



Ag Econogram



Bucking the TREND

DEPARTMENT'S EXTENSION EFFORTS FOCUS ON HELPING COUNTIES "GROW THEIR OWN"

The current economic downturn has touched Tennesseans throughout the state and from all walks of life. However, rural Tennessee has been hit particularly hard. According to the state's unemployment figures from August 2010, nine of the "bottom 10" counties — where unemployment is the highest — are considered nonmetropolitan. In fact, Maury County, which has been significantly impacted by contraction in the auto industry, is the only county in the group designated as metropolitan.

Despite the trends and given the immediate desire to create jobs, some counties have tried to intensify their industrial recruitment efforts. Unfortunately, trying to land the "big fish" has become ever more difficult and the cost of luring such jobs quite expensive. In reality, the vast majority of job creation originates from small businesses and the pursuits of entrepreneurs. In this vein, the department has developed a strong partnership with the University of Tennessee's Institute for Public Service (www.ips.tennessee.edu) and the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development's Business Resource Enterprise Office (ECD-BERO, www.tn.gov/ecd/bero) to address the needs of small businesses and entrepreneurs, especially in rural Tennessee. Recently, these efforts culminated in the launch of an eight-county pilot program, Creating a Rural Economic System in Tennessee (CREST, <http://trend.ag.utk.edu/crest.html>), funded through grants from the Delta Regional Authority and USDA-Rural Development.

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Agricultural & Resource Economics

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Department Head's Notes



This year has witnessed several changes in the department, from the name of the department itself, to personnel, students and our workspace. So my comments this fall will be in the form of a departmental update.

Three faculty members announced their retirements this summer. These retirements will take place over the next few months and include Dr. Emmitt Rawls, Dr. Dan McLemore and Dr. Clark Garland. All three will continue on a post-retirement assignment to at least June 2011. There is no way to replace the experience and effectiveness of these three faculty members, but we expect to fill their positions with new and energetic faculty members sometime in 2011.

For the fifth consecutive year, our undergraduate student enrollment has increased

Two staff members have also announced their retirements in 2010. Mary Gage and Anne Dalton will retire from our department this year. Mary will come back on a part-time basis through June 2011. We wish both Mary and Anne a restful and enjoyable second career.

To fill some of the void of other recent departures, we are currently searching to fill three faculty positions: Extension grain marketing specialist, farm management/ environmental research and teaching faculty position, and Greever Chair of Agribusiness. All three searches are active and we hope to interview candidates soon. With the exception of the Greever Chair position, these positions are filling recent faculty vacancies. With the abovementioned retirements, we plan to have additional faculty searches in 2011.

For the fifth consecutive year, our undergraduate student enrollment has increased. We have 85 undergraduate students enrolled this fall, an increase of 10 students compared to last year. Seventeen of our undergraduate students are enrolled in the newly formed Natural Resource and Environmental Economics major.

We have 27 M.S. graduate students enrolled this year, an increase of four over last year. We currently have one student in his second year of the M.S./MBA program and one student beginning his first year of that program. We also have three Natural Resource Economics Ph.D. students who are working in a joint Ph.D. program with the Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries.

Our workspace has changed significantly compared to last year. All our graduate students are now located on the third floor. In addition our halls and meeting rooms were given a facelift last winter with repairs and new paint. With additional students and staff, space is at a premium, but with the help of our staff, we have found a space for everyone.

If you haven't come by our department for a few years, please come by and visit with us. You will likely see some new faces and surroundings, and we would enjoy showing you around.

Delton C. Gerloff

"TO FILL SOME OF THE VOID OF OTHER RECENT DEPARTURES, WE ARE CURRENTLY SEARCHING TO FILL THREE FACULTY POSITIONS"

Dr. George Smith Retires

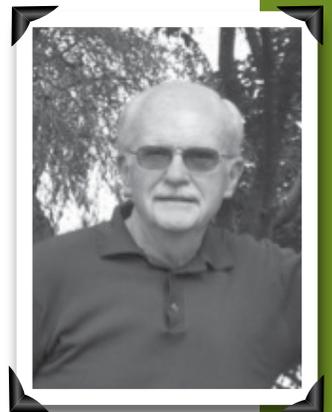
The department said “Hasta siempre!” to one of its longest-serving faculty last winter. Dr. George F. Smith, professor and interim assistant dean of UT Extension, retired after a 40-year career in the department and predecessor units. George came to UT as a graduate research assistant in 1970 and departed as an assistant dean! Prior to coming to UT for his Ph.D. studies, Smith had experience as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ecuador, as a trainer for USAID programs in Ecuador, and as a Peace Corps Technical Representative in Bolivia. Needless to say, he is fluent in Spanish. When he received his Ph.D. in 1974, George became assistant professor in resource development in UT Extension. He spent the remainder of his career dedicated to Extension educational programs in Resource Development in rural Tennessee. He was promoted through the professorial ranks,

eventually assuming the position of interim assistant dean for agriculture, natural resources and resource development in Extension in 2008.

During his years on the Extension faculty, his major responsibilities included providing leadership in planning, coordinating, implementing, evaluating and reporting the clean water priority program focusing on water quality, animal waste management, and related environmental stewardship issues. He also coordinated in-state education-information activities as part of the Southern Region water quality coordination project; developed educational programs in land use, tourism, recreation and related economic development areas; and supported county, district and state rural development committees.

Smith indicates that his proudest accomplishments include helping establish the Southern Region Water Quality Program, publishing the Best Management Practices Handbook for water quality, developing the Tennessee Envirothon for high school students, maintaining the State Rural Development Committee, and mentoring new faculty in Extension. In the community, George was also very active in leadership roles both in Girl and Boy Scouts and in his church.

We wish George and family all the best as he enjoys a well-deserved retirement. Thanks for all you’ve accomplished!



CPA to Fund Graduate Assistantship

Through a partnership with the Center for Profitable Agriculture (CPA), the department recently began a research study of opportunities for value-added processing and marketing of milk by Tennessee dairy farmers. Drs. Kim Jensen and Burt English will direct the thesis work of new M.S. student Jonathan Moss. Jonathon will focus his thesis research on providing economic analysis that will assist dairy producers in evaluating on-farm, value-added enterprises. Jonathan is a recent B.S. graduate of Tennessee Tech and is from Cookeville. Rob Holland, CPA director and alumnus of the department (M.S.’92), said, “We have wanted to work closely with a graduate student project for several years and have been trying to formalize an analysis of on-farm dairy processing.” CPA will provide funding for Jonathan’s graduate research assistantship for two years and will participate in the direction of the project. CPA’s funding, in turn, comes partially from an agreement with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Division of Market Development.

In addition to the thesis, the project “deliverables” consist of fact sheets, Extension publications, PowerPoint presentation and poster. “This project is an excellent example of cooperation between the research and teaching programs of the department and Extension programs that are in need of highly applied analytical results for application in the field,” according to Dr. Delton Gerloff, department head. The department looks forward to a continued relationship with CPA.



Alumni Spotlight



JULIE PEDIGO BOWLING

Julie Pedigo Bowling was a student in agricultural economics and business at UT from 1999 until she graduated in 2003. Today, she is assistant general counsel for Tennessee Farmers Insurance Companies (Farm Bureau Insurance – Tennessee), a job that uses the skills and experience she gained at UT, in law school, and in private practice with a law firm in Atlanta. Although now working for only one client, in this position Julie is exposed to the variety of legal issues that face businesses in today's world: employment law, tax issues, real property issues, litigation, and for this particular business, insurance law and agricultural law.

Julie was interested in the possibility of a legal career in the agricultural industry after her experiences growing up on a farm in Coffee County and being involved in 4-H and FFA. That interest grew with exposure to legal issues in agriculture in extracurricular

activities, internships and classes at UT. Julie recalls being fascinated by a presentation on estate planning by a UT attorney at an Ag Econ Club meeting. He provided several estate planning examples, including how families with minimal cash and lots of assets (such as land and farm equipment) could transfer property to future generations and minimize the tax impact. Julie's summer internships also exposed her to legal issues in agriculture. In 2001, Julie interned with the Public Affairs Department of the Tennessee Farm Bureau and spent a big portion of the summer at the state capitol assisting lobbyists and attorneys working on legislation and agricultural policy. (After that internship, Julie always hoped for an opportunity to return to work for Farm Bureau and was elated when the opportunity to work in the legal department arrived in early 2010.) She interned with an environmental law clinic in London, England, in 2002. A class in agricultural policy and an honors research project on the legal needs of farmers in Tennessee solidified Julie's goal of using a law degree in the agricultural industry.

These experiences made for a strong foundation when Julie started law school at Emory University in 2003. During her three years there, Julie took classes on a wide variety of legal topics including tax law, estate planning, real estate, business planning, environmental law and intellectual property, and was ranked second out of 224 in the May 2006 graduating class. One of her best memories of law school was not in the classroom though. Julie and two other students assisted an Emory professor on a U.S. Supreme

Court case regarding whether a county in Georgia had sovereign immunity from a suit against it. The students researched, reviewed and edited drafts of the brief, and helped prepare the attorneys for oral argument. And they all attended the argument in Washington, D.C. While the Supreme Court decided against the Emory team's client, the experience stoked Julie's interest in appellate litigation and brief-writing.

Julie started working in the tax department at Sutherland Asbill & Brennan LLP, an Atlanta law firm, in September 2006. Her practice there focused primarily on tax litigation and controversy matters, and she represented individuals, corporations, partnerships and trusts in civil tax disputes with the Internal Revenue Service. With many clients, the best results could be reached by working to resolve tax disputes with IRS Appeals Officers without resorting to litigation. However, several of Julie's other cases ended up working their way through the various federal courts that handle tax disputes. She was lucky to work with attorneys who knew of her interest in agriculture and allowed her to work on tax cases involving farms and the equine, forestry and food industries.

One particularly interesting case Julie recalls involved a decision in a case to which none of her clients were parties, but which affected several of her clients. Unfortunately for them, another taxpayer litigated the issue first and lost. In the view of the Sutherland team, the Tax Court incorrectly interpreted a tax statute that applies to partnerships. Julie worked with several of the partners and a paralegal at Sutherland to

draft and file an amicus brief in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia describing how the statute was intended to work based on its language, other statutes, and its history. The appellate court ruled exactly as the Sutherland team suggested in the brief, contrary to the more extreme views expressed by the actual parties to the case.

Besides a great foundation for a career in both the legal world and the agricultural industry, Julie's time at UT inspired a love of travel and her marriage to a man who shares that interest. Julie and her husband, Matthew Bowling, participated in the agricultural study tours and exchange programs that were offered to students in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources — Julie to Mexico, and Matthew to Thailand. Since then, they have traveled together in Europe and Central and South America. Matthew and Julie currently reside in Columbia, Tennessee.



XIAOGU SIMON LI

Graduate Student Spotlight

XIAOGU SIMON LI

Unlike most students arriving at the University of Tennessee for their first year of graduate school, Xiaogu Simon Li did not struggle with the idea of having to develop, write and complete a thesis in agricultural economics. Writing economics papers has always come easily to Simon. Then again, so has writing in general. As a high school student in the small town of Suining in the Sichuan Province of China, Simon wrote and published more than 20 works of fiction and nonfiction prose for his local provincial magazine and newspaper. In college, he continued his passion for writing stories but changed the direction from mystery and fiction to ones rooted in economic theory. As a graduate researcher in college, Simon examined the effects of population movements and health care throughout China, provided recommendations on environmental pollution and health effects to several international organizations such as UNDP and WHO, and even wrote a 50-page economics dissertation as an exit requirement from his university. Suffice to say, an economics thesis was going to be nothing new.

Born in the Sichuan Province, Simon began studying liberal arts in high school, immersing himself in subjects such as literature, history, art and economics. Outperforming most of his classmates, Simon graduated seventh out of 500,000 students and was awarded a monetary scholarship from his province that helped support his college tuition at Peking University, one of the top schools in all of China. Traveling more than 2,000 miles from his hometown, he

continued his liberal arts study at Peking, but was faced with a decision between applied economics and law school beginning with his third year. Simon chose economics and has never looked back.

At UT, Simon's research efforts have focused on energy saving potential and consumer preferences. His work with his major professor, Dr. Chris Clark, centers on determining consumer's preferences and willingness-to-pay for products with energy saving environmental labels, such as the USEPA's Energy Star and Climate Leaders Program. This past summer, he traveled to the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association Annual Meeting in Denver, where he presented his work on consumer's willingness-to-pay for flexible fuel vehicles and hybrid electric cars.

Although Simon has accomplished a great deal already in his short career, his abilities go beyond the classroom and economics. He has a deep love for his hometown and for European and Asian soccer. Many Saturdays you can find him watching an abroad soccer game via the Internet, trying to increase the popularity of the sport in his new American hometown (although that is difficult at times). After his M.S. program, Simon hopes to continue his studies at a Ph.D. program in the U.S. in applied economics.

We wish Simon well in his continued academic pursuits and we are glad he is part of the department here at the University of Tennessee!

What's Been Happening to Alumni

Below is some material from alumni who have returned the enclosed card. If you would like to send some information, "We'd like to hear from you!"

Thomas Bible (B.S. 1976) rose from trainee through manager at Washington Farmers Co-op in Jonesboro, Tennessee, and is currently an agronomy sales specialist with Tennessee Farmers Co-op.

Charles Brooks (B.S. 1975) has been with USDA Rural Development for 36 years. He started as a summer trainee, a job he got through his advisor and the Ag Business Club, never dreaming it would last a career. He is currently area director in the Greeneville, Tennessee, office. He plans to retire in January. Charles says, "I had some very good professors and advisors during my college days."

James Felts (B.S. 1960) says, "Thanks so much for the tribute to the department's 'Greatest Generation' in the 2010 Winter edition ... Joe Martin was my advisor. Tom Whatley and Joe were instrumental in my education and ultimate career choice."

Dan Harston (M.S. 1993) is a local pastor serving a three point charge in McNairy and Hardin counties in Tennessee. One of his churches is the Shiloh UMC, the church for which the battle in April 1862 was named. Dan says, "Sunday service is at 9 a.m."

Ralph Hyde (B.S. 1953) received an M.A. at Memphis State University in 1963 and an Ed.D. from UT Knoxville in 1969 while working in the evening program at UT Memphis. He was assistant director and director of

off-campus programs at UT Memphis from 1954 to 1970 and director of Continuing Education at Memphis State, 1970-74. He was associate dean at UTCHS from 1974 until his retirement in 1989 when he returned to Ripley to farm. He attended UT on the GI Bill after WWII and worked for Prof. Alexander in the greenhouse behind Morgan Hall to help pay living costs. "Best wishes to all in the years ahead!"

Don Kyle (B.S. 1964) is a Vietnam vet (Captain, U.S. Army). He holds an MPA from American University and is retired after 33 years with USDA. He is now self-employed as a mediator and conflict management trainer. He was an adjunct associate professor at the University of Baltimore for 16 years. He is grateful to Dr. Cecil Fuller who was his advisor and mentor and was always "approachable, encouraging, and sincerely interested in my well-being and success."

Morgan Scudi (B.S. 1975, M.S. 1979) has been practicing law in San Diego for 20 years with a focus on agricultural, international and business law. "Enjoyed reading about Dr. Chris Clark. Happy to see him teaching Ag law. There are very few lawyers with any understanding of primary production and/or commercial ag issues."

Faculty Honors and Awards

Congratulations are in order for several of our faculty.

At the recent Institute of Agriculture Awards Ceremony, **Dr. Seong-Hoon Cho's** promotion to associate professor with tenure was announced.

Dr. Burt English received the institute's AgResearch Impact Award. This award is presented to an Experiment Station faculty member whose research efforts have had a profound effect on improving the efficiency, sustainability, and/or economic viability of the food and fiber industry.

Dr. Bill Park received the Lidvall Outstanding Teaching Award. This award honors former faculty member E.R. "Prof" Lidvall and recognizes faculty who exemplify Lidvall's commitment to excellence in the classroom and his commitment to the needs and interests of students.

Dr. Clark Garland was recently selected as the 2010 Southern Regional Excellence in Extension Award winner. This annual award recognizes an individual who has strived throughout his career to achieve excellence in extension educational programming. Garland received the award at the annual meeting of the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities.



CHO



ENGLISH



PARK



GARLAND

[Continued from cover]

The purpose of CREST is to assist targeted rural communities in Tennessee in transforming their local economies through the development of key components required for entrepreneurship and small business development. Led by Dr. Michael Wilcox, an assistant professor and Extension specialist in the department, CREST takes a community-oriented approach to help the pilot communities become more “entrepreneur friendly.”

“It comes as a surprise to some that entrepreneurship plays such an important role in Tennessee’s rural economy,” says Wilcox. “But, the time is now for our rural communities to bolster their local entrepreneurial assets and to pay attention to retaining and expanding the businesses that are already there.”

CREST is designed to play an integral role in the process as community members, local officials, economic development professionals and entrepreneurs learn about the economic importance of entrepreneurship, finding and interpreting data, asset mapping, strategic planning, creating community buy-in, best practices in entrepreneurial development and evaluation methods through a combination of webinars and workshops.

“I think the eight CREST communities have appreciated the opportunity to convene, learn and plan with assistance from the three main partner organizations and are looking forward to implementing their projects,” said Beth Phillips, economic development specialist with

UT-IPS, referring to the \$2,000 grants that each community is receiving to implement a project that supports entrepreneurship and small business development. “In addition, CREST has provided a forum to collaborate and partner with other important state, regional and local institutions that ultimately will comprise the ‘entrepreneurial system’ we are trying to create in rural Tennessee.”

Rural economic development has been a focal point for the department since its inception. By serving a broad base of clientele through research, teaching and Extension, the department has played an important

role in rural Tennessee.

Over the past few years, several faculty, including Dr. Dayton Lambert, Dr. Chris Clark, Dr. Bill Park, Dr. George Smith and Dr. Seong-Hoon Cho, have collaborated on a wide range of projects that have focused on topics such as land

use, retiree migration, economic development, business growth and entrepreneurship. These efforts are regularly highlighted in the department’s Tennessee Rural EcoNomic Development (TREND) website at <http://trend.ag.utk.edu>.

One such project, funded by ECD-BERO and UT-IPS, examined the state of entrepreneurship in Tennessee. “In our Entrepreneurship in Tennessee: Striving for Success study, we found that entrepreneurs contributed greatly to Tennessee’s economy in a variety of ways and we offered some insights for policymakers to highlight opportunities for the future,” explains Dr. Lambert.

“Ultimately, it was the findings from the study and a strong commitment between partners that enabled us to move CREST forward,” said Wisty Pender, ECD-BERO director. “Together, the reach and expertise of UT Extension, UT-IPS and ECD is a major asset to the CREST pilot and the fact that it reinforces and complements the Three Star Program makes it a ‘win-win’ for everyone involved.”



MICHAEL WILCOX

CREST is currently being piloted in eight counties across Tennessee: Cumberland and McMinn in the Eastern Region; Giles, Lewis and Perry in Middle Tennessee; and Dyer, Henry and Weakley in the Western Region. A manual also is being developed for use by Extension agents, economic development professionals and others who are interested in fostering entrepreneurship.

For more information about CREST and the department’s rural economic development activities, contact Dr. Michael Wilcox (mwilcox2@utk.edu) or visit <http://trend.ag.utk.edu>.

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IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA institution in the provision
of its education and employment programs and services.

Graduate Students Exemplify Diversity

In August 2010, the University of Tennessee's Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics welcomed 13 new master's students. The new members, in addition to the 12 returning second year master's students and three Ph.D. students, give the department one of the largest graduate student classes in recent history. New and returning students hail from countries all over the world, including China, Thailand, Africa, Colombia and South Korea, as well as from several states in the U.S., namely Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Florida, Washington and Texas. Although many students possess undergraduate degrees in agricultural economics, other preceding studies include business, economics, finance, engineering and even music! Due to the large class size and the vast array of nations and backgrounds from which students hail, current graduate students and the department have been provided a unique view and perspective of how agriculture functions in different areas across the globe, not only in their own backyard. The breadth of cultural diversity adds depth to in-class agricultural policy discussions, helps garner new and important thesis topics, and even rewards fellow students

with a better understanding of how agricultural markets function globally. While the increase in the graduate class size demanded rearrangement in Morgan Hall for new rooms and desks, the new students are a great addition to an already diverse department and will bring unique viewpoints to a class that is already filled with great cultures and perspectives.

