As the semester begins the push to finals, activity in the Soil and Crop Department is picking up. Planting, field preparation and other activities are progressing in a timely way across the State and wheat has already headed across southern portions of Texas.

Thanks to each and every one for your preparation for the Academic Review team’s visit in early March. The review team has completed their work as we received their report yesterday. We will now transition to a response mode, with the initial response due in two weeks. An initial scan of the report offers suggestions for enhancing our future, but generally recognizes that we are a very strong unit with outstanding faculty, staff and students. I hope we all come away from the process with renewed enthusiasm and new ideas for the future of our department.

Over the past few weeks I have had the opportunity to travel to several of the AgriLife Research and Extension Centers to complete faculty evaluations. It was also an opportunity to observe the research and projects taking place at those facilities. I look forward to wrapping up the evaluations in April. Supervisors are reminded that the period for non-faculty employee evaluations began April 1 and will run until May 23. Only those evaluations completed on time will be eligible for merit, so it is important that you begin the process as soon as possible.

A big Whoop! goes out to Dr. Seth Murray, Dr. Wenwei Xu and their crew for putting on a great workshop March 29 through April 2. The Genetics of Maize-Microbial Interactions workshop drew over seventy researchers, graduate students and industry professionals from many states and several other countries. Cutting edge research and advancements in Maize genetics were discussed. In a few weeks it will be the wheat researchers’ turn, as they gather in San Antonio for the Edgar McFadden Symposium and Hard Winter Wheat Workers Workshop.

This year’s spring Ranch Management University is complete. The participants were a diverse mix of men and women who are managing land for cattle, hay, wildlife and more. Dr. Redmon will be in Kerrville for the Bennett Trust Land Stewardship Conference April 14-15. These two activities are just a small part of the Extension effort made by our department to help landowners produce efficiently while taking care of their property for future generations.

Thanks to our great candidates for the Soil Nutrient position for the time and energy committed to providing us with exciting interview sessions. We hope to complete the process in the near future and continue to move this essential program forward.

Congratulations to all our undergraduates who received awards at the banquet this week. It is encouraging to see motivated, intelligent students preparing to be the future industry leaders and researchers in the disciplines of soil and crop science. A special thanks to our donors who make this all possible.

I will be participating in an Aflatoxin Mitigation Center of Excellence meeting in Dallas on Monday, then meeting with: Zamorano University, Monsanto, the Council of Scientific Society Presidents and Southern Department Heads in the coming month, as well as attending the McFadden Symposium.
Dr. David Stelly recently received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the National Conference on Genetics and Cytogenetics at the University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad in Karnataka, India.

Stelly, a professor of cytogenetics, genetics, genomics and plant breeding in the soil and crop sciences department, holds a joint appointment with Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Texas A&M University in College Station.

He received his award during a program jointly organized by the University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad and the Dr. S.W. Mensinkai Memorial Education and Research Foundation.

The Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes individuals who have made immense contributions in the fields of genetics and cytogenetics, according to the organization. Another American lifetime achievement awardee was Dr. Bikram Gill, a cytogeneticist who works with wheat at Kansas State University.

Stelly has more than 40 years of diverse breeding experiences with diploid and polyploid crops such as potato, tomato, soybean, maize, conifers, sorghum and cotton, including researching germplasm introgression, reproductive biology and cytology, cytogenetics, genetics and genomics.

For over 30 years with Texas A&M, he has led a multi-faceted research program that collectively focuses on increasing the ability to use using wild genetic resources for genetic improvement of cotton and sorghum, both crops of immense importance to Texas, the U.S. and the world.

An aspect of recent scientific emphasis has been to create facile means of high-throughput genotyping cotton for research and breeding, so those methods can be coupled with his plant genetic diversification efforts, according to the award presentation.

Over the past half-dozen years or so, his lab and collaborators identified and mapped millions of minute molecular DNA markers called single-nucleotide polymorphisms or SNPs or “snips,” Stelly said. Thousands of these were chosen for development of a high-quality, high-density SNP array that enables high-speed genetic analysis.

Research that once took years can now be obtained in a matter of days, he said. With expedited timelines, breeders and related researchers, including graduate students, can tackle more substantive research goals.

Moreover, the results can be used to develop marker-assisted selection, a technology where DNA markers are used individually or collectively for indirect selection toward genetic types with improved traits and trait combinations, Stelly said.

The award presentation noted Stelly’s genetic work has featured extensive efforts to create and analyze chromosome substitution lines. By replacing entire chromosomes of cotton with genes from a related species, he established means to more effectively harness the non-cultivated species germplasm resources for genetic analysis and the breeding of improved upland cotton.

Results of Stelly’s studies have been published in multiple high impact journals, and his contributions have helped spur cotton research and breeding forward domestically and globally, according to the citation.

He also was awarded with Cotton Genetics Research Awards in 1995 and 2008.

Stelly co-directs his department’s core AgriGenomics Laboratory and helped create Texas A&M’s Whole-System Genome Initiative, now known as the Texas A&M Institute for Genome Sciences and Society, and serves on its executive committee.

He was involved in the development of the International Cotton Genome Initiative and is currently chairperson. Stelly also was involved in the development of the National Association of Plant Breeders, the only U.S. organization solely dedicated to plant breeding. He also was the driving force behind the informal group that established the International Cotton SNP Chip Consortium and developed the cotton SNP array for high-throughput genotyping.

Stelly said he is excited about the new opportunities to combine the genetic materials he created with the new SNP genotyping methods, because together they promise significant increases in the ranges and rates of genetic inquiry and gain. He said this bodes well for graduate students and breeders alike.
23rd Annual Soil and Crop Sciences Department Awards and Recognition Banquet

2015-16 Outstanding Soil and Crop Students

Nicole Shigley - Freshman
Michael Whatley - Sophomore
Jonathan Stanush - Junior
David Cottrell - Senior

Scholarship Recipients

Kirstin Burnett
Texas Turfgrass Scholarship
A.W. & Barbara Crain Scholarship
Jack Hulgan Memorial Scholarship
Sequor Foundation/Millergrass Turfgrass Endowed Scholarship

David Cottrell
Kenneth & Marion Porter Endowed Scholarship

Corey Diaz
Texas Turfgrass Assn. Scholarship
Texas Turfgrass - William E. “Bill” McLaughlin Scholarship

Omar Elhassan
Luther Jones Outstanding Junior Scholarship
Charles ’63 & Lynann ’66 Simpson Endowed Scholarship
Texas Seed Trade Assn. Scholarship

Jared Goldman
Morris G. Morko Endowed Scholarship
Olin & Thelma Smith Endowed Scholarship

Kevin Hoyt
Texas Turfgrass - Paul Drumhunt Scholarship
Keith Elkins Memorial Scholarship
Texas Turfgrass - William E. “Bill” McLaughlin Scholarship
Joseph D. Whitaker ’63 Scholarship
Kayla Howard
Billy, Gloria & Gerry Conrad Scholarship

Franklin Linam
Dr. Cleveland & Frances Gerard Scholarship

Sydney O’Daniel
H&H Ranch Scholarship
Texas Seed Trade Assn. Scholarship

Kimberlyn Pace
Trotter Endowed Scholarship

William Peebles
Cecil & Ola Bradley Goodman Scholarship
Dick Holland Endowed Scholarship

Jonathan Stanush
J. F. Miles Endowed Scholarship
J. Jean Mills Memorial Scholarship
Pat & Ed Range Future Leaders Endowed Scholarship
Texas Seed Trade Assn. Scholarship

Tri Tran
James Foster Scholarship
Allen & Joan Wiese Endowed Scholarship

Rory Tucker
Dick Holland Endowed Scholarship

Matthew Wiethorn
J. Charlie & Judy Blue Scholarship
Charles A. Schneider ’70 Memorial Scholarship
Charles 63 & Lynann ’66 Simpson Endowed Scholarship

Kacie Wynne
Kenneth Lindsey Memorial Scholarship
Trotter Endowed Scholarship
Billie B. & Gloria S. Turner Production Scholarship

Not Pictured:
Jonathan Prieto - Billy, Gloria & Gerry Conrad Scholarship
Kenneth & Marion Porter Endowed Scholarship
James Roundtree - Joe S. Campise Memorial Scholarship
McAfee Memorial Scholarship
It’s Performance Evaluation Time!

The performance evaluation period began April 1, and runs through the end of May.

All evaluations should be completed and submitted to the department head by May 23.

Supervisors are reminded that the evaluations must be submitted on time in order to be eligible for merit.

Please remember that all performance evaluations must be routed through Greatjobs for signature!

Performance Evaluation matrices, including forms and due dates, may be found at:
Evaluation resources, including tips on employee development and how to write performance objectives, may be found in the Supervisors Toolkit at:
http://agrilifeas.tamu.edu/hr/supervisor-toolkit/performance-management

Bennett Trust Land Stewardship Conference
April 14-15
Inn of the Hills Resort and Conference Center, Kerrville

Designed to teach landowners to:
be good stewards of the land, water, and livestock
to conserve and enhance the natural resources
to teach the next generation of resource managers

This year’s program aims to help landowners find a balance on their property and keep it for future generations.

Conference cost - $75
Includes
meals and refreshments during breaks
and
Choose one of three tours
1. Hillingdon Ranch in Kendall County
2. Kerr Wildlife Management Area
3. “Wine and Roses” tour in Gillespie County

Register on-line at https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/BennettTrust
or by calling (979) 845-2604
For more information contact: Dr. Larry Redmon - l-redmon@tamu.edu
or Dr. Rick Machen - r-machen@tamu.edu
Texas A&M University Hosts 3rd Biennial Genetics of Maize-Microbe Interactions Workshop

By Beth Ann Luedeker

Over seventy people from throughout the United States and four other countries gathered in Rudder Tower March 30 - April 2 for the 3rd Biennial Genetics of Maize-Microbe Interactions Workshop (GMMI).

Scientists from ten states in the U.S., as well as Germany, South Africa, Kenya and China participated in the workshop. Twelve Universities were represented as well as seven private biotech and seed companies and five different USDA agriculture research stations.

Dr. Seth Murray, Soil Crop Sciences Department; Dr. Wenwei Xu, Soil and Crop Sciences; and Dr. Mike Kolomiets, Plant Pathology and Microbiology served as the local hosts for the event. They worked in conjunction with scientists from North Carolina State University, the USDA-Agriculture Research Service in Starkville, Mississippi; and the University of Kentucky to develop the scientific program.

The workshop was designed to update researchers on progress being made in the field of maize-microbe interactions at the genetic level, as well as to foster collaborations between scientists in the academic, government and private sectors.

This year the major research emphasis focused on both pathogenic and beneficial microorganisms.

“The conference was extremely enlightening for both basic and applied researchers working in the genetics of maize and microbes,” stated Murray. “Many of the world leaders from industry, academia and the USDA made presentations or participated.”

“Cutting edge studies across diverse themes were made, including new genetics and breeding approaches, new methods of phenotyping, the molecular interactions underlying plant defense, and new approaches to characterize the plants microbial community,” Murray added.

“Work on reducing dangerous aflatoxin levels in corn was highlighted by several research groups, indicating the importance and recent advances on this issue,” said Dr. Marilyn Warburton of the USDA-ARS. “Many of the technological insights into resistance against the fungus that makes aflatoxin are now being moved towards farmer’s fields, where a high beneficial impact is expected in the near future.”

In addition to advances in aflatoxin research, progress in the fight against other diverse microbes including maize lethal necrosis disease, corn leaf blight, grey leaf spot was presented, as well as research involving beneficials such as nitrogen fixing bacteria.

Keynote speakers included: Dr. B.M. Prasanna, Director, Global Maize Program, CIMMYT & CGIAR Research Program on Maize, from Nairobi, Kenya; Dr. Randy Wisser, University of Delaware; Mingliang Xu, National Maize Improvement Center of China; the team from the USDA ARS Corn Host Plant Resistance Research Unit at Mississippi State University under Dr. Paul Williams, and Dr. Rebecca Nelson, Cornell University.

GMMI was first held in 2011, hosted by the University of North Carolina, with the second event hosted by the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center in St. Louis, Missouri, in 2013.

The workshop is made possible by contributions from Monsanto, AgBiome, Agreliant, KWS (a German seed company), the National Corn Growers Association and Texas A&M University’s Root Rhizosphere Interface, which
is part of the COALS Grand Challenge Program.

Public research funded by NSF, USDA-NIFA, USDA-ARS, the Aflatoxin Mitigation Center of Excellence (AMCOE), Texas AgriLife Research, among others, was highlighted to demonstrate the startling fundamental discoveries and impressive applied plant improvement being made to address emerging food security threats.

In addition to the oral presentations, nearly 30 research posters were presented by scientists and graduate students. The poster competition committee was chaired by Peter Balint-Kurti, USDA-ARS, North Carolina State University.

Steve Anderson, a Soil and Crop Sciences Ph.D. student under Dr. Seth Murray, placed first in the student poster contest. Second went to Tyr Wiesner-Hanks, a PhD student in Plant Pathology/Plant Breeding under Rebecca Nelson at Cornell University, with Pei-Cheng Huang, a Ph.D. student in Plant Pathology under Dr. Michael Kolomiets at TAMU, placing third.
Clean-up efforts along the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks are paying off, according to Texas AgriLife Extension Program Specialist Ward Ling.

This is the fourth year Ling has coordinated a clean-up in the watershed that drains to Geronimo and Alligator creeks. It is part of the watershed protection plan that was established for those creeks in 2012 by AgriLife, the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority and the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board.

Geronimo creek was listed on the Texas 303(d) list of impaired waterways in 2008 and 2010. The watershed protection plan was developed to restore and protect the water quality of the creek. Since Alligator Creek feeds the Geronimo, it was included in the plan.

On April 2, there were 191 volunteers that showed up to help clean trash from the watershed. Dispersed in small groups they covered 27 locations along those creeks, including roadways and creek crossings. Eight hundred pounds of trash were removed, consisting of 175 bags of trash, wooden pallets, tires, car batteries and other debris.

“The first year we had a clean-up, we hauled out almost two tons of garbage,” Ling stated. “We have more volunteers now and cover more area, but came up with less garbage. This is a good thing. It means that people are taking care of the watershed.”

In 2012, the first year of the clean-up, 100 volunteers covered twelve locations along the creeks and removed 2,960 pounds of trash. The following year 230 volunteers participated. They covered twenty locations and removed 7,020 pounds of trash. Last year twenty-two locations were covered, yielding 2000 pounds of removed garbage.

“The first few years we were getting in to areas that had never been cleaned. They are much more manageable now,” stated Ling.

Even with the reduction in the amount of trash cleaned up, Ling plans to keep holding the event on an annual basis.

“The volunteers really have a good time. The list of sponsors is growing and they don’t want to stop having the event,” Ling said. “We will seek out new areas that are in bad shape, and continue to manage those we have been working on.”

Ling admitted that many people are surprised to find that they are cleaning roadsides during the clean-up.

“Many people don’t realize what a watershed is,” Ling said. “We have to explain that all these areas that drain into the creeks are part of the watershed, and that by keeping them clean, we ultimately improve the creek.”

The creek clean-up is just one part of the Geronimo and Alligator Creek Watershed Protection Plan. Other efforts concerning urban and rural land uses which affect the watershed are also being made to improve the quality of the water in the creeks.

For more information go to http://www.geronimocreek.org/
Orville Redenbacher might not have envisioned grain sorghum in his air poppers, but the niche snack is finding its way onto U.S. grocery shelves, and a Texas A&M AgriLife Research program is conducting research into the genetic inheritance of popping in grain sorghum.

Dr. Bill Rooney, an AgriLife Research sorghum breeder in College Station, has been studying the human benefits of the phytochemicals in sorghum for many years, and his research into popped sorghum is a result. Worldwide, sorghum is a human food, but in the U.S., it is used primarily as livestock feed.

Rooney said while popped sorghum has been consumed in certain cultures for generations, it has not had the amount of selective breeding that popcorn has. His team is now seeking heritable traits in sorghum lines associated with popping quality.

Nicholas Pugh, a graduate student under Rooney, evaluated 130 lines of sorghum derived from a hybrid of two known varieties with popping characteristics. Grain from each line was produced in Weslaco, Corpus Christi and Halfway just north of Lubbock. From these samples, 500 seeds were counted and popped.

“We want to determine what the relative influence of genotype, environment, and genotype by environment effects were on popping quality,” he said. “We wanted to determine how heritable popping quality is in sorghum. Finally, we wanted to identify quantitative trait locations.”

He said their initial results found the two popping quality traits of interest to this study, popping efficiency – what proportion of kernels pop, and expansion ratio – how much a kernel expands when it pops, are both heritable within the population used for the study.

“This means both traits can likely be improved, and it would be feasible to do so through selective breeding,” Pugh said.

The resulting popped sorghum kernels are much smaller than popped popcorn kernels, he said. This is because of the smaller size of the grain before popping as well as the much higher expansion ratio seen in commercial popcorn varieties. Typically, about half the sorghum kernels popped, and averaged about eight times the size of the unpopped kernel.

“We also found the most important factor in improvement is to produce the pop sorghum in a suitable environment. We identified the environment at Halfway pops consistently better than the other two sites used in the study,” he said.

Rooney said quantitative trait loci or sections of the DNA on sorghum plants for popping quality traits have been found, though they were not found across all environments and were instead unique to each location.

“This shows that environment, or genotype and environment interactions, play an important role in determining a variety’s popping quality,” he said.

This study can be used to make decisions to improve the efficiency of breeding new varieties of sorghum with improved popping characteristics, Rooney said.
Summer-Dormant Cool-Season Grasses an Option for Perennial Pastures

VERNON – The past El Nino autumn and winter offered a good opportunity to establish pastures of summer-dormant tall fescue in Texas and Oklahoma, according to Dr. Dariusz Malinowski, a Texas A&M AgriLife Research forage agronomist and plant breeder in Vernon.

For more than 10 years, he has been researching and evaluating a number of cool-season grasses originating from the Mediterranean Basin in environments with harsh summer droughts and mild winters, resembling Texas climate conditions.

These grass ecotypes possess a summer dormancy trait that allows them to survive six months without precipitation, in blistering heat, Malinowski said.

“There is no doubt in my opinion that summer-dormant cool-season grasses will be the only option for cool-season perennial forage for a long time, considering the climate projections for the Southern Great Plains.”

He said climate change is projected to progress in the U.S. in the next couple of decades. The U.S. Global Change Research Program report predicts by the end of the century, the average U.S. temperature may increase by 4-6 degrees under the lower greenhouse gas emissions scenario or by 7-10 degrees under the higher emissions scenario.

Climate models suggest much of the Southeast and Southwest will become drier, especially in winter and spring, resulting in increased drought severity and duration, he said.

“We took the climate change predictions very seriously in the early 2000s, when I started to lead the forage systems program at Vernon,” Malinowski said. “Consequently, we initiated a collaborative research with Grasslands Innovation of New Zealand in 2008 to breed new cultivars of summer-dormant tall fescue, orchardgrass and perennial ryegrass with improved forage productivity and quality, and superior persistence.”

Developing a new forage grass cultivar is not a fast track achievement, taking eight to ten years to accomplish. Several breeding lines are in the final stages of cultivar development and will be available to producers in the next few years.

Meanwhile, two commercial cultivars of summer-dormant tall fescue are available in the U.S. – Flecha by Grasslands Innovation and Prosper by Barenbrug USA. According to Malinowsky, these cultivars were planted across Texas and Oklahoma and persisted well until the historic drought of 2011.

“Repeated lack of precipitation during several subsequent winter growing seasons and the resulting inability to replenish resources exhausted the grass plants beyond their level of tolerance,” he explained.

There has been some concern the introduction of summer-dormant cool-season grasses to environments of the Southern Great Plains and the Mediterranean environments of California may result in these species becoming invasive to native flora, as was the case with summer-active tall fescue introduced to the U.S. in the 1800s, he said.

Preliminary research suggests summer-dormant grasses originating from the Mediterranean Basin and introduced to Mediterranean-like environments of California have very limited potential for invasiveness when compared with introduced Mediterranean annuals and native summer-dormant grasses.

“Our data show that summer-dormant tall fescue is less competitive than continental tall fescue when both types were grown in binary mixtures with alfalfa, especially when constrained by low soil moisture availability in summer,” he said.

In non-native environments such as those of the Southern Great Plains, summer-dormant tall fescue will not be able to take advantage of summer soil moisture, in contrast to native temperate and warm-season flora, because its growth pattern is highly restricted, Malinowski said.

“Summer-dormant cool-season grasses were introduced to southern Australia about 50 years ago and did not develop into environmental weeds,” he said.

Malinowski said many producers also want to incorporate a forage legume crop to grow with summer-dormant tall fescue.

“In collaboration with Dr. Twain Butler of the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation in Ardmore, Oklahoma, we evaluated the compatibility of a range of forage legumes, including alfalfa and annual medics. Annual medics, having a very similar growth pattern to summer-dormant tall fescue, were the most suitable to grow in mixed stands with summer-dormant tall fescue,” he said.

Producers interested in growing summer-dormant tall fescue should contact their local Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service agent or Malinowski at 940-552-9941, ext. 240

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GbiANQ61cig
To read Kay Ledbetter’s entire story click here
Murilo Maeda has joined the staff at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center in Corpus Christi as an Assistant Research Scientist.

His position focuses on the management of cropping systems and remote sensing programs, including the development of both ground- and aerial-based platforms for high throughput data collection.

Murilo earned his BS in Biology from the Centro Universitário do Triângulo in Brazil. He received both his Masters and PhD in Agronomy from TAMU, completing his MS in 2012 and his PhD in 2015.

Texas A&M Turfgrass Science students volunteered over spring break in advance week preparations for the PGA World Golf Championships Dell Match Play at Austin Country Club.

The first weekend of April, the Aggie Turf Club volunteered their time and talents during The Big Event. During this event, the club took part in renovating a 4000 sq. ft. backyard to ‘Palisades’ zoysiagrass. Club members assisted the homeowner in soil/site preparation, sod installation, and sprinkler head repairs/adjustments.

Thanks to all who came out and participated.
The Texas Well Owner Network will offer water well screenings in April for 10 South Texas counties, said program coordinators.

The screenings will be held in Atascosa, Cameron, Dimmit, Frio, Hidalgo, La Salle, McMullen, Webb, Willacy and Zavala counties to give residents the opportunity to have their well water screened.

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Texas Water Resources Institute are partnering with the network on these programs.

“Private water wells should be tested annually,” said John Smith, AgriLife Extension program specialist, College Station.

He said those submitting samples should use only sampling bags and bottles from their respective AgriLife Extension office and follow the included instructions carefully to ensure accurate results.

A $10 per sample fee will be collected when bags and bottles are picked up by participants. Bottles and bags will be available at least a week before the turn-in dates.

Samples will be screened for common contaminants, including total coliform bacteria, E. coli, nitrate-nitrogen and salinity.

Smith said the presence of E. coli bacteria in water indicates waste from humans or warm-blooded animals may have contaminated the water. Water contaminated with E. coli bacteria is more likely to also have pathogens present that can cause diarrhea, cramps, nausea or other symptoms.

“Water with nitrate-nitrogen at levels of 10 parts per million is considered unsafe for human consumption,” Smith said. “These nitrate levels above 10 parts per million can disrupt the ability of blood to carry oxygen throughout the body, resulting in a condition called methemoglobinemia. Infants less than six months of age and young livestock are most susceptible.”

He said water with high saline levels may leave deposits and have a salty taste, and using water with high salinity for irrigation may damage soil or plants.

Smith said it is extremely important for those submitting samples to be at the meeting to receive results, learn corrective measures for identified problems and to improve understanding of private well management.

A complete list of locations, dates and times can be found in Paul Schattenberg’s article in AgriLife Today, or on the Texas Well Owner Network website: http://twon.tamu.edu
VERNON – A Texas wheat producer was recently found to be infringing the intellectual property rights of the Texas A&M University System and Texas A&M AgriLife Research, according to the Texas Foundation Seed Service, the marketing arm of the AgriLife Research wheat breeding program.

Wayne Lidster, owner of Four Way Farms of Dalhart, as part of the settlement agreed that Four Way Farms was infringing the Plant Variety Protection Act Certificate of AgriLife Research by the unauthorized selling of TAM 304 wheat for planting seed.

Lidster settled his case for $130,000 with Scott Seed Co. of Hereford and the developer of the variety – AgriLife Research, according to AgriLife Research and Scott Seed officials.

Chad Kriegshauser, co-owner of Scott Seed Co., said they were alerted to the improper sales and began an investigation utilizing the Henry Law Firm in Arkansas, which works with the Farmers Yield Initiative and specializes in prosecuting infringements of Plant Variety Protection Act Certificates.

The issue was settled before going to court, Kriegshauser said.

“We had the rights under our contract with AgriLife Research to pursue anyone we hear about making unauthorized sales,” Kriegshauser said. “The main thing is to try to get them to stop and protect the intellectual property.”

Known as “brown-bagging,” unauthorized sales of protected wheat varieties as seed is unlawful, said Steve Brown, Texas Foundation Seed Service program director in Vernon.

The Federal Seed Act states that certain protected varieties must be sold only as a class of certified seed, Brown said. Rights to produce and sell these varieties are authorized by the developer of the variety.

In the Lidster case, the producer had neither certified the seed as required by law, nor permission to sell the wheat for further propagation, Brown said.

AgriLife Research wheat development teams benefit directly from additional funding through royalties generated from authorized sales of certified seed, he said. Wheat producers benefit through the introduction of new varieties with better yields, improved disease and pest resistances and additional advancements in technology.

“The violators and those who buy from these infringers are getting a free ride at the wheat developer’s expense and are reducing opportunities for new varieties to be developed that ultimately benefit wheat producers throughout Texas and beyond,” Brown said.

Wheat producers should keep in mind that the Plant Variety Protection Act allows producers to grow and keep seed of protected varieties for use on their own farms, he said. It does not allow growers to sell or trade that seed.

Brown said the law allows all parties involved in the unauthorized transaction to be sued: the seller, the buyer, seed cleaner for seeding and other parties involved in such transactions, including custom farming operators.
Forage Workshop April 26

Dr. Vanessa Corriher-Olson, AgriLife Extension forage specialist in Overton, will be one of the presenters at a forage workshop scheduled April 26, from 7:30 a.m. - noon, in Waco.

Dr. Olson will discuss the management of improved warm-season grasses and the economics of hay production.

The workshop will begin at 7:30 a.m. at the Ronnie Dowdle Farm, located off East Loop 340, and move to the Timber Crest Baptist Church mid-morning.

Other presentations include managing weeds in grasses and a demonstration of hay and sprigging equipment.

Breakfast will be available before the program and a noon meal will follow.

Applicator license holders will earn two general CEUs

Cost is $10

Please RSVP by April 22 by calling:
254-757-5180

Regional Brush Management Program in Stephenville

Dr. Josh McGinty, A&M AgriLife Extension agronomist based at the Research and Extension Center in Corpus Christi, will be one of the speakers at the Cross Timbers Brush Management Symposium to be held at City Hall in Stephenville May 12 from 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Dr. McGinty will talk about the future of rangeland herbicides.

The program includes presentations on brush management economics; the use of fire to manage brush; weed and brush management from Bayer Crop Sciences; Dow AgroSciences brush management in Texas; and improving the utilization of unwanted plants through changes in the dietary habits of livestock.

The cost is $40 including lunch, a trade show and three CEUs for private applicator license holders

For more information, or to register, contact James Jackson at 254-968-4144 or jamesr.jackson@ag.tamu.edu
One hundred years ago, as a 25-year-old student at South Dakota State, Edgar McFadden developed the first variety of wheat resistant to stem rust, a disease that had been destroying wheat crops throughout North America.

His variety, named Hope, was the first successful mating between common wheat and an ancestral wheat species.

While genetic modifications have become familiar, at that time most scientists thought it to be impossible.

Hope, and other breakthroughs made by McFadden still impact the wheat industry today.

The 2nd Edgar S. McFadden Symposium on Wheat Improvement will be held April 17-20 in San Antonio, a joint venture between Texas A&M University, South Dakota State University and the Hard Winter Wheat Workers. The Symposium is designed to continue the legacy of McFadden and highlight leaders in wheat research worldwide.

Speakers and topics scheduled for Monday, April 18:

- Dr. Sonny Ramaswamy, Director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture
- “Take it to the Public” - Julie Borlaug, the Borlaug Institute, Texas A&M
- “Training Scientists based on their Observations - Lessons from McFadden's Life” - Dr. Ed Souza, Bayer Crop Science
- “Training Plant Breeders Globally: TAMU’s Distance Plant Breeding Degree Program” - Dr. Wayne Smith, TAMU
- “Reflections on 40 years of Wheat Breeding: Nebraska as an Example” - Dr. Stephen Baenziger, University of Nebraska
- “Breeding CIMMYT Spring Wheat for Resistance to UG99 race group stem rust” - Dr. Ravi Singh, CIMMYT
- “Breeding for Durable Disease Resistance” - Dr. Amir Ibrahim, TAMU
- “Integration of HIgh Throughput Phenotyping and Genomic Selection” - Dr. Jesse Poland, Kansas State
- “Designing Durable REsistance Gene Pyramids” - Dr. Bob Bowden, USDA-ARS
- “Ug99 Update” - Dr. José Costa, USDA-ARS; Dr. Yue Jin, USDA-ARS Cereal Disease Lab; and Dr. Harban Bariana, University of Sydney

On April 19, during the Hard Winter Wheat Workers Workshop, there will be four sessions with multiple speakers at each.

Session One: Intractable Pathogens: New strategies for fighting old enemies
Session Two: Breeding for Abiotic and Biotic Stress
Session Three: Genotyping/Phenotyping/Genomics
Session Four: Wheat Viruses

Participants will tour a nursery in Castroville in the morning April 20 with the program ending at 1:00 p.m.

To register for the symposium go to
https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/McFadden
or call (979) 845-2604
Congratulations!

Sumit Sharma won second place in the graduate student competition with his poster during Student Research Week March 28 - April 4. He was entered against other graduate students doing research in Animal Science, Plant Science, Wildlife & Fisheries, Entomology, Agriculture and Ecological Restoration. Sumit’s poster was titled: Effect of Potential Land Use Change from Cotton to Bioenergy Crops on Carbon Dynamics in the Southern Great Plains.

In Sympathy

Several members of our department are dealing with a loss. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

Dr. Rupert Palmer lost his wife of 62 years, Reida, on February 27. Dr. Palmer is a former turfgrass professor.

Dr. Warren Anderson, Professor Emeritus soil chemistry and fertility, lost his wife of nearly 63 years. Marjean passed away March 9 from a chronic lung disease she had been fighting for over 30 years.

Dr. Monty and Mary Dozier are coping with the loss of Mary’s mother who passed away on April 2.

Concerns

Please keep Dr. Joe Dixon in your thoughts as he continues his recovery from heart issues at College Station Medical Center. He was admitted February 1.
April

4-8 - Ranch Management University, G. Rollie White Visitor’s Ctr. College Station
   contact: l-redmon@tamu.edu

7 - 23rd Annual SCSC Awards And Recognition Banquet
   for undergraduate and graduate scholarship recipients

9 - Turfgrass Seminar - Amarillo Regional Horticulture Expo
   contact: Matthew.elmore@ag.tamu.edu

14-15 - Bennett Trust Resource Stewardship Conference, Kerrville
   contact: l-redmon@tamu.edu or r-machen@tamu.edu

17-20 - Edgar McFadden Symposium and Winter Wheat Workers Workshop
   contact: aibrahim@ag.tamu.edu

26 - Forage Workshop - Ronnie Dowdle Farm, Waco
   contact: s-mclellan@tamu.edu

28 - Borlaug Seminar - Dr. Rob Fraley, Monsanto

May

12 - Cross Timbers Brush Management Symposium - Stephenville

13 - Commencement for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
   9:00 a.m. Reed Arena