



AG SCIENCES 2008

A Monthly Newsletter for the College of Agricultural Sciences

June 2008

News in Brief

Quality Assured Beef

A regional supermarket chain has teamed up with Penn State Cooperative Extension and the state's beef industry to give consumers an opportunity to "buy local."

Weis Stores of Pennsylvania worked with Pennsylvania beef producers certified through the Beef Quality Assurance program to market a high-quality product called "Pennsylvania Proud Choice Angus Beef."

"Pennsylvania Proud" beef is the culmination of efforts to lend added value to beef from farmers who are certified in the Beef Quality Assurance program initiated more than 10 years ago by Penn State Cooperative Extension.

Natural Gas Program Aired

With residents across the state asking questions about the Marcellus shale formation, natural gas exploration, mineral rights leasing and associated issues, WPSU-TV aired a live call-in program May 22 called "Pennsylvania's Gas Rush."

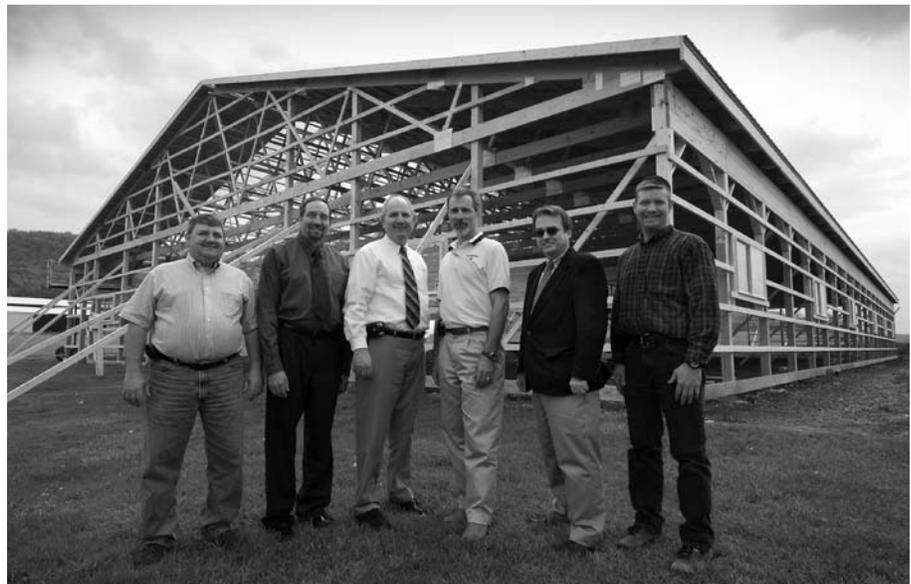
The one-hour program explored natural gas issues with an expert panel that included an educator from Penn State Cooperative Extension.

More Corn Planted in Pa.

Farmers across the country are expected to plant 8 percent fewer acres in corn this year than last, but Pennsylvania farmers will plant 1 percent more corn than last year, according to a crops expert in the college.

Nationwide, corn growers intend to plant 86 million acres of corn for all purposes in 2008, notes agronomy professor Greg Roth. Despite the decrease, corn acreage will remain at a historically high level as the corn price outlook remains strong.

New Building at Ag Progress Days Site



▲ The new AgChoice Farm Credit Building will greet visitors at Penn State's Ag Progress Days in August. Pausing during a recent visit to the construction are (from left) Rod Stine from Triangle Construction of Bellefonte; Jeff Raney, chairman of the board of AgChoice; Allyn Lamb, president and CEO of AgChoice; Bob Oberheim, Ag Progress Days manager; Robert Steele, dean of the college; and Jesse Darlington, Ag Progress Days facilities coordinator. *Story on page 2.*

Staff Laureate Awards Presented

Presentation of the Staff Laureate Awards took place during the collegewide staff meeting May 14 in Room 101 of the Agricultural Sciences and Industries Building. Recipients were:

Customer Service Award: Randy Swope, coordinator of support units in the Department of Dairy and Animal Science;

Leadership Award: Vivian Baumer, research support associate in the Department of Dairy and Animal Science;

Spirit Award: Meg Potter, research support assistant in the Department of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences;

Trailblazer Award: Bryan Banks, research support technician II in the Entomology Department. ■



▲ Left to right: Bryan Banks, Vivian Baumer, Randy Swope, Meg Potter

Familiar Faces

QUESTION: The federal government has begun sending out Economic Stimulus checks to taxpayers. What do you intend to do with yours?



Biao He, associate professor of virology

"I intend to donate the money to various sources currently in need of support."



Susan Walker, poultry science graduate student

"I personally plan on putting all of it into our savings for our first house."



Greg Hoover, senior extension associate in entomology

"I intend to save the money, and use it toward paying my daughter's tuition fees."



Olga Grove, poultry science graduate student

"I plan on putting half into my savings, and half toward a conference trip to Hawaii."



Daryl Heasley, volunteer curator, professor emeritus, rural sociology

"I plan to put it in the bank to do some international traveling."



Pat Comerford, extension horse specialist

"I'm honestly not sure. There are so many things to use it for, it's hard to decide."



Jon Oatley, assistant professor of reproductive physiology

"I haven't thought about it yet, but I'll spend it if it ever shows up."



Amanda Pruss, assistant director of development

"I'm using my check for debt reduction and home improvement. I would travel, but gas is too pricey."

New Building at Ag Progress Days

Regular visitors to Ag Progress Days may notice a new addition to the grounds at this year's expo. A new building, funded in part by AgChoice Farm Credit, will provide additional indoor display space for exhibitors.

"We've always had a presence at Ag Progress Days, but funding the construction of this new building was another way to show our continuing commitment to commercial agriculture in Pennsylvania and to Penn State," says Allyn Lamb, chief executive officer of AgChoice, the largest ag lender in the state with \$1.5 billion in loan volume.

"We see a lot of progressive farmers at Ag Progress Days, and we want to help position them to succeed," Lamb adds. "Supporting an educational trade event such as Ag Progress Days was a natural for us."

Bob Oberheim, Ag Progress Days manager, notes that the AgChoice Farm Credit Building also will be available for AgChoice and other commercial exhibitors during the bi-annual Forest Products Equipment and Technology Exposition, which next will be held at the Rock Springs site in 2009, as well as for other College of Agricultural Sciences events during the year. ■

Penn State in China Collections Fill Gaps for Chinese University

Researchers from the South China Agricultural University recently visited Penn State's Special Collections Library to examine and copy materials from collections that are helping them to reconstruct their institution's past. Former President Luo Shiming and his research associate Pan Hao spent several days looking over archives, manuscript collections, serials and books relating to Lingnan University and its College of Agriculture, a predecessor to the modern South China Agricultural University, in Guangzhou, China.

The collections include the George W. Groff Papers, the Penn State in China

Archives, the W. Leon Funkhouser Papers and other materials. They all stem from the connection of Penn State Distinguished Alumnus George W. Groff with Lingnan University from 1908 to 1941.

Groff's work led to the creation of a college of agriculture at the school after it was renamed Lingnan University. He served as dean from 1921 to 1935, when he stepped aside to resume teaching and research on Chinese plant species and taxonomy. He was particularly interested in fruits and published the first scientific papers on the Chinese fruits the Lichi and the Longan. ■



▲ Faculty and students of the College of Agriculture at Lingnan University in 1924. George W. Groff, first dean of the College of Agriculture, is third from left in the top row.

Beyond the Personnel File

From Dean Steele

The end of the academic year culminated with commencement exercises May 17-18. The College of Agricultural Sciences awarded nearly 300 undergraduate and advanced degrees. This year we had the good fortune of having Kerry Golden as speaker for our undergraduate commencement on May 17. Her words to our graduates were both encouraging and inspiring.

The commencement was followed by a brunch hosted by our college alumni society and attended by nearly 750 graduates, their families and friends, and college personnel. We are already looking ahead to the fall with increased college enrollments expected and what looks to be a strong freshman class for our University Park campus.

The big news of late is the final approval by Congress of the 2007 Farm Bill. After years of hard work and negotiations, the bill passed both the House and Senate by overwhelming margins, thus making it “veto proof” to President Bush’s pen. As many of you know, I was fortunate to co-chair the land-grant efforts on the Farm Bill, and we are quite pleased overall with how the research and education title turned out.

Amid all the media coverage of the Farm Bill, little has appeared about the research, extension and education aspects (Title VII). Depending on your point of view, there is much to like and much to dislike about the Farm Bill. Like all legislation, it’s a product of extended negotiations and compromises designed to secure enough votes for passage. This was particularly important since President Bush had been threatening a veto.

Our college will be developing educational materials on the new Farm Bill over the summer. Meantime, you can find much information concerning the Farm Bill and each of its titles (chapters) at the Web site of the House of Representatives Agriculture Committee (<http://agriculture.house.gov/inside/FarmBill.html>).

I know that summer brings an array of activities that college personnel become heavily engaged in, including field work, demonstrations, fair preparations, and much more. I hope that you also find time to kick back and relax with friends and family during the coming summer months. ■



Name: Kristen Saacke Blunk.

Hometown: Patton Township. “I was born in Bellefonte, Pa., and I grew up in Blacksburg, Va.”

Job title: Director, Penn State Agriculture and Environment Center.

Office: 206 Armsby Building, University Park.

Working at Penn State: Since June 2006.

Spouse: Joel Blunk.

Children: Clay, 18; Andy and Nate, both 16.

Pets: “Mark the cat, who makes Pep-

per the dog (a shaggy, sweet mutt) appear dimwitted.”

Last Book read: Eckard Tolle’s “A New Earth.”

CDs currently in your car’s

player: Penn State public broadcasting interviews of people across the state talking about nutrient-pollution in water.

Favorite singers/songwriters:

Kris Kristofferson, Norah Jones, Bruce Springsteen, Joel Blunk.

Favorite movie: “Once,” an Irish independent film featuring Glen Hansard’s music.

Favorite actor: Susan Sarandon.

Favorite food: Thai. “So good to have Cozy Thai come to town.”

Favorite restaurant or hang-out: Saints Café, Beaver Avenue.

Hobbies: Parenting (“I’m still a novice”) and running on Saturday mornings with a group of women.

Little-known claim to fame: “Asked Randy Travis out on a date when I lived in Nashville. (He said no.)”

Thing you are proudest of: “Working on environmental programs throughout my life.”

How you relax: Eating chocolate.

Favorite part of job: “Yoga on Thursdays with my flexible Armsby comrades. I’ve been on sabbatical from it—and am eager to return.”



▲ Outstanding Alumna Kerry Golden, speaking at the college’s recent graduation ceremony, where nearly 300 undergraduate and advanced degrees were awarded.

Up and Coming...

June 1. 4-H Double Rabbit Show, Ag Arena, UP. Doors open at 8 a.m. Contact Jan Aurant, (814) 643-6944.

June 1-3. Agriculture and the Environment: Achieving Balance conference, Harrisburg. Contact Conferences and Short Courses, (814) 865-8301.

June 6-7. Special Olympics-Equestrian, Ag Arena, UP. Contact Judy Karakawa, (814) 237-3741.

June 8-10. 50th Mushroom Conference, Nittany Lion Inn, UP. Contact Conferences and Short Courses, (814) 865-8301.

June 8-11. Penn State Cellulosic Biofuels Short Course: Feedstock, Conversion, and System Integration, Philadelphia. Contact Conferences and Short Courses, (814) 865-8301.

June 10-11. FFA Activities-Horse Judging, Ag Arena, UP. Contact Lydia Everhart (814) 863-7873.

June 14-15. Llama Show, Ag Arena, UP. For more information, e-mail leach@llamalove.com.

June 15. Father's Day.

June 20-22. Keystone Classic Sheep Show and Sale, Ag Arena, UP. Contact Lori Hubbard (814) 865-5893.

June 22-28. Conservation Leadership School (Week 1) Stone Valley Recreation Center, Petersburg, Pa. Contact Conferences and Short Courses, (814) 865-8301.

FACULTY/STAFF ALERTS

Holiday Announcement

The Independence Day holiday will be observed on Friday, July 4. Classes will not be in session that day.

New Web Site For CAS Human Resources

The college's Human Resource Services Web site has a new look. Visit the site at <http://ohr.cas.psu.edu> to see what is new and noteworthy, and follow the links to help answer your human-resource questions.

Prescription Drug Presentation On Employee Benefits Web Site

Penn State's Highmark Blue Shield PPOBlue plan includes

prescription drug coverage. Information regarding that coverage was included in the Highmark material that was mailed to enrollees' homes. A presentation explaining the PPOBlue 2008 prescription drug benefit has been added to the Penn State Office of Human Resources Employee Benefits Web site at <http://www.ohr.psu.edu/Benefits/2008TimeToChoose/2008PrescriptionDrugCoverage.htm>. If you have prescription drug benefit questions, please contact Jill Musser at (814) 865-1473.

Outreach Professional Development Learning Lunch

Hearing Conservation Awareness is the title of the June 2008 Learning Lunch from noon to 1 p.m. on June 11 in Room 119 of the Outreach Building in Innovation Park on the University Park campus. Noise-induced hearing loss is a common and preventable problem both in industrial and home settings. This session is aimed at anyone interested in recognizing and preventing hearing-loss hazards, both at home and work.

Presenter Mike Burke is the manager of Penn State's Hearing Conservation Program and has 18 years of experience in this field. Video teleconference participation is available at many locations off the University Park campus for this event. To participate from a remote location, contact Outreach Professional Development at opdevents@outreach.psu.edu, or call Amy Gregor at (814) 863-4966. A listing of Penn State video teleconference locations is available at <http://tns.its.psu.edu/Services/vidconf/videdb.asp>.

NEW FACES

James Bollinger, farm machinery operator and mechanic at the Fruit Research and Extension Center

Cassie Coates, assistant extension educator in Greene County

Elizabeth Lockett, staff assistant V in crop and soil sciences

Amanda Mauk, staff assistant V in agricultural economics and rural sociology

Iain Murray, research assistant in veterinary and biomedical sciences

Audrey Smith, research support technologist III at the Animal Diagnostics Laboratory

Alexandru Surcica, program assistant in Franklin County

PARTINGS

Shirley Caldwell, staff assistant VI in Philadelphia County

Joshua Fair, assistant extension educator in Lancaster County

Susanne Meyer, program assistant in Allegheny County

Owen Thompson, research support technician III in entomology

Kim Wright, staff assistant VI in conferences and short courses

RETIREMENTS

Donald Fretts, senior extension educator in Fayette County

Earle Robbins, extension educator in Tioga County

Evelyn Vitali, assistant extension educator in Lackawanna County

PROMOTIONS

Mark Antle, research support assistant in crop and soil sciences

Roberta Horner, research support technician III in veterinary and biomedical sciences

Stacy Port, finance and accounting assistant in administrative services

MORE ABOUT US

Births

Lacey Marie Davis was born May 10 to **Shannon Davis**, youth development/4-H equine educator in York County, and her husband, Dan.

Weddings

Amanda Desiderio Pruss, assistant director of development, married Andrew Pruss, project coordinator in plant pathology, in December.

Amanda Rudisill Kirsten, publications editor in communications and marketing, married Todd Kirsten in February.

Deaths

Thomas Brewer, associate professor of agricultural economics from 1972 until his retirement in 1994, died April 11 at the age of 77.

Betty Hazel, secretary in agricultural and biological engineering from 1975 until her retirement in 1992, died April 27 at the age of 82.

Stephen Northsen, assistant photographer in agricultural communications from 1950 until his retirement in 1979, died April 19 at the age of 89.

NOTEWORTHY

Gary San Julian, professor of wildlife resources, has been selected as Safari Club International Foundation Educator of the Year by Safari Club International, a national organization that protects the freedom to hunt and promotes wildlife conservation and education in more than 100 countries.

Paul Craig, senior extension educator in Dauphin County, was presented with the Merit Award by the American Forage and Grassland Council in recognition of outstanding work devoted to forage, achievements in extension programming and active leadership in the state forage and grassland council.

Steven Bogash, regional horticulture extension educator in Franklin County, received a Partnership Grant Award from Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension Association for an investigation into "Improving Pollination Through Bumblebee Habitation: Evaluation of Nest Box Types in Bumblebee Colonization."

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

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U.Ed. AGR 08-171 3.2M5/08ACG

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