Hyde Promoted in Extension
Jeffrey Hyde, associate professor of agricultural economics, has been appointed state program leader for entrepreneur and value-added agricultural systems with Penn State Cooperative Extension, on a half-time basis.

As state program leader, Hyde will provide leadership for entrepreneur and valued-added agricultural systems extension programming in Pennsylvania. He will work to unify existing extension efforts into a focused state program by collaborating with administrators in the college, academic department heads, regional extension directors, faculty and county extension educators, as well as academic and outreach programs in other colleges within the university.

College in Group to Help Nepal
The college, as part of a consortium that includes Virginia Tech and Ohio State University, is collaborating with researchers from Nepal Agricultural Research Council and Winrock International to develop a new grafting technology to combat diseases and pests in tomatoes and eggplant.

Tomatoes and eggplant are some of the most popular vegetables in the world. But various pests impair the production of these crops. These pests decrease yields and have been known to destroy entire crops.

Murphy Helps Form Safety Council
Dennis Murphy, Distinguished Professor of Agricultural Safety and Health, is a founding board member of a new organization, the Agricultural Safety and Health Council of America, recently formed to work toward making farming safer.

The new council, driven by farmer/rancher and agribusiness leaders, is the first of its kind in the country to pursue a national strategy to reduce disease, injuries and fatalities in American agriculture.

APD College Building: It’s all about Bioenergy

“Ag Energy: Harnessing the Potential” is the theme of exhibits to be showcased in the College of Agricultural Sciences Exhibits Building at Ag Progress Days, Aug. 19-21.

With gas prices reaching all-time highs, visitors can discover how the college’s teaching, research and extension programs are helping turn Pennsylvania toward renewable sources of energy. Faculty and staff also will be on hand to answer questions and provide information about the college’s undergraduate programs.

Exhibits will show how Penn State researchers and educators are developing and applying technologies to produce and process alternative fuel sources—not only from corn and soybeans, but also from wood and other nonfood crops—in a manner that is environmentally and economically sustainable under Pennsylvania conditions.

The exhibits will show that the college is well positioned to provide valuable and much-needed research to move Pennsylvania toward energy independence.

During Ag Progress Days, specialists in the college will offer energy-related presentations in the theatre of the College Exhibits Building. Times and topics are as follows:

**Tuesday, Aug. 19**
11 a.m. – “Natural Gas Leasing Impact”
1:30 p.m. – “Potential of Wind and Solar Energy”
2:30 p.m. – “Using Straight Vegetable Oil”

**Wednesday, Aug. 20**
11 a.m. – “Natural Gas Leasing Impact”
1:30 p.m. – “Energy Efficiency on the Farm”
2:30 p.m. – “Natural Gas Leasing Impact”

**Thursday, Aug. 21**
11 a.m. – “Combined Heat and Power Project”

▲ Getting Ready: Bill Smiley (left) and Jessie Darlington work on the entryway of the new Ag Choice Building at the Ag Progress Days site in preparation for its first use at Ag Progress Days 2008.
Randi Congleton has been named director of multicultural programs in the college. She will develop and coordinate programs and policies affecting the recruitment and retention of underrepresented and minority students in the college. She also will work with student groups and the college’s numerous educational and academic-support services and programs.

Congleton will investigate current and potential funding sources, prepare grant proposals and develop funding partnerships with collaborating agencies.

Before graduating from the college in 2000 with a bachelor’s degree in Agricultural and Extension Education (Leadership Development and Communications option), Congleton was a member of the Minorities in Agriculture and Natural Resources Association (MANRA). She earned a master’s degree in Community Service from Michigan State University and comes to the college from a position as assistant director at Penn State’s Center for Fraternity and Sorority Life, where she provided educational programs and opportunities for students and advisers.

“T’m excited by the opportunity to not only continue working with students but to give back to the college in unique ways that will assist in retention and success,” Congleton says. “Returning to the college where I was an undergraduate will allow me to collaborate with people who were mentors and that I’ve worked with.”

Much of her work with underrepresented groups, she says, will be creating and maintaining spaces where they feel welcome.

“Ag sciences has always been a place where students come together to bond and build social networks that they will retain long after graduation,” she says.

Another perspective that Congleton brings to her new position is a broad sense of multiculturalism that she says meshes with the vision presented in the college’s strategic plan and the university’s Framework for Diversity. “The position has evolved and I want to make sure it offers the broadest sense of multiculturalism as providing all who are underrepresented and looking to find place in college: rural lifestyles, sexual orientation and single-parent students,” she explains.

J. Marcos Fernandez, associate dean for undergraduate education, says that Congleton’s experience will help ensure student success while contributing to the recruitment of new and promising students.

“Randi has a great deal of college-level advising and student-life experience, as well as a familiarity with Penn State and our college,” he says. “Having worked alongside her on university-level student-life initiatives and events in the past, we anticipate that Randi will bring an abundance of enthusiasm, energy and success to this critically important position.”

Ann Dodd, assistant dean for strategic initiatives, says Congleton will be a strong advocate for diversity and inclusion among faculty, staff and educators as well as with undergraduate and graduate students. “She will work with the college’s diversity coordinating council to advance collegewide change in support of our diversity goals and will be instrumental in leading and assisting units in the recruitment, retention and success of underrepresented graduate students,” she says.
High feed-grain prices and the growing interest in “natural” foods have spurred both consumers and farmers to consider grass-fed beef, and a recent study done by researchers in the college may reinforce this trend.

Emily Steinberg, who recently completed her master’s degree in the Department of Dairy and Animal Science, conducted consumer evaluations of cooked grass-fed beef steaks and analyzed production issues for farmers. Her work suggests that some of the preconceived notions held by farmers about the physical type of the cattle and the length of the grazing season needed for high-quality grass-fed beef may not be true.

“Study Shows Consumers Accept Grass-fed Beef”

Department of Dairy and Animal Science, conducted consumer evaluations of cooked grass-fed beef steaks and analyzed production issues for farmers. Her work suggests that some of the preconceived notions held by farmers about the physical type of the cattle and the length of the grazing season needed for high-quality grass-fed beef may not be true. The results of the study showed that most consumer evaluations of the cooked meat were not influenced by frame sizes of the cattle, weight at harvest, range of grazing period from 120-180 days, and final fat composition of the carcass,” Comerford explains.
Up and Coming…

August 5-7, State 4-H Achievement Days, University Park. Contact Phil Hoy, (814) 863-7872.

August 6-7, Penn State Turfgrass Field Days, Joseph Valentine Research Center, U.P. Contact Heather Treaster, (814) 863-0129.

August 19-21, Ag Progress Days, Rock Springs. Contact Bob Oberheim, (814) 863-2081.

August 22-24, New and returning student arrival days.

August 25, Classes begin.

September 1, Labor Day holiday—no classes.

NEW FACES

Elizabeth Booher, staff assistant V in Westmoreland County

Linda Cray, administrative assistant II in Westmoreland County

Stacie Domer, assistant extension educator in Centre County

Karen Fisher-Vanden, associate professor in agricultural economics and rural sociology

Alexander Graziani, senior extension associate in Westmoreland County

Lorraine Jacobs, assistant extension educator in McKean County

Tammy Lihan, staff assistant III in Westmoreland County

Megan Marshall, research associate in agricultural and biological engineering

Beverly Poole, staff assistant V in Westmoreland County

Irmgard Seidl-Adams, research associate in entomology

Bonnie Skovira, staff assistant V in Westmoreland County

Rebecca Villegas, assistant extension educator in Montgomery County

PARTINGS

Clancy Cash, associate extension educator in Luzerne County

Grace Coffman, staff assistant VI in undergraduate education

Amanda Edmundson, research support technician III in veterinary and biomedical sciences

Jessica Howard, conference coordinator in conferences and short courses

Cathy Shreckengast, staff assistant VI in veterinary and biomedical sciences

RETIEMENTS

Craig Kreider, farm machinery facility and mechanic in horticulture

Steven Miller, barn worker and milker in dairy and animal science

Wanda Nyman, administrative assistant III in agricultural and biological engineering

Larry Pruss, director of finance and operations in administrative services

DEATHS

James Bochy, senior extension agent in Somerset County from 1951 until his retirement in 1988, died April 23 at the age of 83.

Helen Puskar, associate professor of home-management extension in Indiana County from 1961 until her retirement in 1975, died May 14 at the age of 93.

Dora Mae Andre, professor of dairy and animal science, coauthored “Assessment of Producer Implementation of Pork Quality Assurance Good Production Practices” for publication in the February 2008 Journal of Extension. The article, a study to measure the implementation rate by 78 pork producers of best-management practices recommended by the Pork Quality Assurance program, was based on research undertaken in fulfillment of Hughes’ master’s degree requirements.

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. It is the policy of the University to maintain an academic and work environment free of discrimination, including harassment. The Pennsylvania State University prohibits discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. Discrimination or harassment against faculty, staff, or students will not be tolerated at The Pennsylvania State University Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to the Affirmative Action Director, The Pennsylvania State University, 328 Boucke Building, University Park, PA 16802-5501, Tel 814-865-4700/V, 814-863-1150/TTY.

U.Ed.AGR. 09-07 3.2MT/08CG