



The Green & Brown

newsletter of the Department of Crop and Soil Sciences

The University of Georgia

College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

Newsletter Editor: Laura Burris



Fall/Winter/Spring 2014-15

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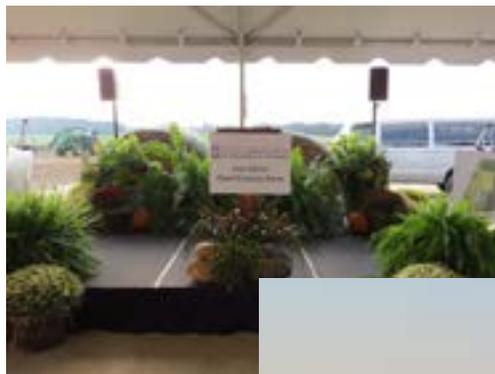
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Sunbelt Ag Expo



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HIGHLIGHTS FROM DEPARTMENT EVENTS

2014 Fall Picnic at the Plant Sciences Farm



2015 Spring Cookout hosted by the UGA Turf Club



TURF CLUB COMPETES IN TURF BOWL CHALLENGES

Four undergraduate Turfgrass Management students and members of the University of Georgia Turf Club traveled to Denver, CO in January to attend the Sports Turf Managers Association national conference. Kaulin Andric, Josh Andrews, Chris Conley, and Erick Begitschke (pictured from left to right) competed against university turfgrass programs across the U.S. in the STMA Student Challenge. The team finished 8th overall on the comprehensive exam that covered topics like turfgrass id, pest id, soil morphology/fertility, sports turf management, and irrigation.



The University of Georgia Turf Club also sent a team to the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America annual meeting in San Antonio, where they competed in the 21st GCSAA Turf Bowl. Erick Begitschke, Clint Connard, Brendan Hoban and Kaulin Andrews competed against 68 other teams consisting of over 250 students from 33 colleges and universities. The team finished 14th overall in the competition, which asked them to identify turfgrass species, diseases, weeds and insects, and required knowledge of mathematics, growth and development. The competition also included a case study portion, requiring students to submit an essay on business management and the importance of communication as a golf course superintendent.

SOIL JUDGING TEAM PLACES 5th AT NATIONAL CONTEST

Four undergraduates and two coaches travelled to Doylestown, PA to visit Delaware Valley College for the National Collegiate Soils Contest in April 2014, after placing 3rd in the Southeast Regional Contest last October. A total of 19 teams from around the country, nearly 80 students, attended. Amidst cool, rainy weather and copious mud, the team described practice pits for 4 days, studying the Alfisols and Ultisols on the diverse landscapes of southeastern Pennsylvania. During the individual contest on April 3, students described morphology, horizonation, land use suitability, and soil taxonomy for 3 contest pits; on Friday the team worked together to further describe 2 further soils. When the scores were tallied Friday afternoon, UGA had finished in 5th place in the overall rankings, with a 6th place finish in the team contest. Two students placed in the top-10 individual scores: senior Water and Soils majors Caitlin Hodges placed 6th, and Zack Sanders placed 10th. For Coach William Miller (professor, Crop & Soil Sciences) it was the highest placing in a national contest since he took over the team in 2008. Caitlin Hodges was been invited to join the US team attending the First International Soil Judging Contest in June in Jeju, South Korea, one of 8 students selected.



UGA team in glacial outwash pit along Delaware River during practice. From L to R: Caitlin Hodges, Patty Lawson, Christian Hoadley (graduate assistant coach), Katie Chatham, and Zack Sanders



DEGREES CONFERRED

Graduate Degrees

Lisa Baxter - M.S. in Crop and Soil Sciences, now pursuing a Ph.D. at Texas Tech University.

Kathryn Payne - M.S. in Crop and Soil Sciences, now pursuing a Ph.D. at the University of Kentucky.

Chase Straw - M.S. in Crop and Soil Sciences, now pursuing a Ph.D. at UGA.

Brian Blanchett - M.S. in Crop and Soil Sciences.

Jasmine VanExel - M.S. in Crop and Soil Sciences.

Camden Lowrance - M.S. in Crop and Soil Sciences.

James "Jason" Arnold - M.S. in Crop and Soil Sciences, now pursuing a Ph.D. at UGA.

Christopher Johnston - M.S. in Crop and Soil Sciences, now pursuing a Ph.D. at UGA.

Henrique Duarte - Ph.D. in Crop and Soil Sciences.

Kate Cassity-Duffy - Ph.D. in Crop and Soil Sciences, now works as a postdoc at the University of Idaho Extension Center in Twin Falls, ID.

Peter Eure - Ph.D. in Crop and Soil Sciences, now works as a Research & Development Scientist at Syngenta.

Jason "Jake" Mowrer - Ph.D. in Crop and Soil Sciences, now works as a Research Scientist at the UGA Soil Test Lab.

Jason Sarver - Ph.D. in Crop and Soil Sciences, now works as the State Peanut Specialist at Mississippi State University.

Xiao "Steve" Li - Ph.D. in Crop and Soil Sciences, now works as an Assistant Professor of Weed Science at Auburn University.

Jialin Yu - Ph.D. in Crop and Soil Sciences, continues to work with Dr. Patrick McCullough as a postdoc.

Undergraduate Degrees

The following students received their B.S.A. in Turfgrass Management:

- Colten Beattie
- Justin Lumpkin

The following students received their B.S.A. in Agriscience & Environmental Systems:

- Callahan Holloway
- Jeremiah Stevens
- Kevin Varnadore
- Victoria Kerry
- Cameron Reagin
- Timothy Chirkalov
- Nicholas Lawrence

The following students received their B.S.E.S. in Water & Soil Resources:

- Caitlin Hodges
- Coleman Perry
- Zachary Sanders
- Derrick Rideout
- Jay White

The following students received their B.S.E.S. in Environmental Chemistry:

- Amanda Solberg
- Robert J. Thomas
- Katelyn Chatham
- Grant Crane
- Alison McKay



IRON HORSE FARM UPDATE

Steering a big ship seems to happen slowly. At a certain point, though, the course is set and a large wake is left. Such has been the case with the Iron Horse Farm's Construction. After months of planning, making lists, and checking them twice, a flurry of activity is now underway at the Iron Horse Farm. Each day, there are between three and five contractors working at any one time. Below is a brief update on what projects have been finished, what is currently underway, and what you can expect to see in the coming weeks.

Roads

The first major project completed was approximately 1.7 miles of gravel road on the west side of the property. Without the completion of this project, work on the other projects listed below would have been impossible, especially during the wet season. Field roads will also be constructed as appropriate to provide access to research plots, irrigation, and to control water runoff.

Berm Renovations and Sand Pit Reclamation

One of the great resources offered by the Iron Horse Farm is the 55-acre sand pit lake. This lake is the result of the previous owner's mining of sand from the site. One of our great challenges, however, is that when we took ownership of the farm, we also took responsibility for closing and reclaiming the mine. To do this, we had to first lower the level of the lake. This meant lowering the outlets that cross under the large berm that is on the southwest corner of the property. This meant cutting the berm, digging out the current piping system, and placing the outlets deeper. During this process, we also added better flood control measures.

As of this writing, the berm renovations have been completed and soil stabilization efforts are being implemented. Progress has already been made on reshaping the sand pit ("the lake") walls to meet the 3:1 slope requirements of the reclamation process. It is expected that this process will be completed within 6-8 weeks. Other stabilization efforts, including stream bank stabilization on Ellison Creek and areas around the culverts where the new farm road crosses the creek, have already been completed. We have held our project manager and contractors to a high standard for environmental stewardship. I am confident in saying that each member of our Department and College should be proud of our efforts for natural resource conservation on the Iron Horse Farm.

Tile Drainage

Approximately 75 acres of bottomland will be made into "plot-worthy" land now that tile drainage has been installed on parts of the farm between the two creeks on the southwestern corner of the farm. The tile drainage was installed and extensively marked with laser-guidance and GPS within a GIS, so that researchers in the area can align plot work in a way that accounts for the influence of the drainage.

Irrigation

One of the most important pieces of infrastructure at the new farm is the irrigation system. After much planning, the installation of the irrigation has begun. The irrigation system will be a mix of laterals, center pivots, solid set guns, with additional plans to integrate subsurface drip irrigation in the near future. The system is anticipated to be complete by mid-May, with our efforts putting priority into 2015 research areas. The whole irrigation system will be automated and finely-tuned to ensure planned water needs can quickly, easily, and efficiently be prescriptively applied. The irrigation system was divided into five phases. Phases I-III, plus all laterals are being installed now to ensure that all research areas will be irrigated. Phase IV-V, which includes irrigation for much of the "revenue-generation" areas on the farm, will be installed after FY15.

Stumping and Grading

Approximately 90 acres of timber were harvested to provide additional cultivated land and building sites. Because of the short timeline associated with preparing for the irrigation, a contractor was hired to stump and grade the 50 acres of land on the west side of highway 15. Currently, about 20 acres remain to be cleared. In order to save money and since it is not as time sensitive, the farm crew is stumping and grading the 40 acres on the east side of the road.

Fencing

One of the challenges of the Iron Horse site is the high population of deer and wild hogs in the area. Consequently, a high priority has been placed on wildlife resistant fencing. An 8'-tall wildlife fence will be built around the research areas on the farm, except for those areas near the road. In response to concerns from the community who worried about the appearance of the wildlife fence along the road, we consulted with wildlife specialists to develop a fencing plan that would successfully exclude wildlife and maintain aesthetics for the benefit of the community. Based on this guidance, areas along our farm's road frontage will have a double fence set about 5' apart. This will have a minimal impact on the fencing budget, but will enhance the appearance while ensuring the integrity of the wildlife exclusion. As of this writing, bids on the fencing project are coming in and a decision is expected by the end of March. Work is expected to begin on the fence within days of the appropriate bidder being awarded the contract. Again, priority will be placed on protecting 2015 research areas. Fencing around the Iron Horse field will also start soon after the contract is awarded, though we have an appropriate plan designed to allow public access to the Iron Horse without compromising plot research that may be in the vicinity. More details on this will be coming soon, but we anticipate partnering with the community and potential sponsors to develop an attractive experience for visitors to the Iron Horse.

Buildings

We are working with architectural firms to finalize the design and cost estimates for the headquarters and the sample drying/processing buildings, as well as the residence for the farm manager's residence. Design finalization is expected by May with construction beginning in June and completion in November. The other buildings on the farm (e.g., shop, large and small equipment storage buildings, etc.) will be pre-engineered, steel structures which share a similar and, in some cases, accelerated timeline. Oconee Construction Services, LLC, has been awarded the contract for all of the buildings. Each party is working together to ensure that the appearance of the buildings will be uniform, though we plan accents for the façade of the headquarters building indicative of its importance.

This and more information about the Iron Horse Plant Sciences Farm will be available on the department's website for the farm (<http://www.cropsoil.uga.edu/info/farm/index.html>).

FACULTY, STAFF, AND STUDENT UPDATES

Faculty Awards/Recognitions

Dewey Lee - 2014 recipient of the Outstanding Alumnus Award for the Department of Crop, Soil, and Environmental Sciences at Auburn University.

Brian Schwartz - Gary A. Herzog Junior Research Scientist Award of Excellence this Spring; named one of Tifton, GA's Top 10 Under 40 by Tifton Scene Magazine.

Dave Hoisington - elected President of the Feed the Future Innovation Council.

Pam Knox - started an extension blog in April, focusing on climate and agriculture in the Southeast. You can follow the blog at <http://blog.extension.uga.edu/climate/>.

Julia Gaskin - 2015 Land Steward Award, annual Georgia Organics' conference, Athens, GA.

Timothy Grey - 2014 D.W. Brooks Award for Excellence in Research.

Clint Waltz - 2014 Walter B. Hill Award for Distinguished Achievement in Public Service and Outreach, Athens, GA.

Eric Prostko - 2014 Walter B. Hill Fellow Award for Distinguished Achievement in Public Service and Outreach, Athens, GA.

Dennis Hancock - Merit Award at 2015 American Forage and Grassland Council Annual Conference, St. Louis, MO.; 2014 D.W. Brooks Award for Excellence in Extension, Athens, GA.

John Snider - Outstanding Young Cotton Physiologist, 2014 Beltwide Cotton Conference, New Orleans, LA.

Jennifer Thompson - 2015-16 UGA Service-Learning Fellow.

Jerry Johnson - 2015 Georgia Research Alliance Inventor's Award.

J. Michael Moore - presented with the Friend of Extension Award, South Carolina Association of County Agriculture Agents.

Student Awards/Recognitions

Chase Straw - 2015 Campus Sustainability Grant in cooperation with UGA's Facilities Management Division Grounds Department and the UGA Turf Club, focusing on performance testing on campus turf areas.

Daryl Chastain - 1st place in the Ph.D. student poster competition, 2014 Beltwide Cotton Conference in New Orleans, LA; 1st place in the C-2 Crop Physiology and Metabolism Graduate Student poster competition, 2014 Crop Science Society of America annual Meeting in Long Beach, CA; 2nd place Ph.D. student poster competition, 2015 Beltwide Cotton Conference in San Antonio, TX; 3rd place in the Cotton Agronomy and Physiology Graduate Student Oral Competition, 2015 Beltwide Cotton Conferences, San Antonio, TX.

Zachary King - 2014 Student Registration Award at the 15th Biennial Soybean Conference in Minneapolis, MN; 2014 Plant Breeding, Genetics and Genomics Graduate Student Travel Award; 1st place in the 2014 Interdisciplinary Graduate Plant and Soil Symposium Ph.D. presentation category; 2014 National Council of Commercial Plant Breeders Graduate Student Award.

Michael Plumblee - 3rd place in the C-3 Division poster competition at the Crop Science Society of America annual meeting in Long Beach, CA; annual Georgia Feed and Grain Association scholarship; Georgia Feed and Grain Scholarship.

Benjamin Stewart-Brown - 2nd place in the 2014 IPBGG spring retreat Ph.D. poster competition; Innovative and Interdisciplinary Research Grant; 2014 Glenn and Helen Burton Feeding the Hungry Scholarship; Honorable Mention for an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship

Rajiv Parvathaneni - Graduate School Dissertation Completion Award.

Clinton J. Steketee - 2014 United Soybean Board Fellowship

Shannon Burns - elected to membership in Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's oldest and most widely-known academic honorary society

Christine Smith (Agriscience & Environmental Systems), *Shannon Michelle Burns* (Environmental Chemistry), *Joshua Andrews* (Turfgrass Management), and *Joseph Boulet* (Water & Soil Resources) - selected as outstanding seniors in their respective majors.

John Carter (Agriscience & Environmental Systems), *Kelsey Morton* (Environmental Chemistry), *Clint Connard* (Turfgrass Management), and *Anna Murray Johnson* (Water & Soil Resources) - selected as outstanding juniors in their respective majors.

Staff Awards/Recognitions

Justin Vaughn - 1st place the poster competition, postdoc category, 2014 IPBGG spring retreat.

Staci Mullis - 2014 Tifton Campus Award of Excellence for Administrative Support in May.

Christy Fricks, Communication Specialist, Peanut & Mycotoxin Innovation Lab - elected Vice-Chair of Media Relations for the Association for Communications Excellence in Agriculture in June 2014.

New Hires

Scott Monfort - Associate Professor, Peanut Extension Agronomist, Tifton campus.

Gary Hawkins - Assistant Professor, Water Resources Policy & Management, Athens campus.

Jamie Rhoads - Assistant Director of the Peanut & Mycotoxin Innovation Lab (PMIL).

Christy Fricks - Communications Specialist for the Peanut & Mycotoxin Innovation Lab (PMIL).

Jessica Cudnik - Program Assistant in the Sustainable Agriculture program.

Zachary Sanders - Research Professional I, working with Dr. Nick Hill.

Sarah Johnson - Research Technician III, working with Dr. Wayne Parrott.

Retirees

Herb Yeomans - Farm Manager over Plant Sciences and Iron Horse Farms

Gene Weeks - Agricultural Research Coordinator I, Athens campus

Dudley Cook - Agricultural Research Assistant III, Tifton campus

Anton Coy - Senior Agricultural Specialist, Tifton campus

Donna Tucker - Agricultural Research Assistant III, Athens campus

With Sadness...

Mitch Gilmer passed away on February 5, 2015, after a long illness. He was a member of the UGA Griffin family for over 30 years, and will be greatly missed.

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newsletter of the Department of Crop and Soil Sciences

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