



AG SCIENCES 2008

A Monthly Newsletter for the College of Agricultural Sciences

July 2008

News in Brief

Dodd Named Examiner

Ann Dodd, assistant dean for strategic initiatives and graduate education in the college, has been named to the 2008 Board of Examiners for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

Created by law in 1987, the award is the highest level of national recognition for performance excellence that a U.S. organization can receive. For more, go to <http://www.baldrige.nist.gov>.

Ash Borer Surveys

Several state and federal agencies, in collaboration with Penn State Cooperative Extension, are on the lookout for various species of invasive insects this summer in many parts of Pennsylvania.

Statewide surveys for exotic insect pests will target the emerald ash borer, the Asian long-horned beetle and other pests.

For more information, go to <http://aginfo.psu.edu/news/2008/5/emerald-dashborer.html>.

Bee Losses Continue

Colony Collapse Disorder, diseases, parasitic mites and other stressors continue to take a devastating toll on U.S. honey bee populations, but Pennsylvania beekeepers on average fared better than their counterparts nationally during this past winter, according to apiculture experts in the college.

A recent survey by the Apiary Inspectors of America found that losses nationwide topped 36 percent of managed hives between September 2007 and March 2008, compared to a 31 percent loss during the same period a year earlier. Pennsylvania fared better, with losses of about 26 percent, compared to nearly 48 percent the previous year.

Learn more at <http://aginfo.psu.edu/news/2008/5/beeresearch.html>.

Only the Nose Knows: College's Odor Lab Sniffs Out, Quantifies Ag Odors

A member of the odor-assessment team bends over the machine, positions his nose in the cup and signals the operator seated at a computer terminal a few feet away that he is ready. With a couple of keystrokes, she directs the device—an olfactometer about the size of an ATM machine in a convenience store—to release a carefully calibrated puff of air and odor.

The odor component in the sample—from treated municipal wastewater biosolids—is so diluted that it's not

detectable to "the sniffer," so the operator manipulates the machine to slightly increase the percentage of odor and emit another puff of air. This time he "smells" it, so the sample's "odor detection threshold" is recorded. The process is repeated until the sniffer correctly recognizes odorous air puffs two times in a row, then another member of the odor-assessment team takes his place, repeating the same testing.

After that, they move on to testing another biosolids sample that has undergone a different treatment to diminish odor. So goes a typical day at Penn State's Odor Assessment Laboratory in the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering on the University Park campus.

On this afternoon, the lab, under the direction of Eileen Wheeler, professor of agricultural engineering, was evaluating samples of municipal wastewater biosolids for a private consulting firm and another Pennsylvania university. Researchers were studying whether innovative treatments can make the material less odorous and more socially acceptable for various land applications.

Besides providing services for other educational institutions and business and industry, the lab mainly collaborates with researchers across Penn State studying how to reduce gaseous emissions from animal

agriculture, most with significant odorous components. Scientists are looking at solutions ranging from manure additives to alternative livestock feeds.

The odor lab is partially funded by a \$330,000 USDA grant to study how dairy productivity is affected by changing the feed rations of cattle and to investigate the resulting changes in odors and gases produced by the animal manure. ■



▲ Research technician Pat Topper detects an odor and signals the operator of the olfactometer in the college's Odor Laboratory.

Familiar Faces

QUESTION: State lawmakers recently passed a smoking ban that includes most public places, like restaurants. What do you think about prohibiting smoking in public places?



Eileen Thomas, staff assistant in poultry science

"I'm all for it. It's more enjoyable to go out if you don't have to breathe in all that second-hand smoke."



Rob Shannon, associate professor of agricultural engineering

"You shouldn't have to be subjected to second-hand smoke. There are other places for people to smoke, so I'm for it."



Ann Swinker, associate professor of equine science and exhibition specialist

"I think it's a good idea. People have their own personal right to smoke in their car or at home, but in public places it should be prohibited."



Molly Martin, staff assistant in dairy and animal science

"I definitely agree with it. I don't think there is a reason why people should be smoking while they eat. I'm bothered if I'm in a nonsmoking section but can still smell the smoke."



Craig Baumrucker, professor of animal nutrition and physiology

"I think it's a good idea, especially since I've given up smoking. While I'm not generally offended by smoking, I believe the more we can discourage smoking the better we are."



Kalidou Ndiaye, graduate student in dairy and animal science

"I agree with prohibiting smoking in most public places."

Horticulture, Food Science Faculty Members Selected for Arthur W. Nesbitt Award

Robert Beelman, professor of food science, and Kathleen Kelley, associate professor of horticultural marketing and business management, have been named recipients of the Arthur W. Nesbitt Faculty Program Development Award.

Representing a \$150,000 commitment by alumnus Nesbitt, this endowed award supports faculty research, teaching or extension activities in agribusiness, dairy science or food science. The Nesbitt Award also aims to attract additional funding for the selected faculty members' programs.

According to Robert Steele, dean of the college, Beelman is receiving the Nesbitt Award for his work on food processing, especially the examination of potato processing for fresh-market sales. Kelley is receiving the award in support of her research on viable outlets for Pennsylvania-grown apples and value-added apple products.

Beelman received his bachelor's degree in biology from Capital University, and his master's and doctoral degrees, both in food technology, from Ohio State University. Kelley earned a bachelor's degree in botany and plant pathology, a master's degree in horticulture, and a doctorate in horticulture/botany and plant pathology simultaneously from Michigan State University.

"I'm hopeful this award will allow me to extend to potato products the technology we have developed to produce minimally processed mushroom products (specifically washed, sliced mushrooms)," says Beelman, who is chair of Penn State's Plant and Mushroom Products Impact Group. "This funding will allow one of my graduate students to work on an independent study project for the summer, with the ultimate goal of helping the potato industry in Pennsylvania."

Kelley notes that her Nesbitt Award funding will be used to investigate the market for Pennsylvania-grown, organic apples. "We plan to implement research studies to help determine consumer demand for apples and value-added apple products," she says. "In addition, the funding will be used to support travel to on-farm markets and farmers' markets so that we can talk with growers and intermediaries and learn more about the potential to market these products through various outlets."

Steele calls both faculty members "very deserving" of the Nesbitt Award. "They have established a distinguished record of scholarship in teaching, research and extension," he says. "This very special award will provide funding to help them attract additional external resources to support their innovative and relevant programs." ■



▲ Left to right: Art Nesbitt, Nancy Nesbitt, Kathy Kelley, Bob Beelman

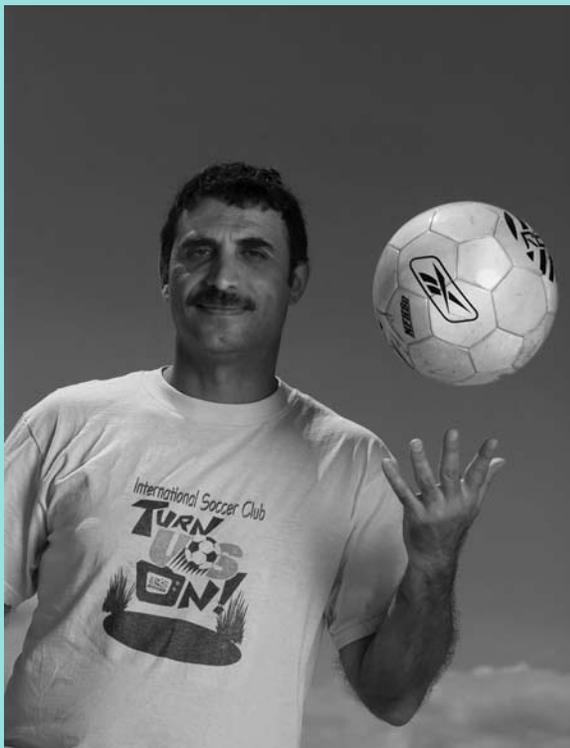
From Dean Steele

Our summer activities are in full swing with summer field days, the Governor's School for Agricultural Sciences, 4-H summer programs and much more. The annual state-wide FFA convention held again at University Park drew more than 1,300 students to our campus. So despite what many think to be a "down time" for us at the university, our days, nights and weekends are filled with activity bringing programs to our stakeholders throughout the commonwealth.

Like last year and years before, we approach the end of the current fiscal year without a state budget for 2008-2009. I hope that by the time you read this newsletter, the situation will have changed. The commonwealth is in solid fiscal shape this year, and we hope to see a budget with an increase for agricultural research and extension programs in the college as well as for the university appropriation overall. However, a simple read of the newspapers illustrates the fiscal challenges the state continues to face. We will keep you posted as the budget finalizes.

Finally, I would like to thank the hundreds of individuals who participated in our college strategic planning activities this past year. With your help, our college strategic plan has been submitted to President Spanier and Provost Erickson. You may view the final plan on our college Web site (<http://strategicplanning.cas.psu.edu>). The college strategic plan is built upon the foundation of our prior strategic plan and sets a course for our teaching, research and extension programs over the next five years. A hallmark of our planning process continues to be the valued stakeholder input we receive, and I personally would like to thank our many stakeholder friends for their valuable time and input over this long process.

So the summer continues to fly by. Before we know it, Ag Progress Days will be upon us. I hope you are finding some time to relax, refresh and enjoy time with friends and family during these summer days. ■



Name: Akbar Khouzani

Hometown: Patton Township

Was born where: Isfahan, Iran

Grew up where: Kuwait, Europe and Canada

Job title: Multimedia Specialist

Office location: 405K Agricultural Administration Building, University Park

Working at Penn State: Since January 2007

Spouse: Carrie

Children: Fatima, 16 (she is in State College Area High School marching

band), Ebrahim, 10 (soccer player), and Laila, 6.

Pets: Two cats, Tilly and Baby

Last book read:

"e-Learning and the Science of Instruction"

Favorite food: Kebabs (grilled marinated lamb or chicken), served with rice and grilled tomatoes and dusted with the traditional condiment sumac.

Favorite restaurant:

"I don't eat out much but when I go to New Jersey or Michigan, I go to Middle Eastern restaurants."

Hobbies: "My wife would say computer, computer, computer—but I play soccer and when I came to State

College in 1991, I started a club called the International Soccer Club."

Little-known claim to fame: "When I became a U.S. citizen, I was interviewed by NBC and also received a personal letter from President Clinton congratulating me."

Thing you are proudest of: "Being able to bring people together from different walks of life through soccer."

How you relax: "Relax—what's that?"

Favorite part of job: Being creative and helping others.

Forester Commits \$2 Million for Silviculture Research

Penn State alumnus and pioneer forester Joseph E. Ibberson has committed \$2 million to endow a new faculty chair in the School of Forest Resources.

Ibberson, of Harrisburg, is a 1947 Penn State graduate in forestry and retired chief of the Division of Forest Advisory Services of Pennsylvania's Department of Forests and Waters (now the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources).

The gift, part of the donor's estate plans, will create the Joseph E. Ibberson Chair in Silviculture Research for Pennsylvania. The chair will focus on the challenges of forest management under changing conditions and the evolv-

ing needs of society. The chair holder's research program will aim to improve the silviculture within the state's forests to produce the highest quality and quantity of products and services. Silviculture organizes the treatment of forests toward their establishment, composition, growth and harvest. Forest products and services include timber, wildlife, aesthetics, watershed protection, recreation and fisheries.

"I consider this chair an investment that will help protect and improve our state's forest resources," said Ibberson. "But I also hope to inspire others to be philanthropic in areas that are of the most interest to them." ■

Up and Coming...

July 4. Independence Day. No classes.

July 12-13. Ag in the Classroom, Ag Arena, UP. Contact Jessica Howard, (814) 865-0970.

July 10. Annual Agronomic Weed Control Research Tour, Agronomy Research Farm, Rock Springs, Pa. Contact Lisa Crytser, (814) 865-2543.

July 28-31. International Hydropedology Conference, UP. Contact Conferences and Short Courses, (814) 865-8301.

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

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

FACULTY/STAFF ALERTS

Call for Statewide In-Service Proposals

Penn State Extension faculty and staff are invited to submit professional development in-service proposals for the new program year, which begins Oct. 1. Plan of Work implementation teams are encouraged to submit an in-service proposal as a team for more effective program planning. The primary focus of in-service education is to improve skills, knowledge and extension program delivery methods.

If you intend to offer an in-service during the 2008/2009 program year, review the proposal information (<http://go.cas.psu.edu/rfp>) and complete the in-service proposal form. The online proposal information includes statewide in-service dates, proposal-submission procedures and the proposal form.

The proposal deadline for the Fall 2008 Statewide In-Service (to be held Sept. 2-4) was June 27. The proposal deadline for the Spring 2009 Statewide In-Service (to be held March 3-6) is Nov. 26. This request will be the only call for in-service proposals for the program year, Oct. 1, 2008-Sept. 30, 2009. A separate

proposal should be submitted for each in-service offering (statewide, regional or distance-delivered) being proposed. Only online submissions will be accepted.

July 2008 Outreach Professional Development Learning Lunch

Family-friendly human resource practices are increasingly recognized as good business in the workplace. However, there is limited evidence that these policies decrease the stress of work-family conflict. The subject will be addressed at the July 2008 Learning Lunch, titled "Managing a Truly Family-Friendly Workplace: It's More Than What's on the Books," on July 9 from noon to 1:30 p.m. in 119 Outreach Building, Innovation Park. Alicia Grandey will discuss research on the limited effectiveness of family-friendly human-resource practices for employee stress, and how management must do more to create a truly family-friendly workplace.

Grandey is an associate professor and program coordinator of industrial-organizational psychology. Her research focuses on employee stress from emotional labor and work-family issues, and her work on work-family stress has been published in the Journal of Vocational Behavior, the Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, and the Journal of Business and Psychology.

Grandey is a member of the American Psychological Association, Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Academy of Management, and the University's Center for Work and Family Research. Participation in this event is available at many locations away from the University Park campus by video teleconference. Anyone interested in participating from a remote location can contact Outreach Professional Development at opdevents@outreach.psu.edu, or call Amy Gregor at (814) 863-4966. A complete list of teleconference locations is available online at <http://tns.its.psu.edu/Services/vidconf/vidcodeb.asp>.

NEW FACES

Jennifer Charney, staff assistant V in the development office

Morgan Firestine, extension program assistant in Berks County

Beth Gugino, assistant professor of plant pathology

Joshua Lambert, assistant professor of food science

Thomas Schaffer, director of the office of administrative services

Linda Spangler, administrative assistant IV in crop and soil sciences

Heather Stephenson, extension program assistant in Delaware County

Zane Weaver, systems administrator in information technologies

Yuanhong Zhu, database specialist in crop and soil sciences

PARTINGS

Michael Domingue, research assistant in entomology

Jennifer Fetter, assistant extension educator in Erie County

Robert Harsh, associate extension educator in Adams County

Deepali Herlekar, research assistant in veterinary and biomedical sciences

Jeremy Hoffman, information technology specialist in veterinary and biomedical sciences

Sherry Hoffman, administrative assistant I in the Capital Region office

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

RETIREMENTS

Paul Blankenhorn, professor of forest resources

Edward Bogus, research support technician III in entomology

Daniel Fritton, professor of crop and soil sciences

Craig Kreider, farm machinery and facility mechanic in horticulture

Mary Puffer, manager of financial and administrative services in administrative services

Dennis Scanlon, professor of agricultural and extension education

Paul Wangness, senior associate dean in the dean's office

PROMOTIONS

Lisa Crytser, staff assistant VI in crop and soil sciences

Jaimie Garrison, finance and accounting assistant in administrative services

Pamela Hileman, staff assistant VII in the North East Regional Center for Rural Development

Paulyanna Stecko, manager of the Agricultural Lab in agricultural analytical services

Kelly Wagner, research support technologist III in veterinary and biomedical sciences

NOTEWORTHY

Charles Strauss, director and professor in the School of Forest Resources, and **Henry Gerhold**, professor emeritus of forest genetics, were honored with 2008 School of Forest Resources Outstanding Alumni Awards at the school's annual Alumni and Friends Banquet held recently.

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

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