

# Ag Eco News

Department of  
Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness

September 2008

## From the Department Head



Gail L. Cramer

On behalf of the LSU AgCenter and faculty, I'm pleased to invite you to visit the campus during Homecoming on September 27. It is a special time of year to renew acquaintances and make new friends.

The LSU AgCenter funds most of our research and extension projects. Chancellor Bill Richardson has led the AgCenter to new heights in economic development and agricultural productivity. Biotechnology investment is expanding around the state, and new industries are emerging.

LSU A&M has hired Dr. Mike Martin as its chancellor. Dr. Martin earned his Ph.D. in agricultural economics from the University of Minnesota. We welcome him to the campus and hope you will have a chance to meet him at our departmental meeting on September 27 at 10 a.m. in the LSU Union.

This past year was another excellent one for the department. We

*(continued on page 4)*

## Caffey and Westra Promoted



Rex Caffey

Dr. Rex Caffey was promoted to the rank of professor effective July 1. Dr. Caffey is responsible for developing and implementing educational programs in wetland/fisheries and coastal zone management, conservation and restoration. He currently serves as director of the department's Center for Natural Resource Economics and Policy. He is also interim coordinator of the Marine Extension Program in the Louisiana Sea Grant College Program and the LSU AgCenter.



John Westra

Dr. John Westra was promoted to associate professor with tenure effective July 1. Dr. Westra has a joint extension and research appointment. His research responsibilities include conducting research in production, natural resource and environmental economics of relevance to the agricultural sector. His extension responsibilities include the development and delivery of educational programs that address production, natural resource and environmental economic problems confronting farmers. A major focus of this effort is the annual publication of the "Louisiana Summary of Agriculture and Natural Resources," otherwise known as "Ag Summary."



## Research & Extension Highlights

Dr. Michael Salassi is serving as the chairman of the LSU AgCenter bioenergy research steering committee. The purpose of this committee is to help focus and coordinate the varied bioenergy research projects in departments and branch stations. One of the current research activities involves sweet sorghum production trials at several research locations. The purpose of these crop trials is to identify optimal planting and harvest dates for the production of sweet sorghum in Louisiana as a biofuel feedstock. The Agricultural Economics Department is conducting the economic portion of this research project, primarily concerning the estimation of expected sweet sorghum production costs for Louisiana.



Mike Salassi

The department is also involved in a research project involving the production of high fiber, “energy” sugarcane for use as a feedstock in the cellulosic production of ethanol.

Dr. Wayne Gauthier is serving on a committee that recommends tax credit awards to individual dairy farmers under the Dairy Refundable Tax Credit Program, which was created by the Louisiana legislature in 2007. The program set forth criteria that must be met to qualify for the tax credit. Refunds are based on production and are limited to a maximum of \$30,000 per year to

an individual producer. Total cost of the program is capped at \$2.5 million. Serving with Dr. Gauthier are individuals from the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, the Louisiana Department of Revenue, the dairy division of the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, the Louisiana Farm Bureau, the Federal Milk Market Order Program and two Louisiana dairy farmers. Mr. Lanny Conerly (B.S. 1963) was one of those two dairy farmers.



Wayne Gauthier

The department was asked to develop and implement a methodology to satisfy the established criteria and assign a level of refundable tax credit to 207 Louisiana dairy farmers based on their 2007 total milk production. Dr. Gauthier leads the departmental effort and is assisted by Ms. Lynda Shoalmire. In addition, the dairy enterprise budgets prepared by Mr. Robert Boucher and Dr. Jeffrey Gillespie are key factors in calculating the refunds. In addition to the cost of production estimates, data from the federal milk market order program and the dairy division of the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals are used in calculating the refunds.

Dr. Gauthier uses the data from the various sources to develop summary reports identifying refunds to individual dairy farmers. These reports are reviewed by the overall committee to ensure compliance with all the stipula-

tions of the legislation. Once approved by the committee, the recommendations are forwarded to the Louisiana commissioner of agriculture for review and approval. The approved document is then forwarded to the Louisiana Department of Revenue for issuance of tax credits and checks to 207 Louisiana dairy farmers. In 2008, \$1.257 million dollars in 2007 refundable tax credits were distributed to those 207 dairy farmers.

A new farm bill has recently been enacted, and several faculty members are reviewing changes and developing information on how these changes might affect Louisiana producers. The Food, Conservation and Energy Act (FCEA, also known as the 2008 Farm Bill) modifies farm commodity and biofuel support policies. It contains a new program to ensure revenue, called the Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program. In addition to ACRE, other key provisions include:

- Reduction in target price for cotton.
- Reduction in share of base acreage eligible for direct payments.
- Increased target prices and loan rates for several commodities.
- Delays in the timing of direct and countercyclical payments.
- Modification of the dairy price support and Milk Income Loss Contract programs.
- Extension of the ethanol-specific tariff and reduction in the ethanol tax credit.
- Creation of a program to make payments to domestic users of cotton.
- Changes in payment limitation rules.

## Faculty Awards and Recognition



Mark Schafer

The department is pleased to have an outstanding faculty, and it is particularly gratifying to have their accomplishments recognized outside the department. The following is a partial listing of awards and other recognition received by the faculty since the last newsletter.

Dr. Mark Schafer, associate professor, received a service-learning fellowship from the Center for Community Engagement, Leadership and Learning at LSU.



Ashok Misra

Dr. Mike Dunn, associate professor, received a 2007 Phi Kappa Phi service award for his work with the LSU chapter of Phi Kappa Phi. He, along with coauthors Drs. Glenn Hughes and Richard Vlosky, was recognized by the Southern Regional Extension Forestry Association with a Silver award for a multistate project, "Certified Forests: Preparing Private Landowners for the Future."



Mike Dunn

Dr. Hector Zapata, William H. Alexander Regents Professor, was voted president-elect of the Southern Agricultural Economics Association last year and will become president of the association this year. He will present his presidential address at the annual meeting to be held in Atlanta in February 2009.



Kurt Guidry

Dr. Jeffrey Gillespie, professor, and fellow faculty member Dr. Ashok Misra, associate professor, were named coeditors of the *Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics*.

Dr. Kurt Guidry was appointed to the Gilbert Durbin Professorship in Agricultural Economics, effective July 1, 2007.



Hector Zapata

Dr. Roger Hinson was appointed to the Donald Welge Endowed Professorship in Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness effective July 1, 2007. Dr. Hinson was also recognized for his journal article appearing in *HortTechnology*, titled "Management Challenges in a Maturing Industry: A teaching Case Study of Melon Farming in Latin America." This article was featured in the journal's spotlight section.



Roger Hinson



Jeffrey Gillespie

## Faculty Awards and Recognition



Steve Henning

Dr. Steven Henning was named to the LSU Gamma Sigma Delta Teaching Merit Honor Roll.

Dr. Michael Salassi was named to the LSU Gamma Sigma Delta Teaching Merit Honor Roll.

Drs. Matt Fannin and Kenneth Paxton, along with coauthors Drs. John Barreca and Huizhen Niu, received the first-place award for a poster presentation at the Southern Agricultural Economics Association meeting in Dallas. The poster was titled "Evaluating the Switch from Cotton to Corn: Impacts on the Louisiana Economy."



Matt Fannin



Mike Salassi

**Don't Miss Homecoming  
Departmental Meeting  
September 27  
10 a.m. - LSU Union**



Ken Paxton

### From the Department Head

*(continued from page 1)*

have record numbers of outstanding students, and the faculty members have been very productive.

The number of undergraduate students has grown from 266 last year to a projected enrollment of 300 for this year. These students are finding good jobs in Louisiana and throughout the nation. Our enrollment in the Ph.D. program has increased to 35 students. These students are finding placement in universities, private industry and the federal government.

The "Forever LSU AgCenter" campaign is in full swing. You may endow gifts, name facilities and meet

our funding needs. Please consider contributing to our existing accounts or to a new account of your choosing. These enrichment funds help improve our undergraduate and graduate education (travel to conferences, scholarships, journals, books and offices).

I have submitted the paperwork to rename the Agricultural Administration Building after Dr. Martin D. Woodin. He was ag economics department head and later president of the LSU System.

The faculty received several awards this year (see awards section of newsletter).

Also, we welcome Dr. J. Ross Pruitt and Ms. Debra Boudreaux. Dr.

Pruitt, a graduate of Oklahoma State University, joined the faculty as assistant professor on July 23 as the livestock economist. Ms. Boudreaux joined the administrative staff on July 14 and comes to the department from another campus office.

Congratulations to all our students who were named to the chancellor's and dean's honor rolls. We appreciate your scholarship!

Please stop by and visit anytime you are in Baton Rouge. I hope you can make it to Homecoming!

See you soon,  
Gail L. Cramer

## Scholarship and Award Recipients

The Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness Alumni Association established several scholarships made possible through the generous contributions of alumni and friends. Awards for these scholarships are made at the annual meeting of the association held each year in conjunction with homecoming activities. A listing of the scholarships and the recipients for 2007-08 follows:

State FFA Farm Management Contest Winner (voucher for scholarship)  
*Carly Sproule*

Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness Alumni Scholarship  
*José Argüello*  
*Andrew Cassidy*  
*Megan Gravois*  
*Denise White*

E.P. Roy Memorial Scholarship  
*Garret Lance Glazer*

Professor William H. Alexander Memorial Scholarship  
*John D. Barreca*  
*Craig Guidry*

Eric O. Goudeau Memorial Scholarship  
*Renée Leger*  
*Dwayne A. Zaunbrecher*

Memorial Scholarship  
*Derrick Goebel*

Students receiving scholarships through the College of Agriculture included *Lauren Heinen*, *Andrew Cassidy* and *Jordan Head*.

*John Barreca* was a member of the first-place quiz bowl team at the Southern Agricultural Economics Association meetings held in Dallas, February 2-5, 2008.

*Lee Brittain* was selected as the outstanding junior in the College of Agriculture.

## From the Graduate Students

Departmental graduate students continue to actively participate in professional activities. These activities not only include professional presentations but involvement in the professional organization. This year, one of our students, Tyler Mark, will be elected to the 2008-09 executive committee of the Graduate Student Section of the American Agricultural Economics Association. He will serve as a member-at-large.

Seventeen students attended the Southern Agricultural Economics Association meetings and participated in the presentation of three papers and two posters. Seven students will attend the AAEA meetings in Orlando and participate in the presentation of one paper and three posters. Two students, Tyler Mark and Sachin Chintawar, received AAEA travel grants to assist in travel to the 2008 AAEA meetings. In addition, several students presented papers or posters at a variety of other professional meetings. The Agricultural Economics Graduate Student Association continued to be active with several functions during the year including social events to welcome new graduate students and the ever-popular Graduate Student Potluck Dinner. More than 60 faculty, staff, students and family members attended the potluck this year.

## J. Norman Efferson Lecture Series

Through the generous contributions of the many friends of the late Dr. J. Norman Efferson, an endowment in his honor has been established. Dr. Efferson was a faculty member of the department and the first chancellor of LSU AgCenter. The endowment supports a lecture series named in his honor. Through this support, the department is able to bring outstanding researchers in a variety of areas to campus to not only present seminars, but interact with our faculty and graduate students. This activity is a tremendous asset for the department. Currently, Dr. John Westra coordinates arrangements for lectures presented in this series. This past year, five presenters gave a total of 10 seminars. The visitors and their topics were:

Dr. Mark Partridge, The Ohio State University, presented a series of seminars on rural development issues, October 23-25, 2007.

Dr. Anil Bera, University of Illinois, presented a seminar on spatial econometrics, January 8, 2008.

Dr. Frank Asche, University of Stavanger, Norway, presented a seminar on international trade issues, January 24, 2008.

Dr. Charles Moss, University of Florida, presented a seminar on the relationship between the housing market and farm land values, April 30, 2008.

Dr. Jerry Fruin, University of Minnesota, presented a seminar on transportation infrastructure issues and another on energy, transportation and biofuels May 14, 2008.

## 2007-08 Graduates

### August 2007

#### Bachelor of Science

Justin Daniel Campbell  
Mary-Clare Cook  
Nicholas Lewis Gutierrez  
Aaron Boyd Habetz  
Dustin Lee Laplante  
Daryl Frank Womack Jr.

#### Master of Science

Francis Gilbert Barker  
Sachin Chintawar  
Elisabeth Grisham  
Baifu Xu

#### Doctorate

Young-jae Lee

### December 2007

#### Bachelor of Science

Kenneth Edwin Bourg  
Jacob Thomas Champion  
Benjamin Michael Clark  
Amanda Alayne Cross  
Jason P. Difulco  
Michael Todd Duplantis  
Gerard Norbert French  
Angelle Marie Guillot  
Carl Joseph Gustin  
Sandy Diana Lambert  
Stephanie Lynne Lampert  
Brian Kenneth Lawson  
Thomas Baker Lay  
Nathan J. Louque  
James Fisher Maddox  
Remington Werner Miller  
Matthew Luke Olivier  
Kesha Dionne Pinel  
Daniel Emanuel Scott  
Jeffrey Eric Simon

#### Master of Science

Won Jun Choi  
Heidi Brook Landry  
I. Cristian Nedelea  
Jorge Raul Rivera

#### Doctorate

James Henderson  
Anil Sulgham

### May 2008

#### Bachelor of Science

James Russell Baker III  
John David Barreca  
Andrew Perry Blank  
Charles Vincent Cannatella  
Thomas Henry James Cook  
Miles Avegno Crawford  
Julie Ann Dugas  
Jon Ramon Ellis  
Thomas Paul Fontenot  
Garret Lance Glaser  
Derrick Bryan Goebel  
Megan E. Gravois  
Craig Campbell Guidry  
Margaret Elizabeth Harris  
Jye Michael Hartman  
Lindsey Leigh Hernandez  
Phillippe Nemour Honoré Jr.  
Brian Wayne Huber  
Brittany D'Lanor Jack  
Renee Elizabeth Leger  
Joshua Ryan Lorando  
Amanda Lynn Marquette  
Karen Re'Nae Martinez  
Matthew Clarke Miller  
John Kevin Monteith Jr.  
William J. Moreaux  
Viral Ranchhod Patel  
John Kiel Patterson  
John Jackson Pool  
Blake James Purcell  
Kerry Owen Thomas Jr.  
Brittany Nicole Tillman  
Marshall Ray Vince  
Denise Michelle White

#### Master of Science

Tanza Erlambang  
Pawan Poudel  
Marco Absalon Velastegui

#### Doctorate

None

## From the Undergraduate Students

The Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness Club had an active year. A highlight of these activities was the club trip to Chicago, May 11-14, 2008. This year, six students and club adviser Dr. Wes Harrison traveled to Chicago where they toured Kraft Food's R&D facilities, visited the Chicago Board of Trade and viewed the George Washington Carver exhibit at Chicago's Field Museum. Students on the trip included John Barreca, Mark Honore, Clark Lanus, Patrick Mouton, James Rumore and Matthew Talley. The club also went on a field trip to Associated Grocers of Baton Rouge on March 28, 2008. A highlight of this trip was touring AG's large distribution center in Baton Rouge and having an opportunity to meet and talk with President Jay Campbell and other top AG executives.

Activities such as these are made possible by contributions of Louisiana agribusinesses, the Baton Rouge Kiwanis Club and LSU Agricultural Business alumni. Tax-deductible contributions to support the educational activities of the LSU Agribusiness Club can be made to an LSU Foundation account dedicated to that purpose. If you would like to contribute, please contact the LSU Department of Agricultural Economics & Agribusiness for more information.

## Caffey, Keithly and Kazmierczak Receive NOAA Fisheries Office and the National Sea Grant College Program Grant

In August 2008, faculty members Rex Caffey, Walter Keithly and Richard Kazmierczak were awarded a research grant in the amount of \$648,512 from the NOAA Fisheries Office and the National Sea Grant College Program. These funds will be used to conduct socioeconomic research on major commercial and recreational fishing sectors of the northern Gulf of Mexico. The three-year study will establish two new postdoctoral positions and two additional graduate assistantships for of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness and the Center for Natural Resource Economics and Policy (CNREP).

### Pruitt Joins Faculty

The department is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Ross Pruitt as an assistant professor. Dr. Pruitt will assume responsibilities of the position formerly held by Dr. Ken Wegenhoft. He will have statewide leadership and coordination responsibilities for extension educational programs in farm management and marketing with a major focus on the livestock sector. He is a native of Kentucky and received his undergraduate degree in agribusiness from Western Kentucky University. He



Ross Pruitt

received his master's degree from Purdue University and his doctorate in agricultural economics from Oklahoma State University.

### Salassi Appointed to Administrative Intern Position in LAES

Dr. Michael Salassi was appointed to an administrative intern position in the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station. This is a part-time assignment in the director's office. He will continue his research, extension and teaching programs in the department.

## Helping Ensure Excellence in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness

The department enjoys excellent support for its core research and extension programs through the LSU AgCenter. The College of Agriculture supports the teaching program through faculty salaries, graduate stipends and other support. Although this support is critical to developing and maintaining extension, research and teaching programs, the level of support is often not sufficient to provide the extra resources to move these programs to the next level. Private financial support from our alumni and friends is becoming more important to enhance existing programs and begin new initiatives.

Your contributions support the teaching, research and extension programs of the department.

This support is in the form of student scholarships, faculty development and enhanced educational experiences through the lecture series. An envelope is included in this newsletter for your convenience should you choose to support these activities. You may use your credit card either online or by mail.

The department has accounts with both the LSU Alumni Association and the LSU Foundation, and both accept credit card donations. For secure online donations to the LSU Foundation, go to [www.lsufoundation.org](http://www.lsufoundation.org). Select the "giving" tab, and click on "give online." You will be asked to supply your credit card information and designate the fund to receive the contribution. To make a contribution to the departmental development fund, click on "for the benefit of" and "school/department."

Fill in the department name in the next box. For donations to scholarships or professorships, select the appropriate category and then name the professorship or scholarship in the next box. A listing of the professorships and scholarships is shown on the enclosed envelope.

Donations also may be made to our scholarships with the LSU Alumni association. For these donations, go to the alumni Web site: [www.lsu-alumni.org](http://www.lsu-alumni.org) and select "contribute." This takes you to the online donation page where you fill in the required information. Designate the particular scholarship in the comments section. Simply indicate the name of the alumni scholarship from the list on the enclosed envelope. Thank you for your continuing support.

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## In Memoriam

The department is saddened to report the death of Jeanne Anne (Jan) Sperry Schupp on September 4, 2007. Jan was the wife of long-time faculty member Dr. Al Schupp. A native of Enid, Oklahoma, she received her bachelor's degree in education from Louisiana College and her master's

degree in education from Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas. She taught fourth grade at England Air Force Base for a number of years before moving to Baton Rouge in 1974. She is survived by her husband and daughters Cynthia, Alyssa and Bettina.

Visit our Web sites  
[www.lsuagcenter.com](http://www.lsuagcenter.com)  
or  
[www.agecon.lsu.edu](http://www.agecon.lsu.edu)

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