



AG SCIENCES 2009

A Monthly Newsletter for the College of Agricultural Sciences

February 2009

News in Brief

Ag Council Gives Awards

A landscape contractor from Shillington, a college student from Lancaster and a Penn State alumni group were the honorees when the Penn State Ag Council recently presented its 2008 Leadership Awards.

Tom Wambaugh, owner of Waterfall Gardens near Reading, was presented with the council's Leadership Award. Alex Lauffer, a Penn State senior from Narvon majoring in Agricultural and Extension Education, received the council's Youth Leadership Award. The Penn State School of Forest Resources Alumni Group received the council's Leadership in Action Award.

For more, go to the Web at <http://live.psu.edu/story/36627>.

Modified Plants for Biofuel

Plants genetically modified to ease the breaking down of their woody material could be the key to a cheaper and greener way of making ethanol, according to John Carlson, professor of molecular genetics in the college.

Collaborating with other Penn State researchers, Carlson has filed a provisional patent on a new approach to making biofuel.

Learn more online at <http://live.psu.edu/story/36682>.

Gas Exploration 'Webinars' Offered

To address the opportunities and challenges of exploring for natural gas in the Marcellus shale in much of Pennsylvania, the college will offer online seminars running through May. These "webinars" will cover a variety of topics.

For more on the one-hour webinars, visit the Web at <http://live.psu.edu/story/36528>.

College Supplies Ice Cream For State's 2009 Inaugural Gala

When Barack Obama made a campaign visit to Penn State during the primaries last March—which included a stop at the Dairy Research Center, where he bottle-fed a calf—it was way too premature to order ice cream from the university's legendary creamery for his inauguration.

But it turns out he didn't need to. Taking note of Obama's interest in dairy, the college took care of everything, coming up with three flavors to honor the president-elect and his new administration: "BaRocky Road," "Obama White House" and "BidenBerry." They were served at the 2009 Pennsylvania Inaugural Gala on Jan. 20.

Known around the world for its fabulous ice cream, the Berkey Creamery—the largest on-campus creamery in the

country—has a tradition of concocting special flavors to commemorate significant events and famous people, such as football coach Joe Paterno (Peachy Paterno). Creamery manager Tom Palchak notes that he shipped 40 tubs, or 120 gallons, of the special flavors for the inaugural ball to the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Washington, D.C.

"BaRocky Road" is a rocky road or tin roof sundae flavor, vanilla ice cream with chunky add-ins such as peanuts, brownies, candy and chocolate swirl," he says. "Obama White House" is vanilla ice cream with maraschino cherries, and "BidenBerry" is vanilla ice cream with red raspberry variegate through it."

The university milks a herd of 300 Holsteins, and all of their milk (along

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▼ Naomi Minarchick, a staff assistant at the Berkey Creamery, holds up two half-gallon cartons of special inaugural ice cream.



Familiar Faces

QUESTION: Some European countries have banned large-screen plasma TVs because they use so much electricity. Do you have a large screen TV? If not, do you plan to buy one? Do you worry about how much energy your TV uses?



Susan Watson, supervisor, Berkey Creamery

“No, I do not own a large-screen TV and I don’t plan on buying one, but from an environmental standpoint

the amount of energy new TVs are using definitely concerns me.”



Edwin Rajotte, professor of entomology

“I don’t own a large-screen TV and I don’t plan on buying one anytime soon, because, as people who know

me are aware, I’m a cheapskate. The energy consumption is a concern when making a purchase like that.”



Michele Moyer, program manager, Dairy Alliance

“Our house doesn’t have a large-screen TV, and much to my husband’s dismay, we are not planning to buy one

soon. Our household still uses older models, and I believe as long as they still work you should use them. I do feel that energy consumption is something I should become more conscious of, because everyone should be making an effort to become greener.”



Lauren Rowe, staff assistant in Dairy and Animal Science

“I don’t own a large-screen TV of any kind—I actually don’t even own a television. It was a

purchase I never made when I moved to college, so the energy issues do not immediately concern me.”



Phillip Clauer, senior instructor in poultry science

“Our family bought an LCD large-screen TV a little over a year ago and we haven’t noticed

an increase in our energy use since that time.”

USDA Statistics Official Asks for Cooperative Extension’s Help

County, state and national summaries from the 2007 Census of Agriculture will be released on the Internet Feb. 4 at www.agcensus.usda.gov, according to Mark Tosiano, director of the Pennsylvania Field Office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

He asks that all county Penn State Cooperative Extension offices with an ag educator regularly participate in the service’s weekly Crop Progress Report, April through November. “We are not asking for anything more than what you already know about crop conditions in the course of your usual work with extension,” Tosiano says. “Our Web site (www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Pennsylvania/Publications/Crop_Progress_and_Condition/index.asp) shows data provided by this program and how to become an Internet reporter.”

The mission of USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service, Tosiano explains, is to provide timely, accurate and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture. “Many extension staffers use these statistics to analyze economic and production trends in agriculture,” he says. “Grant proposals often use basic agricultural statistics to support requests for funds.”

These statistics play an important role in the decision-making processes, Tosiano points out, noting that NASS statistics have been used to develop and implement various programs such as pesticide re-registration, federal and state disaster payments, the Tobacco Settlement, Counter Cyclical Payments and Crop Insurance.

The NASS statistical program includes the Census of Agriculture on a five-year cycle, along with monthly, quarterly and annual sampled surveys in between. The Internet site provides many other statistical services, such as crop-data layers for GIS systems, historical databases of state and county data, computer services to select and download ag statistics, and much more.

“NASS depends mostly on the voluntary cooperation of growers to complete surveys by mail, Internet, telephone or personal interview,” Tosiano says. “Only the Census of Agriculture program is required by law; this includes the Census of Agriculture, Aquaculture, Horticulture, Organic Production Survey and the Farm & Ranch Irrigation Survey.”

Tosiano is asking Penn State extension educators to encourage growers to take

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▲ Nüket Acar, coordinator of undergraduate advising in the Department of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences, talks with visitors to the college’s exhibit at the 2009 Farm Show in Harrisburg in early January.

From Dean Steele

With cold weather and a threat of substantial snowfall, this year's Farm Show got off to a slower start than in recent years. However, within a few hours, crowds were strong and busily inspecting the hundreds of exhibits and displays. Large crowds were evident every day of the show.

Our college displays were spectacular again this year and were visited by thousands of people of all ages. A special thank you to the more than 150 college faculty, staff and students who made this show another great success.

February brings the presentation of President Obama's federal budget to the Congress in Washington, D.C., and Governor Rendell's proposed budget for the commonwealth to the General Assembly in Harrisburg. This year is, without question, the most challenging during my nearly 12-year tenure as dean, particularly at the state level.

It will be a long haul in the months ahead to solidify our budgets in the midst of an extremely uncertain economy. We will keep you posted as events transpire, and we will be calling on many of you from time to time to help us in our advocacy efforts. ■

Ice Cream . . .

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with lots more purchased from two nearby private dairy farms) supplies the creamery, which makes a complete line of beverages, ice cream, yogurt, cheeses and other dairy products. "We take in approximately 4.5 million pounds of milk annually and manufacture 225,000 gallons of ice cream," Palchak says.

The creamery has been operating continuously on the University Park campus since 1865, points out Robert Steele, dean of the college. "As part of our world-renowned Department of Food Science, the creamery has a long tradition of research and education related to the manufacture of dairy products," he says. "This isn't the first time the creamery has been involved in presidential affairs, twice hosting President Bill Clinton during visits to campus. We're delighted that we could add to the creamery's lore by supplying ice cream for such an historic occasion." ■



Name: Gabriella Varga

Hometown: Ridgefield, Conn.

Born: Budapest, Hungary.

Job: Distinguished Professor of Animal Science, "teaching undergraduate and graduate classes in animal science, conducting research in dairy cattle nutrition, conducting educational programs and working with dairy producers and dairy agribusiness industries."

Office: 345 Agricultural Sciences and Industries Building.

Working at Penn State: 25 years in the college.

Spouse: Bill Henning, professor emeritus of dairy and animal science.

Children: Rebecca (anesthesiologist) and Sarah (stay at home mom), and three grandchildren.

Pets: "In the last year, we lost three cats—one was about five years old and the other two about 20 years old. We just recently got Bijou, a pointing Labrador."

Last book read: *State of Fear* by Michael Crichton.

Favorite singers: John Mayer, Sarah McLachlan, Enya, Leona Lewis, Jennifer Nettles.

All-time favorite movie: *Doctor Zhivago*.

Favorite actor: James Spader.

Favorite food: Walleye, lamb tenderloin, sweetbreads.

Favorite hang-out: "Bill's kitchen."

Hobbies: Gardening and reading.

Little-known claim to fame: "Caught an 80-pound starfish off of Ixtapa, Mexico."

Things you are proudest of: "The opportunity to educate and train undergraduate and graduate students, and helping to make the dairy industry and dairy producers successful and profitable; also my parents, my husband, daughters and grandchildren."

How you relax: "Read, garden and take the dog for walks."

USDA Statistics Official . . . (continued from page 2)

part in agricultural surveys conducted by the agency. "Your promotion of these surveys is often influential with growers, who may not understand the importance of sound statistics and how they are important to extension and Pennsylvania agriculture," he says.

"Some of our growers think their operations are too small to be useful in a survey. Since nearly half of our farms are small, retirement or lifestyle farms, we need participation from operations of all sizes, both full and part-time, to get an accurate picture of Pennsylvania agriculture."

County extension staff are an integral part of NASS's weekly Crop Progress Report that publishes crop progress and conditions here and across the nation, Tosiano points out. "My thanks goes to those county extension offices that are able to regularly report crop conditions, but we could use help from several more county offices. Consistent reporting is important to measuring the change in crop conditions from week to week."

For more information, contact Tosiano at (717) 787-5147 or visit the Web at nass-pa@nass.usda.gov. ■

Up and Coming...

February 7-8. Pennsylvania 4-H Horsemanship Skills Clinic, Ag Arena, UP. Contact Pat Comerford, (814) 863-3657.

February 11. Pennsylvania Housing and Land Development Conference, Hilton Scranton and Conference Center, Scranton, Pa. Contact Conferences and Short Courses at (814) 865-8301 or go to <http://conferences.cas.psu.edu/>.

February 14-15. Pennsylvania 4-H Horse Leaders Forum, Ag Arena, UP. Contact Pat Comerford, (814) 863-3657.

February 16. Presidents' Day.

February 17-18. Professional Crop Producers' Conference, Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel, State College, Pa. Contact Conferences and Short Courses at (814) 865-8301 or go to <http://conferences.cas.psu.edu/>.

February 20-22. Mt. Nittany Dog Training Club Dog Agility Trials, Ag Arena, UP. Contact Kathy Huey, (814) 364-1296.

FACULTY/STAFF ALERTS

Hazardous Material Shipping

Are you shipping dangerous goods? Materials that are hazardous for shipping may be generated by teaching, testing and research laboratories, maintenance, housekeeping and agricultural operations. These materials may cause severe illness or death or pose a substantial environmental threat when improperly transported or shipped. There are specific federal regulations governing the transportation of hazardous material.

On campus, hazardous materials cannot be shipped independently by Penn State departments or individuals, but must be shipped through the university's Department of Environmental Health and Safety, which provides a comprehensive Dangerous Goods Shipping Program to assist you. University policy requires that you contact EHS to ship dangerous goods. To learn more, avoid costly citations and protect individuals from injury, please visit the EHS Web site at <http://www.ehs.psu.edu/hazmat/>

hazmat_shipping.cfm or contact our dangerous goods shipping specialist, Barry Cowher, at (814) 865-6391 or bkc11@psu.edu.

ON THE MOVE

New Faces

Dawn Kimmell, administrative support assistant in Mercer County.

Debra McElhaney, administrative support assistant in Mercer County.

Erica Jabco, accounting assistant II in cooperative extension administration.

Janet Heisey, nutrition education advisor in Northumberland County.

John Kaminski, assistant professor of crop and soil sciences.

Kathryn Evans, administrative support assistant in Mercer County.

Lydia Oberholtzer, senior research assistant in agricultural economics and rural sociology.

Michael Messina, director of the School of Forest Resources.

Nancy Knauss, assistant extension educator in Allegheny County.

Pamela Nisewonger, accounting assistant II in cooperative extension administration.

Paula Clayton, administrative support assistant in Mercer County.

Renee Pettenati, nutrition education advisor in Cambria County.

Partings

Guy Barbato, associate professor of poultry science.

Thomas Wilson, associate extension educator in Crawford County.

Retirements

Arnetta Harris, nutrition education advisor in Allegheny County.

Charles Strauss, professor of forest economics and director of the School of Forest Resources.

Donald Nichols, unit manager in dairy and animal science.

Mary Manzoni, administrative support coordinator for Northeast Regional Office.

Promotions

Barbara Christ, senior associate dean in the Office of the Dean.

Denis DiLoreto, coordinator of farm and greenhouse operations in horticulture.

MORE ABOUT US

Death

Gene Love, associate dean emeritus of resident education from 1958 until his retirement in 1989, died Dec. 11 at the age of 80.

Noteworthy

Several members of the Pennsylvania Association of County Agricultural Agents were recognized at the recent annual meeting of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents. Glenn Ellenberger, retired agent in Lehigh County, was named to the Northeast Hall of Fame. Distinguished Service Awards went to Thomas Butzler, extension educator in Clinton County, and John Rowehl, extension educator in York County. Linda Wiles, extension educator in Monroe County, was named the Achievement Award Winner.

The National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences' Distinguished Service Awards were presented to Frances Alloway, senior extension educator in Delaware County, and Robert Thee, extension educator in Chester County. Cindy Shoemaker, assistant extension educator in Monroe County, received the New Professional Award and the Environmental Education Award. Robin Kuleck, extension educator in Elk County, received the Dean Don Felker Financial Management Award. Dawn Olson, county extension director in Monroe County, and Sherri Abbruzzi, program coordinator in Monroe County, received the Mary W. Wells Memorial Diversity Award.

Recognized for outstanding educational curriculum package was the team of Lynn James, extension educator in Northumberland County; Mary Ehret, extension educator in Luzerne County; Margaret Malehorn, extension educator in Cumberland County; Nancy Rouch, part-time educator in Adams County; Annette Kratzer, extension educator in Union County; Matthew Kaplan, associate professor of agricultural and extension

education; Fraiser Zahniser, extension educator in Mercer County; Katherine French, extension educator in Mercer County; Janice Ronan, extension educator in Erie County; Lois Killcoyne, extension educator in Northampton County; Nancy Ellen Kiernan, program evaluator in extension administration; John Byrnes, county extension director in Philadelphia County; Joseph Andreacci, associate professor of exercise science at Bloomsburg University; Cynthia Bartok, associate professor of kinesiology; Cindy Javor, extension educator in Allegheny County; Laurie Weinreb-Welch, extension educator in Clinton County; Judy Richardson, senior marketing associate with Penn State Outreach; Dori Campbell, extension educator in Westmoreland County; Jacques Amor-Zitzelberger, associate extension educator in Clearfield County; and Dawn Olson, senior extension educator in Monroe County.

Robert Thee and Cindy Shoemaker received an award for educational technology. Cathy Brady, extension educator in Fayette County, was recognized for newsletter development. The team of Cindy Shoemaker; Mandel Smith, extension educator in Montgomery County; and Kathy DiGuiseppe, extension educator in Montgomery County, received the Television Award. Laurie Weinreb-Welch also was presented with the Community Partnership Award.

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

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