



# Ag Econogram



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## *New Department Head*



After serving as interim department head for nine months, Dr. Delton Gerloff recently accepted the position as full-time head of the Department of Agricultural Economics.

Gerloff joined the faculty as an associate professor in 1992 with 15 years' experience as an area farm management specialist, extension economist and research associate

at Kansas State, Oklahoma State and Texas A&M universities. His initial department responsibilities were in farm management with a focus on supporting the UT Extension MANAGE program. Gerloff also provided educational programs on agricultural policy issues and developed annual cost and returns budgets for row crops.

In 1998, Gerloff added grain marketing to his responsibilities, which led him into risk management and market outlook work related to row crops. In 2004, he received the American Agricultural Economics Association's Premier Forecaster Award for having the most accurate national crop and price forecast for the previous year. He is the co-author of a number of journal articles and UT Extension and popular publications.

Gerloff, who rose to the rank of professor in 1998, was raised on a dairy and beef cattle farm in southern Oklahoma. He received B.S. and M.S. degrees in 1975 and 1977, respectively, from Oklahoma State and a Ph.D. from Texas A&M in 1992. He and his wife, Gail, have six children – five sons and one daughter – ranging in age from 4 to 22.

# From the Head of the Department

## FISCAL YEAR '09 PRESENTS CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Financial uncertainty has suddenly reappeared in our nation's economy, sending shockwaves throughout global markets. Commodity prices, from oil to soybeans, have tumbled recently from all time highs. State revenue has fallen, and the second round of budget cuts this year at UT will be in effect this fall. With this "rosy" background, I sit in front of my computer to write my first department head column for the Econogram.

But wait – we economists should be armed with the necessary ability to factor out most of the noise and develop a workable plan for the future, whether we are talking about the general economy, or the departmental budget. So far, I have not found Dr. McLemore's crystal ball tucked away in the files here, but with a few facts, perhaps we can look at the current situation and develop a reasoned response. Here are a few questions I've heard recently, with my responses:

1) What will be the impact on the department? The impoundments this fall/winter will hurt because they are taking place when budgets have already been set for the current fiscal year. But, due to careful inventory planning and purchasing in the latter part of FY 08, most of the cuts can be taken from our current operating budget.

2) What about next year? We will likely have additional, permanent cuts in FY 2010 which will cause us to address priorities within the department. Our response obviously depends on the size of the budget cut. I think the most likely scenario at this time is a budget reduction of 5 percent. A cut of that size may call for a

departmental "budget summit" where we discuss and place priorities on our current programs.

3) How can you keep smiling? First, in my 31 years as an economist, I have seen other "budget problems" in different states. They were all resolved, life continued, and in many cases programs were actually strengthened by taking a critical look at priorities. Second, we have very talented people working in this department. I am confident we can work through this situation and benefit when budgets turn around in another year or so. Third, sometimes we forget that the budget equation also includes revenue. Grant funding is up in the department and will be critical in the next few years to keep our grad student numbers and educational programs steady. Again, we have the faculty and staff in place to make a big difference in extramural funding. Tuition increases, while not popular, will likely help support the college budget. Endowment funding, while not always a help in the short run, will provide extra funding in the future, and will continue to grow.

4) Is there any good news? There is plenty of good news. Just this week, we received news of a major grant being funded in our department. Our junior faculty members are making a big impact in our research, extension and teaching components. Senior, more experienced faculty members are providing much needed mentoring support for junior faculty.

**[Our faculty] are developing new and innovative research and extension programs**

Together they are developing new and innovative research and Extension programs and capturing critical funding through external grants and contracts. Undergraduate enrollment stands at 71 for the fall semester of 2008, the highest total since 2004. There are 16 undergraduates enrolled in the new departmental major, Food and Agricultural Business. Twenty-three M.S. students are enrolled this semester, also the largest grad class since 2004. We have four students enrolled in the Natural Resources Ph.D. Program, a new curriculum developed in coordination with the Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries. A new joint Ag Econ M.S./MBA program will begin next year. We will have a new faculty member on board in January with expertise in marketing and logistics. At the recent Institute Awards Banquet, departmental personnel were recognized with two Extension awards, one research award, and three promotions. I could go on.

In summary, there are some budgetary uncertainties facing the department in 2008 and 2009. But there are also many positive things happening in our department including opportunities in teaching, research, and Extension. We are well equipped to handle some short-term adversity and we will come out stronger on the other side.

Thanks for YOUR continued support!

*Delton C. Gerloff*

# Alumni Spotlight

## ROGER "COSMO" MCKINNEY



A wise old professor once said that you have to be nice to all your students, but it pays to be especially nice to the "C students" because they are the ones who will endow the university. There's a grain of truth to that old adage – at least where Roger McKinney is concerned.

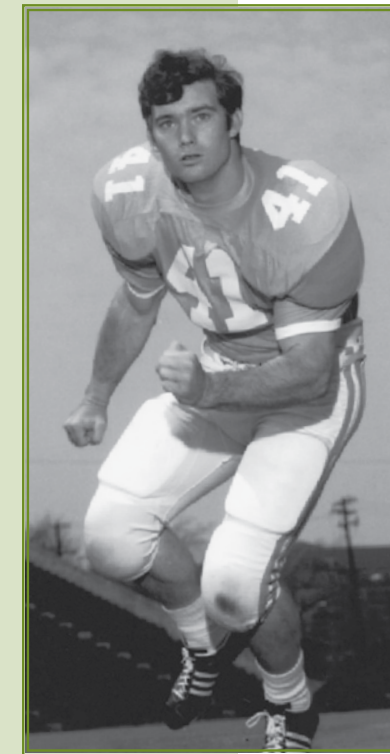
McKinney was recruited to UT in 1968 from Hillsboro High School in Tampa, Florida, to play football and baseball. He focused on those priorities and was successful, lettering in both sports. He played with and was coached by some of the greats in Tennessee sports. A player in both the Gator and Sugar bowls, McKinney called both Doug Dickey and Bill Battle "coach." He was a running back when Phil Fulmer

was a pulling guard and he claims to have pushed Fulmer most of the time. The two remain friends.

On the baseball field, "Cosmo," as he was known to his teammates, lettered three years, had a .408 batting average in 1971, and was co-captain his senior year. He was a teammate and is still a friend of Phil Garner, who went on to a long and stellar career in the big leagues as a player and later, as a manager.

When McKinney graduated from UT in 1973 with a B.S. in agricultural business, his priorities changed. His family had been in the farm/lawn/garden supply business in Tampa, and McKinney opened his own landscaping business. After a few years he took a position with Singleton Packing Corp., a shrimp processing and distribution company in Tampa. From there, he moved on to the BeeGee Shrimp Co. (which was later acquired by Tampa Maid Foods) where

he has enjoyed a highly successful 18 years. Currently, he is vice president for business development at Tampa Maid – one of the giants in the seafood supply business, especially as a food service supplier. McKinney's success in business reflects a shift in his priorities to focus on his job and career and on making valuable contributions to a successful business.



McKinney remains a sportsman and a traveler. He enjoys hunting and fishing and he combines those passions with his love for travel. He has fished and hunted on six of the seven continents and he plans to complete the list with a trip to Antarctica soon. He has also attended baseball games in all of the major league stadiums in the U.S. except for four.

McKinney is an avid and loyal UT alumnus whose support of the

university goes beyond football and baseball to include the Department of Agricultural Economics. We deeply appreciate Roger making the department one of his priorities. The wise old professor was, indeed, correct!

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS: CELEBRATING 90 YEARS

We invite you to join us in celebrating our 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a department September 25-26, 2009. Hope to see you there!





# NAMA Team Scores Again

The University of Tennessee’s 2007-2008 National AgriMarketing Association (NAMA) Marketing Team placed third at the Student Marketing Competition held last April in Kansas City, Missouri. Thirty-one teams from across the U.S. and Canada competed in the extremely rigorous contest.

The annual competition, held in conjunction with the National Agri-Marketing Conference, challenges students to create and define a product, prepare a marketing and advertising plan, and present their work to a panel of judges. The students also create a way to monitor and measure the success of their plan and to project financial expectations.

This year’s team presented a product they conceived called the Heavy Hitter – a cordless, lightweight,

ergonomically-designed automatic staple gun for fastening wire fence to posts. The Heavy Hitter uses the latest technology to provide essential power while maintaining ease of use. At only 6.3 pounds, the cordless, fully portable tool uses a battery pack and a liquid hydrocarbon fuel cell to power a linear drive internal combustion motor. With a 125-staple capacity, a 2,400-shot fuel cell and a 4,000-shot battery life, the Heavy Hitter is designed to drive 8 and 9 gauge galvanized staples into wooden posts.

“I am extremely proud of this group of students. We hit Kansas City and I have never had a team become so focused on why they were there as this group,” said Dr. John Riley, who coached the team. Riley went on to tell how the students awoke on their own initiative at 5 a.m. the day of

their presentation and many spent the early morning hours walking up and down the hotel hall quietly rehearsing their parts. “Never would you imagine a group of college students as energetic and excited as they were before a group of judges at 7:30 in the morning,” said Riley. “During a follow-up critique session, the judges even noted how well prepared the team was. And they were even better that afternoon when they presented in the semifinal round.”

Team members who competed in Kansas City included Aaron Crowgey, Wytheville, Virginia; Amy Greene, Sneedville, Tennessee; Jessica Jarrell, Mohawk, Tennessee; David Lane, Milan, Tennessee; Matt Lawson, Greenback, Tennessee; Ben Morton, Maryville, Tennessee; Katie Newbern, Cottontown, Tennessee; and Ryan Roark, Murfreesboro, Tennessee.



## Agribusiness Club News

The Agribusiness Club is reorganizing and it needs your help! As you may know, the club serves several important functions for students. It provides students a chance to learn more about careers, an opportunity to network with industry personnel and faculty a social outlet. Three meetings have been held so far this year with presentations from Farm Credit and from Dr. Burton English about biofuels and UT’s study of switchgrass. On the social side, the students have had a “make-your-own root-beer float” and, at the last meeting, had the “great Oreo cookie race.”

So how can you, as an alumnus or alumna, support the club? There are ways you can help. Would you be willing to be a speaker at one of the club meetings or, if you are close to Knoxville, host the club for a field trip? Having an incentive to get the students to the meetings also helps, so “door prizes” for meetings are welcome. The opportunity to win gift certificates increased attendance at the last meeting.

If you can help in any of the above ways, contact the club’s advisor, Dr. John Riley at [jriley@utk.edu](mailto:jriley@utk.edu) or 865-974-7465.

## Where are they now?

### BRIEF UPDATES FROM OUR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS.

**A.C. Clark ’57** completed a successful career in Agricultural Extension in 1985 before serving as Tennessee’s Assistant Commissioner for Agriculture from 1987 to 1989. He is enjoying retirement in Cookeville, Tennessee.

**James Harry Felts ’61** retired from Dimon International in 1995. He is living life LARGE with his wife of 49 years, volunteering at Parkwest Medical Center in Knoxville, golfing, and traveling five to six months a year in his motor home!

**Dick Williams ’70** works in the insurance business with Plateau Group Inc. in Crossville, Tennessee. He is still very appreciative of Dr. Ben McManus.

**Howell Foust ’76** owns Foust and Associates, a consulting firm that assists

banks, money managers, and investment advisors in Clarksville, Tennessee. He also co-owns Blackpatch Development LLC with his son; the pair work as general contractors specializing in “green building” for residential and commercial use.

**Keith Harrison ’84** is the marketing manager of the Animal Nutrition Division of Tennessee Farmers Cooperative in LaVergne, Tennessee. He and his wife, Julie, have three children. They live on the family beef cattle farm near Watertown, Tennessee.

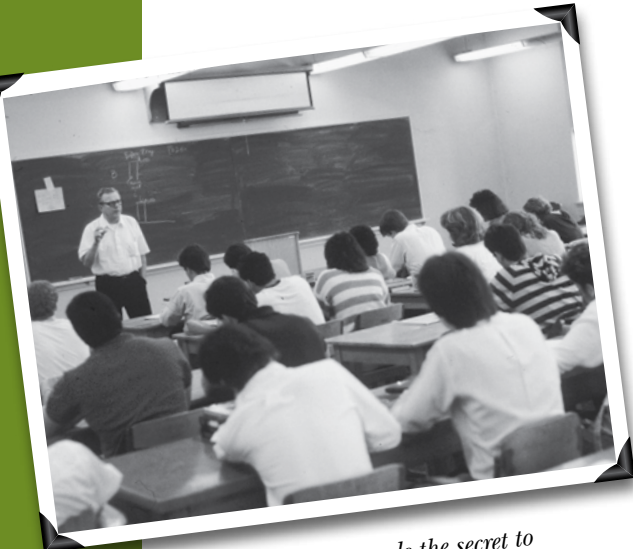
**Ken Purser ’93** works as a financial planner in Dayton, Tennessee. The past member of the UTIA Alumni Council is especially appreciative of John Brooker, Bill Park, Kim Jensen and Burt English for making his time at UT special.

**April Henderson Jennings ’04** is a credit manager for Valley Farms Co-op in Athens, Tennessee. She married Travis Jennings in 2006. The couple welcomed daughter Elizabeth Pearl “Libby” Jennings into the world in February 2008!

Send a reply to let us know how you’re doing these days. You can e-mail us at [agalumni@utk.edu](mailto:agalumni@utk.edu) or return the enclosed envelope with a note. Thanks for taking the time to share!

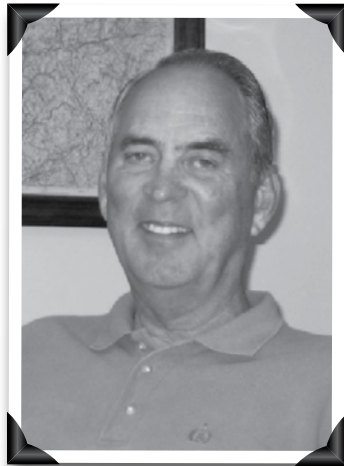


## Remembering



Dr. Sappington reveals the secret to success in the future markets - "Buy low, sell high." (circa 1985)

Dr. John Brooker passed away July 4, 2008, surrounded by family at his home, after a lengthy battle with cancer. He was 68. Brooker retired from the department in fall 2006 after a long and distinguished career. He joined the UT faculty in 1973 just after earning his Ph.D. from the University of Florida. His research program focused on marketing, especially fruits and vegetables and "green" industry products, and he made many lasting contributions to the body of knowledge in those areas. He was also a master teacher in the marketing area at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Brooker won a number of research and teaching awards during his tenure, both from UT and from the agricultural economics profession. He advised a large number of our undergraduate majors and served as major professor for many master's and doctoral students over the years. He served as president of the Food Distribution Research Society and as editor of the Southern Journal of Agricultural Economics. Brooker also enjoyed a long tenure as graduate coordinator in the department. His willingness and ability to do many tasks well and his humor, intellect, positive attitude, can-do approach and smiling face will be missed by all in the department. Brooker is survived by his wife of 47 years, Judy, and by two daughters, Debbie and Kim, and four grandchildren.



## Our New Web Site Is Our Front Door!



Those of us with a little age on us may find it hard to accept, but nowadays our Web site is the location where most people get their first impression of us. It's also the place where people go to find out what we have available to help them. Over the past year, the web committee and webmaster Michele Wilson took a hard look at our Web site. In August, a new, improved version went online at [economics.ag.utk.edu](http://economics.ag.utk.edu).

Not only did we make sure our content was up to date, but we changed the design and added new sections of information. For a prospective student, we added a section designed to answer questions about our programs and enrollment. Highlights in the department's Extension section include new pages for Crop Economics, Livestock Economics, and the

Tennessee Beef Evaluation. The "Market News" section is still available and is updated weekly.

The site also includes a new section called "We Can Help You Find SoLUTions." This newest portion of the site provides the latest information from our teaching, research and UT Extension faculty in the areas of bioenergy, food, horticulture, land use, livestock, logistics, marketing, natural resources, nursery, policy, precision agriculture, production/farm management, rural development, sustainable agriculture and water. We invite you to take a look at the new site and let us know what you think!

## Student Spotlight

### JESSICA JARRELL: HER BASKETBALL TEAM TACKLES!

Anyone who took the time to look at Jessica Jarrell's day planner would probably be amazed at her extracurricular activities – and wonder how she has time to be a student. Yet, the Agricultural Economics and Business senior boasts a grade point average of well over 3.0.

Within the past year alone, Jessica has achieved an amazing amount of success. First, she won the department's Policy Discussion Meet, which is sponsored by Tennessee Farm Bureau. Students are given a topic and have 25 minutes to present opening and closing statements. In between they present points and counterpoints as the topic at hand is discussed among a group of usually four to five students at a time. Jessica went on to win the state meet in July, beating out students from UT Martin, MTSU and Tennessee Tech. She will compete in the February 2009 National Meet in Sacramento, California.

Last April, Jessica was one of eight students on the NAMA (National AgriMarketing Association) Marketing Team that brought home a third place finish in the national NAMA team competition (see article in this issue). Jessica, however, made the team stand out. During one of the group meetings for all the teams, a member of each team was asked to give a 30-second "elevator speech" about their team's product. Jessica not only gave a great speech, she won the award for the best one.

Jessica spent most of her summer completing an internship with the Tennessee Farm Bureau. Her primary responsibility was to help develop curriculum material for the AG Literacy Library sponsored by the TFB Foundation. During her one week off from the internship, she served as a staff coach at UT Coach Bruce Pearl's Basketball Camp. She was assigned a group of youngsters that ranged from kindergarten through high school.



In September, Jessica learned that her essay on the future of cotton was selected as the winning essay for the State of Tennessee in competition sponsored by Delta Farm Press and Syngenta. Her prize was a \$1,000 scholarship.

In addition to her most recent accomplishments, Jessica helped reorganize the department's Agribusiness Club last year and now

serves as its secretary. She is a past vice president of Orange Nation, an athletics student support group, and past officer of Zeta Tau Alpha Fraternity. She also served as a Collegiate FFA Chapter officer, a state FFA officer and was a candidate for a national FFA office. Jessica was a County Extension student intern under the Phillip Morris program in summer 2007. She is a Peyton Manning Scholar, a Chancellor's Scholar and a member of the University Honors Program.

Jessica, who is from Mohawk, Tennessee, is the daughter of Trish and Barry Jarrell. She and her sister, Baylee, grew up on a small beef cattle operation. It was her grandparents' farm and her grandmother, June, still lives with Jessica's family.

What does the future hold for Jessica? "I keep finding things everyday that excite me," she said. Graduate school seems to be a pretty sure direction. She loves marketing and interaction with people. And she loves to plan things.

Oh yes – the tackling basketball team. Jessica is certified as an AAU coach. She had a team of eight to 10 kindergarteners and first-graders. When they played against other teams, one of her team members never seemed to remember it was basketball they were playing – he would always tackle members of the other team. Needless to say, her team's record was not too good!

# *Participate in the Campaign for Tennessee:*

## **SUPPORT THE AG ECON DEPARTMENT**

There's an old saying that asks, "If not me, then who and if not now, then when?" The phrase can be interpreted many different ways and applied to many different situations. Fundamentally, the core of the question asks each of us to consider what we are doing to improve our world.

Perhaps taking those words to heart, the University of Tennessee publicly launched its most ambitious fundraising campaign ever, with a goal of raising \$1 billion. That goal encompasses the desires of each department on each campus, including the Ag Econ department in Knoxville.

We are constantly striving to make our department the best it can be. We are proud of the education and research we provide to our students and the citizens of our state. Yet, for

every one thing we accomplish, there are always several more things to do.

We want to provide our students with opportunities to attend professional conferences. We want to attract outstanding graduate students. We want to provide incentives for our students to study abroad so they will be better prepared for careers influenced by our ever-growing global economy. Each of these departmental ambitions requires significant resources. We pride ourselves on being practical with the resources we have, but your annual contributions make a difference in the quality of the experience we are able to provide to our students. For those who currently support the department, we humbly offer our gratitude.

Every day, we strive to improve our

department and the university's educational experience we offer to our students. After all, if not us, then who and if not now, then when? campaign ever

As the end of the year approaches, we invite you to participate in the Campaign for Tennessee. We hope that you will use the enclosed envelope and consider including the Ag Econ Department among your charitable contributions. With your help, we will continue to expand on the outstanding educational experience already being provided.

If you would like more information of the department's specific needs and/or naming opportunities, please contact Mark Clark at [mclark4@utk.edu](mailto:mclark4@utk.edu) or 865-974-5315.



*Katie Newburn*

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