



# New Ground

The College of Agriculture and Technology Newsletter



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## FROM THE DESK OF THE DEAN

Spring, a time of new beginnings, is when agriculture flourishes and the College of Agriculture and Technology becomes busier than ever. Dr. Greg Phillips, agriculture dean, says a particularly exciting event this spring was a visit from Under Secretary/Chief Scientist Dr. Catherine Woteki, one of the most senior officials in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Dr. Woteki oversees funding and research for the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and Dale Bumpers NRRC grant programs. Her tour of the ASU farm included the Equine Center, farm operations, the Bill and Alice Nix Petting Zoo, the biofuels testing lab and research plots. Dr. Woteki was pleased with the collaboration of colleagues here at Arkansas State University.



Greg Phillips, Dean

Dr. Woteki was also impressed with the public outreach, student engagement and excellent research that have been integrated in the College of Agriculture and Technology. She is recommending a new scientist for the Arkansas Research Service program here – something that is unusual for a non-land grant college. The new scientist is Dr. Michele Reba, who will be housed in the ABL building. Dr. Phillips is excited to see what new ideas Dr. Reba will bring to ASU and is confident the research here will continue to grow and generate rising interest for young, gifted minds seeking a first-rate education in agricultural sciences.

Caleb Bell, Sr. Agribusiness major, Lafe, Ark.

## NEW GROUND

### AGRICULTURAL STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS PROJECT

Students enrolled in the Agricultural Structural Systems class offered each fall in the College of Agriculture and Technology are getting a great applied educational experience this semester. The course, which is taught by Dr. Kevin Humphrey, covers typical topics including structure location and orientation, material selection, usage and identification, tool and equipment use and safety, construction techniques and design for commercial, residential and agricultural buildings, structural integrity and calculating materials. All topics help students gain a better understanding of what is required in the planning process for specific building needs. In addition to classroom theory and discussion, students get the opportunity to apply what they are learning with specifically designed projects.

This semester the project is to construct a 16' x 50' wooden deck on one end of the new Regional Farmers' Market building. The students gained experience in the deck planning and design process, as well as using every tool necessary for construction. Students used the builder's level to establish correct elevation and correct placement of the concrete piers that were poured and designed to support the beams they constructed. The students worked together as a team to complete the project. When the deck is finished, the Regional Farmers' Market plans to use it to add variety, such as guest musicians, to community events at their pavilion.

Zach Harber, Sr. Agricultural Education major, Sturkie, Ark.



The Farmers' Market pavilion before the deck was finished.



Students work on the deck.



Members of the Agricultural Structures Class on completed deck.

### AMBASSADORS TAKE AN INTERNATIONAL APPROACH



From left to right:  
(front row) Megan Davis, Mallory Everett, Chiho Ikarashi  
(second row) Kara Deardorff, Morgan Constant, Seth Engelhardt  
(back row) Ali Baum, Shellvey Robinson, Latisha Robertson

This year the Ambassadors for the College of Agriculture and Technology welcomed Chiho Ikarashi as the group's first international student member. Ikarashi is a junior Agricultural Science major from Tsuruoka, Japan. Her main educational interest is in Food Technology. Ikarashi is a member of the Delta Tau Alpha National Agricultural Honor Society and founder of the Japanese Student Organization on the ASU campus. She is most passionate about cultural diversity. Ikarashi hopes to create a more open-minded atmosphere in terms of cultural diversity and understanding for the College of Agriculture and Technology. After graduation, she hopes to continue communicating with various groups about their cultures and backgrounds. Ikarashi believes the College of Agriculture and Technology has lacked a sense of globalization in the past. She intends to recruit more international students to become part of the college, as well as bridge the gap among current international students and other students on campus. Ikarashi said her long term goals consist of working for a food company in market research to develop new types of food and to continue sharing her culture with others. Recently, in an effort to contribute to the Japanese disaster relief fund, the Ambassadors collected \$308 in donations from College of Agriculture and Technology students and faculty and donated it to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Center in Ikarashi's honor.

Amy Brumitt, Jr. Agricultural Education major, Mt. Home, Ark.

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Throughout the agriculture building at ASU, one name can be heard that is synonymous with knowledge, wisdom, compassion and comedy—Dr. Lew Brinkley. Dr. Brinkley, a University of Tennessee-Knoxville graduate, began his teaching career at ASU in August, 1969, and more than three decades later found himself teaching the offspring of his first group of students. (He even taught three generations of one family!) After 36 faithful years at ASU, Dr. Brinkley retired, but the College of Agriculture and Technology still needed his services in the classroom. In the fall of 2005, Dr. Brinkley agreed to “help out” and has continued to teach one class per semester since. Dr. Brinkley said he will always be found talking about Agricultural Business and Economics anywhere he goes and “may as well have a captive audience.”

In his spare time, Dr. Brinkley travels and hikes throughout Arkansas and Tennessee with his wife Barbara. Their children and grandchildren are often a motive for traveling to West Arkansas and East Tennessee. His active lifestyle is not much of a surprise after learning his dad, now 95, still travels with him to Tennessee to care for their small herd of beef cattle. Dr. Brinkley’s proudest personal moment during his tenure was watching his wife and both children graduate from ASU.

For 40 years Dr. Brinkley has touched the hearts and minds of several generations of agricultural students. He often exhibits acts of kindness to them offering encouragement or ensuring a special need is met. One former student recalls a time when the outlook for a traditional Christmas celebration was grim. The student’s child wanted a Miss Piggy doll for Christmas. Dr. Brinkley overheard the student’s conversation regarding his difficulties and devised a plan to provide the student with a traditional Christmas meal with all the trimmings and a Miss Piggy doll.

Dr. Brinkley has been known to bring comical lyrics, stories and famous quotes to life in the classroom, but the compassion and concern he has consistently shown to students is what they remember most when recalling his classes.

Kassy Whitener, Sr. Agribusiness major, Pleasant Plains, Ark.

## HORTICULTURE PLANT SALE

Crowds eagerly awaited outside the horticulture greenhouses April 7 and 8 as Dr. J. Kim Pittcock’s team of student volunteers, along with the Craighead County Master Gardeners, hosted the annual spring plant sale. According to Dr. Pittcock, “We produce for three reasons: to give students experience in their programs and classes, as a fund raiser for the Horticulture program, and to grow color for the ASU Display Gardens at the farm. Also, it’s beneficial for the students to get experience in sales.” The sale is open to ASU faculty, staff, students and people in the community.

An extensive amount of planning went into the sale. Students began planting ferns last summer in order to have them ready for spring. Plants are all propagated, transplanted, grown, and sold with the help of students and the Craighead County Master Gardeners.

The final preparations for the sale were to prepare the young plants for outdoor conditions. During this time the plants are acclimated to outdoor conditions by growing them in the greenhouses. After a few days of being removed from the greenhouses, the plants were ready for purchase. A variety of plants were sold this year, including many different species of hanging baskets, vegetables, annuals, perennials and tropicals.

All proceeds of the sale will be put to use by upgrading facilities, purchasing new equipment, new plants, and maintenance of the Display Gardens.

Ella Ellingson, Jr. Agricultural Education major, Jonesboro, Ark.  
and Bryan Elder, Sr. Plant Science major, Jonesboro, Ark.



Dr. Brinkley and Kassy Whitener



Dr. Brinkley and students work at the FFA Dairy Foods CDE.

If you have a former faculty or staff member you would like to catch up with, email us at [agri@astate.edu](mailto:agri@astate.edu) and we will try to track them down and give an update in upcoming issues!



### DR. CHARLES COLEMAN RETIRES

Dr. Charles Coleman retired from Arkansas State University in July, 2010, after serving as an instructor and, later, as Director of the Technology Program for 19 years. After leaving the Army, Dr. Coleman earned a diploma in Drafting Design from Tulsa Technical College in 1970 and began a career in the manufacturing industry. He said he was fortunate to have supervisors who encouraged him to develop his talents. He later earned an Associate of Arts degree from Westark Community College in Fort Smith and an Associate of Science degree in Drafting Design Technology from the Carl Albert Junior College in Poteau, Okla., both in 1979. Dr. Coleman began his career in higher education working at Crowley's Ridge Vo-Technical School in Forrest City as an instructor of technology from 1980 to 1991. He completed a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Education in 1987 at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, then a Master of Science in Vocational Administration, as well as a Specialist in Vocational Education and Community College Teaching, both in 1989 at Arkansas State University, Jonesboro. In 1990, Dr. Coleman started teaching part-time in the ASU College of Engineering. In 1991, he joined the faculty full-time in the Technology Program, taught computer-aided drafting and design and was promoted to Director of Technology.

The industrial experience Dr. Coleman gained earlier in life made him an exceptional instructor in the Technology Program, combining real-life applications with the ability to visualize concepts in 2-D and in 3-D. He brought more than \$1 million worth of software grants to the college during his career. Dr. Coleman has always been involved in the Jonesboro community, serving on the Jonesboro School Board, the City Team Ministries Board, the Northeast Arkansas Transportation Committee and others. He was appointed by the governor as a Commissioner to the Arkansas Student Loan Authority twice, and to the Arkansas Pollution Control and Ecology Board. After retiring last fall, Dr. Coleman successfully ran for City Council and is serving his term now. Even now he is continuing his education, working on a Doctorate in Community Counseling from Argosy University in Sarasota, Fla. In addition to his academic career, Dr. Coleman is also an ordained minister, having earned his Master of Theology and Doctorate of Ministry from the Evangel University of America in Monroe, La. He also is the owner/ operator of the Home Drafting Service in Jonesboro. We appreciate Dr. Coleman's contribution to both the academic and civic community in Jonesboro.

Cody Melton, Sr. Agribusiness major, Cord, Ark.

### GRANDFATHER/GRANDDAUGHTER AS CLASSMATES

If you've wondered how interesting it would be to go to school with your grandfather or how interesting it would be to go to school with your granddaughter two students in the College of Agriculture and Technology can tell you. In Dr. Pittcock's Vegetable Productions class, Mary Clayton and her grandfather, Dr. James B. Laird, are classmates. Currently employed with the USDA Department of Rural Development, Clayton is a recent graduate of Arkansas State University. By furthering her education, Clayton plans to strengthen her position within USDA. On the other hand, after four years of retirement, Dr. Laird found himself taking classes in the agriculture department for enjoyment. "My wife didn't want me to sit around and watch television all day," he confessed. A graduate of Texas A&M, Dr. Laird's retirement came after 46 years of owning a successful veterinary practice in Paragould, Ark. If you have time, go by the greenhouse and meet Dr. Laird and Mary Clayton and they'll show you around.

Monica Yarbrough, Sr. Animal Science major, Cabot, Ark.



The ASU Farmers' Market is open this year from May 7 until October 29. Hours of operation are 7-11 a.m., or until everything sells out.

Beginning June 7 through August 30, the Farmers' Market will be open Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 2-6 p.m., or until everything is sold.



## CONFERENCES

### 2011 SOIL & WATER EDUCATION CONFERENCE



Dr. Steve Green, Congressman Rick Crawford  
and Dr. Greg Phillips

Arkansas State University kicked off the 2011 Soil and Water Education Conference on January 27. The forum of professionals discussed continuing and possible new, large-scale projects concerning water conservation in Arkansas.

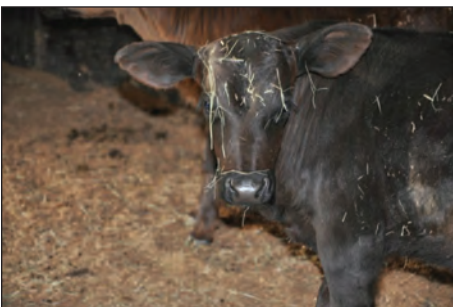
The conference opened with a session on irrigation optimization. Dr. Earl Vories and Dr. Ken Fisher, both scientists with USDA's Agricultural Research Service, along with Dr. Jeff Barnes of Greenway Equipment, presented recent data concerning irrigation timing, new sensors available to monitor soil moisture, and the use of spatial technology and GIS to efficiently utilize irrigation water for crop production at the most appropriate times and in the most appropriate amounts. These technologies and management practices are resulting in significant water savings compared to the amount of water used for irrigation only a few years ago.

A key problem currently impacting Arkansas is the detrimental effect caused by irrigation on groundwater availability. Presenting this issue at the conference, Dr. John Czarnecki from the U.S. Geological Survey in Little Rock explained groundwater science and the current status of groundwater use in the United States, especially Arkansas. Currently, Arkansas ranks fourth out of 50 states in groundwater use, with Northeast Arkansas' water depleting rapidly. New cones of depression have developed in recent years in additional counties and watersheds through Northeast Arkansas. The importance of practicing water conservation is a vital aspect of sustaining Arkansas' ability to continue row-crop agriculture.

Developing watersheds is one way to implement water conservation. Ms. Nancy Young, a State Resource Conservationist in Little Rock, presented the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's Program updates about new landscape ideas to the conference, proposing possible trends that could benefit Arkansas' groundwater availability. The Mississippi River Basin Initiative and the Illinois River/Eucha-Spavinaw projects are among ideas placed into motion as a means to conserve the Arkansas' groundwater quality. Dennis Carman, chief engineer and director of the White River Irrigation District, presented an update on the Grand Prairie Project, which the US Army Corps of Engineers has been developing as a means to use excess surface water to supplement irrigation water supplies and reduce the pressure on aquifer depletion.

John Lewis of the National Weather Service in Little Rock gave a presentation on long-term weather forecasting for the region. One model suggests we will have a very dry spring and summer, while another suggests a wet spring followed by a dry summer. The latter model seems to be holding up well so far. Mr. Lewis explained how changing weather patterns are associated with climate change and how climate change may impact agriculture.

The luncheon address was provided by US Congressman Rick Crawford, the first ASU alumnus (and an alumnus of our college) to be elected to national congressional office. Following lunch, the program closed with a workshop on conservation practices presented by the USDA's NRCS staff.



Scenes from the ASU Farm.

## CONFERENCES

### 2011 AGRIBUSINESS CONFERENCE



Dr. Bert Greenwalt

The 2011 Arkansas State University Agribusiness Conference focused on the economics of food and agriculture, finance and credit, as well as the outlook for trade and farm policy. Dr. Bert Greenwalt opened the general session with Dr. Michael Pakko, chief economist and state economic forecaster with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's Institute for Economic Advancement. Pakko provided a state-level assessment of Arkansas' banking system that, in his words, is faring much better than other regions of the country. Author of *The Economics of Food*, Dr. Patrick Westhoff, co-director of the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute at the University of Missouri, spoke on the link between food and energy prices, and the growing percentage of corn produced for energy use. He addressed other sources of food price volatility, which include world weather events, farm and trade policies, the macro economy, the dollar's value and commodity market speculation.

Similarly, Betsy Ward, president and CEO of the USA Rice Federation, said domestic consumption accounts for about 50 percent of the rice grown in the country. The U.S. is the ninth-largest rice producer in the world and accounts for 12 percent of world rice trade. She stressed the need to remove the embargo with Cuba, which would open another market for U.S. rice. A presentation on "The Politics of Farm Policy and Outlook for the 2012 Farm Bill" was delivered by Reece Langley, vice president of Government Affairs at the USA Rice Federation. Langley discussed the USDA budget and funding for the commodity safety net, conservation, export market development, and food aid programs important to the country's rice industry. The U.S. rice industry is facing significant challenges on a range of environmental issues that are being pursued on legislative and regulatory fronts. A history of events leading up to the recent U.S. recession and financial situation was provided by Dr. David Schweikhardt, professor of Agriculture Economics at Michigan University. He said foreclosures began to increase in 2007 and gradually eroded the banking system; investor mutual fund accounts were particularly hard hit. Schweikhardt believes it will be March 2020 before employment will be back to 2007 levels if the U.S. economy continues to recover at the present rate. He said these financial events will shape credit availability for years, affecting all borrowers and future lending standards.

Likewise, Dr. John Riley with Mississippi State University spoke on livestock and feed market trends and how the cost of raising cattle is extremely high versus the price at slaughter, which is much lower. With beef demand on the decline, profit margins are thin, he said. Poultry production has increased because it is more cost effective to raise and sell. Because of the economic downturn, consumer spending has shifted more to chicken rather than beef, he explained.

Discussing ASU's latest Delta Heritage Initiative, Dr. Ruth Hawkins and Ms. Beth Wiedower spoke on the Dyess Colony Restoration project. Dyess Colony was one of the earliest cooperative agricultural resettlement projects during the Great Depression and was the boyhood home of Johnny Cash. On June 24th, 2011, ASU and the City of Dyess will co-host a town meeting at 6 p.m. to discuss a proposed master redevelopment plan. The meeting will be at the Dyess Community Center Auditorium, on Arkansas Highway 297 in Dyess.

Ella Ellingson, Jr. Agricultural Education major, Jonesboro, Ark.



### UPCOMING EVENTS 2011-12

Fall semester begins-August 22  
Judd Hill Field Day-September 1  
Homecoming -October 29

Arkansas Stock Horse Association Final Show-October 22-23  
Bill and Alice Nix Petting Zoo-October date TBA  
ASU Agribusiness Conference-February 8

For additional information on our degree programs, scholarships and upcoming events please contact us at 870-972-2085 or visit the College of Agriculture and Technology web page at: <http://agri.astate.edu>



## CONFERENCES

### RENEWABLE ENERGY CONFERENCE, APRIL 18, 2011



More than 130 representatives of various organizations from across Arkansas gathered to discuss developments in the renewable energy sector at the Second Annual Renewable

Energy Conference at Arkansas State University. Academic leaders, research scientists, industry managers and government officials discussed on-going efforts and opportunities available in renewable energy at this one-day conference organized by the Renewable Energy Technology program in ASU's College of Agriculture and Technology. Dr. Lynita Cooksey, associate vice-chancellor for Academic Services, welcomed the conference participants. Dr. Dan Howard, interim ASU chancellor, also discussed alternative energy issues with delegates present during the poster presentation session.

The following energy experts were invited to present at this comprehensive, statewide energy conference, covering all areas of renewable energy technology:

- Omar Mendoza, US Air Force Energy Management (Washington D.C. office), discussed renewable energy initiatives in the US Air Force.
- Dr. Mark Cochran, vice president of Agriculture at University of Arkansas, gave an overview of bio-energy research in the state.
- Mr. Peter Nelson, director of Ag-bio Works in Memphis, Tenn., discussed the role of photosynthesis as an important driver for energy, fuels and chemicals in the Mid-South.
- Frank Kelly, president of the Arkansas Renewable Energy Association in Little Rock, discussed strategies for designing passive- and active-solar homes.
- Gibson "Sonny" Morris of the Arkansas Delta Training and Education Consortium (ADTEC) at Mid-South Community College in West Memphis explained the power of partnership for the regional workforce development.
- Benjamin Brenner, sustainability attorney from William and Anderson PLC in Little Rock, informed the audience about recent legislative initiatives in the renewable energy area at the state level.
- Dan McDevitt, vice president of Operations at Nordex USA in Chicago Ill., talked about developments in the U.S. wind energy sector.
- Dr. Paneer Selvam, director of the Computational Mechanics Lab at the University of Arkansas, gave an overview of research activities in the solar-thermal energy and energy storage areas.
- Dr. Robert Straitt of the Little Rock Air Force Base presented an innovative concept on renewable energy systems for the developing world.

Arkansas State University faculty members Dr. Gregory Phillips, Dr. Rajesh Sharma, Dr. Paul Armah, Dr. Brett Savary, and Dr. Steve Green all from the College of Agriculture and Technology; Dr. Robert Engleken and Dr. Kwangkook Jeong from the College of Engineering; and Christian Barnoud from Mid-South Community College, also presented research projects. Seven poster presentations were added to this year's conference by participants from the College of Agriculture and Technology, the Arkansas Biosciences Institute and the ASU College of Engineering, as well as the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

Conference delegates actively participated in the discussion over varying renewable energy issues including biofuels, solar, wind, hydrogen, energy education and legislation. Participants expressed optimism for future growth in the renewable energy sector, especially when linked to economic development in the state.



For additional information on the Renewable Energy Conference, please contact Dr. Paresh Patel at [ppatel@astate.edu](mailto:ppatel@astate.edu) or 870-733-6044

# PETTING ZOO

## LARRY FOWLER RECOGNIZED FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE



Larry Fowler and Mark Cochran

On January 7, 2011, the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture held a ceremony to recognize outstanding performance in the extension service. Larry Fowler received the John W. White Classified Support Personnel Award for the Agricultural Experiment Station. The award recognizes outstanding service in research and supporting project leaders. Mr. Fowler has served as farm foreman at the Judd Hill Plantation since 2005, where he oversees the ASU research farm. New farming techniques and crop varieties are demonstrated each summer at the Judd Hill Field Day. Because Mr. Fowler's work has been so exemplary, this is the second time he has received the same award; he first received the award in 1986.

Larry Fowler grew up on a farm near Judd Hill in Weona, Ark., and began working for the research station in Crittenden County for the University of Arkansas in 1971.

Jerrod Haynes, Sr. Agribusiness major, Wheatley, Ark.

## ASU BILL AND ALICE NIX PETTING ZOO - THROUGH A CHILD'S EYES

Pre-schooler Andee Whitener, 3, lives in an area of Arkansas that is home to livestock and poultry operations, so cows and chickens are not anything new to her. However, when the time for ASU's Bill and Alice Nix Petting Zoo rolls around, Andee is enthusiastic about attending because she gets to see the various facets of agriculture in which she is unaccustomed. Aside from that chance to see and touch many different animals, the College of Agriculture and Technology offers a hay ride tour of the ASU farm. The tour allows guests to view animals like cows, sheep and pigs, and various row crops produced on the farm.

Children like Andee view the Bill and Alice Nix Petting Zoo as an event to attend for fun, but the event also educates those children who do not live in a rural setting and are not able to encounter a variety of domestic animals. Andee enjoys the petting zoo because she loves to "see the little pigs that are so cute!" After her third visit to the event, Andee clarified that she has, in fact, ridden a horse at "the Red Wolf petting zoo and it feels bumpy!" Continued visits to the Bill and Alice Nix Petting Zoo will encourage Andee to learn more about the animals and help her develop a more positive and considerate attitude toward agriculture as a whole.

Kassy Whitener, Sr. Agribusiness major, Pleasant Plains, Ark.



Rorschach the lamb practices his dance moves.



Baby pigs, Angus & Malcolm



Andee and Fiona the Shetland pony

For notification of future dates for the Bill and Alice Nix Petting Zoo, please email [pettingzoo@astate.edu](mailto:pettingzoo@astate.edu).





## HONORS

### SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS FOR 2011-12

**Ark. Crop Protection Association**  
Blake A Chrestman

**Ark. State Federation of Farm Credit**  
Craig Walker

**Ark. State Plant Board**  
Matthew Davis  
Christopher Kinard

**Bill Edmondson Memorial**  
Rodney James

**George A. Berger Memorial**  
Zachary Lancaster

**Golightly Foundation**  
Alexander Pigue  
Courtney Baker  
Brooke Simons  
Amanda Eppes  
Rodney James  
Charles McGaha

**Golightly Upper Level Agriculture**  
Claudia Aldrich  
Shelemia Nyamuryekunge  
Magan Wells  
Miranda Brink  
Stephanie Overby  
Paige Tribble

**James E. Gambill Memorial**  
Andrew Agee

**Joe McAlister- Cache River Valley Seed**  
Bryan Elder  
Craig Walker  
Mallory Everett

**John H. Neeley, Irene N. Neeley**  
Megan Lloyd  
Phillip Massey

**Kelsey Hall/ Brown Lacy Excellence**  
Clay A. Sims

**Olen P. Nail**  
Monica Albuquerque

**Robert G. Blanchard Agriculture**  
Amy Brumitt

**Ruel Nester**  
Bryan Elder

**Samuel S. Lipscomb Memorial**  
Megan Davis



### COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY HONORS BANQUET

The College of Agriculture and Technology held its annual Honors Banquet on April 14, 2011. More than 85 students were recognized for their academic achievements. Paul McAnally and Scott Stiles each received the Outstanding Young Alumnus Award. Gary Kinder received the Outstanding Alumnus Award. The Distinguished Service Award was given to Eric Grant for his contributions to the college.

Pictured below (from left) are Blaine Tarver, outstanding graduating senior, Agricultural Business; Laura Jones, outstanding graduating senior, Animal Science; Michael Thornton, outstanding graduating senior, Plant Science-Agronomy; Junxin Huang, Bo Fu, Yedan Xiong, Xiaowei Chen, honor students from China; Wade Hamilton, Olen P. Nail Outstanding Junior Award winner; Morgan Constant and Ali Baum, representing the outstanding student organization, the Agribusiness Club.

Not pictured are outstanding graduating seniors Lane Lenderman, Agricultural Education; Roan Farr, Plant Science-Horticulture; and Aaron Carr, Technology.



### SMALL ENGINES TESTING LAB

With the economy's unstable fuel prices, researchers have worked to create a more environmentally friendly energy source. To further this research, the College of Agriculture and Technology has developed a new lab dedicated to renewable energy research. Located at the ASU farm, the Small Engines Testing Lab's primary focus is on producing fuels, feed and other bio-based products that can be used directly on the farm. Research using oil seed crops like canola and soybeans is being conducted. Work is also being performed with camelina, an oil seed crop that is new to the state; it is being tested for the crop's viability and sustainability in this region. Once the crops have been planted and harvested, the process of cleaning and pressing the seeds for oil begins. The oil is then converted into biodiesel and tested in non-road diesel engines. "I believe great things will come out of this new renewable energy research facility," said Dr. Kevin Humphrey, lab director.

Jonathon Rorex, Sr. Agribusiness major, Pocahontas, Ark.

## EQUINE CENTER NEWS

Arkansas horsemen are forming a chapter of the American Stock Horse Association. The goal of the ASHA is to “help people ride a better horse” by conducting clinics in which horse enthusiasts receive help from other horsemen on how to train and ride their own horses. The second day of each stock horse event is a competition that allows riders to test how well they have improved their skills with their horses. On May 7 and 8, a clinic and competition was held in Benton, Ark. Arkansas State University was represented by collegiate riders Susan Baird and Jessica Otto, who rode in the novice division. Jessica and her horse, Special, finished as the All-Around High-Point Rider. Susan and her horse, Cowboy, finished as Reserve All-Around Champion. Beginning in March at 6 a.m., the students practiced three mornings each week to prepare. Anyone wanting to know more about the ASU Stock Horse program, ASU Equine Science or the ASU Equine Center may contact Nathan Wells at [nwells@astate.edu](mailto:nwells@astate.edu) or 972-2053.

## IMPROVEMENTS TO EQUINE CENTER

Recent improvements to the ASU Equine Center include an upgrade to the existing sound system made possible by gifts to the university’s capital campaign. By adding a new amplifier and four new speakers, and mounting the system around the perimeter of the arena, the sound in the arena is much clearer/louder and can be heard in the parking area.

Additionally, the footing in the arena has been leveled, and sand is being added to the existing footing to improve the riding surface. The Northeast Arkansas Horse Show Association assisted with this project and purchased gates to be installed on the south end of the arena. The Craighead County Mounted Patrol has donated nylon belting, which will be used to make solid the panels at each end of the arena.

The Equine Center also received an American flag and Arkansas state flag, which will be displayed along with the Arkansas State University flag in the arena. The U.S. and Arkansas flags were donated by State Representative Homer Lenderman of Brookland, while the ASU Equine Club donated the ASU flag.



Dr. Bill Humphrey, Dr. Greg Phillips, Jeremy Wesson of the Arkansas Farm Bureau Federation, and ASU students attended this year’s New Ground Classic Golf Tournament on April 28 at Sage Meadows Country Club in Jonesboro.



The 2011 Arkansas Eastern District FFA Career Development Events were held at the ASU Convocation Center on March 10, 2011. More than 1,000 students in the district participated in this event.

Pictured at top right: Dr. Pittcock and team work on the Floriculture CDE, bottom right: Mallory Everett and Logan McCourtney take a break from their work at the CDEs.

## DEAN OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY RETURNING TO CLASSROOM AND RESEARCH

Dr. Greg Phillips, current Dean of the College of Agriculture and Technology, is stepping down from that position and returning to the classroom and research laboratory effective July 1.

Dr. Phillips has been studying the genetics of rice in relation to grain storage life and the development of rancidity. He will continue this research in hopes of identifying a strategy to impede the development of grain decomposition in stored rice grain. He is also beginning a project to improve the fiber quality of cotton and expanding his research in bioenergy crops.

Dr. Glen Jones, interim executive vice chancellor and provost, announced Dr. David Beasley, dean of the College of Engineering, will serve as interim dean of the College of Agriculture and Technology beginning July 1. The university will begin a national search this fall to identify a permanent dean.

Since his arrival in 2003, Dr. Phillips has modified the College of Agriculture and Technology undergraduate core curriculum, implemented inquiry based seminars, strengthened the research component of the graduate curriculum, brought research groups together to focus on agriculture water quality and biofuels, added a food technology program, renovated the ASU campus farm and added service programming through the Bill and Alice Nix Petting Zoo and ASU Farmers' Market.

"I feel honored and privileged to have served ASU as an academic dean for the past eight years," said Dr. Phillips. "Serving as a dean has been a tremendous professional growth opportunity for me personally, and I am a better person for this experience. It is now time for someone with new ideas to take the College of Agriculture and Technology to the next level of effectiveness.

"I embrace my return to the faculty with the opportunity to expand research productivity in my college and to spend more time in mentoring younger faculty as a senior colleague. I have many friends in the community and state, and I will continue to promote excellent community relations with this university."

Dr. Phillips held the dean position over three colleges at ASU; he also served as the dean of the College of Sciences and Mathematics from 2005-08 and dean of the College of Engineering from 2005-09. His teaching specialties include plant biotechnology and plant cell and tissue culture. Scientific colleagues named him a 'Fellow of the Society for In Vitro Biology' in 2004, a title recognizing outstanding professional accomplishments and service to the society in the area of plant biotechnology/in vitro biology. Dr. Phillips now is serving as that organization's vice president.

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## FACULTY NEWS

Dr. Bert Greenwalt, professor of Agricultural Economics, was selected by the United Soybean Board to participate in the 2010 'See for Yourself' program. Dr. Greenwalt and nine other farmers toured facilities in St. Louis and central Mexico that are end-users of U.S. soybeans. The participants met with USB staff and leadership and provided feedback on the soybean check-off program.

Dr. Elizabeth Hood is lead editor for the book, *Plant Biomass Conversion*, published in March 2011. ASU faculty members who contributed chapters to the book are Drs. Elizabeth Hood, Steve Green, Jennifer Bouldin, and Gauri Guha. Also, Dr. Hood's company, Infinite Enzymes, LLC, recently received a USDA-funded Small Business Innovation Research grant.

Dr. Kevin Humphrey and Dr. Steve Green co-authored a poster presentation, as well as a paper presentation, for the Renewable Energy Conference held at ASU on April 18. In addition, Dr. Humphrey co-authored another research poster presentation along with graduate student Shyam Thapa and Dr. Robert Engelken, professor of Engineering.

Dr. Jianfeng Xu co-authored a review paper, 'Towards High-Yield Production of Therapeutic Proteins with Plant Cell Suspension Culture,' published in *Biotechnology Advances*.

He also co-authored a research paper, 'Ettlia oleoabundans growth and oil production on agricultural anaerobic waste effluents,' in *Bioresource Technology*. (This work was supported by a U.S. Department of Energy grant.)

This spring, Dr. Paul Armah, professor of Agricultural Economics, traveled to Washington D.C. to review bioenergy grant proposals for USDA and to review 64 Southern Africa Fulbright Scholars' grants for the Council for Internationals Exchange of Scholars (CIES). In addition, Dr. Armah traveled to Florida to present the research paper 'The Economic Impact of Ethanol Production on Arkansas Corn-based Livestock Feed Prices' at the Food Distribution Research Society's annual conference.

Dr. Agnew, Dr. Michael Dugan, Cynthia Miller, and Dr. Ron Johnson are involved in the project, 'Arkansas, Africa, and Rice.'

Dr. Rajesh Sharma, Renewable Energy Technology, and acting director of the Technology program in the College of Agriculture and Technology, was recently elevated to senior membership in the Institute of Electronics and Electrical Engineers (IEEE), the world's largest professional organization dedicated to the advancement of engineering and technology. Senior membership is the highest professional grade of the IEEE for which members can apply. According to the organization, only eight percent of its 400,000 members have achieved this level. Criteria for senior membership in the organization include 10 years of professional practice in IEEE-designated fields and five years of significant performance. IEEE serves as an umbrella organization for several societies and technical councils, including the Industrial Applications Society with which Dr. Sharma has been involved for the past 10 years. Dr. Sharma also serves as associate editor for the peer-reviewed journal *IEEE Transactions on Industry Applications*.

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