

# Ag Econogram



Summer 2012

A Newsletter for Agricultural and Resource Economics  
at the University of Tennessee

## *Farm Credit Scholars Program Introduced*

Farm Credit of Mid-America has established the Farm Credit Scholars Program in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.

The purpose of the program is to enhance the learning experience of students and to prepare them for careers in agribusiness or agricultural production. The five-year program begins in fall 2012 with the selection of the first-year class of five scholars. Scholars may be a freshman, sophomore or junior. Each scholar will receive a \$2,000 annually renewable scholarship. The program will include an internship in a Farm Credit office at the end of either the sophomore or junior year of study. Other components of the program include a customized selection of academic courses and additional activities to introduce the student to a career in agricultural finance.



David Lynn, Farm Credit senior vice president of financial services, said, "We're looking for the brightest and most exceptional students across all segments of agriculture. We are structuring this program to be very open. The majority of scholars may come from the agricultural economics and agricultural business curricula, but we want the program to be available to other exceptional students in the UT College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. We want these students to become valuable contributors to their communities and to agriculture."

In addition to a supervisory committee, Dr. John Riley, professor in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, will serve as program administrator. Contact Riley at [jriley@utk.edu](mailto:jriley@utk.edu) or 865-974-7465 for additional information and application materials.

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*Agricultural &  
Resource Economics*

THE UNIVERSITY of  
**TENNESSEE**   
INSTITUTE of  
AGRICULTURE

# *Two New Faculty Join Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics*



**DR. CHRIS BOYER**



**DR. ANDREW GRIFFITH**

The Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics faculty, students and staff welcome two new additions to our faculty — Dr. Chris Boyer and Dr. Andrew Griffith. Boyer joined the faculty on Jan. 3, 2012. He obtained his bachelor's (agribusiness) and master's (agricultural economics) degrees from Texas A&M and his doctoral degree in agricultural economics from Oklahoma State University. Boyer wishes to build a research program that combines farm management and environmental stewardship; that is, to help producers in the state of Tennessee maximize profits while considering the environmental implications of their decisions. He was attracted to the department because of our strong record of solid applied research and friendly faculty environment. Boyer's hobbies are hunting, fishing and enjoying SEC sports. He is originally from Lubbock, Texas.

Griffith joined the faculty more recently on May 14, 2012. He

obtained his bachelor's degree in agriculture with a concentration in business management from Tennessee Technological University; his master's degree in agricultural economics from the University of Tennessee; and his doctoral degree in agricultural economics from Oklahoma State University. Griffith was drawn to UT by the opportunity to work with agricultural producers in his home state and to provide those producers with information to aid in making marketing-related decisions. The opportunity to work with a "fine group of faculty" also attracted him to UT. Griffith plans to carry on many of the livestock marketing programs developed by Dr. Rawls and to expand marketing ideas of less traditional livestock operations. He notes, "Outside of agriculture, which is a hobby and a job to me, I enjoy hunting deer and turkey; participating in 5k's, 15k's and half marathons; and umpiring and officiating high school baseball and basketball." Griffith is from Hampshire, Tenn.

## *Summer Interns Find Work in a Variety of Organizations*

Our departmental interns are working with the following organizations this summer:

- Farm Credit Services of Mid-America in Knoxville, Tenn., and Louisville, Ky.
- Tennessee Farmers Cooperative in La Vergne, Tenn., and Loudon, Tenn.
- Mississippi State University Extension in Mississippi State, Miss.
- National Agricultural Statistics Service (USDA-NASS) in Nashville, Tenn.
- CaseIH in Racine, Wis.
- Tractor Supply (TSC) in Nashville, Tenn.
- East Tennessee Clean Fuels in Knoxville, Tenn.

# Marketing Team Goes to Semifinals

This year the NAMA Marketing Team developed a product to help fellow team member, Heather Merritt (Wray, Ga., Junior), whose family raises peanuts in southern Georgia. While discussing possible products last fall, she related how peanut vines tend to roll back when ascending on the chain conveyor of the peanut inverter. An inverter is the machine that digs the peanuts, shakes the soil from them, combines two rows into one windrow, and then inverts the plants back on the ground with the peanuts on top so they will dry. In 3-5 days a peanut combine finishes the harvesting process. After much discussion, the nine-member team unanimously agreed to take on Heather's project. One of the team members, Will Batey, a Biosystems Engineering Technology junior from Columbia, Tenn., proposed a way to keep the plants tighter against the conveyor chain. He designed the

apparatus, the Rollback Protector Kit, which was intended to be attached to new inverters as well as existing machines already in use. After the development phase was complete, the team designed the marketing plan.

The team presented its plan at the National AgriMarketing Conference in Kansas City, Mo., last April. NAMA is the professional organization that handles all of the marketing communications for agriculture. Members develop the advertising campaigns for farm inputs, publish the agriculture magazines and present the farm radio broadcasts. There were 800 professionals and 400 students at the conference. Twenty-nine universities, including two Canadian universities, competed in the marketing team competition. From the initial heats, 12 teams are selected for the semifinals, and UT's team was a semifinalist. The team did not get selected for the final

round. Finalists included Iowa State, Kansas State, Illinois and Minnesota.

Team members will tell you that being on the marketing team requires many hours in research and in rehearsing the final presentation. However, the experience allows them to practice what they have learned from some different courses they have taken. Students who become team members as freshmen frequently continue on the team every year through their senior year.

Other team members included Alex Ailshie (Columbia, Junior); Adam Boucher (Collierville, Freshman); Brittney Berry (Jonesboro, Junior); Jonathan Harrison (Watertown, Junior); Dustin Kendall (Paris, Sophomore); Gavin Henry (Springfield, Junior); and Hailey Fishel (Union City, Junior). Dr. John Riley served as team coach.





# AREC 201 – Now Two Years Old

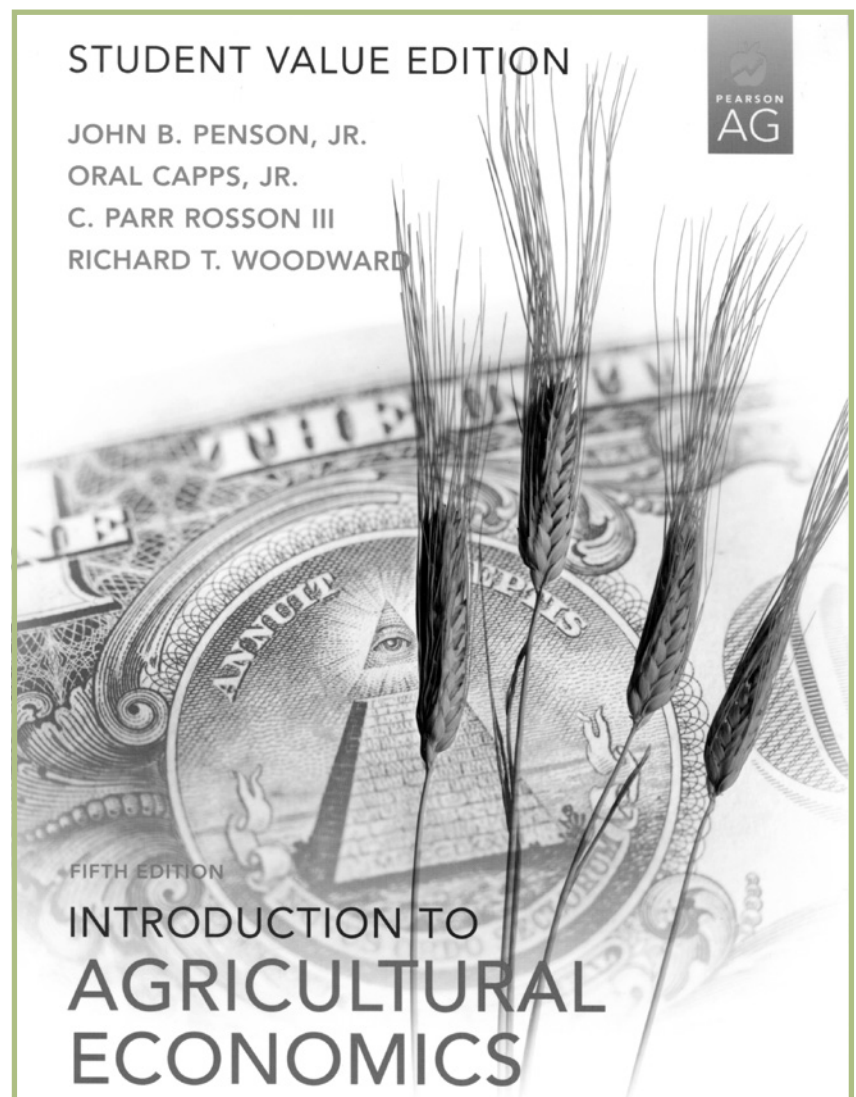
In the spring semester of 2010, the department began teaching an introductory course titled Economics of the Global Food and Fiber System (AREC 201). There were several reasons for doing this: 1) to seek to ensure that departmental majors, minors and other CASNR students who take upper-division courses in our department acquire a solid understanding of basic economic concepts and principles; 2) to provide a course in which students can learn economics by focusing on the particular characteristics of the agrifood sector and their implications for market behavior and policy issues; 3) to provide an economic principles course in which many applications/illustrations are related to subject matter in other CASNR courses and issues/decisions faced by CASNR graduates in typical careers; 4) to establish the first general education course in the social science category from the CASNR; and 5) to contribute to the university-wide Ready for the World Initiative, which calls for expanding the treatment of international topics within the curriculum.

This four-credit course is structured with two 75-minute lecture periods and one 50-minute “lab” period (with a maximum of 20 students). The 14 lab periods over the course of the semester are used primarily for work on problems in pairs, with the instructor and a GTA providing “consulting” support, although a few periods are more discussion oriented. Thus, students get a good deal of “hands-on” practice working with key concepts and principles (e.g., demand elasticities, profit maximization decision rules, market equilibrium, comparative advantage

and foreign exchange rates). While the emphasis of the course is on microeconomics, approximately 25 percent of the course is devoted to macroeconomics subject matter (e.g., GDP, unemployment, inflation, interest rates, the budget deficits, the national debt, and monetary and fiscal policy).

Enrollment over the first five semesters during which the course has been taught has grown from about 40 to 60 (which is the capacity of the classroom currently used for the lecture periods). Most CASNR departments have modified the

curricular requirements for their majors/concentrations to include AREC 201 as an either/or option with ECON 201. Although to date relatively few non-CASNR students have enrolled, we expect this number to grow over time as students and advisers in other colleges become more aware of the course, and capacity constraints are loosened. Once the new animal science building is opened next academic year with its two high-quality lecture halls with a capacity of 100+, we plan to expand our efforts to attract non-CASNR students to AREC 201.



## Department Head's Notes

Spring graduation is an exciting time for our graduates as they either enter the workforce or continue their education. This spring, 13 of our 14 graduating seniors responded to our exit survey. Of the 13, eight had been hired in full-time jobs, three had applied to graduate programs (two had already been accepted), one was working in an internship position, and one was not currently looking for a job.

Given the current state of the economy, our spring graduates did very well in the job market. There is always room for expansion and improvement, both in terms of quantity and quality of available jobs for our graduates. However, based on our most recent experience, the job outlook is very good for our current and future graduates.

We have the opportunity to welcome new faculty members into our department this year. Dr. Chris Boyer

joined the faculty on Jan. 1 and is working in the farm management/environmental economics area in research and teaching. Dr. Andrew Griffith joined our faculty on May 14 and is working in the area of Extension livestock marketing. Dr. Jason Fewell will join our faculty on Jan. 1, 2013. He will work in the Extension farm and financial management area. We are excited to have these new faculty members. We also have three additional open faculty positions, which we plan to fill later this year.

We often hear from departmental alumni. Several of our alumni even guest-lecture in our classes. Please let us hear from you either via letter or email; or better yet, come by the department for a tour and conversation. We always welcome your feedback and suggestions.

Finally, we mourned the passing of Dr. Joe Martin in May. Martin served

as department head, retiring in 1988 after more than 40 years of service to the University of Tennessee.

Martin leaves a lasting legacy both professionally and personally and will be missed greatly.

*Delton C. Gerloff*



## AREC and CASNR Select Outstanding Students

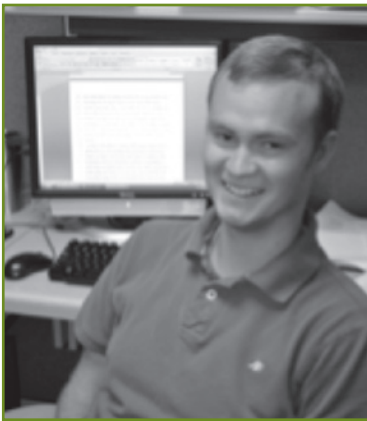
Each year the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics names an Outstanding Undergraduate Student and an Outstanding Graduate Student. The College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources selects an outstanding student for each class of students (freshman through senior). The 2012 awards were given to the following students:

John Schultz received the undergraduate award from the department and the Outstanding Senior award from CASNR. John

grew up on a crop and livestock operation in Dyersburg, Tenn. He served as the Student Livestock Association Round-Up Livestock Show chairman, as vice president of the Ag Econ Club and as president of the Collegiate FFA. At the university level, John held the director's chair for All Campus Events (ACE) and was parliamentarian of the UT Freshman Council. He worked as a summer intern with Monsanto and BASF. In FFA, he served as a state officer, was a National Diversified Crop Production Proficiency Finalist, and was named the West Tennessee Star

Farmer. Starting this fall, John will be pursuing a master's degree in plant sciences at the University of Missouri.

Nathanael Thompson received the graduate student award from the department. In nominating Nathanael, Dr. Roland Roberts wrote, "Nathanael is mature, bright, hardworking, a fast learner and persistent in gaining scholarly knowledge and accomplishing his goals." For his thesis, Nathanael wrote two papers to be submitted to refereed journals. For his first paper, he developed a partial budgeting and



**NATHANAEL THOMPSON**

break-even profitability analysis for soybeans grown in different maturity groups, row spacing and plant population densities. The second paper addressed factors influencing the decision by cotton producers to adopt one or more selected information technologies for variable rate technology application of inputs. Both studies were conducted under the direction of Dr. James Larson, and Nathanael will present them at national conferences this summer. He will begin working on his doctoral degree this fall at Oklahoma State

University and will be working in the field of beef cattle production.

Other CASNR award winners from the department included: Lindsey Rochelle (Outstanding Junior from Nunnelly, Tenn.) and Hannah Wright (Outstanding Sophomore from Spring City, Tenn.).

Congratulations to all of these students on their academic achievements!



**OUTSTANDING JUNIOR:  
LINDSEY ROCHELLE  
FROM NUNNELLY, TENN.**



**OUTSTANDING SENIOR:  
JOHN SCHULTZ  
FROM DYERSBURG, TENN.**



**OUTSTANDING SOPHOMORE:  
HANNAH WRIGHT  
FROM SPRING CITY, TENN.**

## *Art Whaley Enjoys Long-term Career with Farm Credit Services of Mid-America*

He's in charge of the Oneida, Knoxville and Dandridge offices. That's \$442 million in loans and 21 employees. Meet Art Whaley, regional vice president of Farm Credit Services of Mid-America.

Whaley received his bachelor's degree in 1998 and his master's degree in 2000, both from the UT Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics. His career began when he attended the Ag Career Fair on campus and met Mike Estes from Farm Credit. He started his career as a financial services officer and worked his way up to his present position.



**ART WHALEY**

While in college, Whaley worked summers as a lifeguard and sold men's suits during Christmas break. He feels that both work experiences helped him become successful in his current job. His agricultural degree was a "blessing" because it helped him learn about dealing with people. But what he values most are the friendships he established while at UT. He was a member of Lamda Chi Alpha, and he remarks that his classmates and fraternity brothers will be his "best friends for life."

Whaley marks himself as a UT agriculture student "before the



bridge.” He says, “Everybody knew everybody.” There were only four females in agricultural economics at the time, and almost everyone had a farm background. That has changed today, so maybe the “bridge opens the door to ag.”

As he reminisces about his college days, Whaley recalls his enjoyment of being in Morgan Hall, and he remembers his farm management

and rural sociology classes. His degree in agricultural economics could not have been a better choice because he has been able to translate his coursework to his career. Whaley also thinks back to his career changes. He misses the front-end contact with customers when he started with Farm Credit but now sees how he can change the face of the organization with the good people he hires. To that end, Whaley has three

agricultural economics students as interns this summer.

He likes to hunt, fish, play golf and work on his house. That’s something for every season. “Maybe that’s the reason I am not married yet,” he says. If he won the lotto, he would open a bar on the Strip!

Congratulations to a graduate well on his way to success in a career and in life!

## *Melitta Stoutt Recognized for Many Years of Service*



### **MELITTA STOUTT**

Who has answered phone calls to the department for the last 43 years? Who can still take shorthand, though it may not be at her normal speed of 100 words per minute? And who knows more of the department’s graduates than anyone else? That’s right! Melitta Stoutt.

Melitta’s first day on the job was Oct. 13, 1969. Since then, she has worked for five different department heads. What has changed in her job? Melitta says there are more computers and more technology, more responsibility, and more exposure to the public. Today, she types exams, maintains the undergraduate student records, makes sure faculty have textbooks ordered and class evaluations scheduled, schedules the conference room, mails material for the international secretary of Gamma Sigma Delta, updates the bulletin board, sorts the mail, and, yes, still answers the telephone. She is the secretary of the Tennessee Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers and really enjoys her Sunday school class of third grade students.

Born in Heidelberg, Germany, Melitta calls Maryville home.

Working at UT was not her first job. She wanted to be a commercial artist, but that was not a career for women back then. She graduated from Draughns Business College in 1968 and accepted an offer to work for the FBI in Washington, D.C. Much to her surprise, she found herself cataloging evidence associated with the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. assassination.

What does she like about her job? The diversity of the job and the opportunity to meet students and visitors to the department makes each day exciting, she says.

Pat Hickman, Melitta’s office supervisor, says that she takes care of the little things that others don’t even think about. Dr. Morgan Gray tells the story of Melitta sending his boys birthday cards that she drew by hand. Morgan’s boys are now in their 30s, but they still have those birthday cards.

## *We Need Your Help!*

There are many young people missing the opportunity to follow in your footsteps by pursuing a major in Agricultural and Resource Economics. We need your help in identifying those prospective students. If you know of a high school or community college student to whom you would like us to send information, please email the name of the person and their address to John Riley at [jriley@utk.edu](mailto:jriley@utk.edu).

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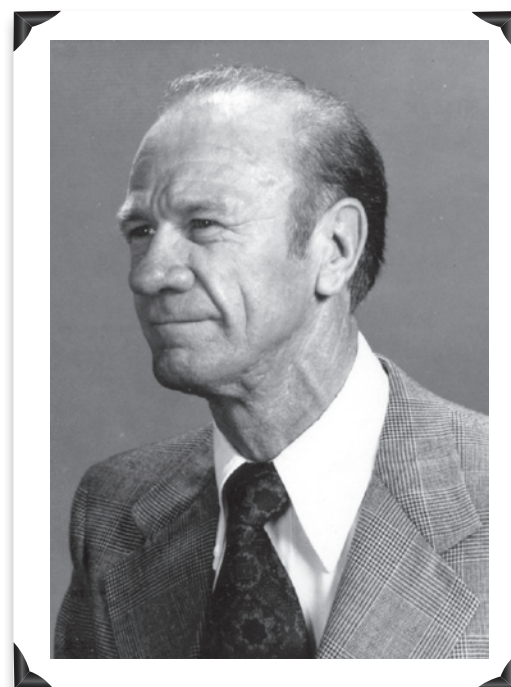
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## *The Department Remembers Joe Martin*

A former professor and head of the UT Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, Dr. Joe Martin, passed away on May 20, 2012. He was 93. Martin was born in 1918 into a cotton farm family of five children in Hart County, Ga. He attended a one-room elementary school and graduated from Rabun Gap-Nacoochee High School and Junior College in Georgia where he met Mary Addington, his beloved wife of 65 years. Martin was in military service at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, and later he served in Patton's army after the D-Day invasion of Europe in the 159th Combat Engineer Battalion in the

Battle of the Bulge. After the war, he graduated with degrees from Clemson University and then earned his doctoral degree from the University of Minnesota. Martin retired in 1988 after 41 years of service at UT. His teaching and research centered on the problem of development and conservation of natural resources, including land, water, air and the environment. During his tenure at UT, he served as mentor to six doctoral students and numerous master's students. He authored or co-authored some 40 technical publications.



**DR. JOE MARTIN**

## *Ag Econogram Delivery to Go Electronic*

Given budget cuts and the trend in the use of electronic delivery, it has become necessary for us to switch to distributing the Ag Econogram through email. We need your help in generating a complete list of alumni email addresses. PLEASE SEND YOUR NAME AND EMAIL ADDRESS to Melitta Stoutt (mstoutt@utk.edu). In the subject line put "Econogram Email," and in the body of the message please give us your full name, mailing address and email address so we can properly match files. Also, use this message to tell us a little bit about what you are doing, so we can share appropriate information with your fellow Ag Econ alumni. If you do not have an email address and would like to continue receiving paper copies, please call Melitta Stoutt at 865-974-7231.