation-focused engagement. Industry representatives explored potential talent for internships and employment, while academic participants presented research findings and identified opportunities for collaborative projects and industry partnerships.





Expanding Horizons in Food Science: Research Training Completed in China



Two final-year Food Science specializing students, Ms. M.A. Pamudi Mandara Premarathne (AG/AT/2020/5247) and Ms. P. Thisari Perera (AG/AT/2020/5305), successfully completed a four-month international research attachment at the Shandon Analysis and Test Centre, Qilu University, Jinan, China. The programme was conducted from 25th February 2025 under the supervision of Prof. Buddhika Perumpuli.

During this period, Ms. Premarathne conducted her research on the comparative study of chemical compositions in Huangqin (*Scutellaria baicalensis*) using different processing methods, under the guidance of Prof. (Mrs.) Hangjing Dong. Meanwhile, Ms. Perera focused on the separation and purification of flavonoids from *Abelmoschus manihot* (L.) Medicus (yellow marsh mallow) flower using macroporous resin D101, supervised by Dr. (Mrs.) Yu Jingqian.

This international research exposure provided both students with valuable hands-on experience in advanced analytical techniques and strengthened their competencies in food science research within a global academic environment.



Eco Harvest Project: Advancing Sustainable Soil Practices



In celebration of World Soil Day 2024 (5 December), the Ruhuna University Soil Science Club (RUSSC), under the guidance of Prof. Rajika Amarasinghe, launched the Eco Harvest Project at the Department of Soil Science, University of Ruhuna.

The programme featured a hands-on session on vermicomposting, focusing on its role in organic waste management and soil fertility enhancement. Farmers and officers from the Kamburupitiya Agriculture Service Office, along with undergraduate students, actively participated in the training and gained practical knowledge on the use of earthworms in organic decomposition and sustainable soil management.

The session highlighted the scientific principles of vermicomposting and its benefits in improving soil health, increasing crop productivity, and reducing environmental impacts. Participants also explored its potential contribution to long-term sustainable agriculture.

The Eco Harvest Project reflects the commitment of RUSSC to promoting environmental stewardship and practical, science-based solutions for sustainable and resilient agricultural systems.

"Learning vermicomposting in a hands-on environment helped us understand that sustainable agriculture begins with healthy soil and practical action"

--Ayona Dissanayake--



AGRI-GLOBE



BUILDING GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS FOR AGRICULTURAL EXCELLENCE



Strengthening International Academic Partnerships with Kanazawa University, Japan

The University of Ruhuna recently welcomed an academic delegation from Kanazawa University, Japan, further reinforcing its commitment to international collaboration and academic excellence. The visit provided a valuable opportunity for both institutions to explore avenues for cooperation and strengthen ties in higher education.

Discussions held during the visit focused on potential collaborations in student exchange, joint research activities, academic capacity building, and other areas of mutual interest. The delegation engaged with university administrators, academic staff, and students, fostering constructive dialogue and identifying opportunities for future partnerships.

The visit highlighted the shared commitment of both universities to advancing knowledge through international engagement and collaborative research. Such partnerships are expected to create new opportunities for students and academics to gain global exposure, participate in multidisciplinary research, and contribute to addressing contemporary challenges through innovative solutions.

As the University of Ruhuna continues to expand its international network, collaborations with leading global institutions such as Kanazawa University play an important role in enhancing academic quality, promoting cultural exchange, and strengthening the University's presence in the global higher education landscape.



Strengthening Academic Ties: Department of Agricultural Biology Hosts Visiting Academics from Pakistan

The Department of Agricultural Biology hosted three distinguished academics from Pakistan during the first half of 2025, strengthening academic ties and laying the groundwork for future collaboration in teaching, research, and innovation.

From 24th April to 7th May 2025, Dr. Abdul Rehman, Assoc. Prof., Department of Agronomy, University of Sargodha, visited the Faculty, followed by Dr. Saeed Qaisrani, Assoc. Prof., Department of Environmental Science, COMSATS University, Islamabad (Vehari Campus), from 4th to 16th May 2025. During their visits, both academics actively engaged in lectures, seminars, innovation workshops, and community outreach activities, contributing to academic exchange and interdisciplinary dialogue.

In addition, Prof. Dr. Iqbal Munir from the Institute of Biotechnology & Genetic Engineering, The University of Agriculture, Peshawar, conducted two special lectures on 20th and 27th June 2025 for undergraduate students of the Department of Agricultural Biology. His sessions on Transgenic Oil Crops and Biodiesel Production provided valuable insights into biotechnology applications in sustainable agriculture and renewable energy.

These academic visits, coordinated by Dr. Anuga Liyanage and Dr. Chathura Perera, enriched student learning, promoted cross-border knowledge exchange, and strengthened institutional partnerships. The Faculty of Agriculture extends its sincere appreciation to the visiting scholars for their valuable contributions and looks forward to continued collaboration in the future.





Okayama–Ruhuna Student Exchange Program 2025

The Okayama–Ruhuna Student Exchange Program 2025 held from January 9th to 12th at the University of Ruhuna, marked a significant milestone in strengthening academic collaboration between Okayama University, Japan, and the University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka. The event was organized by the Ruhuna University Soil Science Club (RUSSC) under the guidance of Snr. Prof. D.A.L. Leelamanie (Patron, RUSSC), Dr. W.M.C.J. Wijekoon (Head, Department of Soil Science), and Prof. S.R. Amarasinghe (Senior Treasurer, RUSSC), along with the active involvement of the department's academic staff.

The program welcomed esteemed participants from Okayama University, including Prof. Morihiro Maeda and two international students. Designed to foster international academic exchange and cultural understanding, the program began with an opening ceremony that encouraged mutual engagement and knowledge sharing. A key highlight was the Okayama–Ruhuna Symposium on Soil and Environment (OASYS 2025), where young researchers presented their work on soil science and environmental sustainability, stimulating insightful discussions and future research prospects. The final two days offered field-based and cultural learning opportunities. A visit to Midigama Fruit Farm allowed participants to explore tropical agriculture, agroforestry, and sustainable land use. The program concluded with a Madu River safari and a tour of Galle Fort, providing students with a deeper appreciation of Sri Lanka's biodiversity and heritage.

This exemplifies the University of Ruhuna's commitment to internationalization, fostering global academic partnerships and enriching student learning experiences.

"This exchange was more than an academic program-it was an opportunity to connect across cultures, learn from diverse perspectives, and grow both personally and professionally"

--Ashini Divyana--

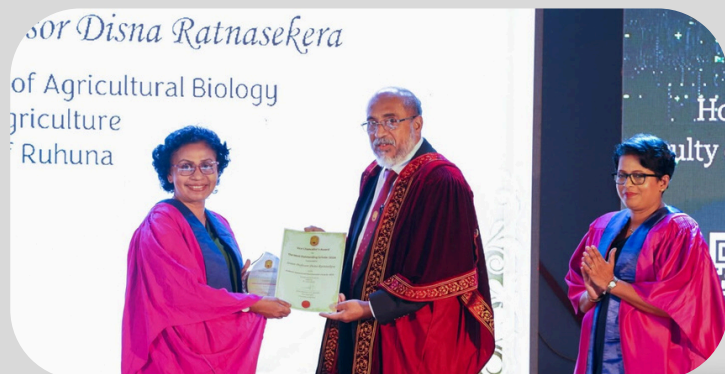


HARVEST OF HONOURS



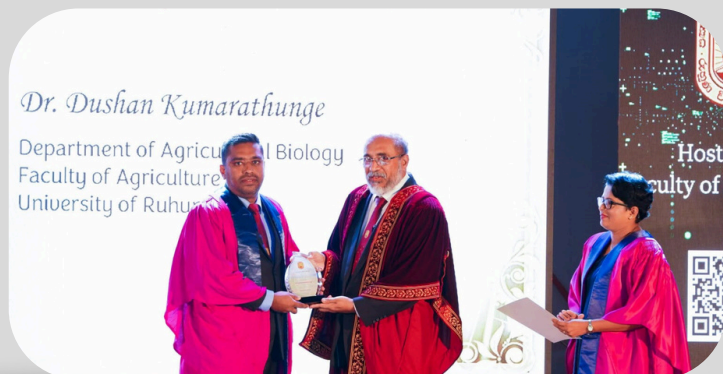
**CELEBRATING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THOSE
WHO CULTIVATE EXCELLENCE**

University of Ruhuna - Prestigious Scholarly Awards



The Most Outstanding Scholar Vice Chancellor's Awards 2025

Snr. Prof. Disna Ratnasekera
Department of Agricultural Biology



The Most Outstanding Young Researcher Vice Chancellor's Awards 2025

Dr. Dushan Kumarathunga
Department of Agricultural Biology

Prestigious Scholarly Awards: 02

Post Doctoral Research Fellowships



Prof. Buddhika Perumpuli
Department of Food Science and Technology

Host Institution:
Shandong Analysis and Test Centre,
Qilu University of Technology, Jinan, Shandong,
China



Dr. G.S.N. Fernando
Department of Food Science and Technology

Host Institution:
School of Health, Sport, and Bioscience,
University of East London
(Commonwealth Professional Fellowship)

Post Doctoral Fellowships: 02



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Competitive Research Grants

National Agricultural Research (NARP) Grants by Sri Lanka Council for Agricultural Research Policy



Research Project 01

- **Principal Investigator:** Prof. Rajika Amarasinghe, of Department of Soil Science
- **Project title:** Harnessing Azolla and Seaweed Extract for Sustainable Foliar Fertilizer Production to Address Soil Salinity Associated Problems in Sri Lanka

Research Project 02

- **Principal Investigator:** Dr. Niluka Nakandala, Department of Crop Science
- **Project title:** Development of in-vitro protocols for the rapid production and estimation of secondary metabolites of *Salacia reticulata* - A highly valuable endangered medicinal plant

Research Project 03

- **Principal Investigator:** Dr. Dushan Kumarathunga, Department of Agricultural Biology
- **Project title:** Crops for the future - Investigating the effects of applying Silicon on enhancing drought tolerance and water use efficiency of selected widely grown field crops

Competitive Research Grants: 03

Appointments

Faculty Expertise Supports Parliamentary Review of Oil Palm Cultivation Policy



Prof. I. R. Paliakkara of the Department of Crop Science was appointed as a subject specialist to a national committee tasked with reviewing the current restrictions on oil palm cultivation in Sri Lanka and preparing a technical report for submission to Parliament.



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SEEDLINGS IN ACTION



SPOTLIGHTING THE NEXT GENERATION OF AGRICULTURAL LEADERS



Aswenna 2025: Celebrating Creativity and Cultural Diversity

The Student Union of the Faculty of Agriculture successfully organized “Aswenna” Cultural Week 2025 from 26–30 May 2025 at the faculty premises, providing a vibrant platform for students to showcase their artistic talents and celebrate the rich cultural diversity of the faculty community.

Throughout the week, a series of engaging cultural events were held, featuring traditional and contemporary dance performances, vocal and instrumental music, stage dramas, and musical critiques. These performances highlighted the creativity, dedication, and teamwork of students while fostering a lively and inclusive atmosphere across the faculty.

A distinctive feature of “Aswenna” 2025 was that all performances were conceptualized, organized, and presented by students of the Faculty of Agriculture, demonstrating their talents beyond academics. The event provided an opportunity for students to express themselves through the arts, strengthen friendships, and promote cultural appreciation among their peers.

“Aswenna” 2025 stands as a testament to the Faculty's commitment to nurturing well-rounded graduates by encouraging student engagement in cultural and extracurricular activities alongside academic excellence.





From Ruhuna to China: MPhil Graduate Embarks on PhD Journey

Ms. P.K. Darshika Sandamini, who successfully completed her Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Agricultural Biology at the University of Ruhuna, has been awarded a highly competitive scholarship to pursue her doctoral studies in China.

She is currently a PhD candidate at the State Key Laboratory for Green Pesticides, Guizhou University, China where she conducts research in the field of biochemistry for the development of environmentally friendly pest management solutions. Her current research focuses on the functional characterization of UDP-glycosyltransferase (UGT) enzymes and the synthesis of novel compounds related to green pesticides.

Adding to her academic achievements, Ms. Sandamini recently co-authored a paper titled "Jasmonate before Salicylate in Systemic Acquired Resistance", which was published in the prestigious journal Trends in Plant Science (Impact Factor: 21.3). Her accomplishments reflect the strong research foundation provided by the Department of Agricultural Biology and serve as an inspiration to aspiring young researchers.



"My postgraduate journey at the Department of Agricultural Biology, provided me with a strong foundation in research and practical skills. This experience continues to guide my doctoral research and preparing me to contribute to innovative solutions in agriculture"

--Darshika Sandamini--



LEGACY IN BLOOM



**HONOURING THE PAST, INSPIRING THE PRESENT:
OUR ALUMNI MAKING A DIFFERENCE**



Honouring Prof. Anton Perera: A Legacy of Wisdom, Kindness, and Dedicated Service

It is with profound respect and remembrance that we dedicate this inaugural Legacy in Bloom section to the late Prof. Anton Perera, a distinguished academic, devoted educator, and proud alumnus of the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna.

Prof. Perera was an eminent scholar in the fields of Livestock Production and Waste Management, whose academic excellence and lifelong commitment to education left an enduring mark on both national and international arenas. His contributions extended well beyond the classroom, shaping agricultural education and environmental stewardship in Sri Lanka.

A proud alumnus of the Faculty, Prof. Perera joined the University of Ruhuna in 1998 as the top-performing graduate of his cohort in the B.Sc. Agriculture degree programme. He later pursued advanced studies, earning an M.Sc. in Environmental Science from the University of Colombo and a Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering from Zhejiang University, China. His academic journey was further enriched through prestigious postdoctoral fellowships under NORAD and the Endeavour Programme, strengthening his global research profile.

Throughout his distinguished career, Prof. Perera served the University of Ruhuna with unwavering dedication. He held several key academic and administrative positions, including Head of the Department of Animal Science (2019–2022) and Deputy Senior Student Counsellor of the Faculty of Agriculture (2008–2013). In these roles, he provided invaluable academic guidance and pastoral care to students, earning their deep respect and admiration.





His service extended beyond departmental and faculty responsibilities. As Senior Treasurer of the Agriculture Faculty Student Union, he actively supported student engagement and development. He also served as President of the Alumni Association of the Faculty of Agriculture and was a founding member of the Ruhuna University Bird Club, reflecting his commitment to community building and environmental awareness.

Nationally, Prof. Perera contributed significantly to higher education and scientific advancement. He served as President of the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science (Section B-Agriculture and Forestry) and contributed extensively to curriculum development through the National Institute of Education. His long-standing role as Chief Examiner for the GCE Advanced Level Agriculture Examination helped shape generations of students across the country.

His passion for student welfare was particularly notable. He played a pivotal role in establishing the Viru Sisu Scholarship Fund, ensuring sustained financial support for students in need. His broader contributions to national policy development, environmental conservation, and agricultural advancement further reflect the depth of his commitment to societal progress.

Beyond his academic achievements, he will be remembered most for his kindness, humility, and genuine care for students and colleagues. To many, he was more than a professor—he was a mentor, and source of inspiration whose impact transcended the boundaries of academia.

Though Prof. Anton Perera is no longer with us, his legacy endures in the lives he shaped, the knowledge he created, and the values he embodied. His contributions continue to inspire the Faculty of Agriculture and the wider academic community, reminding us that a life dedicated to service and learning leaves an everlasting imprint.

The Faculty of Agriculture will forever cherish Prof. Anton Perera's great contributions and honour his memory. His legacy will continue to inspire generations of students, academics, and professionals.



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