

UT INSTITUTE OF Agriculture

News for Employees, Students & Friends April 2007

UT APPOINTS NEW DEAN FOR CASNR

The College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources has a new leader. **Caula A. Beyl**, interim dean of Graduate Studies for **Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University**, has been named dean. Her previous post at Alabama A&M was that of director of the Office of Institutional Planning, Research, and Evaluation.

Beyl will be the first female dean of UT's nearly century old college of agriculture. She is among a handful of female leaders of such land-grant colleges across the nation. Her appointment reflects a shift from traditionally male-dominated programs to studies that are attracting nearly equal numbers of male and female students.

The college offers a variety of studies focused on food, fiber and natural resources systems. As dean, Beyl will oversee the college's academic programs, which serve

approximately 840 undergraduate and 225 graduate students.

A professor of horticulture, Beyl has received numerous awards and recognitions for her teaching and research. She has also served in editorial and review capacities for a number of scholarly publications, including the *Journal of the American Society for Horticultural Science*.



Caula Beyl

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FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT: UTIA REPORT CARD RESULTS

In March I promised you the **results of the Institute's first-ever Report Card from an Institute-wide perspective**. Last fall I asked you and other Institute personnel for your opinions about how well you think the Institute of Agriculture is performing. Essentially one quarter of you, 408 in all, provided grades to aspects of the Institute. As you might expect, there were good marks in some areas and lower marks in others where people believe improvement needs to occur.

In particular, I was pleased to see that quality of faculty, of technical staff, and of clerical staff and professional students received some of the highest marks, as



Joe DiPietro

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Efforts to save hemlocks, inside

Preparing biofuels professionals, back cover



Fill 'er up—Tennessee Rep. Stratton Bone (D-Lebanon), chair of the House Agriculture Committee, pours Ethanol-85 into a UT flex fuel vehicle during Ag Day on the Hill activities in Nashville. And, yes, that's a bouquet of switchgrass lying on the trunk. The March event, and UT Day on the Hill the next day, informed legislators and the governor about the Tennessee Biofuels Initiative and other key Institute programs and impacts.

third thursday

IMPACT STATEMENTS HOLD IMPORTANT ROLE

by Thomas H. Klindt, Interim Dean
Tennessee Agricultural
Experiment Station

Many faculty members have just completed the most recent round of preparing impact statements. While time consuming to prepare, these impact statements are important. They provide the non-disciplinary audiences a sense of value associated with our research mission. And, the bulk of our research support stems from the efforts of the non-scientific community.

The challenge is to translate research findings into terms that are readily understood. The most commonly used measure of impact is dollars. In a recent UT assessment of impact, the Experiment Station's economic impact in Tennessee alone was many times the level of state support. This information makes

the task of justifying budget requests much easier. It helps decision-makers understand that the Experiment Station's research program has a direct bearing on the well being of people in the state.

While dollars are the most common denominator for impact, other measures exist as well. In a recent conversation about research with a Food Science and Technology faculty member, there was much discussion of hydrocolloids, emulsifiers, temperature extremes, stability, and other terms foreign to an economist. But, at the base of the research effort was the fact that military food rations contained a cheese spread that, after being



Thomas H. Klindt

abused by time and temperature, separated into an oily liquid and something else, akin to a rubber eraser. Through research, a product was developed that was nutritious and, at the same time, maintained its consistency through time and extreme environmental conditions. The upshot is that through research by Food Science research faculty, our men and women in uniform will be better fed. That's an impact that even an economist can relate to.

The Experiment Station takes pride in its mission of making lives better through research. Lives can be made better in many ways—greater prosperity, better nutrition, improved products, cleaner environment, and many others. It is through the translation of research finding to impacts that we let those outside the academy know the value of our programs to the citizens of the state, region, nation, and world.

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did personal safety and security, and outreach. These areas all ranked in the top quarter of the class.

In the second quartile were biosafety/lab safety, quality of administrators, graduate students quality, external research, undergraduate students quality, and economic development.

The third quartile consisted of respect for diverse opinions, development/fundraising, multicultural and racial diversity, quality and adequacy of space.

The fourth quartile was composed of faculty salaries compared to peers, state support, federal support, upkeep and maintenance, housekeeping, and staff salaries relative to market.

We take this input seriously and it will guide us in considering ways to improve and advance our organization.

Some areas, such as housekeeping and maintenance, are likely to be easier to improve, while others, like those related to salaries and federal and state support are a heavier lift and greater challenge. The bottom line is that we're going to try to do something about areas that concern us, and do better in areas where we could be stronger. Improvement will take teamwork and cooperation, and that's something we're good at doing.

Look for our next Report Card during Fall Semester, and plan to take part. Should you have questions about the Report Card results, please feel free to send me an e-mail message, give me a call, or drop by.

All the best,

Joe

BEYL, from page 1

She holds a Ph.D. in stress physiology and a master's in horticulture from Purdue University. She earned her bachelor of science degree in biology from Florida Atlantic University.

Regarding her appointment, the new dean said, "Throughout the years, the UT College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources has been well known for its leadership and energetic faculty. I am thoroughly delighted to be welcomed into this outstanding family and to experience firsthand a true UT welcome."

Beyl, who plans to be on campus on June 1, is looking forward to an intense summer of orientation and preparation for the 2007 fall semester.

NEW PARTNERSHIPS TO HELP SAVE HEMLOCKS

On March 27, **USDA Forest Service personnel met in Unicoi County at the Rock Creek Recreation Area in the Cherokee National Forest near Erwin to release predator beetles** in the ongoing effort to keep hemlocks from disappearing from the Tennessee landscape. The roughly 2,500 beetles that will now call Rock Creek home were reared at the Institute's **Lindsay Young Beneficial Insects Laboratory**. Their release is part of a partnership aimed at establishing a permanent population of the tiny beetles to prey upon hemlock woolly adelgid. Area media were also present to report on what is becoming an increasingly familiar story.

The **ecologically important eastern and Carolina hemlock** face extinction in Tennessee without the beetles and other control methods—a daunting prospect when you consider the fact that the Cherokee National Forest alone has over 35,000 acres of hemlocks. Hemlock woolly adelgid, or HWA, has been a serious concern for the Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology since 2002, when Department Head Carl Jones first began working to establish the beneficial insects laboratory. Funding from USDA Forest Service and the National Park Service helped establish the lab in concert with support from UT and the Agricultural Experiment Station, and permanent facilities were built with assistance from the Friends of the Smokies.

Private and public partners have continued to be critical to the success of the laboratory. The Rock Creek release was the second in Rock Creek and was largely possible due to the Partners of the Cherokee National Forest (Partners). According to Sam Brocato, executive director of the non-profit, “We are committed to doing all we can to address hemlock loss by supporting the Cherokee National

Forest’s efforts to address this issue.” Their pledge of \$20,000 helps cover expenses associated with the rearing and releasing of two beetle species aimed at saving hemlocks. They join a list of other committed individuals and organizations that helped the laboratory double beetle production this year under the leadership of new director Pat Parkman. Operational support continues to come from federal partners and has grown

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From left: Rusty Rhea, USDA Forest Service, Sam Brocato, Partners of the Cherokee, and Terry Bowerman, Nolichucky/Unaka District ranger, use a paint brush to place beetles on an infested hemlock.

ENTOMOLOGISTS STUDY BEETLES' EFFECTIVENESS

As beetle releases continue, members of the **Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology are engaged in studies about the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) and the biocontrols that offer promise in combating them.**

Department members have just completed **the first comprehensive study of the life cycle of the HWA in the Southeastern U.S.** “This will help us better target beetle releases, knowing when the adelgids are most vulnerable. It also helps us better time our insecticide applications,” says Professor Jerome Grant.

Grant and Professor Paris Lambdin have also developed a **protocol for using eggs in predatory beetle releases.** Rearing labs that produce biocontrol beetles can yield far greater numbers of beetle eggs than beetle adults. Releasing eggs at sites infested with HWA may result in far greater numbers of predatory beetles in place where they count.

In addition to evaluating how beetle releases are faring at release sites,

Grant and Lambdin, in cooperation with Rusty Rhea of the USDA Forest Service, are also engaged in **a study that is the first known of its kind in the nation.** They will release three different natural enemies of HWA into 30-foot screened cages on HWA-infested hemlocks and then evaluate the effectiveness of the natural controls.

“What makes this study so significant is that beetles have been, and continue to be, released, but it has been extremely difficult to assess their impact in large, natural settings. With this study, we can better assess how the biocontrols are working and evaluate new introduced beetles to better determine which species to rear,” Grant says.

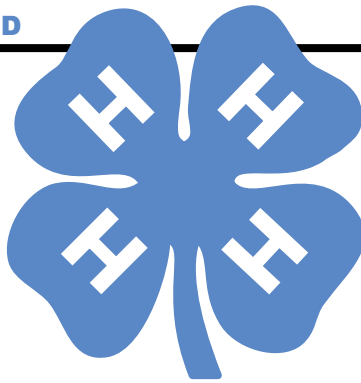
“A complex of natural enemies will be needed to provide us with the best management we can attain, rather than just the activity of a single species.”

The research is funded by the USDA Forest Service.

WOMACK 4-H ENDOWMENT CREATED

The B. Frank Womack 4-H Endowment has been established to support 4-H program work in Rutherford County. The endowment was established following an endowed gift agreement between Lucy Whitesell and the University of Tennessee.

Whitesell made a \$50,000 donation in memory of her father, the late B. Frank Womack. Womack was a well-known farmer, cattle breeder, and auctioneer who lived in Rutherford County for many years. His community activities included membership in the First United Methodist Church, Kiwanis Club, Sportsman Club, and the MTSU Foundation. Womack served as a director of the Mid South Bank & Trust Company for 41 years, and he was a veteran of World War II. He and his wife, the late Eloise Womack, were involved with the 4-H program when their children, Lucy and Ben, participated as youth in 4-H activities. A love of farming and his desire to help young people experience what it



was like to farm and raise cattle kept Womack involved in youth activities well after his children completed their 4-H project work.

The earnings from the B. Frank Womack 4-H Endowment will be used for various purposes related to 4-H junior livestock activities. The University of Tennessee and Rutherford County Extension acknowledge and greatly appreciate the generous donation of Lucy Whitesell in establishing the B. Frank Womack 4-H Endowment in memory of her father.

HEMLOCKS, from page 3

to include Tennessee's Department of Agriculture Forestry Division, Wildlife Resources Agency, and Department of Environment and Conservation.

Everyone, it seems, understands the stakes. At the same time, everyone understands that the beetles are not a silver bullet. "The beetles are an important part of the overall management plan, and we're glad to be doing our part," says Parkman. "The entire project is part of a regional effort to conduct research and look at promising new beetle species to add to the complex of tools we have to fight HWA."

For more information on the hemlock project or how to contribute, contact Pat Parkman at (865) 974-0217 or Amy Yancey (865) 974-8622.

—Amy Yancey

NOTABLE

Dyer County's participation in the statewide Extension program, **Walk Across Tennessee (WAT)**, has been selected for inclusion in the federal "Step Up to Health" manual published by the National Recreation and Park Association. The recognition highlights WAT's ties with Dyersburg Parks and Recreation. WAT is directed by Professor **Bobbi Clarke**, Family and Consumer Sciences. Agent **Beth Bell** oversees Dyer County's participation in the program.

Entomology and Plant Pathology hosted the **81st annual meeting of the Southeastern Branch of the Entomological Society of America** in early March. The event attracted approximately 300 entomologists from nine southern states, a few from outside the region, and a few international entomologists. Associate Professor Karen Vail served as program chair for the meeting, and Professor Jerome Grant was chair of the local arrangements committee.

The state of Tennessee's **Employee Assistance Program** has a monthly **newsletter** with informative items. Each issue is online, in electronic format only, at <http://tennessee.gov/finance/ins/eap/news.html>.

Patricia K. Tithof, associate professor of pathobiology, **was the featured speaker at a UT Graduate School of Medicine research seminar** in March. Her topic was environmental pollution and associated health risks—The Chattanooga Creek Initiative.

Scott McVey has received the UT College of Veterinary Medicine's 2007 Distinguished Alumni Award. McVey, a 1980 graduate of the college, is an associate professor of clinical microbiology and faculty supervisor for bacteriology/parasitology at the Veterinary Diagnostic Center, Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences, University of Nebraska, Lincoln. McVey, who received his Ph.D.

April 17, **Lunchtime, Twilight Walks, UT Gardens**, Knoxville, noon and 6 p.m.

April 17, **Veterinary Social Work Pet Loss Support Group**, 6:30 p.m., Forest Products Center, Knoxville

April 18, **Veterinary Social Work: Challenging Faulty Thought Patterns**, 12-12:50 p.m., Sequoyah Room, Knoxville

May 13-18 **Foreign Animal and Emerging Diseases Training Course**, Knoxville, <http://www.vet.utk.edu/cafsp/>

May 15-16 **Turfgrass Field Day & Workshop**, Knoxville, <http://knoxville.tennessee.edu/>

NOTABLE

from Texas A&M in Veterinary Microbiology, has worked in private practice, industry and academia. From 2003-2004, he served on a presidential blue ribbon panel on Counter Measures for Terrorist Threats to Agriculture. McVey is also a diplomat and past president of the American College of Veterinary Microbiologists.

CASNR, CVM, and UT Extension joined with the College of Nursing to present a homeland security conference on March 28. The speaker was Patricia Meinhardt of the Center of Occupational & Environmental Medicine, New York, NY. Her topic was "Responding to Water Contamination Events -- Readiness, Recognition, and Response." Approximately 50 professionals and students took part.

On May 13-18, the College of Veterinary Medicine will host **in-depth training on foreign animal and emerging diseases**. The course, which is jointly sponsored with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, includes speakers with international expertise on foreign animal and emerging diseases. Registration space is limited. On-line registration is available at <http://www.vet.utk.edu/cafsp>. The fee for the course is \$825 per person and includes meeting notebooks, multimedia CD, and continental breakfast and lunch. The

student rate is \$450. For more info call (865) 974-0345.

April is Smart Trips Month in Knoxville, encouraging people to carpool, take the bus, bike or walk to work...and win big! More details on the challenge and fun events planned for April are at <http://smarttrips.knoxtrans.org/>

Coffee County Green LifeSmarts Team beat out seven teams and captured the Tennessee State LifeSmarts Championship by successfully fielding questions about real-life marketplace issues at the Wilson County Fairgrounds in Lebanon, TN in early March. Team members Daniel Sherrouse, Jordan Kelly, Nick Calderwood, Ashlee Duncan, Sarah Russell, and their coach Michelle Matthews, 4-H Extension Agent, now advance to Orlando, Fla., to compete in the nationals. Coffee County White LifeSmarts Team captured second place with team members Tiffany LaLonde, Daniel Anderson, Deborah Anderson, Andy Brown, and Nathan Stone, with Michelle Matthews also serving as their coach.

Bill Morris, professor and Extension specialist in Food Science and Technology, was the **keynote speaker at the annual meeting of the Tennessee School Nutrition Administrators' Study Council**. The Nashville event drew 120 school food

service administrators from across the state. Morris' topic was "Today's Issues and Priorities in Food Safety: What's Hot and What's Not."



BRIEFLY: VASILJ BOBREK

This month we start a new feature that profiles some of the people who contribute to the cultural diversity of the Institute.

Vasilj Bobrek

Assistant Plot Caretaker, East Tennessee Research and Education Center, and native of Banja Luka, Bosnia, father of UT student Vladimir Bobrek, a junior in marketing, and two daughters who are UT alumnae.

Q: Why do you like living here?

A: I found a good job that I like to do and good people to work with.

Q: Why did you come to work for UT?

A: I did a similar job back home in production agriculture, growing corn, canola, wheat, sunflowers and soybeans, and I thought it would be a good thing to continue doing that here.

Q: How have you adjusted to your new surroundings?

A: I had a lot of help from my family—my brother lives here—and from coworkers Bobby McKee, Lee Ellis and John Hodges, in particular, who believed I could do the work.

At 4-H Congress—Delegates cast their vote for elected officials during the 60th 4-H Congress in Nashville. The event drew 400 4-H'ers and 160 volunteer and staff members. Gov. Bredesen was presented with the State Friend of 4-H Award during the activities.



TEAMING UP TO PREPARE BIOFUELS PROFESSIONALS

New types of jobs are already appearing related to the burgeoning biofuels and biorefining industries, and UT is among the institutions leading the way to educate a professional workforce suited for the new industries.

Under a \$500,000 USDA Higher Education Grant, the Institute and UT Knoxville are working with North Carolina State University and North Carolina A&T to develop a new academic curriculum for master's and Ph.D. students wishing to study the technical side of biomass utilization. Called BioSUCCEED, which stands for Bioproduct Sustainability, a University Cooperative Center of Excellence in Education, the schools will grant advanced degrees in biomass sciences through an innovative program that allows students to study at any of the three cooperating institutions simultaneously through distance education. The effort also includes the development of two undergraduate courses to supplement existing degree programs. More about the effort is online at <http://tinyurl.com/yruwxa>.

4-H'ERS USE IMPROV TO TEACH LESSONS



"You were driving drunk and because of your stupid mistake, we're both dead," screams one ghost to another in a graveyard.

The scene isn't real, but portrayed by talented 4-H'ers on stage. **The kids are in the "Acting for Life" Improv Troupe in Robertson County. The actors use humor to address serious topics—bullying, cyber stalking, teen pregnancy, and suicide.** They have a core batch of skits, yet the lines and circumstances change each time they walk on stage.

"The fun of improv is we don't have to memorize a script," says 4-H'er Courtney Crain. "Every performance is different."

This performance was at a middle school, where the audience members are just a few years younger than the actors. 4-H leaders believe younger kids are more receptive to a message from an older teen.

"There's a lot of difference between those middle school students and the high school," says Robertson County UT Extension Agent Kathy Finley. "Frequently they look up to them. They see them as the future."

You can view a video story about the Improv Troupe at <http://www.agriculture.utk.edu/news/VideoReleases/> —Chuck Denney



Growing a new Gardens entrance—
Renovation is underway for the entrance of the UT Gardens in Knoxville. You can glimpse the design of the new entryway and register to participate in Secret Garden Parties at <http://www.friendsoftheutgardens.org>. The first lunchtime and twilight walks of the 2007 season will be led by staff on April 17 at noon and 6 p.m.

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The University of Tennessee
INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE
101 Morgan Hall
Knoxville, TN 37996-4505