Visiting scholar looks at Brazil’s milk production from the U.S.

By Rodrigo Curi | GPS News

Fulbright scholar Rodrigo Curi shares a recap of his time at UC San Diego working on his doctoral dissertation research examining public policies for milk producers impacted by climate change

My name is Rodrigo Curi and I am a Ph.D. student in São Paulo, Brazil studying economics. I had the opportunity to spend the year at the UC San Diego School of Global Policy and Strategy (GPS) as a visiting researcher through the Fulbright program.

It was an experience that definitely changed my view of my field of study and the
methodology of my research.

My research before arriving in the U.S. was structured as a qualitative analysis of climate vulnerability in the semiarid region of Brazil. After presenting my dissertation project to Professor Jennifer Burney – who was my formal advisor during this period – I was encouraged to expand my analysis to the whole country, focusing on milk producers.

This proved a challenge for me given my lack of experience in data analysis. But I had the motivation and support from the school to take courses on remote sensing and I am really grateful to Professor Gordon McCord for the warm welcome and excellent lessons.

With remote sensing, I learned how to collect and clean all the climate data necessary to test the impacts of precipitation and temperature trends on Brazilian milk production.

Additionally, I was invited to participate in Burney’s weekly research group where I learned more about research methodologies and received valuable suggestions for my thesis. I learned how to use statistical software and find better ways to approach data visualization, as well as assess the impacts of climate change on milk production and the resilience of the farmers in the country.

Burney was always available to meet with me and give me suggestions about my work, which was fundamental for my progress. She gave me the opportunity to participate in her GPS course on food security, which expanded my vision of how to link my research to public policies and programs for the milk producers.
impacted by climate change.

The staff at the school are wonderful and gave me a welcoming and friendly reception, and Fulbright gave me a cultural exchange and learning opportunity that proved to be a life-changing experience.

I return to Brazil with all the knowledge that I received at GPS and hope to make positive contributions to new public policy recommendations for Brazil’s milk producers.