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Western Kentucky University Department of Agriculture Newsletter



1 Big Red Way, Bowling Green, KY 42101-3576

E-mail: agriculture@wku.edu

Tel: (502) 745-3151 Fax: (502) 745-5972

Fall 1997

Department of Agriculture Update

by

Ray E. Johnson

Interim Head, Department of Agriculture

Following a year in which much progress was made under his leadership (see article in this newsletter), Dr. Gordon Jones resigned as Interim Department Head to resume his position as full-time Professor in the animal science area. Effective October 1, Dr. Ray E. Johnson was named interim Department Head until a permanent head is selected.

The Department Head position is currently in the process of being advertised nationally. Applications will be received until February 1998 with a May 1998 anticipated start date.

Agriculture Alumni Luncheon

The annual alumni luncheon is set for Saturday, November 1, 1997 at 1:00 p.m. in the Auxiliary Gym in Diddle Arena. **Please phone, fax, or e-mail your reservations to us by October 30.** You can pay at the time of registration. Please plan to attend and enjoy good food, fellowship and luncheon program. Then plan to stay for other Homecoming activities such as tailgating, and of course the football game. The Toppers have their best team in years - come and cheer them on to another victory!

"The Road to Excellence" - The History of the WKU Agriculture Department

We have been very frustrated with the publication schedule of the book on the history of Western's Department of Agriculture written by Mr. Herbert Cary, Class of '41. Dr. Luther Hughes, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs and former

Agriculture Department Head, has been pushing to finalize this project. The publishing company was sold to another group and caused the delay of final publication by many months. However, the final draft is back in the hands of the publisher. A period of about one month is needed to complete the publishing and binding. It is "touch and go" as to whether it will be ready by Homecoming, November 1, 1997. If not, it will be available shortly thereafter. Those who have contributed \$100 to the Department of Agriculture Phonathon either last year or this year will have a copy sent to them. You may also purchase this outstanding collection of agricultural memorabilia for \$25. All funds are going to the Herbert and Christine Cary Agricultural Scholarship Fund. You will be impressed with the history of which you have had a part.

New Faculty

Our newest faculty member, Dr. Beth Madison, is a native of east Tennessee but is the first generation born outside of Kentucky. She earned a B.S. degree from the University of Tennessee and an M.S. degree from the University of Kentucky in Agronomy. She comes to Western by way of Kansas where she received her Ph.D. in Soil Science from Kansas State University. Beth will teach several courses in soil and environmental sciences emphasizing soil management and water quality. She plans to conduct research with waste management for nutrient cycling applications to soil fertility and water quality protection. She is also interested in bioremediation research for cleanup of petroleum contaminated soils. Currently, Beth is involved in the American Society of Agronomy with national membership assessment and recruitment and with the Soil Science Society of America as a manuscript reviewer. She also serves as an advisor to WKU's Agronomy Club and CERES. Beth's

husband, Dr. Andy Madison, works for the KY Fish and Wildlife Resources Division as a wildlife biologist. Andy and Beth enjoy hiking and traveling and are very active in their church.

Agronomy/Weed Science Vacancy

The second open position in agronomy/weed science, replacing the retired Dr. Jim Worthington, remains open at this date. However we have high hopes that the new person will be on board for the Spring 1998 semester. Stay tuned.

Computer Laboratory

The department has been using the converted student lounge as a computer laboratory for the past several years. It has become more inadequate with each passing semester as the enrollment continues to increase in the Computer Applications in Agriculture course, and as other departmental courses expand computer usage. We are currently in the midst of a remodeling project combining two storage rooms and the small student lounge into a computer classroom/laboratory. Several new computers and additional software have been purchased. The "old" computer room will once again become a student lounge with new and refurbished furnishings. These changes will all be positive for our program and the students.

Unit Productivity Award

The department has received a unit productivity award of \$4,000 from the University for our application entitled "Enhancing Effectiveness of Student Recruitment and Retention". The money was immediately put to good use in the aforementioned computer room renovation. Most of the items mentioned in the application are included in the two-page article in this newsletter. Please read that article to fully appreciate the emphasis placed on student recruitment, and the results both in terms of quantity and quality of the current freshman class. We continue to rely on you to assist us, as many of you do, in this effort.

WKU Students Awarded Scholarships from Tobacco Company

A \$36,000 grant will fund scholarships for 19 students at Western Kentucky University.

The grant from United States Tobacco Manufacturing Co. will help fund scholarships for the children of dark tobacco products. Dr. Gordon Jones of Western's Department of Agriculture said, "We are excited about the positive impact this program can have upon the families of the dark tobacco growing region."

Gary Cadd, vice president for United States Tobacco Manufacturing Co., said the company is "enthusiastic about the prospect of providing scholarships to the tobacco farmers' offspring. This money will provide the opportunity for men and women to develop and strengthen their skills in agriculture."

The recipients include: Leslie Bernard of Orinda, TN; Michael R. Blick of Springfield, TN; Kristie Broadbent of Cadiz, KY; William S. Brown of Lewisburg, KY; Michael R. Costellow of Russellville, KY; Amy Michelle Disman, Andrew D. Mathias, and Chad Wilson, all of Portland, TN; Michael Scott Ebelhar and Gavin Clayton Roberts; both of Owensboro, KY; Michael Wayne Gardner and John Wayne Hagan, both of Bowling Green, KY; Brian C. Hayden of Calhoun, KY; Stacey and Tracey Kelley, both of White House, TN; Laura Gayle King of Cerulean, KY; Jason Kevin Stratton of Adairville, KY; Lewis Bradley Tuttle of Westmoreland, TN; and Michael Webster of Hopkinsville, KY.

Contacting Us

All department faculty members have a personal computer, and thus an e-mail address. The address is simply `firstname.lastname@wku.edu` (for example - `david.coffey@wku.edu`) and the departmental address is `agriculture@wku.edu`. The departmental fax number is (502) 745-5972. We always enjoy hearing from you by whatever means of communication.

Report Submitted to the WKU Board of Regents

The primary mission of the Department of Agriculture at Western Kentucky University is to provide cutting edge scientific agricultural education to undergraduate students. The areas of specialization include: agribusiness, plant science, soil science, animal science, dairy science, horse science, horticulture, turf and golf course management, agricultural education, general agriculture, pre-forestry and pre-veterinary medicine. Although the majority of the 400 students enrolled in the Department are from within a 100-mile radius of Bowling Green, Kentucky, there are students from throughout Kentucky, ten other states and two foreign countries. Thirteen full-time faculty members collaborate and share expertise to accomplish departmental goals.

Faculty in the Department of Agriculture take pride in advising and teaching undergraduate students. Students are counseled on an individual basis when planning coursework and other experiences to enhance their opportunities for successful employment in the agricultural industry. In fact, the majority of the faculty members in the Department of Agriculture have stated they were attracted to WKU because of this opportunity to teach and work closely with students.

The 783-acre University Farm is a vitally important component of the agricultural program. The farm is used extensively to provide "hands-on" laboratory experiences. This function becomes more important each year since an increasingly large number of students come from non-farm backgrounds. The farm is also essential to provide a setting for conducting applied research and public service activities. The livestock enterprises include dairy cattle, beef cattle, horses, swine and sheep. The crops include corn, soybeans and wheat for grain production. Forages consist of corn silage, alfalfa hay, grass hay and a variety of grass and legume pasture mixes.

Another major asset of the Department is the Leonard D. Brown Agricultural Exposition Center. Besides serving as an excellent setting for many animal science laboratories and student functions for the

Department, the Brown Center also serves as a major public service facility for the agricultural community. In fact, the Brown Center has become the focal point of agricultural events in this region of Kentucky. Last year, the Center accommodated 156 different events with an attendance of more than 115,000 persons. Many of these events include youth groups such as 4-H and FFA. Approximately two thirds of the events held at the Center are non-paying events.

Highlights of the Department

- ***Highest rate of acceptance of students into veterinary school*** of any Kentucky university during the last 15 years. For the fall 1997 class, WKU had 13 of 18 applicants accepted to Auburn University School of Veterinary Medicine; University of Kentucky, 9 of 42; Murray State University, 4 of 17; Eastern Kentucky University, 2 of 8; Morehead State University, 1 of 4; and University of Louisville, 4 of 10. In addition, one student was accepted at Ohio State University. Although most Kentucky residents attend veterinary school at Auburn University through a cooperative agreement of the Southern Regional Educational Board, WKU has had students attend ten different schools of veterinary medicine during the last 15 years. The pre-veterinary program is administered by the Department of Agriculture.
- ***Highest retention rate (76%) of any Department at WKU*** according to a study conducted by Dr. Ray Mendel.
- ***Model leaf composting project.*** All leaves gathered by the city of Bowling Green are composted at the WKU farm. This project saves the city thousands of dollars each year, preserves landfill space and serves as a model for many cities.
- ***Diverse international agricultural activities*** including travel classes, lectures and consulting in more than 20 countries.
- ***Graduate program.*** Graduate students have been attracted to WKU from ten different Land Grant Universities and several foreign countries. The graduate program provides the opportunity for both students and faculty to be involved in important research projects.

- **Golf course/turf grass management program.** A 2-hole golf course with six tee boxes has been constructed at the WKU farm. In addition, turf grass research plots have been established.
- **Intercollegiate competition** in Livestock Judging, Dairy Judging and Equitation. The teams have had top ten finishes in national competition.
- **Extramural funded research and/or program development projects** conducted during the last three years by all faculty members.
- **Student recruitment.** The following activities have been conducted during 1996-97:

- More than 1,200 letters have been written to prospective students.
- Seven Agriculture Ambassadors were chosen early in the fall semester with major duties including conducting farm and Exposition Center tours for prospective students and parents, visiting high school classes, attending high school career days and conducting recruitment phonathons.
- An open house was held for prospective students on January 25, 1997, at the L.D. Brown Agricultural Exposition Center--452 students along with teachers and parents attended this event. A short program was presented by the Agriculture Ambassadors and faculty members before dinner and a Hilltopper basketball game.
- The annual FFA Field Day held on April 10 attracted more than 1,400 students from 40 Kentucky, Tennessee and Indiana high schools.
- More than 2,100 newsletters were mailed to Department of Agriculture alumni requesting assistance in student recruitment efforts.
- *Curriculum* was revised to make programs more consistent with trends in the agricultural industry.
- *New Student Planning Manual* was published to reflect curriculum revisions and course number changes.

Results

- 100 students registered in agriculture and pre-veterinary medicine at the March and June 1997 OAR sessions--the largest

number ever for the first two OAR's.

- 113 scholarship applications were received in the Department of Agriculture this spring--the largest number on record (there were 68 applications last year).
- The academic competence of scholarship applicants is the best ever

	1996	1997
ACT	20	21
GPA	3.11	3.36
Percentile Rank in Class	68	78

- **There is new commitment among faculty members** to get more students involved in the following educational experiences:

- **cooperative education or internships**--A special "training session" has been held to assist faculty members in developing this initiative.
- **domestic and international travel courses or experiences**--Plans are to give every agriculture student the opportunity for a career-broadening travel experience.
- **undergraduate research projects**--Utilizing applications of scientific method to contemporary issues
- **freshmen seminar**--Students will be made aware of these opportunities in freshman seminar and encouraged to meet with advisors to make plans to include these experiences in degree programs.

- **Annual Career Day**--The purpose of this event is to provide students the opportunity to explore career opportunities in agriculture and also to learn about cooperative/internship experiences.

Agricultural Ambassadors

The 1997-98 academic year Agricultural Ambassadors are Summer Dixon, Bowling Green, KY; Jessica Gentry, New Haven, KY; Tracey Kelley, White House, TN; Jodi Lynch, Street, MD; Roger Ovesen, Upton, KY; Melissa Pickrell, Paris, KY; Scott Sieckert, Louisville, KY; and Derek Solberg, Dubuque, IA.

Departmental Club

Ag Business Club

This fall the Ag-Business Club participated in the KY Wood Expo by helping in the concession stand, at the Brown Agricultural Center. The club is currently planning a trip to San Antonio, TX , as well as planning speakers for the remaining fall meetings.

The club officers are President - Pam Stevens; Vice-President - Carrie Stenger; Secretary - TJ Morgan; and Treasurer - Brad Peterson. The club advisor is Dr. Alvin Bedel.

Ag-Ed Club and Other Ag-Ed News

New Officers are: President - Julie Fudge, Monroe County; Vice-President - Andre Barbour, Hart County; Secretary - Heidi Hayden, Hardin County; Program Committee - Amy Disman, Portland, TN and Steve Ringle, Hardin County; Food Committee - Chandra Hobbs, Breckinridge County and Joseph Kern, Heritage Hills, IN; Advisors - Drs. David Coffey and Jack Rudolph.

Plans include participating in the National FFA convention in Kansas City and visiting schools in the area adopting educational reform initiatives.

The following list is the WKU graduates hired as aged instructors in Kentucky since the last newsletter: Greg Craddock - Greenwood High School; Melvin Chambers - Todd County High School; Mitchell Cunningham - Monroe County High School; Amy Olt Coomer - Hart County High School; Shawn Murray - Hart County High School; Samantha Moseley - Central Hardin High School; Robert Parrish - Ohio County High School; and Aaron Tucker - Apollo High School.

Seems that Agricultural Education instructors make good administrators! During the past years, the following Ag teachers have been promoted to administrative positions: Tim Murley (Greenwood High School) to North Warren Elementary; Mark Davis (Hart County High School) to Greenwood High School; Mike Hughes (Warren East High School) to

Greenwood High School to Moss Middle School; and Brad Sisk (Ohio County High School) to Caldwell County High School. Congratulations on your accomplishments!

Imagine eating fresh pineapple, marketing bananas, digging potatoes at 12,000 feet, dancing in the streets and learning much about oneself and others! That's what eight students did this summer in Ecuador through a two-week course offered by the Department of Agriculture. Led by Dr. Coffey, students studied issues related to agricultural development in the coastal and highlands regions of Ecuador. Of particular interest were differences in culture, labor supply, and marketing strategies. Ecuador is the world's second largest exporter of fresh flowers and first in bananas. Students got a firsthand experience studying issues related to producing and marketing agricultural products in a domestic and an international marketplace. Students participating included: Jon Sloane, graduate student at Morehead and teacher at Walton-Verona High School; Brenda Oldfield, teacher at Scott County High School; Sanford Holbrook, graduate student at Morehead; Samantha Moseley, graduate student at WKU and teacher at Central Hardin High School; Thomas Green, a WKU graduate student; and undergraduates Jennifer Dennison, Misty Ellis, and Summer Dixon. According to Brenda Oldfield, "Never have I learned so much while having so much fun. It's THE trip of my lifetime. Go if you get a chance." The course is an effort by the department to broaden the international experiences of our students.

Dr. David Coffey has been recognized by NACTA (non-land grant schools) as an Outstanding Professor, and received the University Teaching Award for Ogden College of Science, Technology and Health.

Agronomy Club

The WKU Agronomy Club has begun this year with a pizza party for the first meeting, and is pleased to have increased membership. The club plans to instigate and sponsor the "Certified Crop Advisor Speaker Series". The first speaker in the series will attend the next meeting of this semester and address one of the areas of proficiency covered in the

Certified Crop Advisor exam. Club advisors: Drs. Linda Brown, Ray Johnson, and Beth Madison.

Block and Bridle

The major Block and Bridle Club event of the year was the Little North American Livestock Show held April 1. This was a week full of activities centered around exhibiting livestock. The weeks activities culminated on April 5, with the showmanship contest and the annual awards banquet. Jay Graves received the grand champion showman overall award and Greg Peters was reserve champion showman. The outstanding senior was Joy Wells and the junior scholarship award winner was Bunky Farber.

The club has gotten off to a great start this fall. The first big event of the school year was recruitment week held during the week of September 2-4. The program consisted of numerous activities and a meal each night. This was a great success for the club, recruiting 30 new members with formal initiation occurring on September 11.

The club is currently in the process of planning its annual trip to the National Block and Bridle Convention which this year will be held in Denver, CO during the National Western Stock Show. The entire club is excited about going to the convention which will include educational tours of agricultural enterprises in Colorado and the opportunity to hear some of the top speakers in the livestock industry.

The club continues to emphasize its primary fund raising events - meals at the Brown Ag Center. The Kentucky Wood Expo was held at the Brown Ag Center, September 19 and 20. The concession stands were operated by departmental clubs with Block and Bridle doing the majority of the cooking. This proved to be very successful for the club and will aid financially for the National Convention trip.

The officers for the 1997-98 year are President - Bunky Farber, Vice-President - Roger Ovesen, Secretary - Jennifer Jones, Treasurer - Julie Fudge, Reporter - Pam Stevens, Barbeque Chairpersons -

Steve Ringle and Mark Humphries, Social Chair - Kristen Hall, Scrapbook Chair - Laura Gayle King, and Executive Assistant - Melissa Pickrell. Advisors are Drs. Nevil Speer and Gordon Jones.

The 1998 Little North American and Awards Banquet will be held on Saturday, April 4 at the Brown Ag Center. The LNA will begin at 7:30 a.m., and the banquet is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. All alumni are invited. For reservations, call Dr. Jones at (502) 745-5960 or Dr. Speer at (502) 745-5959.

Dairy Club and Other Dairy News

The Dairy Club continues to be active with over 20 members this fall. The officers are President - Greg Peters; Vice President - Raquel Stiles; Secretary - Natalie Wood; and Treasurer - Tracey Kelley. Advisor for the club is Dr. David Stiles. The club is going to Madison this fall and is participating in a number of activities. The club will not have a dairy sale this fall, but hopes to try to activate it in the future. As always, monies are needed for travel and for the dairy judging team. Though we do not have a judging team this fall, WKU will have one in 1998. We are always most appreciative of donations made to the Department to aid in these trips. Come visit with us at any time. Remember the Little North American at Easter time next year.

Changes continue at the dairy. New fencing is going up around the entrance to the dairy and will continue over the next year. The old silo near the loafing shed (one that burnt some years ago) has been taken down, as will the three metal silos near the milking barn. We continue to move forward with improving the Holstein herd and adding Jerseys (end objective is 40 milking Holsteins and 20 milking Jerseys). These numbers best fit our feed storage and labor available. The Jerseys have come by donation. Recently we have received donations from the Fudge Family, Joey Pendleton, Chaney Jerseys and we will be receiving a calf from KC Farm and from Walnut Farm. Dr. Jim Spear was kind enough to implant/transfer some embryos for us (5 Holstein and 2 Jersey calves should be born next February or March).

Horseman's Association

Western's Stock Seat Horse Show Team once again dominated teams from Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Alabama in the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association during the 1996-1997 show season. The team won the region 3 championship in Murfreesboro, Tennessee in March. In April they were crowned Reserve Champions of zone 5 after a tie-breaking ride-off. Having earned the right to represent the southeast U.S., the team then focused on the National Championship held near Boston, Massachusetts in May. Joe Humphrey of Kevil, Kentucky won the reserve national champion title in the reining class. Other members of the national finals team included; Jodi Lynch of Street, Maryland; Loryn Mcaninch of Jamestown, KY; Kim Campbell of Bowling Green, KY; Monica Fella of Evansville, IN; Corey Thomas of Mt. Washington, KY; Laura Hopper of Jamestown, KY; and Maile Siemon of Edina, Minnesota. Western's team finished sixth in the nation overall.

Horticulture Club

The Hort Club had a most successful plant sale in the spring which helped finance an exciting field trip to Washington, D.C. We visited the National Arboretum, The National Botanical Garden, and the gardens of the American Horticultural Society in Alexandria, VA. These of course in addition to the sights and sounds of the capital city. From there we went to Pennsylvania to visit Longwood Gardens, the Former DuPont estate, and without question one of the finest collections of gardens in the United States.

The club recently installed a planting at the Adult Care Center on Campus, and have been involved in other campus plantings. Now we are planning for our traditional poinsettia sale.

New officers for the WKU Hort Club are President - Catherine Broadwater; Vice President - Ben Cecil; Secretary - Pennie Roberts; and Treasurer - Kellie Evans. Advisor for the club is Dr. Jim Martin.

Turf Club

The Turf Club remains very active, and we had five students doing co-ops this summer on golf courses in Alabama, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Our club membership continues to grow adding several new freshmen this fall. The Turf Club and ag faculty hosted the Kentucky Turfgrass Council (KTC) Board of Directors on September 17. Eight directors and two advisors reviewed our program, visited our facilities, and talked with our turf students. Club members are working very hard to earn money to attend the KTC Convention of Lexington and to attend the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) national meeting in Anaheim, California this February.

Social Fraternities

CERES Women's Agriculture Fraternity

The WKU Chapter of CERES Womens' Agriculture Fraternity chartered on November 23, 1996 with the following members: Terri Beth Bivens, Beth Dailey, Whitney Elmore, Julie Fudge, Cara Kulencamp, Samantha Moseley, Catherine Pearson, Shelly Proctor, Sherry Proctor, Joy Wells, Anita Bartnett, and Dr. Linda Brown. CERES promotes fellowship, leadership and scholarship among its' members, and encourages a relationship with the agriculture community as a whole.

CERES has already had a great fall rush, initiating 15 new pledges! In addition, Dr. Beth Madison has been initiated and will be serving as an advisor. WKU CERES is looking forward to a rewarding school year!

Keep us Informed:

AGRICULTURE ALUMNI

We want to hear from you
and to share your news
with other alumni. Send
us your news on this form
to the address below.
Enclose another sheet if
you have additional
information.

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Achievements and Events _____

Comments _____



Department of Agriculture
Western Kentucky University
1 Big Red Way
Bowling Green, KY 42101-3576

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