What was one significant cultural difference between your host country or community and Madison?
Many people in Mexico still prefer traditional open-pollinated or "heirloom" crops over hybrid crops.

What's one tip or piece of advice you would give to others considering your program?
Be ready to interact with local people, learn some Spanish words before you go.

Describe what the academic and classroom experience (if any) was like on this program.
I learned a lot about agriculture in general and conservation agriculture. In particular we also had many learning opportunities related to nutrition. I liked that we had many guest speakers including CIMMYT staff and local farmers; they gave us many different views on the topic.

Is there one lesson you learned about improving health?
"Listening to the needs of community instead of bringing our own ideology."

Do you think having participated in this program makes you more prepared for a career in public health? Some other career?
Yes. Even though the situation in Mexico and the U.S. are different and we need different approaches to address public health issues, learning about how agriculture affects human nutrition was very important for my future career. Understanding Mexican culture and traditions was also valuable.

What kind of activities would a typical day involve?
Every day was different. My favorite day was when we went to a CIMMYT station where we met the station director and visited his field. Talking with him was very eye-opening and learned things that I never imagined before going there. He shared a lot of stories about challenges and rewarding moments of his over 20 years of work at CIMMYT.

Playing soccer with kids from the Axkan Community foundation

Visiting a local farmer whose family only eats what they grow themselves (including the corn in the background)