No stranger to fieldwork, CAES alumna Joanna Davis, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service emergency coordinator for Georgia and Florida, prepares to inspect feral swine for foreign animal diseases.
**Online Exclusives**

Susan Varlamoff, director of the CAES Office of Environmental Sciences, authors a new book, “Sustainable Gardening for the Southeast.”

CAES students attend The World Food Prize’s Borlaug Dialogue, “the premier conference in the world on global agriculture.”

Seydou was introduced to North America by colonial Georgia farmer Henry Yonge in 1765.

Meet the new faces of the CAES Office of External Relations.

New 4-H Club inspires youth and fills a need in Atlanta’s Buckhead area.

**FOR THESE STORIES AND MORE, VISIT**

caes.uga.edu/alumni/news.

**Hey Readers!**

A Southscapes magazine survey work is coming this summer! Watch for an announcement and survey link that will come to you via email and social media this summer. Take note as you read this issue and browse recent issues online at caes.uga.edu/alumni/news/archives.html, then share your thoughts in our survey. We want to better serve you and cover what you want to read. Thanks for your help!

@UGA_CAES, Alumni

**In this issue, we focus on Women in Agriculture by highlighting some of the industry’s brightest leaders.**

With female student enrollment in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at 63 percent, we asked some of tomorrow’s alumnae about their goals. For more responses, turn to page 28.

“Growing up in Haiti, I was exposed to the detrimental consequences of environmental degradation on a daily basis. The lack of infrastructure, often shackled by natural disasters and political leadership, results in numerous problems when it comes to soil erosion, waste management, agriculture and water quality. Underneath all of this devastation, I found the inspiration to learn more about ways to help improve the environment. I had to leave Haiti after the earthquake in 2010, and I grew interested in water quality during my undergraduate years in the United States. I hope to learn more about the water quality of urban streams given that I will be working on Lake Herrick on campus and Tail Creek in downtown Athens for my thesis. Although I am not sure of where I want to work after graduating, I am a humanitarian at heart… I see myself working actively with a community by being a project leader. I see myself teaching farmers basic knowledge of water quality and best agricultural practices to reduce erosion and nutrient losses. No matter what the scenario happens to be, I think that being in the field of agricultural and environmental sciences will give me so many opportunities to better the lives of others around the world.”

– Thalika Saintil, student in crop and soil sciences– Thalika Saintil, graduate student in crop and soil sciences from Port-au-Prince, Haiti

“Upon graduation, I hope to either teach high school agriculture or work with Extension services in north Georgia. I am very excited to complete my degree at UGA Tifton and teach in an area of study that I am so passionate about!”

– Christina Garner, third-year agricultural education major from Taylorsville, Georgia

“One day I would like to have a farm and raise cattle. My hope is for a future career that enables me to be directly involved in agriculture while connecting people to where their food comes from, promoting agricultural literacy. I either see myself as an ANR (Agriculture and Natural Resources) Extension agent for a land-grant institution or working with an ag company like SUDIA (Southeast United Dairy Industry Association, Inc.) to bridge farmers/agriculturists with the vast majority not involved in agriculture and food production. In doing so, I would like to see more people having faith in their food and appreciating the farmers, so a child will say their food comes from a farm, and not a grocery store or a fast-food restaurant.”

– Sarah Jane Thomsen, third-year animal science and dairy science double major from Salem, Virginia

In this issue, we focus on Women in Agriculture by highlighting some of the industry’s brightest leaders. With female student enrollment in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at 63 percent, we asked some of tomorrow’s alumnae about their goals. For more responses, turn to page 28.
“We need everyone who has a passion for the land, a passion for feeding people to think about a career in agriculture. It’s not just women, but it certainly has to include women. We want to make sure they recognize that their contributions are valued.”

KRISTA HARDEN, FORMER U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE DEPUTY SECRETARY, NOW DUPONT’S VICE PRESIDENT OF PUBLIC POLICY AND CHIEF SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER

46.1% of the nation’s 1.3 million agricultural and food scientists are women.

30 PERCENT OF AMERICA’S FARMERS ARE WOMEN.

SUMMIT UNITES WOMEN IN AG

MORE THAN 150 AGRICULTURAL LEADERS from 13 Southern states and Washington, D.C., convened on UGA’s Athens Campus on Feb. 8 to discuss leadership roles for women in agriculture. Women representing government agencies, farms, the Cooperative Extension System and industry participated in the UGA-led Southern Region Women’s Agricultural Leadership Summit, sponsored by the UGA President’s Venture Fund, the UGA Women’s Leadership Initiative and the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences.

“The work [that summit delegates] are doing to shape policies and programs to promote gender equity and women’s leadership development will have a positive impact on an industry that is crucial to our nation’s food security and economic vitality,” said UGA President Jere W. Morehead.

“Women make up a significant portion of the nation’s agricultural workforce. Women comprised 35% percent of the nation’s agricultural workforce in 2012 and currently stand at 44%,” said Harden.

Harden moderated a panel of female agricultural leaders who urged women to step out of their traditional roles. They touched on the need for today’s leaders to support young women and for professional women to support one another.

Facilitators from the university’s J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development recorded the results of delegate discussion about barriers and support for women in agriculture and are compiling a formal, public report to be released later this year.

Be college must recognize and embrace the widest range of talents across our state and beyond. Over my career, CAES has become more diverse in the students we teach, the clients we serve and the subject matter we explore. Our undergraduate program is predominately female (63 percent) and diversity enrollments matches the larger campus. One-third of CAES students will participate in an international experience.

I am pleased that we are celebrating women in agriculture in this issue of Southseas and through several notable events at UGA. This past year, the college recognized Peggy Otiati-Akins as our first female D.W. Brooks Distinguished Professor. We are proud to have hosted the first Southern Region Women’s Agricultural Leadership Summit at UGA, and to have had then-U.S. Department of Agriculture Deputy Secretary Krysta Harden serve as our featured guest and speaker.

The next green revolution in agriculture will be a revolution in human capital. We will engage and enlist a new, diverse team of scientists to face the grand challenges before us.

I am also pleased and honored to have served as your interim dean and director. I would be remiss if I did not thank Bob Shurtleff and Laura Porty Johnson for their wise counsel and leadership during this time. Bob is among the most effective leaders of our research enterprise, while Laura has brought new energy and creativity to UGA Cooperative Extension.

I especially want to thank Jean Bertrand for her fine leadership in the Office of Academic Affairs.

Former Dean Scott Angle’s tireless efforts to make friends and build coalitions across the state set the stage for a successful budget year. Never before has the agricultural coalition of CAES, the Georgia Department of Agriculture, Georgia Farm Bureau, Georgia Poultry Federation and the Georgia Agribusiness Council been more effective.

I want to personally thank Gary Black, Zippy Duvall, Abit Massey and Bryan Toal for their steadfast support of CAES. I am indebted to President Morehead and Provost Whitten for their confidence in and support of the college and Georgia agriculture. We appreciate the strong support of key leaders in the Georgia General Assembly whose valuable leadership helps to ensure that UGA Extension and UGA Experiment Stations remain among the best in the nation.

Now, I want to welcome Dean Sam Pardue to the helm of the college. He comes to CAES from North Carolina State University’s College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, where he was associate dean and director of academic programs. I wish him all the best and can’t wait to see what the future has in store for CAES.

Meet CAES’ New Dean Sam Pardue

“I am honored to have the opportunity to work with UGAs outstanding administration, faculty, staff, students, alumni, friends and Georgia’s dynamic agricultural community. The College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences has played a significant role in growing Georgia’s No. 1 economic sector. It’s a college with a long and honored history. I look forward to an even brighter future for CAES.”

SAM PARDUE, CAES DEAN AND DIRECTOR

FORMERLY
Associate dean and director of academic programs and Alumni Distinguished Undergraduate Professor at North Carolina State University’s College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Raleigh, North Carolina

EDUCATION
North Carolina State University
Bachelor’s degree in poultry science, 1977
Master’s degree in physiology, 1979
Doctoral degree in physiology, 1983

NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Helped double the number of poultry science majors at NCSU, grew distance education offerings and acquired external funding to modernize teaching laboratories.
Invested in a biosafety level 2 facility to expand the NCSU poultry science department’s research capabilities and supported development of a poultry processing laboratory to address the needs of that state’s largest agribusiness.
Helped secure a $10 million gift to the NCSU poultry science department, which was subsequently named the “Prestige Department of Poultry Science.”
Better Home and Garden

**COLLEGE, EDUCATION, RESEARCH, OUTREACH & UGA EXTENSION NEWS**

**noteworthy**

**Inset photo:** The edible landscaping includes an aquaponics system.

In insulated by recycled blue jeans, covered in solar panels and surrounded by an edible landscape, the Future Farmstead on the UGA Tifton Campus exemplifies sustainability. Completed in October 2015, the Farmstead accommodates research from more than 40 companies and enhances the daily living of its occupants through the latest technologies. Made possible by the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, with labor funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Labor along with about $250,000 and materials contributed by 60 different companies, the Future Farmstead houses graduate students participating in research related to the Tifton Campus Farmstead.

**Campos Close-Up**

**UGA Tifton’s**

**Future Farmstead is built with energy-saving technology**

**“Things as simple as the water turning off while I am washing my hands or brushing my teeth are making me more aware of how wasteful I was in the past,” said Amanda Miller, a UGA Tifton graduate student and resident of the Farmstead. “Each and every feature in this house was built with a purpose, and living in it really makes that evident.”**

**Craig Kiven**

“Energy efficiency starts by designing something that doesn’t need a lot of energy,” said Craig Kiven, UGA Tifton professor and the brain behind the Farmstead. “You can build a net-zero energy house probably 10,000 different ways. There’s not a single recipe. A lot of it is just like agriculture, which involves a lot of different things working together.”

**UGA plant-breeding teams contributed to the house’s edible landscape with seedless lemon and tangerine trees. The landscape includes an aquaponics system developed, as a student project, by Miller and UGA aquaculturist Gary Burtle. It includes a small vegetable garden and a tank of fish, and it is designed to generate enough food to feed a small family.**

**Students in CAES Professor Jason Peake’s fall 2015 “Sustainable Agriculture Production” class grew plants that added to the Farmstead’s landscape.**

“**I was really interested in this house the whole time they were building it, so it’s a privilege to get to experience it, especially as one of its first residents,” said entomology graduate student and Farmstead resident Ian Knight.**
The house that Dawgs built

It only covers 150 square feet, but the impact of the student-run Tiny Dawg House construction project has been felt across UGA’s Athens Campus and throughout the state.

Tapping into the growing popular interest in tiny houses, or homes with less than 400 square feet of living space, UGA students worked with Associate Professor David Berle in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences and Assistant Professor Kim Skobba in the College of Family and Consumer Sciences in the fall of 2015 to explore the American housing landscape. In the process, 13 students, coming from CAES and other colleges, learned hands-on construction skills by building their own tiny house.

George Wright, an Athens, Georgia-based contractor, worked with the students to make sure the tiny house was safe and up to code.

The students were responsible for making several decisions in planning the tiny house, which incorporated a working bathroom, kitchen, recreation space, sleeping loft and storage space on the back of a flashed trailer.

“The big thing the tiny house taught us was patience,” said Taylor Cotton, a third-year CAES horticulture student from Kennesaw, Georgia. “Most of us didn’t realize how much work it was going to take to complete it.”

Over the 16-week semester, Berle and Skobba presented students with different topics impacting housing in the U.S., from land planning, to energy efficiency, to green building. They saw how those issues impacted their own building project.

Cotton, for one, doesn’t think he could build his own house from scratch, but he is more comfortable tackling construction projects and knows more about what he wants in a house.

“A semester isn’t enough time to become an expert on roofing a home or installing flooring or cabinets, but I am definitely more comfortable with the tools and with small projects,” he said.

The final cost came out to about $25,000 and was covered by a grant from The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta. Project partner Georgia Organics received the title for the property and will help with fundraising for the next tiny house.

The fall 2016 course will incorporate more housing issues specific to farmers and will help with fundraising for the UGA Tiny Dawg House.

Tiny Dawg House by the Numbers

<table>
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<th>16 weeks to build</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>150 square feet</td>
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<td>$25,000 final cost</td>
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Tiny Dawg House: The house that Dawgs built.

Researchers press ‘print’ for prototype

It really saves a lot of time. You don’t have to order things, wait for it and modify that. You can custom-make it, and it’s really up to your own imagination how you want to do that,” Rains said. “You know you’re not limited to looking something up in a catalog.”

Vellidis, a precision agriculture expert, is using the 3-D printer to develop a sensor probe to measure soil moisture. The probe is inserted into the soil to measure moisture at several depths, providing scientists and farmers with the information needed to make a decision about irrigating the field. The printer allows Vellidis to prototype the exact dimensions, length and everything needed to design the probe for maximum response and accuracy.

Vellidis estimates that, with the addition of the 3-D printer, development time is reduced by 60 to 70 percent. Costs are also greatly reduced. Instead of paying top dollar to a machine shop to make and customize a prototype, Vellidis and Rains can produce that same product themselves.

“I think it’s going to be an indispensable tool for anything we do from now on,” Vellidis said.

You think it through, make the design, hope that it will work and then you test it. You might find some fault in your design. Then you find out how you can improve it.”

George Vellidis

tinydawghouse.wordpress.com • Merritt Melanson

Searching for the Best and the Brightest

The Food, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences Career and Internship Fair, in conjunction with the UGA Career Center, is geared toward College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences disciplines and provides an opportunity to recruit CAES talent for full-time and internship opportunities.

Last year, 53 companies and more than 250 students and alumni participated in this event. The career and internship fair will be held Thursday, Oct. 6, from noon to 3 p.m. at the Tate Student Center Grand Hall (fifth floor), 45 Baxter Street, Athens, Georgia. The corporate registration fee is $200, nonprofit registration fee is $100 and the cost is $25 for additional representatives. To register, visit career.uga.edu/hireuga/faes_fair.
Tiny insect, Big impact

A tiny fly is having a huge impact on American fruit farmers. Known as spotted wing drosophila, the insect is costing farmers more than $890 million a year on prevention costs and lost produce.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) tasked Georgia researchers with developing a long-term management plan for the fly. Ashfaq Sial, a national leader in spotted wing drosophila management and an entomologist in the UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, will lead the $2 million NIFA-grant-funded plan.

The flies deposit eggs into ripe fruit, rendering the fruit unmarketable. Populations are so prevalent in some areas that the flies are pushing organic farmers back to using conventional pest control methods, according to recent farmer surveys, forcing them to sacrifice higher fruit prices and the environmental advantages that come with an “Organic” label.

Conventional farmers are losing out on profits as they spend ever-increasing amounts of money to prevent the damage caused by the fruit-running flies.

“Spotted wing drosophila has emerged as a major threat to small- and stone-fruit production industries, and its management is challenging, particularly in organic systems due to lack of organically approved control options,” said Sial, who is an assistant professor of entomology. “I am glad to have the opportunity to lead this collaborative effort to help organic farmers develop effective management strategies to control this devastating pest in a more sustainable manner.”

Spotted wing drosophila has the potential to attack all berries and stone fruit, but its major target is blueberries. In 2014, Georgia farmers grew about $335 million in blueberries on more than 28,000 acres, according to the 2014 Georgia Farm Gate Value Report. Georgia farmers grew about $335 million in blueberries on more than 28,000 acres, according to the 2014 Georgia Farm Gate Value Report.

Sial will build on his existing integrated pest management (IPM) work in blueberries to establish management strategies for organic growers. Tactics will include developing cultural practices to minimize the fly’s impact on the fruit, developing specific attractants that will draw the flies away from blueberry fields and investigating organic insecticides to diminish fly populations before they cause major damage to fruit.

The grant will also cover outreach efforts to help farmers implement these new management practices. **Merritt Melancon**

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**Urban Invaders**

### Entomologists Train Pest Control Operators to Fight Household Pests

Since 2000, UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences entomologists have taught pest control operators across the Southeast how to control termites and other household pests at a training facility built on the UGA Griffin Campus by the college, the Georgia Department of Agriculture and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Now, the Georgia Structural Pest Control Training Center is growing to meet the needs of the industry, which has seen an increase in urban pests, such as bedbugs.

According to the National Pest Management Association, bedbugs date back to ancient Egypt some 3,300 years ago. In the U.S., they made a resurgence in the late 1990s, due in part to increased international travel.

The center will include a mock home kitchen and bedroom, school classroom and commercial kitchen. The new additions will allow trainees to learn how to control and detect indoor pests, such as bedbugs, cockroaches, mice and ants.

“Pest control companies have to go in and control cockroaches and rodents around food, so operators need to be trained,” said Dan Suito, the UGA Cooperative Extension specialist who directs the program. “We plan to start holding bedbug control workshops and trainings on controlling pests in so many settings.”

The workshops include lectures, hands-on insect identification and training demonstrations. More information is available at gabugs.uga.edu. — Sharon Dossidy

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**Seeking the great Georgia Grape**

### Georgia wines may not have the same reputation as California Chardonnays or French Burgundies, but they make fantastic wines.

**Paula Burke**

“Pest control companies have to go in and control cockroaches and rodents around food, so operators need to be trained.”

Daniel Jackson, manager of the Crop and Environmental Quality Laboratory, is quantifying what makes a grape great for winemaking. Building on a testing system that he developed to chemically describe the sweetness of Vidalia onions, Jackson developed a battery of tests for the Cross’ grapes.

His lab measures pH and titratable acidity, which are measures of the acidity of the grape juice, how quickly that acidity will mellow and meld with other flavors, the Brix and sugar profile, which characterize the potential alcohol content of the wine, and the overall sweetness of the juice.

“Then we have a bunch of other things we do in our lab to help growers make informed decisions about which grapes to grow and which cultivation techniques to use to maximize yield and quality,” Jackson said. “Winemakers should also be able to use our results to identify how to treat the grapes and the styles that would produce the best wines.”

Burke and Jackson’s work with Trillium Vineyard is funded by a three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and has received technical advice from Fritz Westover of Westover Vineyard Advising and Rachel file, a postdoctoral horticultural researcher on the UGA campus in Griffin, Georgia. Separately, Jackson’s laboratory has started accepting grapes from other Georgia growers who want to know the chemical breakdown of their grapes and how to improve their quality. **Merritt Melancon**

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**Noteworthy**

**Tiny insect, Big impact**

**Ashfaq Sial**, an entomologist at UGA, checks on a young crop of blueberries in a research field in Alma, Georgia. Above: The tiny, spotted wing drosophila perches on a raspberry.

**URBAN INVADERS**

### Entomologists Train Pest Control Operators to Fight Household Pests

** Seeking the great Georgia Grape**

** Georgia wines may not have the same reputation as California Chardonnays or French Burgundies, but they make fantastic wines. **

**Paula Burke**
Noblet’s 19-year tenure marked by departmental awards and grants

Raymond Noblet will retire from leading the UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Department of Entomology later this year. He took the helm of the department in 1997 and, counting his college career, has spent about 50 years in entomology. Noblet received his bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees from CAES in entomology in 1965, 1967 and 1970, respectively. “I really loved biology,” he said. “I liked both field and lab work. Entomology is a great combination. It’s a biological science, an agricultural science and a biomedical science. It gives you a lot of working room.”

During the Vietnam War, UGA received a grant from the National Institutes of Health to study the transmission of malaria. At the time, the U.S. military was losing more men to disease than to combat in the war, Noblet recalled. The timing of the grant, received while he was enrolled in the department, was fortuitous for him: he was interested in studying disease transmission in humans and animals. For 25 years before returning to UGA, Noblet worked at Clemson University as a professor of entomology and environmental toxicology. During his 19-year tenure as department head at CAES, the faculty have won more professional awards than any other entomology department in the country, Noblet said, and faculty-won grants fund at least half of the department’s budget. “Even through difficult economic times, this entomology department has remained one of the best in the country, and the future of the department looks exceptionally bright,” he said.

Noblet’s UGA laboratory – he has been studying black flies, the disease-transmitting agents they transmit and their control for about 30 years – remains funded. He plans to keep an office at the Riverbend Research Lab South in Athens, Georgia.

UGA Griffin Campus’ Kristine Braman, CAES entomology professor and director of the Center for Urban Agriculture, will take Noblet’s place as entomology department head later this year. • Kathryn Schilio

Then-department head testified about the importance of land-grant universities, research

At the request of Congressman Austin Scott, then-poultry science department head Mike Lacy represented the UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences as part of a panel recruited to speak to the U.S. House Committee on Agriculture’s bio-technology, horticulture and research subcommittee about research at land-grant universities, the research community’s policy and resource challenges as well as cooperation between institutions.

Lacy’s presentation centered on his knowledge of poultry science, and he used the college’s recent collaborations on avian influenza (AI) as an example. “Because of the size and importance of poultry in Georgia, the leading producer of poultry in the U.S., a serious AI outbreak in our state would be devastating to our economy and impact the U.S. food supply,” he said.

He cited research by UGA poultry scientists and veterinarians, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other land-grant universities that strengthened poultry producers’ biosecurity procedures as well as contributed to the development of response plans. He also spoke about the USA Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development program’s work with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to bring an understanding of biosecurity and zoosporosis to youth.

Beyond AI, Lacy brought the subcommittee’s attention to UGA and other land-grant universities’ work on reducing foodborne pathogens during processing, protecting poultry from parasitic diseases and developing ventilation systems for poultry houses. The value of cooling technology developed at UGA is worth $15 million annually to Georgia producers alone.

He thanked the committee for extending Section 1433 of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Act, which provides funding for animal health research at state veterinary and agricultural colleges, but he called for full funding of the program “to address the priorities of food security, animal health and environmental stewardship.”

“They were grateful and supportive of what land-grants (universities) were doing for agriculture,” he said. “Congress is aware of the huge impact agricultural research has on the U.S. economy, the cost and quality of our food, and on saving lives in developing countries.” • Kathryn Schilio

Mr. Lacy goes to Washington

Mike Lacy (far right), former poultry science department head Mike Lacy represented the UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences as part of a panel recruited to speak to the U.S. House Committee on Agriculture’s bio-technology, horticulture and research subcommittee last fall. During 20 years in the U.S. Congress, Chambilis earned a reputation as an advocate for agriculture. He started his career as an angry farmer from his hometown of Macon, Georgia. He was elected from Georgia’s 8th Congressional District to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1994. Chambilis helped shape the nation’s agriculture policy, assisting with authoring four farm bills during his tenure in the U.S. House, from 1995 to 2002, and in the Senate, 2003 to 2015, where he chaired the Senate Agriculture Committee.

Breedlove, a dairy and beef farmer in Walton and Morgan counties, was the first executive director of Georgia’s Agriculture Adjustment Administration, the precursor to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Farm Service Agency. In the early 1950s, Breedlove also acted as regional director of the field service branch of the Federal Production Marketing Association. He was a founding board member and first president of Walton EMC, and a founding vice president of what is now Georgia Farm Bureau.

• Samantha White and Meritt Melancon

AG LEADERS INDUCTED INTO HALL OF FAME

FORMER U.S. SEN. SAXBY CHAMBLISS AND GEORGIA DAIRYMAN, THE LATE THOMAS RICHARD BREELOVE SR. WERE INDUCTED INTO THE GEORGIA AGRICULTURAL HALL OF FAME LAST SEPTEMBER. During 20 years in the U.S. Congress, Chambilis earned a reputation as an advocate for agriculture. He started his career as an angry farmer from his hometown of Macon, Georgia. He was elected from Georgia’s 8th Congressional District to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1994. Chambilis helped shape the nation’s agriculture policy, assisting with authoring four farm bills during his tenure in the U.S. House, from 1995 to 2002, and in the Senate, 2003 to 2015, where he chaired the Senate Agriculture Committee.

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• Samantha White and Meritt Melancon
Gardening is Elementary
Master Gardeners plant love of horticulture in youth

M G SPROUTS, a new gardening program for young children, has been created for Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteers (MGEVs) to use in teaching the littlest green thumbs -- students in kindergarten through third grade. "MG SPROUTS will allow our volunteers to meet their communities’ needs for youth horticulture training without having to plant and maintain a permanent garden. It is designed for a community approach and can easily be presented at your local library," said Sheri Dorn, director of the Master Gardener program. "Since there are just six lessons, the MGEVs don’t have to sign on for a long commitment."

The program is an easy-to-follow “project in a box” that includes directions, exercises, and activities.

"The goal of MG SPROUTS is to share the joy and wonder of plants and gardening with people, showing that our actions in our own gardens do impact our environment and our planet," said Dorn. When a lesson begins, MGEVs and children start by reading a garden-related story before exploring plants through hands-on horticulture activities, writing prompts and games.

MG SPROUTS Ella Blackstock (left) and Lyda Allen prepare to plant garlic cloves in recycled 2-liter bottles. Planting in these clear, plastic bottles allows children to see the formation of roots and shoots.

UGA Cooperative Extension agents and MGEVs learn about MG SPROUTS and how to share it in their communities by attending online trainings.

Last fall, Dorn shared the new MG SPROUTS lessons at the American Society for Horticultural Science’s annual conference and with Master Gardeners from across the country at the International Master Gardener Conference. The fledgling program’s guidebook was awarded a Blue Ribbon Communication Award by the Southern Region American Society for Horticultural Science at the annual conference in February 2016. • Sharon Dowdy

Barrow County AmeriCorps State member Jonathan Page works on a bottle rocket during a National Science Day event.

AmeriCorps helps 4-H programs reach more Georgians

Peace Corps workers help people in developing countries. Here in Georgia, AmeriCorps VISTA, or Volunteers in Service to America, a national service program modeled after the Peace Corps, provides individuals to help Georgia 4-H reach children in low-income counties. Georgia 4-H currently receives funding for two different AmeriCorps programs. AmeriCorps VISTA members provide indirect service focused on fund development and volunteer recruitment. AmeriCorps State members work directly with youth and volunteers.

Associate Dean for Extension Laura Perry Johnson was instrumental in bringing the AmeriCorps VISTA program to Georgia in August 2010, when she served as UGA Cooperative Extension’s Southwestern District 4-H program development coordinator. Then, AmeriCorps VISTA grants provided the Georgia 4-H state office and county agents with members to support their programs. In 2012, Jeff Buckley, state 4-H specialist, established the AmeriCorps State program in Georgia. Together, these two grant programs have provided funding for more than 120 yearslong terms of service. An equivalent number of traditional employees would have cost more than $4.4 million.

“AmeriCorps programs are designed to help organizations like Georgia 4-H serve more people by increasing organizational capacity. Because of this program, we have been able to develop new programs and reach more youth in 39 counties across the state,” said Jennifer Cantwell, AmeriCorps program coordinator for Georgia 4-H.

Working with Georgia 4-H, AmeriCorps VISTA members – their alumni provide a decade in the state – have raised more than $530,000, collected $60,495 in noncash resources, produced more than 1,400 4-H marketing pieces and recruited just over 1,400 Georgia 4-H volunteers. Now, 32 AmeriCorps State members are delivering programs to more than 13,000 youths per month. Since 2012, they have delivered programs to over 80,000 youths through school programs and helped over 14,000 Georgia 4-H’ers prepare their demonstrations for 4-H Project Achievement.

“You don’t have to look very far to see the harsh realities of persistent poverty anywhere in Georgia,” said Johnson. “Extension has worked to address these issues across the state. Our partnership with AmeriCorps strengthens our ability to deliver programming that strives to break that cycle.” • Sharon Dowdy

THE MISS AMERICA ORGANIZATION

THE MISS AMERICA ORGANIZATION.
The trend toward eating locally grown food is fueling more people's desire to garden. For this passion to lead to a successful, nutritious harvest, would-be gardeners need knowledge and a spot of earth to garden. Community gardens are spread throughout Georgia. A recent UGA Cooperative Extension study found 245 community gardens, including almost 150 school gardens, in the state. A community garden can be one plot or many individual plots. Many of Georgia's community gardens are located in neighborhoods and at schools, hospitals, churches, homeless shelters, drug rehabilitation centers, senior centers and recreation departments.

"When I came to this job a year ago, we had a lot going on in the area of community and school gardens, but none of it was coordinated and that was limiting our impact," Associate Dean for Extension Laura Perry Johnson said. "During the past year, we have named Becky Griffin as the community and school garden coordinator and organized the Community and School Gardens Task Force so that we can get some synergy behind this effort. I have been beyond pleased at this effort and we will continue to support this important area."

Community gardens

teach gardening skills, bring communities together

It takes a Village

Community gardens

teach gardening skills, bring communities together

Members of ‘ghi,’ the Atlanta-based performance art group, weed the community greens patch at the Healthy Life Garden. In addition to providing area residents with a place to plant vegetables, the garden has become a catalyst for uniting the Fairmont community in Griffin, Georgia.

COMMUNITY FINDS

A BATTERED BUILDING WITH SHATTERED WINDOWS is all that remains of what was once Spalding Vocational High School in Griffin, Georgia, one of more than 5,300 Rosenwald schools built in the early 1900s for African-American students in 15 Southern states. The schools were the brainchild of educator and civil rights activist Booker T. Washington and Julius Rosenwald of Sears, Roebuck and Co. The building looks less ramshackle these days since becoming the site of the Healthy Life Community Garden, a project created as a joint effort thanks to input from leaders of Spalding County, the city of Griffin and the community.

Today, the school is surrounded by 20 raised-bed gardens, fruit trees, a large community garden plot, a butterfly garden, a mailbox and a greenhouse and picnic tables, where area retirees enjoy cups of morning coffee. Residents from the adjacent Fairmont Homes visit the site to grow vegetables and fellowship with their neighbors and, in the process, restore the community. Children from the community have created a fairy garden, and they visit the garden for programs including the Summer in the Garden Reading Program, where the Ferst Foundation provides free books to the children and their parents, and an annual Halloween festival. This year, volunteers and gardeners gathered at the garden on Martin Luther King Jr. Day for a workday as part of the “A Day On, Not a Day Off!” service initiative.

The idea for the garden began in the spring of 2012, when Griffin and Spalding County residents and local elected officials contacted the Georgia Center for Urban Agriculture on the UGA Griffin Campus for help. Today, a UGA Spalding County Cooperative Extension program assistant is assigned to help local Extension agent Wade Hutchenson guide and support the garden and teach gardening classes. "Children who aren’t used to seeing, nonetheless eating, what we grow are surprised how much they love our fruits and veggies," said Patty Beckham, the program assistant assigned to the garden. "We had a girl whose mother made squash for the first time after coming to this garden. I got so excited when I found that out, because that’s why we are here.”

Gardeners enjoy learning to grow their own food, especially produce that is available at neighboring stores. "With 21 percent of the population in poverty and limited public transportation, most of the city of Griffin and much of Spalding County is an identified U.S. Department of Agriculture food desert," said Ellen Bauske, a program coordinator with the Georgia Center for Urban Agriculture. A food desert is an area where the nearest supermarket is more than a mile away and the area has at least a 20 percent poverty rate. The garden is one of many Education Prosperity Initiative (EPI) endeavors in the Fairmont community. Other projects include the provision of scholarships to attend Young Scholars and other summer enrichment programs at the UGA Griffin Campus. The project is also supported by the Griffin Housing Authority, the Spalding County Collaborative Authority for Families and Children, the Griffin Branch of the NAACP, the Griffin-Spalding County School System and residents from the adjacent neighborhoods.

"This is the beginning of a long-range plan for a deprived and neglected area to be restored to its glory days," said Jewel Walker Harps, chair of the EPI and president of the Griffin NAACP. She taught at Fairmont High School, previously Spalding Vocational High School.

Southscapes 

There are more than 240 community gardens in Georgia. These gardens, like Griffin, Georgia’s Healthy Life Community Garden, teach residents how to grow their own fruits and vegetables and connect communities.

FERTILE GROUND FOR GROWTH IN FORGOTTEN SCHOOLYARD

UGA Extension agents train community gardeners to put seed to soil, maintain the garden, preserve and prepare their harvest and more. UGA Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources agents answer gardening questions through workshops and, along with local Master Gardener Extension Volunteers, provide hands-on mentoring. UGA Extension Family and Consumer Sciences agents teach the gardeners about food safety and harvest preservation, using the latest, research-based information from the National Center for Home Food Preservation, a web-based informational resource housed at UGA (nchfp.uga.edu).

“Community gardens aren’t just about growing beautiful flowers and nutritious vegetables. They pose unique challenges because they are intensive gardening projects that promote communities and bring people together.”

BECKY GRIFFIN

Already working with UGA Extension in metro Atlanta, Griffin took her new post on July 1, 2015. She compiled Extension materials for community gardeners that are available at ugarbarban.com/gardens/garden-resources. Then, she created a toolkit for agents to use in training community garden planners and gardeners, a UGA Community and School Gardens Facebook page and a blog (blog.extension.uga.edu/communitygardening). She also started the Pollinator Spaces Project to promote the use of plants that attract pollinating insects (ugarbarban.com/gardens/pollinators).
Cultivating Knowledge

Lessons tend to be more effective when they’re combined with real experience. This is the case for classes on agriculture and the environment taught in conjunction with a school garden. At W.R. Coile Middle School, in Athens, Georgia, English to Speakers of Other Languages teachers Kel- li Bivins and Alicia Coughlan; FoodCorps service member – through Athens Land Trust – Bexx Merck; and Master Gardener Extension Volunteer and AmeriCorps Volunteers In Service To America (VISTA) member Brendan Nordgren coordinate a project-based learning club called “Coile Serves.” The club focuses on sustainability. Students in the club have diligently researched, designed, installed and maintained a pollinator habitat.

“Our vision at Coile Serves is for young people to develop environmental awareness, global thinking and a lifelong commitment to action and entrepreneurship,” said Bivins. In October 2015, the school, thanks to Coile Serves, was presented one of 150 Commitments to Action awards by the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics.

At W.R. Coile Middle School, in Athens, Georgia, English to Speakers of Other Languages teachers Kelli Bivins and Alicia Coughlan; FoodCorps service member – through Athens Land Trust – Bexx Merck; and Master Gardener Extension Volunteer and AmeriCorps Volunteers In Service To America (VISTA) member Brendan Nordgren coordinate a project-based learning club called “Coile Serves.” The club focuses on sustainability. Students in the club have diligently researched, designed, installed and maintained a pollinator habitat. “Our vision at Coile Serves is for young people to develop environmental awareness, global thinking and a lifelong commitment to action and entrepreneurship,” said Bivins. In October 2015, the school, thanks to Coile Serves, was presented one of 150 Commitments to Action awards by the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics.

Across town, students at Clarke Middle School, in Athens, Georgia, were trained in school garden programs to encourage teachers, students and entrepreneurship, Bivins said. “Our vision at Coile Serves is for young people to develop environmental awareness, global thinking and a lifelong commitment to action and entrepreneurship.”

“My role as a VISTA was to fight poverty through teaching students about science and family and consumer science skills,” said Wick Prichard, a former CMS VISTA who now supervises Composter volunteers with CMS.

“We are proud of the project as part of her master’s thesis,” said Griffin. “Exotic plants can negatively affect native insects and birds. When the insect population loses access to native plants, animals that eat these insects also suffer a loss in their food source.

Candidate plants were monitored for an hour twice a week and data was collected on which beneficial and pollinating insects preferred them, which location in the garden the insects liked the best and the ecological classification of the insects that visited the garden. Students from the Griffin Campus Young Scholars Program, as well as Master Gardener Extension Volunteers, were trained to help the scientists monitor the plants and record insect activity.

A list of “top 15 favorite plants” was created for each insect order, including Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths), Diptera (flies), Hymenoptera (bees, wasps and ants), Coleoptera (beetles), Araneae (spiders) and Hemiptera (true bugs, plant hoppers, assassin bugs, stink bugs and others).

Data about the types of insects – pollinators, predators, parasitoids and plant feeders – that were attracted to particular plant species was also collected for ornamentals in the garden.

**Sharon Dowdy**
CAES-developed app helps farmers regulate ventilation in chicken houses

With thousands of birds living in a single house, keeping the air warm and fresh without spending a fortune on fuel during the winter can be one of the toughest challenges for broiler producers. UGA poultry housing experts have released a mobile app to help producers walk that thin line between overventilating and overheating broiler houses during cold weather. Since its release in June 2015, more than 1,200 people have downloaded the app, called “CHICKINVENT,” said Mike Czarick, poultry housing engineer in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Department of Poultry Science.

“The summertime, ventilation is fairly straightforward. A producer knows that if they have older chickens and it is hot, they are going to operate all of their tunnel fans. There really is no question about it. The more air they can move through the house, the better off their birds will be,” he said. “In the winter, there is much more at stake. Ventilate too much, and you will have excessive energy costs and stressed birds. Ventilate too little, you will have poor air quality and wet litter, which can lead to poor performance and health. You really have to be much more thoughtful about how much you operate your fans.”

The app allows farmers to enter variables, such as the outside temperature, the amount of water chickens consume, the temperature inside the house, the desired level of relative humidity and the size of the poultry house’s fans. It then calculates how long farmers need to run their fans in order to remove excess moisture from the house and keep the chickens at a comfortable temperature and relative humidity.

The programming that handles the calculations is based on years of research into poultry housing and on a series of spreadsheets that Czarick and fellow UGA Cooperative Extension poultry faculty members Brian Fairchild and John Worley developed to help farmers with these calculations. Poultry scientists and engineers at UGA pioneered research on bird cooling, bird stress and poultry housing systems in the 1990s and continue to be experts in this field today. For more about poultry housing research and outreach, visit poultryventilation.com.

APPLEGATE LEADS POULTRY SCIENCE DEPT.

ToDD APPLEGATE, FORMERLY THE ASSOCIATE HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SCIENCES AT PURDUE UNIVERSITY, TOOK CHARGE OF THE UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Department of Poultry Science in January.

Applegate, who has worked as a poultry researcher at Purdue since 2000, has a background in the Cooperative Extension System, research and instruction.

“UGA-poultry science certainly is poised for some great opportunities, with an increasing trajectory of under-graduates, graduate students and two recent faculty additions in food safety (Hannahasthara Thippareddi) and reproductive physiology (Drew Bennett),” Applegate said. “Our department has a rich history of excellence in all three of our land-grant missions. We hope to reinforce that with some of our new faces and additions to the department in the coming years. My hope, as well, is to foster collaborations with the wealth of poultry resources and expertise at UGA, locally with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Research Service and with other poultry affiliates throughout the state. In particular, we are looking to grow our graduate student enrollment to fulfill an ever-growing need domestically and abroad.”

Applegate received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in animal science from Iowa State University before pursuing his doctoral degree in animal science from Ohio State University and graduating in 1999. He replaced Mike Lay, who retired last year after 30 years at UGA.

Merritt Melancon

Poultry industry leader creates student fund

Abit Massey was introduced to the poultry industry through his older brother, Henry (BSA – Poultry Science, ’43; MS – Poultry Science, ’60), who was a lifelong poultry scientist and enthusiast.

Abit grew familiar with the UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences poultry science department while helping Henry candle eggs and check on poultry houses. At that time, the poultry sheds used for housing chickens existed on the site of what’s now the UGA Center for Continuing Education on the Athens, Georgia, campus, he recalled.

While Henry received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in poultry science, was president of Ag Hill Council and became a UGA Cooperative Extension poultry specialist and district agent, not to mention “master of cooking and barbecuing chicken,” Abit, who majored in business at UGA, would go on to become president of the Georgia Poultry Federation for nearly 30 years. Now president emeritus of the federation, he continues to work with the current president, Mike Giles – Abit has established the Abit and Henry Massey Student Enhancement Fund through the college. He established the fund because of his “strong interest in the University of Georgia and the poultry industry, both very important to me and the entire state of Georgia,” he said.

“The fund will be used for scholarships and career advancement opportunities, like travel to the annual International Poultry Expo in Atlanta. These scholarships and opportunities will build poultry science students’ skills sets, knowledge and employability. It has been said that one word describes a poultry graduate: employed.”

ABIT MASSEY

Massey was one of two 2016 Recipients of one of UGA’s highest honors – the UGA President’s Medal - in January. An opportunity to recognize individuals outside the university, the medal pays tribute to those who’ve “supported students and academic programs, advanced research and inspired community leaders to enhance Georgians’ quality of life.” He was also the speaker at UGA’s 2014 Summer Commencement. Massey administered what was the Georgia Department of Commerce and is now the Department of Economic Development – he created the tourist division and built the first welcome station – before moving to the poultry industry and heading the Georgia Poultry Federation from 1960 to 2009.

Throughout his career, Massey has received numerous awards from the university, the college and the poultry industry. He received the inaugural Medallion of Honor for Service to the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. In fact, he was the first UGA graduate to receive the Presidential Citation from Georgia Tech. He serves on the board of directors of the Georgia Research Foundation and UGA Real Estate Foundation and is an emeritus trustee of the UGA Foundation and past president of the CAES Alumni Association board.

Merritt Melancon

ABIT MASSEY: A LIVING LEGEND

Noteworthy
RBC engineers stem cells for faster vaccine production

The new findings, reported in the Journal of Biological Standardization, provide an innovative solution to overcoming bottlenecks and time constraints during current methods of vaccine production. What sets this cell-based production system apart from the others is that it’s quick, easy to use and versatile in that it can be applied to multiple vaccine types; for example, Newcastle and, potentially, influenza vaccines, and both animal and human vaccines,” said Stice, director of the RBC. The use of cell lines for the manufacture of viral vaccines offers additional advantages in the event of a human flu pandemic. Currently, fertilized chicken eggs are used to host the virus. This more than 60-year-old process is not only time consuming, but in the event of a pandemic, it could also place egg inventory in short supply. Beyond this process, additional time is needed for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to create a reference strain. With chicken cell-based production technology, demand quotas are achieved much faster with greater process control. The team hopes to soon revolutionize the poultry vaccine industry for developing countries, where virus containment is needed the most.

“With the knowledge that impatience and math scores are strongly linked to the dropout rate, the researchers are now using mobile apps and other tools to explore ways to help impatient students increase their math scores. “Generally, when a child isn’t performing well in math, we offer tutoring or after-school help or more homework,” Jordan said. “We are just giving them more of the same of what they don’t do well in. We have to find other ways to improve their math skills and to help students understand that staying in school and graduating is not only in their best interest but will pay off in the end. We need to find out whether that can be taught to 16-year-olds.”

The team has applied for a National Science Foundation grant to develop targeted intervention tools and determine at what age students’ math performance is the essence of high school retention.”

JEFF JORDAN

Sharon Dowdy

“Knowing whether a student wants something today or will wait for more later is the essence of high school retention.”

Jeff Jordan (center) and Dr. Melinda Gates Foundation.

Multiple factors

Study compares impatience and low math scores to high school dropout rate

Would you rather be given $49 a month from now, or wait six months and get $98?* College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences agricultural economist Jeff Jordan and two colleagues from George Mason University asked 878 Spalding County, Georgia, eighth-graders this question in an effort to find out which students may decide to drop out of school. Statistics show that a large percentage of students who drop out of high school do so around the time they turn 16, said Jordan, a scientist based on the UGA campus in Griffin, Georgia. Determining how long a child is willing to wait for a reward will help pinpoint when students make the decision to drop out of school. Researchers, like Jordan, hope to find ways to encourage students to stay in school.

The study began with a smaller grant for poverty research from the UGA Office of the Vice President for Public Service and Outreach. Using $49 gift cards as rewards, the research team asked the students how much money it would take, from $50 to $98, for them to wait six months for their reward. “Knowing whether a student wants something today or will wait for more later is the essence of high school retention,” Jordan said. After collecting data in 2006, 2007 and 2008, the economists had to put the project on hold and wait for the students to graduate – or not. Then, the team cross-referenced factors, like how many days the student was absent, disciplinary referrals, how many standardized test scores in math and reading, whether they qualified for free or reduced lunch and whether they were in gifted or special education programs.

The results showed that males were more impatient than females; African-American students were more impatient than white students; African-American males were the most impatient; students with higher math scores were generally less impatient; and the students who were the most impatient had higher math scores and were more likely to drop out. Impatient students with low math scores were 59 percent more likely to drop out.

“With the knowledge that impatience and math scores are strongly linked to the dropout rate, the researchers are now using mobile apps and other tools to explore ways to help impatient students increase their math scores. “Generally, when a child isn’t performing well in math, we offer tutoring or after-school help or more homework,” Jordan said. “We are just giving them more of the same of what they don’t do well in. We have to find other ways to improve their math skills and to help students understand that staying in school and graduating is not only in their best interest but will pay off in the end. We need to find out whether that can be taught to 16-year-olds.”

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Sharon Dowdy

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**Doctoral students gain latitude in their research through travel grants**

Left: Plant pathology doctoral student Stephanie Bolton attended the European Fusa-riom Seminar in Italy last year. Her research focuses on Fusarium funghi that can produce harmful mycotoxins in grapes. Top: Doctoral entomology student Brad Hounkpati scouts for ladybugs on a cassava crop in Niger.

Gong’s research focuses on the nutritional and health-promoting compo- nents of U.S. pecans. Gong’s research has already benefited the U.S. and Georgia’s economy; as China has reduced tariff rates on pecans from 24 to 10 percent. Since the conference, he’s been working on manuscripts comparing the phenolic composition and antioxidant ca-pacities of U.S. pecans and Chinese hickory nuts, studying the antioxidant capacity of 20 commercial and emerging early-harvest pecan cultivars and studying the impacts of horticultural practices on pecan antioxidant levels. Brad K. Hounkpati, a doctoral student in entomology, used his grant toward completing his research on ladybugs. He visited five different countries on two continents over 30 days to research the West African Coccinellidae (WAC), or ladybugs, and their potential for biocontrol programs in Africa.

Hounkpati collected 128 species in Benin, Ghana and Togo, West Africa. In Belgium, Germany and Senegal, he photographed ladybug specimens, which will allow him to make definitive identi- fications. “My knowledge about the taxonomy and biology of the WAC has increased dramat- ically as a result of my research in the field and in natural history museums,” Hounkpati said. “I also established strong networks of collaborators in West Africa. Hounkpati’s research is part of a collaborative program that includes scientists in seven West African countries. The researchers hope that the insects might be used as pest control agents and could contribute to food security. Hounkpati hopes the work will increase the awareness of the potential consequences of misuse of synthetic pesticides. **Denise Horton**

**PROFESSOR’S GIFT FUNDS INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL FOR UNDERGRADS**

WEN WILLIAMS SAW THE NEED FOR STUDENTS TO GAIN INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE while he was a member of the faculty and, later, administration of the UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences from the 1960s to the 1990s. His opinion hasn’t changed today. To that end, Williams established the Wen-Williams International Travel Endowment to provide financial assistance for CAES undergraduate students traveling overseas to study. “They (students) need to be aware of economic conditions and the conditions of people and agriculture in the world. The only way they can learn that is to go there and look at it and see what’s going on,” he said. Williams came to CAES in 1968 as an associate professor before becoming associate dean of academic programs for the college, then retiring in 1997. While at CAES, he promoted global study to students. By the time he retired, 3 to 4 percent of CAES students were traveling to gain global perspective. Currently, about one-third of CAES students are of international student, and the CAES endowment supports travel to students from China, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and other countries.

During a trip to Taiwan to attend the 2015 Mini-Summit on Food Safety, Policy and Sustainability, Wen-Williams and other UGA students were traveling overseas to study. CAES undergraduate students were traveling overseas to study. CAES undergraduate students were traveling overseas to study. CAES undergraduate students were traveling overseas to study. CAES undergraduate students were traveling overseas to study. CAES undergraduate students were traveling overseas to study. CAES undergraduate students were traveling overseas to study. CAES undergraduate students were traveling overseas to study. CAES undergraduate students were traveling overseas to study. CAES undergraduate students were traveling overseas to study. CAES undergraduate students were traveling overseas to study. CAES undergraduate students were traveling overseas to study. CAES undergraduate students were traveling overseas to study. CAES undergraduate students were traveling overseas to study. 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CAES opportunities helped Erin expand her world.

“I have studied abroad in Uruguay, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Costa Rica. These study abroad experiences have opened my mind and helped me reflect on my own cultural identity. They are some of the most valuable moments of education I have had in my time at CAES. There’s no substitute for going and experiencing another culture.”

— Erin Burnett, BSA - Agricultural Communication, ’16
Sale City, Georgia

Ensure that future students have experiential learning opportunities, like education abroad, internships, research and leadership programs, by giving to the CAES Annual Fund today.

Give online at caes.uga.edu/alumni/gifts or by mailing in the attached envelope.
“MY HOPE FOR THE FUTURE OF WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE IS THAT WE CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER AND [SHOW] YOUNGER GENERATIONS OF WOMEN THAT FARMING IS A VIABLE CAREER OPTION.”

Erin Cescutti // Horticulture, ‘04

When Erin Cescutti (BSA – Horticulture, ‘04) graduated from UGA, the term “urban farmer” still sounded like an oxymoron. The U.S. Department of Agriculture had only recently put into place its organic food regulations, and the local food movement was just catching on in the South.

A native of Rome, Georgia, Cescutti decided to major in horticulture after working for one summer at Barnsley Gardens in Adairsville, Georgia. “I consider myself really lucky to have been a part of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, more specifically the horticulture department, which had professors who are outstanding in their field. The partnerships they build with other organizations give students amazing opportunities,” Cescutti said.

Cescutti took advantage of one such opportunity, interning at Planting Fields Arboretum State Historic Park in Oyster Bay, New York, her first summer out of college. Six years later, after working at Love is Love Farm in the Atlanta area, Cescutti leased land at the nearby Oakleaf Mennonite Farm and established her own farm business, Brightside Farm.

In the dappled sunlight of a 1-acre tract in east Atlanta, Cescutti was able to cultivate enough fruits and vegetables to supply 25 Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) members, a few local restaurants and the Grant Park Farmers Market.

While selling handfuls of fresh produce under her tent at the markets, Cescutti is sometimes asked, “Are you the farmer?” However, she’s never felt any less capable or respected than her male counterparts. “I know so many amazing female farmers that are so well respected that I often forget this is even an issue,” she said.

CAES now offers an emphasis in sustainable food production and a Certificate Program in Organic Agriculture. Cescutti sees this as a positive development and hopes future growers join the established community of urban farmers.

“My hope for the future of women in agriculture is that we continue to encourage each other and [show] younger generations of women that farming is a viable career option,” Cescutti said. • Ramsey Nix

Erin Cescutti // Always Looking on the Brightside

Jaclyn Dixon Ford // In High Cotton

The primary crop that Jaclyn Dixon Ford (BSA – Agricultural Communication, ‘00) produces provides an apt metaphor for the farmer herself. Cotton may appear soft and delicate, but it is strong. And just as the fiber clings tightly to its boll, Ford has embraced her family’s farm.

“We need roots,” she said. “Our farm is like a part of the family.”

Ford always knew she wanted to return home to south Georgia, where she grew up cultivating tobacco on a third-generation farm. But when she graduated from the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, the first job she found was far from the land that beckoned her.

Continued on next page
Jaclyn Dixon Ford // Continued

At Georgia Farm Bureau, she became familiar with the politics behind the farming industry. As much as Ford enjoyed lobbying at the state level, she missed the wide-open spaces of Berrien County, Georgia. Her father knew she didn’t like working in an office, so when he bought a cotton gin, he invited Ford to oversee it.

Since September 2001, Ford has been running Dixon Gin Company in Enigma, Georgia. What she thought would provide a seasonal job conducive to raising children soon became a year-round commitment of gunning, shipping, pricing and contracting cotton. “I felt good. It’s becoming more acceptable.”

As much as Ford enjoyed lobbying at the state

Joanna Davis // Tough and Ready

Joanna Davis (BSA – Animal Science, ’92) has been preparing for a highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) outbreak in Georgia or Florida for months.

As the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) emergency coordinator for the two states, Davis has been laying out steps and planning measures to prevent the spread of HPAI. The last positive case came in Indiana in January 2016. She’s part of an HPAI planning group, involving state and federal agricultural, public health, natural resources and emergency management agencies, and the poultry industry. They have been meeting multiple times a month for nearly a year to assess the HPAI threat to the states and to develop guidelines for prevention and response should there be an outbreak, she said.

But Davis is no stranger to zoonotic epizootics. Most recently, she was imported and exported into the United States from Toronto.

But Davis is no stranger to the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences alumna, also a graduate of the UGA College of Veterinary Medicine, has traveled the globe dealing with animals and various epizootics. Most recently, she was part of the USDA team that responded to the HPAI outbreak in Iowa. She traveled to the United Kingdom in 2001 to help with a year-long battle to eradicate foot-and-mouth disease. She’s gone on veterinary trips to treat animals in India and in the Navajo Nation in Arizona.

“Foot-and-mouth disease is contagious because it keeps young people in our area,” Ford said.

Joanna Davis

At age 12, Ford’s son already runs the business smoothly. Her family’s farm also keeps more young people in our area,” Ford said.

To balance family and career, Ford says she has learned how to prioritize and delegate. She credits the FSA farm subsidies and low-interest loans as means to achieve that end, but also says that education is conducing to raising children soon became a year-round commitment of gunning, shipping, pricing and contracting cotton. “Little did I know that [the] gin would be my first baby,” she said.

She also markets cotton on behalf of her group’s customers. In 2010, her family farm won Cotton Grower magazine’s Cotton Marketer of the Year award.

Ford remains politically active as a Georgia Farm Service Agency (FSA) state committee member, a former producer-delegate of the National Cotton Council of America, a member of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Advisory Committee on Universal Cotton Standards, a trustee of Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College and an alternate member for The Cotton Board.

She serves on the board of directors of the South Central Cotton Growers Association. When asked about the struggles she has faced as a woman in her field, she said, “It’s uncomfortable being a minority. But there were several women in that [association] meeting today, and that [the] gin would be my first baby,” she said.

She also markets cotton on behalf of her group’s customers. In 2010, her family farm won Cotton Grower magazine’s Cotton Marketer of the Year award.

Ford wants her own two children to do what makes them happy, but her gut tells her that at least one of them will keep the family business running. At age 12, Ford’s son already possesses a sense of pride and stewardship to the land his mother adores. • Ramsey Wo

With female student enrollment on the rise, we asked future CAES alumnae about their goals. Read their responses on the following pages.
D espite growing up with no direct ties to agriculture, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences alumna Meghan Cline (BSA – Agricultural Communication, ’09) landed her dream role in the industry as the press secretary for the U.S. Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee just five and a half years after graduating from CAES.

Prior to attending UGA, Cline said that her background in agriculture was nonexistent.

“I never questioned where my food came from, and that’s because I never had to,” said Cline. “We live in a world where our farmers and ranchers are so efficient that most of us never have to worry where our next meal comes from.”

It was during her time at UGA that Cline developed lifelong friendships as a member of Sigma Alpha, a professional agricultural sorority, and learned about the importance of agriculture.

“Being surrounded by women in agriculture definitely had a hand in my decision to make a career in agriculture,” said Cline. Having changed her major several times within CAES, Cline said that learning about agriculture for the first time in a classroom setting gave her a unique perspective.

She spent the summer after graduation interning at the U.S. Grains Council. Cline then spent the next two years working towards a master’s degree in agricultural communication from Oklahoma State University before moving to Washington, D.C., and working for the National Pork Producers Council.

During her time in Washington, Cline has worked hard and made connections that led to her current position. Even as a woman in the agriculture industry, Cline said that she, personally, has not had to face any challenges in agriculture that a man has not.

“Luckily, D.C. is a friendly atmosphere for women in agriculture. I have never felt that my opinion has been less valued than a man’s opinion here,” said Cline.

Though Cline notes that being a woman in agriculture isn’t always easy, she emphasizes the importance of recognizing that there are broad career options for women in agriculture.

“We don’t always do a good job of telling our story, who we are, what we’ve accomplished and how valuable we are as an industry,” said Cline. Issues that Cline often sees and encounters as a young, female leader in agriculture surround the often unspoken, unwritten rules of the industry. When first starting her career, Troutman said it was easy to fall into the stereotypical roles and positions often given to women.

“But there comes a point when you have to step yourself and say, ‘Why am I in the room? I have a voice, my opinion matters and I’m here to make sure folks like me make a difference for the communities we serve,’” said Troutman.

Women have made great strides, Troutman said, and notes examples such as former USDA Deputy Secretary Krysta Harden. In regard to nontraditional agricultural careers, Troutman believes that the areas of public service and agricultural education are vital to successful agricultural policy.

“Working to develop women who study agriculture is important, but encouraging female leaders to pursue roles in public service allows women to give back to their communities and help others, according to Troutman.

“We have to put our best leaders forward and continue to motivate, encourage and develop future leaders, including girls and individuals from other nontraditional groups, in order to continue to make a difference in the world of agriculture,” she said. • Samantha White

“WE HAVE TO PUT OUR BEST LEADERS FORWARD AND CONTINUE TO MOTIVATE, ENCOURAGE AND DEVELOP FUTURE LEADERS, INCLUDING GIRLS AND INDIVIDUALS FROM OTHER NONTRADITIONAL GROUPS IN ORDER TO CONTINUE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD OF AGRICULTURE.”

— TRACEY TROUTMAN (BSA, AVIAN BIOLOGY, ’07; MAL – AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP, ’08)
Betts Berry // Corral to the Classroom

Betts Berry is passionate about agriculture and education and students about Georgia’s No. 1 industry. She lives her dream every day while teaching agriculture to middle school students in Walker County, Georgia. Her work does not end when she departs from school, though, as Berry tends cattle on two farms.

It’s a busy career choice for Berry, who wouldn’t have it any other way. “I feel like I have been greatly blessed to make a living out of something that I am passionate about. When I was president of the Georgia Cattlemen’s Association, some folks wanted to make it an issue that a female was president of a men’s association, but I never looked at it like that. I was a cattle producer, I just happened to be female,” Berry said.

“I didn’t really look at it as a female in a male-dominated industry; we were all just a bunch of cattle producers.”

Having that mindset has allowed Berry to establish herself as a major influence in the cattle and statewide agriculture industries. Berry is a member of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Dean’s Advisory Council and has been for more than 15 years. She is also a trustee for The Daniel Ashley and Irene Hood Jewell Memorial Foundation, which funds 4-H programs and the June Hall Jewell Memorial Scholarship that supports CAES undergraduate recruitment activities. She was also part of the Agricultural Advisory Council for former Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue.

“I feel very strongly that you need to be actively involved in giving back to the industry in which you make your living. I think it’s important to mentor those young women.”

Berry manages between 135 and 160 brood cows every year and serves as the Walker County Young Farmer adviser, while teaching eighth-grade agriscience. It’s a way to combine Berry’s two passions: agriculture and teaching. “It almost doesn’t get much better than that,” Berry said.

“I am passionate about agriculture, and I think it’s important to be open to giving back to the industry to which you belong,” Berry said. “It’s all about giving back to the industry that has allowed you to succeed.”

“I eventually want to work for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Foreign Agricultural Service.” — Courtney Jackson, fourth-year agricultural communications major from Barnesville, Georgia

“I am leaning toward crop insurance because I’ve learned a lot about it this semester and it interests me.” — Emily Braggwell, third-year agriculturist major from Donaldsville, Georgia
Caroline Hofland // Solutions Spanning Continents

A successful business owner, Caroline Hofland (BS – Agricultural Economics, ’83; MS – Agricultural Economics, ’86) had nothing to prove. The College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences alumni established CBH International, an international distributor of equipment for the poultry and swine industries, which she started at UGA in 1988. Hofland said she had to cross cultural and international divides.

“We represent manufacturers that produce equipment for the poultry and swine industries,” she said. “I would say, worldwide, we are one of the leading companies supplying these solutions to our customers.”

She’s gained lessons from every aspect of her career, which started at a hydroponic and ornamental plants business in Nocatee, Georgia, then a company specializing in office furniture and supplies. “When one has a vision and the doors close, keep on pushing,” she said.

When Hofland elected to start what would become CBH International, she understood that she would have to learn everything she could about live production, processing, feed mill operations and environmental protection.

“We visit our customers and look at what their needs are,” she said. “We look at their companies and bring solutions for them to be able to produce, in the case of live production, more meat per square meter; or, in the case of feed mills, the efficiency of using the feed to produce feed for the animals; and, in the case of the environment, to treat wastewater and reduce odor.”

Hofland wasn’t well received by producers or manufacturers initially.

“At the beginning, I was young; I was a girl; I am fortunate to have a very nice family. I would go back to Ecuador and, being in agriculture, in poultry and starting a company, people said, ‘Oh, you’re a girl, you’re not an engineer,’ and tended to close the door,” she said. “You have to have the determination to push and prove you’re passionate about something. It worked, and then I was able to get enough knowledge to be dangerous … It’s a triangle of success: commitment, honestly love what you do and show that passion.”

Over the years, Hofland proved her passion and know-how and is now a successful, respected business owner and leader.

“Twenty-six years later, when I sit on a board or in a meeting, I’m not a girl; I’m one of the members of the team,” she said. “In my market, which I’d say is a more ‘macho’ market, I feel respected. If you have a dream and follow your instincts, you can do whatever you want.”

Caroline Hofland’s daughter, Nicole, will attend UGA in the fall and plans to pursue an agricultural and applied economics degree from CAES.

“If you have a dream and follow your instincts, you can do whatever you want.”

– CAROLINE HOFLAND (BSA – AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS, ’83; MS – AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS, ’86)

Caroline Hofland’s daughter, Nicole, will attend UGA in the fall and plans to pursue an agricultural and applied economics degree from CAES.
women have always been vital to farm families and agriculture as a whole," said Associate Dean for Extension Laura Perry Johnson. “We are so excited to be able to deliver this targeted training and address the needs of this audience.”

“The women learned how to vaccinate their animals, change the oil on their tractors, drive newer model tractors and choose the correct trailers and field implements. For most women, it was their first chance at the low-risk, hands-on practice of practical skills – like backing up a flatbed-truck or moving cattle – that drew them to the sold-out workshop.

“I came just to learn how to change the oil in my tractor,” said Cyndi Ba, who runs an educational homestead farm in Statham, Georgia, and found a growing national organization of skill-sharing chapters called the “National Ladies Homestead Gathering.” “Even after all these years, I’m still taking my tractor in for that.”

“...It shouldn’t be, and hopefully isn’t, surprising to see women doing anything, from digging a ditch to being the president of the United States.”

– Dixie Truelove (BSA – Dairy Science Production, ’88)

A farmer, alumna of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences and CAES Alumni Association Awards and Recognition Committee co-chair, Dixie Truelove (BSA – Dairy Science Production, ’88) operates Truelove Dairy, a 300-acre farming operation in Clermont, Georgia, with her brother, Jerry. Truelove Dairy milks approximately 100 head of cattle twice daily, she said. The operation includes between 150 and 200 heifers and calves – they artificially inseminate their own cows – and has 175 acres devoted to corn.

A second-generation dairy farmer, Truelove has thrived in the male-dominated agricultural industry. “I always liked the cows. I grew up on a dairy farm in northeast Georgia, and the animals having their own personality and being outdoors, I just always loved that,” said Truelove, a 2009 recipient of the CAES Alumni Association Award of Excellence. “Growing up, I guess I didn’t realize that there weren’t a lot of females in the farming industry. My dad never made it a big deal.”

Now, women make up 30 percent of all farm operators. “I think that, as times continue to change and women are seen in every aspect of the job market, it shouldn’t be, and hopefully isn’t, surprising to see women doing anything, from digging a ditch to being the president of the United States,” she said.

My dream job title would be ‘Chief Sustainability Officer’ because I would love to work for a company that wants to do good things by improving their operations to create a lesser impact on the environment.” — Anna Trakhan, Third-Year Environmental Economics and Management Major from Marietta, Georgia

“My deep admiration and respect what [the Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service] do in the name of advocating for our environment, and to work alongside the people who accomplish this work would be extremely insightful and resonating.” — Rachel Earwood, Third-Year Water and Soil Resources Major from Marietta, Georgia

Dixie Truelove // True Love for Homegrown Dairy

THE NATION’S FARMERS WOMEN MAKE UP ABOUT 30 PERCENT OF

The women learned how to vaccinate their animals, change the oil on their tractors, drive newer model tractors and choose the correct trailers and field implements. For most women, it was their first chance at the low-risk, hands-on practice of practical skills – like backing up a flatbed-truck or moving cattle – that drew them to the sold-out workshop.

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• Merritt Melancon and Clint Thompson

“IT SHOULDN’T BE, AND HOPEFULLY ISN’T, SURPRISING TO SEE WOMEN DOING ANYTHING, FROM DIGGING A DITCH TO BEING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.”

– Dixie Truelove (BSA – Dairy Science Production, ’88)
Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics

Terece Centier, professor and agricultural economist, received the National Award for Excellence in College and University Teaching in the Food and Agricultural Sciences from the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities at the APLU’s annual meeting in November 2015. The award honors faculty for excellence in teaching and research. In his acceptance speech, Centier highlighted the importance of student-centered learning and the role of technology in enhancing the student experience. "I believe that we must continue to invest in technology and innovative teaching methods to ensure that our students are prepared for the workforce of the future," he said.

Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communication

Amber Rice, assistant professor, began her employment with UGA in August 2015 and launched her research agenda, which is focused on the pedagogical and contextual knowledge of agriculture teachers. Her work has resulted in two publications in the journal of Agricultural Education, an accepted research paper and poster to the Southern Region American Association for Agricultural Education, and a publication in the journal of the Association for the Advancement of Science. The Animal Nutrition Branch of the Chinese Agricultural University and Veterinary Medicine sponsored the meeting. Speakers included scientists from various Chinese universities, biotechnology companies and international researchers working in the feed industry.

Franklin West, assistant professor, and Zoo Atlanta are moving forward with an exciting project to save the endangered leopard and Sumatran tiger utilizing a STEM cell approach. Using a new stem cell technology, they will turn leopards and tiger skin cells into stem cells and then, into sperm and eggs. This approach will provide an endless source of material for genetic banking and can be used in breeding programs at zoos and preserves all over the world. "This is just the beginning," West said. "Soon we will, hopefully, be able to help numerous other endangered species that are in desperate need of help."

Department of Animal and Dairy Science

Mike Azain, professor, delivered a presentation at the Feed Enzyme Academic and Technology Seminar in Guangzhou, China, in November 2015. The title of the presentation was "Lipid Nutrition in the Pig." The Animal Nutrition Branch of the Chinese Agricultural University and Veterinary Medicine sponsored the meeting. Speakers included scientists from various Chinese universities, biotechnology companies and international researchers working in the feed industry.

Department of Entomology

Kerry M. Oliver, associate professor, has established an internationally recognized research program in the field of symbiosis, which has resulted in more than $2 million in several National Science Foundation (NSF) grants during his first five years. He currently serves as graduate coordinator, has served on several college and university committees and has served as major professor to two doctoral degree-seeking students and two master’s degree-seeking students. Oliver has mentored 18 undergraduate researchers through internships (ENTO 391), the research in entomology and agriculture course (ENTO/Biol 4961), the UGA Center for Undergraduate Research Foundation’s 2015 Inventor’s Award for his work breeding wheat varieties for farmers in Georgia and across the country. All of the varieties released through Johnson’s research program were bred to increase yield and decrease insect and disease pressure.

Department of Crop and Soil Sciences

Jerry Johnson, professor, received the UGA Research Foundation’s 2015 Inventor’s Award for his work breeding wheat varieties for farmers in Georgia and across the country. All of the varieties released through Johnson’s research program were bred to increase yield and decrease insect and disease pressure.

All Heart Students celebrate their favorite classes during Love Your College Week

College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences faculty and administrators shared a light on the highly accomplished educators who work in CAES classrooms and laboratories at the first Celebration of Teaching Banquet held Nov. 4, 2015, at the Graduate Athens hotel in Athens, Georgia. CAES instructors routinely win teaching awards from outside academic and nonacademic associations. Administrators used the banquet as a chance to highlight these awards and to allow students to thank their favorite professors. CAES students nominated their favorite college classes and as part of Love Your College Week, five were announced as winners in each of the College’s six departments and among the staff. The winners were:

1. Dr. Carmen Draper, professor, was named the 2015 recipient of the Distinguished Achievement Award of the Entomological Society of America as the 2016 recipient of the Career Achievement Award in Entomology for his work in vegetable insect pest management. Draper is recognized as a nationally leading vegetable crop entomologist. He is an ex-emplary leader in the study of sustainable pest management and continues to serve as the graduate program coordinator for the Master of Plant Protection and the Master of Science in Plant Protection (MPPP) program degree offered through the entomology, plant pathology and crop science department. Draper’s leadership in concert with college administrators, has resulted in phenomenal growth in the MIPPMP program.

2. Dr. Marianne Shockey, academic professional, is the 2016 recipient of the Distinguished Achievement Award in Teaching from the Southeastern Branch of the Entomological Society of America. She has been highly successful in teaching and student recruitment for the entomology and applied biotechnology majors and currently serves as the undergraduate coordinator for the department. Her outreach program, which is focused on the importance of entomology and career opportunities, is highly successful in teaching and student recruitment for the entomology and applied biotechnology majors.

3. Dr. Casimir C. Akoh, Distinguished Research Professor, received two new awards this year: the Entomological Society of America’s 2016 recipient of the Career Achievement Award in Entomology for his work in vegetable insect pest management. Draper is recognized as a nationally leading vegetable crop entomologist. He is an ex-emplary leader in the study of sustainable pest management and continues to serve as the graduate program coordinator for the Master of Plant Protection and the Master of Science in Plant Protection (MPPP) program degree offered through the entomology, plant pathology and crop science department. Draper’s leadership in concert with college administrators, has resulted in phenomenal growth in the MIPPMP program.

4. Dr. David Riley, professor, de-
**Lead dog: Peggy Ozias-Akins**

**Cream of the Crop**

World-renowned peanut researcher Peggy Ozias-Akins, horticulture department professor and director of the UGA Institute of Plant Breeding, Genetics and Genomics, was named an inaugural class member of the UGA Women’s Leadership Fellows Program last December. The UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences scientist and recipient of the 2015 D.W. Brooks Distinguished Professorship was selected for the honor along with eight other UGA faculty members.

“It will be exciting to be involved in this (the Fellows program) to learn from others who are at the level I am in terms of having some administrative responsibility, all the way to the sexual reproduction of the world's food supply.”

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**Faculty Notes**

**Department of Horticulture**

**John Ruter,** Armitage Endowed Professor of Horticulture and director of the Trial Gardens at UGA, and his graduate student, Zhitong Li, spent the week of Oct. 10-18, 2015, visiting gardens and institutions in China for his ornamental breeding and tea-oil projects. While there, Ruter gave a presentation at the Shanghai Chenshan Botanical Gardens called “Ornamental Breeding and Evaluation Programs at the University of Georgia.” He gave two presentations at the Central South University of Forestry and Technology in Hunan Province and the Research Institute of Subtropical Forestry in Zhejiang Province entitled “Development of tea-oil camellia as a new crop for the United States.” They also spent time visiting with faculty, staff and growers to get the latest information on tea-oil production in China.

**Department of Plant Pathology**

**Robert Kemerait,** professor, was named a Fellow of the American Peanut Research and Education Society (APRES). This honor is bestowed on selected APRES members in recognition of distinguished contributions to the peanut industry and APRES.

**Department of Food Science and Technology**

**Michael Doyle,** Regents Professor of Food Microbiology and director of the UGA Center for Food Safety, was selected by the University of Wisconsin-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences for the Distinguished Alumni Award. Introduced in 2008, the award recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to their professions, their communities and the university. Doyle has an international reputation in the food science community for being an expert in food safety issues. He is responsible for several important developments in the food industry, is highly sought after for his expertise and has improved the safety of the world’s food supply.

**Department of Poultry Science**

**Robert Beckstead,** associate professor, received a Richard B. Russell Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, UGA’s highest early career teaching honor. Since joining the faculty in 2007, he developed three courses, one of which explores the relationship between culture and agriculture and fits into the university’s World Languages and Culture, Humanities and the Arts core curriculum.

**Innovative Ideas**

Internationally recognized UGA plant breeder Wayne Hanna added one more distinguished honor to his impressive resume in 2015. Hanna, a professor of crop and soil sciences on the UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Tifton Campus, was one of two UGA faculty members named National Academy of Inventors Fellows.

“We have been able to be productive over the years because of excellent team efforts by scientists, support personnel and administration,” Hanna said. Hanna has been issued 16 patents for his research and three are pending, according to the UGA.

Within the college, Hanna and his wife, Barbara, made possible an endowment — the Tift Cultivar Study Abroad Scholarship — to support national and international study abroad opportunities for Tifton Campus students in the hopes that the knowledge gained will further the campus’ success with grasses. Tift cultivars have impacted agriculture, recreation and food production worldwide.

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**Lead dog: Wayne Hanna**
Kelsey Fox (English) (BSA – Horticulture, ’13) frequents Facebook World Headquarters in Menlo Park, California. The Tunnel Hill, Georgia, native and UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences alumna manages and works on the landscaping of the social media company’s two campuses, one of which includes a 60-square-roof-top garden. “You wouldn’t even know it’s a roof,” Fox said. “My favorite thing about the roof is explaining the installation. Every piece of material, from foams to soil, to trees, was brought up by crane. It’s hard for people to realize because it looks incredibly natural, just like the planting on ground level.”

Fox is an account manager for ValleyCrest, a corporate real estate based in California. As the contact person for corporate real estate property managers, she connects the client and the crew. She hears clients’ requests, walks through and evaluates sites, and relays information back to employers about my experiences.”

Fox applied, interviewed and was hired by ValleyCrest while still overseas. “ValleyCrest’s nurse-regional vice president always brings up at our year-end and holiday events that she found me while I was pruning roses in France and that I am one of two people she’s hired without meeting,” she said. Fox credits the horticulture department—particularly professors Marc van Iersel, Allan Armitage, Matthew Chappell and Timothy Smalley—with equipping her with the tools, experience and advice needed to excel at the path she’s chosen.

“My adviser, Dr. Smalley, literally changed my life by opening the door for the study abroad (Hag) and French Heritage Society [internship]. Those two experiences led directly to my current position,” she said. “I don’t know where I would be without his advice and guidance.” – Kathleen Schilno

From Four Towers

In 1918, the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences was the first college at UGA to admit women. Today, 31 percent of the CAES Alumni Association is female, and CAES student enrollment is 63 percent female. This issue, featuring women in agriculture, profiles female alumni and CAES offerings that highlight the college’s commitment to its female—and male—students.

As a father of two daughters, I take comfort in knowing our college creates opportunities in the agricultural and environmental sciences for any student willing to seek those rewards, and that we, as alumni and friends of the college, are here to support students during their journey.

You are the volunteers who give of your time to attend CAES events and programs on campus and in Georgia. You are the leaders in your fields who use your talents to mentor students and young alumni, to recruit students and to provide employment opportunities for graduates.

You are a resource to CAES, helping students to participate in life-changing experiences.

I am humbled to serve as this year’s CAES Alumni Association president and am excited to work with an outstanding group of volunteer board and committee members. CAES needs you to act. Please contact our alumni director, Suzanne Griffith, at 706-542-5264 or send a note to asg@uga.edu and let her know how CAES can use your time, talents and treasures.

Follow CAES Alumni Association for more events and News

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Class Notes

1960s

Benjamin G. Brackett, DVM, Ph.D., (BSA – Animal Science, ’64) was named a 2015 Alumnus of Distinction by the UGA Graduate School. One of 12 alumni of the Graduate School to receive the award, Brackett, of Athens, Georgia, is a retired professor and department chair of physiology and pharmacology at UGA. His research ushered in a new era in reproductive biotechnology. Dr. Brackett pioneered the first repeatable in vitro fertilization (IVF) and led teams that produced the world’s first IVF calf, the nation’s first IVF goat kids and Georgia’s first IVF babies. Today, cattle breeding involving the transfer of IVF embryos is employed globally for optimization of meat and milk production. Dr. Brackett also initiated the first successful application of IVF to overcome human infertility in 1983. In Georgia, he established Reproductive Biology Associates, an infertility clinic and in 2013, joined in celebration of 30,000 babies on its 30th anniversary.

1970s

David Weaver (BSA – Agronomy, ’74; MS – Agronomy, ’76) received the 2015 Cotton Genetics Research Award at the U.S. cotton industry’s 2016 Beltwide Cotton Improvement Conference in New Orleans in January. Weaver won the award for his cotton genetics research. He is a plant breeder and professor in the Department of Crop, Soil and Environmental Sciences at Auburn University’s College of Agriculture.

Hiram Larew (BSA – Horticulture, ’73) received the 2015 Outstanding Alumnus Award at the University of Georgia’s Carl Vinson Institute of Government, which provides technical assistance, applied research, technology solutions, and training and development services to governments in Georgia and internationally. Prior to her work with UGA, Larew was appointed as the first executive director of the OneGeorgia Authority. She also served as the commissioner of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, assistant secretary of state, and state director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural Development program.

The lead dog: kelsey fox

Status Update

University have offered him adjunct/ affiliate faculty status. He has also been enrolled in the Woodrow Wilson Visiting fellows program, which offers nonacademics, like Larew, weeklong visits to selected campuses. Poetry remains one of Larew’s active interests.

1980s

Carol Evans (BSA – Animal Science, ’80) is a wildlife biologist for the U.S. Department of the Interior’s Bureau of Reclamation in Glendale, Arizona, and has been in the position for three years. She works as the biologist on large projects involving water and energy for the federal government and conducts Endangered Species Act, Section 7, consultations with the department’s U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Prior to this position, Evans worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and then U.S. Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton. In all, she’s worked for the federal government for 18 years. Evans received her master’s degree in wildlife science from New Mexico State University in 1997.

Laura Meadows (BSA – Food Science, ’81) was named a 2015 Alumnus of Distinction by the UGA Graduate School. One of 12 alumni of the Graduate School to receive the award, Meadows is the director of UGA’s Carl Vinson Institute of Government, which provides technical assistance, applied research, technology solutions, and training and development services to governments in Georgia and internationally. Prior to her work with UGA, Meadows was appointed as the first executive director of the OneGeorgia Authority. She also served as the commissioner of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, assistant secretary of state, and state director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural Development program.

I love being outside and wanted an unconventional career,” she said. “I saw a field of [horticulture] had a lot of varied opportunities and would allow me a lot of flexibility in my career path.”

Fox came to work for ValleyCrest after being recruited by the company at a college career day. She was leaning toward work in a nursery or botanical garden, but her interaction with ValleyCrest and impression of the company’s values and culture pushed her to move into corporate landscaping, she said.

Her final course at CAES was a month-long study abroad program, called “Europe: The Grand Tour – Art and Gardens,” which takes students through some of Britain, France and Italy’s most famed architecture and gardens. CAES scholarship funds enabled her to participate in the course. She said the opportunity was “an incredible experience and a great tool for me to use in talking to employers about my experiences.”

After the Maymester course, she stayed in France to complete a three-month internship with the French Heritage Society that involved her working in the public gardens of three chateaus. Fox applied, interviewed and was hired by ValleyCrest while still overseas.

“ValleyCrest’s new-regional vice president always brings up at our year-end and holiday events that she found me while I was pruning roses in France and that I am one of two people she’s hired without meeting,” she said. Fox credits the horticulture department—particularly professors Marc van Iersel, Allan Armitage, Matthew Chappell and Timothy Smalley—with equipping her with the tools, experience and advice needed to excel at the path she’s chosen.

“My adviser, Dr. Smalley, literally changed my life by opening the door for the study abroad (Hag) and French Heritage Society [internship]. Those two experiences led directly to my current position,” she said. “I don’t know where I would be without his advice and guidance.” – Kathleen Schilno
reactions to outside influences, such as kale and spinach. He said, “I can look at a variety of different vegetables. He is producing vegetables not pin me down to one crop. Instead, really unique. Our work focuses on making them more nutritious. It is our hope that you'll we do eat enough vegetables, what we don't eat enough vegetables, for higher nutritional quality rather than just the quantity they produce.”

John Burton Hall (BSA – Animal Science, ‘82; MS – Animal Science, ‘84) received the Extension Award from the Western Section of the American Society for Animal Science during the organization’s annual meeting in Ruidoso, New Mexico. The award recognizes Hall’s beef cattle research application and Extension contributions. Hall is the superintendent of the University of Idaho’s Nancy M. Cummings Research, Extension and Education Center.

William Gresham (BSA – Horticulture, ‘93) is the president of Gresham Planning and Development, Inc. He resides in Clarksville, Georgia.

John Arnold (BSA – Agronomy, ’84) worked for the last 20 years as the enrollment director for World Relief Atlanta, helping refugees from around the world begin a new life in the U.S. Prior to this position, he spent two years doing missions work in Mozambique, Africa, and before that worked for UGA Cooperative Extension in DeKalb and Fulton counties.

Brad Cornelious (BSA – Agricultural Economics, ’87) is the president and CEO of Cape Fear Farm Credit in Fayetteville, North Carolina. He started this role on Jan. 1.

1990s

Mark Bennett (BSA – Agricultural Communication, ’91) is in community investments and public affairs for Gulfstream Aerospace. He resides in Savannah, Georgia.

Jason Morris (BSA – Agricultural and Applied Economics, ’97) accepted the position of commercial banker, vice president with First Community Bank of Tifton, a division of Synovus Bank, in August 2015.

Myria Shipman (BSA – Animal Science, ’04; MAL – Agricultural Leadership, ’10) was the subject of a Jan. 22 article, “Myria Shipman: One of a Kind Program, One of a Kind Teacher,” in Chatham Isles Living magazine. Shipman teaches animal science, veterinary science and small animal

Influenced by a UGA Cooperative Extension county agent – he was an UGA agricultural economics major – Randall Copeland (BSA – Agricultural Economics, ’77; MS – Agricultural Economics, ’79) applied only to UGA and, when he got there, never changed his major. “I was very interested in different subjects, and his description of what he learned in micro- and macroeconomics, commodity futures [and] policy just sounded like something I would enjoy,” Copeland said. This training resulted in a more-than-30-year career. He now oversees the operations of Just Born Quality Confections, the third-generation, family-owned company, based in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, that makes PEEPS®, HOT TAMALES® and MIKE AND IKE®. As vice president of operations, Copeland oversees the development and implementation of operations plans. He’s also excited to go to work where Marshmallow PEEPS® are made. “It’s always had a reputation as a wonderful company to work for, and a fun work environment,” Copeland said. “It is a real manufacturing job. It has many ties to ag economics.” Copeland considers himself fortunate to work for a company that looks to improve the product but also cares about people. This is something he considers an ideal situation at Just Born, which also has “interesting and exciting growth plans.” In late 2015, Copeland joined Just Born from Manischewitz Company, where he served in the same role. Manischewitz is the country’s largest manufacturer of kosher food. Before Manischewitz, Copeland worked at Campbell Soup Company and Alpo Petfoods. At Campbell, Copeland said he learned about plant operations, maintenance and waste treatment. Run by a company of engineers and scientists, Copeland said everything was quantified. He credits his former professor, Wen Williams, with lessons on commodity and futures trading that he still uses, like how to hedge, take risks and set goals. Part of Copeland’s new role involves improving the fundamentals of the operation while maintaining efficiency and consistency. Copeland said he works in a 100 percent landfill-free factory, where 92 percent of the waste is recycled and the remaining 8 percent is incinerated and converted into electricity. The most notable change has been computerized controls on manufacturing lines, he recalls. “Don’t be afraid to take on challenging situations,” he said. "Take on jobs that are difficult and learn how to succeed."
Beyond Pecans

Eric Cohen (BSA – Agricultural Economics, ’00) is nuts about Georgia pecans. Farming 1,250 acres with his brother, Rob (BSA – Plant Protection and Pest Management, ’97), the UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences alumni are two of south Georgia’s leading pecan growers. Fast forward through graduation, two years at an internship-turned-job at a St. Louis agricultural marketing agency and then a master’s degree, the UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences alumna has returned to Africa as a liaison between AgriCorps and 4-H Ghana.

Care and management at Savannah, Georgia’s Islands High School. The article showcased the school’s Veterinary Science Specialty Program as well as Shipman’s unique teaching style. She is also the adviser for the National FFA Organization at her school.

Mat Thompson (BSA – Agribusiness, ’07), of Thomas County, Georgia, was named Soil Conservationist of the Year by the Middle South Georgia Soil and Water Conservation District of the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission.

Ryne Brannen (BSA – Agribusiness, ’08; MPPPM – Plant Protection and Pest Management, ’11) is a member of the Cotton Incorporated board of directors. He and his wife, Heather Brannen (Savelle), an alumna, live on his family’s row crop farm in Bulloch County, Georgia, where they grow cotton and peanuts and raise beef cattle.

Karl Halbig (BSA – Agriscience and Environmental Systems, ’08) is a manager with Blackwater Cattle Company. He resides in Lake Park, Georgia.

Matt London (BSA – Animal Science, ’08; MS – Dairy Science, ’10) and wife, Kimberly, of Cheval land, Georgia, were finalists for the Georgia Farm Bureau Young Farmer Excellence in Agriculture Award, which was given in July 2015 at the Georgia Farm Bureau Young Farmer Leadership Conference. Matt is employed as a manager at the family farm, London Farms, Inc.

Heather Brannen (Savelle) (BSA – Animal Science, ’09; BSA – Agricultural Education, ’09; MPPPM – Plant Protection and Pest Management, ’11), of Bulloch County, Georgia, was a finalist in the Georgia Farm Bureau Young Farmer Discussion Meet at the July 2015 Georgia Farm Bureau Young Farmer Leadership Conference. She is the agricultural education teacher and the National FFA Organization adviser at Metter High School in Metter, Georgia.

2010s

Kyle Dekle (BSA – Agricultural Education, ’10), of Habersham County, Georgia, won the Georgia Farm Bureau Young Farmer Discussion Meet at the July 2015 Georgia Farm Bureau Young Farmer Leadership Conference. Dekle teaches agriculture at Habersham Central High School in Mont Airy, Georgia.

Patrick Rohling (BSES – Environmental Resource Science, ’10) is a soil conservationist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Andalusia, Alabama. Prior to the position in Alabama, Rohling worked for the NRCS in Montana and Louisiana.

Katie Gazda (BSA – Agricultural Communication, ’12) recently accepted the position of executive director of the Georgia Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture.

Jamison Croce (BSA – Agricultural Education, ’13) recently accepted the position of director of program development for the American Farm Bureau Federation in Washington D.C., where he resides.

The truffles in the Cohens’ orchards in Georgia’s pecan truffles on the UGA Tifton Campus, Ericences alumni are two of south Georgia’s leading Protection and Pest Management, ’97), the UGA 1,250 acres with his brother, Rob (BSA – Plant ‘00) is nuts about Georgia pecans.

 soybeans, and is a licensed real estate agent row crops, including cotton, peanuts, corn and rainy and wet and hot, we’ve got a lot of truffles. truffles, it’s all dependent on weather. When it’s has good populations of truffles,” Eric said. “With using a black winter truffle extract.

already started producing black truffle pecan oil by infusing the oil he and Rob already blanks them. They’ll go away on you.”

Tate was trained to sniff out the fungus, locat- scavenge hunt.”

“It’s something unique for my kids,” Eric said. “It’s entertainment for the whole family. “The reason I wanted to get into the truffle business was for my kids,” Eric said. “They’re not watching a TV or playing ‘Meatballs.’ They’re out in the pecan woods. It’s a scavenger hunt.”

Eric is considering producing white truffle pecan oil by infusing the oil he and Rob already produce with Tate’s found truffles. They have already started producing black truffle pecan oil using a black winter truffle extract.

“Our of 1,250 acres, I would say 20 percent has good populations of truffles,” Eric said. “With truffles, it’s all dependent on weather. When it’s rainy and wet and hot, we’ve got tons of truffles. When it gets dry like it did last September, it blankeys them. They’ll go away on you.”

Eric also doubles as a crop consultant on row crops, including cotton, peanuts, corn and soybeans, and is a licensed real estate agent specializing in land sales. • Clint Thompson

leadtodg: eric cohen

Beyond Pecans

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Young Alumni Awards

MEGAN GREEN (2) (BSA – Animal Science, ’03) has worked with some of the finest performance horses in the world and now manages equine and large animal veterinary services at Merital, a global animal health company.

TRAVIS MOORE (3) (BSA – Food Science, ’03) worked for Anheuser-Busch InBев in Cartersville, Georgia, for eight years before becoming senior brewmaster at the company’s St. Louis brewery. He is responsible for the safety, quality and production of the brewing department in Anheuser-Busch’s largest domestic brewery.

CARMEN BYCE (4) (BSA – Agricultural Education, ’99) is the program coordinator for Asia at the Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture at Texas A&M AgriLife Research and serves as curriculum writer and facilitator for Sigma Alpha and Alpha Gamma Rho chapters.

BO WARREN (5) (BSA – Agribusiness, ’95) served for 14 years as a government affairs coordinator, representing Fortune 500 companies in Georgia and Washington, D.C. In 2011, Warren was tasked with developing the Georgia Department of Agriculture’s first business development division. He helped establish an agreement with the Georgia Department of Economic Development’s International Trade Team to find new markets for Georgia’s agricultural products. Currently, he is the director of the Office of International Trade and Domestic Marketing at the Georgia Department of Agriculture. Warren fosters international trade, supports agitourism in Georgia and administers the Georgia Agriculture Tax Exemption program. He directs the Center of Innovation for Agribusiness.

ANIMAL SCIENCE ALUMNUS NAMED GEORGIA FARMER OF THE YEAR

UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences alumnus and Sylvanias, Georgia, corn, peanut, and soybean farmer John McCormick (BSA – Animal Science, ’72) was named 2016 Georgia Farmer of the Year at Gov. Nathan Deal’s Ag Awareness Day at the state capitol in March. McCormick (center) and his wife, Paula, who has her bachelor’s degree in home economics from UGA, received the award from Gov. Deal (left), while Screven County UGA Cooperative Extension Coordinator Ray Hicks (second from right), who nominated McCormick for the honor, and state Rep. Jon Burns, Georgia House Majority Leader, congratulated them. McCormick will represent Georgia in the Swisher Sweets/Sunbelt Expo Southeastern Farmer of the Year contest since 2014. Their jams are now sold at Ingles Markets in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

“Many buyers value the chance to meet with producers and see products that they have not seen before,” he said. Support from Georgia Grown and the Georgia Department of Agriculture, Georgia Farm Bureau, the Georgia Center of Innovation for Agribusiness and CAES has grown the contest, Wolfe added. For more information about the contest, visit flavorofga.com and follow @FlavorofGA on Twitter.

Flavor of Georgia celebrates 10 years of the finest food products made in the state. They also receive industry feedback and use of the “Flavor of Georgia finalist” logo for their branding and packaging.

Through the contest, grocery buyers get first crack at new products to build their store’s repertoire of locally produced or Georgia-produced products, said Kent Wolfe, director of the CAED.

“The feedback we’ve received from the judging panel not only showed us things about our product that we needed to work on, but also showed us pathways we could use to break into larger retail markets.” Most contest finalists report increased interest in their products, and many benefit from increased sales, profits, publicity and website traffic, Kane said.

Finalists and winners participate in a number of high-profile industry showcases following each year’s Flavor of Georgia contest. The 2016 Flavor of Georgia grand prize winner Amanda Wilbanks, of Southern Baked Pie Company, poses for a photo with Gov. Nathan Deal (left to right), Sam Purdue, new CAES dean and director, and Gary Black, Georgia agriculture commissioner.

Savor the State

From cheese to chutney, craft chocolate to chourizo, the annual Flavor of Georgia Food Product Contest – hosted by the UGA Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development (CAED) – has been celebrating Georgians’ culinary creativity for 10 years. The state’s premier food product contest has come a long way since the years that hand-labeled Mason jars and questionably contained meat spreads were dropped off or arrived by mail for judging. More professional, more professional and more impactful than ever, the 10th annual Flavor of Georgia contest, which culminated in March with 33 finalists, saw 135 of the best entries in its history.

Georgia’s food manufacturing and processing industry, which has an annual impact of $11.5 billion, according to the Georgia Department of Economic Development, is made up of thousands of companies. Flavor of Georgia was envisioned as a showcase for all of them, said Sharon F. Kane, coordinator for Asia at the Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture and economist for the CAED, which is housed in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics. Over the years, more than 1,000 food products have competed in the contest.

Clark Neal and his wife, Suzy, who own Unicoi Preserves, have participated in the contest since 2014. Their jams are now sold at Ingles Markets in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. “We learned a lot from the contacts we made through Georgia Grown and by meeting other [Flavor of Georgia] participants,” Neal said. “The feedback we’ve received from the judging panel not only showed us things about our product that we needed to work on, but also showed us pathways we could use to break into larger retail markets.”

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Outstanding in their Fields

Five college alumni were honored for career achievements by the CAES Alumni Association at the association’s ceremony in Athens, Georgia, last September.

Awards of Excellence

JIMMY FORREST (1) (BSA – Dairy Science, ’72) is president of Ridge Spring, South Carolina’s Dixie Belle Peaches, Inc., the fourth largest peach operation in the U.S. In 1974, Forrest started his nationally recognized peach business on 40 acres. Now, Dixie Belle Peaches operates on 2,600 acres in South Carolina, employs 300 people and sells to chains like Kroger, Wal-Mart, Ingle and Food Lion.

RO WARREN (5) (BSA – Agribusiness, ’95) served for 14 years as a government affairs coordinator, representing Fortune 500 companies in Georgia and Washington, D.C. In 2011, Warren was tasked with developing the Georgia Department of Agriculture’s first business development division. He helped establish an agreement with the Georgia Department of Economic Development’s International Trade Team to find new markets for Georgia’s agricultural products. Currently, he is the director of the Office of International Trade and Domestic Marketing at the Georgia Department of Agriculture. Warren fosters international trade, supports agitourism in Georgia and administers the Georgia Agriculture Tax Exemption program. He directs the Center of Innovation for Agribusiness.

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* Meritt Melancon
Agricultural communication and agricultural education double-major Abbey Gretsch is taking a year off of school to travel the country and beyond. She’s already been to Japan and will stop in almost all 50 states before the year is out.

As the newly elected Southern Region vice president for the National FFA Organization, UGA sophomore Gretsch is laying aside her studies, involvement in UGA Cattlemen’s Association and job as a College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences student worker to visit FFA members and sponsors, give speeches to tens of thousands of FFA members, lead workshops and even advocate for agriculture and FFA in Washington, D.C.

“Our team of six [national FFA officers] will hit about 50 states, with the exception of Hawaii,” Gretsch said. “Alaska, Texas, Nevada, Montana, New Jersey, New Hampshire – they do a really good job of placing us in every corner of the country.”

There are more than 600,000 members of the organization in the U.S. In Georgia, there are 40,000 members. FFA is the largest student-led organization in the nation, Gretsch said.

Prior to being elected to her national post, Gretsch was involved in FFA in high school. She competed in agricultural communication and public speaking contests, showed Angus cattle, served as a chapter officer and was Georgia’s North Region vice president. She received the American FFA Degree at the 2015 National FFA Convention, where she was also elected Southern Region vice president.

She learned of the news of the initial cut and final election with family, friends and even her CAES Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communication adviser, Eric Rubenstein, who stayed at the convention to hear election results.

“He set up all my classes knowing I was running [for FFA office],” she said. “While he was at the University of Florida, he saw their candidates run for office. He wanted to bring that to UGA and make sure the candidates from here were treated really well and that school wasn’t a burden.”

With Rubenstein’s help, she loaded up on agricultural communication classes prior to becoming an FFA vice president. She will start on her agricultural education classes when she returns.

Missing out on the year of school is “definitely worth it,” Gretsch said. “I’m paid in experience and connections.” • Kathryn Schiliro