Change seems to be the constant in the Texas A&M Soil and Crop Sciences Department. As we prepare for the transition beginning in September with six of our faculty that are participating in the Voluntary Separation Program and we have suffered the loss of our newest faculty member and his wife in a tragic Christmas Eve automobile accident. At the same time we have retirements and transitions around the State with long-term faculty, Dr. Milt Engelke retiring in December along with Dr. John Matocha. We currently have vacancies from Diane Rowland in Uvalde, Kevin Bronson and Randy Bowman in Lubbock, Vince Haby, Lloyd Nelson and Gerald Evers in Overton, and Nael El Hout in Weslaco. It is critical that we think long-term and strategically as we plan for the future.

Our graduate and undergraduate programs continue to grow and we are moving forward with our curriculum review at a rapid pace. Recent discussions with NRCS have led to the opportunity for support in recruiting Hispanic graduate students for our soils program.

The first meeting of the joint management team with Scotts was the 20th and we were able to work through many hurdles toward getting some research started this spring. It looks as though it will cover areas from fire ants to weeds to water.

Long term renewals of master agreements have recently been completed with Chevron and Ceres and both are looking at procedures to add to their portfolios of research with us. We continue to expand negotiations with the private sector across the breadth of our programs.

This month I have had the opportunity to meet with Bayer, Action Restoration, Ceres, Chevron, Scotts and Monsanto. It was special to see so many fine Soil and Crop Sciences presentations at the Beltwide Cotton Conference, pre-plant meetings in Weslaco, and Texas Turf Grass Producers in Bay City where Dr. Chalmers received their major award. We were well represented by our turf team at the National Sports Turf Managers meeting in Austin where they took home 4th place. I was also able to meet with members of the wheat board and the small grain advisory board in Amarillo.

Make sure you get your nominations in for the departmental awards!
Merle Buchanan passed away this month at the age of 104. Dr. Milford writes - some of you will remember her as the personable and competent leader of the support staff in the Department of Agronomy and then Soil and Crop Sciences through the fifties and sixties and perhaps even earlier than that. She was in the position when I entered as a student in 1951 and was still in it when I returned as a faculty member in 1968. I think she retired about 1970. Merle moved from Bryan at least 20 years ago and was living in Boerne at the time of her death.

We are saddened to report the death of retiree Dr. Sam Cotner. Dr. Cotner was the Department Head for Horticultural Sciences at the time of his retirement on August 31, 2001. Dr. Cotner passed away on Thursday, January 20, 2011. Cards and condolences may be sent to his wife Ann Cotner at: 4587 Sandpiper Cv, College Station, TX 77845

Memorials can be made to the COADC Sam Cotner Scholarship Fund. Make checks payable to Texas A&M Foundation and mail to: 401 George Bush Drive, College Station, TX 77840-2811. Please include a note indicating the memorial is in memory of Dr. Sam Cotner.

Please keep Susie Mendez in your thoughts and prayers as she goes through testing for shoulder pain. She was in the hospital earlier this week but has returned home.

Dr. Jacqueline Aitkenhead-Peterson also needs your thoughts and prayers as her youngest son is in the hospital having tests for some serious health issues.

**For Your Information**

**ACAP** – Accrued Compensable Absences Payable

Did you know that this program has been established to pay employees lump sum leave when they resign/retire, etc? Your accounts (with the exception of Extension E&G) are taxed each payroll at the rate determined by each system part. The current rate for AgriLife is .1% and for the University (our teaching accounts) it is .064% for faculty and .047% for other budgeted employees. These rates are adjusted annually based on a pay-out history formula to maintain the pool.

The funds are collected into a pool and used to pay the employee’s annual leave upon termination. The pool covers all leave eligible employees. In other words, separating employees should take a lump-sum payment ..... your funds have already paid for it.

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to give me a call at 5-3001 - Carol Rhodes
A memorial service for Dr. Chris and Jenny Stiegler has been scheduled for Friday, Feb 4 at 3:30 p.m. at Christ United Methodist Church. All Faculty and Staff are encouraged to attend.

Directions to Christ United Methodist Church, College Station:
If you are coming from south of town, take Hwy 6 north to the William D Fitch Prkwy exit. Continue up the feeder past the Fitch intersection. The church is located a half a mile up the feeder.

If you are coming from the north, take Hwy 6 south to the William D Fitch Prkwy exit. Make a u-turn under the overpass at Fitch. Continue north along the Hwy 6 feeder and the church is a half mile up the road.

As you get to the church, take the first entrance and follow the signs to guest parking.

Congratulations to Dr. Seth Murray on the completion of the Cold room. Led by Jim Wilborn there were many hands helping including Bryan Simoneaux, Rex Herrington, Zack Farrow, Dr. Jessup, Grant Brooks, Kyle Whitmire, Jacob Washburn, Jordan Haralson, Ryan McHugh, Andrew Beamsley, Gerald De La Fuente, Adam Mahan, Keith Sage, Don Renche, Johnny Herrera, Buddy Beamon and Dr. Seth Murray.

KUDOS!
Congratulations Award Winners!

Dr. Travis Miller receives Texas A&M System Regents Honors

Dr. Travis Miller has served 31 years as an AgriLife Extension specialist in Texas A&M soil and crop sciences department. A portion of his career focused on small grain and oilseed crops, first in Weslaco as an area specialist and then as state specialist in College Station. More recently, Miller has been associate head and AgriLife Extension program leader for the department, providing administrative leadership and programming on a variety of topics, but with emphasis of biofuels and the development of oilseeds and feedstocks for renewable diesel. As a well-known expert on the situation of Texas farm commodities, Miller has spoken to more than 70,000 people in 1,300 audiences across 86 counties during his career.

This award recognizes employees who have made exemplary contributions to their university or agency and to the people of Texas.

Congratulations Dr. Miller!

Dr. B. B. Singh Receives the 2010 Madhuri and Jagdish N. Sheth Award

Congratulations to Dr. B. B. Singh for receiving the 2010 Madhuri and Jagdish N. Sheth International Alumni Award for Exceptional Achievement by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Established in 2000, the Madhuri and Jagdish N. Sheth International Alumni Award for Exceptional Achievement recognizes the university’s distinguished international alumni. Recipients of the award include individuals who are highly distinguished in their profession, either internationally or nationally in their own country; who have helped their nation or the world by outstanding contributions to government, humanity, science, art, or human welfare; and who exemplify the strength of their education.

Congratulations Dr. Singh!
Award Winners continued

2011 Beltwide Cotton Improvement Conference Awards

Kolbyn Joy, PhD student with Wayne Smith, won first place graduate student presentation at the 2011 Beltwide Cotton Improvement Conference. Kolbyn’s presentation was entitled “Diallel analysis of fiber length and fiber bundle strength using extra long staple upland, mutated upland, and interspecific hybrid germplasm.” Kolbyn’s advisor is Dr. Wayne Smith.

Neha Kothari, PhD student with Steve Hage, won second place graduate student presentation at the 2011 Beltwide Cotton Improvement Conference. Neha's presentation was entitled "Comparison of sampling techniques to determine cotton fiber quality and yield."

Sports Turf Award Winners

Students from the Turfgrass Program and Aggie Turf Club recently participated in the Sports Turf Managers Association Annual Conference in Austin, Texas January 11th – 15th. Students also participated in the STMA Student Challenge, a contest that allows students to demonstrate their knowledge of topics such as pest management, sports field management and operation, turfgrass and weed identification, irrigation system design and component parts, water management and drainage, soil physical and chemical properties, plant nutrition and fertilizer technology, skinned area preparation as well as other critical elements of sports turf management. About 24 teams from Universities all over the United States participated in the event. One of the Aggie Student Teams placed 4th in the Student Challenge among teams participating from schools with 4-year degree programs. Texas A&M University students participating included (from left to right) Laura Kolb and Lindsey Merritt (sitting) Kurt Spoor, Chris Dyess, Kent Kieschnick, Reagan Hejl, and Jaxson Bailey (standing). Congratulations and thanks for representing us so well. Not pictured were coaches Richard White and Craig Potts and Club advisor David Chalmers.
Dr. John Matocha Retires

John has been with AgriLife Research since 1968, with 11 years at Overton before moving to Corpus. At Corpus he established some of the longest term research plots in the A&M system. His focus has been on cropping systems. With his graduate work, he has spent more than 45 years in the A&M System.

Congratulations on your retirement!

Dr. Milton Engelke Retires

Dr. Milton Engelke retired in November of 2010 with more than 30 years with AgriLife Research. He was a professor in the Texas AgriLife Research Turfgrass Breeding, Genetics and Management program in Dallas. He was recently recognized for his career achievements in turf with the American Society of Agronomy, Fred B. Grau Lifetime Achievement Award. He is returning to Oregon to be with family.

Congratulations Dr. Engelke!

Departmental retirement recognition plans for both are pending.
Please send letters of recognition to Judy Young, 2474 Heep, College Station, TX 77843 for inclusion in a memory book.
### Calendar Events

#### - 2011 -

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 24-28</td>
<td>TAMU Turf Management Shortcourse - College Station, TX</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 26-28</td>
<td>TX/OK Cotton Physiology Working Group - Austin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 31</td>
<td>Faculty Meeting with Dr. Hussey - 8:00 a.m., Room 440 Heep</td>
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<td>Jan.31-Feb.4</td>
<td>Turfgrass Producers International Orlando, FL</td>
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<td>Feb. 1-2</td>
<td>Energy Outlook Summit - Hilton Hotel and Conference Center, College Station, TX</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 3 - 4</td>
<td>Soil Survey and Land Resources Workshop,Conference</td>
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<td>Feb. 4</td>
<td>Memorial service for Dr. Chris and Jenny Stiegler, 3:30 p.m., Christ United Methodist Church College Station</td>
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<td>Feb. 7-11</td>
<td>Golf Course Superintendents Association of America - Orlando,</td>
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<td>Feb. 19</td>
<td>Aggieland Saturday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.</td>
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<td>March 2</td>
<td>MEP’s Symposium - Rudder Theater</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 15-17</td>
<td>8th International Functional Foods for Chronic Diseases Conference - Las Vegas, NV</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 23-25</td>
<td>National Association of Plant Breeders Annual Conference</td>
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### From the Communications Office

The SCS Communications office is in the process of updating photos for all faculty, staff and graduate students. New photos will be used for directories, websites, email signatures, press releases, etc. Photos may be viewed at: [http://www.flickr.com/photos/tamusoilcrop/sets/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/tamusoilcrop/sets/).

Please schedule a time (t-hons@tamu.edu, 458.4044) to take your photo during the following times:

**February 1 & 2, 2011**

- 9:00 - 11:00 p.m.
- 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

### You've Got Mail

The entire AgriLife department is planning to move to a different email system (Microsoft Exchange) in the near future! Functionality will essentially be the same. What this means to you is that you will use Microsoft Outlook (2007, 2010 or 2011) for your email and calendar activity instead of Groupwise. Your email address will stay the same and you will continue to have access to your old email. Kevin and Scott will be working with everyone individually to make the transition.
The university and community have joined in mourning the tragic loss of OSU alums Dr. Chris Stiegler and his wife Jenny Goodpasture Stiegler in an auto accident on the afternoon of Christmas Eve. Each had earned both bachelor’s and master’s degrees at OSU. Chris, 35, was an assistant professor at Texas A&M after receiving a doctorate in turfgrass management from the University of Arkansas last May. Jenny, 32, was manager at Bath & Body Works at Post Oak Mall in College Station.

The couple’s 8-month old daughter, Emily Grace, was the sole survivor of the accident that also killed another couple whose vehicle reportedly hydroplaned into the Stiegler’s path across Texas 14, between College Station and Dallas. The Stieglers were headed to Dallas for a family gathering.

The accident left Emily with two broken femurs, and a small skull fracture. She is in a cast and doing remarkably well, according to her grandfather, Dr. Jim Stiegler, OSU Emeritus Professor and former head of the plant and soil sciences department, and his wife Connie.

“She was released from the hospital on Dec. 29th, but will remain in a bilateral spica body cast for at least six more weeks,” said professor Stiegler. “Emily’s doctors indicate that the broken bones in her femurs are starting to calcify and they expect a complete recovery. She is sleeping and eating well and playing with her cousins in the Dallas area. She is truly our ‘little angel’ and the largest blessing of all,” he said. “She will be a living reminder and tribute to both of her parents.”

“We are overwhelmed by the tremendous outpouring of support for Chris, Jenny, Emily and our families. There are not enough words to adequately thank all the people in Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma, especially the Stillwater community for their prayers, love, concern and support throughout this difficult time,” Stiegler added.

“Chris and Jenny were two very special young people, who had touched so many lives in their short lifetime,” said Connie. “Emily lost her very loving and nurturing parents and we also lost a great son and daughter-in-law, and OSU lost two outstanding alums.”

A fund has been started to provide for Emily’s education and life. It is the Emily Grace Stiegler Fund, c/o Citizens State Bank, 4611 W. 6th Street, Stillwater, OK 74074.

-Jim Mitchell, OSU Communications
Join us for cake and light refreshments to kick off the

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Centennial Celebration

Wednesday, February 9 at 3:30–5:00 p.m.
Remarks at 4:00 p.m.
Clayton W. Williams, Jr. Alumni Center, The Zachary Room

☞ Free College Centennial posters
☞ College Centennial video premier
☞ Interactive display kiosks from the Association of Former Students

aglifesciences.tamu.edu/100

Hosted by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Student Council, and the Centennial Committee.
Please Join Us
You are invited to a groundbreaking event for the Scotts Miracle-Gro Facility for Lawn and Garden Research

Friday, February 25, 2011

10:00 a.m.

Texas A&M University
2891 F&B Road
College Station, Texas

R.S.V.P.
no later than February 15, 2011
Mrs. Tammy Shupak
t-shupak@tamu.edu
(979) 847-9314
The Office of the Vice Chancellor and Dean for Agriculture and Life Sciences
The Texas A&M University System

The Office of the Director
Texas AgriLife Research

The Department of Soil and Crop Sciences
Texas A&M University
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

The Scotts Company LLC
Groundbreaking Location