A Word From The Department Head

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I was able to participate in the germplasm meeting in Ames, department heads steering committee for the University, cord meeting to discuss issues with OAR, planning sessions for Agronomy Field Lab renovations and for a toxic plant educational garden. My activities as CSSA president elect are increasing as we plan for the 2013 meetings in Tampa. We are still seeking a keynote speaker for Tampa. If you have suggestions please let me know.

We continue to hold discussions on how to leverage our precision ag capacities, engage in discussion to expand our rice research capacity, turfgrass research, rye breeding, mine co-product research, sorghum breeding, soil amendment efforts and water science research. I was able to participate in the commodity forum in Austin, soil producers fishing tournament in Matagorda (all I caught were chiggers), and the Vice-Chancellor’s Department Head retreat. The focus was on how we design metrics that will provide comparisons of our strengths relative to our peers and how we improve development funding. COADC held their annual fall meeting and it was capped off by a hog-roast just before the Arkansas game. As part of the development efforts I have formed a committee to provide some guidance on how to move us forward in this area including Cristina Morgan, Richard White, Larry Redmon and Scott Senseman. If you have suggestions please let one of them know.

Congratulations to Sam Feagley and team on a special event. A special congratulations to all our department members and former students involved with.

The semester has hit the mid-way point and there have been many activities to kick off the fall semesters from an ice cream social to hot dog feeds for fun. Our seminars have gone well this fall. With several special seminars and sessions, including the opening of the genome exhibit at the Bush Library it has been a stimulating fall. If you have not had an opportunity to visit this exhibit or take friends or family, you need to plan to do so soon. It highlights a great deal of departmental work. A special thanks to Dr. Stelly for his leadership in this exhibit.

Congratulations on a successful turf field day. A special thanks to all those that pitched in to make it special, especially as we were a bit short handed with turf specialists. Thanks to Dr. Chalmers for making this trip back to Cincy’s on 6th St. will be the site of our Texas A&M soil and Crop Science Mixer at the National meetings. Hope to see you there with the doors opening at 5:30 on Tuesday night of the ASA meetings. This should provide a break in the action between all of the student activities, committee meetings, presentations and other activities that department members and former students are involved with.

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Dr. Senseman has kept the FAC and our strategic planning committee actively engaged in completion of our strategic plan. We expect it to be ready for final faculty discussion shortly after the national meetings when we can discuss the positions put forward. Thanks to this team for the ongoing efforts. We will be seeking new members for the FAC to start in January and if you have suggested nominees, please contact one of the current FAC representatives.

The retirement events have been many. Thanks to Dr. Singh for his efforts to provide engagement opportunities. A special thanks to those who have worked diligently to provide stability in our work at Ukima. We had the opportunity to bid farewell to Dr. Ed Smith as Extension leadership transitions to Dr. Steele. We look forward to a visit from Dr. Steele to the department in the near future.

(continued next page)

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

Outstanding Young Scientist Award
Nithya Rajan was awarded the ‘Outstanding Young Scientist Award’ for 2012 from the Association of Agricultural Scientists of Indian Origin (AASIO). She will be presented with a plaque by the President-Elect of the Agronomy Society at the AASIO meeting held in Cincinnati during the ASA meeting.

2012 Dean’s Outstanding Achievement Awards
Interdisciplinary Research Team - Sorghum Bioenergy Breeding and Genomics: William Rooney, Patricia Klein, and John Mullet

Graduate Research - Edinalvo Camargo
Administration - David Baltensperger
Staff Excellence - Carol Jean Rhodes

2012 Promotions and Tenure - Amir Ibrahim, Terry Joe Gentry, Girisha Ganjegund, Keerti Rathore, Gaylon Morgan, Amir Ibrahim (tenure only)

2012 New Faculty - Paul Schwab, Ben Wherley, Ronnie Schnell, Clark Neely (April 1)

Retirement - Seichi Miyamoto, Gerald Evers, David Zuberer, Dave Chalmers, Mike Chandler (March), Juerg Blumenthal, Rob Duncan, Brent Bean, John Sloan, Todd Baughman

You can view the entire article at http://agsljesciences.tamu.edu/news/2012/09/14/2012-college-awards/
The Department welcomes Drew Gholson as program specialist serving as the Texas Well Owner Network Coordinator. Drew was formerly with the Post Oak Savannah Groundwater Conservation District and is a two-time Aggie with a B.S. in Rangeland Ecology and Management and a Master's in Water Management. Drew and wife Heather live in College Station with their 5-month old son Sam.

Welcome to Ronnie Schnell our new Extension Cropping Systems Specialist who came on board October 1st. Ronnie comes to us from the University of Florida where he worked at the West Florida Reseach and Education Center. Ronnie received his B.S. from Sam Houston State University and his M.S. and Ph. D. from Texas A&M University. Ronnie is originally from this area and he and his wife Natalie are living in the College Station area.

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Please join us in congratulating Russ, Jeannie and big sister Rosie Jessup on the birth of a healthy baby girl, Eleanor. Eleanor was 8lbs 6oz and 19 inches long at birth. Mom and baby are doing great Russ is an Assistant Professor of perennial grass breeding.

Congratulations to Robert and Veronica Duncan on the birth of their first child, Noah Loureiro Duncan. He weighed 8lbs13oz and was 19 3/4" long. Rob was our Small Grains Specialist until he took a position in Manitoba, Canada.

Joshua Timothy Verbree arrived Tuesday, September 4 to proud parents Cheryl and David Verbree. Joshua weighs 8lbs 8oz and is 20” long. Mom and baby are doing great. Cheryl was a graduate student of Jacque Peterson. She and her husband live in Tennessee.

If you will be attending the ASA, CSSA, SSSA Annual Meetings in Cincinnati, come join us at the departmental mixer on Tuesday evening at Cincy’s on 6th street. The fun begins at 5:30pm.

The Department of Soil & Crop Sciences invites you to join us for food, fun, and fellowship!
Alumni Anniversary Program

In 2012, we initiated an Alumni Anniversary program honoring our graduates at the 25th, 50th and 75th milestones of their graduation dates.

Our 75th anniversary recipients and oldest living graduates are Mr. John Ayers ’37 and Mr. Leo Witkowski ’37. Both men contributed life long, admirable careers to agriculture.

As we approach the year’s end, there are several things we need to place on our calendar.

End of Year

January 7 at the latest so the staff can put them to-

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Make sure Tami Hons, t-hons@tamu.edu, has your current contact information so we can recognize you when it’s time.

AgriLife Conference January 7-9

The AgriLife Conference is scheduled for January 7- to 9. We do not have an agenda in place at this time. Specialists and Extension adminis-

All departmental reviews will be conducted this year in January, and we will put together our an-

Websites:

All departments in the college had a redo on their websites. Ours at http://soilcrop.tamu.edu had a major facelift. As a result, links to this website from virtually all outside websites are now bro-

2012 Metrics: Due by December 21

All departmental reviews will be conducted this year in January, and we will put together our an-

While not essential -- it really helps if you let Judy know you are planning to participate by Friday morning. Families are welcome.

See you there!

Breakfast Tailgate this Saturday

Come tailgate with us at our home football games this fall. We will be somewhere on the North side of Heep adjacent to Lot 68. We will start serving 3 hours prior to kickoff so folks have time to get to the stadium for pre-game. Subject to a post-game tailgate for any games that are moved to start early for TV.

Breakfast Tailgate – 3 hours before 11:00 a.m. kickoff.

The Heilman’s will be bringing a breakfast casserole. Bring your own drinks and a side dish, snack or dessert to share. Also, please bring chairs.

2012 Fall Semester Student Statistics

UNDERGRADUATES:

AGRO - 133, PSSC - 1
Total - 134

GRADUATE STUDENTS:

AGRO - 16 MS, 12 PhD, PLBR - 12 MS, 33 PhD, SOSC - 10 MS, 18 PhD, FSTC - 5 MS, 6 PhD
MEPS - 1 MS, 9 PhD, WMHS - 2 MS, 1 PhD, GENE - 1 MS, 2 PhD
Total - 128

GRAND TOTAL - 262
Texas A&M Releases Two New Cultivars

The Texas A&M AgriLife Research Released Two New Cultivars

**COLLEGE STATION**

- Two new cultivars have been released by the Texas A&M AgriLife Research small grains breeding team, according to Dr. Amir Ibrahim, small grains breeder and geneticist in the department of soil and crop sciences.

- TAMO 411 was recently approved for production in the Rolling Plains, South Texas and the Blacklands. (Texas AgriLife Research photo)

The release of TAMO 411 oat variety and TAM 305 hard red winter wheat were approved recently by Dr. Mark Hussey, director of AgriLife Research.

Ibrahim said TAMO 411 is a dual-purpose winter oat developed by the statewide small grains breeding program under the leadership of Ibrahim, who is in the College Station Center of Excellence, and Dr. Jackie Rudd, an AgriLife Research wheat breeder and geneticist in the Amarillo Center of Excellence.

TAMO 411 resulted from the cross of TAMO 405 and PlotSpike oats made in 2003, he said. Due to a combination of crown rust resistance and winter hardiness, this line will be suitable for growth in south, central and northeast Texas, as well as adjacent states with similar adaptation requirements.

“This new and improved cultivar combines excellent grain yield, test weight, forage potential, winter hardiness and straw strength to resist lodging,” Ibrahim said. “It also has excellent resistance to current races of crown rust in Texas and moderate resistance to current stem rust races prevalent in Texas.”

TAMO 411 requires an average of 104 days to maturity and averaged 42 inches in height, while TAMO 405 is slightly earlier at 101 days and shorter at 36 inches, he said. While some taller oats have weak straw and tend to lodge, Ibrahim said TAMO 411 provides the added biomass but does not lose straw strength.

Ibrahim said TAMO 411 has been submitted for Plant Variety Protection. Authorized seed classes of TAMO 411 will be foundation, registered and certified. Breeder and foundation seed of TAMO 411 will be maintained by the Texas A&M AgriLife Research Foundation Seed unit.

TAMO 411 will be available for licensing to competing private entities and some certified seed should be available to producers for planting in fall 2013, he said.

TAM 305 wheat was approved for production in the Rolling Plains, South Texas and the Blacklands, Ibrahim said. These areas suffer losses from leaf and stripe rusts, and “TAM 305 will provide excellent resistance to these diseases.”

“When three years of performance testing indicated that TAM 305 is well adapted and will be competitive in these regions,” he said. “We’ve watched TAM 305 come up through the selection process and it should be a great fit for these areas,” Rudd said. “Common parents used in the development of TAM 305 include TAM 200, TAM 105, and Century, which is a sibling of Fannin, as well as two different wild grass relatives.”

The test weight of TAM 305 was 60 pounds per bushel when averaged over 31 sites, the same as TAM 112, and higher than TAM 401, which averaged 57 pounds per bushel, Ibrahim said.

Forage yield trials involving TAM 305 were conducted in 10 environments during the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 growing seasons. Initial results indicate this new hard red winter wheat cultivar has good forage production and re-growth potential following clipping, he said.

Also, Ibrahim said, milling and baking quality characteristics of TAM 305 were rated as “very good” by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural Research Service’s Hard Winter Wheat Quality Laboratory in Manhattan, Kan. Loaf volume was higher than the three check varieties and all other Texas entries evaluated.

TAM 305 also will be available for licensing and, like TAMO 411, should be available to producers for planting in fall 2013, he said.

**KUDOS!**

To the Turfgrass & Landscape Field Day crew. October 10th was the 2nd Annual Turfgrass & Landscape Field Day. Thanks to Richard White, Ben Wherley and their crew, it turned out to be a great success. Kay Ledbetter wrote an article and a video about the Field Day and you can view this at: [http://today.agrilife.org/2012/10/18/water-rest-water-save/]((http://today.agrilife.org/2012/10/18/water-rest-water-save/))

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**Writer: Kay Ledbetter, 806-677-5608, skledbetter@ag.tamu.edu**

**SCS Gold ‘Housekeeping’ Award**

2013

Jan. 7-10 Beltwide Cotton Conference - San Antonio, TX

Jan. 30 - Feb. 1 Cotton Physiology Working Group - Austin, TX

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