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UA66/5/2 Newsletter

WKU Department of Agriculture

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The greater Agriculture community had many discussions about Western's Centennial history and how the essence of those accomplishments could be captured. A sampling of the results is included in this newsletter. The idea of giving blood fully embraced the spirit of Western and received total support of the Agriculture Department and University. Discussion with the area Red Cross Blood Unit in Nashville added to the enthusiasm and excitement. The slogan, presenting an image of Big Red and the Red Cross with the words, "100 pints for 100 years" followed by "From one Big Red to another", was printed on the back of t-shirts. The message "WKU Agriculture: A Century of Service" was printed on the front of the t-shirt. Thanks to joint support from the Red Cross and the Department, each participant in the blood drive received a shirt. Also, the office of Enrollment Management, headed by Dr. Luther Hughes former head, Department of Agriculture, provided a tuition scholarship of $500 for each 100 pints of blood donated. In recognition of the importance of giving blood, the response was fantastic—Over 600 participants, 495 pints of blood with more than 100 pints given by the Agriculture Department. Also, five lucky students each received a $500 tuition scholarship. People who give blood early in life are more likely to continue the practice; therefore, many of the student donors are likely to continue giving well into Western's second century.

Some agriculture students who participated in the Blood Drive, along with Dr. Paul Woosley, pose in their Blood Drive t-shirts.

Doctorate Recognition at Centennial Homecoming

Thanks to you Agriculture Alumni who responded to the fall newsletter request for names of our past graduates who subsequently earned a doctorate. We identified approximately 150 graduates who proceeded to a doctorate degree in various disciplines. Indeed, our degrees provide solid preparation for advanced study and are appropriately recognized by a broad spectrum of doctoral granting institutions. This information reaffirms the value of the Western degree held by alumni and is valuable to our faculty who continuously scrutinize our curricula. Our present and future students can be confident about the marketability of their agriculture degree.
National Speaker on Healthy Water
Practicing and professional agriculturists know that an ample supply of water is essential for all aspects of agriculture; indeed, for life itself. However, we may not be cognizant of the impending worldwide water crisis. There is reason to believe that the threatening water crisis is more serious than the oil shortage. Water is the most limiting natural resource.

Approximately 70% of the water extracted from surface and ground water reserves is consumed by agriculture. It is expected that this pattern will continue for the foreseeable future. It is urgent that agriculturists come to grips with the water issues of supply, contamination, and pollution.

Centennial-level discussions by the agriculture faculty of past accomplishments and future challenges included the need to create greater awareness of global water conditions and the total dependence of agriculture upon water quantity and quality. Through funding from the Provost, Mike Magee, M.D, a world-renowned water authority, was brought to campus. Some 450 members of the University community attended his Global Water Seminar. His student-oriented seminars attracted approximately 125 agriculture and public health students. Free copies of Dr. Magee’s book “Healthy Waters” were made available to faculty and students. We gained greater understanding of the global water situation and of our responsibility in protecting water as a limited natural resource.

The Department, in conjunction with the College committee on sustainability, plans to continue its emphasis on water. Broad-based seminars on water ownership, legal rights, economics and ethics will be followed by seminars on state and local agencies and programs for protecting and maintaining the water supply for human and agricultural use.

Our final goal is to ascertain the place of water as a natural resource in the curriculum of students studying agriculture.

Agriculture Faculty Member Designs Floral Arrangements at Oscars
Roger Dennis has received much publicity over the past couple of weeks concerning his floral design work at the Academy Awards. Roger was the topic of an article in the Daily News, the Courier Journal, and he was interviewed for a segment on WBKO 13. Roger was also the topic in the Kentucky section of “Across the USA” in a national newspaper. The following excerpt is from USA TODAY on February 19th.

Kentucky: Louisville-Roger Dennis, a Western Kentucky University horticulture and floral-design instructor who owns a flower shop in Upton, is among top designers from across the USA invited to assist with floral arrangements for the Academy Awards show at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood on February 25th. Extensive floral arrangements line the red carpet, which is 24 feet wide and 2 city blocks long.

Students Study Abroad in Ecuador
Sixteen students are registered for a course on Andean Development Issues, which includes an 11-day field trip to Ecuador prior to and during Spring Break. One day will be spent in the Amazon in addition to visiting livestock and flower farmers and markets in the Highlands. Kristie Guffey, instructor at the Glasgow campus and a veteran of Ecuadorian experiences, will assist David Coffey on the Department’s 12th venture with students to Ecuador.

First US Agriculture Travel Course
The Fall semester of 2006 was the first semester for offering a section of AGED 475G: Survey of U.S. Agriculture Seminar in which students traveled to different places in the U.S. to gain an appreciation for the diversity of our agricultural industry. The inaugural class had 10 participants under the instruction of Dr. Linda Brown. Four trips were made throughout the semester. In Chicago, students visited the Chicago Board of Trade and witnessed the trading of futures. On that trip, they also visited Fair Oaks Farms which is a 25,000 head dairy operation having tours of the farm, demonstration sites and a restaurant associated with it. In Mississippi, students visited with Amish and non-Amish farmers producing catfish commercially and processing them. They visited a working cotton gin, poultry producers and a beef cattle operation as well. Another site visited was Clemson University in South Carolina where our alumnus and former WCU employee, Brian Bolt, served as host and guide. There, students heard about the change in that state from a row-cropping-based to a forage- and animal-based system. They toured the 20,000 acres of University farmland and campus, and visited with an excellent beef cattle producer and a poultry producer. Perhaps the trip which provided the most unique experience was to Massachusetts for the cranberry harvest. For one thing, some of the students had never flown before, so that was an experience, particularly considering that the airline industry had recently instituted rules concerning the carrying of liquids and gels in carry-on luggage. Students were able to observe dry harvest of cranberries and wet harvest, and to gain an appreciation for the ingenuity of cranberry producers to modify existing equipment to meet their specialized needs. Further, students took a helicopter tour of the cranberry bogs, getting an aerial view of this remarkable production. Most all participants had not visited Massachusetts previously, so during our leisure time some students and accompanying faculty toured Cape Cod and others went to Salem for a historic tour concerning the Witch Trials of the 1600’s. Additionally, several participants visited Plymouth Rock and reported that there is not much rock left, having been moved on a couple of occasions throughout history.

and chipped away by tourists. Students were required to read assigned material prior to each trip, in order to be somewhat knowledgeable about the enterprises visited. Following each trip, students were required to submit written reports. All reports from students have been very favorable regarding the learning that resulted from participation in this class. As such, another incarnation of the course is being planned for the May term of 2007. From May 14 to 24 this year we are expecting to offer AGED 475G: Texas Agriculture in which a single loop will be made through that state to see the great variety of environmental conditions and accompanying agricultural enterprises that are prevalent there.

A lunch stop at Clemson, South Carolina
Pictured are (l to r): Dr. Andre, Haley Pendleton, Amber Cook, Brian Bolt, Brittany Taylor, James Floyd, Natalie Denney, Marty Halsey, Jennifer Johnson, Matt Futrell, Cora Newsom, Kori Mays. (Behind Kori Mays is Adam Massey.)

Wet Harvest of Cranberries, Middleboro, Massachusetts.
Pictured are (l to r): Cranberry Producer, Adam Massey, Dr. John Kessell. Matt Futrell, Dr. Becky Gilfillen, Amber Cook, Marty Halsey, Haley Pendleton, James Floyd (in the background), Kori Mays, Cora Newsom, and in the right foreground is Natalie Denney.

Students Study Abroad in Ecuador
Pictured are (l to r): Amber Cook, Brian Bolt, Brittany Taylor, James Floyd, Natalie Denney, Marty Halsey, Jennifer Johnson, Matt Futrell, Cora Newsom, Kori Mays. (Behind Kori Mays is Adam Massey.)
Coty Back Named 2006-2007 National FFA Eastern Region Vice President

Growing up in Frenchburg, a small Kentucky town with a population of 550, Coty Back gained an understanding of what it's like to be overlooked and underappreciated. It also inspired him to look for ways to help struggling students and organizations realize their full potential. The Menifee County High School FFA Chapter member will now have a chance to inspire students across the nation. Back was named the 2006-2007 National FFA Eastern Region Vice President at the 79th National FFA Convention. He was among six individuals selected from a field of 41 to hold national office. He is the son of Mark and Rhonda Back, and his advisor is Tim Adams.

Fulfilling his position will require traveling more than 100,000 miles; meeting top leaders in government and education; visiting approximately 40 states and participating in an international experience tour to Japan. His responsibilities will include providing personal growth and leadership training for students, setting policies that shape the future of the organization and promoting agricultural literacy.

The national FFA officer selection process is intense and represents an assessment of years of academic and extracurricular accomplishments made by each student running for office. Nominees must first qualify on the state level to represent their particular state FFA associations. They then submit an in-depth application, detailing their accomplishments and contributions to the community, along with an essay detailing why they desire to be elected to the position. Once at the convention, candidates participate in five rounds of interviews, take an in-depth written test on the organization and agricultural education topics and complete two writing exercises. A panel of nine state FFA officers comprises the nominating committee that proposes the slate of six officers for approval by the convention delegates.

First Annual Antique Tractor Show

The L.D. Brown Agricultural Exposition Center held an Antique Tractor and Gas Engine Show on October 7th, 2006. There were about 40 antique tractors present and about 15 hit and miss engines. Thanks to the Woodburn Antique Tractor Club for making the event a success. We hope to make this an annual event to raise money for the WKU Scholarship Fund.

Dairy Judging Team News and Notes

- The 2006-2007 Dairy Challenge team participated in the Southern Region contest at Virginia Tech in November 2006. The four WKU team members were placed on 4 aggregate teams made up of 4 or 5 students each and each from a different university. WKU students were on teams that finished 1st Platinum, 3rd Gold, 8th Silver, and 9th Silver.
- WKU researchers from the Department of Agriculture and the USDA-ARS gave oral presentations and posters at the American Association of Bovine Practitioners in St Paul, MN in September 2006.
- Four WKU agriculture students accompanied Dr. Britt to Mexico, 2 in July and 2 in December, to visit large dairy farms that use Britt as an advisor.
- Jenks Britt was one of the invited speakers at the Stray Voltage seminar hosted by WKU-Ag and WREC.
- Jenks Britt was an invited speaker at the Minnesota Dairy Conference in St. Paul in May 2006.

Kentucky Academy of Science Presentations

Agriculture faculty and students were well represented at the KAS—Agriculture Science meeting at Morehead State University in December. A symposium on Kentucky Agriculture in Transition featured Dr. Martin Stone as moderator and included well known panelists: Dr. Will Snell (Agriculture Economics, U.K.), Dr. Paul Detloff (Veterinarian, WI), and Dr. Michael Bomford (KSU). Students and faculty participated in poster and oral presentations. Two of Western’s Graduate Students, Ashley Monfor and Kyle Daniel, won First and Third places in their competition. Elmer Gray served as Secretary to the Agricultural Sciences section. KAS provides an excellent outlet for information on research at Western.

Southeast Regional Soil Judging Contest Hosted at WKU

WKU Agronomy hosted our first Southeast Regional Soil Judging Contest in October 2006. There were 12 teams, along with WKU, who participated in the week long event. There was a total of 80 students who participated in the contest. Schools that were represented included: Auburn University, Clemson University, Eastern Kentucky University, Murray State University, North Carolina State University, Tennessee Tech University, University of Georgia, University of Tennessee at Knoxville, University of Tennessee at Martin, Virginia Tech University, and West Virginia University. The first place team was University of Kentucky. Many thanks to all the Agriculture Faculty, Staff and Students along with NRCS who made this event a success.

Presentations Made By WKU Students at American Society of Agronomy

The National American Society of Agronomy Meeting was attended by 4 people from WKU Agriculture. Matt Futrell, Jennifer Johnson and Philip Price along with Becky Gilfillen all made presentations at the meeting. All the graduate students delivered an excellent presentation along with meeting several other scientists from the U.S. and International Countries.
2nd Annual Gamma Sigma Delta Initiation Banquet Held

The 2nd Annual Gamma Sigma Delta Initiation Banquet was held in November 2006. The WKU Gamma Sigma Delta is a new chapter who received its charter last year. This year we inducted Debbie Gabbard (Staff), Kyle Daniel, Jay Garmon, Jennifer Johnson, Philip Price (graduate students), Donald Budzynski, Jeffrey J. Campbell, Kelsey Carter, Kurt Dryden, Christopher Kenner, and Susan Alexander (undergraduate students). The chapter is continuing to grow and is glad to add these outstanding staff and students to the WKU Chapter and the International Gamma Sigma Delta Organization.

Numerous Wins for WKU Livestock Judging Team

The Western Kentucky University Livestock Judging Team has just completed a successful year of intercollegiate competition, Pete Burmeister, a graduate student from Iowa State University, coached the 2006 WKU team. Spring of 2006, the team competed in four competitions: the Dixie National in Jackson, Mississippi; the Houston Stock Show in Houston, Texas; the All-East Contest in Blacksburg, Virginia; and the spring competition culminated at NACTA contest held at Western Illinois University, where the WKU team won every division and the overall contest. Lindsey Berry was High Individual in that contest. In the fall of 2006 the team competed in five competitions: the National Barrow Show in Austin, Minnesota; the Stockman’s Contest in Indiana; the Mid-South Fair in Memphis, Tennessee; the American Royal in Kansas City, Missouri; and the National Collegiate Judging Contest in Louisville, Kentucky.

Now that the intercollegiate judging year is completed, all team members can reflect on their accomplishments and say that their skills in evaluating livestock greatly improved, but also their communication skills, decision making ability, and their respect for all aspects of the livestock industry were enlightened. There is no doubt that being on the team was very hard work. Anyone who has had an experience such as this can tell you that one key thing you leave with is how to have complete confidence in yourself, which is something that will last a lifetime.

Members of the team included Lindsay Berry, a junior from Hardinville, KY; Bradley Warren, a senior from Springfield, KY; John Pedigo, a junior from Scottsville, KY; Ashley Moore, a senior from Rose Hill, IA; Cindy Harris, a junior from Shelbyville, KY; and Fran Korthaus, a senior from Smithfield, KY. The team traveled and practiced on farms and ranches in eleven states. During the

Kentucky Sports Turf Managers Association Meets at Taylor Center

The Taylor Center located at the WKU farm had a busy, but successful year. The highlights of the year was hosting the Kentucky Sports Turf Managers Associations annual field day. This field day took place in the summer and included a trade show and educational seminars the first day followed by a day of hands-on workshops. This event was the first ever of its kind hosted by the Taylor Center. Continued improvements to the facility have enabled the department to offer more classes at the Taylor Center, including most recently floral design courses.

Horticulture Students Learn in a World-Class Garden

In April, 2006, Mr. Jerry Baker, a WKU alum and local businessman, made the largest private donation to a public university in the history of Kentucky. The Department of Agriculture and specifically the landscape horticulture section, was significantly impacted by this generous act. The grounds of the Baker Arboretum including unique collections of rare dwarf conifers, Japanese maples, and dogwoods among many others will be donated to horticulture in the future. In addition, it is currently being used as a teaching and research laboratory by WKU. The garden comprises fifteen acres of which around ten have been developed to date. Hundreds of unique plants grow in the gardens that have been collected from many parts of the country and imported from overseas. Baker Arboretum employs recent WKU graduates, interns from the department, and is currently hosting a research project on conifer nutrition with two undergraduate students. Mr. Baker supplies horticulture students with four partial scholarships each year, and makes possible several seminars and symposia each year. This year, the arboretum paid for horticulture students to attend, at no charge, a grafting seminar on campus that took place over a two day period. In total they grafted over five hundred spruce, pine, Japanese maples, and ginkgos, among others. It also made possible the second annual speaker symposium in which speakers from out of state delivered talks on landscape horticulture. It was attended not only by students but made available to the public as well. Horticulture will continue to work very closely with the Baker Arboretum to educate students in a world-class garden.

WKU Co-Hosts WRECC Stray Voltage Conference

On November 2, 2006, the Department of Agriculture hosted a Stray Voltage Workshop at the L.D. Brown Agricultural Exposition Center. The program was co-hosted by UK Agriculture Extension Services and Warren Rural Electric Cooperative Corporation. The purpose of the one day workshop was to educate dairy producers and dairy professionals on the importance of following electrical codes when building new facilities or updating existing facilities. Guest speakers from both the power company and dairy industry shared cases where the electric code was not followed and a problem was incurred, usually in the way of stray voltage. Stray voltage can cause many problems on dairy farms and can have a negative effect on the economic well being of the farm.

The workshop was well received by all who attended. The workshop will also help prepare the dairy industry in the state of Kentucky to grow and be a leader in the US Dairy Market.

Dairy Barn and Snell Hall Prints

We still have Dairy Barn and Snell Hall prints for sale. Dairy Barn prints are $30 and Snell Hall prints are $100. When you purchase one of these prints, we will also send you a free copy of Road to Excellence—Agriculture at Western Kentucky University. Please make checks payable to WKU Foundation. Please send payment to Department of Agriculture Western Kentucky University 1906 College Heights Blvd #41066 Bowling Green, KY 42101-1066

Fundraiser for Richard Flener Family

Richard Flener, an alumnus of the Department of Agriculture, and his wife both passed away over a 3-month period. They left two daughters who are 9 and 10 years old. The Block and Bridle Club sold pork chop meals and donated all proceeds to the “Friends of the Flener’s Trust” fund established for the daughters. The club donated $2476.82. If you would like to donate money to the fund, please contact PBI Bank in Morgantown, KY.

PBI Bank
PO Box 338
Morgantown, KY 42261
270-526-3855