

Changes abroad affect A&M's mix of foreign students

By Alan Sembera
Reporter

The mixture of international students at Texas A&M is undergoing major changes because of economies abroad, says international student adviser Tina Watkins.

In the early 1980s, most international students attending A&M were from Latin America, but because of weakening economies in that area, their number has fallen and they are being replaced by an increasing number of Asians, Watkins said.

When she first came here eight years ago, Watkins said, about two-thirds of the international students were from Central America and South America. During the last school year, they were one-fourth of the international student population.

Watkins said A&M is also losing many students from the Middle East because of the fighting there. There has been a large decrease in Iraqi, Lebanese and Palestinian students attending A&M since she came here, she said.

The largest group of new international students that applied to A&M this year are from Asia. She said Korea had the most applicants — 61. Fifty-eight students applied from China, 53 from Taiwan, and 29 from India.

Usually about 75 percent of the applicants will actually come here, Watkins said, because some students apply to more than one university. Watkins said there are usually about 1,700 international students at A&M, but this year she expects an increase of about 100 students.

This increase is caused by the improvements in the economies of countries in Asia, she said.

Kyo Sang Chung, a Korean stu-

dent, said education plays an important role in Korea. He said increasing numbers of students are going into universities.

"If they miss the chance to study in a university, they've failed," Chung said. "They've failed to get a

Because of weakening economies in Latin America, many Latin students are being replaced by Asians.

— Tina Watkins, international student adviser.

good job, a good husband or a good wife."

Yong Hun Lee, a 24-year-old engineering graduate student who just arrived in the United States, said he came here because the United States is outstanding in his field.

He said he chose A&M because it is a good engineering school and is not expensive compared to other schools. A&M also offers a lot of assistantships in engineering, he said.

Another Korean engineering student, Choi Jaebum, agreed that A&M is a good engineering school. He said A&M is also attractive to foreign students because they can attend classes while they work on their English.

Jaebum said many other universities require foreign students to pass English tests before they can attend classes, but A&M lets students who fail parts of the tests improve their English while they take classes.

Researchers in Texas work to end worries about pork, health

HOUSTON (AP) — Texas scientists are working on relief for those cholesterol-conscious Americans who are tired of eating sushi and crave a traditional pork chops and potatoes meal.

Research is producing a new way of raising swine that makes pork meat higher in unsaturated fat, which has been shown to significantly reduce the risk of heart disease.

"If this type of meat became available, then you could eat bacon and sausage and ham without raising your cholesterol level," says Dr. Scott Grundy, who heads the Center for Human Nutrition at the University of Texas at Dallas.

Grundy says studies show the new pork would be extremely beneficial because unsaturated fats lower cholesterol in the bloodstream and reduce the risk of heart disease.

Pork already has one of the highest levels of unsaturated fats among all meats and doesn't deserve the nasty image of heart disease it conjures up in the minds of some people, notes Steve Smith, one of the researchers conducting experiments on the subject at Texas A&M.

"We're starting with something good and trying to make something better," he says.

Researchers are putting laboratory animals on a health regimen of their own, increasing the amount of unsaturated fat in their diets to raise the ratio of unsaturated-to-saturated fat deposited in tissues, he says.

The meat is not lower in total fat, however. Smith says the unsaturated fat in research animals was about 76 percent of total fat, while normal pork contains about 58 percent unsaturated fat.

The meat cooks and tastes about the same as regular pork, but is

slightly "springier" when bitten, he says.

But the diet does have problems. The modified feed costs about 30 cents per pound, compared with about 6 cents per pound for regular feed.

So researchers now are looking into cheaper ingredients, such as sunflower and cottonseed oil, to provide the unsaturated fats, Smith says.

Another drawback is a sheen of oil on the raw meat that makes it look less desirable.

Similar experiments with cattle have not been as successful because of differences in the digestive systems between the two types of animals, he says.

Grundy says the idea for the experiment came from a study of Mediterranean people showing that mono-unsaturated fats in the diet reduced the risk of heart disease.

The experiment also is part of the doctoral studies of Texas A&M student Lori St. John and is among the first to try to modify animal fat.

Not everyone, however, is optimistic the product of the research will end up at supermarket meat counters.

Darrell Knabe, who is in charge of the swine at the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, says, "My guess is that it will never fly, because of the higher diet cost and labor involved."

A major Texas pork producer says his industry might be interested if the cost of feed were lowered to about 10 cents per pound and if the consumer demand for the meat was sufficient.

Fred Woodley, whose 1,200 sows in Uvalde County make him one of the largest swine producers in the state, says, "I think the industry is going into it whole hog. The price will come down, but it won't happen overnight."

Superconductivity findings 'overwhelm' science world

Scientists working on superconductivity have found a "cave full of gemstones" in recent months.

The pace of reports about discoveries in the field is overwhelming scientific journals, says Energy Secretary John H. Herrington.

In May, Herrington announced the creation of a special computer database to keep track of the research into the ability of some materials to conduct electricity without losing any current to resistance.

Reid Terwilliger, assistant editor at the prestigious Physical Review Letters, says in his 15 years there he has never seen such a flood of papers on a single topic, with more than 300 so far this year.

A special panel of reviewers has been set up to get reports into print before they are obsolete, he said.

"It's still an exciting time because no one knows how much is out there," says Brian Maple, a physicist at the University of California in San Diego.

For superconductivity scientists, he says, last year "was like going into a cave full of gemstones, and if you look over here and over there, you find rubies and emeralds," Maple said.

"We just didn't know what kinds of rubies or gemstones would be in there.

"And we still don't," he added.

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