

News 'n Notes July 2011

Alumni News

Roger Gerrits 1958 was inducted into the National Pork Producers Council Hall of Fame for his outstanding contributions to the U.S. pork industry. Gerrits served in research and administrative positions for 35 years in the USDA Agricultural Research Service. Under Gerrits' leadership, USDA advanced research in animal physiology, genetics and reproduction.

Lloyd Nelson 1965 recently retired after 34 years of research in plant breeding. He is now a Regents Fellow and Professor Emeritus with Texas AgriLife Research and the Soil and Crop Sciences department at Texas A&M University. During his career, he both released and cooperated in the release of numerous cultivars. Nelson continues to work part-time with the goal to release a salt tolerant turf-type annual ryegrass. He and his wife live in College Station.

Dale Wester 1966 captured first place honors in the 2010 Wisconsin Profits through Efficient Productions Systems program dairy/livestock corn division with a healthy 232 bushels per acre for only \$1.56/bushel. Wester attributes his win to innovative cropping technologies, ideal growing conditions and nutrient-rich turkey manure. Wester is a cash-crop and beef cattle producer in Polk County.

After 22 years as the Pepin County agriculture agent, **Bob Cropp 1975**, is retiring. He's planning to do some farm business consulting and wants to spend more time camping and fishing with his grandchildren.

Wisconsin State Representative **Gary Tauchen 1976** recently visited Germany to learn more about the various forms of bio-energy technologies in place and the advantages they might offer to Wisconsin farmers.

It's all in the family as Larry and **Clara Hedrich 1976** along with their five children and their spouses are planning a venture into the production of homestead artisan goat cheese. Their daughter **Anna 2002** and her husband **Mike Zastrow 2004** are contributing to the effort by purchasing and milking 200 dairy goats to provide an additional source of milk to the venture.

Cal Dalton 1979 is the 2011 recipient of the Agri-Communicator Award which was presented at the Corn/Soy Expo in Wisconsin Dells. Dalton was recognized as going above and beyond telling agriculture's story to the non-farm public. He, his wife Joanne, and daughter Jayne, raise crops and Angus cattle in Pardeeville. Their Angus are home-raised and sold direct off their farm to customers.

Bob Johnson 1980 received the Art Pope Award from the Wisconsin Sheep Breeders Cooperative. Johnson has taught agriculture at Milton High School for over 30 years. He is best known among sheep producers as a livestock judge, superintendent of the sheep shows at the Wisconsin State Fair, livestock superintendent for the Rock County Fair and for his role in the Blue Ribbon Sale of Champions. The Art Pope Award is bestowed on individuals exemplifying dedication and involvement in the sheep industry.

Scott Hygnstrom 1980, professor in the School of Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, received one of the 2011 Holling Family Awards for Teaching Excellence in Agriculture and Natural Resources. Hygnstrom initiated the development of a teaching program focused on wildlife damage management, training biologists so they can work with people to solve conflicts between humans and wildlife.

Bob Panzer 1981 joined Verity Resources as a business relationship manager. He will oversee Verity loan accounts for Landmark members. Panzer is very active in his community, currently serving as school board president and writing a column on agriculture for the Fond du Lac newspaper.

Christine Jumbeck 1987 advisor to the Cochrane-Fountain City FFA chapter was in a quandary after a thief broke into the school and stole \$2,200 in concession money the chapter had raised. Thanks to America's Farmers Grow Communities program, the chapter was selected to receive \$2,500 which will help support the trips and the annual banquet the stolen funds were intended to support. The program is sponsored by the Monsanto Fund to support rural communities. Farmers can register to win \$2500 to support their favorite community non-profit association.

Liz Doornink 1989 has joined the Stewart-Peterson business development team. She'll be responsible for working with producers regarding their commodity marketing goals and service needs. Stewart-Peterson is a commodity consulting firm that offers strategic opportunity and risk management services to farmers nationwide.

Brian Johnston 1989 was one of a handful of producers that directed clinics on livestock showing, grooming, husbandry and judging during the Interstate Livestock Show in June at the Polk County Fairgrounds in St. Croix Falls.

Pamela Garvey 1991 was appointed by the Governor to a 6 year term on the Wisconsin Board of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. Garvey and husband Mike, live in Centuria, raise turkeys for the Jennie-O Turkey Store and are active in the Wisconsin Farm Bureau and its Young Farmers Program.

Scott and **Mia Bayer** 1992 received adult honoree recognition at the Wisconsin Livestock Breeders Association annual meeting for their work with beef. The Bayers have exhibited the grand champion Angus and Red Angus heifers at shows in Denver and at the World Beef Expo and are always willing to help young exhibitors and others.

Vertical tillage was the topic of presentation for crop consultant **Doug Kapral** 1995 of Chilton during a panel presentation at the 2011 Northeast Wisconsin Grain Crops Production Clinics in Green Bay and Brillion. Vertical tillage is a seedbed preparation method that involves minimal soil inversion with sets of straight or wavy coulters that direct soil disturbances downward in slots that are a couple of inches wide and deep.

Julie Ketterling 1995 has been bringing the farm to city kids at St. Pauls' Humboldt High School. Ketterling spoke about her experiences starting Minnesota's first urban agricultural education program at the Minnesota Agri-Women's annual leadership conference in Chaska in April 2011.

David Bangart 1995 of Greenwood was elected as a new director to the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board. He represents District 7, Clark County.

Mike Wachtendonk 1996 has joined Countryside Cooperative as a livestock production specialist. Wachtendonk brings experience and perspective as a former manager of a 4,000 head custom heifer raising operation in Barron County. He lives in Bloomer with his wife and two sons.

Kevin Lallensack 1997 is the Ag Yield Specialist in northwestern Wisconsin for AgVenture Spangler Seed. Fifteen years of experience in the seed industry is assisting Lallensack with his support of growers in every facet of raising a crop. He and his wife Carleen live in Hudson.

The Governor appointed **Miranda Leis** 2000 of Cashton to a 6 year term on the Wisconsin Board of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. Leis is a project manager with CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley, and along with her husband and father-in-law milks 300 cows and farms 1100 acres.

Jared Schaffner 2000 is the new Onalaska High School Principal effective July 1, 2011. Schaffner has been serving the district since 2008 as Associate Principal at Onalaska High School.

Deborah Ihm 2000 is a farm management program instructor at Southwest Wisconsin Technical College. The program includes both classroom instruction and on farm consultation and training. Ihm was a member of the team that helped develop modifications to the program that increased educational offerings while lowering cost, resulting in a unanimous vote by the district board to retain the program.

Pete Lammers 2001 joined the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) as a Livestock Specialist, and works out of NCAT's Midwest Regional office. Lammers earned a PhD in Animal Science and Sustainable Agriculture from Iowa State University. Before joining NCAT, he was assistant professor of agriculture at Berea College in Kentucky. Lammers' expertise lies in livestock production and niche marketing, particularly in pig production.

Maria Bendixen 2002, Clark County Extension agent, served as conference co-planner for the second Wisconsin Dairy and Beef Industry Animal Husbandry conference in March 2011. The conference focused on issues relevant to the care of dairy and beef cattle.

Christine Clark 2002 has accepted the position of marketing specialist with AgSource Laboratories in Bonduel. She will develop and implement a marketing and public relations plan and work directly with forage, agronomy and specialty crop clients. Prior to joining AgSource she was an agriscience instructor and FFA advisor in the Suring School District. She and her husband Brian live in Mountain and raise and train bird dogs for hunting.

Michael Zastrow 2004 of Mayville defeated the incumbent and was elected to serve as a director for the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board. He represents District 19, Columbia and Dodge Counties.

Martine Bredl Lueck 2004 is the herd manager and fifth-generation dairy producer at Harmony-Ho Dairy in Marathon County. Harmony-Ho Dairy is a diverse operation that sells breeding age bulls and operates a cheese factory along with other ventures. Bredl Lueck and husband Matt have three children, Carter, 4, and Owen, 2, and daughter Amelia who joined the family in May.

Michelle Berdan 2005 participated in Dairy Challenge as a student and is now coaching her dairy program students at Northcentral Technical College along with working full time at her family's 1,500 cow dairy.

Ben Augustine 2007 was elected to the Wisconsin Corn Growers Association executive board and is Agri-View's From the Field Reporter from northwest Wisconsin for the 2011 growing season. He oversees the equipment and cropping enterprise for his family's 2300 acre operation which includes the home farm in Taylor County and land in Rusk and Chippewa counties. He and his wife Amanda, have a 7 month old daughter.

Leah Johnson 2007 joined the ABS Global team as Midwest Cornerstone Specialist. Johnson will be responsible for assisting field staff with education and promotion of developing new herds, as well as working with staff to evaluate and maintain data in herds already participating in the ABS Cornerstone program. She will cover territory in Wisconsin, eastern Iowa, northern Illinois and Missouri.

Steve Boe 2008 is the new district coordinator for the west-central Wisconsin region of the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation. Steve will be working with county Farm Bureaus to develop and implement programs to serve Farm Bureau members and to coordinate membership and retention efforts.

Samantha Nyre 2010 is the new agronomist for Countryside Cooperative for Mondovi area producers. Nyre completed five internships during her university career with four of the internships being completed at Countryside as a field scout and in sales and marketing.

Christine Kuhr 2010 was promoted to QA Supervisor for Del Monte Foods. She'll be dealing directly with auditors and regulatory officials, private label customers, in addition to providing training to supervisors and full-time staff on new and revised corporate procedures.

Nathan Halbach 2010 provides reproductive expertise and artificial insemination services to farmers in western Wisconsin as a tech specialist with New Genex. Halbach has built industry experience through work on numerous farms across the state.

On May 14, 2011, **Katie Wirkus 2010** was selected as the 64th Alice in Dairyland. Alice in Dairyland is a full time public relations employee of the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and serves for one year promoting Wisconsin products and educating media, youth and civic groups about the state's diverse agriculture industry. Wirkus was also recently hired to teach middle school in the Athens School District, the job will be held for her while she completes her year as Alice.

Melissa Ploeckelman 2010 was a top five finalist in the 64th Alice in Dairyland contest. Ploeckelman is currently working on her family dairy farm, substitute teaching and volunteering for Wisconsin Farm Technology Days.

Jeff Jens 2010 and Mary Shaw were united in marriage on June 4, 2011 in Maplewood, Minnesota. Jens is a reproductive management specialist for ABS Global Inc. in DeForest.

Four UW-River Falls CAFES alumni and Wisconsin Agricultural Education instructors were honored at the Wisconsin FFA Alumni Association convention in February 2011. **Darrell Hines** 1978 from Mauston, **Jerry Wendt** 1982 from Stoughton, **Michelle Kamm** 1994 from Baldwin-Woodville, and **Troy Talford** 2005 from Sauk Prairie were recognized for working with their local FFA alumni over the past year.

Faculty/Staff News

This past spring, **Ranee May** hosted a group from Kosovo through a Land O'Lakes International Development effort. The group spent half their time in the plant and the other half visiting dairy processing facilities in Wisconsin and Minnesota. At UWRF they learned how to create an American-type yogurt with fruit and taught a class on making European-style Gouda. Rane also just returned from Australia where she participated in a Cheese Maker in Residence program sponsored by the South Australia Food, Tourism and Hospitality Skills Department. She worked with 12 farmstead/artisan cheese makers who manufacture white mold and blue cheeses. Her goal was to give them a better understanding of the science behind cheese production and to provide technical assistance in areas of need.

Jerry Nechville 1971, 1972 returned to campus in 1979 as a faculty member in Agricultural Engineering Technology. After 32 years in the classroom he retired this past spring.

After 34 years in teaching and serving Extension clients with their food safety needs, **Purnendu Vasavada** retired this past spring.

Mike Middleton recently indicated his intention to retire this summer. Mike joined the Geology faculty in 1984.

Jerry Nolte continues to travel. This spring he was in Bangladesh and sent a note back to colleagues noting how crowded it was – approximately 190 million people in a space slightly smaller than the state of Minnesota which has a population of 5.5 million. He is currently in Lebanon and anticipates hosting a group from Nicaragua this month and returning to Nicaragua later this summer.

Veronica Justen in collaboration with a faculty member at UW-Madison received a grant from the UW Ag Consortium. They will be helping to develop production guidelines for extended season vegetable production in high tunnels in western Wisconsin. As part of the project a high tunnel will be constructed on the laboratory farm.