

### From the Department Head



Freddie A. Martin  
Head

Our faculty, staff and students have amassed an impressive list of accomplishments since the last newsletter. Drs. Jim Board, Lewis Gaston and Magdi Selim were awarded major competitive grants in the areas of improving pests and environmental management. These grants brought opportunities to recruit new graduate students and create new research associate positions.

Supported by a grant from LaSIP/LINCS, Dr. Maud Walsh carried out a special program for high school science teachers again this summer.

An oats variety developed by Dr. Steve Harrison was released for commercial production.

Dr. Jim Griffin was named the Lee F. Mason LSU Alumni Association Professor. Our weed team took several honors at the Southern Weed Contest.

Departmental scholarships were awarded to a deserving group of undergraduate students. The officers of Agronomy and EMS clubs have developed ambitious programs for their respective clubs.



### Students Compete in Weed Science Contest

Weed science students competed in the Southern Weed Science Society Weed Contest hosted by Monsanto in Leland, Miss., in August. The competition in the contest is intense, and only the top weed science students in the southern region participate.

The contest has four events: weed identification, herbicide symptomology, sprayer calibration and farmer problems. The LSU team members included Brooks Blanche, Chris Leon, Jonathan Siebert and Kristie Pellerin, with Chris Mudge

and Ronnie Levy as team alternates. Wilson Judice was the first undergraduate student from LSU to participate.

Seven universities were represented, and the LSU team placed third. Chris was the second high individual, and Brooks was the tenth high individual. Brooks had the top score in the weed identification event, and Jonathan was the top scorer in calibration. Coaches who helped to train the students included Dr. Eric Webster, Dr. Jim Griffin, Dr. Wei Zhang and Curtis Jones.

### Research Spotlight

### Kimheng Receives Sugarcane Improvement Grant

Dr. Collins Kimheng received a two-year grant from the USDA, Higher Education Challenge Grant program totaling \$187,772. Co-investigators include members of the LSU AgCenter's Sugarcane Improvement Program. The objective of the grant is to provide an integrative hands-on learning experience for undergraduate students with an interest in the plant sciences.

Using sugarcane breeding as a model platform, students will be introduced to the multidisciplinary nature of research. They will work collectively and then individually with researchers in the Sugarcane Improvement Program. Students also will visit several area laboratories and universities. This project is expected to produce a reservoir of potential graduate students in agricultural sciences drawn from diverse backgrounds.



## Faculty

### Griffin Honored by College of Agriculture

Dr. James L. "Jim" Griffin, weed scientist and professor in the Department of Agronomy, has been named the Lee F. Mason LSU Alumni Association Professor in the College of Agriculture. This honor recognizes his teaching contributions both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Dr. Mason is an Emeritus Professor who was a plant breeder in the Department of Agronomy early in his career.



*"Jim" Griffin*

### Kang Contributes to Textbooks, Serves Professional Groups

In addition to writing the textbook, "GGE Biplot Analysis: A Graphical Tool for Breeders, Geneticists, and Agronomists," Dr. Manjit Kang has edited two books this year: "Crop Improvement: Challenges in the Twenty-First Century" and "Quantitative Genetics, Genomics and Plant Breeding." Dr. Kang has received an invitation to serve on the Editorial Board of Indian Journal of Genetics and Plant Breeding, a journal established in 1941.

In March 2002 he lectured at the Science and Society Series at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque on "Gene Expression and the Environment: Implications for Food Production." Dr. Kang has also been invited to contribute an article on "Genotype by Environment Interaction in Plant Breeding" to the upcoming Encyclopedia of Plant and Crop Science.

Dr. Kang was elected to a two-year term as president of the Association of Agricultural Scientists of Indian Origin. He was invited to chair the Tri-Societies (ASA, CSSA, and SSSA) ACS236 Membership and Society Identify Coordinating Committee, as well as the ASA Membership Services and Retention Committee, which is a three-year term.

### New Grants Secured by Faculty

Dr. Jim Board has received a three-year, \$172,320 grant from the Board of Regents Support Fund. Co-investigators on this project include personnel from the Entomology Department, the Geographic Information Service and private industry support from an aerial photography company. The objective is to develop criteria for insecticide application to defoliating insect pests of soybean based on remote sensing technology. The research will interrelate insect populations with leaf area and light interception, spectral reflectance parameters determined by digital aerial photography and yield loss. The end results will be to provide Louisiana's soybean industry with an inexpensive, accurate and rapid method for determining timing of insecticide application for defoliating insects.

Drs. Pat Bollich and Lew Gaston have begun work on a \$230,000 La. DEQ-funded water quality project, "Reducing Nonpoint Source Pollution from Agricultural Fields in Cole Gully Watershed." This three-year project will demonstrate the benefits of best

management practices (BMPs) for rice and soybeans on reducing soil and nutrient losses to downstream water bodies.

During 2002 Dr. Magdi Selim secured \$450,000 in grant funds. One project funded by NOAA deals with the impact of sugarcane production management strategies on water quality for Pontchartrain Lake Basin (LPB). In cooperation with Dr. Richard Bengtson (BAE), the project will provide the necessary data to quantify water quality benefits and effectiveness of best management practices on reducing nonpoint source pollutants from fertilizer and herbicide applications to sugarcane fields. This project will provide information especially useful to sugarcane farmers. The second project is a water quality study funded by the La. Department of Environmental Quality through the EPA-319 program. The project is in cooperation with Dr. Brad Venuto (Southeast Research Station) and focuses on reducing total maximum daily loads by implementing best management practices.

### Twidwell to Chair 2003 National Meeting

Dr. Ed Twidwell presented a poster at the annual meeting of the American Forage and Grassland Council held in July in Bloomington, Minn. He also set up a promotional display for the 2003 meeting, which will be held April 26-30 in Lafayette, La. He is chairman of the 2003 national forage meeting.

### Oard Promoted

Congratulations to Dr. James Oard on his promotion to Professor, effective July 1, 2002.



*James Oard*

## Faculty

### Summer Workshop Held for Area Teachers

Math and science teachers “mixed it up” during the Linking Math and Science to Our Environment workshop July 22-August 1 at the Louisiana Center for Educational Technology and Westdale Middle School in Baton Rouge. Schoolyard investigations of water quality and ecology yielded projects such as “Soils R Us,” “What is that Floating?” “Shady Resort,” “How Heated is an Ant Mound,” “Temperatures Down Below” and “Effect of Acid Rain on Aquatic Organisms.”

Mini-projects at Bluebonnet Swamp focused on soil variations by habitat, fern habitat and golden spiders. There were some amazing webs during late July!

The workshop, sponsored by LaSIP/LINCS, LSU Agronomy and the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, is part of a year-long project aimed at developing links in math and science curricula in elementary and middle schools. School teams spent time developing math-science modules for use in their schools.

Participants will reconvene for two weekend workshops during the academic year at Chicot State Park and



*Cornelius Allen (Prescott Middle), Angee Burd (Greenville Elementary), Juanita Harris (Northwestern Middle) and Susan Collura (LaBarre Elementary) set off in search of golden spiders at Bluebonnet Swamp Nature Center, Baton Rouge.*

at Tickfaw State Park to further their experience in wetland research and to refine their school modules.

Workshop facilitators were Pam Blanchard, LSU; Barbara Denu, Westdale Middle; Carol Paine, Westdale Middle; Erica Sanders, Delgado Community College; Maud Walsh, LSU; and Jim Whelan, Westdale Middle. For information, contact Maud Walsh, LSU Agronomy Department, at 225-578-1211 or [evwals@lsu.edu](mailto:evwals@lsu.edu).

### Alumni - Where Are You Now?

Tell us what is going on with your life and career. Classmates like to know what other classmates are doing! Here's your chance to share your news with the Agronomy Department Alumni and Friends. This information will appear in an upcoming *Agronomy and Environmental News*.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME TEL: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ WORK TEL: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL : \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS OF: \_\_\_\_\_

FAMILY MEMBERS: \_\_\_\_\_

NEWS: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Departures

Myla Babin, Accounting Specialist II, accepted an accounting position in the School of Veterinary Medicine.

Sherri Dickey resigned as Research Associate to move with her husband, Kevin, to Valentine, Neb., where he has accepted a position as a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine. Sherri is working at a local bank. They are expecting their first child in April.

Scott Fitch resigned as Research Associate in September. He is working for Primary Mortgage Group, Inc., in Orlando, Fla.

### Alumni

Chism Craig, who received his Ph.D. in May 2002, has accepted a position as Extension Cotton and Small Grains Specialist with the West Tennessee Experiment Station in Jackson, Tenn. We wish him well.

## Students

# Environmental Management Student Interns with The Nature Conservancy of Iowa

Christopher McCoslin, a senior in Environmental Management Systems, spent the summer of 2002 working with the Nature Conservancy Iowa chapter in the Loess Hills Internship Program in Conservation Biology. His responsibilities focused on prairie restoration, particularly on removal of invasive woody plants and creation of firebreaks for future prescribed burns. Chris and other interns worked in various locations along the north and south border of western Iowa, staying in state campgrounds near their work areas. In addition to doing field work, interns learned about prairie ecology and restoration through the Loess Hills Prairie Seminar.



*Chris McCoslin at The Nature Conservancy's preserve, Broken Kettle Grasslands. Located in the northern part of Loess Hills, it is the largest preserve in Iowa.*

### Cotton Fellowship Selects Blanche

Congratulations to Sterling "Brooks" Blanche, Agronomy Ph.D. student, who was selected for the Cotton Incorporated Fellowship program effective September 1. This program is an effort to enhance research and training in cotton genetics and breeding in critical areas. The fellowship will last two to three years.

### Undergraduate Scholarship Recipients

Students awarded scholarships for the Fall and Spring semesters of 2002-2003 are:

<i>Joseph Boudreaux</i> .....	Lee & Frances Mason Scholarship
<i>Wilson Judice</i> .....	John P. Gray Scholarship
<i>Andre Ricau</i> .....	John P. Gray Scholarship
<i>Gabriel Anderson</i> .....	Agronomy Alumni Scholarship
<i>Nick Rasmussen</i> .....	B.J. Miller Scholarship
<i>John Hebert</i> .....	L.W. Sloane Scholarship
<i>William Felicien</i> .....	Dean Lee Scholarship
<i>Beau Braswell</i> .....	James & Edna Trott Scholarship
<i>William Felicien</i> .....	Louisiana Seedsmen Scholarship

## Students

### National Agronomy Student Recognition Program Awarded

Congratulations go to Wilson Judice, a senior in Plant and Soil Systems, on receiving the Outstanding Senior Award through the National Agronomy Student Recognition Program for 2001-2002. This award is presented annually to an outstanding senior at each four-year



*Wilson Judice*

institution with students enrolled in agronomy, crops science, soil science or environmental science degree programs. Students are selected on the basis of scholarship, leadership and participation in campus organizations.

### Congratulations to These Spring and Summer Graduates

#### Bachelor of Science:

#### Plant and Soils Systems

*Faron M. Gaspard*

#### Environmental Management Systems

*Joseph P. Austin  
Jennifer A. Bruno  
Anserd Foster  
Russell Gaudet III  
Rory Hebert  
Joseph W. LeBlanc  
Scott Rainey  
Kevin Simoneaux  
Dustin Snider  
Bradley Tant  
Joshua Waldmeier*

#### Master of Science in Agronomy

*Xiaobing Fang  
Marsha Samuels  
Glenn Suir*

#### Doctor of Philosophy in Agronomy

*Charles Chism Craig  
Hongxia Zhu*

### 2002 Senior Recognition Dinner

The Agronomy Department Senior Recognition Dinner was held April 17 to honor Plant and Soil Systems and Environmental Management Systems students graduating in 2002. Andrew Barron (M.S., Agronomy, 1996) was the featured speaker.

In speaking of his career path, which included high school teaching and positions at the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality

and the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program, he emphasized the variety of opportunities available for graduates.

Agronomy Club and Environmental Management Society officers reported on activities during 2001-2002, and Wilson Judice received a plaque from the Agronomy Society of America recognizing him as an outstanding senior.

## Graduate Students

### Student Wins 1st Place in Oral Presentation

Sterling "Brooks" Blanche, a Ph.D. student under the direction of Dr. Gerald Myers, placed first in the graduate student oral presentation competition at the Beltwide Cotton Conferences in Atlanta January 7, 2002. His presentation was titled "Transgene effect on the stability of cotton varieties in Louisiana." He also placed first in the graduate student oral presentations at the American Society of Agronomists, Southern Branch in Orlando in February 2002 with his presentation titled "Stability and performance of transgenic and conventional cotton varieties."

### Welcome to New Graduate Students

Jie Alojado Arro - M.S.  
(Dr. Collins Kimbeng)

Michael Daley-Turnbull - M.S.  
(Dr. Collins Kimbeng)

Anserd J. Foster - M.S.  
(Dr. Lewis Gaston)

Craig Johnson - M.S.  
(Dr. Ron Delaune)

Chris Mudge - M.S.  
(Dr. Eric Webster)

Hua Zhang - Ph.D.  
(Dr. Magdi Selim)

## Agronomy & Environmental Management Club News

The LSU Agronomy Club and Environmental Management Club jointly hosted a spring crawfish boil April 20. About 70 people attended. Most stayed until the early evening to enjoy good conversation, volleyball or horseshoes and some homespun music.

The Agronomy Club also planted a plot of chewing sugarcane at the Sugar Research Station to be harvested and sold this fall. Last year's ornamental corn was a big hit, and club members hope the chewing cane sells as well. As usual, club members helped with departmental and College functions like tAGer Day, the Science Expo and the 4-H Plant Science Contest.

Several club members plan to attend the ASA-SSSA national meetings in Indianapolis this fall and the Regional Soil Judging Contest to be held at Texas A&M in late October.

The Agronomy Club has caps and shirts for sale. Contact Mike Lindsey at 578-9005 for more information.

## AGRONOMY *and Environmental News*

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