

Third Thursday



Joe DiPietro

Appreciation to our retirees

This spring approximately 60 employees in UT Extension and AgResearch have indicated their interest in accepting the voluntary retirement incentive program. Their plans are to retire on June 30 or on a mutually agreed upon alternate date. As these plans are finalized, I hope you will join with me in expressing appreciation to our retirees for their many years of dedicated service to the Institute and University and the people we serve. The good news is that for many, this is not goodbye. We anticipate part-time appointments for those who requested them.

Their decision to retire, though, contributes to cost savings as we adjust our operations in light of the permanent state reductions we must be ready for in FY12. Through development of restaffing plans including downsizing and not filling some open positions, we hope to be able to better meet the financial pressures the Institute and University are under to reduce operating expenses and best meet the needs of our constituents. At any time but in particular during this period of dealing with difficult budgets, I welcome your thoughts and ideas on how we can better right size our operations and succeed.

All the best,

Joe



Beth Willis

Grants & Contracts

You can view a .pdf containing the first quarter 2009 grants and contracts listings at <http://tinyurl.com/3T1qtr>.



Nick Myers

Credited for her genuine, positive, warm, friendly and helpful attitude, **Trish Wagoner**, senior administrative services assistant in the **Vice President's Office**, is this month's recipient of UT's **Send Roses Award**. The honor celebrates the university's most **courteous employee**. Wagoner was praised for her professional demeanor and personal rapport and for consistently going far beyond the call of duty in fulfilling her responsibilities.

In the first of what will be an annual event, some 250 children and their parents gathered to dye, decorate, and hunt eggs in the **UT Gardens in Knoxville**. The Easter Bunny was on hand as were lambs for petting. Children were also able to decorate cookies, color, and make picture frames.

What's news

- » **Two Institute researchers were among those celebrated at UTK Chancellor Jimmy Cheek's spring honors banquet.** Kurt Lamour, associate professor of Entomology and Plant Pathology, was recognized for professional promise in research and creative achievement, a distinction granted to faculty who have received national and/or international recognition in their fields and show professional promise for their research and creative achievement. **Stephen Oliver**, professor of Animal Science, received a research and creative achievement award given to tenured faculty who have received national or international recognition in their field.
- » At its 49th annual awards recognition program and reception, CASNR recognized five faculty and one staff member for outstanding achievements. **Matthew Gray**, assistant professor, Forestry, Wildlife, and Fisheries, and **Paris Lambdin**, professor, Entomology and Plant Pathology, received W.F. and Golda Moss Outstanding Teaching Awards. **John Mount**, associate professor, Food Science and Technology, was presented the W.S. Overton Faculty Merit Award, which is given to a faculty member who makes notable contributions to the development of students. Outstanding Faculty Advisor Awards went to **Neal Schrick** and **Michael Smith**, professors of Animal Science. **Renee Follum**, research associate in Entomology and Plant Pathology, received the Outstanding Staff Award.
- » **Want to learn more about the UT Gardens in Knoxville's 4,000 plants?** Visitors and tourists can take free, guided tours of its annuals, perennials, herbs, tropicals, trees, shrubs, vegetables and ornamental grasses each month on the third Tuesday. Knowledgeable staff members will discuss what's in bloom and what is new. The tours will be offered Tuesday, May 19, at noon and 6 p.m. and every third Tuesday through October.

What's news continued on page 3

Climbing to the top



Jim Thompson

by Jim Thompson
Dean, College of Veterinary Medicine

At the UT College of Veterinary Medicine, our people are resource number one. Protecting and improving our resource is a deep obligation we must all embrace. One way we have begun to accomplish this responsibility is to lay the groundwork for professional development so our people have the opportunity to view their jobs as fulfilling careers, not merely a place to earn a paycheck. **Since 2003, we have created career ladders for several job families and are committed to continuing the process.** The career ladders provide a defined mechanism for advancement that is linked to financial incentives and help prepare people for leadership roles within the college.

Janet Jones, director of clinical services, and **Nancy Howell**, assistant research professor, **worked tirelessly with university human resources to create the veterinary technician career ladder more than six years ago.** Recently, with the help of **Vanessa Byrge**, administrative specialist in human resources, we completed career ladders for laboratory technicians, pharmacy technicians, health information employees, and veterinary assistants. **To date, almost 24 staff members have taken advantage of this opportunity to advance their careers.**

For our employees, the career ladder empowers them to take charge of their careers. They have the opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills, receive pay-grade increases, and enjoy higher self-esteem and job satisfaction through professional advancement.

The college benefits, too. Our organization advances as our employees advance. The career ladders lead to improved work performance, a more knowledgeable workforce, and decreased employee turnover. They also act as an enticing recruitment tool. These benefits ultimately improve the educational experience for our students and provide a higher level of care for our patients. This is a tangible investment in our people, who provide tremendous effort each day as an integral part of our health care team.

The career ladder program also demonstrates to our students the importance of all members of a health care team, as they prepare to enter the workforce themselves. Our alumni surveys tell us that graduates realize their need for better communication and interactions with those they work with every day. Graduates rate these abilities as among the highest rated skills they need in practice.

As we continue to develop an environment of collaboration and sharing of knowledge throughout the college, we adhere to a fundamental principle—everybody in the College plays an essential role in educating students and providing exceptional patient care. Our organization will be stronger as all members of our organization advance; ladders allow us all to reach higher places. It is this opportunity to reach high goals along with the dedicated and caring nature of our people that makes the veterinary college a truly special organization. 🐾

Phil Snow



Licensed Veterinary Technician Leslie Wereszczak performs CPR on a puppy in the College of Veterinary Medicine's intensive care unit.

Research Profile: Highland Rim AgResearch and Education Center

We interviewed Center Director **Barry Sims** about what the **Highland Rim Research and Education Center** offers **UTIA** scientists.

Describe your location and general facilities:

The Highland Rim AgResearch and Education Center is located on Experiment Station Road in Springfield. The center is uniquely located on the northern Highland Rim physiographical region of Tennessee. The center consists of 615 acres of land. Pastures and forages account for over 350 acres, and 100 acres are in row crops. The center has housing for graduate students and undergraduate summer interns.

What can your Center offer faculty in terms of land and infrastructure resources?

In 2008, there were about 5,000 small replicated research plots in soybeans, wheat, corn, grain sorghum, tobacco, and forages. There are two 10-acre drip irrigation systems, and two three-acre systems for small plots. Overhead irrigation is currently available in the form of traveling guns. The Center has tobacco curing barns and outdoor curing structures capable of curing approximately 19 acres of burley and 19 acres of dark fired tobacco. There are seven conventional barns and six smaller research-sized curing structures for dark fired cured (DFC) tobacco. There is also a conventional burley barn, two two-tiered air cure barns and four outdoor curing structures of varying designs for burley.

The beef herd consists of 135 head of mature cows, plus approximately 40 head of replacement heifers. There are over 300 acres of fescue pastures. Several are designed for rotational grazing. Thirty-six acres are set up in three-acre grazing paddocks, currently established in native warm season grasses.

All grazing paddocks are in close proximity to an 18-pen cattle feed floor. Adjacent to the feed floor is a commercial sized, three-bay dry commodity feed storage facility, along with a mixer feed wagon and

feed grinder/mixer, each equipped with electronic scales.

Tell us about current research and Extension projects currently underway at your Center.

Projects include dark and burley tobacco variety development; tobacco systems including pest management, fertility, and curing; agronomic crop variety development and testing; forage viability and variety testing. Current beef research involves heifers artificially inseminated to evaluate the semen quality of bulls grazing tall fescue pastures. A grazing project to explore the development of an integrated forage/biofuels management system for the mid-south is in planning.

Describe one or two recent success stories that have come from your Center.

Highland Rim, along with other AgResearch Centers in Tennessee, provided outdoor laboratory support for project leaders to accomplish the following successes:

Identification of detrimental issues with semen from bulls grazing tall fescue has allowed for development of best management practices (BMPs) to reduce infertility associated with bulls grazing infected tall fescue. Our Center assisted in a breakthrough discovery in beef reproductive health, boosting fertility rates. The product has been patented and licensed by UT Research Foundation and is currently earning royalties.

A superior soybean variety, USG "Allen," was developed and is not only high yielding but also exhibits above average seed protein, displays an ideal balance of amino acids, and lower levels of trans-fats than other varieties. This variety is also more environmentally friendly because of lower levels of phytate than other high yielding varieties on the market.

These findings have the potential to enhance rural communities across Tennessee.

What's news *continued*

- » In Jackson vacant neighborhood lots are being filled with neat rows of tomatoes, beans, cucumbers and other vegetables. It's part of a new initiative called **Jackson Community Gardens**. The city of Jackson is donating vacant lots to be used as small garden plots. The intent is to help families with food costs during the summer. While the idea for Jackson Community Gardens began with a group of volunteers at the First United Methodist Church, **Madison County Master Gardeners** and the **local UT Extension office** quickly became involved. The Master Gardeners have adopted Jackson Community Gardens as an official project. This spring volunteers are serving as garden consultants. Since many of the garden plots are in low-income neighborhoods where participants haven't gardened before, Master Gardener volunteers are offering training, recommending planting dates, and answering questions from first-time gardeners. The hope is that community members will take ownership of these gardens, and that this project will cultivate not only fresh vegetables, but will spark gardening and community preservation as well.
- » Like to keep up with gardening news? **Sign up to receive a new monthly e-newsletter** from the **UT Gardens in Knoxville**. You can do so at the Gardens' Web site at <http://utgardens.tennessee.edu/>.
- » The **UT Gardens at the West Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center** were recently selected as a **Conifer Reference Garden** by the American Conifer Society. Reference gardens offer plant professionals as well as the home gardener an opportunity to see live cone-bearing plants in a landscape setting displaying their unique colors, shapes and growth habits. With this new distinction, UT Gardens at Jackson is now one of only six Conifer Reference Gardens in the southeastern United States. 🌲

Partners boost Beneficial Insects Lab

The Partners of the Cherokee National Forest recently presented a check for more than \$5,000 to support the Lindsay Young Beneficial Insects Laboratory at the Institute of Agriculture. The gift is part of a \$20,000 commitment made two years ago.

Gary Schneider, president of the Partners and retired associate dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, made the presentation to Bill Brown, dean of AgResearch, at the Partner's annual board meeting.

The lab, which depends greatly on grants and private support, rears predatory beetles to combat an invasive pest known as the hemlock woolly adelgid. The adelgid has devastated hemlocks in the eastern U.S. and threatens thousands of acres of trees throughout the Cherokee National Forest.

"We want to support any effort that protects the forest from destructive insects such as this adelgid," Schneider says. "Doing so will enhance the forest for our generation and for many generations to come. We are glad the university has made this a research priority and are impressed with the progress made thus far."

The Cherokee National Forest stretches across 10 counties in Tennessee from Polk County in the southeast corner of the state to Johnson County in the north-east corner, blanketing more than 640,000 acres.

Beneficial Insects Lab Director Pat Parkman shows a beetle maturation box, which can contain up to 2,000 adults, to members of the Partners of the Cherokee National Forest.



Rich Maxey



Rachel Rutter

*The UT Horse Judging Team recently competed at the Middle Tennessee State University Intercollegiate Horse Judging Contest, marking the revival of the team since 2001. Comprised of mostly novice judges, the **Volunteers claimed a sixth-place finish overall, sixth in halter, fourth in performance, and fourth in reasons**, from a slate of 13 teams and 53 contestants. **Allison Erkman** led UT, earning high-point honors in all individual categories. Team members include, from left, Erkman, **Audrey Moore**, **Jennifer Hartman**, **Caitlin Narramore**, and coach **Russell Kriewald**, lecturer in Animal Science.*

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