In This Issue:
Department Head’s Comments
Plant Breeding Symposium
Regents’ Awards
Retirements
News and other Awards
Calendar of Events
Spring is coming on fast. With a break in the rain, planting in the southern portion of Texas is moving quickly and most areas are now ready for a bit more rain to really get the crop moving. As I travel the state each spring to participate in annual reviews it is amazing to see the variation across the State. We still have areas of Texas dealing with severe drought and other areas that really could use a few sunny days.

A special Whoop! to our Aggie Plant Breeding graduate students for hosting an outstanding plant breeding symposium. The organization was great and the professionalism exceptional. Great job to the whole team and special thanks to those contributing talks.

This month I had the opportunity to visit with plant science colleagues in the DC area to discuss the future of plant science, and draft a new vision statement and plan for plant science research and graduate education. This will be a multi-year process and is exciting that some portions are already being evaluated by agencies for implementation. I also had the opportunity to participate in the AgriLife Department Heads retreat where we discussed communications opportunities and worked to improve brief communications to our constituents about our work. This fits in well with our own extension efforts to do a better job of reaching the general public with answers for their concerns about our food production systems and our management of our natural resources as well as our vision for enhanced soil security. More at the local level I had the opportunity to visit with former students from our department in the Corpus area and to host the State Seed and Plant Board meeting here in College Station.

Annual performance reviews for your staff need to be completed by mid-May to get them through the complete process by the end of May. I appreciate those who got an early start. Don’t forget that mid-term evaluations are due to the Department by April 30. Promotion lists including preliminary reviewers and draft document are due by June 1. Thanks to all for getting set up with google scholar to facilitate the tracking of our publications. If you have not yet completed this and have questions, Terry Gentry has a great sheet of instructions for completing the process.

Our Academic Program Review is scheduled for March 6-9 with most faculty activities from noon on the 7th to noon on the 9th. We have a great review team. A special thanks to Terry Gentry for his leadership and Judy Young for getting us ready. Our future is bright and this is an opportunity to define it more clearly. Thanks to everyone for engaging to make a great review process happen.

This month left time for a pause as we mourned the loss of Dr. Jürg Blumenthal and other TAMU faculty that many of us worked with. Charlie Fenster also passed away. He was a mentor who played a key role in my career through his research demonstration efforts on our farm as I was growing up, and later as a co-author. He was always an enthusiastic visionary for dryland agriculture. With the retirement of Dr. Hons we had a great opportunity to reflect on how we make a difference as well. It is truly awesome how our roles in the department can make a difference for the world. Keep safe and keep up the great work!

It is exciting to participate in multiple visits with others around the campus to discuss major grant funding opportunities. A few examples this month include discussion on our cancer initiative, soil security, UAV’s, wheat genetics, and bio products. Congratulations to each of you for investing in this significant activity. Moving our department forward as a leader will require continued leadership by our faculty. Thanks to all!

Welcome to Murilo Maeda, who has joined our department as an Associate Research Scientist at Corpus Christi.
Dr. Larry Redmon, Texas A&M University soil and crop sciences associate department head and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service program leader, has been named a Regents Fellow by the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents.

The award was presented Feb. 10 at the 2014-2015 Regents Awards Reception and Dinner on the Texas A&M campus in College Station.

The Board established the Regents Fellow Service Awards program in 1998 to recognize employees who have made exemplary contributions to their university or agency and to the people of Texas.

Redmon's visionary, deliberate course, characterized by an ecological systems approach to natural resources, effective team building in program development and delivery, and a broad outreach through both technology and direct service, will have positive impacts across Texas and the nation for years to come, the nomination stated.

His research and educational outreach focus on establishment, management and utilization of forages to improve production systems and protect valuable natural resources.

"His work is renowned because it matters in many ways—for the environment, for the livestock industry and for people, from family farmers and small-acreage owners to major producers, land managers and rural and urban Texas residents alike," the nomination stated.

After earning his doctorate in range science from Texas A&M University in 1992, Redmon began a career as an Extension educator at Oklahoma State University. In 1999, he moved back to Texas to join AgriLife Extension, serving first at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center in Overton and became a professor in 2004.

In 2005, he became the agency's state forage specialist, based in College Station, where he pursued an additional master's degree in wildlife science. Redmon was named Bennett Trust Extension specialist in 2013.

Redmon manages a unique endowment to AgriLife Extension left by Eskel and Ruth Bennett. He also conducts Ranch Management University, an intensive four-day event targeting new or inexperienced ranchers and landowners, twice a year at the G. Rollie White Visitor's Center on the Texas A&M campus.

He was an integral part of creating Forage Fax, http://foragefax.tamu.edu, a website that allows subscribers to receive posts such as reminders to obtain a soil test, drought management recommendations, new products and information regarding critical pasture issues. The forages website http://forages.tamu.edu receives in excess of 600,000 requests annually.

Redmon collaborated on five Lone Star Healthy Streams manuals aimed at educating Texas livestock producers and land managers on how to best protect Texas waterways from bacterial contributions associated with livestock production and feral hogs.

He works closely with Texas A&M AgriLife Research faculty members to conduct the forage session at the three-day Texas A&M Beef Cattle Short Course. In his position on the board of directors of the Prescribed Burn Alliance of Texas, Redmon further confers with researchers and other AgriLife Extension faculty.

Redmon has served on numerous agency committees, including the Texas A&M AgriLife Water Initiative and the Extension Drought Incident Response Team, the Extension West Region Livestock Production Team, the Extension East Region Beef Cattle Management Team, the Extension East Region Small Acreage Education Team, and the Extension Beef Partnership with Extension Program Team.

He is a much sought after speaker on forage management, according to the nomination. To date, Redmon has participated in more than 1,100 AgriLife Extension county programs with direct contacts in excess of 73,000 individuals. He typically participates in more than 50 AgriLife Extension programs annually.

Redmon is a certified forage and grassland professional, certified wildlife biologist and a certified professional in rangeland management.

He has received two Certificate of Excellence awards from the American Society of Agronomy for the Lone Star Healthy Streams program, as well as for his electronic newsletter, "The Pasture Gazette."

At Texas A&M, Redmon and other members of the Hurricane Ike Saltwater Intrusion Response Team received the 2009 Vice Chancellor's Award in Excellence and the AgriLife Extension Superior Service Award. In 2004, a Vice Chancellor's Award in Excellence was conferred to Redmon's team for the Pasture and Livestock Management Workshop for Novices.

Most recently, Redmon was named an Outstanding Alumni of the Stephen F. Austin State University Department of Agriculture, the second such award ever presented by SFASU.
COLLEGE STATION – Dr. Bill Rooney, Texas A&M AgriLife Research Faculty Fellow and sorghum breeder, has been named a Regents Professor by the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents.

The award was presented Feb. 10 at the 2014-2015 Regents Awards Reception and Dinner on the Texas A&M campus in College Station.

The Board established the Regents Professor Awards program in 1996 and the Regents Fellow Service Awards program in 1998 to recognize employees who have made exemplary contributions to their university or agency and to the people of Texas.

Rooney has made unprecedented headway in the area of new sorghum-based bioenergy crops that are now considered by many across the industry as one of the leading feedstocks for the future bioenergy economy, his nomination stated.

To make these endeavors successful, he has continuously engaged peers, unit heads, administration to develop interdisciplinary teams to implement strategic initiatives to strengthen AgriLife's overall mission in these areas, while remaining true to its core value of excellence.

Rooney helped spearhead integrated programs leading to millions of dollars in sponsored research and development with industry, state and federal institutions, according to the nomination.

He has also helped lead recent transformational activities for intellectual property strategies, management and commercialization programs across AgriLife Research, in close coordination with Texas A&M University System's Office of Technology Commercialization.

He manages an active breeding program with locations throughout Texas, Puerto Rico, Brazil and Central America with research activities in grain, forage and bioenergy sorghum biotypes. He interacts with other AgriLife Research scientists in many affiliated disciplines such as molecular genetics, plant pathologists, entomologists and agronomists, as well as sorghum researchers nationally and internationally.

The program has strong ties to the sorghum seed industry, interacting with them to test and evaluate new sorghum germplasm as well as to commercialize new and novel sorghum types for specific and unique markets, the nomination stated. The breeding program provides the basis for both genetic research and graduate student training.

The students are trained in the conduct of an applied, aggressive plant breeding program. The majority of his graduated students are employed in the plant breeding industry throughout the U.S. or in an academic career, the nomination stated.

Rooney has served as chair of the AgriLife Plant Release Committee since 2001. This committee reviews all proposed plant variety and germplasm releases to ensure the scientific merit of the release. He is member of the AgriLife Energy Grand Challenges committee and served as a member, then chair, of the College Promotion and Tenure Peer Review Committee.

As a professor in the Texas A&M soil and crops department, Rooney has focused on advising graduate students with an emphasis on plant breeding. Over his faculty career, he has served as chair for 20 master's degree students and a committee member for an additional 13 master's students. He has been the major advisor for 22 doctorate degrees and served on the committee of an additional 29 doctorate students.

Currently he is advising eight doctoral students and four master's students and serves on the committee of eight doctoral students and one master's student.

Rooney's research has been recognized by invited presentations and recognition and service, the nomination stated. He has presented over 30 invited presentations both nationally and in China, Australia, South Korea, Greece, India, Brazil, Mexico, South Africa, Ethiopia, Zambia and El Salvador.

Rooney earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from Texas A&M and his doctorate from the University of Minnesota. He worked for two years at Kansas State University before starting his 20-year career at Texas A&M.

He has received the Texas A&M University Office of Technology Commercialization Innovation Award, the AgriLife Research Faculty Fellow and was a Research Team Award recipient from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.
Nearly 100 soil scientists gathered in the Rudder Conference Center to hear presentations, industry updates and student research presentations during the 53rd annual Soil Survey and Land Workshop February 4th and 5th.

Students from Texas A&M and Baylor were judged as they presented their research to workshop participants. Ryan Mushinski, a PhD student at A&M, and William Lukens of Baylor tied for first place in the presentation competition. Matthew Bean, a masters student in Soil and Crop Sciences at A&M, placed second.

Mushinski, an Ecosystem Science and Management major, is co-chaired by Dr. Tom Boutton (ESSM) and Dr. Terry Gentry (SCSC). He spoke about effect of timber harvest on forest soil carbon and nitrogen stocks.

Bean, co-chaired by Dr. Jamie Foster and Dr. Cristine Morgan, presented research examining the effect of no-till management practices on a semi-arid sorghum-cotton crop rotation.
Graduate Students from the Texas A&M University Soil and Crop Sciences Department brought home awards from the 2016 Annual Meeting of the Southern Regional Branch of the Agronomy Society of America, which was held February 7-9 in San Antonio.

Partson Mubvumba, who is co-chaired by Drs. Frank Hons and Paul DeLaune, claimed second place among the graduate students for his oral presentation in soils, and third place with his soils poster.

Sumit Sharma, who is co-chaired by Dr. Nithya Rajan, placed second with his poster on the soil respiration. Sharma who had been at Texas Tech working with Dr. Steven Maas, transferred to A&M in January.

Yong Chen placed third in the graduate student poster contest for crops with his poster exploring the effects of land use change on water quality. He is co-chaired by Dr. Nithya Rajan and Dr. Srinivasulu Ale.

The Southern Regional Branch of ASA comprises the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, the Virgin Islands, Virginia, and Texas.

Students from several colleges and universities competed, including Auburn University, the University of Arkansas, Mississippi State University, and others.
Matthew Bean, a Masters student in Agronomy, placed second with his oral presentation at the 53rd Annual Soil Survey and Land Resource Workshop held Feb. 4-5 in College Station.

His research evaluates the impact of no-till management practices on a semi-arid cropping rotation using cotton and sorghum. Matthew is co-chaired by Dr. Jamie Foster and Dr. Cristine Morgan.

Sabrina Alam, a PhD candidate in Soil Science, won the Dixon Award at the Soil Science Society of America annual meeting.

This award, which was endowed in honor of Dr. Joe B. and Martha Dixon, is presented to the top graduate poster or presentation in the soil mineralogy division.

Sabrina’s research involves modifying smectites to minimize protein’s interference on aflatoxin adsorption. She is chaired by Dr. Youjun Deng.

Morgan Carlson, a Masters student in Weed Science, won first place in the MS poster contest at the Weed Science Society of America annual meeting recently held in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Morgan’s research focuses on understanding the gene flow between crop sorghum and johnsongrass.

She is chaired by Dr. Muthu Bagavathiannan, and works closely with Drs. Bill Rooney and George Hodnett in the sorghum breeding program.
Silvano Ocheya won first place with his poster at the Texas A&M Plant Breeding Symposium February 18.

Silvano is working on his PhD in Plant Breeding. His research involves the genetic mapping of QTL associated with different traits in wheat including grain yield, yield components, agronomic traits and end-use quality.

His poster focused on the mapping and QTL analysis for end-use quality.

Silvano is chaired by Amir Ibrahim and Shuyu Liu.

Geraldo De Carvalho placed second with his poster at the Texas A&M Plant Breeding Symposium February 18.

He is working on his PhD in Plant Breeding, primarily in sorghum.

Geraldo’s poster was titled “Predicting Juice Yield Using Stem Properties in Sorghum”.

His research is geared toward increasing sugar yield in sorghum to increase the economics of its use in ethanol production.

Geraldo is chaired by Dr. Bill Rooney.
More than one hundred fifty people attended the 2nd Annual Plant Breeding Symposium held February 18, in the MSC Bethancourt Ballroom on the Texas A&M University campus. An additional eighty-five participated via the webinar.

According to Ammani Kyanam, one of the graduate students coordinating this year’s event, the webinar participants tuned in from four different countries. There were students from several other colleges/universities, and a large number from the industry.

This year’s symposium, title “Healthier Food for a Healthier World”, featured speakers from DuPont, CIMMYT, and several universities from across the U.S. In addition, three Soil and Crop Sciences grad students, Alfred Delgado, Sarah Ajayi, and Nicholas Pugh, were selected to present their research during the symposium.

A visiting, potential Masters student, Samuel Vigue, was impressed by the way the symposium was run. He has been at other symposia, and he really appreciated that the presenters here focused on the benefits of the research rather than just the technical aspects.

“I am glad he picked up on that,” stated Dustin Wilkerson, another of the six graduate students on the organizing committee. “We wanted to focus on the human benefits and to highlight the desired end result of the research. I am glad it was evident.”

“As to the success of the webinar, I think it really speaks to the credit of our speakers and to Texas A&M University’s reputation to have people from all over the world join our webinar,” Wilkerson stated.

The entire organizing committee considers web access to be a crucial part of the symposium, and will definitely include a webinar again next year.

In conjunction with the symposium, graduate students participated in a research poster contest. First place went to Silvano Ocheya, who is working on his PhD in Plant Breeding; second place was Geraldo De Carvalho, who is also a PHD student in Plant Breeding; and third place went to Tessa Ries, a Masters student in Plant Pathology.

The annual event, put on by the Plant Breeding and Genetics Graduate Student Organization, is part of the DuPont Plant Sciences Symposia Series presented by DuPont Pioneer. The series connects similar events at universities around the world. The event was also sponsored by Cotton, Inc., Texas A&M’s Office of Graduate and Professional Studies, Texas A&M’s Departments of Soil and Crop Sciences, Horticulture, and Biology, Texas A&M’s College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Texas A&M’s C.O.A.L.S. Council, Ronin Cooking, Seed Saver’s Exchange, and Johnny’s Select Seeds.

This year’s organizers were Kyanam, Wilkerson, Francisco Gomez, Brian Pfeiffer, Laura Masor, and Smit Dhakal.
More from the 2016 Plant Breeding Symposium
Agronomic Irrigation Management One Key to Maximizing Corn Yields

Dr. Jourdan Bell, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service agronomist in Amarillo, spoke at the High Plains Irrigation Conference and Trade Show in Amarillo in early February.

At that conference she stated that good irrigation will not compensate for bad agronomic practices.

“While crop water use is driven by environmental demands, agronomic management can also affect water management,” Bell said. “It is important producers realize there is a synergy between agronomics and irrigation to reach yield goals. Efficient water use equals yield, and yield equals money.”

Bell told producers there are several corn hybrid characteristics that should be considered including maturity, drought tolerance, ear flex and others. She stated that knowledge of these characteristics is important to maximizing crop water use.

According to Bell, Texas A&M AgriLife Research crop stress physiologist Dr. Qingwu Xue studied drought-tolerant hybrids using three different irrigation regimes. He determined that 30 inches of seasonal crop water use is about the maximum needed.

Watershed Workshop to focus on Village Creek-Lake Arlington March 10

A Texas Watershed Steward workshop on water quality and water management related to the Village Creek-Lake Arlington watershed will be held from 1-5 p.m. March 10 at the Trinity River Authority of Texas General Office, 5300 S. Collins St. in Arlington.

Doors will open at noon for networking and a free lunch will be provided for attendees who pre-register by March 8.

For more information, go to the website or contact Michael Kuitu at 979-862-4457, mkuitu@tamu.edu; Fred Hall at 817-884-1946, fmhall@ag.tamu.edu; or Aaron Hoff at 817-493-5581, hoffa@trinityra.org.
Texas A&M AgriLife Research is closing in on specific genetic traits in wheat that can help increase yields in the future.

Dr. Shuyu Liu, AgriLife Research small grains geneticist in Amarillo, said they are narrowing the knowledge gap as to where key traits are in the wheat genome and how to access them.

“Our goal is to develop improved wheat varieties with high yield capability and resilience to a variety of stressors across differing climates and water resource availability,” Liu said.

The AgriLife Research study included teams led by Dr. Jackie Rudd and Dr. Amir Ibrahim, wheat breeders in Amarillo and College Station, respectively; Dr. Dirk Hays, plant geneticist in College Station; and Dr. Qingwu Xue, crop stress physiologist in Amarillo.

Their study included three wheat populations derived from two popular AgriLife Research cultivars, TAM 111 and TAM 112, and other diverse wheats.

Rudd said the importance of this research should not be lost in the technical jargon.

“We have talked about using genetic markers for many years now, but this research moves us from ‘proof of concept’ to actual practice in our TAM wheat germplasm,” he said. “To be able to accelerate the movement of greenbug and wheat curl mite resistance from TAM 112 into new varieties is huge.”

Single nucleotide polymorphisms, known as SNPs, are the most common type of genetic variation in a plant, animal or human. Each SNP represents a difference in a single DNA building block, called a nucleotide. Those variations are found throughout the wheat DNA and act as biological markers, helping scientists locate genes that are associated with a certain trait or characteristic.

“For instance, we are working to identify major genes controlling yield under dryland and irrigation conditions,” Liu said. “Data is collected from multiple environments so we can focus on how major genes contribute to yield improvement under different climates.”

Silvano Ocheya, a doctoral student of Liu’s who is completing his thesis research, has already mapped 6,000 of the SNPs, including those pinpointing drought tolerance and wheat streak mosaic virus characteristics, in one of the three mapping populations.

Liu’s lab has also developed high throughput molecular markers for greenbug and wheat curl mite resistance, and are studying the interaction between genes and the environment.

“For instance, we are working to identify major genes controlling yield under dryland and irrigation conditions,” Liu said. “Data is collected from multiple environments so we can focus on how major genes contribute to yield improvement under different climates.”

All this information will help breeders incorporate key genes associated with the traits and get the new enhanced varieties to producers sooner, he said.
The Time for Hybrid Wheat has Come

There’s growing interest in hybrid wheat and Dr. Amir Ibrahim, a Texas A&M AgriLife Research wheat breeder in College Station, believes the time is right to make it available.

Ibrahim has been working toward the development of hybrid wheat varieties since 2013, but wheat breeders first began looking at hybridization in wheat more than 50 years ago in the early 1960s, he said.

“The price for wheat was so low, and the cost for the hybrid seed was too high at the time,” he said. “Today we have a better handle on the genes and better prices and availability of genomic tools.”

According to Ibrahim, it is something that is needed. Wheat production yield potential has been leveling off and “this is one way to break that barrier.”

The performance of the TAM varieties of wheat developed by AgriLife Research’s wheat breeding team has been improving across the state and into other states with diverse climates, providing a solid base of germplasm.

“Within five years, I hope we can have the first commercially available hybrid seed available for producers,” Ibrahim said.

Regional Sorghum Program March 3 in Plainview

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension will be holding their second Regional Sorghum Program at the Ollie Liner Center in Plainview, Tx, March 3, beginning at 8:00 a.m.

Topics that will be covered include: sorghum soil and water relationships, the sugarcane aphid, weed management options, and risk management/profitability outlook.

Participants may earn two Texas Department of Agriculture continuing education units in integrated pest management.

For more information contact:
Danny Nusser, AgriLife Extension program leader, North Region
(806) 677-5600 or dnusser@ag.tamu.edu
The Aggie Turf Club recently attended the GCSAA Golf Industry Show (GIS) in San Diego, CA. This show is a highlight of the college experience for many students, with travel to the show supported largely through donations and club fund raising efforts over the previous year.

At GIS, students gained exposure to the turf and landscape industry through attending the trade show, as well as networking with industry, alumni, and prospective employers from around the world. At the Jacobsen and Toro trade show booths, they learned about new products and technologies for golf course management.

Students also participated in the John Deere Collegiate Turf Bowl, along with 65 other teams from universities across North America. The students finished strong in the competition, and represented the university well.

Spring Ranch Management University Set for April 4-8

Ranch Management University, a five day event targeted at new or inexperienced landowners, will be held in College Station April 4-8, according to Larry Redmon, Texas A&M University soil and crop sciences associate department head and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service program leader.

The course is taught primarily by AgriLife Extension specialists at the G. Rollie White Visitor’s Center, 7707 Raymond Stotzer Parkway (Hwy 60). Subjects include, but are not limited to, basic soils, watersheds, feral hogs, cattle and horse production, weed and brush management, wildlife and farm pond management.

Attendance is limited to 40 people. Registration is $500 with meals and a flash drive containing more than 100 ranch resource management publications included.

For more information, or to register online go to: http://agriliferegister.tamu.edu and enter “ranch management” into the search window; or contact Redmon at 979-845-4826 or l-redmon@tamu.edu

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Students also participated in the John Deere Collegiate Turf Bowl, along with 65 other teams from universities across North America. The students finished strong in the competition, and represented the university well.
Shirley Engelke, a junior Weed Science major, received a $2,000 Undergraduate Research Award from the Weed Science Society of America (WSSA).

In addition to the financial assistance, Shirley will have an opportunity to present her findings at the 2017 WSSA annual meeting in Tuscon, Arizona.

This award is given at a national level to attract students to the field of weed science as well as to encourage undergraduate research.

Shirley works with Dr. Muthu Bagavathiannan. Her research focuses on characterizing the genetic and phenotypic diversity of Echinochloa populations infesting Texas rice fields.

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3rd Annual Bennett Trust Land Stewardship Conference Scheduled

The conference, which will be held at the Inn of the Hills Resort and Conference Center April 14 and 15, is hosted by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and funded by the Ruth and Eskel Bennett Endowment.

Speakers will cover a variety of topics including water, managing for the whole, managing deep root invasions, managing warm-blooded invaders, 1-d-1 valuations, and more.

Cost of the two-day conference is $75 and includes all meals, break refreshments and tour transportation costs.

Registration will begin at 7:30 a.m. April 14, with the program beginning at 8:00.

The second day of the conference will be dedicated to tours. Participants will select one of following: a tour of the Hillingdon Ranch in Kendall County, a “Wine and Roses” tour in Gillespie County, or a Kerr Wildlife Area tour.

Register on-line at https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/BennettTrust or by calling (979) 845-2604

For more information, contact Dr. Larry Redmon at l-redmon@tamu.edu, Dr. Rick Machen at r-machen@tamu.edu, or an AgriLife Extension agent in the region.

A complete list of the topics and speakers can be found in an article by Kay Ledbetter in AgriLife Today.
Planting starts for the Crop Testing Program

The Crop Testing crew started planting in the valley this month. The team planted at Monte Alto on February 18 and is working their way up the coast.

If things go as scheduled, all of their coastal region test plots will be planted by March 1.

They are excited to announce that the Crop Testing Program now has its very own Facebook page. There will be updates throughout the year on planting status, harvest status, and everything in between for all locations we cover.

Check them out at facebook.com/tamuctp

Dr. Cristine Morgan participated in NRCS Webinar

Dr. Morgan spoke during a webinar to discuss her work with Vis-NIR to detect soil properties.

The webinar reached approximately 180 people, and is now available on YouTube.

Vis-NIR, or visible and Near Infra-Red Spectroscopy measures the reflection of white light from soils.

According to Dr. Morgan’s research, the ways in which the light is reflected indicates many soil properties including: clay content, clay mineralogy, organic carbon, inorganic carbon, iron, cationic exchange capacity, and petroleum hydrocarbons.

To hear her presentation go to: https://www.youtube.com/user/nrcsnnsc

It’s a busy time for the Corn Breeding and Genetics Crew!

Dr. Seth Murray and his crew have been busy sorting seeds in preparation for planting.

He expects to plant between 8,000 and 12,000 germplasms this spring.

Some of the seeds are part of an on-going research program involving 34 sites nation wide.
It’s Crabgrass Time Again

Given the recent warm temperatures in North Texas, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service experts have put out the word that now is the time to treat for crabgrass.

“With soil temperatures rising to the upper 50s and low 60s, we may see crabgrass germination very soon, especially if we get rain,” said Janet Hurley, AgriLife Extension program specialist at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center in Dallas. “Now is a great time to apply pre-emergent herbicides.”

Hurley said crabgrass germination typically occurs in late winter, but varies from year to year based on temperature, rainfall and location.

Dr. Matt Elmore, AgriLife Extension turfgrass specialist at the Dallas center, recently recommended homeowners and others who take care of turfgrass areas, such as groundskeepers and athletic field managers, apply pre-emergent herbicides in the very near future.

Elmore said when looking for crabgrass seedlings, walk along south-facing slopes, bare areas and areas along sidewalks.

Most pre-emergence herbicides must be applied before the target weed germinates or emerges or they will not control them.

Some of the common active ingredients in pre-emergence products available to homeowners include pendimethalin, dithiopyr and prodiamine. Trade names for these products include Pre-M, Bonide Crabgrass Preventer and Halts Crabgrass Preventer.

Hurley noted corn gluten meal is an organic option for crabgrass control, and while research has shown crabgrass control with this product is inconsistent, it may be effective in some situations.

To read the entire article click here

More information is available on the Aggie Turf website: https://aggieturf.tamu.edu/turfgrass-weeds/large-crabgrass/
Retirements and Resignations

The Soil and Crop Sciences said goodbye to three employees this month, Dr. Frank Hons, Sonny Feagley and Leann Chmelar.

Dr. Hons career was celebrated February 26 at the Pebble Creek Country Club. He retired after 44 years of research and teaching, but his work, and the graduate students he has inspired, will continue to have an impact for many years.

Dr. Hons will not disappear immediately, however, as he will continue to work part-time to finish several projects and to help his current graduate students complete their degrees.

Sonny Feagley retired effective February 28. She had served more than seven years as a Business Coordinator for the department.

Leann Chmelar and her husband have a commercial chicken operation to which Leann has decided to devote her full attention. She had been the Administrative Assistant to Drs. Baumann, Feagley, Schnell and Reynolds since July 2013.

More photos from Dr. Hons retirement celebration are available at: https://www.flickr.com/photos/tamu-soilcrop/albums/72157662941108713
In Sympathy

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

Dr. Paul Schwab and his family are dealing with the loss of his mother who passed away February 9.

Dr. Richard White and his family are dealing with the loss of his mother-in-law, Dr. Margaret Sitton, who passed away February 8.

The family of Dr. Jürg Blumenthal, who passed away February 15.

Concerns

Please keep Dr. Joe Dixon in your thoughts as he continues his recovery from heart issues at Crestview, 2505 Villa Maria Rd., Bryan in room 2303. He had been admitted to the College Station Medical Center on February 1.
March

1-2 - Annual Review in Corpus Christi
1 - Permian Basin Cotton Conference, Big Spring, TX
   Contact: t-yeater@tamu.edu
1-4 - 36th Biennial Rice Technical Working Group meeting
   Contact: ltarpley@tamu.edu or lt-wilson@aesrg.tamu.edu
3 - Regional Sorghum Program - Ollie Liner Center, Plainview
   Contact: dnuesser@ag.tamu.edu
4 - Lone Star Healthy Streams workshop - Hempstead TX
   Contact: matthew.brown@tamu.edu
4 - Bailey County Feed Grains Conference - Muleshoe, TX
   Contact: c-preston@tamu.edu
6-12 - National Groundwater Awareness Week
   Contact: dgholson@tamu.edu
10 - Texas Watershed Steward workshop - Arlington
   Contact: mkuitu@tamu.edu
30 - Texas Well Owner Network Training - Gatesville
   Contact: http://twon.tamu.edu/training

April

4-8 - Ranch Management University, G. Rollie White Visitor’s Ctr. College Station
   Contact: l-redmon@tamu.edu
14-15 - Bennett Trust Resource Stewardship Conference, Kerrville
   Contact: l-redmon@tamu.edu or r-machen@tamu.edu
26 - Forage Workshop - Ronnie Dowdle Farm, Waco
   Contact: s-mclellan@tamu.edu