Armed for Agriculture
FROM AG HILL

Dear Alumni and Friends,

Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, “When you come to the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on.”

Our college tied many knots this year that will help us remain one of the top agricultural institutions in the nation. We enrolled a new crop of students who see the promise of a rewarding future in agriculture. You can read about two CAES programs – the Food Animal Veterinary Incentive Program and the Undergraduate Research Initiative – that are preparing our students for graduate school and careers in agriculture on pages 18 and 20.

Attracting and retaining top scientists, like those featured on pages 14-17, is a sure sign our reputation remains strong among our peers. From breeding an allergen-free peanut to studying sex ratios in chickens and even tackling the “dirtiest” of jobs, our faculty work on the front lines of their fields.

I’m often inspired by people I meet who brave nature, policy and economics to keep their farms in business and produce the food and fiber the world needs to survive. Georgia farmers tied a knot and hung on through a tough summer drought. And this spring, as we approached the 10-year anniversary of 9/11, our college helped train members of the Georgia National Guard who deployed to Afghanistan to help farmers there learn modern, sustainable agricultural practices. You can read their story on page 8.

We’re still making changes to our Extension delivery system that will help us continue to bring valuable education and training to Georgia agriculture, youth and families in new ways. Extension may look a little different, but our agents and specialists are still answering questions from people across the state, including a few of the more peculiar ones featured on page 23.

Even in this year of hanging on, Georgia’s agricultural economy and the industry that underpins it remains among the strongest in the world. Due diligence as lawmakers pen the new farm bill, careful conservation and protection of our resources and dedication to educating future industry leaders will keep us on the path to a prosperous future.

Sincerely,

J. Scott Angle
Dean and Director
College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
A team of Georgia National Guardsmen trained at CAES for a special mission in Afghanistan. Members of the Guard’s Agribusiness Development Team visited the UGA campus in Athens to get hands-on training from specialists to help them on their mission to revitalize the war-torn country’s agriculture industry. During their campus visit, the guardsmen trained in agriculture-related areas such as irrigation, crop production, pest management, soils assessment, livestock management and food storage.
Information

The changing face of Cooperative Extension

By Faith Peppers
County Extension agents have often been called change agents. Since Cooperative Extension's inception almost 100 years ago, agriculture, families, 4-H and Georgia have changed. So, too, has the way Extension serves them.

Before budget cuts in the 1990s began hacking away at the numbers, “We had close to 500 county Extension agents,” said Tony Tyson, director of Extension county operations. “A number of counties had two and three agriculture and natural resources agents back then.”

Counties also had home economics – now called family and consumer sciences – agents then. Faculty specifically assigned to 4-H didn’t come until several years later.

“Now we have around 225 agents with state funding, half of what we were in the late ‘80s,” Tyson said. “But we do now have more agents that are 100 percent county funded or grant funded” – 41 across the state at the time this issue went to press.

Flat federal funding and tightening state budgets brought Cooperative Extension leadership to a point in 2010 where they had to make changes that they hoped would benefit both their clients and their counties. Instead of following the examples of several other states that chose to drop their county-level operations and go to more regional models, the University of Georgia chose a tiered approach.

“One of the results of the regional model typically is a loss of county support. Counties no longer have local ownership,” he said. “We’ve been reluctant to go that route because partnership is so important.”

In the new system, counties designated on the lowest tier receive basic support, which Tyson explains is a continuation of their 4-H program run by a program assistant or 4-H associate from another county. County agents are funded through state and local funds in higher tiers on a needs-based system.

But just because state dollars designate a certain number of agents for a county doesn’t mean the county government can’t step in and choose to fund a position. This happened recently in Douglas County, where the Douglasville-Douglas County Water and Sewer Authority agreed to pick up the part of agent Kevin Livingston’s salary that the state could no longer afford to pay.

Despite tight times, there’s good news. Extension recently started hiring agents in high-needs counties like Thomas and Fayette – 16 openings at the time of Tyson’s interview. And many retired agents help keep county operations going on a part-time basis as temporary re-hires. “It’s the first time in three years we’ve been able to fill positions,” he said.

**GETTING CREATIVE**

Agents are one very important part of the Extension equation. Another is getting information to people who need it.

For clients who need a helping hand, they can still find it in their local Extension office. “We want to make sure that when Georgians need hands-on help from Extension, they get it,” said Beverly Sparks, CAES associate dean for Extension. “We don’t want people to feel like they are completely on their own but that they leave our offices with the information they need.”

Some people simply want to access our educational information; others need face-to-face contact and advice.”

Continued on next page
“Information Agents,” continued from previous page

In each county Extension office, agents assist those who need help finding information by pulling from their own knowledge base, other Extension agents, specialists and researchers, Extension publications, websites and eXtension (a national online resource for Extension information).

Technological advances are also making it easier to deliver needed Extension education. “When I was a county agent in the early ‘90s,” said Todd Hurt, “I’d hold a workshop in my county. I might have two people show up or I might have 32. The next day I would always have people call and want to know when we were going to offer that workshop again.”

Hurt, who is now the training coordinator for the University of Georgia Center for Urban Agriculture on the UGA Griffin Campus, worked with fellow urban Extension agents to search for more effective ways to deliver Extension education and develop online trainings that participants can attend from their home or office. An archive is available 24/7 at http://gcip.info for anyone who cannot attend a workshop.

FROM DELIVERY TO ACCESS

In the mid- to late ‘90s, Extension and other education groups began to move from education delivery to education access. The Web became the great library of information. New technology developments opened the doors to virtual
classrooms. Hurt says he still sometimes delivers workshops to a limited audience but reaches many more people through technology. “Now we have webinars,” he said. “We have as many people watch the training or workshop archive as attend the session live because they can do it when it's convenient for them. They still want the information, they just want it in their own time.”

Tyson agrees. “Through the use of technology and other means, we’ve been able to take up some of the slack. When I first started 30 years ago, no one had a cell phone. Now agents are available all the time,” whether they’re in the office or out in the field.

WHAT’S OLD IS NEW AGAIN

Years ago, you could walk into any county Extension office and see printed publications lining massive racks along the walls. Today, hundreds of expert-written, peer-reviewed UGA Extension publications are available for free online.

This year CAES launched a new UGA Cooperative Extension website that’s a one-stop shop for information ranging from commercial crops and livestock production to home gardening to family development. The new site automatically correlates publications with news stories, events and other related information so users get a multimedia learning experience.

Combining old technology with new is happening across the airwaves as well. For many years, Extension agents have relied on one of the oldest communication technologies – radio – to get important ag-related information to the public. The “UGA Tifton Farm Chat” radio spot airs daily in partnership with Tifton’s WTIF station. The newly established show provides growers in the area with up-to-date information from specialists and researchers on the UGA Tifton Campus as well as interviews with area 4-H and agriculture and natural resources agents. CAES news editor Brad Haire, who coordinates the show, is currently retooling the content for an even broader delivery.

“The 15-minute radio spot is also being podcast from the new Extension website and will soon be streamed from WTIF’s website, reaching anyone with Internet access,” Haire said.

“We’ve also started a video series called ‘In the Field’ that extends the idea around the Tifton radio spot into a video,” he said.

Haire talks with experts on camera about timely topics and agricultural trends. The four-minute chats look much like a TV news story with video added to illustrate the topic.

And then there are the social media outlets like Facebook and Twitter, which give Extension faculty another opportunity to grow trust with a whole new audience who may not have otherwise ever tapped into Extension resources.

“We can serve many client needs conveniently with Internet technology, but it is the trust and relationships that county agents create locally that make strong Extension programs work for the community.”

~ Todd Hurt
Training Coordinator
UGA Center for Urban Agriculture

For more information, visit http://extension.uga.edu.

~Additional reporting by Stephanie Schupska
George Boyhan of the UGA CAES horticulture department shows soldiers techniques for growing crops in Afghanistan’s dry, sandy climate at the UGA horticulture farm in Oconee County, Ga.
“Assalamu alaikum” or “peace be upon you” in Pashto has become a common greeting for a team of Georgia National Guardsmen. The group deployed to Afghanistan in May 2011 on a special mission to help revitalize the war-torn country’s agriculture industry.

University of Georgia agricultural experts helped arm them with the knowledge to do it.

Before shipping out, 21 members of the 201st Agribusiness Development Team visited the UGA campus in Athens to get hands-on training from specialists with the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. The guardsmen learned about irrigation, crop production, pest management, soils assessment, livestock management and food storage.

It is 2230 [10:30 p.m.] in Wardak, Afghanistan, and I am writing this huddled beneath the soft glow of a lantern on the dirt floor of my rat-infested tent...

Okay, that is actually an extreme exaggeration even though my AC is broken.

I have now been in Afghanistan for three weeks and am having an amazing time. The FOB [Forward Operating Base] we are stationed at is nestled between mountains, gets a gentle wind and has become a comfortable home away from home. The weather is actually relatively mild (compared to the humid summers of Georgia). The agriculture team is working long hours to sustain projects developed by the NV ADT [Nevada Agribusiness Development Team] and begin new initiatives in the areas of horticulture, animal husbandry, food storage and processing, and marketing. Our team is currently overseeing the installation of about 80 cool storage facilities (root cellars) that should be in full operation and ready for the harvest season this fall. These facilities are important as they help villages work together to store food that would otherwise go to waste or be sold at harvest (at low prices to countries that do have cool/cold storage) and mitigate the traditional winter hunger season. Also, we (the WITT team) are working with the Director of Women’s Affairs in both Logar and Wardak to develop initiatives that will empower women with the technical expertise and equipment needed to create sustainable agribusinesses from home. For example, this fall we plan to coordinate jarring and solar drying [food preservation] training for over 200 women throughout the provinces we serve. I am also looking into youth programs that will help bring hands-on agricultural education to local girls’ and boys’ high schools.
The handpicked guard unit, based at Fort Gordon in Augusta, Ga., includes engineers, teachers, pesticide applicators, veterinarians, marketing experts and farmers. It also includes four UGA grads: Gary Church (BSFR – Forest Resources, ’94), Carmen Benson (BSA – Ag Education, ’09), George McCommon (BSA, ’95, DVM, ’90) and Catherine Tait (EDD – Adult Education, ’04).

“This is not a typical training session for us, but when the Georgia National Guard asked for help, we wanted to do all we could,” said Steve Brown, assistant dean for UGA Cooperative Extension. “While our scientists may not be experts in Afghan agriculture, the basics are the same worldwide.”

CAES experts taught the guardsmen how to hold and care for chickens, walk through a beehive, prune fruit trees and milk cows – essential skills in a country where the agriculture industry is decades behind those of developed nations.

“Milk is a big carrier of diseases like salmonella, tuberculosis, listeria and E. coli,” said Steve Nickerson, a UGA dairy scientist. “We taught the guardsmen how to collect the milk in sanitary ways to limit the transmission of disease. They use open systems in Afghanistan to collect milk; if you handle it wrong, you could be killing people.”

THE MISSION

More than 80 percent of Afghan residents are farmers, but many lack the knowledge to produce viable crops and productive yields.

“Afghans are using farming methods that are hundreds of years old in a soil that is depleted of all nutrients,” said Lt. Col. Ken Baldowski, media relations officer for the Georgia National Guard. He hopes the training the troops received at UGA will help Afghan farmers learn to
Afghan schools are separated by gender. This is very important as the majority of the population relies on small family farms (2-5 jeribs*) for subsistence.

Currently, I am in Wardak, Afghanistan, assisting with a weeklong veterinarian training event that focuses on the clinical evaluation of small ruminants. It is very interesting as each day people bring their animals from miles away to be seen by the local vet and DAIL staff. It was cute today when I saw a young boy, about 7 years old, struggling to lead this old stubborn cow. I immediately thought of my students back home [at South Effingham Middle School in Guyton, Ga.] ardently struggling to work their show pigs, heifers, steer and goats. I stopped the boy and showed him how to hold the halter closer to the head and keep the head up so that she wouldn’t be enticed to stop to eat along the way. His smile was so adorable. I am often reminded of my students and miss teaching. The great thing, however, is that every day is an opportunity for me to teach, and to learn, with the Afghan people.

I think oftentimes people equate poverty with ignorance when, in fact, poverty and suppression lead to ingenuity and courage. I witnessed this courage two days ago at a women’s peace shura** in the Wardak district of Mayden Shahr. The shura was held by the provincial governor with the intent to encourage women to participate in the formation of a Provincial Development Plan. I was blessed to be invited and surrounded by 100 women from all nine districts of Wardak. After many speeches, a young girl covered from head to toe in a beautiful white wrap timidly

Continued on page 13
produce crops to feed their families and possibly even export someday.

Potatoes, apples, apricots, wheat and eggplant are staple food crops for Afghan farmers, but obstacles like watershed management, lack of refrigeration, limited access to markets and quality seed sources, transportation hurdles and a history of reliance on growing poppies for opium make rebuilding the country’s agriculture industry difficult.

“Afghanistan may be a high-tech battlefield,” said Col. Bill Williams, who commands Augusta’s 201st Regional Support Group, “but its agricultural practices are like those of America’s during the 1900s, or in some cases the 1800s. And the income of its people, especially the farmers, is in terrible shape.”

Thirty years of war and prolonged drought have set Afghan farmers way back, said Williams, who led the first of three ADT teams to Afghanistan this spring. Georgia is the 13th state to send a specialized ADT team to Afghanistan. The 201st replaced a group from Nevada when they arrived in May.

“Our job,” he said, is “to help the Afghans change their practices through education, mentorship and ‘easy-to-train, easy-to-sustain’ crop, livestock, water and land-management projects that fit their culture and environment.”

Q&A with Sgt. Carmen Benson
(BSA – Ag Education, ’09)

Compiled by April Reese Sorrow

You joined the National Guard at age 17. Why?

I always knew I’d join the military. My mom, dad and stepmom all served, and I grew up hearing stories about their service. My parents definitely instilled in me a sense of patriotism and duty. Ever since I was 9, maybe even before that, I remember saying I wanted to be in the Army. I chose the National Guard because after I took my first agriculture class at Evans High School with Mr. Chuck Anderson I decided I wanted to study agriculture and be a teacher. I knew I couldn’t do that as active Army so I chose the Guard as the best of both worlds.

Why CAES?

I knew I wanted to study ag education, and I chose Georgia because I researched the program and I knew they had a commitment to research and Extension. I was comforted by the fact that the classes were small and [students] got a lot of one-on-one attention.

Who were your most influential teachers at CAES?

Definitely Dr. Dennis Duncan. He taught me a lot about professionalism and how to present yourself. And Dr. Maria Navarro. My first class with her was an international agriculture development class. She taught me to be open-minded and think outside the box and also listen to other people’s ideas but form your own ideas based on fact. Dr. Nick Hill. I took his “Terror and the Food Supply” class. He taught me about creative thinking. He showed me a type of education that was way out of the box. For our final project we had to design a terror plot – not a typical approach. He wasn’t an education professor but he taught me educational lessons.
approached the podium. At first in a shaky voice and then gaining confidence, she pleaded with the governor to provide better facilities for the local girls’ school. She explained that the girls of the district were taught in the dirt under tents while the boys enjoyed a recently built schoolhouse. She explained that they did not have books or enough teachers. My heart went out to the girls in attendance. I thought about how many students in America dread going to school, disrespect the teachers who care so dearly for them and degrade the facilities and books provided to them. I also felt guilty about my own gluttony and spoiled childhood. Again, every day I am overwhelmed by the courage of the people of Afghanistan. Government officials travel miles to meet with us to develop initiatives for their people knowing that their lives are in danger (literally). I wonder if the politicians in America would have the courage to be this brave to help their [constituents].

I am also very proud of the other members of my team. Our security forces have remained very professional and diligent in providing the team the security needed to travel around the provinces. Our leadership is very supportive and open to innovative ideas. Every soldier has been given, and embraced, two or three duties. Soldiers that thought they would simply be security forces are now on the ag team helping plan and prepare for projects. I am now technically endowed with the following duties: Equal Opportunity Leader, Unit Victim Advocate, Horticulture Subject Matter Expert (expert is a very relative term in this case), Women’s Initiative Training Team Ag Advisor and Cooperative and Association Coordinator. While this makes for very long days, I am happy to stay busy and hope my efforts make an adequate contribution to the overall team effort.

As a side note, I love Afghan food. Their long grained rice with raisins and beef is delicious. I have even come to enjoy the hot chai (tea) and sugar candies that are accompanied by friendly conversation (a prerequisite before any meeting here).

~ Sgt. Carmen Benson

*Five jeribs equals about 2.5 acres of land.
**A shura is a consultation or decision-making group.
Entomologist’s job considered ‘dirty’ by popular television show

Brian Forschler can smell a cockroach long before he sees it. It’s a unique skill he’s developed over the years as a University of Georgia entomologist. “It’s a very distinct odor. You’ve smelled it. You just didn’t know what it was,” he said. “I have walked into a restaurant, smelled roaches and walked right back out.”

Top: CAES entomologist Brian Forschler peers through an aquarium filled with American and German cockroaches, which he uses to teach students about insect biology.

Left: Crawling under houses and digging through attics, Forschler finds evidence of insect infestations, like these boxes that became termite food.
As part of his job as a professor with the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Forschler keeps American, German and Madagascar roaches as “research pets,” travels across the state, nation and world collecting and recording termite activity and crawls under and into some of the most disgusting places you could think of – all in the name of science.

Some people might consider his job dirty. Mike Rowe, host of the Discovery Channel television show “Dirty Jobs,” is one of them. In 2009, Rowe and his crew traveled to Georgia’s Sapelo Island to spend a day with Forschler and his staff. The trip was a year and a half in the making.

One of Forschler’s technicians, Sarah Shanewise, considered her job dirty enough to write Rowe a letter. By the time the UGA laboratory made the production cut, Shanewise was working at an Athens, Ga., hospital. “I called her up and told her it was her idea, so get packed for Sapelo,” Forschler said.

Rowe and his production staff rode the ferry to Sapelo Island and spent nine hours following the UGA research crew around in the humid heat of a typical Georgia summer.

“We crawled under houses, poked around in dark places and found termite frass (feces) in the attic of an old theatre,” Forschler said. “Out of the entire day, the attic shots were what they used for the show. They filmed nine hours for like 20-some-odd minutes on air. It was interesting to see how much time goes in for what they end up using.”

The show’s goal is entertaining its audience. Forschler’s goal is educating people about his work.

“I hope we provided a bit of biological reality. I wanted to show people the termites and insects around their homes, what their roles are and why they’re there. And I wanted to show the science facts behind the sensationalism.”

~ Dr. Brian Forschler, UGA entomologist

Before meeting Rowe, Forschler thought “Dirty Jobs” was all about “illustrating gross occupations.” After spending several hours in tight quarters with Rowe, he now has another view of the popular series. “The program’s really about wit and humor,” he said. “Mike’s a really nice guy.”

Forschler’s episode of “Dirty Jobs” aired in March 2011, but his 20 minutes of fame hasn’t gone to his head.

“I was actually out of the country on a research trip, and my doctor called to say he saw it,” Forschler said. “My dentist saw it, and a lot of people I’ve worked with over the years and lost touch with contacted me to say they saw it. I even had a distant relative I’d never met get in touch with me after the show.”

Is Forschler’s UGA research job as dirty as some the show has covered? He doesn’t think so.

“You ask 10 people what they consider ‘dirty’ and you’ll get 10 different answers,” he said. “My job is dirty and sweaty. We wear full-face respirators for a reason.”

Monica Townsend, a research coordinator on the UGA Griffin Campus who began her career as Forschler’s lead technician, agrees there are dirty parts to the job.

“I’d say the dirtiest job was probably crawling under houses where you come face-to-face with spiders and crickets and uggghhh,” Townsend said, shuddering at the memories of her six years working in the UGA Household Structural Pest Control Program.

But, she wasn’t under those houses alone. Forschler was leading the way.

“He could easily crawl under the houses,” she said. “He never asked us to do something he wasn’t doing, too.”

It’s not all about bugs, though. “I can show you some pictures of some nasty stuff we’ve found under houses,” Forschler said. “The worst was probably a mummified cat.”

Jacob Holloway, who was among the technicians filmed on “Dirty Jobs,” says nothing he’s seen working with Forschler or in his lab – including the roach colonies used to teach biology to undergraduate students, insect management to graduate students and for show-and-tell for younger students – grosses him out, except maybe “the leftover food graduate students forget to clean out of the refrigerator.” Dr. Forschler “is actually a really clean guy.”

Helping Agriculture Acclimate
EGA joins national team to address climate and animal agriculture

By April Reese Sorrow

University of Georgia researchers recently joined a national team of scientists working on a five-year, $4.1 million U.S. Department of Agriculture grant to study climate change’s effects on animal agriculture.

“In 2009, poultry, beef cattle, dairy and swine accounted for nearly $5 billion of the agricultural value in Georgia. It is important to keep our animal producers informed of practices that are environmentally sound, climatically compatible and economically viable,” said Mark Risse, an engineer with UGA Cooperative Extension, who is leading the research at UGA.

The goal of the USDA grant is to help livestock and poultry producers adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change, especially as they face new weather patterns or regulations put in place to limit greenhouse gases.

Risse is working with the Southeast Climate Consortium to identify climate projections that may affect animal agriculture. The consortium is predicting more weather extremes, including more droughts and more flooding in the Southeast. Rainfall is expected to remain the same annually but be delivered in more concentrated rainstorms. Temperature increases aren’t expected to be as great as those in other regions of the U.S.

Risse, along with UGA Extension, will work with producers in Georgia and across the Southeast to develop strategies to help lower animal management’s impacts on the climate. With manure management, harnessing the gases as fuel is often a more economical practice than releasing it into the atmosphere, he said.

“You can use those gases on the farm as fuel instead of just letting them escape to the atmosphere,” he said. "I"

Collaborators include the University of Nebraska, Washington State University, Texas A&M University, Cornell University and the University of Minnesota.

Gender Equity!
The chicken industry cares

By April Reese Sorrow

Chickens, like most animals, typically produce equal numbers of males and females. But this natural sex ratio doesn’t always work in the poultry industry’s economic favor. That’s why a University of Georgia researcher is working on ways to skew the sex ratio to help the poultry industry streamline production and increase profits.

Mark Risse, left, an agricultural engineering professor, and Adam Speir, an agriculture and natural resources agent in Madison County, check out the compost piles at the University of Georgia.

UGA researcher Kristen Navara is applying what she’s learned about sex ratios in hamsters and humans to birds in hopes of helping the poultry industry increase its profits.

Chickens are big business in Georgia, worth $4.4 billion in 2009 – 45 percent of the state’s total agricultural value. The industry is split into two areas: meat production and egg production.

Chickens raised for meat are called broilers. On average, male broilers weigh half a pound more than females at market age, and they eat 5 percent less feed. For egg-laying chickens, females are prized over males.
Kristen Navara, a poultry scientist with the UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, is trying to determine how to control avian sex ratios.

Focused on species survival, Navara is looking at sex ratios in zebra finches as well as poultry. “We are really interested in how a species survives,” she said. “If we could figure out how to adjust the sex ratio of avian offspring, it could really help in conservation efforts.”

Navara has recently studied skewed sex ratios in hamsters and humans in relation to day length. She is now looking for the mechanism that can control the ratios in poultry and finches.

“In nature, it is a necessary strategy to adjust offspring sex in relation to the environment,” she said. “Humans, rodents and birds all skew sex ratios.”

Finding the key to those ratios could mean a more productive – and profitable – industry for Georgia’s poultry growers.

### An allergen-free peanut? UGA Tifton Campus researcher works to create safe peanut

By Brad Haire

Peggy Ozias-Akins and her team of scientists on the University of Georgia Tifton Campus are working to create a peanut that won’t cause severe allergic reactions, which typically come from an extreme sensitivity to specific proteins in the peanut seed. The Tifton, Ga., native and molecular geneticist with the UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences works with what are called seed-storage proteins, which aid the peanut seed’s development and are necessary for its proper growth.

When non-critical seed-storage proteins are reduced, other proteins can carry out their functions and promote the peanut plant’s development. This is what Ozias-Akins, who is also a professor with the CAES horticulture department, is trying to do. Several proteins cause allergic reactions, so the process takes a lot of time.

“We don’t know which proteins are really critical for growth, but we’ve actually knocked down expression of two of the ones that are the most serious allergens. In cultivated peanuts, at least the experiments we’ve done so far, we have not seen any detrimental effects,” she said.

She is working with peanuts because it is a major row crop in Georgia – worth more than $500 million annually. The state produces more than half of the country’s peanuts each year. Working with peanut DNA is also essential to decrease its potential allergen risk and to ensure its status as a major source of healthy nutrition in the U.S., she said.

### Dialing In

iPhone app helps diagnose turfgrass problems

By April Reese Sorrow

What’s the coolest thing about the iPhone? Its applications. The smart phone that can convert international currency, find a nearby five-star restaurant and help park a car can now also help turfgrass managers diagnose and remedy turf problems.

Although Patrick McCullough, a UGA turfgrass expert, originally created the “Turfgrass Management” application for weed identification and herbicide recommendations, he expanded the program to incorporate other aspects of turfgrass management like varieties, diseases and pests. Input from UGA Cooperative Extension turf specialist Clint Waltz, entomologist Will Hudson and plant pathologist Alfredo Martinez completed the package. Now turf managers, landscape professionals, homeowners and UGA county Extension agents have information and recommendations from a library of turfgrass textbooks easily accessible while they’re out in the field.

The application has been downloaded more than 6,000 times worldwide since its November 2009 release. An annual subscription to the full app, “Turfgrass Management,” costs $19.99. “Turfgrass Management – Lite” is available on iTunes for free. For more information, visit [http://tinyurl.com/ugaturfapp](http://tinyurl.com/ugaturfapp).
When Buck Trible told his advisor he wanted to study single-queen versus multi-queen ant colonies, he had no idea that one of the world’s leading experts on the subject worked just down the street. Within months, Trible, a rising junior double majoring in entomology and ecology, was working side-by-side with Kenneth Ross, an entomology professor in the UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, on a project that would earn him first place in the Honors section of the first annual CAES Undergraduate Research Initiative Symposium.

The URI is a new program that connects students directly with faculty mentors to give them first-hand research experience. In the program’s first year, 36 students from eight CAES departments completed research projects and presented their findings at the inaugural symposium, held April 13, 2011. The top four presenters received awards of $750, $500, $300 and $200, respectively, funded by the Paul Coverdell Agricultural Scholarship and Dow AgroSciences.

Although he won top honors for his project, Trible said, “Winning is fun, but more beneficial is being engaged in research with faculty members in a school that makes that kind of environment possible.”

As one of only two students working in Ross’s lab, Trible had a lot of one-on-one time with his mentor to map out his project and talk in-depth about current research in the field.

“I didn’t expect to find this experience as engaging and rewarding as I did,” he said. “In large part that’s because of who I was working with. Dr. Ross gave me the intellectual freedom to problem-solve without leaving me on my own to fail.”

Although the UGA Honors Program offers a similar research-based program for incoming freshmen, as Jean Bertrand, CAES assistant dean for academic affairs, explains it, “Some students who are 17 or 18 years old may not know they’re interested in research for whatever reason. One of the great advantages of the Undergraduate Research Initiative is that it’s open to any CAES student, not just freshmen or Honors students.”

Katie Collins, a rising senior majoring in poultry science, was one of those students considering graduate school but unsure how to get research experience.

“Most undergraduates don’t realize they can do research unless they’ve talked with their advisor about it,” she said. “This program helps spread the word that undergraduate students can do research. It’s also good if you’re thinking about graduate school so you can figure out if you even like research. It would be awful to take the GRE and start grad school and then figure out you hate doing research.”

Collins, who plans to pursue a CAES graduate degree in poultry science, worked with professor and Extension researchers in Training
CAES Undergraduate Research Initiative offers opportunities

“I learned a lot about keeping accurate records, collecting accurate data and seeing how a full project would run.”

~ Katie Collins, senior
Poultry Science

The Undergraduate Research Initiative gave poultry science major Katie Collins the chance to discover that she enjoys doing research – before applying to graduate school.

Researchers in Training
CAES Undergraduate Research Initiative offers opportunities

By Amanda E. Swennes
Photos by Stephanie Schupska

“I learned a lot about keeping accurate records, collecting accurate data and seeing how a full project would run.”

~ Katie Collins, senior
Poultry Science

The Undergraduate Research Initiative gave poultry science major Katie Collins the chance to discover that she enjoys doing research – before applying to graduate school.
Josh Williams knew he needed some hands-on experience with large animals before applying to vet school. A mastitis research project with animal and dairy science professor Stephen Nickerson proved about as hands-on as it gets.

The Undergraduate Research Initiative connects students like Buck Trible with faculty mentors who work with them one-on-one to conduct research projects. Trible paired with CAES entomology professor and world-renowned ant expert Kenneth Ross to study ant colonies.

poultry scientist Jeanna Wilson and UGA researcher Kristen Navara for nearly a year on a project evaluating whether mere tenths of a degree differences could skew the sex ratio of broiler chicks. [Editor’s note: Collins’ project focused on temperature differences, while Navara’s work – see “Gender Equity?” on page 16 – focuses on hormone changes.]

The time-intensive project meant setting more than 1,000 eggs in an incubator and then waiting three weeks for them to hatch. After that, Collins drew tissue or blood samples from each chick to determine its sex.

Working on a large-scale, long-term research project gave her a glimpse of what she can expect in graduate school, she said. “I learned a lot about keeping accurate records, collecting accurate data and seeing how a full project would run.”

Like Collins, Josh Williams, a senior from Lilburn, Ga. – “an area with no cows,” he said – knew he needed some large animal experience before applying to vet school.

Last fall, he worked closely with animal and dairy science professor Stephen Nickerson on a mastitis prevalence study for a dairy farm in Oglethorpe, Ga.

“The owners had a bulk tank of milk rejected because the somatic cell count was too high,” Williams said. He spent several weeks determining which cows were causing the contamination and then studying which antibiotic treatments were most effective. Solving a real-world problem not only increased his understanding of dairy herd health but also gave him a glimpse of large-animal medicine – an important experience for an aspiring vet.

Fostering opportunities for undergraduate students to conduct their own research and work one-on-one with faculty mentors is the URI program’s goal. It’s also part of the greater goal of the CAES Deans’ Promise, which encourages students to study abroad, work in internships, participate in service-learning, assume leadership roles and conduct research.

“We want more students involved in research and interested in going to graduate school,” Bertrand said. “This program shows students the value of being part of a research project – and working with faculty.”

For more information, email Jean Bertrand at jeanbert@uga.edu.
The first class: Food animal vet need breeds new solutions

Story and photos by Stephanie Schupska
Shannon Larsen jumps at the chance to help deliver a calf through cesarean section. Her face glows when she talks about how she watched a veterinarian in Royston, Ga., use a special contraption to untwist another cow’s uterus – and how this surgery saved a calf.

Larsen loves cows. Cats, however, make her nervous. So when she heard there was a veterinary school program that mostly involved large animals, she applied – as an incoming freshman.

The option she chose is called the Food Animal Veterinary Incentive Program. The program began four years ago as a partnership between the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences and the College of Veterinary Medicine.

The program

Because students in the FAVIP program are gearing up to work in a specialty that is in need of more veterinarians, they receive special consideration when they apply to vet school. With about 560 applicants vying for 102 spots in the College of Veterinary Medicine’s program each year, every advantage helps.

Larsen and four other UGA students have now finished the first step in the process: an undergraduate degree from CAES in animal science, avian biology, dairy science or poultry science, a good GRE score and two 300-hour food animal veterinary internships. Now they’re starting step two: vet school at the College of Veterinary Medicine with an emphasis on food animal medicine.

They’re the first class of FAVIP students, the test group to see if putting the pressures of a rigorous pre-veterinary curriculum on undergraduates so early will work out after four years. And so far, Larsen, Katie Rosenbalm, Deana Veal, Zeb Duvall and Jennifer Dalton are holding up.

“After we interviewed and selected them, they did a nice job of working their way through the undergraduate portion of the program,” said Dean Pringle, the CAES professor who oversees the undergraduate side of the FAVIP program.

The college has learned a few lessons from this first group and modified the program. Now instead of entering the program as incoming freshmen, students apply for the FAVIP in the middle of the second semester of their freshman year. This gives students the opportunity to see if the program is a good fit and faculty the opportunity to see if students can succeed in the classroom, which has been a source of frustration for some of the FAVIP students.

The need

Jennifer Dalton grew up in rural Banks County showing livestock through FFA and 4-H. To the southeast, the county is bordered by Interstate 85 and traffic constantly flowing in and out of Atlanta. But even a county close to a metro area can be vet-less.

“I grew up around large animals and sheep and hogs,” she said. “What I want to do is go back and set up a vet office in Banks County. Right now, you have to go to Royston.”

Banks isn’t the only county that’s hurting. “Certain counties in Georgia have no veterinarian to provide large-animal services,” said Sheila Allen, dean of the UGA College of Veterinary Medicine.

These include: Marion, Stewart, Webster, Chattahoochee, Emanuel, Candler, Jenkins, Burke, Treutlen, Upson, Crawford, Peach, Meriwether,
Pike, Coffee, Jeff Davis, Bacon, Berrien, Irvin, Atkinson, Clinch, Wilcox, Crisp, Telfair, Wheeler, Early, Baker and Miller counties, according to the USDA’s designated Georgia shortage situations. The top needs are for veterinarians who practice beef cattle, dairy cattle, swine, poultry and small ruminant medicine. Other shortages include needs for veterinarians in food safety, public health and epidemiology.

“Being a veterinarian is not only about keeping the animal healthy, but also ensuring a safe food supply,” Allen said. “Having enough veterinarians is critical for public health. We have a shortage of boots-on-the-ground veterinarians seeing animals on the farm, working in diagnostic labs, screening animals at the slaughterhouse and inspecting meat products. All these functions are vital to providing healthy yet affordable food products for the consumer.”

In 2006, the year before the FAVIP started, not a single UGA vet med student went exclusively into large animal medicine. Part of the reason is finances. With loans topping $110,000, students usually look for the highest-paying jobs, which are often found in small-animal practices.

To attract veterinarians to high-need areas, Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal signed House Bill 60 in June 2011. The bill says that for every year recent graduates work in a rural county, the State Veterinary Education Board will pay off $20,000 of their debt – up to $80,000. While the bill is not funded yet, it is hoped that as the state’s budget improves, money will be allocated for this purpose.

The USDA also runs a veterinary medicine loan repayment program, which pays $25,000 a year and comes with a three-year commitment for veterinarians to serve in shortage areas.

The other reason graduating veterinarians don’t choose large-animal medicine is convenience. Most large-animal practices are far away from the metro meccas many students look forward to living in after graduation. Plus, the hours in a small-animal practice are more regular, and you’re less likely to get your foot stomped on by a cow.

That’s not a problem for the FAVIP students. They’ve all grown up around large animals, enjoy the rural lifestyle, and most are more willing to risk a dislocated shoulder wrestling with farm animals they understand than the claws of an animal they don’t.

The education
Right now, Dalton, Larsen, Duvall, Rosenbalm and Veal are squinting to see straight after hours of studying, necropsy labs and lectures. Even though in the first few months of vet school the field they’re playing on will be leveled by exhaustion, right now they have a practical advantage over many of their classmates.

That practical advantage came from their undergraduate years and experience in the FAVIP. “Probably the biggest thing we have to offer students is the hands-on experience,” Pringle said. The program is about more than lectures and textbooks. “We can actually show them in a biological system what something means, why it’s important for them to know it.”

Pringle spent four years teaching and mentoring his students. He saw them grow from freshmen to “leaders in our department and our college,” he said. “The next class is the same way. These kids are a lot more than food animal students. They’re leaders, and I think they’re going to have a very positive effect on those vet students who didn’t have that food animal experience.”
In addition to helping people with their crops, animals and home-grown produce, Extension faculty and staff have been known to field some pretty unusual questions, which inspired this issue’s Q&A.

**What’s the most peculiar question you’ve ever been asked?**

Compiled by Amanda E. Swennes

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**My most unusual question is, “What can I do to get rid of the invisible bugs in my skin?”**

We regularly receive these queries from people suffering from Ekbom Syndrome, or delusory parasitosis, a psychological condition in which people experience the delusion of being infested by bugs. Even after 25 years of dealing with these sorts of calls, I’m still amazed at how common and pervasive the condition is.

_Nancy Hinkle_
Professor
Department of Entomology
Athens, Ga.

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**“Can you send the agent out with his traps to catch the armadillos?”**

_Kris Peavy_
County Extension Coordinator and 4-H Agent
Randolph County Extension

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**“I have a pet possum and don’t want anything to happen to her so I would like to have her spayed. I think she is coming into heat.”**

I told the caller I was the UGA Extension peanut agronomist and I could help him with a peanut production problem but I was not qualified to spay his possum. Then I remembered my cell phone is one digit different than a veterinary clinic in Gulfport, Miss., and that’s who he thought he’d called.

_John P. Beasley, Jr._
Professor and Extension Peanut Agronomist
Department of Crop and Soil Sciences
Tifton, Ga.

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In one week, the Gwinnett County Extension office got calls about: Where to buy a snake trap, where to find the forms to get a boat license, withdrawing from school, how green a cucumber needs to be before picking it, where to buy “green wildflowers” and what to do with an 11-foot diameter oak tree.

_Marlene Gillman_
Agriculture/Horticulture Program Assistant
Gwinnett County Extension

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To read more, visit Southscapes online at [http://www.caes.uga.edu/alumni/news/index.html#scapes](http://www.caes.uga.edu/alumni/news/index.html#scapes)
Wilbur Mull (BSA – Ag Economics, ’63, MS – Ag Economics, ’65), owner of Classic Groundcover Inc. in Athens received the 2011 Georgia Green Industry Lifetime Achievement Award. Wilbur has been in the wholesale nursery business for 48 years. He has received numerous awards for his innovative work, including the David E. Laird Memorial Award, the Slater Wight Memorial Award and the 2003 Jake Tinga Distinguished Professional of the Year Award.

Laura Meadows (BSA – Food Science, ’81) was appointed interim director of UGA’s Carl Vinson Institute of Government. She will continue to serve as associate director of its training division, a position she has held since 2009. Prior to joining the Vinson Institute, Meadows served as associate vice president for economic development at UGA, commissioner of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and assistant secretary of state for the state of Georgia. She also held executive positions in the OneGeorgia Authority and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development agency.

Teri Hamlin (BSA – Ag Extension, ’83, MS – Ag Education, ’85, Ph.D. – Ag Education, ’98) received the 2011 Barbara Petit Pollinator Award at the Georgia Organics Conference held in Savannah. She was recognized for her leadership in the Farm to School Program, her outstanding advocacy for agriculture education in Georgia and for seeking common ground between the organic movement and conventional agriculture.

Jody Tyson Strickland (BSAE – Ag Engineering, ’86), of Perry, Ga., took a new position with Weyerhaeuser as the U.S. timberlands acquisitions and divestiture manager. She has been with Weyerhaeuser for 19 years. She also serves on the Georgia Forest Foundation board of directors and the Georgia FFA sponsors board and continues to serve the CAES Alumni Association.

James Woodard (BSA – Ag Education, ’87) was recently named CEO of Newton College and Career Academy. He will also continue his role as director of career, technical and agricultural education for the Newton County School System. James lives in Madison, Ga., with his wife, Janet (BS – Home Economics Education, ’86), and children Claire and Will.

Chuck Williams (BSA – Ag Economics, ’77), of Watkinsville, Ga., was chosen in a special election to represent Georgia House District 113, which includes Oconee County and parts of Clarke, Oglethorpe and Morgan counties.

Wan-Tran Huang (Ph.D. – Ag Economics, ’89) is teaching and conducting research at Asia University in Taiwan.

Todd Hurt (BSA – Agronomy, ’92, MS – Agronomy, ’93) was named an Outstanding Institutional Team Member by eXtension for his role as the leader of the Georgia Institutional Team since its inception. Perhaps the most creative tool in Todd’s toolbox is his column in Tech Tips, a UGA Extension quarterly e-newsletter that delivers technology tips.

Jennifer Whittaker (BSA – Ag Communication, ’94), of Georgia Farm Bureau, received the Georgia Peanut Commission’s Media Award during the 2011 Peanut Farm Show.
Charles Grimsley (BSA – Agribusiness, ’01) was sworn in as a member of the Georgia Bar in the Superior Court ofTwiggs County in December 2010. He was the first attorney sworn in at the Twiggs County Court since 1974. After earning his degree from CAES, Charles obtained an MBA from Mercer University in 2010, where he finished first in his class. He is currently pursuing a master’s degree in litigation and dispute resolution at the George Washington University Law School in Washington, D.C.

Adam Smith (BSES – Environmental Economics and Management, ’01), chief lending officer at First National Bank of Coffee County, has been appointed to the Douglas-Coffee County Economic Development Authority. Adam served as chairman for the Chamber’s Young Professional Network and helped spearhead the Coffee Middle School Mentor Program, which acts as a connection between education and businesses. After completing his degree from CAES, Adam earned an MS from Colorado State University in 2004.

Heather (Zacharias) Otterstetter (BSA – Biological Engineering, ’02) is a project engineer for LT Environmental in Colorado, where she manages five remediation projects that vary from SVE/AS to excavation and soil composting. She primarily deals with petroleum hydrocarbons and also manages an SPCC project for a large oil and gas client.

Walter Ham (BSA – Biological Engineering, ’04) is a post-doctoral fellow in the department of civil and environmental engineering at the University of California, Davis. He is working on a state-funded project involving modeling and laboratory studies of ozone formation from pesticide solvents and an NIH-funded project exploring the role of ultrafine PM on platelet activation in humans.

Jeff Holland (BSA – Biological Engineering, ’04) is an engineering director with Phoenix Solutions Inc. where he manages environmental operations, performs field reviews and designs ESPCPs for an R/W acquisition company.

Alfie Meek (Ph.D. – Ag Economics, ’05), Gwinnett County economic analysis director, has accepted a job as director of community innovation services for Georgia Tech’s Enterprise Innovation Institute.

Phil Southerland (BSA – Agribusiness, ’05) is the chief executive officer and founder of Team Type I, an international program working toward the Tour de France 2012 and developing sustainable/scalable systems for delivering diabetes supplies and education to developing countries. Phil also wrote a book, Not Dead Yet, which was released in May 2011 (http://www.teamtype1.org/book/).

Dustin Dyer (BSAE – Ag Engineering, ’06) is an aerospace engineer with NASA at Kennedy Space Center. He performs independent verification and validation of the guidance, navigation and control systems on the rockets used to launch NASA’s unmanned space missions.

Stephen Goss (BSAE – Biological Engineering, ’06) is a post-doctoral fellow in the department of civil and environmental engineering at the University of California, Davis. He is working on a state-funded project involving modeling and laboratory studies of ozone formation from pesticide solvents and an NIH-funded project exploring the role of ultrafine PM on platelet activation in humans.

Lauren Dees Mizelle (BSA – Ag Communication, ’07) joined the staff of National Onion Labs Inc. as a consumer products advocate. She works to inform sweet onion stakeholders of the benefits of maintaining a consumer’s perspective and is beginning a campaign to establish flavor criteria for onions carrying the sweet onion label.

Trey Davis (BAES – Agriscience and Environmental Systems, ’08) has joined the staff of Mendel Bioenergy Seeds as a research associate and is assisting in the research and development of new varieties of productive, non-food energy grasses.
2000s

Gregg Liddick (BSAE – Ag Engineering, ’08) is an MBA candidate at Emory University and a project manager at Epsten Group Inc. where he reviews documentation for the USGBC for LEED submittals, performs energy audits on existing buildings and consults for private clients attempting to achieve LEED certification.

Lou Misenhamer (BSAE – Ag Engineering, ’08) is an engineer for SEFCOR Inc. He designs and manufactures electrical connectors for substations used by utilities within and outside the U.S.

Jarrett Rabe (BSAE – Ag Engineering, ’09) is a mechanical engineer with ESD in Chicago. She assists in the mechanical design of hospitals and university buildings both in the U.S. and across the globe.

Zak Rutz (BSAE – Ag Engineering, ’09) is a business analyst for Capital One where he analyzes mortgage data to develop strategies to better serve customers with financial hardships and to minimize losses.

2010s

Cathy Strickland (BSA – Agribusiness, ’09), of Labelle, Fla., is a sales representative for the turf and ornamental division of Agrium Advanced Technologies, a fertilizer manufacturer and chemical distributor.

Florence Santos (MS – Environmental Economics, ’10) is a research and evaluation specialist working with the Rural Development Institute, an international nonprofit organization dedicated to ending global poverty by securing land rights for the world’s poor. She is leading and supporting project implementation, research, monitoring and evaluating activities related to rural land tenure and agricultural livelihood projects in Africa, China, India and other countries. Florence is currently part of a study related to women’s land rights and the National Land Tenure Regularization Program in Rwanda and is involved in processing data from a women’s land rights survey RDI carried out in rural China.

Kavita Sardana (Ph.D. – Ag Economics, ’10) is an instructor of environmental economics and a postdoctoral research associate working with David A. Hennessy and GianCarlo Moschini in the Iowa State University department of economics.

Nick Adams (BSAE – Environmental Engineering, ’11) is a student naval aviator in the U.S. Navy’s Officer Candidate School. He is currently undergoing pilot training and will fulfill an eight-year commitment upon winging.

Lisa Ann King (BSES – Environmental Economics and Management, ’11, BS – Ecology, ’11) is enrolled in the environmental technology graduate program at the Imperial College London, which ranks seventh among the top universities in the world.

Katy Riccione (BSA – Biological Engineering, ’11) of Kennesaw, Ga., graduated magna cum laude. She was a CURO Summer Research Fellow and also spent a summer conducting research at New York University’s Sackler School of Medicine. Katy will attend Duke University’s biomedical engineering doctoral program, where she will study bacterial population dynamics and genetic factors contributing to antibiotic resistance.

To include your professional class notes in the next issue of Southscapes, please e-mail Juli Fields at jfields@uga.edu, or call (706) 542-3390.
CAES WELCOMES NEW ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

By Sharon Dowdy

Mary Ann Parsons (BSA – Ag Communication, ’02, MAL – Ag Leadership, ’06) was named assistant director of the UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Office of College Advancement and External Affairs on Aug. 1, 2011. In her new position, Parsons will be responsible for day-to-day operations, including overseeing personnel and developing and implementing a fundraising strategy with emphasis on major, planned and annual fund gifts to benefit CAES programs, events and facilities.

“We have a vision and a plan for great things here at CAES, and Mary Ann’s promotion and involvement in day-to-day activities are critical to the success of this mission,” said Rodney Miller, director of the Office of College Advancement and External Affairs and assistant to the dean.

“She has a unique blend of ‘outside the box’ forward thinking coupled with a detailed approach to development, and she has the experience and personality needed to be successful.”

Parsons’ new position will allow her to continue to work with Georgia 4-H as executive director of the Georgia 4-H Foundation, a position she’s held since 2010.

“I am pleased that we will now be able to better coordinate development activities in 4-H and the college,” said Scott Angle, CAES dean and director. “The appointment of Mary Ann Parsons to the assistant director’s position is an important step in this direction.”

Parsons currently volunteers with the CAES Alumni Board and received the Outstanding Young Alumni Award from the Alumni Association in 2005. She is also a graduate of the Georgia Agri-Leaders Forum.

Flavor of Georgia 2012

This annual food product contest is a celebration of all the flavors Georgia has to offer. Market-ready prototypes or commercially available food products from across the state are judged and critiqued by a panel of food experts.

The contest casts the spotlight on delicious, original food from right here in Georgia. Get ready for the competition! Categories include barbecue and hot sauces, confections, dairy products, meat products, snack foods and jams, jellies and sauces. Entries are judged based on flavor, best use of Georgia ingredients, Georgia theme, unique or innovative qualities, commercial appeal and originality.

Entries accepted

Final judging will be held March 12-13, 2012 at the Georgia Freight Depot in Atlanta during the Governor’s annual Ag Awareness Week.

For more information visit www.flavorofgeorgia.caes.uga.edu.
Giving Back: Gossett Family Legacy Lives On at UGA Griffin Research and Education Garden

By Montrese Adger-Fuller

In honor of her family, Brenda Gossett funded the construction of an ornate entryway at the University of Georgia Research and Education Garden in Griffin, Ga. A water fountain in the center of the garden is dedicated to the memory of Gossett’s brother, Larry Franklin Gossett (BBA, ’63, M.Ed., ’69).

“The entryway and the ever-flowing water of the fountain exemplifies my family – from the agricultural development of farm land to business and teaching – and provides an excellent opportunity to keep their legacy forever in their home town of Griffin,” Gossett said.

The Gossett family has a deep history in Griffin. Located on the east side of the city, the Gossett family farm included “The People’s Warehouse” where cotton and grain were stored until time to sell them to the public. Around 1911, Mr. and Mrs. A.F. Gossett, Sr., built a home on the corner of South Sixth Street and East College Street in Griffin. The family also owned and operated Gossett Oil Company, a gasoline and oil products distributor, and A.F. Gossett and Sons, which primarily manufactured fertilizer that contained cottonseed meal. People came from across the region to purchase the fertilizer, and many garden club members refused to use any other product.

A Bark Goes Out to …

By Amanda E. Swennes

Four CAES alumni, Raj Shah (BSA – Honors Interdisciplinary, ’06, JD – Public Administration, ’10), Billy Skaggs (BSA – Agronomy, ’96, MAL – Ag Leadership, ’06), R. Edward Garrett (BSA – Ag Communication, ’06, MBA, ’08) and Kimberly Metcalf (BSEH – Environmental Health, ’93, MS – Environmental Health, ’96), have been named to the UGA Alumni Association’s inaugural “40 Under 40” list. The new honor recognizes UGA alumni who have “made an impact in business, leadership, community, educational and/or philanthropic endeavors” and have shown a commitment to the university’s teaching, research and service mission. Congratulations!
A WARM WELCOME

By Amanda E. Swennes

Ashlee Nicole Sharer loves the University of Georgia. A lot. The third-year biological science major from Jesup, Ga., has such a passion for UGA that she convinced the Office of Undergraduate Admissions to choose her from a pool of hundreds of applicants to be one of 12 orientation leaders for this fall’s incoming freshman class and transfer students. The honor also nabbed her a $1,000 per-semester academic scholarship from the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Alumni Association.

“The scholarship provides a CAES student the incentive and financial capability to be an orientation leader,” said CAES student recruitment coordinator Brice Nelson. “While most of our students are away from campus doing study abroad, internships, working or taking classes, orientation leaders are required to be on campus.”

So on a hot afternoon in late June, Sharer worked her way around a computer lab in the Miller Learning Center helping incoming freshmen use the OASIS system to register for their first college classes. A sign posted at the room entrance read, “NO PARENTS BEYOND THIS POINT.” She stopped at every raised hand with a smile on her face and “What can I help you with, darlin’?” then answered questions ranging from “What does ‘TR’ mean?” (Answer: Tuesday/Thursday) and “Why can’t I find the teacher named “Staff” in the key?” (Answer: The course doesn’t have an instructor assigned to it yet) to “Why isn’t my AP credit appearing in the reported courses on OASIS?” (Answer: Either the student didn’t send the AP scores to the university and they need to contact the college board or the registrar’s office hasn’t processed their scores yet).

You’d think after spending a summer helping teenagers navigate the ins and outs of a university as large as UGA, she’d be ready to hang up her red and black for a while. not so. Decked out in pearls, cowboy boots, skirt, UGA T-shirt and red hair bow, Sharer couldn’t stop grinning.

“I love first-years! I think I’m actually still a freshman at heart,” she said. “They inspire me because they have so much fire and energy and want to be part of this university. They’re even excited about homework!”

Catching that spirit and passing it on is what being an advocate for UGA – and CAES – is all about. 

4-H GREEN JACKET AWARDED

David Ralston, 73rd Speaker of the Georgia House of Representatives, received the 4-H Green Jacket award at the 69th annual Georgia 4-H State Congress Banquet in Atlanta, Ga., on July 21, 2011. The award is given to state legislators who have significantly supported 4-H.

“During the 2010 session of the Georgia General Assembly, there was some talk of eliminating 4-H,” said Georgia 4-H director Arch Smith. “Speaker Ralston stepped up and never blinked in his backing of the 4-H program.” In 1964, Ralston joined 4-H as a fifth grader in Gilmer County. He went on to receive a law degree from UGA. In 1992, he was elected to the state senate, became Georgia’s attorney general in 1998 and was elected to the Georgia House in 2002, representing House District 7. He also works as an attorney in Blue Ridge, Ga. The banquet was sponsored by the Georgia Electric Membership Corporation.

~ Stephanie Schupska
CAES Alums and Friends: Italy

By Juli Fields

Bellissimo! Meraviglioso! Delizioso! Beautiful! Marvelous! Delicious! These are just a few of the sentiments overheard during the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Northern Italy Garden and Farm Tour. Nineteen CAES alumni and friends made the memorable 11-day trip to Rome and points north from June 2 to 11, 2011.

Thinking about traveling with CAES? Our next educational adventure will take us to Scotland July 29 – August 4, 2012 and include stops at Edinburgh Royal Botanic Garden, St. Andrews, Glenlivet distillery, Loch Ness and Castle Urquhart. Contact Juli Fields at jfields@uga.edu or 706-542-3390 or visit www.caes.uga.edu/alumni for more details.

1. Sally Brooks and her daughter Sally Brooks (BLA – Landscape Architecture, ’04), Tracey Neely (BSA – Animal Science, ’89) and Rosemarie Sells (BFA – Art Education, ’69) enjoy a pre-dinner aperitif before a stroll through the gardens of the world-famous Villa d’Este resort on Lake Como in northern Italy.

2. In keeping with long-standing tradition, David Rogers (BSA – Ag Education, ’84) and others in the group leave a love note on the courtyard wall beneath Juliet Capulet’s balcony. A guide led the group through the streets of Verona, describing the city’s rich history and architecture.

3. The group enjoyed a private tour of Il Falconiere winery and resort’s vineyards and olive groves, hosted by winery and estate owner Riccardo Baracchi. They sampled wines, local cheeses, salami and breads and took in the beauty of the 17th century Tuscan villa situated on the slopes of Cortona.

Save the Date!

Pre-registration opens December 1, 2011. Speakers from UGA and local communities will be covering Georgia’s economic outlook and farm labor issues.

- January 23: Macon
  Georgia Farm Bureau Building
- January 24: Tifton
  Tifton Campus Conference Center
- January 25: Statesboro
  Nesmith Lane Conference Center
- January 26: Gainesville
  Georgia Mountains Center
- February 10: Carrollton
  Carroll County Ag Center

Coffee and onsite registration will begin at 9 a.m. The Ag Forecast Seminar runs from 10 a.m. to noon. The networking luncheon will last from noon to 1 p.m. For more information and to register, visit www.georgiaagforecast.com.

Georgia Ag Forecast is a University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences program made possible through an endowment from the Georgia Farm Bureau.

In cooperation with the Georgia Department of Agriculture
FROM FOUR TOWERS

Alumni and Friends,

It seems like just yesterday I embarked on my journey as a student in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. As a recipient of the CAES Alumni Association freshman scholarship, I was seeking opportunities to become involved with the Alumni Association as a student volunteer. One of my very first appointments was with Louise Hill, who served as the director of what is now the Office of College Advancement.

Never did I envision that becoming involved as a student would lead me to where I am now – president of the CAES Alumni Association! I am honored to have the opportunity to serve you this year and look forward to the challenges and experiences this position brings.

In this issue of Southscapes, you’ll see that our college helped train Georgia National Guard members – including CAES alumni – who are currently working with farmers in Afghanistan and actively making a difference around the world. While training farmers in Afghanistan may not be your calling, there is an opportunity for each of us, as alumni, to be involved in furthering the CAES mission. Whether volunteering for local events, contributing to the college financially or sharing our experiences with prospective students, we can all make a difference.

As the Alumni Association president, it’s a privilege to work with more than 80 enthusiastic volunteers from around the United States to support our college. I welcome your input on ways we can better serve CAES and you, our alumni. Better yet, I encourage you to join me in giving back to this historic organization that has delivered quality student and alumni programming since its charter in October 1955. Feel free to contact me at meganhmorris@ugaalum.uga.edu with questions or suggestions.

Sincerely,

Megan Howard Morris
BSA – Ag Communication, ’00

CAES BY THE NUMBERS

Compiled by Amanda E. Swennes

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION REACHES GEORGIANS

Office Contact Hours

Face-to-face: 105,148
Phone: 174,044
Written: 163,773

Source: CAES Office of Accountability & Organizational Development

Presentations/Workshops
For adults: 4,129
For youth: 2,123
Elisa Robinson, left, pets a Barred Plymouth Rock hen at the 2011 College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Welcome Back Party held September 1 at the CAES Four Towers Activity Center. Her mom, CAES study abroad coordinator Carolina Robinson, center, looks on.

The annual event, hosted by the CAES Alumni Association and the Office of College Advancement and sponsored by Bayer CropScience and Kroger, introduces incoming students to the wide variety of study abroad, service-learning, leadership development and extracurricular activities the college offers. Current students, like poultry science major Andrea Cooper, right, are on hand to answer questions about the diverse opportunities available within the college.