News from the Department of Agronomy & Horticulture

Department History
Special section includes historical articles, a timeline and a schedule of events for the Centennial Celebration.

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On the Cover:
This special edition of Green Scene includes all the normal parts of the annual newsletter, but has been expanded to include information on the department’s history, such as a timeline and information on the Centennial Celebration to be held this fall, September 17–18, 2010.
The faded-out photos on the cover also appear in full brightness on the page to the left and include names, years, places and descriptions where applicable. In addition, after the Centennial Celebration, you may visit our website to view these historical photos and many others.

Editing, layout/design, advertising:
Aaron Franco, Kathy Schindler, Carola Strauss, and Charlene Wendt

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Department of Agronomy & Horticulture
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Editor
Dept. of Agronomy & Horticulture
UNL
PO Box 830915
Lincoln, NE 68583–0915
or via email: agrohort@unl.edu

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Can you believe it’s been 100 years? It seems like it was just yesterday when the voices of Homer Goodding, H.O. Warner, Charles Bessey, F.D. Keim, T.A. Kiesselbach, and George Beadle were heard on the new East Campus of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. 2010 will be remembered as an exciting year for the Department of Agronomy & Horticulture. The renovations on Keim Hall were completed in July, reuniting faculty and staff who have been spread across the campus for two years; the department celebrates its centennial in September; and we will complete a three-year hiring cycle resulting in the addition of 16 new faculty. The rededication of Keim Hall will be on September 17, 2010, completing a renovation project started in 2006 with $13.5 million in state legislative funding (LB605). The building houses the Department of Agronomy & Horticulture, the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, the Agricultural Research Service, the PGA Golf Management program, and the Center for Grassland Studies.

The demolition and construction were done using sustainable practices earning the building a LEED “gold” certification. For those of you with fond memories of Keim Hall, the architects have retained the classical style of the exterior façade. Even the new energy-efficient windows retain the look of the original windows. The south entrance has been lowered to street level with large glass windows to entice visitors and permit easier access from the street. Hanging from the ceiling of the two-story vestibule is a mobile composed of reflective aluminum panels, commissioned from the artist Tim Prentice. As you enter the building from the south, your eyes will be drawn to the interior courtyard. The Keim Hall courtyard is a key feature of the building, with a pond, waterfalls, planting beds, turfgrass, walking paths, and sitting areas. A glass curtain has extended Keim’s north wall, adding more usable space and a breathtaking view of the courtyard. The second floor houses the department’s administrative offices, the Center for Grassland Studies, the PGA Golf Management program, four modern classrooms, and a student commons area. The third floor accommodates the research laboratories, graduate student offices, and faculty offices. The first floor houses the landscape design classroom, Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, the Agricultural Research Service, the Donald Hanway conference room, and faculty offices.

The newly renovated Keim Hall also symbolizes a shift in priorities for the department. We live in a very different world than our parents and grandparents. In their time, the agriculture enterprise was all about increasing production to feed a growing nation and world. The amazing increase in productivity was realized through the efforts of faculty and staff at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, and Nebraska’s innovative and hard-working farmers. There appeared to be no limit to the amount of food we could produce, and all of us share the credit in this amazing feat.

A new millennium has now come, along with it new dreams of flying cars, men walking on Mars, and robots that do everything from cooking our dinner to plowing our fields. However, with this new millennium, there is a new realization that our resources are not limitless, and all of man’s achievements are not without consequences. In this millennium we need to produce more food on less land, with less water, all while using fewer fossil fuels and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This will not only require the development of new technologies—it will require a change in our behavior. With its focus on teaching, research and extension, there is no land grant university better prepared to tackle these energy, greenhouse gases, and productivity concerns than the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.
Promotions & Tenure August 2010

Dr. John L. Lindquist

Dr. Robert A. Mitchell
Promoted to Adjunct Professor. Hired: 2002. Ph.D., University of Nebraska–Lincoln, 1995; M.S., University of Nebraska–Lincoln, 1992; B.S. University of Nebraska–Lincoln, 1989. Area of focus: Perennial grassland establishment and management for bioenergy, forage and conservation; bioenergy, prescribed fire, forages, and perennial grass management.

New Hires & Appointments

Faculty

Dr. Greg Kruger
Weed Ecologist
WCREC
January 2010

Dr. Aaron Lorenz
Plant Quantitative Genetics/Statistical Genomics
July 2010

Dr. Zac Reicher
Integrated Turfgrass Management Specialist
March 2010

Dr. Harkamal Walia
Plant Molecular Physiologist
May 2010

Dr. Stephen Young
Weed Ecologist
WCREC
January 2010

Staff

Theresa James
Extension Assistant
September 2009

Emily Levine
Extension Technologist
November 2009

Kathy Schindler
Office Associate
April 2010

Rachael Wells
Research Technician
June 2010

‘09 Photo Contest Winners

1st
“Sandhills Ranch Sunset” by Roch Gaussoin

2nd
“Abandoned But Not Forgotten” by Sue Walker

3rd
“The Past Remembered” by Myron Coleman

4th
“Nebraska Sunset” by Eric Barnes

5th
“Blowing Grass” by John Dillingham
a word with Kathy Schindler

While deciding what to write for this article, I looked at last year's publication and decided to continue the theme started by Karen Kreider: “Bloom Where You’re Planted.” Just like Karen’s life has been nomadic, so has my life (four states and one foreign country). We might not know where life will take us or what changes will occur, but it’s important to keep a positive outlook and “bloom” wherever we are planted.

The Department of Agronomy & Horticulture is a good fit for me because my family has been interested in gardening and farming for many years. My Dad always had a large vegetable garden wherever we lived and my two brothers and I were expected to help plant, weed, water, and harvest the vegetables. My Dad’s specialty was growing potatoes. Both my grandfathers were farmers and my Wisconsin grandfather even took a turn at growing tobacco, a very labor-intensive product at the time.

My first day as an office associate in the department was April 5. I’ve been assisting with a range short course, the department’s centennial celebration, a faculty retreat, travel arrangements and expenses, a grant, and other miscellaneous projects. My duties will include being the lead secretary for the office, assisting with teaching and curriculum, and helping students. I like to think I’m a “people person” because I enjoy working with and learning from individuals of all ages, cultures, and educational backgrounds.

My professional interests include writing, editing, and working on the web. To facilitate these interests, I earned a master’s degree in Journalism and Mass Communications with a minor in Teaching, Learning & Teacher Education in May. My thesis studied how Nebraska newspapers are dealing with the advent of new technologies, such as web pages, blogs, digital cameras and digital printing presses. This process is called convergence.

At home, I have two teenage boys, Steven and Mike, and an energetic Border Collie named Hailey. Steven just graduated from Lincoln Southeast and will start classes at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln this fall. Mike will be an eighth grader at Pound Middle School in Lincoln this fall. I also enjoy reconnecting with old friends and keeping up with new ones through email, Facebook, and annual camping trips and reunions.

The UNL Department of Agronomy & Horticulture has many people who strive to do their best in every aspect of their positions. It’s easy to work with people who have such a positive outlook on life and “Bloom Where They’re Planted.” I look forward to working with everyone in the future.  

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“Analysis You Can Grow With.”
I joined the department in April of 1998 and as I look back, I find it hard to believe that it has been that long. Every day brings a new challenge or accomplishment, or even a disappointment, but it makes it a learning experience and makes me look forward to coming to work every day.

I manage the Agronomy research farms at the Agricultural Research & Development Center, 84th & Havelock, and the land on the north edge of East Campus. The farm crew and I perform the field work in the spring for several researchers from disk, field cultivating, fertilizing, and pre-plant herbicide applications. Although we do plant some larger research plots, our primary focus shifts to the “production” areas of the farm which is the rotational land for the researchers. In most years we have approximately half of our acres in research and half in production, and as budget restrictions increase it requires better planning of labor, equipment, and marketing to ensure that we have the latest equipment to further research.

In my position I get the opportunity to work with researchers not only from Agronomy but also Plant Pathology, USDA, Horticulture, Calmit, Biosystems, and others along with assisting graduate students and technicians. I get to see the research being conducted by this broad spectrum of individuals that runs from organic plots that have been here for more than 25 years to a new GMO area that we began two years ago with specialized irrigation and the ability to have a mile isolation from any other crops. My responsibilities include assigning land, ordering herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers, scheduling equipment use, scheduling irrigation on our lateral move and pivot land, and the day-to-day operations. I am fortunate to have an excellent farm crew who understands that our main goal is to further research and that we are in the “service business” and are willing to assist researchers in any way that they can. The professors and technicians also have no problem helping out when things are busy to make our job easier and I feel that we have achieved a team concept where we share common goals and accomplishments.

As we look forward to the future and the changes that will happen in agriculture and research, I feel confident that the Agronomy & Horticulture Department can meet new challenges just as we have in the past.
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