



# AG SCIENCES 2007

## College Building at APD will Focus On 100 Years of Crop and Soil Sciences

Visitors at Penn State’s Ag Progress Days, Aug. 14-16 at Rock Springs, may be surprised to learn about the role that agronomy and related sciences have played in their day-to-day lives.

Special displays in the College of Agricultural Sciences Exhibits Building will mark the 100-year anniversary of the college’s Department of Crop and Soil Sciences. The building’s theme, “A Century of Solutions ... From the Ground Up,” will showcase the department’s illustrious history of providing agricultural innovations to benefit Pennsylvania’s farms and citizens. And while department head David Sylvia knows it’s hard for many people to get excited over “dirt,” the intent is to increase awareness of this vital resource.

“We’d like to see people come away saying, ‘Wow—we didn’t know crops and soils did that!’” Sylvia says. “There are a lot of aspects of crop and soil sciences that people don’t associate with us, and many issues facing us in the future—global warming, alternative energy sources—will be impacted by the things they see here.

“People are very concerned about air and water quality, and you can only have good water if you have good soil,” he adds. “Once pollution is in the water, for instance, it’s hard to get rid of, so land

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## From Dean Steele...

The arrival of August brings our annual Ag Progress Days, our opportunity to showcase our programs to our stakeholders spanning the entire food and fiber spectrum. This year’s show promises to be another highlight for our college. Please join us this year at Ag Progress Days, running from Tuesday, Aug. 14 to Thursday, Aug. 16.

This year, the beginning of August also brings us a finalized state budget. Overall, our college and Penn State will receive an increase of 2 percent over last year’s budget. While this increase is not enough to cover ongoing operating costs, we continue to work hard at extracting efficiencies from an already lean budget in attempts to minimize the impacts of this budget shortfall. We do not anticipate any layoffs, but it is unlikely that we will be able to re-fill every position that becomes vacant over the year ahead.

The positions that we do fill and the programs that we do continue to invest in are the result of an ongoing and extensive strategic planning process within our college. We are now in the third year (fiscal year 2007-08) of our current three-year strategic plan (2005-2008). The university, including our college, is now in the early stages of formulating our next five-year strategic plan. As before, the planning process will continue to be inclusive, engaging a wide range of college faculty and staff as well as our stakeholders from across the commonwealth as we define our priorities for the years ahead.

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## Ag Progress Days – Getting Ready



*Preparations for Ag Progress Days were proceeding at Rock Springs in late July. Because of extremely dry conditions, an irrigation system (above) was put into place to help crops used in the exhibition grow. In the photo above, right, college workers install brick pavers in a new walkway outside the APD show office near the top of Main Street. At right, a piece of farm equipment rolls down East 2nd Street after completing a job. As most staffers in the college know, there is a tremendous amount of work that goes on behind the scenes at the Ag Progress Days site.*

## New Trustee Scholarship Supports College's Students

Students in the college will benefit from a new scholarship created by Nancy Nichol Myers and her husband, Craig B. Myers, of Doylestown. The couple has committed \$50,000 to endow the William C. Nichol Trustee Scholarship, which will assist students who have financial need.

The scholarship honors Nancy's father, William "Bill" Nichol, a 1952 Penn State graduate in agricultural economics and executive director emeritus of the Pennsylvania Holstein Association.

"Growing up as one of nine children on an Indiana County dairy farm, I understand the need for assistance to attend college," said Bill Nichol. "I am so pleased that this opportunity will be available to students in the College of Agricultural Sciences."

Nancy Nichol Myers is a 1980 Penn State alumna in business. Craig Myers is a 1975 materials science and engineering graduate of Cornell University and a 1986 master of business administration graduate of the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

After serving as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean conflict, Bill Nichol began his agricultural career as an assistant agent for the Penn State Cooperative Extension Service. In 1959 he joined the Pennsylvania Holstein Association, presiding over a time of record-breaking membership and guiding the association to national and global prominence. He retired as executive director emeritus in 1997.

Over the years, Nichol has been involved in numerous organizations, including the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine Board of Overseers, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Animal Health Advisory Board, the Keystone Milk Marketing Council and the Pennsylvania Dairy-men's Association. At Penn State, he served twice as a member of the board of directors for the College of Agricultural Sciences Ag Council, and was director and president of the Alpha Gamma Rho alumni association.

Nichol and his wife, Lilly Greider Nichol, a 1954 Penn State alumna in education, reside in State College, where Bill is involved in leadership roles with the YMCA, Kiwanis Club and the State College Presbyterian Church.

The Trustee Scholarship program is designed to keep a Penn State education accessible to all qualified students, regardless of their financial means. The program is unique in that the university matches 5 percent of each gift annually and combines these funds with the annual spendable income from the endowment to increase the financial impact of the scholarship.



## Kapur Named New Head of Vet and Biomedical Sciences



Vivek Kapur, professor of microbiology and director of the Biomedical Genomics Center at the University of Minnesota, was named head of the Department of Veterinary and

Biomedical Sciences, effective July 1.

"Vivek has a distinguished record of accomplishment as a scholar and administrator," says Robert Steele, dean of the college. "His research in genomics has led to a greater understanding of how bacteria cause diseases in their hosts, and, as a result of his leadership, the center that he co-founded has become a model for cross-disciplinary biomedical research.

"He has demonstrated excellence in research and teaching, and in communicating the relevance of his research. We believe his knowledge and experience will enhance our existing strengths in veterinary diagnostics, environmental toxicology, and immunology and infectious disease."

Kapur joined the faculty at the University of Minnesota in 1995 as an assistant professor in the Department of Veterinary Pathobiology and soon was appointed director of the Advanced Genetic Analysis Center. In 1999, he was promoted to associate professor, and in 2001, he helped to establish the university's Biomedical Genomics Center and was named its co-director. He assumed sole responsibility for the center in 2003, the same year he achieved the rank of full professor in the University of Minnesota Medical School.

Kapur is internationally recognized for his research in microbial genomics. He is best known for his pioneer-

ing work in completely sequencing the genomes of several of the world's major human and animal pathogens, including *Pasteurella*, *Mycobacterium*, *Staphylococcus*, *Brucella*, *Lawsonia*, and *Cryptosporidium*. The results of these studies have provided key insights into how microbes cause disease and have led to the development of powerful new diagnostic tests and novel vaccines with major global implications in disease control.

Kapur's record of academic accomplishments includes more than 100 original published articles and six U.S. patents. He leads an international consortium of scientists studying Johnne's disease, one of the most important infectious diseases of cattle worldwide, and he is the recipient of several national and international awards for his research in microbial genomics.



## Dunn, Moore Conduct Conference in Ukraine

James Dunn and H. Louis Moore, professors of agricultural economics, traveled to Ukraine May 13-22 to conduct an extension conference and to work with universities. The conference, held in Vinnitsa, was cosponsored by Penn State and Vinnitsa State Agrarian University.

Penn State's educational efforts in Ukraine are funded by the Woskob Endowment to the College of Agricultural Sciences. The Woskobs, successful State College entrepreneurs, have deep roots in Ukraine and are strong supporters of programs to aid Ukraine's development.

The sessions explored the opportunities for agricultural development and the current problems of developing an extension service. The conference attracted about 75 participants, including leaders from universities, representatives from local and national government, and former faculty exchange program graduates from Ukraine and Russia.

At the end of the conference, academic leaders prepared a proposal for the Ministry of Education explaining the need for the new extension service to be university based.



We're on the Web:  
[www.cas.psu.edu](http://www.cas.psu.edu)

## College's Day at Longwood Gardens Focused on Arboretum at Penn State

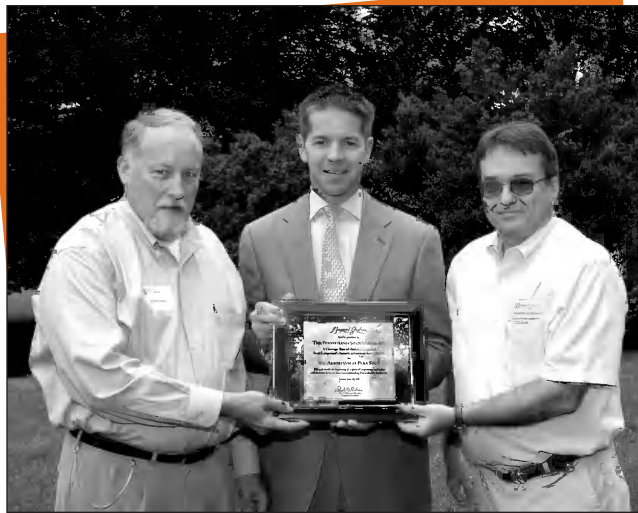
It was a day of sunshine, flowers and ice cream as the college's Office of Alumni Relations recently cooperated with the Penn State Alumni Association to host "Penn State Family Day at Longwood Gardens."

The result was an educational and entertaining program for alumni and friends at the famed horticultural attraction near Kennett Square, Pa. The day was part of the association's "City Lights" cultural events series and featured the garden's premier horticultural displays, fountains, outdoor and indoor gardens, and four acres of conservatories.

Penn Staters learned about plans for the university's own arboretum while enjoying walks, tours and activities led by college faculty and expert alumni. The day was capped by a Penn State Berkey Creamery ice cream social. Roger Williams, association executive director, says the Alumni Association's success in partnering with the college at the U.S. Botanical Gardens in Washington, D.C., in 2006 prepared him for overwhelming alumni demand for tickets to the event.

"We had a very impressive response," he says. "Our Philadelphia-area alumni always respond in full force. The Alumni Association really has a soft spot in its heart for the College of Agricultural Sciences because the college goes back to the very roots of Penn State, so we look for opportunities to collaborate. We're elated to visit Longwood Gardens because we all now know that the Arboretum at Penn State is not a fanciful dream—I could walk around and draw inspiration for what I know our own arboretum is going to be."

Robert Steele, dean of the college, says the alumni support and town-and-gown flavor of the joint events in Washington and Kennett Square are a



▲ Longwood Gardens Director Paul Redman (center) presents a promissory certificate for a heritage tree of choice to be selected from the gardens for inclusion in the Arboretum at Penn State to Kim Steiner, arboretum director (left) and Robert Steele, dean of the college.

reminder that the arboretum will be more than another university facility. Recent major donations toward construction of the arboretum are advancing the project, he says.

"When the lead gift was announced publicly at the Board of Trustees meeting, it was such a crowning moment for those of us who've been working on it, because the Arboretum at Penn State is a community resource, much as the Longwood Gardens are," he says. "We look forward to the day when we can showcase the Arboretum at Penn State with as much satisfaction and pride as is so evident everywhere at Longwood Gardens."

Kim Steiner, professor of forest biology and director of the Arboretum at Penn State, joined Steele to accept a promissory certificate for a Heritage Tree propagated from Longwood's historic arboretum for future inclusion in Penn State's new facility. Steiner says such special events are an enjoyable mix of business and pleasure.

"I enjoy doing them because I like to tell the story of the arboretum and hopefully cultivate support for it," he says. "And the alumni get to come together and touch base with Penn State faculty and staff, so everyone's happy. Momentum is growing for the arboretum. We recently received an important lead gift, and we got another gift of nearly a million dollars not long after. So hopefully, it will keep going at this rate."



## College Building...

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or more specifically soil affects many aspects of our health."

The College Exhibits Building will feature graphic displays demonstrating the latest advances in acid mine drainage and other soil issues, sustainable lawn care, and new and emerging crops for alternative energy production. Also highlighted will be the department's turfgrass science program, which administers undergraduate and certificate programs that are among the best in the world.

Special displays will spotlight:

**Water and Soils**, including nutrient management, acid mine drainage remediation and current advances in environmental engineering.

**Turfgrass**, focusing on characteristics and comparison of natural and synthetic turf for safer, longer-lasting and lower-maintenance athletic fields. This exhibit will also feature Penn State's turfgrass teaching and breeding programs and their impact on golf courses. Turf-testing equipment developed at the university will be on display.

**Crops**, revealing the role of crop and soil sciences in providing abundant food and feed, a cleaner environment and biofuels.

**Geographic Information Systems**, demonstrating their use to support food production through such geospatial-technology-based services as SoilMap, AgMap and other applications.

In addition, daily presentations in the College Exhibits Building Theatre will include Nutrient Management: Food-Farms-Water Quality (11 a.m. Tues. and 2 p.m. Wed.); State Animal Response Team (noon Tues. and 10 a.m. Thurs.); Helpful Tips on Home Lawn Care (1 p.m. Tues. and 4 p.m. Wed.); Agronomy Jeopardy (2 p.m. Tues., 1 p.m. Wed. and 11 a.m. Thurs.) and House Ag & House Education Committees Town Meeting (10 a.m. Wed.).



## From the Dean...

*continued from page 1*

Our college strategic planning Web site will continue to be a good place to follow our progress as well as to offer your input and comments. We will keep you updated as our strategic-planning activities move into higher gear with the beginning of the academic year.





## Up and Coming...

- ▼ **August 14-16.** Ag Progress Days, Rock Springs, UP. Contact Bob Oberheim, (814) 865-2081.
- ▼ **August 24-26.** New and returning student arrival days.
- ▼ **August 27.** Classes begin.
- ▼ **September 3.** Labor Day holiday—no classes.
- ▼ **Sept. 16.** PAWS Extraganza, Ag Arena, UP. Contact Chrissy Castles, (814) 237-8722.

## Faculty/Staff Alert

### Statewide IT Training Opportunities

Information Technologies announces its statewide training schedule for the coming months. Training is open to all personnel in the college. For more information, visit the Web at <http://ict.cas.psu.edu> and select "Computer Training."

Among the classes available are:

—"Dreamweaver for County Web Pages" series, Aug. 2, 16 and 30; and October 2, 16 and 30 (Breeze)

—"MS Office 07: Excel Overview," Aug. 28 (Breeze)

—"MS Office 07: Outlook Overview," Aug. 31 (Breeze)

—"MS Office 07 Overview," Aug. 21 (Breeze)

—"MS Office 07: PowerPoint Overview," Aug. 29 (Breeze)

—"MS Office 07: Word Overview," Aug. 22 (Breeze)

—"Using Acrobat to Create Forms," Sept. 18 (Breeze)

—"Online Survey Tool—Hands-on Workshop" series, Sept. 19 and Oct. 10; and Nov. 14 and Dec. 5 (NetMeeting)

## On the Move...

### New Faces

**Sherry Crum**, information technology consultant in information technologies

**Dana Ekey**, assistant extension educator in Warren County

**Vivek Kapur**, head of veterinary and biomedical sciences

**Naomi Knaub**, assistant director for alumni relations in the Office of the Dean

**Lingling Li**, research associate in veterinary and biomedical sciences

**Paul Lupo**, research support technologist III in forest resources

**Esther Voelker**, nutrition education advisor in Butler County

### Retirement

**Sandra Hemman**, staff assistant V in agricultural economics and rural sociology

## More About Us...

### Deaths

**Maximillian O. Braune**, assistant professor of veterinary science from 1958 until his retirement in 1989, died June 16 at the age of 74.

**Wilmer P. Geist**, records supervisor from 1939 until his retirement in 1979, died June 22 at the age of 90.

**Joseph Staley**, extension agent in Pike County from 1957 until his retirement in 1977, died July 12 at the age of 95.

### ACTS Promotions

BETA TO ALPHA

**Joseph Harding**, unit manager in forest resources

**Linda Mace**, information technology manager in ag economics and rural sociology

**Elinor Serotkin**, publications editor/designer in ag communications and marketing

### Noteworthy

**Peter Wulforst**, economic and community development extension educator in Pike County, presented "Pennsylvania Land Choices," a youth planning education program for 6th to 12th grade students that engages youth on land-use and planning issues through activities, with representatives of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources in a recent workshop at the 2007 American Planning Association Annual Conference in Philadelphia. The audience for the session was professional planners that want to engage youth on planning topics.

**Larry Hull**, professor of entomology at the Fruit Research and Extension Center in Biglerville, was recently selected by the Eastern Branch of the Entomological Society of America for the Entomological Foundation Award for Excellence in Integrated Pest Management. He will now

compete for the national award against nominees from the other branches of ESA. The winner will be announced this fall.

**Brenda Coe** in veterinary and biomedical sciences and **Mary Wodecki** in ag communications and marketing recently passed both of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Search and Rescue exams to become certified as Field Team Leaders in Search and Rescue. They completed more than 100 hours of class and field work in preparation for the exams for outdoor searching techniques. They are members of the Centre Region Emergency Strike Team's Search and Rescue team, which is associated with Centre Lifelink.

**Timothy Kelsey**, professor of agricultural economics and state program leader for economic and community development, was presented the 2007 Buck Stopper Award by vote of the state's economic and community development extension educators for "his tenacious empowerment of communities, extension educators and those working in economic and community development."

**Joanne Logan**, 4-H youth-development extension educator in Westmoreland County, recently won the Permanency Teamwork Recognition Award from the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network—Independent Living Services, for her teamwork in conducting a positive camp experience for youth involved with two foster care agencies, Laurel Youth Services and Wesley Spectrum Services.

A story titled "Seeing the Forest," about Pennsylvania forest-management issues and research being done in the college to address them—written by **Jeff Mulhollem**, associate editor of publications, and published in the summer-fall 2006 issue of Penn State Agriculture—won the Best Magazine Feature award at the Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers Association's conference in May. Jeff was also recently reappointed to Gov. Rendell's advisory council on Hunting, Fishing and Conservation.

A College of Agricultural Sciences team has been selected as Eastern Region winners of the Mary W. Wells Memorial Diversity Award in the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Annual Awards Program. The award recognizes "outstanding efforts and accom-

plishments of individuals and/or teams in diversity and pluralism for any Extension FCS program or activity, including staff development, advisory councils, programs, etc." The team includes **Deanna Behring**, director of international programs; **Mary Alice Gettings**, family living/nutrition and health educator in Beaver County; **Fay Strickler**, retired family living/nutrition and health educator in Berks County; **Leon Ressler**, Capitol Region interim director; **Nancy Crago**, family living educator in Allegheny County; **Nancy Kadwill**, agriculture and 4-H/youth development educator in Montgomery County; **Robin Rex**, Columbia County extension director and nutrition educator; and **Roxanne Price**, youth development/4-H educator in York County.

**Robert Roberts**, associate professor of food science, was presented the 2007 Milk Industry Foundation's Teaching Award in Dairy Manufacturing at the annual meeting of the American Dairy Science Association in recognition of outstanding teaching of undergraduate students in dairy foods. It is the highest teaching award presented by that professional organization.

## Comments...

If you have comments about this issue of *Ag Sciences 2007* or suggestions for future issues, please call Jeff Mulhollem at (814) 863-2719 or send e-mail to [jjm29@psu.edu](mailto:jjm29@psu.edu). Send Back Page items to Gary Abdullah at [gxa2@psu.edu](mailto:gxa2@psu.edu).

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