

Laura A. Paul

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Appointments

- 2019 **Postdoctoral Research Fellow**, Mentors: Kent D. Messer and Leah Palm-Forster.
Department of Applied Economics and Statistics and the Center for Experimental and Applied Economics, University of Delaware
- Researcher**, Center for Experimental & Behavioral Agri-Environmental Research (CBEAR), a USDA Center of Excellence

Education

- 2019 **Ph.D.**, Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of California, Davis
Research Fields: development economics, econometrics
Dissertation committee: Michael Carter and Travis Lybbert, co-chairs, Aaron Smith
- 2017 **M.S.**, Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of California, Davis
- 2013 **M.A.**, Economics, Duke University Graduate School, Durham, North Carolina
Thesis committee: Marc Bellemare and Charles Becker
- 2011 **A.B.**, Economics, Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio

Research

Under Review:

Paul, L.A. “Less Rain, More Gain: Evaluating the On-Farm Yield Performance of Drought-Tolerant Maize in Southern Africa Using High Resolution Rainfall Data”

Drought is a primary cause of crop failure, which has severe economic and welfare consequences for farmers in southern Africa. Improved crop varieties, such as drought-tolerant (DT) maize, can mitigate crop failures and provide substantial improvements in yield level and variance. DT maize has been a major focus of development initiatives across Africa for its large potential advantages over other varieties of maize. What is the difference between the potential of these new varieties, and what is experienced on farms practicing rainfed agriculture? This paper assesses the advantage of the DT trait using data from on-farm trials of DT maize and high-resolution precipitation data (10-day measurements at a 0.05 resolution) in four countries in southern Africa, over four years. While prior work has found DT maize to have up to twice the yields of comparison varieties in controlled settings, I find that the yield advantage to DT maize is far lower in the farmer field. On farms, I find the yield difference only slightly exceeds that of other improved varieties of maize: DT has 7% higher yields on average, and 15% higher yields under moderate drought stress. Moreover, there is significant heterogeneity in returns from the DT maize technology with the lowest returns estimated for low-performing farms.

Weigel, C., **L.A. Paul**, P.J. Ferarro, K.D. Messer. “Policy-Relevant Economic Experiments with U.S. Farmers Experience Low Recruitment Rates when Academics do the Recruiting ”

To develop evidence-based agricultural policies, researchers increasingly use insights from economic field experiments. However, recruiting farmers for these experiments can be challenging; low response rates and unrepresentative samples can limit the quality of the evidence. To shed light on ways in which researchers can improve the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of farmer recruitment, we evaluate ten strategies used in two large-scale field experiments with large financial incentives. We find that monetary incentives and reminders are effective, but costly. Costless strategies, such as prominently citing a well-known institution as the sponsor, had positive but small, effects on recruitment.

Working Papers:

Paul, L.A. “Availability Bias in Drought Expectations and Adoption of Drought-Tolerant Maize”

Boucher, S., M.R. Carter, T.J. Lybbert, J.G. Malacarne, P. Marenza, and **L.A. Paul**. “Achieving Development Impact with Complementary Stress-resistant Seed and Financial Technologies: Evidence from Randomized Control Trials in Mozambique and Tanzania”

Fooks, J., **L.A. Paul**, J. Suter, K.D. Messer. “Spatial Attribution in Nonpoint Source Pollution: Experimental Evidence of the Value of Emissions Information for Producers and Regulators”

Works in Progress:

Paul, L.A., S. Wallander, R. Iovanna, P. Ferarro, and K.D. Messer. “Conservation Cover Practice Defaults”

Paul, L.A., A.R. Siders, L. Palm-Forster, and K.D. Messer. “Managed Retreat: Coastal Residential Property Buyout”

Paul, L.A., K.D. Messer. “Participation in Citizen Science for Coastal Water Data Collection: Measuring Persistence in Contributing to Public Goods”

Research Field Experience

2019-2020	Principal Investigator , Center for Experimental and Applied Economics, <i>Participation in Citizen Science for Coastal Water Data Collection</i>
2015- 2018	Project Coordinator , University of California, Davis <i>Bundling Index Insurance and Drought-Tolerant Maize in Tanzania</i> Designed and implemented field surveys, trained enumerators, conducted stakeholder meetings.
2014	Project Coordinator : University of California, Davis <i>Health Savings Behavior in Burkina Faso: A Framed Field Experiment</i>
2013	Field Assistant , Nicholas School of the Environment Duke University <i>Water, Health and Climate Change in the Ethiopian Rift Valley</i>
2012	Research Assistant to Marc Bellemare, Duke University Sanford School of Public Policy
2012	Research Assistant to Charles Becker, Duke University Economics

Selected Presentations

2019	Presentation : “What Does DT Maize Do? Evaluating the On-Farm Yield Performance of Drought-Tolerant Maize in Southern Africa Using High Resolution Rainfall Data” USAID, Washington, D.C. Selected Presentation : “Evaluating the On-Farm Yield Performance of Drought-Tolerant Maize in Southern Africa Using High Resolution Rainfall Data.” AAEA, Atlanta, G.A.
2018	Presentation : “Less Rain, More Gain: DT Maize and Hurdles to its Adoption.” UC Davis Selected Presentation : “Rain on the Parade: Hurdles to Adoption of Maize with Weather-Contingent Advantages.” AAEA, Washington, D.C. Discussant : Impacts of Shocks on Behavior & Personality, Pacific Conference in Development Economics, Davis, CA.
2017	Poster : “Drought-Tolerant Maize Response to Precipitation.” AAEA, Chicago, IL. Presentation : “Drought-Tolerant Maize Response to Precipitation.” UC Davis Gifford Seminar
2013	Selected Presentation : “Subjective Price Expectations and Production Decisions: Rice Price Volatility in Madagascar.” AAEA, Washington, D.C.

Outreach and Media

- 2018 **Conference Coordinator**, “Partnerships to Scale Insured Drought-Tolerant Maize Seeds in Tanzania” Stakeholder Meeting, Arusha, Tanzania
- 2018 **Basis Innovation Lab for Assets and Market Access Spotlight**, “Partnerships to Scale Insured Drought-Tolerant Maize Seeds in Tanzania.” <https://basis.ucdavis.edu/people/laura-paul>.
- 2017 **Workshop Coordinator**, “Protecting Farmers Against Weather Risk: Satellite Based Index Insurance with Drought-Tolerant Maize” Stakeholder Meeting, Arusha, Tanzania
- 2016 **CGAP Working Paper**, “Resilience and Health Shocks: The potential of health savings accounts and health loans.” <http://www.cgap.org/publications/resilience-and-health-shocks>

Teaching and Mentoring

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- 2019 **Guest Lecturer**, “Experiments in Development Economics,” for Experimental Economics (APEC 820, graduate), Applied Economics and Statistics, University of Delaware
- 2017 **Instructor of Record**, Intermediate Microeconomics, Students: 62, Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of California, Davis
- 2017 **Teaching Assistant**, Intermediate Microeconomics, Students: 57, Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of California, Davis
- 2017 **UndocuAlly Certificate**, AB-540 and Undocumented Center, University of California, Davis
- 2017 **Teaching Certificate**, Scholarly Teaching Strategies to Maximize Student Learning, Center for Educational Effectiveness, University of California, Davis
- 2012- 2013 **Undergraduate Advisor**, Benjamin N. Duke Merit Scholars, Duke University
- 2011- 2013 **Undergraduate Advisor**, Angier B. Duke Merit Scholars, Duke University
- 2009- 2011 **Assistant Teacher**, French Department, Kenyon College

Grants and Awards

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- 2018 Gifford Foundation Research Award, University of California, Davis
- 2017 Henry A. Jastro Research Award, University of California Davis
- 2017 Gifford Foundation Research Award, University of California, Davis
- 2013 Provost’s First Year Fellowship, University of California, Davis

Languages and Skills

French (fluent), Swahili (intermediate), Stata, R, Matlab, L^AT_EX

Academic Service

Reviewer

- American Journal of Agricultural Economics
- Applied Economics and Policy Perspectives
- Journal of Environmental Management
- Demographic Research
- 2020 AAEA Annual Meeting (Abstract Reviewer)
- 2018 Pacific Conference in Development Economics (Abstract Reviewer)

Other Service

2017- 2018 Graduate Student Associate Instructor Mentor
2013- 2017 Coordinator, ARE Graduate Professional Development, University of California, Davis
2013- 2014 Representative, Graduate Student Council, University of California, Davis
2011- 2013 Member, Duke University Economic Masters Council
2011- 2012 Representative, Duke University Graduate Student Council
2012- 2013 Representative, Duke University Annual Fund Executive Committee
2011- 2012 Representative, Kenyon College Alumni Council