



...A report to Soil & Crop Sciences Faculty by David Baltensperger

<http://soilcrop.tamu.edu> February 1, 2007

It has been an exciting start to 2007, with the Statewide Ag Conference, and the Beltwide Cotton Conference providing an opportunity for our faculty and students to showcase their talents.

At the Beltwide we had four students receive awards. In the oral presentation, Justin Scheiner won second place and \$200. In the poster competition, Justin captured the \$300 first place award and Josh Bynum won \$100 for third place. Nilesh Dighe took first place and \$200 with Polly Longenberger winning second place and \$100 in the Graduate Student Paper Competition.

At the Statewide Ag Conference a poster by Ronnie Schnell was recognized as the top poster for which he won 1st place and \$500. Scott Stanislav won 2nd place and \$200 for his poster. Congratulations to Scott and Ronnie.

Congratulations to Dr. Jim McAfee on being named as the recipient of the 2006 Dr. William H. Daniel Award for excellence in teaching, research and extension at the National Sports Turf Conference in San Antonio.

Most of the department was able to participate in our faculty meeting on January 10, but for those of you that missed it, a list of the award recipients is attached. A special thanks to the staff and faculty that made it go so smoothly-- even though my voice disappeared for the day and then a few more days. Carol Rhodes should be recognized for getting it all organized. My highlight of the meeting was the press release made during the Beltwide Cotton conference the day before, that a commitment to fund an endowment for both a chair position in Plant Breeding and International Crop Improvement and a cotton breeding and production assistantship program were announced by Monsanto. A press release on this announcement can be

found on the next page.

On Friday the 12th, I had the opportunity to participate in a department head continuing education program on balancing our priorities. This was followed with a long weekend and an ice storm that delayed getting back to work until Thursday. This was fortuitous as it gave me an opportunity to recover my voice a bit and get rid of the worst part of my first Texas cold. Several have since claimed that I shared it with them, but as it lingers on, I think I had my very own unshared version. The rest of the week was spent preparing for our interviews for the wheat breeding position.

The wheat interviews kept us busy on Monday as we had to reschedule due to the weather. The first two interviews were in College Station on Tuesday and Thursday and then the interviewees went to Lubbock on Wednesday and Friday. We will finish up the interviews this week with a Monday-Tuesday visit and Wednesday-Thursday visit. Thanks to so many students and faculty for participating in the interview process and to the staff for making the adjustments to keep things going smoothly.

We wrapped up the initial screening of our forage extension candidates during the week and will initiate the interview process as soon as possible.

We are nearing the deadline for applications for the soil mineralogy position which is February 15, so this is the time to make any last minute calls to encourage applications. We also need to support the search for a turf breeder at Dallas and an Environmental Soil Scientist at Vernon.

On Friday I met with Vice Chancellor Murano to discuss some of the issues a new department head bumps into and to try to get a sense of the

expectations for the strategic planning and budgeting process that needs to be completed by March 1. This is an exciting time as we look at greater departmental control of the budgeting process. This in turn places greater emphasis on our need for strategic planning. Saturday I was able to meet with Dr. Hussey to cover some specifics on potential positions, priorities and follow-up on our departmental review. The departmental review, the tremendous work the various faculty groups have done to outline issues and opportunities, and the various advisory groups that we are forming should position us well for a solid presentation of our efforts.

This week I will be working with the TAES administration to finalize some bio-energy proposals, participating in the Cotton Physiology/ Harvest Aid group and welcoming the Soil Survey and Land Resource Conference to campus. In addition, there are the wheat interviews, working on bonus adjustments for TAES and TCE and getting the new faculty advisory group organized. Those elected to the committee are: Frank Hons, Dave Zuberer, Tom Cothren, Robert Lemon, Dave Stelly, Loyd Rooney, and Monte Rouquette. Be sure and share your ideas for things that need to change with them, Wayne, Travis or I as we will be developing our strategic plan and supporting budget for presentation to administration on March 1.

One of the exciting things that I think we should all consider is the improved outlook on crop prices. For the first time in many years it appears that we are entering a demand driven market for many of the crops we produce in Texas. It seems that if this trend continues we will be able to expect an even greater demand for our graduates as input industries expand to meet the need for increased crop production. We need to be proactive in recruiting students

to meet these needs and opportunities. Any thoughts as to how we might bring more students into our programs will be appreciated.

David

NEW FACES

Jon Snider, former student and golf course superintendent at Miramont is teaching the undergraduate course, AGRO 430, Turfgrass Maintenance, this semester.

Slick Fellowship

Sarah Lancaster with Scott Senseman and Les Kuhlman with Bill Rooney have been awarded the Slick Fellowship. This award recognizes outstanding work in the Department of Soil and Crop Sciences and across the College. Requirements are that the student has completed course work and prelims, and thus predominately engaged with the completion of their research for their Ph.D. We **congratulate** you for this outstanding recognition.

Soil & Crop Departmental Awards For 2006

SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Judy A. Young - *Administrative Support*

James McAfee - *Extension*

Changel Scheuring - *Research Support*

Gary Nimr - *Technical Support Staff*

Morgan Arnett - *Undergraduate Student Support*

Brad Westmoreland - *Graduate Teaching*

Gary Bomar - *Collaborating County Extension Agent*

John Cosper, Mike McBee, & Glenn Rod - *Outstanding Collaboration with our Teaching and Turf Programs*

SERVICE PINS FOR 2006

10 YEARS: Donna Prochaska - *TAES*

30 YEARS: Tom Hallmark - *TAES*

Delroy Collins - *TAES*

Donald Vietor - *TAES & TAMU*

Frank Hons - *TAMU*

Southern Weed Science Society 2007

Peter Dotray and his weed team attended the 2007 Southern Weed Science Society. Max Batla and Adam Ford participated in the speech contest and Matt Schwertner also participated in the poster contest. All three students did an exceptional job and Matt brought home a second place ribbon. **Congratulations!**

Texas A&M, ag company establish \$2.5 million endowment
January 10th, 2007 10:01 am
Nobel Peace Prize winner has university chair



*By Associated Press
Austin-American Statesman
Fort Worth Star-Telegram
Dallas Morning News
January 10, 2007*

The man who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1970 now has a \$2.5 million endowed chair at Texas A&M University to support plant breeding and crop improvement.

Norman Borlaug, 92, won the Swedish honor in 1970 for developing high-yield wheat varieties. Heavily involved in the Green Revolution of the 1960s, Borlaug currently is a distinguished professor of international agriculture at Texas A&M in College Station.

"We consider this a tremendous opportunity to continue Dr. Borlaug's legacy," said Elsa Murano, vice chancellor and dean of agriculture at A&M, said.

The announcement of the Borlaug-Monsanto Chair for Plant Breeding and International Crop Improvement came Tuesday at the Beltwide Cotton Conferences in New Orleans. Borlaug was not in attendance.

Borlaug's work aimed at increasing and diversifying crop yields in parts of the world where agriculture was less developed than in the United States, saving thousands of lives through his research advances.

Funding for the endowed chair comes from Monsanto, which provides technology-based solutions and agricultural products to improve farm productivity and food quality.

Position Updates:

- Turf Breeding Position at Dallas—Advertised
- Environmental Soil Scientist at Vernon—Advertised
- Soil Clay Mineralogist at College Station—Advertised
- Extension Forage Specialist at Overton—Interviews scheduled
- Wheat Breeder at College Station—Interviews completed

UPCOMING SEMINARS

February 7- Brazil Report

14 - Jorge daSilva

21 - Lloyd Nelson

28 - Milt Engelke

All February seminars are from 4:00 - 5:00 pm.

Future Events

- **March 14 - 16** - Spring Break
- **April 12** - 2007 Awards Banquet - Reception begins at 6:30 pm at the MSC in room 229
- Faculty Performance Evaluations - Please call Judy immediately if you have not arranged a date
- Staff Performance Evaluations - Begin March 1
- FUTURE STATEWIDE FACULTY MEETINGS: *(at noon in room 440, brown bag lunch)*
Tuesday, March 6 th - Wednesday, June 6th - Tuesday, October 9th

New Computers

Thanks to computer access fees, eight new computers have been installed in the Undergraduate Computer Room of the Heep Center.

IN MEMORY

Dr. John Sinclair Rogers

March 5, 1917 - January 16, 2007

Dr. Rogers was employed by the Texas Agriculture Experiment Station at Texas A&M from 1938-1956, then served as head of the Department of Agronomy at Texas A&M from 1956-1958. From 1958-1979, he was employed by Asgrow Seed Company, serving as Director of Research from 1961-1979. In recent years, he served as a consultant for the Douglas King Seed Company of San Antonio.

Dr. Rogers was active in industry organizations during his career, serving as President of the Agricultural Research Institute, American Seed Research Foundation, National Council of Commercial Plant Breeders, Texas Certified Seed Producers Association, and as Chairman of the Corn and Sorghum Division of the American Seed Trade Association. He was also a fellow of the American Society of Agronomy and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. In 1955, he was presented the annual award for outstanding contributions to the seed industry from the Southern Seedmen's Association.

If you have future events for the Aggie Agenda, please send them to Judy Young at:
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