Fall 2006

UA66/5 Newsletter, Vol. I, Issue 1

WKU Agriculture

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Welcome

Welcome to our new newsletter. We hope you like and appreciate the format. We started this new academic year off with a great faculty and staff retreat at the Kentucky FFA Camp. In any organization change is the only thing you know for certain will happen and our department is no exception. Ms. Kristie Guffey, a graduate of our department, (Ag Education) has been teaching part-time at the Glasgow campus. Student numbers are growing due in part to her efforts, so we have been able to move her into a full-time instructor position. Mr. Rhoades Hester, a graduate of our department has been working part-time with Mr. Darrin Benton at the Ag Expo Center. Darrin has accepted a position in Muhlenberg County starting in October and Rhoades has agreed to stay on as folks in the Ag department. Our a full-time temporary to run the entering freshman class was Expo until the position is filled permanently. Mr. Roger Dennis, a graduate of our department has been teaching floral design classes for us for the past several years. With Dr. Jim Martin’s retirement we were able to bring Roger on full-time. Ms. Gabrielle Hunt, a 2006 WKU graduate has joined our department as our new office associate. Ms. Laura Kitchens moved with her husband and son to the State of Washington. Dr. John Kessell, a graduate of University of West Virginia, Iowa State and Texas Tech has joined our faculty to teach Agriculture Education. Dr. David Coffey has accepted an administrative position with the Trio on campus. As you can see there have been several changes and these are only the ones regarding personnel. We are glad to have all the new people thermals and is

Paging the Doctor

Presence of the Western Spirit on campus is unprecedented during this Centennial Year. The campus is more beautiful and is being experienced by more students than ever before. We in the Agriculture Department are sharing the excitement associated with Homecoming 2006. As we reflect on the significance of this milestone, we fully realize and appreciate that our roots and our harvests are in graduates of the past and the future. You are the reason why we can feel proud during this special Centennial celebration.

For Homecoming you will experience a varied menu for the luncheon and program. We will prepare the luncheon, but your help is critical in preparing a special program activity. It is entitled recognition of our bachelors and master’s graduates who subsequently earned the doctorate (EdD, PhD, DVM, MD, JD, other). We know there are more than 100 doctoral recipients who completed their bachelors and or master’s in agriculture at Western. This information will be helpful to the faculty as they assess the curriculum for a stepping stone to advanced degree work. (Yes, we want to use this information for some highly justified boasting.)

If you received a doctorate degree, please submit your contact information in the box on the back of this newsletter. If you know other doctoral agriculture alumni who are not receiving the Newsletter, add the name(s) and address(es) and we will make contact. Also, if you believe, but are not sure, that a graduate continued and received the doctorate, please add that name and we will do the research.
On the week of June 11, the Department of Agriculture held their very first ASSET Conference: Agriculture Students Striving for Effective Tomorrows. The conference was fully funded through various sponsors throughout the agriculture community. There were 21 high school seniors representing 18 counties in Kentucky and Indiana. The four-day conference was jam packed with activities and guest speakers. Students had the opportunity to experience life at Western by living in Hugh Poland Hall with ASSET counselors and dining at the Fresh Food Company in the Downing University Center. ASSET counselors- Coty Back of Frenchburg, Jenna Brown of Bowling Green, Josh McCubbins of Bardstown, and Sheldon Pence of Flemingsburg—along with the Department of Agriculture’s faculty and staff were responsible for planning and coordinating this event.

The students along with faculty visited two of Kentucky agriculture’s finest establishments—Robey’s Dairy and Jerry Baker’s Arboretum. Other activities included an etiquette dinner, a R.O.P.E.S. Course, Barnyard Olympics, photo scavenger hunt, and one-on-one discussions with faculty about career opportunities. We were fortunate to have Warren Beeler and former Commissioner of Agriculture Billy Ray Smith to speak and share their experiences with us.

The first ASSET Conference was an amazing experience for everyone.

First Annual ASSET Conference

Graduate Student Visits Queretaro, Mexico

By Evan Tate

The first week of July, I was able to travel to Queretaro, Mexico with Dr. Britt. The trip was an eye opening experience for me. Not only did I get the opportunity to visit several different dairies around the city, but I was also exposed to Mexican culture. This broadened my horizons. What we see on television shows little resemblance to what the country and culture actually is. The site seeing and cultural fact finding was interesting to say the least; however, it does not compare to the science I was exposed to in our travels from herd to herd. On many different locations, I was able to take part in troubleshooting and problem solving activities. Knowledge gained on reproduction, production and the give and take relationship between the two is sure to be of great assistance to me in the future. Very rarely does this opportunity become available to students. I feel honored to have had this experience. Until a student is able to apply the information gained in a hands-on activity, there is no way to truly understand the material. It is my belief that the Agriculture Department at WKU far exceeds other universities in providing these type experiences, and the faculty and staff should be commended for their efforts.
Leadership Students Visit Ireland

From May 18 to June 2, Dr. Linda Brown taught an introductory course in Leadership Studies in Ireland. Dr. Brown is a Professor in the Department of Agriculture with a specialization in plant science, particularly forage crops. Eleven students from the U.S. participated in the course including two WKU Agriculture students: Josh Tubbs and Haley Pendleton, both from Bowling Green. The course is the equivalent to the LEAD 200 class offered on campus, the first step to completing the Undergraduate Leadership Certificate. Dr. Brown states, "The Leadership Certificate is valuable for any major in our University! It exposes students to leadership theory and practice so that they can be more deliberate in developing their own leadership skills. And the best time to do that is during the college years." Anyone who wants to know more about leadership development may contact the Leadership Excellence Center directly or contact Dr. Brown, the Ogden College representative on the WKU Leadership Enhancement Committee.

Pictured above is Bunratty Castle, a fully restored Medieval castle near Limerick. Note the palm trees in the foreground. It is interesting that such palms thrive on the island. Because of the proximity of large bodies of water and the Gulf Stream, water and air currents that affect Ireland, winters are relatively mild. Because of the northern latitude, summers are quite mild as well. The Irish news reported that May of 2006 was the coldest and rainiest in many years. In fact, the temperature did not reach of high of more than 70 degrees F while this class was there, and many days the high temperature was in the 50s or 60s. Consequently, popular souvenirs for students were the hand-knit woolens from the Aran Islands.

It is a very different experience to visit a European country as opposed to domestic US travel. Even though communication was in English, nearly all signs and public announcements were dually stated, in English and Gaelic, the native Irish language. Students utilized the LUAS commuter train in Dublin, as well as buses, but quickly learned that walking a great deal is common. Some students got into the spirit of the World Cup Soccer games, watching them and cheering along with the Irish. The class visited the historically significant Kilmainham Gaol (jail), where leaders of the rebellions against British rule were jailed and many executed. Students also visited the port of Cobh, once known as Queensway, famous for being one of the key ports from which many people left Ireland during the Potato Famine of the 1800's. It is also the port from which the Titanic sailed on its fateful maiden journey across the Atlantic.

Big Red At the WKU Farm

Be sure to view the newest greeter for the University farm, BIG RED. A red and white plant outline of BIG RED waving at southbound Nashville road (31-W) traffic is located near the Bennett lane farm entrance. Kyle Daniel proudly implemented his horticultural and artistic skills on this project. Mr. Daniel is a horticulture graduate student from Henderson, Kentucky studying blueberry production. Kyle, we appreciate your efforts on the University farm throughout the past two summers and your commitment to WKU agriculture.
Live Animal Evaluation Center

The Live Animal Evaluation Center (LAEC) is a new enterprise, opened February 2006, for the University farm. This facility was constructed to conduct practical research and to demonstrate methods to enhance profitability of weaned calves through preconditioning and development during the stocker phase. Currently we have the capacity to background approximately 2,500 head on an annual basis and look forward to testing/developing new concepts within an important phase of the cattle industry.

Antique Tractor Show

The WKU Department of Agriculture will be hosting the First Annual Southern Kentucky Antique Tractor, Gas Engine, and Farm Toy Show Saturday, October 7, 2006 from 8 am to 5 pm at the L.D. Brown Agriculture Exposition Center. Proceeds will benefit WKU Agriculture Scholarships. There will be tractor games, children games, and concessions will be available. There is no charge for admission. For more information visit our website at www.wku.edu/agexpocenter or call (270) 745-3976.

News From Dr. Britt

Mark Jaynes, Travis England, Steve Ray and Micah Thomas were members of the WKU Dairy Challenge team that participated in the North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge contest held in April 2006 at Twin Falls, Idaho. The dairy challenge contest gives students the opportunity to evaluate management on dairy farms. At the contest the team visited several farms including one that milked 11,000 cows at one location. They also visited a cheese plant that processes milk from 100,000 cows per day. There were 29 teams present from U.S. colleges.

Stephen Houchens and Evan Tate traveled with Dr. Britt to Queretaro, Mexico in June 2006 to visit 4 large dairy farms that Dr. Britt consults with on a regular basis. Study abroad is an important aspect of WKU's mission and several students have been able to make this trip with Britt. The farms range in size from 800 to 1600 cows. Students do an extensive report on the farm management practices used on the farms and how they might be improved.

Dr. Britt's research this year has been extensive with field trials for EcoLabs, Western Yeast Company and Novartis Animal Health. The EcoLabs research involved treatment/prevention of heelwarts in dairy cattle. The Western Yeast Company involved feeding yeast to early lactation dairy cows and the Novartis project was a vaccine safety trial. Britt continues to be involved in Johne's disease research.
Turf Grass Management News

Dear Alumni,

I look forward to visiting you during our special homecoming this year. Hooray one hundred years for Western Kentucky University. I would like to inform you on the activities of the turf program this past year. First, we have continued to make improvements to the Taylor Center located at the farm. Our efforts have been concentrated on the classroom. The classroom has new paint and finished table tops. It really is an attractive space to hold class and laboratories at the farm. Also, class projects with students have included adding three naturalized areas, a bunker renovation, and expanding a tee box at the golf course. New landscaping around the building has also been added.

Next, I would like to briefly talk about our students. Once again, our students received top scholarships from the Kentucky Turfgrass Council. I had 5 students attend the GCSAA conference in Atlanta, GA in February. Graduates this year have obtained employment here in Bowling Green, Louisville, and Gallatin, TN. Other graduates have started their own lawn care companies. Joel Weber received a golf course assistant position with the new Jack Nicklaus design golf course being built near Gallatin, TN. Also, we have students in many places this summer with internships. I will make mention that Jonathan Boyd is working this summer helping maintain UK sports fields. It is the first time that a student from another university has interned at UK. Jonathan has done a great job and UK is eager to have more WKU students. I am encouraged by our students and alumni success in the turf grass industry.

Finally, the highlight of this past year was the Kentucky Sports Turf Managers Association trade show and field day at the Taylor Center. I am fairly certain that this has been the first professional meeting hosted at the Taylor Center. We had a great two-day meeting. The first day, participants were able to demo equipment from the tradeshow out on the golf course. In the afternoon, seminars were held in the improved classroom. After a tour of Lost River Cave, participants had dinner at the Taylor Center. The next day, hands-on workshops were given on WKU's athletic fields. Everyone involved agreed that the event was a success.

I went on a faculty retreat at the FFA camp this past summer to generate ideas on improving the department and our graduates. I have been energized and I am looking forward to this upcoming school year. See you this fall at homecoming.

Paul Woosley
SNELL HALL PRINT - $100
Call the Ag office at 270-745-3151 to order your print. Checks can be made payable to the WKU Foundation.
WKU DAIRY BARN PRINT - $30
Call the Ag office at 270-745-3151 to order your print. Checks can be made payable to the WKU Foundation.
Horticulture Happenings

As we return to another school year, excitement fills the air but there have been several changes, as well. This past May we said goodbye to the now "officially retired" Dr. Jim Martin. Jim began teaching in the department in 1978 and has been the entirety of the horticulture department for most of that time. He will now focus his energy on his nursery business (thus the quotes around "officially retired"). Since his wife, Joan, has also retired recently from WKU, they are both looking forward to having more travel time to visit their one and only grandson in the Seattle area. Thank You, Jim, for the years of service, the excellent horticulturists you turned out, and the mentoring you gave to countless students through the years. You are leaving a big hole in the department and will be missed. Best of Luck to you in retirement.

Mr. Roger Dennis has joined our faculty as an instructor after many years of teaching as an adjunct. Roger will teach classes in greenhouse production and will continue his popular classes in floral design. Roger brings experience in business and much talent to our department. Welcome aboard, Roger.

Ms. Jaime Crocker (B.S., M.S. WKU Ag-Horticulture) and a recent graduate has been in a doctoral program at Virginia Tech since January. Reports from her major professor are that she is carrying her work ethic and enthusiasm from WMU to VT. She is the recipient of a major competitive scholarship recently and is doing us proud.

In May, the horticulture club traveled to Delaware, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, including a trip to the world class Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania. They also visited the National Arboretum, U.S. Botanical Garden, and all the sights on the national mall. It was a wonderful experience for all and we hated to part at the end of the trip.

Kyle Daniel, current horticulture M.S. candidate will be finished in December and will enter a doctoral program but as of the deadline, has not made a final decision. Kyle's work on blueberry propagation and orchard management has been excellent and it has paid off in his successful search for doctoral programs.

We welcome our new M.S. student, Elizabeth Alewine, who recently completed her B.S. in horticulture at WKU. Elizabeth will be working on an unusual type of project, historical landscape design. Currently, she has several projects on campus with which she is involved so she is off to a quick start. Welcome to graduate school, Elizabeth.

Martin Stone

This 450 year old bonsai pine was within a mile of the Hiroshima bomb blast in Japan in 1945. Fortunately, it was kept beneath a shed and was apparently uninjured. Think of all the hands that have cared for this plant through the centuries! Horticulture club saw this in the national bonsai collection at the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington D.C. this May.

The landscape design class last spring designed and installed a new landscape in front of the WKU Ag Expo. The photo shows the class on the night they finished after hundreds of hours of work. Good Job, Gang.
Western's back on the road! Cattle for WKU's beef unit have been successfully exhibited this year at the Kentucky Beef Expo, Atlantic National, Kentucky Angus Preview show, and Kentucky State Fair. Accomplishments include several class winners and division championships. While banners have been added to the wall, we are more excited about providing opportunities to our students. The experience of showcasing our program while networking with influential individuals within the industry proves beneficial in terms of their educational experience at Western. In addition, we've enjoyed the opportunity to interact with WKU alumni, visit with the parents of current students, and recruit future Hilltoppers.

The combination of time, hard work, dedication, and a disciplined breeding program have enabled Western to become a credible source of breeding stock for both purebred and commercial cattle operations. Our efforts will be available for your inspection on March 31, 2007 at The Breeder's Resource sale. For more information on the Breeder's Resource sale and our beef cattle program, check us out online at www.wku.edu/wkubee. Be sure to look us up at the North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville, Kentucky this November because we will be "On the Road Again."

On The Road Again

Ninety three of Western's finest students are making themselves known across the United States! The National Block and Bridle Convention 2005 was held Columbus Ohio where numerous members traveled to see all that they could see. We were able to attend the National Quarter Horse Congress, tour the original site of the first Bob Evans establishment, as well as touring Champion Hill's prestigious Angus Farm. The National Outstanding Junior Scholarship Award was presented to one of our very own, Whitney LeGrand. Our chapter was also awarded fifth place in the Chapter Activities Award.

This year's National Convention will be held January 25-28 2007 in Kissimmee, Florida. We will be given the opportunity to see SYSCO meat processing, food distribution retail, Global Phosphate Mining Company, fresh fruit and Orange Juice processing, purebred Brangus cattle operation, multiple cow/calf operations, wildlife management, and to look inside the thoroughbred industry through the Seminole Feed Company. All of these tours will allow us to see a different aspect of agriculture that we have not been introduced to.

Block and Bridle Events

On a local level our year has just begun. We have multiple goals to achieve this year including increasing our membership through effective means of recruitment as well as increasing our involvement in the community through community service projects. We will continue our famous pork chop sales for local community businesses and organizations. We will be traveling in January to Florida for the National Convention and as soon as we return, Little North American plans will be well underway.

If there is anything Block and Bridle can do for you, please feel free to contact us. Our contact information can be found on the Western Kentucky University Department of Agriculture website.
**Road to Excellence**

*A History of the Agriculture Department at Western Kentucky University*

From the early 1900’s to more recent years, Herbert C. Cary chronicles the progression of WKU agriculture in the 1998 edition of *Road to Excellence*. Along with an interesting history of WKU agriculture, numerous photographs of past department heads, students and events are included. This hardback copy of *Road to Excellence* is sold for $20. All proceeds go to the Christine and Herbert C. Cary Memorial Scholarship. If you are interested, please call the agriculture office at 270-745-3151 to order your copy. Checks can be made payable to the WKU Foundation.

**Snell Hall and Dairy Barn Prints**

Prints of the WKU Dairy Barn and Snell Hall are available. Dairy Barn Prints are $30 each and Snell Hall Prints are $100 each. In addition, we will send you a free copy of *Road to Excellence* with your purchase of either the Snell Hall or Dairy Barn print. If you are interested, please call the agriculture office at 270-745-3151 to order your print. Checks can be made payable to the WKU Foundation.

**Students Visit Ecuador**

Seventeen agricultural students from WKU, Morehead and UK enjoyed an 11 day Ecuadorian experience hosted by Diego Martinez, Eddye Mayorca and Miguel Castanel during spring break. Additionally, WKU faculty member Dr. Linda Brown and Alum Mitchell Liechhardt accompanied David Coffey and MSU’s Dr. Adam Kantrovich. Liechhardt, a Bowling Green landscape architect, worked with Diego Martinez while in Ambato on planning and designing for the new park and arboretum. The energy and attitude of the 82 year old participating for his second tour was an inspiration for our students.

Indian strikes in the highlands caused our planned activities to be changed almost daily. Dr. Linda Brown was unable to complete her pesticide training activities planned in the Amazon area of Tena. However, we were able to experience the new Funicular near Quito, old Quito and museums, the Ambato Indian livestock market high in the Andes, delphinia and artichoke farms, and a visit with persons who have experienced WKU and Kentucky through the Kentucky-Ecuador Partners. An abbreviated visit to the Amazonian city of Puyo hosted by Miguel Castanel allowed us to visit an indigenous pottery project where many items were purchased. As always the honest, warm hospitality of Ecuadorians was agreed upon as the highlight of the trip.

Since our experience, the volcanic region south of Ambato in Banos has experienced major eruptions of the Tungurahua volcano. Imagine having to cope with up to 7 inches of ash if you are a dairy, livestock, vegetable or flower producer.

This year is the 11th WKU journey to Ecuador for our students. Each year seems to get better, even with Indigenous strikes. If you are interested in exploring the Andes and the Amazon and/or know of students who want a memorable experience, have them reserve March 8 to 18 Kentucky-Ecuador Partners. An abbreviated visit to the Amazonian city of Puyo hosted by Miguel Castanel allowed us to visit an indigenous pottery project where many items were purchased. As always the honest, warm hospitality of Ecuadorians was agreed upon as the highlight of the trip.

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Student News

Agronomy Students have been busy taking several trips this past year. WKU Agronomy Students competed in the Southern Regional Soil Judging Competition during October 2005 which was held at North Carolina State University. The team placed 7th out of 12 teams. Members included: Robin Dalton, Lacey Geary, Christie Goley, Josh Lauria, Adam Massey, Alan Moss and Darren Tabor. We will be hosting the regional competition here at WKU this fall in October.

Another Soil Judging Contest was held by the National American College Teacher’s Association at Western Illinois University in April 2006 where the team placed 5th out of 8 teams. Team members included: Robin Dalton, Lacey Geary, Christie Goley, and Adam Massey. Both teams were coached by Matt Futrell, Philip Price (graduate students), Darwin Newton, and Becky Gilfillen.

WKU Agronomy Students also attended the American Forage and Grassland Council Meeting in San Antonio, TX during March 2006. Here the team placed 1st in the Grassland Evaluations and 1st and 2nd in the Forage Quiz Bowl. Congratulations to team members Jay Campbell, Brandon Griffith, Chris Kenner, Adam Massey, and Susan Priddy.

Soil Judging Team Members at North Carolina State University

Our research continues this summer — we are assisted in our efforts by our Technician Matt Futrell who directs the efforts of graduate students Jennifer Johnson and Philip Price, and undergraduate students Lacey Johnson and Adam Massey.

Dr. Mehai Tekeste has joined our department in a Post-Doctoral position associated with the USDA-ARS project. Dr. Tekeste is a native of Eritrea and will be assisting the Agronomy Research Group with statistical analysis and manuscript preparation.

Faculty News

After 7 years of excellent service to our department and university, Dr. Byron Sleugh departed WKU to accept a position with Dow AgroSciences. Byron will be serving as a Product Technology Specialist and will be living in the Des Moines, IA area. Although we are saddened by Byron’s departure, we are thankful for his many contributions to our department and our students. We wish Byron and his family all the best in their future endeavors.

We are pleased to have Dr. Elmer Gray rejoin our department as a faculty member! Elmer has for the past several years served as WKU’s Dean of Graduate Studies. He will be teaching 2 classes per semester in his new role.

Research

The Agronomy Faculty continues to focus on research in the area of waste management in cooperation with the new USDA-ARS unit located at the WKU Farm. Research projects include the use of poultry litter as a fertilizer source to grow forage and field crops. Drs. Becky Gilfillen, Byron Sleugh, and Todd Willian made presentations at Salt Lake City, UT last November at the National ASA Meeting. Drs. Becky Gilfillen and Todd Willian, along with graduate students Matt Futrell, Jennifer Johnson and Philip Price will be attending and presenting papers at the 2006 ASA Meetings in Indianapolis, IN.

Drs. Becky Gilfillen and Byron Sleugh present their research at the ASA conference.

Soil Judging Team Members analyze the Soil at a Competition
If you have received your doctoral degree, or if you know of another Western Alumni who has received their doctoral degree, please provide us with the information below.

Name ________________________________
Address ________________________________
__________________________
Phone ________________________________
Email ________________________________

Return this form to the address to the left, or call us at 270-745-3151.