

FAFS Dean's Office Updates

Issue no.23 | April 2020

**“Together We Stand”
Together We Will Meet Soon At FAFS
STAY SAFE... STAY CONNECTED!**

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In the spotlight

Message from Dean Mohtar

Dear FAFS Students, Faculty, Staff and Alumni,

AUB and Lebanon are passing through a difficult period and the world is fast changing even our daily routine that was taken for granted is changed for the foreseeable future.

COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated an already dire financial crisis that is affecting Lebanon and AUB. These financial issues are on everybody's mind.

Today, probably more than any time in Lebanon's recent history, it is our duty to take responsibility towards members of our community; be it our students, our staff, faculty, alumni, and towards the communities we engage with: the producers, food processors, dieticians, land stewards and our community at large in Lebanon and in the region.

We have the responsibility to help ease the burden on our stakeholders and the above communities. We shall survive and we shall thrive with all of us working together.

FAFS is working to support the most vulnerable of its family: the students in ways where we can help those who are in need. We are also working on ways to help our staff, and our faculty to make sure that they can live in dignity in the coming weeks and months.

We are working on ways to improve our efficiency and also on ways to increase our revenues. Our faculty and staff have been extremely busy with external grants that offset some of the financial challenges.

Be assured that FAFS will survive and continue to lead, as always, and will be true to its mission of educating responsible leaders in our disciplines, supporting our communities, and engaging in meaningful and impactful research.

I strongly believe that, with our perseverance and steadfast conviction, we can overcome the challenges ahead of us; and our solidarity as one team should usher us into better times to come.

Rabi H. Mohtar
Professor and Dean

Go FAFS!

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Proud Graduates of FAFS!

We are proud of our alumni and our ambassadors who carry the values of our faculty throughout their careers. Watch prominent FAFS alumni share about the importance of pursuing an education and the promising opportunities for FAFS graduates. [READ MORE](#)

Click [here](#) to watch the video.

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Join the FAFS Leaders of change

FAFS in action for COVID-19

The impact of COVID-19 on Global Food Security | FSP webinar series

FAFS' Food Security Program (FSP) has launched the webinar series "*The Impact of COVID-19 on Global Food Security*" led by Dr. Martin Keulertz, chair of the FSP Executive Committee, and Rachel Bahn, FSP Coordinator.

The first online session panel considered several timely questions on the topic of "food trade" and how the COVID-19 pandemic will shape long-term food security strategies and its impact on food geopolitics.

The second webinar session explored the "Impact of COVID-19 on Food Security in the Global South" where speakers explained their view on the ways in which COVID-19 impacts food security in their respective regions.

Web Links to the Series:

Session 1: "*COVID-19 Impact of food trade*" Watch [here](#)

Session 2: "*COVID-19 Impact on Food in the Global South*"
Watch [here](#)

[READ MORE](#)

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Ardi Ardak continues efforts in support of local communities with seedling distribution

ESDU remains committed to supporting the local communities, especially in times of need. As part of the Ardi Ardak initiative and in collaboration with Food Heritage Foundations, Lebanese League for Women in Business, and Zico House, 7,500 seedlings were distributed (April 24) to 128 small-scale farmers in Akkar, Btedhi (Baalbek), Chouf and West Bekaa. [READ MORE](#)



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Nahla Hwalla at ESCWA dialogue on the emerging impact of COVID-19 pandemic on food security in the Arab region

Dr. Hwalla highlighted the catastrophic implications of the pandemic on global economies and international markets, which have intensified the already existing food insecurity. In Lebanon, the situation is worsened by a volatile political and financial crisis that makes availability, access, and consumption of healthy food fiscally challenging. This requires an approach that emphasizes local agricultural produce over reliance on food imports; it also demands the formulation of policies that support the production, distribution, and access to a healthy, affordable food basket. [READ MORE](#)



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Rami Zurayk: *Pandemic and food security: A view from the Global South*

Rami Zurayk published a timely piece offering insight into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic upon the food security pillars. The article "Pandemic and Food Security: a View from the Global South" was published in the Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development. Since the beginning of the lockdown in Lebanon, Dr. Zurayk has co-managed the Twitter account @foodpandemic with FAFS' Alumna Nour El Houda Amhez and FAFS' Food Security Program Research Assistant Abed Al Kareem Yehya. The three are tracking the impact of the pandemic on food security in the Arab World. [READ MORE](#)



Dr. Zurayk's article can be accessed [here](#).

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Dean Mohtar at FAO Zoominar: How can digital innovation help smallholder farmers cope with impacts of COVID-19 in NENA?

Dean Mohtar participated (April 16-23) in the first of a series of Zoominars, organized by the FAO-RNE Regional Initiative for Small-Scale Family Farming. The Dean co-presented with Dr. Armine Juergenliemk, Agriculture Specialist at World Bank, on the topic of “Revitalizing the agri-food sector through digital technologies in Mashreq countries”. Speakers highlighted the important role of public action to facilitate adoption of digital technologies for agriculture in Mashreq countries. Such technologies can improve efficiency and reduce cost of public sector functions such as the gathering and dissemination of statistics relevant to agriculture, provision of extension services, regulation of land tenure and markets, subsidy payments, and others. They emphasized the importance of protecting smallholder farmer interests as the digital transformation of agriculture advances, particularly regarding data ownership, privacy, and confidentiality. [READ MORE](#)



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Hadi Jaafar with Al Arabiya: A Lebanese farmer's tale: Amid coronavirus, struggles to import supplies, prices rise.

“The Lebanese agriculture and food production industry has come under multiple threats, and the coronavirus-spurred economic contraction has exacerbated the hit already laid upon the sector by the ongoing currency crisis.”

Dr. Jaafar shares his thoughts and recommendations with Al Arabiya.

Click [here](#) for full interview. [READ MORE](#)



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Martin Keulertz with the Daily Star: Community initiatives crucial for food security during COVID-19 lockdown.

Martin Keulertz was interviewed by the Daily Star to discuss the effects of COVID-19 lockdown on food security and local communities, and the different initiatives that are being prepared and implemented to help those in need. [READ MORE](#)



Read full article and recommendations of Dr. Keulertz, click [here](#)

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Farah Naja on *Nutrition amid COVID-19 pandemic: a multi-level framework for action*

As the world battles the ravaging COVID-19 pandemic, every aspect of human health becomes a precious resource, and optimal nutrition is no exception. In a perspective published *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, Dr. Farah Naja offered a framework for action and set of nutritional recommendations aimed at maintaining good physical and mental health, community resilience, and national and global food security during the pandemic. [READ MORE](#)

Click [here](#) for full article.

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FASF Students fight for a brighter and healthier Lebanon

Omar Bahlawan is on the ground and fighting COVID-19

Omar Bahlawan, a student of Public Health Nutrition at FASF and FHS, is interning at the Ministry of Public Health's Preventive Medicine Office where he works on the COVID 19 file in Lebanon.

"FASF has always taught us that promoting Healthy Earth, Healthy Food, and Healthy People should be at the core of what we do. I want to help my country and my community fight the spread of this pandemic." [READ MORE](#)

Click [here](#) to watch Omar's video.

Ali Assi, a soldier in the war against COVID-19

I am eager to take part in the change that FASF is leading. FASF inspired me and in my turn, I want to inspire others to help in keeping a healthy community. Lebanon needs us!" says Ali Assi, a FASF food microbiology student volunteering with the Ministry of Public Health. I am helping control the spread of the virus by applying the skills that I've acquired at FASF to help the ministry teams in epidemiological surveillance, collecting random samples from all over Lebanon for PCR testing, and investigating how the virus spreads. [READ MORE](#)

Click [here](#) to watch Ali's video.

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Outreach

Developing Solutions for the Litani River: FAFS partners with Water Innovation Lab

FAFS proudly partners with Water Innovation Lab (WIL) 2020 for Lebanese youth (in Lebanon and diaspora) to develop solutions to the Litani River challenges. WIL Lebanon is the biggest water innovation event dedicated to young leaders.

Selected projects will receive a seed grant of up to USD \$5,000 to pilot, test, and prototype their proposed solution. Learn more and apply: [Waterlution Lebanon 2020](#)

[READ MORE](#)



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MOU with GNFF NGO to enhance academia-private sector collaborations

Led by Dr. Mirella Aoun, FAFS recently concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with the Georges N. Frem Foundation (GNFF). The objectives of the five year MoU are threefold: strengthen collaboration between the agri-food private sector and academia; identify and create opportunities for applied research, development and outreach in the agri-food sector; and create venues for student engagement with local communities within the project frameworks. The MoU facilitates engagement and the work toward food production resilience during and in the aftermath of Covid-19 pandemic. [READ MORE](#)



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Mohamad Abiad leads the continuous growth and importance of LEAF

As of March 2020, EVL or Core lab moved from AUB's Faculty of Medicine to FAFS, where it was renamed as Laboratories for the Environment, Agriculture, and Food (LEAF). With Dr. Mohamad Abiad as Director, LEAF strives to be a reference lab for Lebanon and the Region in analytical testing. LEAF serves the public and private sectors, as well as individuals. The LEAF team maintains high-quality international standards and provides analytical testing and training services for food, animal feed, pharmaceuticals, water, soil, wastewater, and compost. [READ MORE](#)



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IBDAA Award in Agribusiness goes to FAFS Students

Agribusiness students Hala El Moussaoui, Fatima Keserwani, and Ramzah Chammout received first place in the IBDAA Award in Agribusiness for their project “Waste-To-Nourish”. The team successfully developed organic fertilizer from food waste and chicken feed from fly larvae also raised on food waste. [READ MORE](#)

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Prospective students join online interactive sessions to learn about FAFS

Today more than ever, and at a time where the Planet is facing global challenges in terms of climate change, hunger, biodiversity loss, alarming food security, FAFS stands as a global hub for agriculture, water, food, and nutrition, for people & the environment.

Among its ongoing efforts to highlight the significance of FAFS disciplines in addressing current pressing national and global issues, the faculty held two interactive online live sessions for prospective students. [READ MORE](#)

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HEALTHY EARTH



HEALTHY FOOD



HEALTHY PEOPLE

Faculty News

Ideas to Reality: FAFS Hadi Jaafar leads an AUB project with Google AI to help farmers manage their water

Hadi Jaafar and AUB team were awarded the Google AI Impact Challenge to develop a smartphone application that helps farmers irrigate their fields precisely using remote sensing and machine learning. This mobile app allows farmers to reduce their pumping costs, manage water more efficiently, and better adapt to climate change while protecting the environment.

[READ MORE](#)



Click [here](#) to check new Google video

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Giuliano Martiniello on the legalization of cannabis for medicinal purposes in Lebanon

FAFS' Dr. Giuliano Martiniello was recently interviewed by Spanish magazine LaVox de Galicia on the recent "legalization of cannabis for medicinal purposes in Lebanon."

"Lebanon suffers from an agrarian crisis due to collapsing exports, weak internal market, water shortage or abundant competition, highlights Dr. Martiniello. "As an escape route, small farmers have joined the cannabis boom as this cultivation comparatively requires less labor, less water and provides a greater profit margin."

Click [here](#) to read the full article. [READ MORE](#)



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Locusts, Food Security, and Climate Change in East Africa, by Giuliano Martiniello

During a recent interview with the Italian magazine, Dr. Giuliano Martiniello discussed "Locusts and Food Security and Climate Change in East Africa." Dr. Martiniello focused on the relationship between climate change and the outbreak of locusts in eastern Africa; connecting their emergence with oscillations in rain patterns, drought and flooding. Click [here](#) to read the full article. [READ MORE](#)



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Events

LDEM plant sales help promote good mental health during the COVID-19 lockdown

This year, due to the COVID-19 lockdown, the LDEM plant sale was truly exceptional: over 75 AUB faculty purchased more than 800 plants, which they selected from LDEM's online catalogue. The sale took place online (April 8-10). Research shows that plants and connecting to nature improve mental health and wellbeing, especially during times of lockdown. [READ MORE](#)



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Earth Day 2020 Celebrated at FAFS

Joining celebrations around the world in observance of the 50th anniversary of International Earth Day, FAFS conducted a social media campaign to raise awareness and promote the importance of maintaining a healthier and sustainable Earth: always at the core of FAFS' mission and vision. Check [here](#) for full FAFS campaign that encourage the community to heal and safeguard our home!

FAFS recognizes the impact of COVID-19 on the security of food and water around the world, and as a part of our mission, we will continue to fight for a Healthy Earth for all.

EARTH DAY IS TOMORROW!

How have you contributed to preserve a healthy and sustainable earth?

Click through to see some tips for being more eco-conscious! 



#EARTHDAY2020

Happy Earth Day!



FAS has always been committed to inspire minds and train future leaders who promote

"HEALTHY EARTH, HEALTHY FOOD, HEALTHY PEOPLE"

We invite you to celebrate with us this special day #EarthDay2020

HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO SUSTAIN A HEALTHY EARTH

- Grow your fruits and veggies at home
- Try to reduce plastic use
- Conserve water
- Be car concious to reduce gas emissions

Share with us how you are taking part in safeguarding a healthy and sustainable Earth



#EARTHDAY2020



Announcements

SAVE THE DATE

The Impact of COVID-19 on Global Food Security | FSP webinar series

Date: May 14, 2020

Time: 4:00 pm

Live on: [Facebook](#) / [YouTube](#)

In continuation with the Food Security Program webinar series, the FSP department as well as speakers from around the world tackle questions and problems in relation to how COVID-19 will impact Global Food Security. This is the 4th session.

To see the full list of speakers, click [here](#).

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FAFS FAMILY MISSES YOU!



To learn more about FAFS events, please visit our website [Calendar](#)

To advertise your upcoming events, please send the event details (*title, location, date, brief description, picture, and contact name & email*) to fafs_com@aub.edu.lb

If you missed the last issue of the FAFS Dean's Updates, [click here](#).



HEALTHY EARTH



HEALTHY FOOD



HEALTHY PEOPLE

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