Alumni News & Notes – Fall 2014

Hunter Wojcik (2013) started a new job as a State Food and Dairy Inspector for Oconto and Brown counties.


Mandy Masters (2012) agricultural business graduate, was recently hired as the new Assistant Program Director for the Wisconsin Pork Association. She will be responsible for managing the state office and coordinating consumer and producers programs. [http://www.wisconsinagconnection.com/story-state.php?Id=706](http://www.wisconsinagconnection.com/story-state.php?Id=706)

Trista (Gropp) Cady (2011), a graduate in agricultural marketing communications, began working at Harvest PR & Marketing in Minneapolis as an Agriculture PR Specialist. [http://harvest-pr.com/harvest-welcomes-trista-cady/](http://harvest-pr.com/harvest-welcomes-trista-cady/)

Stacey Reetz (2011) and John Swanson (2010) were married June 14, 2014 at Our Saviors Lutheran Church in Amery. [http://www.leadertelegram.com/people/weddings/article_fef9d0ba-5a2c-11e4-b15a-9b024cbd4153.html](http://www.leadertelegram.com/people/weddings/article_fef9d0ba-5a2c-11e4-b15a-9b024cbd4153.html)

The following UWRF agriculture education alumni received awards at the Wisconsin Association of Agricultural Educators (WAAE) Professional Development Conference from the National Association of Agricultural Educators:

- **Jeanna James** (2008) - Outstanding Young Member
- **Linda (Rist) Petersen** (1984) - Outstanding Middle/Secondary Ag Ed program (Region III)
- **Crystal Retzlaff** (2002, 2009) - Teacher Mentor
- **Rachel Sauvola** (1999) - Agriscience Teacher
- **Amie Stillman** (2010) - Teacher Turn the Key

Danielle Endvick, (2009) who majored in agricultural marketing communications and minored in animal science was recently named the new Communications Director for the Wisconsin Farmers Union. [https://www.morningagclips.com/wfu-hires-new-communications-director/](https://www.morningagclips.com/wfu-hires-new-communications-director/)

Alyssa (Bagneski) Ziche (2009) graduated from the University Of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine in May 2014.

Vicki (Cooper) Janisch (2008) recently joined the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board. She had previously worked with Wisconsin AgriAbility.


CAFES Alumni Board member, Wendy Kannel (2003) was named the Wisconsin Farm Bureau's Agriculture in the Classroom Coordinator and Director of the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation. http://www.agriview.com/briefs/regional/kannel-hired-as-wisconsin-farm-bureau-s-ag-in-the/article_750d48b1-a8f2-5386-b04d-002da83019fd.html

Nathan Eckert (2002) is a finalist for the Wisconsin Farm Bureau’s Young Farmer and Agriculturist (YFA) Achievement Award. The winner will be announced in December. http://wfbf.com/farm-bureau-news/farm-bureau-names-achievement-award-finalists/

Shari (Nemitz) Graffunder (1995), Grace Roberts (1999, posthumously), Rachel (Zabel) Sauvola (1999), and Becky (Pawlowski) Wirkus (1999) were all recipients of an Honorary State FFA Degree for their outstanding service to agriculture and/or the agricultural education/FFA program at the Wisconsin State FFA Convention in June 2014.

Aliesha Crowe (1998) who majored in animal science and completed a master’s degree in agricultural education was named the Executive Director of the CVTC Foundation and the CVTC Alumni Association.

Willie Helpingstine (1997), a horticulture graduate, recently started as a new grower at Tuinier Brothers Greenhouse in Michigan. His boss described UW-River Falls as having “one of the best horticulture programs in the country."

Andrea Stetzer, PhD, (1994), UWRF animal science graduate, received her Certified Food Scientist (CFS) credential from the Institute of Food Technologists in June 2014. The CFS credential is the only global certification for food science professionals.

The Irrthum family was named the 2014 Farm Family of the Year for Goodhue County in MN. John Irrthum (1986) currently oversees and works with milking cows and crop production on the farm. http://www.zumbrota.com/articles/2014/08/13/irrthums-are-farm-family-year

Mel Pittman (1976) has operated a successful 70 cow dairy for 38 years. Mel was recognized as a Master Agriculturalist in March 2013, served as executive chairman for Farm Technology Days in Pierce County in 2010, and also served on the Pierce County Board of Supervisors for 10 years. Mel is running for the 31 State Senate district this fall.

Greg Zwald (1974) switched from dairy farming to start White Pine Berry Farm in River Falls in 2012. To prepare for the berry operation he took courses with horticulture professor Brian Smith. He was the feature of an article in The Country Today http://www.thecountrytoday.com/country_life/article_5ac03414-007f-11e4-9fe7-0019bb2963f4.html and October/November issue of the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation’s Rural Route http://issuu.com/wfbf/docs/october_november_2014_rural_route_f/0.

Three individuals were inducted into the Wisconsin FFA Hall of Fame at the Wisconsin State FFA Convention in June 2014 and all were UWRF alumni, including Orland Abel (1965), Don Leibelt (1960) and posthumously to Roy Esser (1952).