

2003 International Awards Ceremony

Wednesday, April 2, 2003

303 International Center

Delia Koo International Academic Center

Michigan State University

Ralph H. Smuckler Award for Advancing International Studies and Programs at Michigan State University

The Ralph H. Smuckler Award for Advancing International Studies and Programs at MSU recognizes and rewards one or two faculty members each year for their significant and lasting impact on the advancement of international scholarship, teaching, and public service at MSU. This award is named after Ralph H. Smuckler, a former long time dean of International Studies and Programs.



John M. Staatz and Michael T. Weber

For over 20 years, John Staatz and Michael Weber, Professors of Agricultural Economics and African Studies, have provided leadership in building their department's programs of teaching, research, and outreach on international development and food security.



Since joining MSU's faculty in 1984, Dr. Staatz's professional work has focused on international agricultural development, food policy and food security, agricultural marketing, trade, and cooperatives – primarily in francophone Sub-Saharan Africa. Dr. Weber, who joined MSU in 1976, has focused since the mid-1980s on strategies for improving access to food by poor people in Sub-Saharan Africa. Currently, his projects focus on food marketing systems, market information systems, and access to land in that region.

Perhaps the greatest contribution of the Staatz-Weber teams has been the intellectual and managerial leadership they have provided as Co-Directors of a series of MSU-USAID Food Security Cooperative Agreements. The renewal of the original 1984 agreement for two additional terms is a testament to their research program's significant and ongoing contribution to better understanding the causes of, and solutions to, food insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa.

John Staatz and Michael Weber are recognized far beyond the MSU community for their contributions in the field of international development. Dr. Staatz is co-editor of the most widely-used textbook on agricultural development. He has served as the U.S. representative to CILSS/Club du Sahel (OECD) working group on cereals policy in the Sahel (1984-94), and as a consultant to organizations like USAID, the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment, and the Earth Satellite Corporation. Dr. Weber is widely recognized for the lead he took in developing a series of "MSU Food Security Policy Synthesis" documents which are widely read in research and donor institutions worldwide. He has also frequently served as an advisor/consultant to USAID and the World Bank. Both Staatz and Weber serve on the Technical Committee of the Partnership to Cut Hunger in Africa.

In their effort to build a strong food security research program, Staatz and Weber have actively collaborated with faculty and students at MSU and with colleagues in developing countries. During their careers at MSU, they have mentored an exceptional number of international graduate students who have assumed key leadership roles in their countries. Many of their U.S. graduate students who carried out thesis and dissertation research in Africa have continued to make contributions in the area of international development. In the many countries where Staatz and Weber have helped establish research projects, they and other MSU team members have mentored young university and ministerial staff to implement policy-relevant research and to communicate the research results to key national policymakers and the donor community.

John Staatz and Michael Weber, both individually and as a team, have contributed greatly to the mission of MSU and to progress in solving major world problems. It is with great pride that we honor them with this year's Ralph Smuckler Award for Advancing International Studies and Programs at MSU.