There are always great things to talk about when it comes to agronomy. Here at Purdue Agronomy this could not be truer. As spring becomes closer you will be able to see more faculty, staff and students participating in field research and the complimentary laboratory research that brings us closer to feeding a growing population. This is an exciting time for the department. I am happy to share more about all of our research in future newsletters.

Around the department many students are eager to start their summer internships. Although we will miss seeing them, we are excited they are gaining real-world experiences with some of the top agriculture leading companies. For those students not participating in an internship, agronomy is offering a summer genetics course taught by Dr. Katy Rainey. Dr. Rainey is also offering a practical plant breeding methods course.

The agronomy senior steak fry will be happening soon. Each year it is a pleasure to see how our students have grown during their degree programs and the career paths on which they are embarking. All come from different backgrounds with different goals and interests. I am proud we are able to highlight their hard work and talent one last time.

Hard work and talent are not only found in our students. Earlier this month, several of our agronomy faculty members were promoted to full professor by the Purdue Board of Trustees. I am very proud to highlight Drs. Cale Bigelow, Dev Niyogi and Qianlai Zhuang. Dr. Doug Smith was also promoted to adjunct full professor of agronomy by the Purdue Provost Office. The scholarship in learning, research and outreach these professors have developed are remarkable. They and impacting our students, Indiana and the international scientific community.

The College of Agriculture students organized Ag Week this month culminating in our annual Spring Fest. A significant theme of Ag Week was providing information about where our food comes from and how we as a department and college are facing the global challenge of food insecurity. The students packed over 58,000 meals to be shipped to Haiti. Our agronomy students together with faculty and staff participated in the College of Agriculture Food Drive to help those in need in our community. I am very pleased that agronomy collected a large amount of food donations and raised over $2,000. The department hosted two walking taco luncheons, a sundae bar and a hot dog luncheon to raise money.

I look forward to sharing more exciting and promising news from agronomy in the future.

Joe
Faculty and Staff Recognitions

Agronomy faculty and staff promotions announced

At the beginning of April, the Purdue Board of Trustees announced three agronomy faculty promotions. Cale Bigelow, Dev Niyogi and Qianlai Zhuang were all promoted to full professor. In addition, the Purdue Provost Office approved the promotion of Doug Smith to adjunct full professor of agronomy. Tom Pluimer, agronomy network system administrator, is now at a rank 5. Congratulations to all. A full list of faculty promotions can be found here: [www.purdue.edu/newsroom/releases/2014/Q2/purdue-trustees-approve-faculty-promotions.html](http://www.purdue.edu/newsroom/releases/2014/Q2/purdue-trustees-approve-faculty-promotions.html)

Dr. Cale Bigelow  
Dr. Dev Niyogi

Farewell, good-bye and good luck

Maria Mateos-Hernandez, research geneticist, has accepted a maize commercial breeder position with Monsanto in Illinois. She joined Purdue in March of 2010 to work as a Post Doc in the maize program under professor Torbert Rocheford. Her main research focused on the genetic architecture of the maize inflorescence. In 2013 she became a research geneticist working in the same program. She worked at CIM-MYT and Pioneer before joining Purdue. Maria said she was very grateful to have the opportunity to meet and interact with all the professors, staff and students from the agronomy department.

A new avenue

Samantha McFarland, agronomy and ACRE business manager, has accepted a new position as Assistant Director of Financial Affairs with the College of Veterinary Medicine. Samantha was with Purdue Agronomy for almost three years. During this time she has been able to transform our business practices and customer service to be in a preeminent place in the College of Agriculture. She will start her new position on May 1st.

Samantha McFarland  
Dr. Cale Bigelow
Full-time research assistance for soybean production systems needed

The Soybean Extension and Research Team is looking for full-time summer help. We conduct applied research that investigates various components of soybean production. The workload will vary and the hours are flexible based on your schedule. You do not have to have a research background, but you do need to be willing to be trained. Attention to detail is a must to ensure quality data for the research projects. The ability to work with others and the ability to work autonomously are both required. Assistance will be needed in field and greenhouse experiment establishment and maintenance, plant growth monitoring (heights, weights, node & pod counts), soil sampling, plant material collecting and grinding, and data entry in MS Excel. The work week should average 35 to 40 hours over the summer with some weeks closer to 50 hours and others closer to 30 hours. The work day will be a mix of outside (in the heat of the summer) and inside activities. Travel will be necessary on occasion, as our experiments are located throughout the state and some days will require early departures and late arrivals. Please contact: Andrew Westfall at awestfall@purdue.edu or 219-863-3410 to apply.

Purdue Agronomy Club past president speaks about future of agriculture

The Purdue Agronomy Club hosted Justin Schneider to speak at their meeting on April 2nd. Justin is an alumnus president of the Purdue Agronomy Club and is currently the Sr. Policy Advisor and Counsel at Indiana Farm Bureau, Inc. He has been the staff attorney at Indiana Farm Bureau, Inc. and a judicial law clerk at the Indiana Court of Appeals and an intern with the Senate Ag Committee. He spoke about Indiana Farm Bureau and the future of agriculture.

Agronomy senior steak fry held May 4

The agronomy senior steak fry will be held May 4th at the William H. Daniel Turf Center starting at 5:30 p.m. The cost per person this year is $10. To sponsor a student the cost is $16. If you would like to sponsor a student but cannot attend the meal, the cost is $10. If you can attend, please RSVP to Karen Clymer at kclymer@purdue.edu or 494-4775. Registration is due April 30th.

Agronomy summer course offered to undergraduate students

Students, are you interested in taking summer courses? Agronomy 320: Genetics will be held this summer. Contact Dr. Katy Rainey for more information.
Sonny Beck, B.S. ’62, was honored with NAMA’s highest honor – the 2014 Agribusiness Leader of the Year at their annual convention in Jacksonville, Florida. This award honors outstanding leaders in agribusiness, education, government and other agribusiness related areas who exemplify excellence in agribusiness by their significant contributions to the industry.

How does a company like Beck’s Hybrids grow into the largest family-owned seed company in the U.S.? Beck tells HAT the idea is simple, really. “You treat your customer like they want to be treated. If they need some help with population rate, if they need some help with getting information about a planter, whatever they might need, you help them become successful in their lives and probably most people will treat you right and help you become successful. That’s the mantra that the company has really grown on since the early 90s when we said we had to do something different.”

Beck said it took a realization back in the early 90s that they wanted to be a marketing company that produced most of their own products, not a seed company that did their own marketing. Did he deem that a risk? “Oh, absolutely, because everything was sell, sell, sell. This was like providing free practical farm research which we had already been doing but we ramped it up and put it on the internet as soon as it ramped up, even for non-customers.”

That risk paid off in the long run. Today, Beck’s Hybrids hosts one of the largest field show in the agricultural industry, Becknology Days, a three-day event in late August that hosts more than 10 thousand farmers from across the Midwest.

When Beck got the news that he had won the award, he automatically deferred the praise to his team. “This is not golf. This is not like a single sport game. This is basketball, this is soccer, this is football where it takes truly a team effort. I really am honored now and I accept it on behalf of our whole team. They’re thrilled and I am, too.”

In July 2013, Indiana Governor, Mike Pence, appointed Sonny as a trustee on the Purdue University Board of Trustees. In addition, Sonny currently serves on the Indiana Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, is vice president of the Purdue Ag Alumni Seed Improvement Association and is a founding member of the Purdue FarmHouse Fraternity Foundation board. Sonny has held a variety of other leadership positions within the agricultural industry.
Agronomy has been busy this spring raising money for the College of Agriculture Food Drive. The food drive started on March 24th and ended April 11th. The department hosted two walking taco luncheons, a sundae bar and a hot dog luncheon raising, over $2,000 plus collecting a large amount of food donations.

Purdue Spring Fest was another hit this year. Attendees were able to stay engaged with Purdue Agriculture through the many activities the college and departments hosted. If you were hungry for free popcorn, then agronomy was the place to stop by—and many did. You could also learn about what plants need to grow and the process of erosion. The next Purdue Spring Fest will be held on April 18-19, 2015.
Congratulations to Tammy Goodale on her new grandchild, Reagen Janae Albaugh. Reagen was born on March 1st at 9:56 a.m. She weighed 7 lbs. 9 oz. and was 19.5 inches long. Proud parents are Katy and Ben Albaugh. She has a big brother, two year old Romey.

Congratulations to Terry and Valerie Lemming on two new grandchildren. Twins Vivian Rose and Riley Adaline Weaver were born on March 31st. Vivian weighed 5 lbs. 15 oz. and was 19 inches long. Riley weighed 6 lbs. 9 oz. and was 19.5 inches long.

Congratulations Newlyweds

Lynn Bargfeldt, agronomy secretary, and Rex Cornell were married on February 28th at Grace Lutheran Church in Lafayette. Lynn’s nephew performed the ceremony. The families ate dinner together before the ceremony and a dessert reception was held after for guests. Lynn and Rex honeymooned at Barefoot Beach, Florida.