

What Is International Services?

International Services (IS) is a program within the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) that works to protect and promote U.S. agricultural health globally. More than 300 Americans and host-country nationals work in 34 foreign countries on 6 continents, preventing the international spread of animal and plant pests to the United States, facilitating safe agricultural trade, and helping to build effective and efficient animal and plant health infrastructures overseas. With the wide range of skills and expertise needed to accomplish this work, IS employs a diverse team of professionals—including veterinarians, plant health specialists, entomologists, epidemiologists, and others.

What We Do

Safeguarding U.S. agriculture is a challenge that reaches beyond political boundaries and international borders. To carry out this mission successfully, USDA must build and maintain strong, collaborative relationships with its animal and plant health partners. IS professionals



are a small but highly respected group among their foreign agricultural counterparts who work diligently to accomplish this goal.

To keep unwanted invasive species and diseases from crossing U.S. borders, IS cooperates in major surveillance, eradication, and control programs in foreign countries. By helping our global neighbors in these efforts, we are also helping to protect the United States. Having effective agricultural health programs in countries around the world significantly reduces the risk of pests and diseases spreading to our country.

For example, screwworm is a devastating foreign pest that attacks open wounds in warm-blooded animals—including humans. IS assisted Mexico and Panama in eradicating screwworm from those countries. The eradication effort has saved U.S. livestock producers more than \$400 million annually in control costs and lost production values.

In addition, IS assists Mexico and Guatemala in controlling and eradicating the countries' populations of Mediterranean fruit fly, which lays eggs in ripening fruit and causes extensive crop damage. IS' work in these countries is critical to prevent the "Medfly" from establishing

itself in the United States—a problem that could cost our country more than \$1.5 billion annually to eradicate.

Building Health Capacity Overseas

One of IS' main goals is to enhance the ability of foreign officials to address—in their own countries and organizations—the kinds of animal and plant health issues we seek to prevent in the United States. IS works closely with the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in this effort. For example, in order to safeguard the United States and other countries against the threat of a human pandemic, IS is actively engaged in the international



effort to prevent and contain highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). IS personnel have worked with more than 40 countries to provide technical expertise and equipment (such as surveillance and diagnostic tools), conduct preparedness and diagnostic workshops, deliver epidemiology courses to veterinarians from more than 50 countries, and help staff an avian influenza Crisis Management Center in Rome.

By collaborating with other countries and sharing U.S. experience, IS helps strengthen animal and plant programs, increase technical capacity, and improve infrastructure in other countries—all of which results in decreased risk to U.S. agriculture.

Facilitating Safe Agricultural Trade

IS plays a major role in building and maintaining strong agricultural trade relations between the United States and other countries. IS employees discuss trade requirements with foreign agricultural officials, work to eliminate quarantine barriers for U.S. products, and explain the scientific basis for U.S. agricultural import requirements. Through their close work with foreign governments, IS employees stationed abroad have been instrumental in protecting existing markets and opening up new markets for trade worldwide.

In addition, IS employees work tirelessly to ensure that agricultural products entering the United States are safe. Employees manage pre-clearance programs in a number of countries, including Mexico, Chile, and the Netherlands. Our officials inspect, or "preclear," fruits, vegetables, and flower bulbs that are destined for the United States to ensure that they are free of pests and diseases. In cooperation with the U.S. Department of Defense, IS also assists in pre-clearing military personnel, baggage, and equipment used overseas before returning to the United States.



Claudia Cartwright

Dr. Claudia Cartwright epitomized the next generation of IS Veterinary Medical Officers and was one of the first recipients of the IS Fellowship Program, using it to obtain her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine. After being assigned to her first foreign post in the Caribbean, she was diagnosed with cancer. Following an aggressive surgery and treatment, Dr. Cartwright volunteered to go on a temporary assignment in Rome, Italy, with the intent to beat the disease and become a Foreign Service Officer. Unfortunately, she was medically evacuated from Rome approximately 2 years into her posting and succumbed to her illness on September 19, 2008. She leaves behind a devoted husband, adoring daughter, loving parents, and a worldwide community of friends and colleagues.



The Claudia Cartwright Fellowship

IS offers fellowships and career opportunities to academically qualified students who are enrolled in post-baccalaureate programs related to agriculture or the biological sciences. Fellowship recipients can receive up to \$25,000 in financial assistance for the final 2 years they are enrolled in a master's or doctoral degree program. Students must maintain at least a 3.0 grade-point average during their fellowship enrollment.

What Does the Claudia Cartwright Fellowship Offer You?

- Up to \$25,000 per year towards tuition for graduate studies and related academic studies
- Paid employment during summers and other school breaks
- Tutoring assistance and mentoring
- Coverage in the Federal employees' retirement system, including participation in the Thrift Savings Plan (401K)
- Paid vacation and sick leave
- Life and health insurance benefits, depending on the length of work periods
- Possible permanent employment upon graduation

For each year of fellowship aid, the Career Experience Program agreement requires 640 hours of study-related work with IS. This work, successfully completed, allows APHIS the option to offer students noncompetitive conversion to a full-time, career-conditional, Foreign Service appointment.

During the fellowship period, recipients gain IS work experience in the fields of plant and animal health or international agricultural trade. Plant health work typically includes diagnostic testing; biologically assessing exotic pest potential; conducting plant quarantine and preclearance operations; and carrying out biological control activities. Animal health work usually involves livestock and/or poultry disease control activities (such as observing or performing routine medical procedures); performing laboratory tests; tracking test results; and preparing specimens.

Participants are expected to achieve a career Foreign Service appointment with IS after successful completion of the program and graduation with an appropriate degree. If appointed, upon graduation, fellowship recipients are required to work full-time for at least 1 calendar year for each school year that they participated in the Fellowship Program.¹

Qualifications

Students interested in the Claudia Cartwright Fellowship Program should apply directly to USDA-APHIS.

¹ If the recipients fail to serve the entire length of the mandatory IS employment, they will be required to reimburse the agency a prorated share of scholarship funds used. Candidates accepted into the program will be expected to convert into the Foreign Service and pursue a career with APHIS overseas, which requires passing a top secret security clearance and worldwide availability medical clearance.

To apply, candidates must:

- Be a U.S. citizen,
- Be enrolled in the final 2 years of a master's or doctoral degree program—in good academic standing—at an accredited university within the United States,
- Be willing to work for the agency during school breaks, and
- Sign a statement committing to be available for permanent work assignment worldwide.

Deadline for Application Is April 1

Completed applications must be postmarked no later than April 1.

Nominations should be addressed to:

USDA, Marketing and Regulatory Programs
Business Services, Human Resources
South Building, Room 1710
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Your application must contain the following items:

- Résumé, including current and summer addresses, telephone numbers, and e-mail address;
- Transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate courses completed to date;
- Three letters of recommendation—at least two of which are from current professors;
- A personal essay about your interest in and potential contribution to IS; and
- Documentation of service in the U.S. Armed Forces or Peace Corps, if applicable.

You may obtain further information by calling (202) 690-4759 or (301) 734-7550 (for local calls in the greater Washington, D.C., area).

To learn more about IS activities worldwide, go to www.aphis.usda.gov/international_safeguarding.



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The Claudia Cartwright Fellowship

Making a Difference in American Agriculture Worldwide

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