

Shaky Ground

**Agronomy and Soils
Professor Experiences
Haitian Earthquake Firsthand**
by KATIE JACKSON

During the night, as more and more injured survivors showed up for help, the hotel grounds became a temporary triage unit under the guidance of Bahn and a young woman named Anne Wanlund, a U.S. Agency for International Development AIDS project worker in Haiti. Shannon, Hanlon and others fetched supplies and tore up hotel sheets to use as bandages. But their resources were extremely limited. “We were breaking broomsticks and pieces of wood we found on the ground to make splints for broken bones,” Shannon says.

Shannon, who speaks Haitian Creole, also became an interpreter, making notes dictated by Bahn that could be passed on later to a doctor. Eventually Shannon also began cleaning wounds and performing basic first-aid procedures.



DEVASTATING SCENES—This photo of collapsed houses on a hillside was taken by College of Ag professor Dennis Shannon, shown left, the morning after the 7.0 magnitude earthquake that struck Haiti on Jan. 12.

None of this came naturally to Shannon, whose sister asked when she heard his post-earthquake story, “Do you remember? You used to be pretty queasy.”

The group worked nonstop through Wednesday and began again early Thursday morning, until the exhausted Bahn slipped and injured his leg. Shannon filled in for Bahn as best he could and was busy working on injured people when an evacuation team arrived about 9 a.m. to escort their team out of the country.

“I had my passport in my pocket, but I saw more injured people coming in,” says Shannon. “I looked at Henry and said ‘I can’t leave.’ I guess I felt a greater responsibility because I could speak Creole and I could talk directly to the wounded and their families.”

Shannon and two Haitian high-school boys formed a team to continue work on the injured, but had few resources at their disposal.

(continued on page 2)

B **EING IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME SOMETIMES** requires being in the wrong place at the worst possible time. That seems to be the case for Dennis Shannon, a professor of agronomy and soils at Auburn who arrived in Haiti on Monday, Jan. 11—the day before the small island nation was devastated by a 7.0 magnitude earthquake.

Shannon, who has worked extensively in Haiti over the past 20 years on soils and agroforestry projects, returned there in January with U.S. Department of Agriculture and University of Florida colleagues on a food security project for the U.S. Department of State. The team spent Tuesday formulating a plan for soil sampling and testing to help Haitian farmers rapidly increase food and crop production in the country. Arriving back at their hotel, the Villa Creole in Petion-Ville just outside Port-au-Prince, at about 4:30 p.m., Shannon and UF agronomist Ed Hanlon were in the hotel lobby when the quake hit.

“There was a sort of rumbling, bumping noise that I didn’t pay much attention to,” says Shannon. “I thought it was a dump truck or something banging down the street. Then it got louder and Ed said ‘Everybody out!’ It sounded like a freight train coming right through the hotel.”

About that time the ground began to shake. “I felt the ground moving short distances and then it started moving harder and harder. As I was turning to move, I could hear cracking noises as bricks came apart, and as we were running out

there was a crashing noise as part of the wall in the center of the hotel fell down,” Shannon recalls.

Shannon dashed outside to relative safety but fell twice in his dash because, he later deduced, he was running against the earthquake’s movement. The earth was moving east to west, but he was running from north to south, so the quake’s movement tossed him from side to side. Luckily, neither Shannon nor anyone else in the hotel sustained severe injuries.

Following the initial tremor, Shannon and other guests and employees gathered outside near the hotel’s pool where they all spent the first night. Aftershocks continued for hours, though gradually lessening through the night, but the human activity soon increased on the hotel grounds.

“About an hour after the earthquake someone brought a 5-year-old boy in with a big gash on his skull,” says Shannon. Henry Bahn, the USDA economist who was leading their food security project team, was trained as an EMT and went right to work on the boy’s wound. As night fell, and with no electricity for illumination, Bahn worked on the child in the glare of car lights and flashlights.

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from View AGhill



THE ECONOMIC FREE FALL THAT BEGAN IN EARNEST IN 2008 has been no respecter of persons—and it hasn't played favorites among the nation's colleges and universities, either. The same financial chaos that has ravaged personal savings, investments and dreams has drained the state's education coffers and dealt unprecedented funding cuts to Auburn University.

(SHAKY GROUND, from page 1)

"From the time of the earthquake until I left on Saturday morning we received absolutely no medical or other assistance from the U.S. government, Red Cross or United Nations," says Shannon, who agonized even after he returned home over the slow pace of medical assistance for the victims. "The only help we got was a church-related group that dropped off some medical supplies that we went through relatively quickly," he continues. "Then, on Wednesday night, a group called International Medical Corps got rooms in the hotel and their doctors worked on some of the worst cases."

This group of doctors left the hotel on Thursday to help reopen a local hospital and took some of the worst cases from the hotel with them. On Thursday and Friday two Haitian doctors arrived and began helping with patients, all on a volunteer basis.

Meanwhile, Shannon did all he could to help—cleaning wounds and trying to determine which cases were most urgent. Many of the injuries were horrific—head wounds, crushed bones, compound fractures and deep gashes were common.

Several cases were particularly difficult for Shannon, including one involving a little girl about 7 years old whose parents were killed in the quake. A man rescued her from a collapsed home with a broken leg and severe wounds on her body and brought her to the hotel. Shannon cleaned her wounds with the help of a 12-year-old Canadian boy who had some first-aid training, and bystanders made sure the weak child got a few sips of water and grains of rice to keep her stable until more skilled care arrived.

"The owner of the hotel, Melissa Padberg, made sure the child spent the night next to a family that could keep an eye on her," Shannon says. The next morning the Haitian doctors

treated her and she was eventually transferred to a medic unit.

"I really want to know what happened to that girl," says Shannon, who has three daughters of his own. "I wanted to take her home with me. At least I know that she was given medical treatment because she would have died within a day if we had not helped her."

They also lost some of the victims. Shannon knew of at least two deaths on Wednesday, but heard another four people also died before they could get sufficient treatment.

On Friday, journalists and more doctors were arriving at the hotel and Shannon decided it was time for him to leave. But getting home was no easy task. Shannon left the hotel Saturday morning and, after a long wait at the American Embassy, eventually got on a flight on a C-17 air transport plane at 1 a.m. Sunday. He was taken to McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey where he rested on a cot while waiting for a flight home. He arrived back in Alabama around 7:30 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 17, and reported to work on Tuesday, Jan. 19.

The earthquake experience and his role as an accidental hero are not circumstances Shannon wants to repeat, but he may consider taking first-aid training classes, and he will willingly return to Haiti in the future if he has the chance.

For now, he mostly wants to see proper and sufficient help reach the Haitian people. "This is Katrina all over again, only the consequences are 1,000 times worse," he says, adding that he was appalled by the slow response pace immediately after the quake.

While he remains frustrated by the initial relief effort, Shannon believes that future rebuilding projects for Haiti need to be well planned and thought out. In fact, within days after getting home, Shannon was already talking with Bahn and others about how they can continue their original mission. **CS**

But all is not gloom and doom—not in the College of Agriculture at Auburn, at least—thanks in large part to our faculty's exceptional success at bringing in extramural funds.

In 2009, our faculty garnered more than \$13 million in grants, up from about \$10 million in 2008. The number of proposals increased significantly as well, with just over 180 proposals totaling nearly \$60 million made in 2009 compared to 120 proposals totaling more than \$25 million in 2008.

While research grant money from corporations and commodity organizations has decreased, federal funding for competitive proposals has increased and our faculty members have been successful in obtaining funding from several federal agencies. Among many faculty members who brought in large amounts from grant monies in 2009 were Rex Dunham, Nannan Liu, Jeffery Terhune, Bill Deutsch and Joe Klopper, all of whom were recognized in December for their grantsmanship success (photo, page 7).

Several large grants also were obtained in 2009 including a \$4.9 million bioenergy grant from the U.S. Department of Energy awarded to Steve Taylor, professor and head of biosystems engineering; an \$800,000 U.S. Department of Agriculture genomics grant awarded to fisheries and allied aquacultures professor (and our associate dean for research) John Liu; and a \$494,000 USDA grant to Stephen Enloe in agronomy and soils to study cogongrass.

In addition to these research grants, Auburn was awarded a \$14.4 million National Institute of Standards and Technology stimulus grant to build a new Center for Advanced Science, Innovation and Commerce (NIST Innovation Center) in the Auburn Research Park (story, page 8). When this state-of-the-art center is completed in 2012, it will be a boon to researchers campus-wide.

Our donors and faculty and staff also were tremendously generous in 2009 despite the economy. Their donations funded scholarships, professorships, study-abroad programs and a variety of other projects and causes that will further strengthen our programs. We thank you all and I assure you that your investments in our college are solid and will yield substantial dividends for decades to come.

Richard Guthrie

DEAN, COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
DIRECTOR, ALABAMA AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION



AG AMBASSADORS GO OUT IN THE WORLD—Four Ag Ambassadors who served the College of Ag while they were students here have gone out into the world. The four graduated in December and were honored for their service at the fall 2009 Graduation Breakfast by College of Ag Dean Richard Guthrie, right, who presented them with commemorative Comer Hall prints. The honorees included, from left: Cody Smith, Katlin Mulvaney and Katie Hines. Not shown is Shaina Smelas.

Award-Winning Alums December Graduates Win Honors



TOP OF THE CLASS—Three College of Ag students who graduated in December received top honors for their exceptional academic achievements while at Auburn. They include, from left, John Vanderford and Shelby Agnew, both winners of the Dean's Award, and Cody Smith who served as the College of Ag graduation marshal for the December ceremony.

Shelby Agnew and John Vanderford received top honors at December's graduation ceremony as well. The two were cowinners of the Dean's Award, which is given to an outstanding graduating senior each semester. This is only the second time in recent years that a tie has occurred. Agnew, an animal sciences/pre-vet major, has already begun her first year in the College of Veterinary Medicine. Vanderford, a horticulture major, is now a graduate student in horticulture at Auburn. His father, Jim, is also serving as vice president of the College of Ag Parents' Council.

Cody Smith, a December 2009 College of Ag graduate from the Department of Agronomy and Soils, carried the College of Ag banner during the December graduation ceremony as the College of Ag Marshall. Smith was chosen based on his exceptional academic record and contributions to the college. He served as president of the Agronomy Club and as a member of Ag Ambassadors, Ag Council and Young Farmers. He was also active in other campus organizations and professional organizations, such as the Alabama Sweet Potato Association and the Cullman County Young Farmers Federation.

Taking Action

At press time, Auburn University's Haitian response effort was still being formulated, but several groups took immediate action to help.

First among these is The Committee of 19, Auburn University's student leadership group for the War on Hunger, which donated \$15,000 to the United Nations World Food Programme for Haiti relief. The money was collected over the past 18 months through various fundraisers by Auburn's individual schools, colleges and organizations, as well as campuswide activities.

The WFP is the largest humanitarian agency in the world and is a first responder in the current Haitian crisis. WFP will attempt to bring weekly rations to more than two million people in Haiti over the next few weeks.

Committee of 19 members will continue to spearhead fundraising efforts on behalf of Haiti during the remainder of the semester with donations being collected in individual academic units, through campus organizations and on the concourse.

A working group has been formed consisting of representatives from the University Senate, the offices of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs, the President, the Provost, Vice President for Student Affairs, University Outreach, SGA, Graduate Student Council, Governmental Services, International Education and faculty. The group's primary focus is to determine how Auburn students, faculty and staff may be able to help in the long-term rebuilding effort. The group also is working with community organizations from Auburn and Opelika to dovetail activities.

To learn more about the Auburn University response to Haiti's earthquake and to see more detailed information about College of Ag professor Dennis Shannon's experience during the quake, go to <http://ocm.auburn.edu/haiti/>.

Celebrities and Careers Ag Industry Day Features Both

The first-ever Ag Industry Day planned for April 8 promises to offer an entertaining and enlightening look at careers in agriculture, along with some celebrity advice.

The event, to be held beginning at 10 a.m. at Ag Heritage Park and the Ham Wilson Livestock Arena on the Auburn campus, is a career fair for high-school students from across the state and is part of the college's annual Ag Week festivities. Ag Industry Day will feature outstanding speakers—from current students to alums and possibly even an entertainment industry celebrity—talking about the diversity and excitement of job opportunities in agriculture.

One celebrity slated to speak is Randall Ennis, an Auburn poultry science alumnus who is chief operating officer of Aviagen, the top poultry-breeding company in the world. At press time plans were being finalized for the keynote speaker—a music industry star who has ties to agriculture.

In addition to these speakers, representatives from the College of Ag's eight departments and from agribusinesses such as Aviagen, AGCO, Alabama Farmers Cooperative, Walt Disney World and the USDA Farm Service Agency will be on hand to talk about career opportunities available through their academic programs and businesses. Food and fun will also be part of the scene.

To learn more about Ag Industry Day and Ag Week, contact Deborah Solie at 334-844-8900 or das0001@auburn.edu, or go to www.ag.auburn.edu/agindustry.



Randall Ennis

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**ALL PROCEEDS GO TO
SUPPORT STUDENT ACTIVITIES!**

In Memoriam

John Richard "Jack" Snow of Marion, the first person to receive a master's degree in fisheries from Auburn, died July 27, 2009. He was 91. He earned his bachelor's degree in agriculture in 1942 and his master's degree in 1948 from what was then Alabama Polytechnic Institute.

Charles T. Meadows, Sr., who served as head of the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station/College of Ag office of Research Instrumentation for 17 years, passed away Dec. 4, 2009.



Happy Birthday

Comer 100 (1910-2010)

College's Comer Hall Celebrates Centennial by LEIGH HINTON

In 2010 Comer Hall—the cornerstone of agriculture at Auburn University—will celebrate its 100th anniversary, and several special events will be held to commemorate Comer's centennial.

On April 29, Gene Stevenson and Joe Yeager, authors of *Inside Ag Hill: The People and Events that Shaped Auburn's Agricultural History from 1872 through 1999* will tell the story of historic Comer Hall and its unique contributions to Auburn history. Stevenson is former head of research information in the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station, and Yeager is former head of agricultural economics.

Another lecture is set for Sept. 16, when Dwayne Cox, head of special collections and archives at the Ralph Brown Draughon Library, will speak about AU campus life from 1902 through World War I. Cox, who has been at Auburn since

1986, has written extensively on the history of higher education.

Both lectures will take place at 3 p.m. in the library's Special Collections and Archives Department and are part of the Discover Auburn Lecture Series, cosponsored by the Auburn University Libraries, the Caroline Marshall Draughon Center for the Arts and Humanities and the Auburn University Bookstore. Receptions will follow both lectures.

In addition, photos, books and other material from Comer's early years will be displayed in special collections located on the ground floor from April 25 through June 4.

Centennial festivities call for birthday cake, and ag family and friends will have several opportunities to have their cake and eat it too. Birthday cake will be served at the Ag Hill Picnic, held during Ag Week, April 5-9, as well as at the Move-In

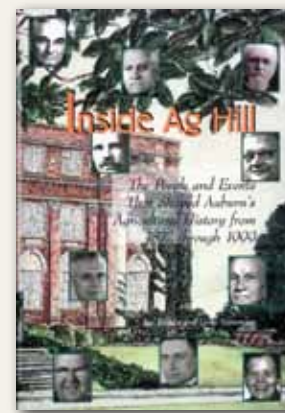


COMER THROUGH THE YEARS—From its historic location atop Ag Hill, Comer Hall has presided over Auburn agriculture for the past 100 years. While the lights burn brightly on the facade of the present day Comer Hall (left), the building (above) was declared the "handsomest of the new additions to the College Group" by the Board of Trustees in its June 7, 1910, meeting and was featured in postcards promoting the University. Postcards of Comer Hall and other historical buildings on what was then the Alabama Polytechnic Institute campus can be found in the Alabama Postcard Collection in the AU digital library (<http://diglib.auburn.edu/>).

Day Picnic in August. The Move-In Day Picnic is hosted for all College of Ag incoming freshmen and their families by student services and the Ag Parent Council. Both picnics will take place on Comer Hall's front lawn.

Dean Richard Guthrie looks forward to celebrating Comer Hall's centennial. "This is a good time for the College of Agriculture to take a look back as we prepare to look forward. We are poised at a unique point in our history," says Guthrie. ☞

Get the Inside Story



A limited number of copies of *Inside Ag Hill* are still available for \$10. (A \$5 shipping and handling fee will be added to mailed copies.) Money from book sales has endowed a scholarship—the Agricultural

Alumni Association Gene Stevenson and Joe Yeager Endowed Scholarship in Agricultural Communications—and all future proceeds will go to Ag Heritage Park. To order a book, visit www.ag.auburn.edu/onlinestore.

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The Art of Agriculture

Animal Estates

"Welcoming the Wild" Focus of York Lecture

by KATIE JACKSON

Can homeowners help wild things survive—even thrive—in an increasingly urban world? Can lawns become sources of food for humans as well as wildlife? Artist, architect, gardener and activist Fritz Haeg will discuss these and other landscape-related topics when he presents the spring 2010 E.T. York Distinguished Lecture on March 23 at 7 p.m. at Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art in Auburn.

Haeg studied architecture in Italy, then received his architecture degree from Carnegie Mellon University. He has taught in architecture, design and fine art programs at California Institute of the Arts, Art Center College of Design, Parsons School of Design and the University of Southern California. In addition to his academic career, he is an advocate for making landscapes beautiful, functional and sustainable.

He established Gardenlab, an umbrella organization through which he operated ecology-related art and design projects, in 2000 and then began Sundown Salon, an event and performance series located near Los Angeles that brought together area artists, designers, musicians and performers. It later became Sundown Schoolhouse, a multidisciplinary educational environment that remains an integral part of all his projects.

In 2005, he helped a Kansas family replace their lawn with a kitchen garden and since that time has established similar private and public demonstration gardens in California, New Jersey, Texas, Maryland and London. His 2008 book, *Edible Estates: Attack on the Front Lawn* is based on his efforts to encourage people to replace lawns with edible landscapes.

Recently he began Animal Estates, a project that promotes designing landscapes that sustain wild animal populations, and he incorporates performances, displays, installations, exhibitions, documentary videos and printed materials in each project. Haeg debuted his first Animal Estates design in 2008 at the Whitney Museum, where he incorporated a beaver pond in a sunken courtyard and installed an eagle's nest above the museum's entry. He now has Animal Estates in Massachusetts, California, Oregon and The Netherlands.

Haeg's lecture, entitled "Welcoming the Wild," is sponsored by the E.T. York Distinguished Lecturer Series, which features internationally known scientists speaking on a wide range of topics at public and technical lectures



YUMMY YARDS—Turning front yards into edible landscapes has been the focus of artist Fritz Haeg's work for the past several years. Haeg, top photo, who will deliver the spring 2010 York Distinguished Lecture on March 23, is now turning his attention to creating landscapes that feed and support wildlife.

and seminars on the Auburn campus. The series was established in the College of Agriculture in 1981 through an endowment from E.T. and Vam Cardwell York, both native Alabamians and AU graduates. York headed the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service from 1959 until 1962, and then went on to serve as the head Federal Extension Service in Washington, D.C., provost and vice president for agriculture at the University of Florida and then chancellor of the State University System of Florida until his retirement in 1980.

Haeg's lecture is also part of Art in Ag (see column below), a multidisciplinary project that highlights the aesthetic and social values of agriculture and natural

resources and explores ways that art and science can work together to improve society. Haeg's work will also be the focus of a panel discussion on April 7.

For more information on the York lecture, visit www.ag.auburn.edu/yorklecture or contact Katie Jackson at 334-844-5887 or smithcl@auburn.edu. To learn more about Art in Ag, go to www.ag.auburn.edu/ArtinAg. ☞

From the Editor

Way back in 2007 the College of Ag's amazing student recruiter, Deborah Solie, came to us with an idea: How about organizing an art exhibit based on agriculture?

She'd heard about a similar project at Oregon State and saw it as a way to showcase Alabama agriculture to new and nontraditional audiences while also giving those of us in agriculture a fresh perspective on the creative and aesthetic value of our discipline.

Deborah, who has a minor in art history, and Ag Communications and Marketing specialist Leigh Hinton, who is also an acclaimed fabric artist, embraced the idea but knew they needed help from someone more closely connected to the art world. They found that help in Auburn University art professor Barbara Bondy, who graciously agreed to work with us on an exhibit originally planned for 2007 or 2008.

Unfortunately, tight budgets and busy schedules delayed the project for a while, but in early 2009 we revisited the idea with Barb, who then brought several of her fellow art professors into the discussion. One of those professors, Allyson Comstock, was already leading an effort to incorporate sustainability, civic engagement and environmental awareness concepts into the art program, so working on this project was a great fit.

That was the beginning of an unlikely but extremely successful collaboration among the College of Agriculture, the Department of Art and the College of Liberal Arts at Auburn University. That collaboration—called Art in Agriculture—has also attracted other cooperators, both on campus and off, from the College of Architecture, Design and Construction to Auburn's Women's

Studies Program and Office of Undergraduate Studies to the Alabama State Council on the Arts and National Endowment for the Arts.

The original goal for Art in Agriculture was to explore the visual images of agriculture, natural resources and related scientific disciplines. In striving to meet that goal we have accomplished so much more. We have each expanded our own horizons professionally and personally, and we have established a multidisciplinary relationship through which we are exploring the intersection and interdependencies of art and science.

The first Art in Ag project, held in fall 2009, was named "Water: Three States" and featured art exhibits, lectures and a panel discussion, all focusing on water issues. The 2010 Art in Ag project, which was highlighted in the last issue of *Ag Illustrated*, is called "Reclaiming Ground: Ag-Gardens-Art" and focuses on the art, science and social impact of one of Alabama's most popular pastimes—gardening. You can see the entire four-month calendar of Art in Ag events at www.ag.auburn.edu/ArtinAg, or contact us at 334-844-5887 or smithcl@auburn.edu to learn more about it. We hope you will attend some if not all of the events.

We wish to thank the entire Department of Art faculty and the many others in the College of Liberal Arts and elsewhere on campus who are supporting this project. We also thank the Alabama State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts for awarding the project a \$5,000 grant. And we especially thank College of Ag Dean Richard Guthrie and College of Liberal Arts Dean Anna Gramberg not only for giving us the freedom to pursue this collaboration, but for being advocates for this project. And I personally want to thank Deborah, Leigh and our designer, Hannah Dixon, for unflagging efforts and creative ideas on this and many other projects under way in our college and in the AAES.

Just think what future collaborations may occur!

Katie Jackson
EDITOR

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Take an Art Walk on Ag Hill

Last fall, Department of Art Professor Barbara Bondy asked her advanced drawing class to create drawings on the theme of "agriculture" by incorporating three elements related to agriculture in their pieces. Their ensuing work caught the eye of College of Ag Associate Dean Paul Patterson, who realized that the assignment not only provided art students an opportunity to learn more about Alabama agriculture but also gave College of Ag students, faculty and staff a chance to see agriculture through new eyes.

Patterson asked Bondy if those drawings could be displayed on Ag Hill; she and her students graciously agreed. The drawings are now on exhibit in several College of Ag buildings and are available for public viewing.

An Art Walk guide listing the locations of the art works, names of the student artists and a brief description of each piece is available at www.ag.auburn.edu/ArtinAg. The works will be on display in Comer, Funchess, Swingle and Duncan halls and in the Poultry Science Building until the end of February.



Artwalk piece by Rebecca Williams



EAT, GREET AND MEET—The College of Ag's Ag Ambassadors held their first campuswide social last fall, inviting ambassadors from the colleges of Business, Liberal Arts and Education to share ideas on how to keep ambassadors motivated and involved. The event was a huge success and will be an annual get-together.

Hash-Brown-Crusted Chickfast Deemed Best New Food Creation by JAMIE CREAMER

An all-in-one breakfast product featuring spicy chicken sausage, eggs, cheese and a coating of fresh hash browns may not be on fast-food drive-through menus yet, but that's not to say it never will be.

In fact, the crispy patty—dubbed Chickfast—beat out five other innovative prototype food products, all made with either chicken, pork or beef and all created by teams of College of Ag poultry science and animal sciences students, to win top honors in a new-product-development competition held in the Poultry Science Building at the end of fall semester 2009.



A TASTE SENSATION—Deborah Bradley, cuts a hash-brown-breaded chicken patty into squares and teammate Matthew Bailey arranges the crispy bite-sized samples on a platter just moments before the judging begins in a competition to determine which team of poultry science and animal sciences students has developed the best new chicken, beef or pork food product. Bradley, Bailey and teammate Braden Cook's Chickfast patty, touted as an all-in-one breakfast meal, claimed the blue ribbon.

The three- and four-member teams were comprised of students taking poultry science professor Shelly McKee's and animal sciences assistant professor Christy Bratcher's advanced processing, research and development classes, both of which expose students to the process of adding value to meat and poultry by creating and producing new dishes that taste great, have marketability potential and could be adapted to mass production for the restaurant and ready-to-eat industries.

In the competition, a panel of judges that included a roomful of poultry science and animal sciences faculty, staff and students put the four new chicken and two new meat value-added products to the taste test, evaluating each one for originality, marketability and overall sensory characteristics. Chickfast came in first in all three categories, besting the likes of King Pao Chicken Kabobs, Molto Bene Italiana Sausage, Gourmet Patties, Spicy-Coconut-Rice-Stuffed Pork and Southwest Stuffed Chicken.

Credit poultry science seniors Braden Cook, Deborah Bradley and Matthew Bailey—on a team they called Breakfast Tech Inc.—for inventing Chickfast. The breakfast-in-one product, if you're curious, could almost be described as a souped-up chicken version of that ubiquitous party food, the sausage ball.

Despite Chickfast's winning ratings overall, however, it came in a close second to Southwest Stuffed Chicken on the scorecard of guest judge Chris Martin. Martin is senior director of product management for Keystone Foods, a food manufacturing giant that each year supplies products ranging from burgers and chicken nuggets to fully cooked wings and fajita strips to about 30,000 restaurants globally.

"I liked the flavor and texture of the stuffed chicken best, but Chickfast ranked very high for its creativity, and I loved the name," says Martin, who is involved in the development of new products at Keystone and, in fact, took the recipe for a seasoning blend used to flavor the winning dish in Auburn's 2008 new-product competition back to Keystone's Atlanta location for researchers there to play around with. "But just about every one of the products the students developed had the potential to be commercially viable."

He gives a thumbs-up to the hands-on exercise for exposing students to "real-world stuff" and helping them understand some of the processes involved with the product-development side of the industry. McKee and Bratcher say that's precisely their goal. "The students get actual experience with ingredient functionality and manufacturing steps so they can go into poultry- and meat-processing environments with working knowledge of the processes used commercially, and that can give them a competitive edge in the job market," McKee says.



KUDOS FOR STAFF—Five staff members serving the Auburn University College of Agriculture and the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station were honored recently as 2009 Employees of the Year. They included Beth Clendenen, academic program administrator in the Department of Horticulture; Bill Deutsch, research fellow in the Department of Fisheries and Allied Aquacultures; Katie Hardy, program coordinator for the college's development office; Michael MacGhar, agriculture technician at E.V. Smith Research Center in Shorter; and Scott Snyder, information technology specialist for the college and AAES. Shown with their awards are, from left, Snyder, MacGhar, Hardy and Deutsch.



TOPS IN GRANTS—Five Auburn University College of Agriculture and Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station researchers were honored recently for their excellent grant-writing records. The five excelled in obtaining research dollars through extramural grants and contracts. Winners of the Grantsmanship Awards were, from left, Rex Dunham, Nannan Liu, Joseph Klopper, Jeff Terhune and Bill Deutsch. Deutsch, Dunham and Terhune are all in Auburn's Department of Fisheries and Allied Aquacultures while Klopper and Liu are both in the Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology.



AWARD WINNERS—Several faculty members in the Auburn University College of Agriculture were honored recently for their outstanding teaching, research and advising efforts. Beth Guertal, agronomy and soils professor, was given the 2009 Dean's Award for Teaching Excellence; Steve Schmidt, professor in the animal sciences department, won the 2009 Dean's Award for Advising Excellence; Henry Kinnucan, professor of agricultural economics and rural sociology, received the 2009 Senior Researcher Award; and Scott McElroy, assistant professor in agronomy and soils, who earned the 2009 Junior Researcher Award. Shown left are, from left, Schmidt and Kinnucan.

Faculty and Staff Accomplishments

Agronomy and soils professor **Dennis Delaney** and Auburn University Libraries' archivist Dewayne Cox were featured on cable and public television stations nationwide in January as part of the national farm and ranch show, America's Heartland, which came to Auburn last fall to do a piece on the Old Rotation. Delaney and Cox discussed the scientific and historic aspects of the Old Rotation. Clips from the show can be seen at www.americasheartland.org under stories: Episode 519.

Rex Dunham, Auburn University professor of fisheries and allied aquacultures, recently represented Auburn University in a signing ceremony for a new International Academic Interchange Agreement with Central Luzon State University in the Philippines. This agreement will support cooperative work on freshwater aquaculture and may open the door for future collaborations in fisheries and other fields of study. Auburn and CLSU have a long history of cooperation that is recognized as the origins of the current Freshwater Aquaculture Center and the College of Fisheries at CLSU. Dunham, an internationally recognized fish geneticist, participated in the agreement signing ceremony last fall while visiting the Philippines to present a seminar at CLSU. Dunham will also serve as an affiliate faculty of CLSU's Department of Aquaculture, Institute of Graduate Studies in 2010 to share his expertise in fish genetics.



IN FULL AGREEMENT—Rex Dunham, left, represented Auburn University during the signing of a new academic interchange agreement between Auburn University and Central Luzon State University in the Philippines. With Dunham at the signing, from left, are Tereso Abella, director of the Freshwater Aquaculture Center at CLSU; E. Ibanez, CLSU and board secretary; and CLSU President Ruben Sevilleja, an Auburn fisheries and allied aquacultures graduate.

Join the Fun! College of Ag Clubs, Organizations Offer Something for Everyone

Did you know that 21 student clubs or organizations are affiliated with the College of Ag? That's right, there are many, many ways that students can get involved in organizations and projects that boost their careers and their Auburn fun factor.

The entire list of College of Ag club options is available at www.ag.auburn.edu/adm/student/orgs.php, but we want to draw attention to each of them, so we will be highlighting the different clubs in future issues of *Ag Illustrated* to offer a glimpse into who they are and what they do.



In this issue, we present PLANET, the Professional Landscape Network, which will be holding its annual plant sale on April 17 and 18. PLANET is a student chapter affiliated with the national PLANET organization, a professional organization involved in all aspects of the landscape horticulture industry. PLANET members at Auburn participate in community service projects at local elementary schools, high schools and other organizations. In addition, they have many social and professional networking opportunities through national competitions, cookouts, social events, sports and travel.

GREAT DEALS, GREAT SUPPORT—PLANET, Auburn's student professional landscape chapter, will cosponsor an annual plant sale on April 17-18. The sale is held in conjunction with the Auburn University Campus Club and proceeds from the sale go to the Campus Club's First Lady scholarships in horticulture.

Officers for the 2009-2010 year are Jack LeCroy, president; Russell McKeown, vice president; Summer Thaxton, secretary; Casey Teel, treasurer; and Work Day and Plant Sale co-chairs Meredith Jedlicka and Michael Kennedy. Faculty advisers, all from the Department of Horticulture, are Joe Eakes, Amy Wright and Carolyn Robinson. Learn more about PLANET at www.ag.auburn.edu/hort/amywright/planet.htm.

Student Accomplishments

The College of Ag's Ag Ambassadors, who serve as official student hosts for the College of Ag, received the Excellence in Service award at the National Ag Ambassador Conference held in January in California. The award came with a \$500 cash prize and the opportunity for our ambassadors to present conference workshops on their program's areas of excellence.

A team of five entomology graduate students claimed a solid victory over a University of Florida squad in debate competition held during the Entomological Society of America's 2009 annual meeting in Indianapolis, Ind., in December. The Auburn debaters included **Clement Akotsen-mensah**, **Prithwiraj Das**, **Timothy Nafziger**, **Esther Ngumbi** and **Hadi Ratna**. Also at the conference, Das, a Ph.D. student with entomology associate professor **Henry Fadamiro**, won first place in the student poster competition.

Auburn University's **Dustin Herring** claimed first place in the graduate student presentation competition at the Beltwide Cotton Conference held in early January in New Orleans. Herring is pursuing a master's degree in plant pathology under associate professor **Kathy Lawrence**. His presentation was on reniform nematode control linked to variable-rate herbicides used to eliminate post-harvest cotton regrowth and winter weeds. He will complete his studies summer semester.

Innovation in Action

Teamwork

Group Effort Brings in \$14.4 Million For New Research, Innovation Center

by JAMIE CREAMER

When College of Agriculture Dean Richard Guthrie instructed John Liu in July 2008 to devote his complete and undivided attention to writing a proposal, due a mere 14 days later, to compete for a substantial federal grant that would mean a new research facility at Auburn, Liu took that “complete” and “undivided” literally.

The assistant director of the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station and associate dean of research for the College of Ag quickly assembled a highly proficient support team that worked with him on the proposal almost round the clock for the next two weeks to produce a detailed, budget-inclusive grant application that arrived in Washington just as the final buzzer sounded.

That all-out, fast-track effort paid off last fall, when the U.S. Department of Commerce’s National Institute of Standards and Technology awarded Auburn University \$14.4 million in federal stimulus funds as cost-share support to build a state-of-the-art Center for Advanced Science, Innovation and Commerce.

The university will provide matching funds to construct the 68,000-square-foot, 21-lab facility at the Auburn Research Park on South College Street. Five multidisciplinary “research clusters” will be located in the center and will bring scientists from a variety of disciplines across the campus together to collaborate on research projects aimed at improving standards, measurements and forecasting related to food safety, bioenergy technologies, aquaculture development and sustainability, and water and environmental quality.

Liu, who in addition to his administrative positions in the College of Ag and AAES is an Auburn fisheries professor and an internationally known fish geneticist, has written many successful grant proposals throughout his career, but the seasoned grantsman says this one never would have seen the light of day had it not been for the expertise and diligence of those who partnered with him to make it happen.

In addition to Liu, the core grant-writing team included college/AAES CFO Lane Sauser and contract and grants specialist Kelley Terry, AAES out-



lying units director Jim Bannon and university architect and facilities design director Greg Parsons.

Many others across campus, however, contributed to the success, and the leadership that Auburn President Jay Gogue, Provost Mary Ellen Mazey, Vice President for Research John Mason and Guthrie provided; the cost-share commitment Executive Vice President Don Large made; and the information and assistance Brian Keeter, public affairs director, supplied were “crucially important,” Liu says.

Parsons remains highly involved in this early stage of the project, Liu says, and an advisory committee that includes Auburn professors Don Conner in poultry science, Claude Boyd in fisheries and allied aquacultures, Steve Taylor in biosystems engineering and Graeme Lockaby in forestry and wildlife sciences is providing valuable input.

Though the College of Agriculture and AAES played the major role in the grant-writing process, Liu stresses that the center will not be a facility for college and Experiment Station scientists exclusively.

“It is an Auburn University facility that is being built to bring together researchers that are working in the same areas but are scattered across the campus,” he says.

The new research center is scheduled for completion by the end of 2012.

KEY PLAYERS—Auburn University landed a \$14.4 million federal grant to build an advanced research facility thanks to a core group of administrators that, despite a short notice, wrote a strong, persuasive grant proposal. The group included Kelley Terry, front left, College of Ag contracts and grants specialist, and College of Ag/AAES CFO Lane Sauser along with, second row, from left, John Liu, College of Ag associate dean for research/AAES assistant director; Jim Bannon, AAES outlying units director; College of Ag Dean/AAES Director Richard Guthrie; and Greg Parsons, architect and director of facility design at Auburn.

Federation Cites Guthrie’s Service to Agriculture

by JAMIE CREAMER

The state’s largest and most diversified farm organization has awarded its highest honor to Richard Guthrie, dean of the Auburn University College of Agriculture and director of the Ala-

bama Agricultural Experiment Station, in recognition of the outstanding contributions Guthrie has made to Alabama agriculture throughout a 42-year career that includes 26 years at Auburn.

The Alabama Farmers Federation presented its Service to Agriculture Award to Guthrie in early December during the organization’s 88th annual meeting in Mobile. In making the presentation, Jerry Newby, federation president, hailed Guthrie as “a true friend of the farmer” who long has kept a finger on the pulse of Alabama agriculture and has recognized and responded to the needs of the state’s food producers.

Guthrie’s Auburn connection began in 1958 when he enrolled as a freshman on a football scholarship. Four years later, he received his bachelor’s degree in agronomy and soils, followed in 1965 by a master’s in soil science. He earned his doctorate from Cornell University in ’68 and worked for several years for the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a soil scientist in what today is the Natural Resources Conservation Service but returned to Auburn in 1983 as professor and head of the Department of Agronomy and Soils.

He served as acting dean of the College of Ag from 1985 through 1988 and then was named as-

sociate dean of international agriculture programs, a position he held until his first official retirement in 2003. In fall 2005, however, Guthrie came out of retirement to assume the dean/director position he now holds but from which he has announced he will permanently retire in May 2010.

Newby noted the dramatic advances that have occurred in agriculture since Guthrie launched his career.

“Farmers now use less fertilizer and fewer chemicals and they use precision agriculture, and it is proving to be a better, smarter and cheaper way to do business,” Newby said. “Soil scientists like Dr. Guthrie are one reason for that. By helping farmers better understand the soil beneath their feet, they have enabled our farmers to produce better and more abundant crops.”

The Alabama Farmers Federation’s Service to Agriculture Award is the latest on an impressive list of honors Guthrie has received, including induction into the Alabama Agriculture Hall of Honor in 2009 and, in 1996, winning the AU Athletic Department’s Walter Gilbert Award, which recognizes Auburn athletes who have distinguished themselves through achievements after graduation.



HONORING GUTHRIE—Alabama Farmers Federation Jerry Newby, left, presents the organization’s prized Service to Agriculture Award to Richard Guthrie, College of Agriculture dean and Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station director, during the Federation’s annual meeting in December. Newby called Guthrie “a true friend of the farmer.”

AAES Site Delivers Decades of Data

Results of Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station research projects conducted at Auburn University from as far back as the late 19th century to the present are as near as your computer on the AAES’ publications Web site at www.aaes.auburn.edu/comm/pubs/.

The newly updated site offers access to publications that run the gamut from brochures to special reports and that detail findings of studies in areas ranging from livestock production to rural economics and from aquaculture to the environment. Some of the publications are highly technical and directed toward scientists, but others target agricultural producers and some are for the general public.

Biofuels and horticulture are the topics of two of the latest additions to the site. “Prospects for Biofuels in Alabama: A Synthesis of Expert Opinion” looks at the state’s developing biofuels industry from the perspectives of farmers, forestland owners, nonprofit and governmental repre-

sentatives, industry representatives, politicians, lobbyists and university faculty, while “Economic Impact of Alabama’s Green Industry” provides statistics showing the dollars and jobs the horticulture industry—nurseries, greenhouses, turfgrass and sod production, lawn and landscape operations and retail businesses that sell plant materials and related products—means in the state.

The AAES Web site is also an archive of some of the earliest scientific research conducted at Auburn University, with publications dating from 1888. Many of these early publications are out of print, but the College of Agriculture is working with the Auburn University Libraries to have these items scanned so they will be accessible online. This project should be completed by April.

Anyone can access the publications site and read or print the documents free of charge. Although many of the publications are available online only, others can be ordered by mail, e-mail, phone, fax or online.

Poultry Litter Software Program Could Lead to Cleaner Water

by JAMIE CREAMER

An ecological engineer in the Auburn University College of Agriculture’s biosystems engineering department has developed a Web-based computer software program that could significantly minimize the impact that rainwater runoff from pastures and hay fields fertilized with

ter abound, extensive use of litter in the watershed through the years has led to a buildup of nutrients, most notably phosphorous, in the soil. Now, elevated phosphorous levels in area water bodies are raising water quality issues that Srivastava says could challenge the sustainability of an industry that is essential to the economy of not only the Appalachian Plateau area but the entire state as well.

That risk is what motivated Srivastava to create the computer program, which, in addition to streamlining nutrient management planning, would help poultry producers calculate phosphorous indexes, erosion rates and nutrient equivalencies and keep precise records, now required at the state and federal levels, detailing their fertilizer-application activities.

Anyone with a computer and Web browser could easily access and use the highly secure Web site for free.

Ultimately, the Poultry Litter Decision Support System would include a message board where poultry farmers can post how much litter they have available for sale. That way, livestock producers and crop farmers in the Black Belt and other areas of the state where poultry houses are few and far between could go to the site to find their nearest sources of the soil-enriching material. The closer the litter, the bigger the savings on transportation costs.

Using excess litter from Alabama’s leading poultry-producing areas to fertilize and enrich the soils and green up pastures elsewhere in the state would be a win-win situation, Srivastava says.

“It would help stimulate the economy in Alabama’s Black Belt and also help sustain the state’s poultry industry by alleviating water quality threats,” he says.

The future of Auburn’s feature-packed prototype depends on whether a public- or private-sector entity will follow through with it.

“We had the idea and have developed a reliable prototype that delivers,” Srivastava says, “Now we’re looking for somebody to take it and run with it.”

He has demonstrated the product to state Natural Resources Conservation Service leaders and hopes to present it at the federal level as well.



GETTING WITH THE PROGRAM—Auburn biosystems engineer Puneet Srivastava shows one feature of his Web-based Poultry Litter Decision Support System that allows users to digitize their poultry house locations and field boundaries while looking at recent, true-color aerial photos. The system is designed to help producers develop and follow nutrient management plans.

poultry litter has on water quality both above and below the surface.

Associate professor Puneet Srivastava’s provisionally patented Poultry Litter Decision Support System is a user-friendly online program designed to help poultry producers, especially those who use their nutrient-rich chicken litter as fertilizer, develop comprehensive nutrient management plans so as to avoid applying too much of the waste material to their pastures and farmland. Poultry litter is an excellent source of soil-enriching nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium, but when it is used in excess, the surplus nutrients can wash into nearby creeks and streams.

Every year in Alabama, poultry farmers raise a billion-plus birds that leave in their wake roughly 1.7 million tons of litter. Widely used as a low-cost yet highly effective fertilizer for pastures, hay fields and cropland, the litter can be an additional source of farm income for poultry growers.

But in Alabama’s hilly Sand Mountain region, where poultry operations and poultry lit-

Scientists Study Wicked Weed’s Impact on Ailing Loblolly Pine Forests

by JAMIE CREAMER

A team of Auburn University scientists led by College of Agriculture invasive plant specialist Stephen Enloe has been awarded a \$494,000 grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture to investigate possible links between two biological phenomena that pose threats to Alabama, both ecologically and economically.

Working with Auburn forest ecologist and invasive plant specialist Nancy Loewenstein, for-



NOT WELCOME—Cogongrass has bright yellowish-green foliage with serrated edges. The rhizomes are hard and scaly and have sharply pointed tips; the seed head is fuzzy, white and plume-like. Cogongrass negatively impacts pine productivity and survival, wildlife habitat, recreation, native plants, fire behavior, site-management costs and more.

est pathologist/entomologist Lori Eckhardt and entomologist David Held, Enloe will determine whether the spread of cogongrass—rated as the seventh worst weed in the world—through Alabama is contributing to an increased incidence of pine decline, a syndrome that is jeopardizing the health and survivability of loblolly pine plantations statewide.

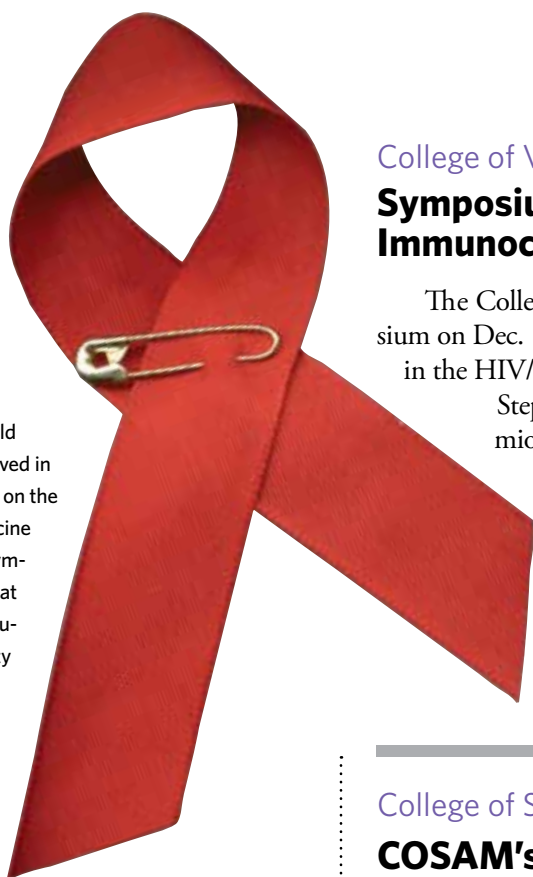
Cogongrass is an aggressive, highly flammable, nonnative grass that invades, and can quickly overtake, forests and other uncultivated areas such as pastures and rights of way. The weed spreads by seeds and by creeping, underground rhizomes that form dense, deep layers of thatch, choking out native plants and potentially altering insect diversity.

In the NIFA-funded project, the Auburn researchers will evaluate the impact that both cogongrass invasions and the strategies used to manage the invasive weed have on insect communities in pine ecosystems in Alabama and the Southeast, particularly in terms of insects that transmit the pathogenic fungi found in the roots of trees showing pine decline symptoms.

The study’s findings will give forest landowners and managers science-based cogongrass-control recommendations that can help them improve the health and productivity of their forest stands.

RED RIBBON MARKS

WORLD AIDS DAY—For more than 10 years, the red ribbon has symbolized World AIDS Day, which was observed in December by a symposium on the College of Veterinary Medicine campus. Speakers at the symposium explored the role that veterinarians can play in educating clients about a variety of AIDS-related topics.



College of Veterinary Medicine Symposium Looks at Pet Ownership and Immunocompromised Clients

The College of Veterinary Medicine and Auburn Diversifying Veterinary Medicine sponsored a symposium on Dec. 1 in observation of World AIDS Day. The lectures explored the veterinarian's continuing role in the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Stephanie Schleis, with Auburn's College of Veterinary Medicine, and Mark Freedman, an epidemiologist with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, were the keynote speakers.

Schleis, who is a diplomate in the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine, spoke on pet ownership and the immunocompromised client, noting that veterinarians need to step up and take a greater role in educating clients about zoonotic diseases. They can also help advise clients on pet selection, nutrition and health care. Veterinarians can promote the human-animal bond and help the immunosuppressed keep their pets.

HIV/AIDS is the fourth leading cause of death worldwide.

College of Sciences and Mathematics COSAM's Anderson Awarded Rhodes Scholarship

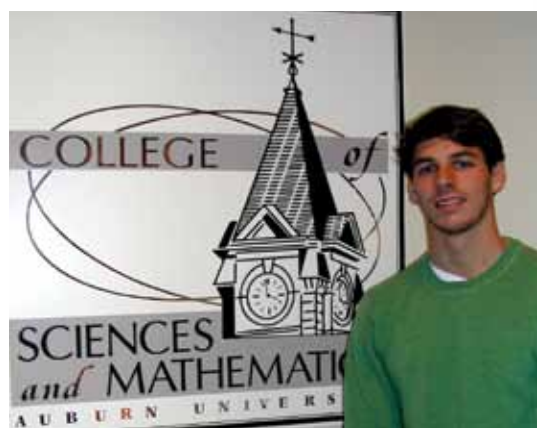
Jordan Anderson, a senior in biomedical sciences, was recently awarded the prestigious Rhodes Scholarship, joining only three former Auburn University students with this recognition.

"Mr. Anderson is truly an outstanding person who represents the qualities for which Auburn University stands," says COSAM Dean Stewart Schneller. "I convey my gratitude to him for this honor he has brought to our university and to his family for sharing this wonderful individual with us. My colleagues in COSAM and those across campus who mentored Jordan to this exceptional accomplishment are to be commended."

Jordan, a native of Roanoke, Va., began the application process last August with help from Paul Harris of the Honors College. After being named a district seven finalist, Anderson traveled to Birmingham in November to begin a two-day interview process with 12 other finalists from Tennessee, Alabama and Florida.

"There were so many great and qualified candidates, and to be in their company was a great honor," says Anderson. "When they announced my name, I was overwhelmed at first, but then felt very honored and excited."

Anderson is the first Auburn student since 1980 to receive the Rhodes Scholarship, which was created in 1902 at the request of Cecil Rhodes to bring outstanding students from across the world to study at Oxford University in England.



Jordan Anderson

School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences Forestry Professors Leading Team to Inventory Trees on Auburn's Campus

Researchers from Auburn University and the U.S. Forest Service recently inventoried all trees within the managed areas of Auburn University's campus in order to provide information and techniques for managing the urban forest and planning future projects at Auburn.

"Using a model developed by U.S. Forest Service personnel, we have begun to evaluate potential ecosystem services on the Auburn campus," said Art Chappelka, a SFWS professor who is leading the project. "These data will be used by the U.S. Forest Service to evaluate their model and to provide more efficient techniques in data collection and by Auburn personnel for the proper management of campus trees."

In addition, data collected from the project will be included in the development of the Climate Action Plan, which the university and the Office of Sustainability have initiated.

The researchers at Auburn include graduate student Nick Martin and several undergraduate students under the direction of a faculty and staff team. The team includes Chappelka and SFWS associate professor Ed Loewenstein from the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences; professor Gary Keever from the College of Agriculture's Department of Horticulture; and Charlie Crawford, superintendent of Auburn University's Landscape Services.

Data collected included location of the tree, height, caliper, crown width and health. Approximately 6,000 trees were inventoried this fall. Collection was completed in mid-October and sent to the U.S. Forest Service in Athens where the data will be entered in the Forest Service model.

During 2010, a training session will be conducted on campus to educate professionals from the region on methods to inventory trees in urban settings and systems to analyze and utilize the data.



"... AS LOVELY AS A TREE"—Many people are unaware of the contributions trees make to our daily lives, not only aesthetically but practically—providing shade and shelter, storing carbon and aiding erosion control. The approximately 6,000 trees on the AU campus were inventoried last fall by a team of researchers, including forestry and wildlife sciences graduate student Nick Martin, above, to provide information for managing the trees and developing plans for the AU campus.

College of Human Sciences Mize Receives \$1 Million for Research on Parent-Child Psychophysiology

Jacquelyn Mize, professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies, is the principal investigator for a two-year, \$1 million National Institutes of Health grant, "Biopsychosocial Factors in Economically Disadvantaged Preschool Children's Adjustment." The grant is funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and is the largest ARRA-NIH grant at Auburn and one of the largest in Alabama.

Co-principal investigators are Greg Pettit, professor; Kristin Bub, assistant professor; and Mona El Sheikh, alumni professor. They will examine autonomic nervous system reactivity, cortisol stress response and patterns of social information processing in a sample of preschool-aged children and their families as a means of understanding developmental pathways in young children's psychological and behavioral adjustment.



Jacquelyn Mize

Stimulus Funds To Help Restore State's Longleaf Pine Forests

Before the Southeast was settled, longleaf pines blanketed about 90 million acres. Today, that number's down to about 3 million acres, but in Alabama, federal stimulus dollars soon will be used to restore stands of the official state tree.

So says Dean Gjerstad, a retired professor of forestry at Auburn University and co-director of The Longleaf Alliance, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the restoration and conservation of longleaf-pine-forest ecosystems.

"The Longleaf Alliance, working with the Alabama Forestry Commission, will reestablish longleaf in several state forests as well as provide cost-share assistance to landowners to restore longleaf on private lands," Gjerstad says.

He says that the project is using local vendors on the different projects in order to keep the dollars and the jobs in Alabama.

Gjerstad says outreach is a key element of the overall effort, with educational workshops to be held at Auburn's Solon Dixon Forestry Education Center near Andalusia.

"We want to educate as many landowners, forestry consultants and state agency personnel as we can about the value of longleaf pine stands and how to establish and manage them," he says.

John Kush, a research fellow in Auburn's School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, and Extension specialist Becky Barlow agree with Gjerstad that more awareness is needed of the actual value of longleaf pine. Kush says that the longleaf pine was a significant part of the nation's and the state's early commercial ventures.

"Longleaf pine helped build this country and this state," he says. "It went far beyond the wood for buildings. You have to consider the volume of tar and pitch made from longleaf that was exported to Europe. It grew in every area of the state except the Black Belt and the limestone plateau of north Alabama. Those forests provided timber to build structures across the state and country and to make tar and pitch products."

Today, the longleaf could soon take on additional value as a carbon store, because research indicates it stores carbon better than other pine species because it grows in nutrient-deficient soils. It has many natural advantages over other species, too. Longleaf pines are resistant to most beetles that can wipe out a loblolly pine stand, are the longest-lived species of pine, grow faster and can adapt to drier soil conditions better than other species.

Barlow, who is also a forestry Extension specialist with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, points out that longleaf pines are commonly used for poles that have twice the value of sawn lumber. She adds that longleaf pines have a place on even small acreages.



RESTORATION MOVEMENT—When early explorers ventured into the area that today is the southeastern U.S., longleaf pines dominated the landscape, stretching from southwest Virginia through nine states—including Alabama—and all the way to east Texas. Today, a portion of the federal stimulus money Alabama received has been earmarked specifically to reestablish longleaf forests in the state.

"The small landowners matter," Barlow says. "Most family forest landowners don't have huge tracts of land that they manage."

She points out that longleaf pines work well combined with cattle operations.

"It's a model that early settlers used, and it still works today," she says. "Grazing cattle can help control understory plants, which are critical in managing longleaf pines effectively, while providing landowners with additional income from their forestland."

Exotic, Kudzu-Eating Bug Could Threaten Crops

There's good news and bad news about the recent discovery in north Georgia of an insect that eats kudzu. The good news, obviously, is that the bug eats kudzu. The bad news is that the plataspid shield bug, or *Megacopta cribraria*,



BLESSING, OR CURSE?—Reports from a few north Georgia homeowners about strange, smelly insects that were swarming their homes led Extension personnel there to determine that a nonnative, kudzu-eating insect never before seen in the U.S. had invaded the area. Scientists are concerned the bug might enjoy dining on soybeans, peanuts and other crops as well as kudzu. (Photo by D. Suiter, UGA-CAES)

doesn't belong in Georgia—or anywhere in the Western Hemisphere, for that matter—and scientists are worried the exotic insect that is

native to India and China might also enjoy dining on valuable farm crops in the southeastern U.S., too.

The Georgia sighting was the first ever in the U.S., says Alabama Cooperative Extension System entomologist Ayanava Majumdar.

"Our concern is that we don't know what other plants might be targets," he says. Kudzu is a legume, making it a relative of sorts to some agronomic

crops including soybeans, peanuts, alfalfa and clover, which means the insect could pose a threat to such crops.

And that could have a serious impact on Alabama agriculture. Soybeans and peanuts are major crops in the state, with growers this year harvesting almost 16 million bushels of soybeans from about 430,000 acres and right at 490 million pounds of peanuts from about 155,000 acres.

Soybeans and peanuts are grown extensively in India, and Majumdar acknowledges that none of the four major Indian agricultural publications he has reviewed cite the plataspid shield bug—also known as shield bug or lablab bug—as either a major or minor insect pest of soybeans or peanuts there.

"But the threat it may pose to crops in the southeastern United States is a complete unknown since this is a new environment for this insect," he says.

Adult shield bugs are about 5 millimeters long and have humped bodies. They have beak-like mouthparts and hardened forewings that cover a pair of soft hind wings used for flying.

Majumdar strongly encourages farmers to be on the watch for this insect in their fields and to report any sightings to the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries at 334-240-7311. Homeowners should keep their eyes open for the pest, too, he says.

"In north Georgia, homeowners noticed the insects swarming sides of homes and other buildings, not unlike the swarming of Asian lady beetles we often see in the state," Majumdar says. "They have also reported the insects may have an unpleasant or bitter smell."

Calendar of Events

February • 2010

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March • 2010

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April • 2010

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February 23

AU Agricultural Alumni Association Annual Meeting and Hall of Honor Banquet The Hotel at Auburn University and Dixon Conference Center - Auburn

This event includes a board meeting, a membership meeting and the Hall of Honor awards banquet.

Contact: Elaine Rollo at 334-844-3204 or rollome@auburn.edu or visit www.ag.auburn.edu/adm/alumni/hall_of_honor.php

March 1

Application deadline

Agricultural Leadership Education Academy

This event for high school juniors and rising seniors enhances leadership skills and offers participants a chance to be dually enrolled at AU for college credit. The sessions will be held April 22-24 and June 9-11. To learn more go to www.ag.auburn.edu/adm/student/prospective/events/documents/flier09092009.pdf.

Contact: Don Mulvaney at 334-844-3200 or mulvadr@auburn.edu

March 15-20

Spring Break

Auburn University

March 23

Spring 2010 York Distinguished Lecturer Series

**Welcoming the Wild - Fritz Haeg
Jule Collins Smith Museum - Auburn**

This event is the spring lecture of the York Distinguished Lecture Series and is also part of the 2010 Art in Ag project.

Contact: www.ag.auburn.edu/yorklecture

April 5-9

Ag Week

This annual celebration of all things Ag Hill includes guest lecturers, sporting events, social events, a blood drive and the famous Ag Hill Picnic.

Contact: Deborah Solie at 334-844-8900 or das0001@auburn.edu

April 7

Digging Deeper

112 Rouse Life Sciences Building

5 p.m.

Auburn

This event is an interdisciplinary conversation that considers the common ground shared by artists, scholars, scientists, agrarians, designers and environmentalists. Faculty members from the colleges of Agriculture, Liberal Arts and Architecture, Design and Construction dig deeper into the aesthetic, social and environmental issues addressed by gardening.

Contact: 334-844-5887 or visit www.ag.auburn.edu/ArtinAg/

April 8

Ag Industry Day

10 a.m.

Auburn

This event features Randy Owen of the legendary band Alabama talking about his experiences in agriculture; Randall Ennis, a poultry science alumnus who is chief operating officer of Aviagen; and other speakers, displays and special events. It is open to high-school students from across the state.

Contact: Deborah Solie at 334-844-8900 or das0001@auburn.edu or visit www.ag.auburn.edu/agindustry

April 17-18

Annual Plant Sale

**Corner of Samford Avenue and College Street
9 a.m.-5 p.m.**

Auburn

This annual plant sale, held on A-Day football weekend, offers for sale hundreds of plants including shrubs, trees, vegetables, herbs and bedding plants. It is cosponsored by PLANET landscape horticulture club and the Auburn University Campus Club. All proceeds go the Campus Club's First Ladies Scholarships in Horticulture program.

Contact: Mary Lou Matthews at 334-821-2161 or mandml@att.net

April 19

Garden in the Kindergarten

005 Biggin Hall

4 p.m.

Auburn

Landscape architect Susan Herrington traces the development of gardens in kindergartens during the 19th century in Germany and their later transformation in North America.

Contact: 334-844-5887 or visit www.ag.auburn.edu/ArtinAg/

April 28-29

Ag Classic

Auburn

This event offers golfing, fishing and sporting clay tournaments and helps fund AU College of Agriculture scholarships.

Contact: Katie Hardy at 334-844-1475 or katie@auburn.edu

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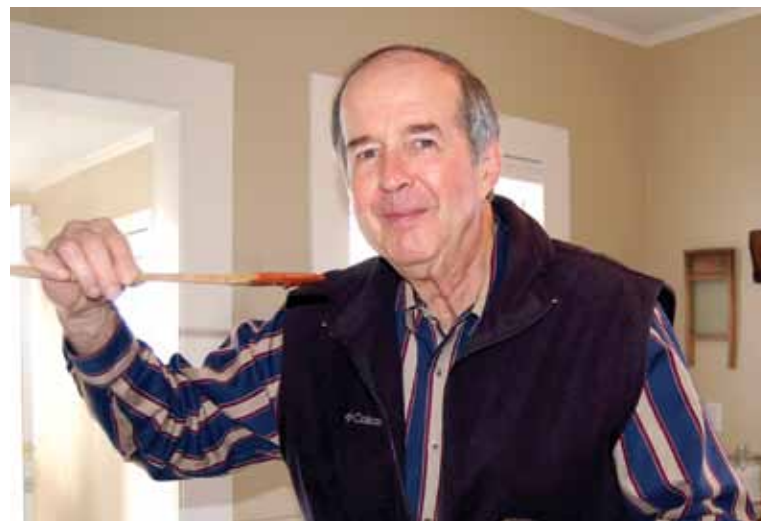
Recipe File

Special Sauce Family Recipe, Family Memories

Jim Bannon, director of outlying units for the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station, is known across Ag Hill for his fine cooking skills. In fact, his holiday packages of home-baked goodies are much anticipated and coveted by all his coworkers each December. He may well have inherited his cooking talent from his mother, Julia Armstrong Bannon, who sadly passed away in January but whose legacy lives on in this family recipe for spaghetti sauce Bannon recommends serving it with a salad and French bread.

Julia Bannon's Spaghetti Sauce

- 2 lbs. ground round beef (lean)
- 3 tbs. olive oil
- 1 tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- ½ tsp. sugar
- 2 medium onions, chopped finely
- 2-3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2-3 stalks celery, chopped finely
- 1 green pepper, chopped finely
- 1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 1-2 tsps. Italian seasoning
- 1 - 14½ oz. can stewed tomatoes, mashed up w/potato masher
- 1 - 8 oz. can tomato sauce
- 2 - 6 oz. cans tomato paste
- 1 medium can mushrooms, drained
- ½ to 1½ lbs. thin spaghetti (vermicelli)
- Grated parmesan cheese



TASTE TEST—Jim Bannon, director of outlying units for the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station, tastes the spaghetti sauce his late mother made famous.

Brown the meat and first nine ingredients in a large skillet. (If the meat is lean, it doesn't have to be drained.) Once meat is fully browned, transfer the mixture to a large Dutch oven and add the Worcestershire sauce, tomatoes, Italian seasoning, tomato sauce and tomato paste. Simmer for 1 ½ to 2 hours, adding the mushrooms during the last 15 minutes of cooking. Stir the sauce every 15 minutes or so to keep it from sticking. Prepare the noodles during the last 15 minutes of simmering. Serve meat sauce on top of noodles and top with grated parmesan cheese.