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Top Story

PSS Staff Receive Quality Service Awards

Robby Carlson, our Lead PC Network Support, and LouAnn Hillhouse, our Analyst II at the FBRI, are two of this year's recipients of the Quality Service Awards presented to outstanding TTU Staff. They were honored May 4 in a Texas Tech University ceremony at the United Spirit Arena. The awards, established in 1990, recognize those who provide excellent customer service in the performance of their jobs.



LouAnn

Robby

Robby has been with the Department since 2002 and is always eager to solve network, software, and hardware problems in both TTU Campus and the FBRI. He was nominated by Dr. Tom Thompson.

LouAnn has been a great asset at the FBRI for the past three years. Since the FBRI joined PSS, she has helped the department in many ways. She was nominated by Dr. Dean Ethridge.

Both of them received a President's Quality Service Award and a \$500 check. We are proud of their achievements and honored to have them in our Department.

Chat with the Chair

Tom Thompson

I often use this space to expound on an issue uppermost in my mind. But this has been such an eventful (and fast!) summer that I think I will just share some musings on recent events in PSS. Our loyal readers have no doubt noticed that we "lost" one issue of the newsletter. There is a good explanation. Laura Bilbao, my administrative assistant (and producer of the newsletter), was off work for three months after the premature birth of her son Ezequiel. She has just returned to work and her family is doing fine. If you've noticed Gerald Henry looking a bit haggard lately, there are two good reasons. His wife Emily gave birth to twin boys, Ayden and Ethan, just a few weeks ago. Gerald has hardly missed a beat, but no doubt their lives have become more exciting. We have recently had a major turnover in our office staff. Lori Walraven and Angela Gonzalez are now our "business office". This department is one of the most active on campus, and between the staff transition and the need to master our new data management system (the infamous Banner!), these ladies have been kept busy, to say the least. No doubt many (I hope all) of our PSS folks have had time for rest and recreation this summer. A few notables...Wayne Hudnall traveled to Baghdad (is this R&R?)...Pete Dotray and family traveled to Minnesota to buy a transmission...Cynthia McKenney caught a baseball game in St. Louis (not literally)...Robby Carlson visited his ancestral home in Connecticut...Noureddine Abidi and his family spent much of the summer in Morocco...and these are just the ones I know about. I hope you and yours have been able to enjoy some down time this summer. I will be getting in a few days of badly needed fishing this week.

Our department is in great shape. We have more graduate students than ever in PSS, and expect to have at least 20 new undergraduate students this fall. Enjoy the short rest of your summer and best wishes for the upcoming fall semester!

Faculty Corner—Christian Nansen



Spider mites are rarely a problem in row crops unless they become water stressed. Why? What are the physiological mechanisms that make plants more susceptible to spider mites when they are water stressed? How do spider mites “find out” and locate water stressed crops in a vast agricultural landscape? Those are the kind of questions that we are researching in my program. As an insect ecologist, I am very interested in plant-insect interactions, especially in agriculture. This fall I will teach a class, PSS 5303, on host plant resistance and we will discuss the fascinating arms-race between plants and their pests! In my research program, we use innovative tools to collect and characterize volatiles or gasses emitted by plants - some of these volatiles serve as messengers or signaling compounds to insects and mites. We also use high-tech imaging technology to measure how light reflectance from plants changes in response to stress as part of developing early-detection systems. Knowledge about how insects and mites respond to plant stress can be used in breeding programs and in development of better integrated pest management strategies. In collaboration with chemical companies, we conduct in-depth analyses of how insects and mites respond behaviorally to insecticides. We ask fairly basic questions and therefore conduct research both under laboratory, greenhouse, and field conditions. However, we keep a very close focus on the end goal, which is to improve agricultural production systems. Please visit my website for more information about our research <http://www.pssc.ttu.edu/cnansen/Website.html>.

I was born and raised in Denmark but have lived abroad since 1993. While studying biology, I became an exchange student for 1 year in Lisbon, Portugal, and since then I have lived in a number of countries. I know first-hand the value of cultural experience, and I want to give Tech students an opportunity to live abroad. I am therefore leading a student exchange program between Texas Tech and two universities in Brazil - I strongly encourage you to find out more on our website: <http://www6.ufrgs.br/agronomia/fitossan/portal/>

On April 21, **Dr. Ellen Peffley** was honored with the title of “Professor Emerita” at the Faculty Honors Convocation.

This Summer **Dr. Dick Auld** earned the title “Rockwell Endowed Chair in Plant and Soil Science” .

Dr. Craig Bednarz was selected to serve as president of Gamma Sigma Delta for 2010.

Dr. Ginger Light left Plant and Soil Science to assume a position with Bayer CropScience. Ginger was one of our Instructors, teaching courses in Crop Science, Horticulture, and Entomology. Dr. Light also taught and helped to develop several distance courses, and she contributed to recruiting activities. A reception in her honor was held on May 15 in PS 115.



On July 2, the Quaker Research Farm hosted a Field Day showcasing regional safflower crop production. Oil is extracted from safflower seed and used in margarine and cooking oil in much the same way as sunflower seeds. Safflower also makes an excellent feed stock for biodiesel. Hosted by Texas Tech, Dreamland Industries Inc. and Texas AgriLife Research and Extension, the field day included **Steve Oswalt**, farm manager, who provided an update on performance of spring and winter safflower and irrigation response.



Dr. Kevin Bronson has been selected as a 2009 American Society of Agronomy Fellow.

The Texas Tech Horticulture Society participated in the Arbor Day festivities on the TTU campus.

PSS Student News

- **Tyler Cooper**, one of our undergraduate students, was the first turfgrass student to attend the Jacobsen's Future Turf Manager's Seminar in Charlotte, NC, May 18-21.
- **Sharon Boudreau** was recognized by the American Society for Horticultural Science as an Outstanding Undergraduate Horticulture Student. She is one of our horticulture distance education students.
- The following students were recognized for being in the top 15% of their class as 2009 ASHS Collegiate Scholars:
Seniors: **Margaret Fanning, Tanner Irwin, Shane Merrill, Carla Shockley, and Kaylee Whitehurst.**
Juniors: **Jeff Block, Joanna Lehrmann, and Matthew Orr.**
- The following students were also recognized at the CASNR Honors Banquet, on April 24 at the Merket Alumni Center.
Kaylee Whitehurst— Plant and Soil Science and Horticultural and Turfgrass Sciences Outstanding Student.
Chris Griffin—Environmental Crop and Soil Sciences Outstanding Student.
Sheyenne Scott—Plant and Soil Science Department highest academic achievement.
- Gamma Sigma Delta, the honor society of agriculture, held its 37th Annual Awards Recognition and New Member Initiation Luncheon on April 21. Among the graduate students honored were **Katie Leigh**, our Communication and Recruiting Coordinator, and **Steve Oswalt**, Quaker Farm Manager and one of our graduate students. **Kimberly Nelson** and **Heath Reeves** were among the undergraduate students to be honored.

PSS Staff News

Lori Walraven, from Littlefield, TX, joined the Department in April as our new Lead Account Processor and Business Office Manager.

Angela Gonzalez, from Levelland, TX also joined the Department as our new Senior Business Assistant.



Angela

Lori

Publications

Faculty Accomplishments

- **Henry, G. M.**, M. G. Burton, and F. H. Yelverton. 2009. Landscape heterogeneity of weedy Paspalum species and edaphic variables in turfgrass. *HortScience*. 44 (2): 447-451.
- Yabaji, Rajkumari, J.W. Nusz, **K. F. Bronson**, A. Malapati, J. D. Booker, R.L. Nichols, and **T. L. Thompson**. 2009. Nitrogen management for subsurface drip irrigated cotton: Ammonium thiosulfate, timing, and canopy reflectance. *Soil Sci. Soc. Am. J.* 73:589-597.
- **Bronson, K.F.**, A. Malapati, J.D. Booker, B.R. Scanlon, **W. H. Hudnall**, and A.M. Schubert. 2009. Residual soil nitrate in irrigated Southern High Plains cotton fields and Ogallala groundwater nitrate. *J. Soil Water Conserv.* 64:98-104.
- Fare, R., Wang, C., A.M. Schubert, **K.F. Bronson**, and J. Johnson. 2009. Site-specific management of limiting nutrients in peanut (*Arachis hypogaea*) on the Texas High Plains. *Prec. Agric* 10:331-341

Presentations

- **Henry, G. M.** and T. Williams. 2009. Postemergence Control of Khakiweed (*Alternanthera pungens* HBK.) in a Bermudagrass Rough. *Proc. Weed Sci. Soc. Am.* 49:393.
- **Henry, G. M.** and T. Williams. 2009. Postemergence Control of Puncturevine (*Tribulus cistoides* L.) in Bermudagrass. *Proc. Weed Sci. Soc. Am.* 49:216.
- **Henry, G. M.**, A. N. Bates, and C. B. McKenney. 2009. Tolerance of Evening Primrose (*Oenothera elata* Kunth) Transplants Preemergence Herbicides. *Proc. Weed Sci. Soc. Am.* 49:212.



PSS - Faculty Meeting!

August 28, 12:30 p.m. , PSS 115



August

11: Turfgrass Field Day

21: PSS Faculty Retreat

25: CASNR Faculty

25-26: Fall Registration

27: First Class Day

28: CASNR Back To School Cookout

Upcoming Events!!

September

7: Labor Day

22: First Day of Autumn

Projects Funded

Cont. Faculty Accomplishments

- Paterson, A. H., **D. Auld**, and **R. J. Wright**. 2009. A TILLING resource for cotton. The Consortium for Plant Biotechnology Research, Inc. (CPBR) Award: \$180,000 (Account Manager of \$72,000). Period: Jan. 2009 – Dec. 2010. Funded.
- Paterson, A. H., **D. Auld**, and **R. J. Wright**. 2009. A TILLING resource for cotton. CPBR - Dow AgroSciences. Award: \$235,592 (Account Manager of \$43,208). Period: Jun. 2009 – Aug. 2010. Funded
- Paterson, A. H., J. Angle, P. W. Chee, N. L. Trolinder, and **R. J. Wright**. 2009. Scaling a new adaptive peak for cotton. NSF Partnerships for Innovation. Award: \$599,606 (Account Manager of \$200,000). Period: Sept. 2009 – Aug. 2012. Funded.
- Dever, J., **R. J. Wright**, T. Wheeler, **M. Parajulee**, and J. Starr. 2009. Mining Genes for Texas Cotton: Identify and Deploy Genes that Confer Resistance to Insect, Disease, and Nematode pests. Texas AgriLife Research Cotton Improvement Program. Award: \$140,000 (Account Manager of \$50,000). Sept. 2009 – Aug. 2011. Funded.

2009 Turfgrass Field Day

This year **Drs. Gerald Henry, Thayne Montague, and Cynthia McKenney** will be speakers at the 2009 Turfgrass Field Day on Aug. 11 at the Quaker Research Farm. Registration will start at 8:00 a.m. The latest turfgrass research, from controlling fire ants, to conversion of bermudagrass to buffalograss, and weed control options in wildflowers, will be highlighted. Texas Pesticide Certification and Golf Course Superintendents Association of America credits will be available for field day participation.

Among the morning highlights are presentations featuring:

- High pH tolerant centipede grass
- Seashore paspalum as a West Texas turfgrass
- New chemistries for white grub control in turfgrass
- Response of several tree species to mulching practices

Ecology of Grazing Lands

Ecology of Grazing Lands, a multi-university, multi-discipline Graduate class started by **Dr. Vivien Allen** in the late 1980's, had **Cody Zilverberg** as a TTU representative this year. Several professors of TTU and other universities are instructors.

This class gives students networking opportunities with industry professionals and other academic programs as well as awareness of forages and livestock systems around the country. From June 1-13, the class visited Yosemite National Park, The Mojave Desert Reserve, and The Grand Canyon. Additional information can be found at

<http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/grazinglandecology/index.htm>.



The Class at Yosemite Park. Back row third from left, Cody Zilverberg.

