Spring 2015 Alumni News’n’Notes

A senior at Bay Port High School took part in a project assigned by Ag Teacher Whitney Barnes (2014, Ag Education) and won a $5,000 prize for the school from Bayer CropScience and Feeding America.


Emily Dressler (2013) began a new position as Technical Support Specialist at AgSource. She will serve the Southern AgSource Region.

The 10th annual Show Pig Auction was held this spring and former student managers were invited back. Prior student managers who visited the auction included such CAFES alumni as John Nelson (2013), Jim Magolski (2007) and Brent Vorpagel (2005).

Congratulations to Whitney (Piessig) Thome (2011, Ag Marketing Communications major, Ag Business and Food Science minors) for her election to the CAFES Alumni Board of Directors.

Ross Bender (2010) graduate research assistant at the University of Illinois was one of those featured in the article "Drip is Making Waves" in March 2015 issue of The Furrow magazine.

CAFES alumni, Mandy Speerstra (2010) and John Rosenow (1972) of Cowsmo Compost, were featured in an episode of Around the Farm Table (a series airing on Wisconsin Public Television). Mandy, and John and his wife Nettie (also a UWRF alum) have many ties to UWRF and CAFES. John is a member of the Chancellor's Advisory Council and the UWRF Foundation Board of Directors. Mandy is a member of the Ag Econ department advisory committee. They also hosted a group of students this November for a tour of their farm.

Congratulations to Ashley (Sollman) Gausman (2009) and Jenni (Drinkall) Skiba (2003), both re-elected to the CAFES Alumni Board of Directors.

Two CAFES graduates were recognized with Distinguished Poster Presentation awards at the American Association for Agricultural Education (AAAE) conference. The recipients included David Doerfert (1982), Professor of Agricultural Communications and Graduate Studies Coordinator at Texas Tech University, and Laura Hasselquist (2006), Ph.D. student and graduate assistant at the University of Missouri.

A BIG thank you to Troy Talford (2005), now leaving the CAFES Alumni Board of Directors, for his service and contributions over the past couple years.

AgDay TV featured alumni Tolea Kamm-Peissig (2003) and her husband Jake Peissig (2003). Tolea runs Twisted Rooster Yoga, a yoga studio on their farm next to their dairy barn, for farmers and others in rural Dorchester.
Jenni (Drinkall) Skiba (2003, Dairy Science, CAFES Alumni Board Member) and her husband Patrick welcomed a son, Matthew Lee Skiba, on May 15, 2015. He weighed 8 lbs. 12 oz. and was 22 in. long. Matthew joins big brothers Peter, age 9, and Andrew, age 3, and big sister Abigail, age 6. Jenni and Patrick own Silver Star Jerseys and farm with Patrick’s family on Diamond S Farm near North Branch, Minn.

Congratulations to Adam Wehling (2003, BA in Ag Education; 2009, MS in Ag Education) who joined Chippewa Valley Technical College in January 2015 as the associate dean of agriculture and energy. He was previously an agricultural education teacher at Mondovi High School and currently owns Cedar Bee Farm with his wife.

Shari Graffunder (1995, Ag Education) received a Crystal Apple Award from the Madison area NBC station. They select five local teachers each year to receive this award. She is also the FFA Advisor at the school and her FFA students were the ones who nominated for her award.

Jay Heeg (1990) was newly elected this spring to the Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin Board of Directors. Two other CASES alumni also currently sit on the PDPW Foundation Board - Brian Forrest (1994) and Vice President Marty Hallock (1989).

The James P. Olson Memorial Scholarship was recently established by the family of James Olson (1987) in memory of his passion for the dairy industry. He passed away in August 2014. As a student at UWRF, James served as president and vice president of the Dairy Club and after college devoted himself to farming. In 1997, he suffered a water skiing accident that left him unable to farm. The first recipient of this scholarship was announced at the College Scholarship and Awards Banquet in April – Joseph Tauchen, a dairy science major from Cecil, WI.

Gregg Losinski (1983) was featured in the article "Fish and Game’s Gregg Losinski takes expertise to Slovakia." Gregg is the regional conservation educator for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game’s Upper Snake Region and is chairman of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee. The article details his work with the Slovak Wildlife Society in Slovakia specifically in regards to wildlife education and bear management.

Thanks to Dave Stone (1978, Geology) who taught a short course this January titled Applied Petroleum Geology. Dave brought a wealth of experience and knowledge to the course as he spent 20 years at Marathon oil Company and then become Vice President at Ward Petroleum before retiring in 2013. His wife, Pat, also studied geology at UWRF.

Jan Shepel (1977, Animal Science and Ag Journalism) recently retired from her position as Associate Editor for the Wisconsin State Farmer after 31 years as an ag journalist and 24 years at the Wisconsin State Farmer. At UWRF, she also worked at the Student Voice.
**Greg Pittman** (1971, Animal Science) from Plum City retired from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Dairy, Food, Meat, and Feed Division in April 2011. Greg was a supervisor for the Dairy Inspection Program for 27 years in the southern half of the state of Minnesota supervising the inspectors. He was responsible for ensuring safe milk and dairy products for the consuming public. He previously spent six years as an inspector and previous to that 7 years in quality control at a milk bottling plant. He currently lives in rural Waseca, Minn., and works part time for a crop farmer.

Four members of the Class of 1965 visited CAFES for their Golden Jubilee celebration. Alumni **Orland Abel** (1965), **Charles Kuhtz** (1965), **Lloyd Nelson** (1965) and **Bill Sazama** (1965) were given tours of the Greenhouse and the Dairy Pilot Plant (including samples of cheese and ice cream). Then they headed to the Dairy Learning Center for lunch followed by an experience on a Case IH tractor and a tour of the dairy operation.

**Bruce Thiemke** (1965, Agriculture) passed away on May 12 after dealing with lymphoma for more than five years. Bruce and his wife Kathy would have celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on July 24.