



AG SCIENCES 2008

A Monthly Newsletter for the College of Agricultural Sciences

October 2008

News in Brief

Young Alumnus Honors Grandfather

At age 24, only two years after graduating from the university, alumnus Benjamin Cordivano has endowed a student award, honoring his grandfather.

After Cordivano left Penn State in 2006 with his bachelor's degree in Agricultural Science, he returned home to Kennett Square, Pa., to bring his new knowledge to his family's mushroom business, where he had grown up working side-by-side with his grandfather, Joseph Cordivano Sr., and his father, Penn State 1978 agriculture graduate Joseph Cordivano Jr.

When Joseph Sr. passed away in 2007, Benjamin and his sister decided to create the Joseph Cordivano Sr. Memorial Award at Penn State with a pledge of \$20,000. The award will be given to recognize outstanding achievement by an undergraduate who is minoring in international agriculture.

Young Adults and Local Government

Young adults staying in or coming to Pennsylvania are attracted to regions that have more units of government, and they are not deterred by the large number of local governments in the state, according to a new study co-authored by Stephen Goetz, professor of agricultural and regional economics and director of the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development at Penn State.

Researchers used a new economic measure of state and county government fragmentation to test if fragmentation drove away young residents from the state. The findings were published in the paper, "Youth Out-Migration from Pennsylvania: The Roles of Government Fragmentation vs. the Beaten Path Effect."

College Seeds Energy Crop from the Air

Glen Cauffman wanted to get the word out about Penn State's aerial seeding of bioenergy crops on 300 acres just north and east of the University Park campus in mid-September for two reasons.

First, he didn't want area residents to be concerned about a small plane repeatedly swooping low over fields near town. Aerial agricultural applications are still rare enough in Pennsylvania that residents could have feared some sort of terrorism. He wanted to avoid any confusion.

But more importantly, the manager of farm operations wanted the public to know that the university is serious about helping the country to solve its energy crisis. "We want to lead the way in showing farmers how to intersperse energy crops with their crop rotations

to produce food and fuel on the same land," he says. "By seeding from the air in late summer, we can establish an energy-feedstock cover crop before the food crop is harvested, effectively getting more out of the growing season. Penn State wants to demonstrate that society can have its biofuel and food, too."

In this case, the energy crop is canola, which must be planted in early September in central Pennsylvania to survive the winter. The food crops are standing corn and soybeans, which often are allowed to dry down before being harvested in November. A specially equipped aircraft precisely delivered the seed at a speed of 160 miles per hour utilizing GPS technology to pinpoint the right fields and the swath width.

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▼ An airplane, specially equipped for agricultural applications, spreads canola seed at 160 miles per hour over Penn State cropland just north and east of the University Park campus, where standing crops of corn and soybeans will be harvested this fall.



Familiar Faces

QUESTION: Are you concerned about the environmental risks associated with the current wave of deep-well natural-gas drilling in Pennsylvania? If so, what concerns you and why?



Christine Orrson, senior extension educator, Luzerne County

"I am concerned with the environmental impact of deep-well drilling. It's wonderful economically,

but what about the gorgeous landscape and beautiful forests in these areas of Pennsylvania? I'm really concerned with forest depletion and water usage."



James A. Clark, extension educator, McKean County

"I am concerned about our water resources, but I am more concerned about the lack of knowledge that

Pennsylvanians have about where their drinking water comes from and the importance of protecting these water sources."



Burt Staniar, assistant professor of equine studies

"In looking at new energy sources I think it's important to understand the involved risks, and I don't think that we know

enough about what those are right now with deep-well drilling."



Margaret Brittingham, professor of wildlife resources

"I am concerned that the rapid pace of gas development may not enable us to monitor and

track the effects that forest disturbance and fragmentation and extensive water removal may be having on vulnerable forest wildlife, aquatic resources, and water quality and quantity."



Jamie Murphy, instructor/coordinator for undergraduate students, School of Forest Resources

"I'm particularly concerned with the impact that access roads and

other infrastructure will have on forests. Landowner rights are also an issue because landowners may lack control over how the gas companies conduct themselves on site."

College Seeds Energy Crop . . . (continued from page 1)

Canola was chosen, according to Cauffman, because the grain is 40 percent oil that can be used to fuel tractors and harvesters. "Canola typically can produce 125 gallons of biodiesel fuel per acre," he says. "Canola meal—what remains after the oil is extracted—is high in protein and can be used as a high-quality supplement to feed the university's livestock."

Making farmers adept and comfortable with implementing this food-fuel rotation is seen as a key to the nation's ability to lessen its dependence on imported oil. It is an environmentally sound practice as well, according to a recent Chesapeake Bay Commission report that encourages farmers to apply cover crops to their land. ■

▼ Approximately 4,000 pounds of bagged canola seed sits on a truck at the University Park Airport, to be loaded into the plane that performed the aerial seeding over approximately 300 acres.



Harbaughs Give \$250,000 to Create Lecture Forum on Entrepreneurship

Penn State alumnus and fundraising volunteer Earl K. Harbaugh and his wife, Kay Harbaugh, have given \$250,000 to create the Harbaugh Endowment for Entrepreneurship in the college.

The endowment will fund the Harbaugh Entrepreneurship Forum, which will bring successful entrepreneur leaders to the university to meet with students and faculty and to participate in a biannual lecture series focusing on current and future opportunities for national and international economic investment and growth in the food and fiber business sector.

The endowment also will provide support for curriculum, program and course development and educational initiatives with a focus on fostering students' entrepreneurship and leadership skills.

Earl K. Harbaugh earned his bachelor's degree in general agriculture from Penn State in 1961. An entrepreneur

himself, he is the founder and president of four Illinois companies: Ditch Witch Midwest, which provides products, services and training for the underground construction industry; Rentals Plus, an underground construction equipment rental business; and generator and power-services rental companies Illini Power and Gen Power.

Harbaugh recently was named chair of the college's development council for the university's fundraising campaign—For the Future: The Campaign for Penn State Students—which is currently in its leadership gifts phase. He also has served on several previous college fundraising advisory committees.

Philanthropy to the college by the couple includes two scholarships and a teaching excellence fund. Both Pennsylvania natives, the Harbaughs live in St. Charles, Ill. ■

From Dean Steele

As the saying goes—“We live in interesting times.” The rhetoric of the presidential campaign continues to heat up and the economy continues to remain cool. All of this casts a lingering cloud of uncertainty over the economic health of the commonwealth. Therefore, we continue to take a very cautious stance regarding commitment of resources to our college’s programs in teaching, research and extension.

The academic year is now in full swing and we will soon have enrollment statistics for the fall semester. The overall increase in Penn State enrollment is mirrored by increases in enrollment in College of Agricultural Sciences majors at University Park as well as at other Penn State campuses. Our undergraduate and graduate programs continue to attract some of the best and brightest students in the commonwealth and beyond.

The College of Agricultural Sciences marks the beginning of the annual United Way campaign by participating in the 15th annual Centre County United Way Day of Caring on Thursday, October 2. I am certain we will have a sturdy and hard-working crew show up for the day’s activities.

Agencies supported by the United Way continue to be stressed and stretched to their limits. With the beginning of our annual United Way campaign, it is crucial for us to help these agencies rebuild their resources. Our college has always been a great supporter of the United Way campaign and I am confident that we will have another strong year. But we can do more. We especially want to increase the percentage of our college employees who contribute to this important program.

It’s easy to have the pledge form envelopes stay unopened on our desks. So, it begins by you making the commitment to give and then following through on that commitment. When you receive your pledge form, take the time right then to make your commitment to this year’s campaign and help those agencies supported by the United Way. The entire community benefits from your participation, and the entire community thanks you for your generous support. ■



Name: Jill Findeis

Grew up: Ithaca, N.Y.

Job title: Distinguished Professor of Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Economics & Demography. “My job is hard work but also incredibly fascinating. My current work takes me to Africa, Costa Rica, China, the EU and across the United States.”

Office: 111D Armsby Building, in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology.

Working at Penn State: 25 years in the College of Agricultural Sciences.

Partner: Husband, Peter Findeis, a biochemist at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pa.

Children: We have two daughters, Jenny (28) and Sarah (18). Jenny graduated from Bucknell and Hershey Medical, and is now a medical resident at the University of Rochester. Sarah is a freshman at Bucknell.

Last books read: “Wittgenstein’s Poker,” “The Professor and the Madman” and “Stan Mikita: I Play to Win.”

CD currently in car player: *Modern Jazz: Out of Africa*. “When driving by myself, I crank the volume way up for really great music.”

All-time favorite movie: “If ‘all-time favorite’ is judged by the number of times I’ve watched it, I would have to say *Pirates of the Caribbean—Curse of the Black Pearl*. It’s just plain fun.”

Favorite food: Spicy food, particularly Mexican, and great coffee.

Favorite local restaurant or hangout: Zola, State College, or Kelly’s Steak and Seafood, Boalsburg.

Hobbies: “Art is a passion: oils, watercolor, charcoal, pen and ink. Now that daughters are grown, I’m going back to it.”

Little-known claim to fame: “Superman Christopher Reeve was a friend of mine in college.”

Proudest of: “The fact that our daughters are independent and caring people.”

How you relax: “In the summer, I head to Canada to relax: swimming, fishing and just being out on the water.”

Turf Students Benefit From Toro’s Support

The college’s Turfgrass Science program has received a \$40,000 grant from the Toro Co. to support student activities, along with product donations that include an aerator and other Toro equipment valued at about \$25,000.

Toro’s cash grant will help give student teams the opportunity to travel and compete in two major turfgrass events—the National Sports Managers Association Student Challenge, and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America’s Student Turf Bowl.

“Through its generous support, Toro recognizes that preparing for and attending these national events is an extremely

important part of our students’ education,” said Andrew McNitt, associate professor of soil science. “Participating in the turfgrass industry’s premier events encourages team-building and networking skills, and represents a defining moment in most students’ professional development.” McNitt said the program aims to send a 16-student team to the upcoming events.

The aerator, Toro’s new, innovative Pro Core 648, replaces one that was purchased in the 1980s and is no longer representative of designs commonly used in such applications as golf course and athletic field aeration. The new aerator will be used for demonstration and instruction. ■

Up and Coming...

October 2. 15th Annual PNC Bank/United Way Day of Car-ing, Bryce Jordan Center, UP. Contact Randall Bock, (814) 863-2300.

October 4. Great Insect Fair, Ag Arena, UP. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Contact Steve Jacobs, (814) 863-3963.

October 18-19. Penn State Horticulture Show, Ag Arena, UP. Contact Kristen Mowery at (717) 250-4990.

October 24-25. Penn State Calf Sale and Fun Auction, Ag Arena, UP. Contact Dan Kniffen at (814) 865-7809.

October 29. Dairy and Animal Science Open House, Ag Arena, UP. Contact Jana Peters at (814) 863-4198.

November 8. Nittany Lion Fall Classic, Ag Arena, UP. Contact Dale Olver at (814) 863-3914.

FACULTY/STAFF ALERT

2008-09 Holiday Schedule

The following days are established as office holidays for the remainder of 2008 and January 2009:

Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 27; December holidays—Dec. 24, 25, 26, 29, 30, 31; and January 2009 holiday, New Year's Day, Jan. 1.

Please note that Friday, Jan. 2, 2009, is NOT a University holiday. Employees should charge that day either to vacation or personal holiday, if Friday is a normally scheduled work day. Anyone who chooses to work on Friday will be permitted to do so, but temperature conditions in the work area may be less than ideal.

Pick-Up Truck Safety Tip

Did you know that university faculty, employees or students are not permitted to ride in the backs of open pickup trucks or utility vehicles, such as gators, and "tailgate riding" is prohibited on any Penn State property? Seating specifications must be followed. Seats equipped with safety belts are to be used whenever possible. Pennsylvania Vehicle Code #3719 states, "An open-bed pick-up truck or open flat-bed truck may not be driven at any speed if a child less than 18 years of age is

occupying the bed of the truck or trailer. An open-bed pick-up truck or open flat-bed truck may not be driven at a speed of more than 35 miles per hour if any person is occupying the bed of the truck." The Penn State Department of Environmental Health and Safety's General Safety Manual (page 12) stipulates that "riders are not permitted in the back of open pickup trucks."

NEW FACES

Bethany L. Bickel, program associate in dairy and animal science

Alessandro Bonnano, assistant professor of agricultural economics

Vickie Clauer, staff assistant VI in undergraduate education

Rayna Cooper, extension educator in Adams County

Kathryn DiGuseppe, assistant extension educator in Montgomery County

Dawn Irvin, staff assistant VI in agricultural and biological engineering

Kathleen Radkiewicz, nutrition education advisor in Lackawanna County

Lewis Trumble, program associate in dairy and animal science

Jolene Wagner, staff assistant V in administrative services

PARTINGS

Sheila Dreher, program assistant in Allegheny County

Catherine Levis, project data specialist II in Nutrition Links

Guoyang Lin, senior research assistant in horticulture

Karen Parkes, staff assistant VI in Nutrition Links

Jodi Reed, accounting assistant IV in plant pathology

DEATHS

Esther R. Hart, extension agent in Washington County from 1937 until her retirement in 1979, died July 12 at the age of 94.

MORE ABOUT US

Noteworthy

Andrew Muza, extension educator in Erie County, received an "Excellence in IPM" award from

the New York State Integrated Pest Management Program, for his leadership in the use of IPM techniques to reduce damage caused by the grape berry moth in that region.

John Turack, economic and community development educator in Westmoreland County, has been reappointed to the board of directors of the Local Government Academy, an independent nonpartisan organization that promotes excellence in local government by developing effective local leaders and educating public officials, public employees and citizens. Previously appointed to the board in the local government category as a township supervisor, he was re-appointed as a representative of the academic community.

David Jackson, forest resources extension educator in Centre County, has been named chair of the 2008 National 4-H Forestry Invitational, a national 4-H youth competition that caps the nationwide forestry educational program. Approximately 25 states conduct county and state events involving nearly 100,000 youth, hundreds of volunteers, foresters and extension educators, with typically about 20 states sending teams to the invitational.

Cindy Shoemaker and **Dawn Olson**, tobacco-prevention educator and county extension director, respectively, in Monroe County, presented "Smoke Free Town" at the 2008 Priestler National Extension Health Conference in Durham, N.C., during the conference's successful-programs showcase. "Smoke Free Town" is an interactive walk-through area to help educate children ages 5-8 about the dangers of tobacco. The town consists of streets, buildings, cars and signage, which set the stage for speaking to youth about tobacco issues.

Gregory Ziegler, professor of food science, is the recipient of the 2008 Gamma Sigma Delta Faculty Award for Research. As the honor society of agriculture, Gamma Sigma Delta has the goal of advancing agriculture in all its phases. Ziegler's research explores foods as composite materials and examines the physical properties and processing of polymeric and particulate foods, with an emphasis on chocolate and confectionery products.

Stephanie Doores, associate professor of food science, has been presented with the 2008 William V. Cruess Award by the Institute of Food Technologists in recognition of excellence in teaching food science and technology, acknowledging her efforts in the classroom and laboratory, and in undergraduate student mentoring, advising, educating and recruiting.

Robert Roberts, associate professor of food science, is the recipient of the University of Vermont's 2008 Distinguished Alumni Award from its College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. The award honors alumni who achieve excellence and success in their specific field, follow land-grant ethics and contribute to their community, state and nation; and who demonstrate support of and service to the university and the college.

Charles Abdalla, professor of agricultural and environmental economics, and **Kristen Saacke Blunk**, senior extension associate and director of the Agriculture and Environment Center, received the 2008 Best CHOICES Article Award from the American Agricultural Economics Association, along with Tatiana Borisova of the University of Florida and Douglas Parker of the University of Maryland. The award recognizes the outstanding contribution of an article that leads to improved understanding and improved policies. The article's title is "Water Quality Trading and Agriculture: Recognizing the Challenges and Policy Issues Ahead," published in the June 2007 issue of CHOICES.

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

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