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Institute of Agriculture

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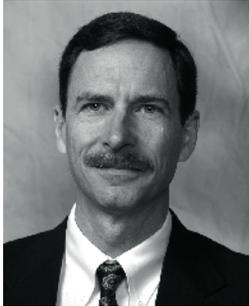
# INSTITUTE OF Agriculture

News for Employees, Students & Friends

June 2007

## BELLI TO LEAD DEPT. OF FORESTRY, WILDLIFE, AND FISHERIES

**K** eith Belli is the new head of the Department of Forestry, Wildlife, and Fisheries. Prior to his appointment,



Keith Belli

he worked at Mississippi State University for 18 years, most recently as associate dean of the College of Forest Resources, associate director of the Forest and Wildlife Research Center, and interim head of the Department of Forest Products. During the past two years, he worked with former FWF head George Hopper.

Belli, whose name is pronounced *Bell-Eye*, holds a bachelor's in forest science from

Penn State, a master's in silviculture from Michigan State, and a doctorate in forest biometrics from the Univ. of Minnesota.

"Dr. Belli was an outstanding candidate for the position, from his leadership skills, his experience base, and his enthusiasm. We look forward to his leadership as department head," said search committee chair Neil Rhodes, head of the Department of Plant Sciences.

Belli says he is very happy to now live in the beautiful countryside of East Tennessee and looks forward to meeting and working with Institute faculty, staff, and students.

**Bloomin'  
Field Days  
ahead.  
Details  
inside**

## HEALTHY HARDWOOD FIELD DAYS GUIDE FOREST OWNERS ON BMPS

**T** ennessee is rich with forest resources. Fifty-five percent of the state's land base is covered with trees, and 89 percent of the state's 13.9 million acres of forest land are considered hardwood types of trees, predominately oaks, hickories, ash, maple, and poplar.

This spring a series of three **Tennessee Healthy Hardwood Field Days** have sought to educate the state's forestland owners on practices that will improve the health and economic value of their forests. UT Extension led the programs in partnership with the state's Division of Forestry, the Tennessee Forestry Association, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Forest Service. A field day occurred in each of the state's three grand divisions.

"We've been emphasizing the intermediate operations of forests, the practices we do while the forest is developing," said Extension forester David Mercker.

"Some of our forests have been abused in the past. In these programs we're emphasizing ways to improve the forests while they're developing. I've addressed the subject of crop tree release; Wayne Clatterbuck discussed improving forests with a commercial harvest. Through a proper harvest, one can achieve a better forest with better composition, better growth, and improved health. Larry Tankersley and Allan Houston focused on the need for a forest management plan using a professional to develop a multi-year plan, and our final area of emphasis has been on protecting soil and water through forestry best management practices. Sam Jackson surveyed participants to assess knowledge gained and preference of learning from field days compared to the Internet and other means."

Two hundred and thirty forest owners and agency personnel attended the field days this year. Similar field days were held in 2006, and more are planned for 2008.



The field day at Sewanee drew a crowd.

third thursday

## INVESTING IN AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES PROGRAMS

By *Tim Cross*  
Associate Dean, UT Extension

Agriculture has been undergoing significant and rapid changes across the state, and UT Extension programs are adapting and anticipating these changes to meet the needs of producers. **Five new state action agendas were developed in 2006 to assist Extension agents in planning, conducting, and evaluating programs for agriculture and natural resources audiences.** The resulting plans were provided to Extension agents to develop their own individual action agendas based upon local needs and resources. Agents are now recording contacts, impacts, and outcomes for these state action agendas, so that aggregated impacts and outcomes in high priority programs can be documented and reported.

The state plan for **horticulture** recognizes that both homeowners and commercial growers have educational needs, and each group affects the other. Agent training was provided to agents and Master Gardeners at a Master Gardener train-the-trainer workshop, a turf and ornamental workshop was offered to agents and commercial turf and landscape professionals, and an in-service training for fire ant management techniques was conducted to train agents. These activities were supplemented with educational curriculum, as well as supplies and minor equipment to conduct demonstrations and meetings. Area Specialists in Farm Management are included in the plans to conduct one-on-one assistance with new and existing growers.

The **row crops** state action agenda recognizes the need for timely, research-based information to assist growers with decisions concerning seed selection, pest management, and technology adoption. Three agents participated in the Beltwide Cotton Conference to learn about the latest research efforts in cotton production. A mini-grants program was administered to provide much-needed equipment to agents for use in scouting, identifying pests, delivering integrated pest management training programs, harvesting small plots and demonstrations, and applying spatial data to precision agriculture management.

Much of the state is endowed with timber, making our natural resource base an important component of the state's economy. The **natural resources** state action agenda emphasizes training for Extension agents in native warm season grasses and forest management. Four agents will participate in a national warm season grass meeting in Missouri, and regional training sessions are being conducted to present information about warm season grass establishment and management. Interest in these grasses and forest by-products and residues as feedstock for cellulosic ethanol production makes it critical for investing in additional training in these areas, leading to more educational programs over time.

The state's livestock industry is largely based on forages, so the **livestock and forage** state action agenda builds upon this relationship and emphasizes the production and utilization of quality, inexpensive

forages. Many programs are focused on beef cattle production, but horses, goats, sheep, and dairy are also included in these plans. Seed money has been provided for an upcoming Master Horse program, and agents have received funds to conduct demonstrations on safe hay storage, alternative approaches to weaning cattle, and forage management.



*Tim Cross*

**Biosafety** concerns transcend all agriculture program areas, and this state action agenda was developed to guide agents with regard to biosecurity. Personal protective equipment has been provided to all agents for use in the event of a disease outbreak or other emergency, or for use in visiting biosecure sites (such as broiler houses or pork production facilities). This equipment includes Tyvek suits, plastic boot covers, disposable gloves, goggles, etc.

As agriculture continues to change, Extension programs will react, with new priorities being phased in and current priorities moved to base programming. Watch for new efforts related to biofuels, value-added agriculture, and fruits and vegetables in the future, as additional emphasis and investments are directed to these areas of need.

## CORRECTION

The correct total for first quarter grants and gifts to the Institute is \$3,581,927. This figure is different than one run in the previous issue of *Third Thursday*. We regret the error.

## BLOOMIN' FIELD DAYS AHEAD

Two of the Institute's most colorful events will soon occur.

**Blooms Days Garden Festival and Marketplace** will take place at the UT Gardens June 23 and 24. The event will feature an array of workshops, focusing on everything from presidential vegetables to the state's best and beautiful annuals. Fun events are planned for the entire family, as well. More details are at [www.bloomdays.utk.edu](http://www.bloomdays.utk.edu). Across the state, **Summer Celebration** will also feature annuals and perennials, with gardening know-how to aid novices and expert green thumbs. The event takes place July 12 at the West Tenn. Research and Education Center in Jackson. You can find out more at <http://westtennessee.tennessee.edu>.

While gardening is the theme of those two events, this year's most varied field day takes place June 28 at Highland Rim Research and Education Center in Springfield. **Tobacco, Beef, and More** is the theme of the day. Participants will hear presentations designed to enhance local production of a variety of commodities, including beef cattle, tobacco, soybeans, and tree fruits. Freeze recovery and biofuels are also among the topics. More information on this event is available at <http://tinyurl.com/2f3j2p>.

## WHAT'S NEWS

For the third year in a row, **Alan Windham's** workshop at the **Golf Course Superintendent's Association of America Education Conference** was the first of 100 workshops to sell out and was one of the highest rated workshops of the massive event, which was attended

## FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT: TENN. FARMERS PUT FOOD ON THE TABLE

Recently at a Tennessee Farm Bureau Board meeting we held a discussion about **drivers of change in the U.S. Food System**. Doing so prompted me once again to reflect that our country's food system is the very best in the world. The system includes production, processing, distribution, and consumption components. The variety and quality of the food available to us year round is amazing and something that we enjoy, have grown accustomed to, and most of us take for granted. On average Americans in 2005 spent a relatively modest amount of their disposable



Joe DiPietro

personal income, 10 percent, on food, compared to 23 percent in 1929 and 18 percent in 1957. We are fortunate that this is the case.

The Institute's education, Extension, and research programs have an integral role in making sure that our food system continues to prosper while assuring us a continued supply of safe, diverse, high quality, nutritious, and affordable food. Many of our citizens do not really make the connection between what they eat and agriculture. So, the next time you get the chance, remind your neighbor that the food we enjoy has a lot to do with the efforts of not only the Institute's faculty, staff and students, but more importantly farmers and Tennessee agriculture.

All the best,

Joe

by over 7,000 participants. Windham, professor of Entomology and Plant Pathology, and Henry Wetzel of Jacklin Seeds/Simplot led an eight-hour workshop on microscopic identification of turfgrass diseases. The workshop covered the principles of turfgrass disease identification for golf course superintendents in a working laboratory situation.

As part of an effort to save a former YMCA camp, four UT students have given Camp Montvale the equivalent of a physical, the *Maryville Daily Times* reported. The students, Amber Dunn, Ryan Hintz, Mary Williams, and Brittany Hildreth, developed a land-management plan and resource survey for the 400-acre-plus property for a senior-level land-management planning class in the **UT Forestry, Wildlife, and Fisheries** program.

Billy Minser and Larry Tankersley, both of Blount County, taught the course.

Former Hardin County 4-H'ers honored retired Extension agent **William I. Butler** on the 65th anniversary of the Bataan surrender in WWII, April 9th, 2007. State Sen. Jim Tracy (R) Shelbyville, son of former Hardin County agent and UT swine specialist, James Tracy, introduced a joint resolution in the legislature honoring Mr. Butler for his service to the country and his devotion to duty while enduring the Bataan Death March and three and one half years in Japanese concentration camps. Former 4-H'ers gathered in Hardin County to celebrate Butler with a picnic, and a scholarship has been established in his name for 4-H'ers at South Haven Christian School in the county.

## WHAT'S NEWS

The bimonthly newsletter *Making A Difference* is designed to help university supervisors and managers perform their duties and tasks more efficiently and effectively. The May issue is available in hard copy and online and **provides supervisors with tips and techniques regarding communication skills**. This month's newsletter and all archived issues can be seen online at <http://tinyurl.com/yqlamz>. Contact David Bowman at (865) 974-4430 or email him at [dbowman@tennessee.edu](mailto:dbowman@tennessee.edu) if you would like to be added to his distribution list.

**UT Gardens will host "Books and Blooms" for families in the gardens this summer, in partnership with the Knox County Public Libraries.** Dates are 10:30 a.m. Thursdays, June 7, 14, 21, and 28, and July 5, 12, 19, and 26. The programs include stories and hands-on projects and are free and open to all ages. Pack your lunch and picnic in the gardens afterward. For more info call (865) 525-4555 or visit [www.friendsoftheutgardens.org](http://www.friendsoftheutgardens.org).

## DEVELOPMENT NEWS

**Ben and Margaret Kimbrough of Clarksville** committed \$650,000 to fund scholarships in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources through their estate. The scholarships will be awarded to CASNR students based on achievement and financial need.

**Bill and Jane Bell** of St. Cloud, Fla., committed \$50,000 toward Spring Camp Awards for students in the Department of Forestry, Wildlife, and Fisheries. The award reduces student

cost of participation in the camp. Bill Bell is a 1972 graduate of FWF. Jane Bell is a 1973 Arts and Sciences graduate.

**Ripshin Lake Corporation** committed \$25,000 to the Lindsay Young Beneficial Insects Laboratory in the Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology. The funds will further hemlock conservation efforts in the Cherokee National Forest by supporting beneficial insect rearing and release.

## TYING THE KNOT

"When I first saw her, I thought she was mean," he said. "He's not my type," she said. Apparently he *is* her type now because Jaron Carson and Shaleah Boykins will soon be husband and wife. The Memphis couple wants their marriage to last and recently went through a UT Extension premarital counseling program called "Before you tie the knot."

Many couples just plan a wedding, rather than think about the marriage that comes afterward. Tennessee's high divorce rate has been a state embarrassment and country music cliché for a long time. But since 2000, it's improved every year—part of a national trend. "Knot" looks to build on that.

"We cover four areas. We talk about communication, handling conflict, parenting, and money matters," says Cathy Faust, UT Extension agent in Shelby County. UT Extension also trains many clergy and marriage counselors as part of this program. You can view a video story about "Before you tie the knot" at [www.agriculture.utk.edu/news/VideoReleases/-ChuckDenney](http://www.agriculture.utk.edu/news/VideoReleases/-ChuckDenney)

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