



# Department of Agriculture Newsletter

FALL 2007

## US Tobacco Company Scholarships

By: Dr. Gordon Jones

The U.S. Tobacco Company (UST) continues to provide scholarship funds for the Department of Agriculture. UST contributed another \$65,000 to the Department of Agriculture to provide scholarships for the 2007-2008 academic year. The UST scholarship program began in 1997-1998 and is provided for students who along with their families are involved in dark tobacco production. In addition, the scholarship recipients are required to be full-time students majoring in agriculture and making satisfactory progress toward a degree. Funding has also been provided for graduate students who are pursuing research in some phase of dark tobacco production.

Since 1997, 301 UST scholarships totaling \$724,000 have been awarded to WKU Agriculture students.

The students and faculty in the Department of Agriculture are most appreciative to UST for their generous support. UST officials report they are pleased to provide these funds to support the education and leadership development of their farm family tobacco producers.

The 2007-2008 UST scholarship winners are the following:

Jordan Beyke of Whitesville, KY; Jeremy Cook of Portland, TN; Joshua Cook of Portland, TN; JT Farley of Henderson, KY; Geoffrey Fischer of Philpot, KY; Jacob Fuqua of Springfield, TN; John Hayes of Elkton, KY; Jake Henderson of Franklin, KY; James Lillard of Franklin, KY; Margaret Mitchell of Henderson, KY; Jaclyn Mantlo of Russellville, KY; Jonathan Neely of Owensboro, KY; Ashley Pearson of Springfield, TN; William

Penick of Allensville, KY; Melissa Roberts of Henderson, KY; James Slaton of Madisonville, KY; and Tyler Sneed of Springfield, TN.

The faculty of the Department of Agriculture solicits the assistance of alumni in identifying prospective students who are involved in dark tobacco production. Applications are available online at [www.wku.edu/agriculture](http://www.wku.edu/agriculture). You may also call the Department of Agriculture at 270-745-3151 to have an application mailed to you.



2007-2008 Scholarship check presentation. Pictured left to right: Dawn Saturley and Danny Kingins from UST and Dr. Gordon Jones who is chairman of the Department of Agriculture Scholarship Committee

## WKU Agriculture Blood Drive

The Agriculture Department is sponsoring a Blood Drive on October 15, 16, and 17th in Garrett Ballroom. The theme this year is "Homecoming 2007— 101 reasons to share a pint with a friend." You are invited to participate in this important event.

# WKU Hosts All-East Livestock Contest

By: Dr. Gordon Jones

The Department of Agriculture hosted the 2007 All-East Live Animal Evaluation, Livestock Selection and Livestock Judging contests on April 19, 20, and 21. The following universities participated in the event: Penn State, University of Kentucky, University of Illinois, VPI, Purdue, MTSU, University of Tennessee, The Ohio State University, University of West Virginia and McNeese State University. A total of 64 contestants participated in the contests. The Ohio State won the evaluation contest, UK won the selection contest and University of Illinois won the Judging contest. The overall winner for the 3-day event was The Ohio State. Two teams were coached by WKU alumni. Dr. Jessica Carter (Gentry) is the coach of the MTSU team and Fran Korthaus coaches the UK team.

Dr. Gordon Jones served as the coordinator of the event, but he was very ably assisted by Terry Burks and Warren Beeler in arranging the livestock, data and officials for the contest. All the officials for the contest were WKU alumni and included the following in addition to Terry and Warren: Brian Bolt, Bradley Wilson, Gil Cowles, Joe Don Estes, Jodie P'Poole, Jason P'Poole, Darrin Benton, Chris Milam, Kenneth Lowe, and Dr. Lynn Cofield. Group leaders and livestock handlers for the contest were members of the 2006 Livestock Judging team. The mammoth task of conducting the computerized scoring for the event was handled by Rob Fitzgerald, who is presently pursuing a doctoral degree in animal science at Iowa State University. Rob also ultrasounded the pigs for the evaluation contest. Dr.

Troy Wistuba, from Morehead State University did the ultrasound work for the cattle and sheep for the evaluation contest.

A total of 124 head of livestock were used for the 3-day event. The cattle for the contests were furnished by the St. Catherine College farm (Evaluation Cattle), Pleasant Hill Farms-Gil and Mary Cowles (Angus and Hereford), Oak Hollow Farms-Kenneth Lowe (Angus), Riverview West- Drs Lynn and Sam Cofield (Charolais), Danny Miller Polled Herefords, Bruce and Sarah Lane Polled Herefords, and Chris Milam and Family Limousine. The pigs were furnished by the WKU farm and the George Watson Yorkshire farm. Sheep were furnished by the Warren Beeler family and the University of Kentucky. The goats were provided by Terry and Alice Burks.

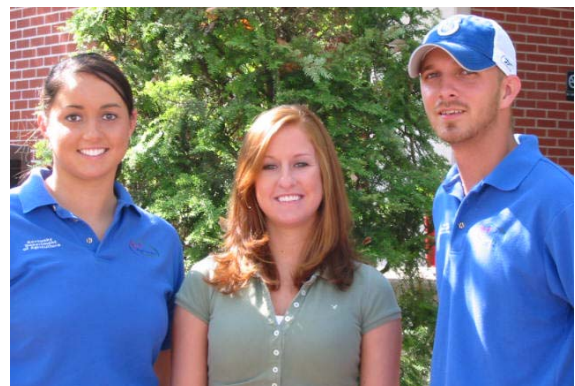
Dr. Jack Rudolph handled the logistical arrangements for the contest. His committee consisted of Dr. Charles Anderson, Joey Reynolds and Bob Jaynes. The event was held in the new horse arena, so all penning had to be constructed and all livestock moved in and out of the facility at contest time. Entries and correspondence for the contest were handled by Gabrielle Hunt. Debbie Gabbard prepared the awards program and handled the presentation of awards.

Financial support for this event was primarily provided by the Kentucky Cattleman's Association (KCA) and the Kentucky Pork Producer's Association (KPPA). Dave Maples is CEO of KCA and Mike Oversen is CEO of KPPA. Both Dave and Mike are WKU alumni. Thanks to both organizations for their continued support of educational programs at WKU.

## Kentucky Department of Agriculture Interns

This year we were pleased to have four WKU Agriculture students serve as summer interns at the Kentucky Department of Agriculture. Sara Greene, Falmouth, KY; Lauren Farmer, Georgetown, KY; Lauren Cottingham, Sebree, KY; and Micah Thomas, Russell Springs, KY, represented the department well. We are proud of these students and we wish them the best.

Pictured Right: L to R. Lauren Cottingham, Lauren Farmer, and Micah Thomas.  
Not pictured: Sara Greene





If you would like to make a gift to the Agriculture Department at WKU, please make checks payable to the “WKU Foundation”.

Donations can be mailed to:

Department of Agriculture  
Western Kentucky University  
1906 College Heights Blvd #41066  
Bowling Green, KY 42101

## Plant Breeding Centennial Celebration

By: Dr. Elmer Gray

In addition to working with my colleagues, Drs. Gilfillen, Stone, Willian and staff and students on research with chicken litter waste, baby corn production, and corn populations, I found time to attend a professional development conference. Through support from the Provost's Office, I was able to return to Cornell University, 45 years after graduation, to participate in the Plant Breeding Centennial Celebration. In keeping with milestone celebrations, the progress focused upon past accomplishments, present status, and future challenges. There were diverse voices representing international foundations, country organizations, alumni, current faculty, and students. The only regret was that Dr. Normal Borlaug, Nobel Prize winner for his leadership with the Green Revolution, was unable to attend and deliver the keynote address due to his health condition. However, his working colleagues were program participants. The conference addressed many conditions of interest and concern to instructors of agricultural students and to the wide range of agricultural workers.

World poverty and hunger will continue to increase and will not be eliminated by a “big bang” development. Rather, alleviation of world hunger hinges more on local, small producers, especially women. Universities are more effective in aiding agricultural development when faculty spend time in the country of focus becoming familiar with conditions and identifying present and future leaders. Students work on the projects under supervision, come to a U.S. University for study of theory, and then return to their home location for thesis/dissertation and continued work.

The Green Revolution continues to be successful provided that farmers have the necessary marketing

infrastructure, fertilizer, water, and management skills. Under less favorable conditions, Land Races of crops are more consistent. Sometimes avoiding losses may be better than striving for gains. In retrospect, a shortcoming of the Green Revolution was the displacement of Land Races by higher yielding varieties, rather the two types should have been crossed to combine strengths of both. Plant breeding has been less successful in Africa, a continent that lacks many attributes necessary for a Green Revolution approach.

The role of selection was reviewed. Darwin's concept of “Survival of the Fittest” applies to genotypes in a given environment but not over all environments. Genotype by environment interactions continue to be challenging for plant breeders on both the micro and macro environmental levels.

Plant breeders need to be trained in both classical and molecular methodologies. An Analogy is that the classical breeder builds the house and the molecular geneticists extends its features. In recent years, there has been a growing deficit of classical breeders resulting in a shortage of new houses.

The shift of plant breeding from public to private is as it should be for major crops, but the private sector is reluctant to support important minor crops where seed volume and profits are less. Breeding of these crops must remain in the public domain.

Intellectual property rights protect the development investment but seriously restrict the flow of information and exchange of breeding materials.

Western's efforts in agricultural and molecular preparation of students plus the international emphasis are well founded. We need to further emphasize to our students the message regarding world food production and distribution.

# Agronomy News

By: Dr. Todd Willian

## Student News

WKU Agronomy Graduate Students Jennifer Johnson and Philip Price graduated with their M.S. degrees in May 2007. Jennifer has begun her Ph.D. program in Forage Science at the University of Kentucky. Philip is pursuing a career in the Agronomy field in Soil Science.

Along with Dr. Becky Gilfillen, three Agronomy graduate students (Jennifer Johnson, Philip Price and Matt Futtrell) presented papers at the annual American Society of Agronomy meetings in Indianapolis in November 2006.

Todd Ballard has joined the Agronomy group as an M.S. Student under the direction of Todd Willian and Elmer Gray. Todd received his B.S. from WKU and his thesis research focuses upon field corn hybrid, plant population, and in-row spacing effects upon grain yield.



## Faculty News & Events

Western Kentucky University's Department of Agriculture hosted the 2006 Southern Regional Soil Judging Competition last October. There were 13 teams with about 100 students who participated in this contest. Teams that competed were: Auburn University, Clemson University, Eastern Kentucky University, Murray State University, North Carolina State, Tennessee Technology University, University of Georgia, University of Kentucky, University of Tennessee Knoxville & Martin, Virginia Tech, Western Kentucky University, and West Virginia University. Many of our alumni graciously allowed us to use their farms for practice sites and the contest – Thanks to all of you!! We also greatly appreciate Darwin Newton & several local and state NRCS personnel. We

couldn't have done it without you!!

Agronomy faculty, staff and students attended and/or participated in several field days and workshops including the University of Kentucky Field Day in Princeton, the Garst



Field Day held at the WKU Farm and the DuPont Agricultural Products plot tour at the WKU Farm.

## Research

The Agronomy Faculty continues to focus on research in the areas of animal waste management, pest control and corn variety trials. Our cooperative work with the USDA-

ARS unit in Bowling Green continues to focus on evaluation of environmentally and agronomically sustainable usage of poultry litter as a fertilizer for field and forage crops. Drs. Elmer Gray and Todd Willian (Agronomy) and Martin Stone (Horticulture) established a field experiment to investigate the influence of hybrid choice and plant population upon yield of "baby" corn. "Baby" corn is an increasingly popular item on salad bars and any type of corn (field corn, popcorn, sweet corn, etc.) can be utilized in its production.

After the departure of Matt Futtrell (previous technician associated with the USDA-ARS research), we welcomed our new Research Technician Naomi Rowland in May 2007. Naomi received her B.S. at WKU and an M.S. in Plant Pathology from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. Prior to her employment in the Department of Agriculture, Naomi worked as a Technician with Dr. Nancy Rice (WKU Biology Dept.). This past summer, Naomi, along with undergraduate assistants Alex Seaton and Tara Holaday, worked diligently at the WKU Farm and in the laboratory to establish and maintain field plots, and collect and process soil and forage samples for future analysis. Research results will be presented at the 2007 American Society of Agronomy meeting in New Orleans in November.

# WKU Block and Bridle Captures Chapter Activities Award at the 87th National Block and Bridle Convention

By: Dr. Gordon Jones

The WKU Block and Bridle Chapter won the 2005-2006 Chapter Activities Award at the National Block and Bridle Convention held in Kissimmee, Florida on January 25-27, 2007. Based upon a standard activities form, the WKU Chapter was judged to be the most actively involved chapter among the 92 chapters in the U.S. This makes the 3rd time the WKU chapter has won the National Activities Award since the chapter was chartered 31 years ago. The WKU chapter has ranked among the top 5 chapters for activities during each of the last 9 years.

Seventeen members of the WKU Block and Bridle Club attended the convention which was hosted by the University of Florida club. Members who attended the convention were Adam Tattersall, Southington, CT; Amber Weaver, Scottsville, KY; Katrina Womack, Brownsville, KY; Kristen Allen, Glasgow, KY; Earlene Whitaker, Grayson County, KY; Lisa Pohlman, Sunfish, KY; Megan Halcomb, Hanson, KY; Carrie Lush, Louisville, KY; Ashley Sullivan, Louisville, KY; Jillian Warren, Washington County, KY; Jenna Brown, Bowling Green, KY; Jordan Beyke, Owensboro, KY; Miranda Tarry, Glasgow, KY; Sara Jo Greene, Pendleton County, KY; Brad Neukam, Huntingburg, IN; and Adam Thomas, Bowling Green, KY.

Evan Tate, an animal science graduate student from

Breckenridge County, accompanied the students to the convention.

The convention provided the opportunity for students to tour farms and ranches in Florida as well as hear speakers from various segments of the livestock industry. Students also attended informational sessions, business meetings and had the opportunity to socialize with B & B members from 42 other chapters in attendance at the convention.

The 88th National B & B Convention will be held October 17-19, 2007 in Kansas City, MO. Again this year, the WKU chapter will be in competition for the Activities Award as well as the Scrapbook, and Outstanding Senior and Junior Scholarship awards.

The WKU Chapter is looking forward to recruiting another great group of members during the Fall semester. Officers for the 2007-2008 year are the following: President, Kyle Shelton; Vice president, Margaret Mitchell; Secretary, Megan Halcomb; Treasurer, Keith Nash; Reporter, Sarah Thomas; Alumni Secretary, Jenna Brown; New Member Chairman, Brad Neukam; BBQ Chairs, Adam Thomas, Logan Daniels, and Geoff Fisher; Social Chairs, Amber Weaver and Katrina Womack; and Marshal, Samantha Hodsdon.

## Career Day Success in WKU Agriculture Department

We would like to thank those companies who participated in our career day March 6, 2006. If your company is interested in setting up a booth at our next career day, please email us at [agriculture@wku.edu](mailto:agriculture@wku.edu).

UK Cooperative Extension Services

South Central Bank

Tennessee Farmers Cooperative

LSI Landscape Service, Inc.

Farm Credit Services of Mid-America

USDA, APHIS, VS

Lesco, Inc.

Brickman

Southern States

Pioneer

Equity Group-Kentucky Division LLC

Monsanto

USDA, APHIS, PPQ

City of Bowling Green

Tractor Supply Company

Green Ridge Tree Farm/Village Green Landscape

Hills Pet Nutrition

Integrity Nursery

# WKU Quest WINS Georgia National Fair



Above: WKU Quest 5422 at the Georgia National Fair where he was Grand Champion Bull



Above: Brent Williams cauterizing after dehorning



Left: Laura Beagle running livestock scales at WKU Live Animal Evaluation Center

By: David Newsom

The Beef Unit exhibited and displayed Angus cattle at the Kentucky State Fair, Georgia National Fair, North American International Livestock Exposition, and the Kentucky State Angus Preview Show. The highlights include: Grand Champion Bull at the Georgia National Fair with WKU Quest 5422 and winning two divisions at the Kentucky State Fair with Quest and WKU Erica 5417 (flushmates). Semen is currently available on Quest at \$10 per straw by contacting WKU.

In addition to our promotion and recruiting on the show

road, the beef crew hosted its annual production sale at Barren River Livestock on March 31, 2007. The sale included WKU and WKU customer consigned cattle. Currently, we are gearing up for The Breeder's Resource Sale IV on April 3, 2008 and look forward to increased involvement from alumni and customers.

Lastly, we invite you to visit our website [www.wkubeeef.com](http://www.wkubeeef.com) periodically throughout the year. This website features our genetics, upcoming events, activities, and student employees.

## LAEC Running Strong

By: David Newsom

Last year we introduced the new WKU Live Animal Evaluation Center (LAEC) which saw its first cattle on February 1, 2006. In the first 17 months of existence, we backgrounded 2,333 head of calves. With continued reinvestment of operating revenue into capital improvements, we have strengthened our facility while increasing overall feeding capacity. Meaning, we should

be able to turn ~3,000 head in 2007-2008. Running more calves permits larger student involvement. More importantly, it enables students to become proficient at livestock management techniques while receiving hands-on experience within an important phase in the cattle industry. Equally important, our staff and student employees have guided several groups through this facility.

# Alumni News and Notes

- **Dr. Jack Britt** recently joined Strata-G LLC as a senior consultant. Dr. Jack Britt has served in administrative roles at two major universities. Britt has won numerous awards and achievements in the agriculture and biology fields.
- **William Davenport** and his family were recently featured in *Kentucky Agricultural News* for their involvement in their Logan County family farm.
- **Dr. Donald M. Johnson** (1981) received a grant from the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board for \$18,000 to study the costs and benefits of biodiesel fuel in a fleet of four-wheel drive utility vehicles used by the University of Arkansas.
- **Eric Raby** will be moving to England for a three year stay to market the Caterpillar Challenger. His territory will be Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.
- The Turf Grass Program at WKU was featured in the July 2007 issue of *GCM*, the official publication of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. **Dr. Paul Woosley** (1996) was commended for this work with the current Turf Program at WKU.

We would love to feature more Alumni News and Notes in our next newsletter. If you have any information you would like added to the newsletter, please email it to [agriculture@wku.edu](mailto:agriculture@wku.edu).

## News From the Turf Department

Dear Alumni,

This past year, the GCSAA Tradeshow and Conference was in Anaheim, CA. This year was the largest group of students I have ever taken to the conference. Eight students attended. I believe they enjoyed the conference; unfortunately I spent the whole trip in the hotel room, sick. We did learn one thing; never fly through Chicago in February. On the way back, our plane underwent three de-icing events, and was the last plane to take off before they closed the airport. Nashville never looked so good.

There hasn't been much grass to mow at the farm this year. This has been the worse drought year I can remember. It appears this year's students will get an opportunity for some hands on learning dealing with establishment. Tyler Seymour and Leland Irving receive the two top KTC scholarships this year. That makes four consecutive years a WKU student has won the Dwight Barkley scholarship.

Probably the highlight of the year was the feature article in the July edition of the GCM magazine. I've received several nice comments relating to the article. It was nice to have the turf program recognized on a national stage. Without the success of alumni, this recognition wouldn't be possible. I thank you for your continued support.

Dr. Paul Woosley

## Contact Us

Department of Agriculture  
Western Kentucky University  
1906 College Heights Blvd #41066  
Bowling Green, KY 41066

Phone: 270-745-3151  
Fax: 270-745-5972  
Email: [agriculture@wku.edu](mailto:agriculture@wku.edu)  
[www.wku.edu/agriculture](http://www.wku.edu/agriculture)



Department of Agriculture  
Western Kentucky University  
1906 College Heights Blvd #41066  
Bowling Green, KY 42101-1066  
Address Service Requested

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Permit No. 398  
Bowling Green KY  
42101



**ANNUAL ALUMNI  
HOMECOMING  
LUNCHEON**

**November 10, 2007**

**12:00 p.m.**

**AG EXPO CENTER**

**Please call 745-3151 to RSVP**

**Tickets \$15.00**