Faculty and Staff Recognition

Karen Hudson received a new award - Soybean Field Work - for $19,470. This award is sponsored by the USDA/ARS and is from 6/1/13-5/31/14.

Shaun Casteel received an award sponsored by the Monsanto Company. He received the Saved Soybean Seed: Genetics award for $6,000 from 4/1/13 to 3/31/14.

Samantha McFarland was awarded the 2013 Business Office Service Award. The faculty have come to rely on Samantha’s expertise as they look to her for budget analysis, problem solving and ensuring they are making the best use of grants funds to further their research and to fulfill the obligations delineated in the grants.”

Updates in Agronomy

Some of the Business Office Staff have moved into a new location, last month. Patsy King and Sherron Myers are located in Room 2-426. Cheryl Long, Brenda Warren and Mary Wise will be located in Room 2-448.

Mary Wise will be joining the Agronomy Department Business Office Staff on July 8th. She will be the department contact person for Bi-weekly Payroll, Travel (Concur), Driver Approval, and collection of all cash and checks.

4-H Round-Up is a three day educational experience designed for youth who have completed 7th-9th grade. Participants can develop leadership skills, stimulate individual growth, learn about educational opportunities of college life and experience in-depth action learning in specific interest area. Purdue Agronomy hosted three sessions about soils.

Pictured is Sherry Fulk-Bringman teaching a group about clay and how it is used daily.

June 12-14th was the 4-H Plant, Insect, Natural resources and Environment (PINE) Workshop. The workshop is designed for student in high school who want to learn about science of animals, plants, food, computers, engineering, aerospace, robotics, renewable energy and personal finance.

Sherry Fulk-Bringman is teaching students about soil being a filter for our water source.
Nine days in June were dedicated to inviting our incoming freshman to meet department representatives and register for classes, for the fall semester. During Summer Transition, Advising and Registration (STAR) Agronomy saw 22 students and NRES saw 12.

Cale Bigelow, is helping a student with his log in information.
Purdue Agronomy Graduate Students stand out as Tri-Societies Fellows

Jennifer Burks, a Agronomy graduate student and recent graduate of the Ecological Sciences and Engineering (ESE) Interdisciplinary Graduate Program, accepted the Congressional Science Policy Fellowship from the Tri-Societies. She will be working on Capitol Hill, in Washington DC, for one year advising congressional staff about scientific information and how it relates to legislation.

Burks attended Earlham College for her undergraduate degree where she graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Biology and a minor in Chemistry. During her time at Earlham College, she discovered an interest for environmental science. She was co-advised by Dr. Sylvie Brouder and Dr. Jeff Volenec in the ESE Program.

Burks said she had several professor’s interested in working with her, but she had the opportunity take part in a fellowship with Dr. Brouder.

“One aspect of the ESE program that caught my interest was its ability to accommodate the broad interests I had coming into graduate school. After meeting with Drs. Brouder and Volenec multiple times regarding the bioenergy project and being exposed to their ongoing research and labs, it became very apparent to me that I wanted to conduct my doctoral research on the eco-physiology of perennial bioenergy systems under their guidance,” Burks said.

The Congressional Science Policy Fellowship for the Tri-Societies is a one-year position that is designed to make practical contributions to the more effective use of science and technical knowledge in government, to demonstrate the value of such science-government interaction, to inform the scientific and educational communities about public policy and the legislative process and to provide unique public policy learning experience.

“I was interested in a position like this for the last six months to a year of my graduate program,” Burks said. “I attended the annual meeting of the Tri-Societies and spoke with the policy director about available positions. I applied a few months before graduating and am very excited to start in September.”

Dr. Joe Anderson, Purdue Agronomy Department Head said he does not know of another student that is such a strong and effective leader amongst her peers, has the ability to share her knowledge to diverse audiences, with a strong interest in science policy and is at the leading edge of ecosystem bio-energy research.

“This combination is rare and Jennifer seems to blend these attributes easily and seamlessly. There is no doubt in my mind that she will continue to make significant contributions to agronomic science and policy throughout her career,” Anderson said.

Purdue Agronomy will have two graduates, back-to-back, who are Congressional Fellows for the Tri-Societies. Samantha Shoaf, an Agronomy graduate who worked with Dr. Herb Ohm while obtaining her Ph.D., accepted the same fellowship, a year earlier.

“I first learned of this opportunity in my senior year of undergraduate study at the University of Florida, during the ASA-CSSA-SSSA meeting, when I was a Golden Opportunity Scholar,” Shoaf said.

“This fellowship offers a unique vantage on the political and legislative processes that affect our everyday lives and research institutions. I was particularly interested in gaining insight into Congress that most researchers and professors never consider beyond mild, persistent frustration. This fellowship grants unparalleled access to the professionals who work to shape our legislation, and therefore the regulatory climate that affects research, innovation and product development; it is also an opportunity to build a professional network.”

Shoaf also found the experience had given her a new perspective on being an agronomist.

“This fellowship has really broadened me as an agronomist. In research, so often you work to become more and more specialized, specific, an expert on the details. In this work, I have had to learn how to quickly become proficient in a wide range of topics. In a typical day, I may meet or speak with stakeholders from five different aspects of the agricultural industry, and need to be up-to-speed on their roles, needs, and concerns. So that might be a meeting with pork producers,
A Look Back

Provided By
Dr. Bill McFee

Agronomy in the Seventies

The Decade of the seventies saw growth and development of excellence in Agronomy. The Department Head, Dr. J.B. Peterson was succeeded by Marvin Phillips in June of 1971. Marvin had the assistance of an experienced secretary in his new position, Sandy Brower Spitznagle, who retired just a few days ago, June 30, 2013. Some highlights from material recorded by Professors Peterson and Patterson follow: AGRY 355, Soil Judging; AGRY 210, Turf Management; AGRY 305, Grain Grading; and AGRY 306, Seed Technology were added to undergraduate course offerings in the decade. The Senior Steak Fry, an event allowing staff members to host a graduating senior, was initiated in the early seventies and has become quite a tradition. It was noted that student contact hours in 1975-76 had nearly doubled since 1972. An Agronomy undergraduate Co-op Program was initiated in 1975-76 and by 1979 had 38 students involved. In 1976-77, Jim Ahlrichs was named the AMOCO Outstanding University Undergraduate Teacher and Jim Vorst received the NACTA National Teaching Award the following year. The Crops Judging Team coached by Eldon Hood won the national contest at Kansas City. Effective Oct 11, 1976 the Ph. D. foreign language requirement was dropped. Numerous recognitions came to faculty in the seventies including prestigious offices: Patterson, President ASA 1976, Low, President SSSA 1972, Moldenhauer, President SCS 1979. A few of the many awards received include: Outstanding Teacher in School of Ag. Bill McFee 1972, Jim Ahlrichs 1977; ASA_CIBA Geigy Award, Vic Lectenberg in 1978 and Darrell Nelson in 1979; ASA Agronomic Research Award, Al Ohlrogge, 1975; ASA Service award, Bill Daniel 1973; ASA Education Award, Wayne Keim 1971, Jim Ahlrichs 1974; CSSA Research Award, John Axtell 1977. At least 9 faculty were elected to Fellow of national societies and included: ASA, J.L. Ahlrichs, M.F. Baumgardner, W.C. Moldenhauer, J.R. Wilcox, J.D. Axtell, D.A. Holt, D.W. Nelson; SSSA, J.L. White, D.W. Nelson.

Farms in Indiana continued to grow in size, the number of full-time farmers decreased and land prices rose to $3000-$4000 per acre for high quality land. The country was becoming heavily dependent on foreign oil and inflation was exceeding 10%. Research grew and emphasis shifted in the Seventies, and I will share information on that next time.