A first in a long time -- summer without an official 100 degree high for a single
day and wrapping up with moist soil. What a great way to start the fall.

Congratulations to our many award recipients mentioned in articles in the
newsletter. It is wonderful to continually see so many of our faculty, staff and
students recognized.

This week I had the opportunity to visit the University of Tennessee and
review their Plant Science Department. It was great to see how Dr.
Senseman is moving the department forward. It was also an opportunity to
visit their new greenhouse and growth facilities for plant science research as
we plan to upgrade ours.

I also had the opportunity to participate in the Farm Bureau sponsored
Food Dialogues in Austin. Hopefully, this will be the start of an ongoing
education effort in the debate on the role of genetic research in plant
improvement. Next week we go to South Dakota for a forum to celebrate the
accomplishments of one of the great plant breeders from Texas, Dr. Edgar
McFadden. His long-term efforts to make an inter species hybrid led to a
source of stem rust resistance that became the background pedigree of a
huge proportion of US wheat. See note in newsletter on student awards.
Several from AgriLife will be part of the symposium including Dr. Elsa
Murano, Amir Ibrahim, and myself.

Thanks to all for the efforts in our P&T process. It seems like it has become
increasingly time consuming, and I appreciate everyone’s effort to bring the
departmental portion to a successful completion. A special thanks to Judy
Young and David Stelly for their efforts!

Please plan to join us as we celebrate with our annual Harvest Bash on
October, 10 at the Wellborn Community Center. It will be the same weekend
as COADC and the AgriLife tailgate.

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Sympathy

Please keep Nancy Harris and her family in your prayers as they mourn the loss of her husband. Eugene Oliver Harris of Bryan passed on Sunday, August 24, 2014 at home. Nancy is a Business Associate in our main office.

Please keep Dr. B.B. Singh in your thoughts and prayers. He fell on September 10 and broke his kneecap. He then underwent surgery to have part of his kneecap removed. Dr. Singh is a professor in our department.

PRAYER REQUEST
From Dr. Tom Hallmark:

Our grandson Ethan was to have chemo treatments on September 9, but with complaints of pain and uneasiness in his abdomen, a CT scan was preformed instead. It showed an explosion of tumors and rapid growth of existing tumors since the last scan about six weeks ago. The largest is about 6 inches by 2 inches. Some were noted associated with the kidneys and perhaps directly on the liver. Chemo is out of the question, as is surgery. The doctors estimate his has three to six weeks left. Please pray for the family as they cope with this news, and make the many decisions that need to be made. Although this news was expected eventually, it is still hard to face. Pray for comfort, strength, compassion, and mercy for Ethan and for the family. Your prayers are treasured.

Please keep Dr. Dariusz Malinowski in your thoughts and prayers. His mother passed away on August 30. Dr. Malinowski is a professor in our department based in Vernon, Texas.

Please keep Dr. Tom Cothren in your prayers as he continues to recuperate from his fall. Dr. Cothren is a professor and Crop Physiologist in our department.

Please keep Haly Neely in your prayers. She was taken to the hospital his week for blood clots in her lungs and leg. Haly is an assistant professor in our department.

Wishing you strength for today and hope for tomorrow.
Welcome to the Department

Josh McGinty has been hired as the new Extension Specialist in Corpus replacing Dr. Fromme.

Josh’s goal is to provide leadership for Extension programming and applied research in field crops and forages for the Texas Gulf Coast and Lower Rio Grande Valley. Programming will be coordinated with county Extension agents, state-wide colleagues, and industry personnel in order to provide high-quality information to growers in this highly productive region of Texas.

Congratulations!

Our two new Soil and Agronomy faculty, Haly and Clark Neely welcomed the arrival of their baby girl Evelyn Louella Neely. She was born Tuesday night Sept 2, 2014. She weighed 4lbs 0oz and was 17.5 inches long.

After 38 years of Federal service, Dr. Dan Upchurch, Southern Plains Area Director, retired on September 3, 2014.

Dr. Upchurch, who recently served as Acting Director for both the Beltsville and Mid South Areas, joined ARS in Temple, Texas, in 1980 as a soil scientist after receiving his master’s degree from the University of California at Davis. In 1983, Dr. Upchurch transferred to the ARS Plant Stress and Water Conservation Unit in Lubbock, Texas, and began his Ph.D. degree at Texas Tech University in soil science with a minor in mathematics, which was awarded in 1985.

Dr. Upchurch has spent most of his ARS career in Lubbock, Texas, where he served as Scientist, Research Leader of the Wind Erosion and Water Conservation Research Unit, and Director of Cropping Systems Research Laboratory. He is nationally and internationally recognized for pioneering research in root study methodology, root growth dynamics, water and temperature stress, and rain shelter design and use.

He served a short time as acting Deputy Administrator for the Natural Resources and Sustainable Agricultural Systems with the Office of National Programs before being named Director of the Southern Plains Area in 2006.

Prior to joining ARS, Dr. Upchurch served as a military policeman in the U.S. Army.

ARS has been fortunate to benefit from Dr. Upchurch’s knowledge and expertise in soil and water issues, which have contributed to the Agency’s reputation as one of excellence. We are proud to have had him as a member of our leadership team.
The Aggie Turf Club recently kicked off the new academic year with a barbecue and club social. While we will miss seeing those who’ve graduated and moved on to do greater things. The new semester and new Turfgrass Science degree brought a great turnout, with many new faces in the club.

Student interests range from golf and athletic turf to landscape construction and lawns. We look forward to hearing all about the great experiences our students had during their summer internships across the state and country, as students share presentations on their experiences during this fall’s club events.

The club recently helped to host a Lone Star Golf Course Superintendents Education Field Day event at the Turfgrass Field Laboratory.

Over 15 students came out to participate, serving breakfast as well as taking the opportunity to interact and ‘talk turf’ with over 50 superintendents from around the state.

In early October, the club also plans to attend a Sports Field Management Workshop at Constellation Park, home to the Sugarland Skeeters. This all-day event will focus on basics of soil science, game day infield prep, painting, mound building, turf culture, nutrient management, and irrigation practices related to sports field management.

And as always, the club looks forward to helping sponsor and set up for consecutive days of fun at the Fall Harvest Bash October 10th as well as the COALS Tailgate October 11th, where Turfgrass Science will be on display! Please come by the club booth, visit with some of our students, and consider supporting their efforts through purchase of some of our newly designed Turf Club shirts, hats, or window decals.

The Aggie Turf Club meets every other Wednesday from 5-6:30 pm in Heep 440, with pizza and drinks provided. We welcome all students to come try us out!

For more information please contact Dr. Wherley (faculty advisor), Dan Hargey (graduate advisor), Chase Brister or Michael Healey (student officers).
Awards

Congratulations to soil and crop undergraduates, Ian Sprouse, Julieta Collazo, and Shelby Redgate, on their Golden Opportunity Scholar awards!

The Golden Opportunity Scholars Institute is a program of the American Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America, and Soil Science Society of America that matches undergraduates with scientist-mentors during the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Annual Meetings. The program encourages talented students to study agronomy, crop and soil sciences while cultivating networks to develop the necessary workforce to sustain the profession.”

Congratulations to soil and crop alumna, Dr. Maria Salas Fernandez, for receiving the NAPB Young Scientist Award!

Maria Salas Fernandez is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Agronomy at Iowa State University. Previous to her appointment in the academia, she worked in the private sector in Argentina, at the R&D Department of American Cyanamid Company and as a sorghum breeder at Nidera. She received a B.S. in Agriculture Production from the Argentine Catholic University, M.S. in Plant Physiology from Texas A&M University, and Ph.D. in Plant Breeding and Genetics from Cornell University. She initiated and leads a sorghum field breeding program at ISU to develop germplasm for forage and biofuel production adapted to the Midwest. Her research program is also focused on the use of high-throughput genotyping and phenotyping technology to identify genetic mechanisms controlling traits such as plant architecture, photosynthesis, photoprotection and cold tolerance at germination.
Congratulations to Bharath Reddy, Silvano Ocheya, and Ahmed Elsayed for being selected to give poster presentations at the Edgar S. McFadden Symposium on Wheat Improvement! The Symposium will be September 23-24 in South Dakota.

Muir selected 2014 Crop Science Society of America Fellow

Dr. James P. Muir, Tarleton State University professor of grassland ecology and research scientist with Texas A&M AgriLife Research Station in Stephenville, has been named a Crop Science Society of America (CSSA) Fellow for 2014. The international science organization will present its highest honor to Muir and 11 others from across North America on Nov. 3, 2014, during its annual meeting in Long Beach, Calif. Fellows are elected by select CSSA members based on professional achievements and meritorious service, as well as outstanding contributions to agronomy through education, national and international service and research. They comprise just 0.3 percent of the society membership.

A Tarleton professor and Texas A&M AgriLife research scientist since 1997, Muir has made his mark on both academic and research fronts. He is a grassland ecologist focusing on the plant-animal interface, with research currently ongoing in South Sudan, South Africa, Swaziland, Brazil and throughout Texas. Muir’s students have undertaken research or presented their data in many countries, including Argentina, South Africa and Malaysia. His long-term focus has been legumes, both cultivated and natural, and their myriad roles in pastures, rangeland, prairies and savannahs.

Currently, his multi-national team is looking at the many facets of legume-condensed tannins as they affect plant survival, carbon capture, as well as animal and environmental health. Muir’s research interests also include domesticating native Texas legume ecotypes for many uses, including prairie restoration and roadside re-vegetation.
The Dean’s Outstanding Achievement Awards:

**Bacterial Source Tracking Team – Interdisciplinary Research**

The BST Team is a model of team building, cooperation, and education across the state. From five of our departments, Drs. Kevin Wagner, Roel Lopez, Raghavan Srinivasan (Raghavan Shrini-vas-an), R. Karthikeyan (Karth-ih-key-an), Saqib Mukhtar, and **Terry Gentry** have created one of the most widely recognized and respected BST programs in the country. Because the technologies used for bacterial source tracking have evolved greatly, the team collaborated to host and conduct a statewide workshop which was the first in Texas and presented recent advancements in BST technologies, methodologies, applications and results. Their accomplishments have had significant and lasting impacts on the protection of our environment and public health, conservation of natural resources, and adoption of sound agricultural practices.

**Ms. Amanda Hulse – Graduate Research**

As a Ph.D. student in genetics, Ms. Hulse has indisputable potential and motivation for research and is truly committed to academic excellence. Amanda has made significant contributions to the field of cotton genomics in the past two years through the development of a cotton SNP chip and is rapidly becoming a leader in the cotton community. She has done a stellar job in all aspects of leading the project and has displayed management skills beyond what is expected from a graduate student researcher.
FAC Update—Sept. 22, 2014

Congratulations to Drs. Paul DeLaune and Richard White who were recently elected to 3-year terms on the SCSC Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC). Thanks to Drs. Scott Finlayson and Mark McFarland for their completed service on the FAC.

The FAC met most recently on 9/26/14 and discussed several items including the upcoming Harvest Bash, legislative initiatives, ongoing chair searches, the FY15 budget outlook, and SCSC activities for The International Year of Soils (2015). Another major item was the need for active mentoring programs for the 7 new faculty members who have joined SCSC over the past year.

If you have any items that you would like for the FAC to discuss at future meetings, please contact one of the current FAC members: Vanessa Corriher, Paul DeLaune, Jamie Foster, Terry Gentry, Cristine Morgan, Richard White, or Hongbin Zhang.

Agronomy Society Update

Thirty-one students attended the initial meeting of the Texas A&M Undergraduate Agronomy Society this semester. It promises to be an exciting year with the club making plans for students to have multiple opportunities to participate in services projects and professional development. The club is currently making plans for several undergraduate students to attend the Students of Agronomy, Soils, and Environmental Sciences (SASES) meetings which will be held in Long Beach, CA in November in conjunction with the ASA/CSSA/SSSA meetings. The attending students will represent Texas A&M and SCSC by participating in contests such as Club Poster Presentation Contest, Visual Presentation Contest, and Quiz Bowl and by giving presentations on their undergraduate research. The Texas A&M Agronomy Society meets every other Tuesday at 5:30 PM in Heep Center 440 – all interested undergraduate students are welcome to attend.
Soil and Crop Sciences

FALL HARVEST 2014 BASH

October 10
Wellborn Community Center
7-10 pm

Barbecue dinner by:
J.CODY’S
steaks barbecue
BRYAN TEXAS
ARE YOU GETTIN’ HUNGRY?

Tickets
$12/person
$10 TAMU Students
$5 Children 10 and Under

Buy tickets online at soilcrop.tamu.edu

Live Music by:
The STRINGBENDERS
Country Music With A Rockin’ Attitude!

Thank You to our Sponsors!

Williamson County Equipment Company
Southwest Agribusiness Consulting, Inc.
AgGro Innovations
Aggie Turf Club
Gaylon and Cristine Morgan traveled to Australia in August to develop and continue collaborative efforts with scientists at CSIRO in Narrabri and University of Sydney. Gaylon was an invited speaker at the 17th Australian Cotton Conference that had over 1700 attendees. His presentation was on improving cotton yield and quality through injected potassium application. This potassium research is a multi-year project that includes Gaylon Morgan, Mark McFarland, Tony Provin, Dale Mott, Dennis Coker, and Michael Spiegelhauer and is partially supported by IPNI and Cotton Incorporated. “This was a great experience to learn about cotton production from a country that is recognized for some of the highest cotton yields and quality in the world.” Cotton production in Australia faces many of the same production challenges as Texas, including limited water, nutrient management, and sustainability, and it was great to get their perspective dealing with these challenges.” said Gaylon. “I was most impressed by the sessions on cotton physiology and learning how to deal with social media and agriculture,” said Cristine, “I have underestimated the presence of social media as the source of Agriculture information for so many people.”

Gaylon also met with Michael Bange with CSIRO, who did a sabbatical in Soil & Crop Sciences in 2006. Gaylon presented an overview of his program to a diverse set of scientists working in cotton production at Narrabri. Cristine and Gaylon concluded their trip at the University of Sydney. Cristine worked with numerous Soil Scientists on topics, including the planning of the Global Soil Security Symposium and the USDA NRCS Rapid Soil Carbon Assessment program. Gaylon met with the scientists that are implementing precision agriculture in grain and cotton farms across Australia and the Executive Director of Cotton Australia.