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Virginia Tech Ranked No. 5 in Ag Schools Nationally

Virginia Tech has been named one of the top five agricultural research institutions in the nation by the National Science Foundation.

The university jumped from last year's ranking of No. 10 to the No. 5 position this year, placing it in the NSF's top tier of institutions in terms of total research expenditures in the agricultural sciences. The ranking is for the 1999 budget

year, the last year for which figures are available.

"I was delighted and proud to see Virginia Tech ranked fifth among all universities in the country in agricultural research expenditures," said Andy Swiger, dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. "This is a great tribute to our faculty. Modern technology is providing unlimited

opportunities for agriculture to alleviate hunger and provide a nutritious, healthy food supply for people throughout the world."

The NSF reported agricultural research and development dollars expended at Virginia Tech for 1999 at \$59,805,000, an increase of nearly \$5.5 million over the 1998 figure.

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College launches 5-year strategic diversity plan

The college will undertake a number of initiatives to increase diversity among students and faculty, according to a five-year plan unveiled this spring.

"This plan is an extension of the college's long-term commitment to diversity and multiculturalism," said Larry Moore, special assistant to the provost for diversity and co-director of the Minority Academic Opportunities Program, or MAOP. Moore joined with Randy Grayson, founder of MAOP, and Dean Andy Swiger in developing the plan.

The plan calls for increasing the proportion of under-represented undergraduate students and graduate students in the college's student body, and for implementing programs to improve academic performance by under-represented students. In addition, it calls for increasing the percentage of minority faculty and staff members in the college.

Among the tasks the plan calls for are the development of an awards program to recognize contributions to diversity within the college; improving the college's Web sites to address the importance and value of diversity and multiculturalism; and establishment of a college-wide diversity committee.

Activities supporting that are such things as hosting underrepresented high school students who have been accepted to the university; seeking grant funding to support diversity programs; and preparing a recruiting plan to increase diversity within the college.

Moore said the plan was developed with wide input from throughout the college.

Barbecue is good advice



John White, associate dean, serves up barbecue to students and faculty during the college's advising celebration and forum last fall. The celebration recognized the important role of advising in a student's academic career.

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FROM THE DEAN

Reaching for the top

By Andy Swiger
Dean



Last year, Virginia Tech's new president set the ambitious goal for this university to join the ranks of the top 30 universities in the nation in terms of research and development expenditures.

President Steger's goal of leading us to the higher echelons of research universities is widely applauded by, and most stimulating to, the entire Virginia Tech family. Our college is already heavily invested in research, it has a rich heritage of research excellence, and it has a culture that thrives on the challenges of research.

We were delighted to learn recently that Tech ranks fifth among all universities nationally in agricultural research expenditures and contributes over one-third of this university's total research expenditures. This remarkable accomplishment says much about the reputation of our researchers. The government officials who dispense grants and the decision makers at private foundations and commercial enterprises who fund research do what all good investors do – they put their money where they know they will get the best return for it.

We have a wonderful reputation, but that reputation isn't built exclusively on research. It is built on our extension and teaching efforts, as well. This college is organized in such a way that the three missions of research, extension, and teaching are tightly inter-locking pieces of a single puzzle. Excellence in one area creates excellence in all areas.

Even the best research, if it remains buried in file cabinets or journals, is of little value. The unique feature of land-grant universities is that discovery provides a steady stream of new information not only for our resident students, but also for all our citizens. In our case, of course, there is a heavy emphasis on extension and teaching in support of the industry of agriculture and rural communities. This link with students and clientele provides a feedback posing new researchable questions, an unending exchange in both directions that generates new knowledge and puts it to work for the betterment of mankind.

In the case of agriculture, we can capture this in one figure – our country spends just over 10 percent of its disposable income for food. This is the crux of our high standard of living. Perhaps more importantly, we are not dependent on foreign food as we are on foreign energy. Let's hope we have the wisdom and the determination to keep it that way.

Ag alumni officers

Glenn Anderson (Ag Ed, '68) was elected president of the Virginia Tech Agricultural Alumni Organization. Jamie Whitacre (Ag Econ, '94) was elected president-elect, and Jay Jackman (Ag. Ed. Ph.D. '91) was elected secretary-treasurer. Anderson succeeds Anne Herring. For more information about VTAAO, call (540) 231-3773.



From Academic Programs

A Celebration of Excellence

By John M. White
Associate Dean



It is that time of year again. Spring Commencement is May 12, and it is time to recognize outstanding faculty and student academic achievement award recipients.

Our College of Agriculture and Life Sciences 2001 Certificate of Teaching Excellence Award recipient is Dr. Dixie Watts Reaves, associate professor of agriculture and applied economics.

Dixie is not only an exceptional classroom teacher, she is a terrific academic adviser and club and organization adviser. Dr. Reaves served as faculty adviser to our very active Ag Econ – NAMA (National Agriculture Marketers Association) Club that competes on a regional and national level. She has also been instrumental in organizing and advising a very active chapter of our Minorities in

Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences organization.

Dr. Ozzie Abaye, associate professor of crop and soil environmental sciences, will receive the 2001 University Alumni Award for Teaching Excellence. Ozzie is a terrific teacher in both our BS and Ag Technology programs. She is both an excellent graduate adviser and undergraduate academic adviser. She has supervised several undergraduate research projects.

She has coached the crops judging team that competes very effectively at the regional and national level. She has served as adviser to the Agronomy Club, Sigma Alpha Women's Professional Society and several other organizations.

As a result of her selection for this award, Ozzie will become a

member of the University Academy of Teaching Excellence.

Susan Michelle Miller, animal and poultry sciences major from Edinburg, Va., is the 2001 Outstanding Graduating Senior in the college. Susan is an outstanding student with an overall GPA of 3.9. She has been a very active leader in the Block and Bridle Club, Dairy Club, Alpha Zeta and Sigma Alpha Professional Agriculture Society and is a member of Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society.

Susan should feel a great sense of achievement from this award because the competition from other departmental outstanding seniors was exceptional. The overall GPA's of the nine departmental nominees were 3.55, 3.62, 3.75, 3.76, 3.79, 3.86, 3.90, 3.90 and 3.97.

It has been a very good year!

Newsletter name

We've extended our search for a new name for this newsletter. While a number of names were nominated, none of them has seemed just right.

"The college covers so much territory in terms of the areas of research and study, and then you throw Extension into the mix," said John White, associate dean. "What we're finding is it is difficult to come up with a name of a word or two that reflects the many, many important things going on here."

Thanks to those who submitted ideas.

Make additional suggestions to Stewart MacInnis at (540) 231-5863, by E-mail to macinnis@vt.edu, or drop a note to Stewart MacInnis, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, 104 Hutcheson Hall (0402), Blacksburg, Va. 24061.

Hokie Harvest horses



Animal and Poultry Science seniors Mandi Moore, left, and Alyssa Fenton prepare horses for the Hokie Harvest 2000 horse auction. Good crowds showed up once again for the annual October event, which included a cattle auction among its events.

College alumni events

The college held two regional alumni receptions last year and three more earlier this year.

The first was held at the Northern Virginia Higher Education Center in Falls Church last May 18, and the second was held at the Southwest Virginia Center for Higher Education in Abingdon on Aug. 3. The college also hosted its annual pre-game alumni reception at the Oct. 7 Homecoming football game against Temple. More than 200 alumni, friends, faculty and staff took advantage of this wonderful networking opportunity.

The college and the College of Natural Resources held their first joint regional alumni reception on Jan. 10 in Richmond at the Farm Bureau Building. Special guest speaker was Martha Moore, director of public affairs for the Virginia Farm Bureau. Almost 70 alumni and friends attended this event.

Two additional joint regional alumni events were held on the Eastern Shore and in Suffolk on Feb. 19 and 20 respectively. John Crunkilton, associate dean and director of the Ag Technology Program, spoke about the Ag Technology Program to the Eastern Shore group of alumni. Lynn Young, college alumni coordinator, spoke about the new Alumni Center to the Suffolk group of alumni.

The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Ambassador Dean's Team was estab-

lished this spring. The Ag Ambassadors comprises 11 students who will assist with student recruiting efforts and alumni events beginning this fall.

The National Agriculture Alumni and Development Association's annual conference will be held June 19-24, at NC State University in Raleigh. This year's pre-game alumni reception is scheduled for three hours prior to kickoff on Oct. 13 when the Hokies take on Boston College.

GTA Alumni Coordinator Brad Bryant will graduate in May with his Ph.D. in Ag Education. He has assisted alumni in numerous capacities for the past two years. His replacement is Gary Larrowe. Gary is currently working on his doctorate in Ag Ed. He graduated

from Tech in 1987 and received his master's degree from Radford University. He is an Extension Agent, Educational Resource Development Coordinator.

We are seeking nominations for the Hall of Fame and Outstanding Young Alumni for the College. If you know of people who have excelled in their profession, service, or research on behalf of the College, please contact Lynn Young.

If you would like to host a regional alumni event in your area, please feel free to e-mail Lynn Young at youngl@vt.edu or call her at (540) 231-5809.

Homecoming

Jake Fravel, right, holds a chick from an Animal and Poultry Sciences exhibit at Ag Homecoming activities in Litton Reaves Hall. The Entomology department's entry in the Virginia Tech homecoming parade was a (VW) Bug featuring an illustration of a (real) bug attacking an owl.



Ag. Ed. grad leads Va. Young Farmers

Chase Lowe, whether he knew it or not, has been preparing himself for the position of president of Young Farmers of Virginia since he was 19 years old. That's when he entered a public speaking competition sponsored by the organization. He's been in the thick of the organization ever since.

Lowe (Ag. Ed. '99) was elected president of the statewide organization in January.

An agricultural education teacher at Christiansburg High School, Lowe figures that now is the prime time for him to lead the organization. He helps on the family farm in Floyd County, but otherwise he's not an active farmer, and he's unmarried (though engaged).

"This is a time in my life when I can put time into it," he says. "Normally, the president is a farmer or an agri-business person with a lot of responsibilities. I probably have fewer responsibilities now than I will have in a few years, so I can devote a good deal of attention to the Young Farmers."

He's doing that by systematically visiting each of the about 40 county Young Farmer organizations in the state. A brand new county organization has formed in Rockbridge County, and two other counties are in the process of establishing chapters.

The Young Farmers is a grass-roots organization, with each county group deciding the programs it will offer and then setting about doing it. At the state level, Lowe says, the president tries to influence local groups through encouragement, an awards program, and trying to raise the profile of the organization generally.

"There are many things the Young Farmers are doing, but the best thing is providing adult education on the local level to farmers," he says. "They provide a link to information resources for farmers."

The social aspects of the organization are also important, he says. The meetings of Young Farmers in the counties and at its state convention offer important opportunities for producers to network, to compare notes with their peers, and to explore new ideas.

Lowe's involvement in Young Farmers is an extension of a family tradition. His stepfather was named Young Farmer of the Year, and his stepuncle is a former president of the organization.

"Their work ethic and their ability have impressed me though the years," he says.



Chase Lowe

VTAAO needs your active support

By Glen Anderson
VTAAO President

The Virginia Tech Ag Alumni Organization is one of those groups with a tremendous potential, but its potential cannot be realized without the active support of its members.

Becoming a member is easy – you just have to graduate from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. You don't have to fill out any forms, you don't have to pay dues, you just have to be a graduate. By that measure, we have plenty of members.

It's the active members, however, who make the difference. They are the ones who organize local alumni events, they encourage others to become active, and

they are responsible for the results of the organization. By this measure, VTAAO is successful.

But there is plenty of opportunity for still more active participants. Mike Parrish is working hard to reorganize our system of county coordinators, a way you can become an important part of our organization.

County coordinators have the potential to focus the energy of alumni in their communities on such activities as student recruitment, promoting Virginia Tech locally, and building support for the college and for the university

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Learning, helping others key for outstanding senior award winner

A devotion to learning, a commitment to helping others, and dedication to Virginia Tech are among the reasons Susan Miller was selected to receive the 2001 Outstanding Senior Award for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

The daughter of Robert D. and Sharon Miller of Edinburg, she received her degree in animal and poultry sciences in May. The award was presented April 25 at the Alpha Zeta banquet.

Miller has been on the dean's academic list every semester since the Fall of 1997. She was also named to the university president's list for notable achievement, and has been awarded a number of scholarships.

"Academic performance is just

one indicator for something much more important – a love of learning," said John White, associate dean of the college. "That is what is really at the heart of what we strive to recognize with this award. Susan Miller has that love, and the indicators go beyond grades."

She has been an undergraduate teaching assistant for Introduction to Animal and Poultry Sciences Laboratories for the past three fall semesters.

As a student ambassador for the Department of Animal and Poultry Sciences, she has traveled all over the state to promote Virginia Tech and the college.



Dean Swiger presents outstanding graduate certificate to Susan Miller.

Outstanding graduates of other departments were Thomas Cecere, biochemistry; Katherine Coppedge, dairy science; Ian Kelly, crop and soil environmental sciences; Dean Ratliff, agricultural technology; Sherry Roser, horticulture; Amy Saunders, environmental science; Kelly Shank, agricultural and applied economics; and Joey Talbert, food science and technology.

Club leadership a commitment

Poise, confidence, decisiveness. They are three attributes members of clubs look for in club presidents.

"Hey, I'm just a student and I'm learning," says Jeanette Ankoma-Sey, president of MANRRS, Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences. "But people look to me for the answers."

Ankoma-Sey says her yearlong tenure as club president has helped her develop personally. Just staying on top of the club's business and being constantly prepared to answer questions about it have made personal

growth inevitable.

"It takes a lot of determination to be a club president," she says. "You have to want to do it, and your attitude will affect how successful your organization will be."

Managing her time and staying organized are two skills she says she has had to develop. "It's definitely a challenge to balance your life – personal, academic, and club," she says. "You have to be there for your club, but you also have to be there for your academics."

Interpersonal skills are important for club leaders, she has found. Club leaders have to be

open to a variety of ideas and they have to accept criticism in the positive manner in which it is usually offered. Also important is showing a sense of responsibility.

Ankoma-Sey got her start in MANRRS in 1998, when the Virginia Tech chapter was preparing for the national organization's annual meeting held that spring in Roanoke. She had transferred to the Horticulture Department from the Biology Department that year, and thought MANRRS would be a good way to meet people.

She found herself thrust into committee assignments as the

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Employers court students

At right, a biotechnology company representative talks to a student about jobs at BioFair 2001. The career fair, sponsored by the Fralin Biotechnology Center, brought to campus a number of biotech companies that impressed Virginia Tech graduates.

At far right, Joe Hunnings, of Virginia Cooperative Extension, discusses career opportunities in the organization with senior Jaye Hamel at the CareerScope career fair last October. Anyone interested in a career in Extension should contact David Travis at (540) 231-5659, or E-mail him at dtravis@vt.edu.



Students make their marks

Entomology graduate student **Lois Swoboda** won the student paper competition at the Eastern Branch of the Entomological Society of America in Harrisburg, Pa. Her talk was titled "The response of the Eastern subterranean termite *Reticulitermes flavipes* (Kollar) to subterranean guide lines of wood products and nonwood materials." She is working with assistant professor Dini Miller.

Four Virginia Tech graduate students in entomology competed in the "Linnaean Games," sponsored by the Entomological Society of America. Teams of students from various universities compete in a knowledge of entomology quiz game. Virginia Tech team members were **Erin Holden**, **Sean Malone**, **Rachael Perrott**, and **Lois Swoboda**. They competed against a team from the University of Delaware.

The Virginia Tech Turf Club's "Quiz Bowl" team finished 5th out of 61 teams competing at the

72nd Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's annual meeting in Dallas in February. Team members included **Peter Rappoccio**, president of the club, **Kevin Fortune**, **Andrew Green**, and **Dean Ratliff**. The competition consisted of the team members getting three hours to work together on a 12-page exam that included various questions concerning turfgrass management.

Plant pathology graduate student **Debbie Glenn** received the second-place award in the graduate student paper competition held by the Potomac Division of the American Phytopathology Society last year. She received the Joe Sugg Graduate Student Award for best student paper presentation last year at the annual meeting of the American Peanut Research and Education Society. Glenn also was awarded the Virginia Crop Production Association scholarship in January.

Support from Virginia Tech continues after graduation

Career Services offers a wide range of job search services to alumni. Those not living in the Blacksburg area are encouraged to take advantage of the resources on the department's Web page for alumni (www.career.vt.edu/ALUMNI/Alumni1.htm).

Additionally, graduates may call to request an appointment to meet with a career adviser to discuss individual employment needs. During such an advising session, alumni typically discuss such topics as conducting a job search in a specific location, developing a network of employment contacts, preparing for interviews, and the use of specific Career Services' resources.

Dairy Club checks out Italian Agriculture

By Lindsay Potts

Dairy Club Reporter

The Virginia Tech Dairy Club went farther afield than usual for Spring Break this year: 37 club members and two advisers spent March 1 to 9 touring Northern Italy.

The club members labored through the fall and winter selling milkshakes at home football and basketball games, earning money to help finance the annual trip. The club members toured dairy farms, dairy processing plants, a breed organization, and a cow show, but they didn't forget to do some sightseeing as well. They visited the cities of Milan, Cremona, Mantova, Verona, and Venice.

The group toured two farms, the Cerri Farm, a swine and Holstein dairy, and Marelli Farm, also a Holstein dairy. On the farms they talked with the farmers

about their operations and compared them to the farms in the United States.

The same day the club also attended the Montichiari Inter-provincial Holstein Farm Show. There were equipment, feed, and farm service dealers, and a Holstein cow show in the afternoon. The club toured the Pizzamiglio and San'antonia dairy herds. The club was hosted by the Italian National Holstein Association for one morning and learned about the Italian breeding



Members of the Dairy Club visit a dairy processing plant in Mantova, Italy.

systems and the Holstein industry in Italy.

In Mantova the club members visited a cheese plant and were taken step by step through the process of making Caseificio Sociale S. Maria Formigada. Next they toured the Consorzio Latterie Sociali Mantovane dairy processing plant. The club members sampled many dairy products, such as butter, cheeses and yogurt. They toured the Corte Marzago Winery and learned about how the different types of grapes create the unique tastes of the wines.

In addition to the agricultural aspect of the trip, the club members toured the cities of Verona and Venice. In Verona, one highlight was seeing the home of Juliet, from Shakespeare's play, *Romeo and Juliet*. Venice was an interesting place, with many boats and waterways that ran through the city. The trip was an amazing experience for all of the members of the club.

Charity auction memorializes alum



A basketball signed by the Virginia Tech Women's Basketball team goes on the block during the Ag Econ/NAMA Club charity auction. Co-sponsored by the Dairy Club, the auction raised \$2,400 for a scholarship being established in memory of Tracy Stiles (Dairy '77) who died last winter after a battle with cancer. Stiles was a respected dairyman living in Maryland.

Family, ag events set for Farm and Family Showcase

The college farm is gearing up for the first annual Virginia Tech Farm and Family Showcase, scheduled for Sept. 5-6. The event, which includes family activities as well as educational programs, will be held at the college's research farm, Kentland Farm, just west of Blacksburg.

The showcase is being sponsored by the colleges of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Natural Resources, Human Resources and Education, and Veterinary Medicine. There is no fee for attending.

Activities will include displays, tours, seminars, demonstrations, panel discussions, farm equipment operations, and more. Areas

of interest are lawn, garden, landscaping, home care, wildlife and forestry, human health and nutrition, family life, livestock, poultry, horses, agronomic field crops, forages, nutrient management, biotechnology, riparian corridors, water quality, and many others.

A few of the attractions being planned are sheep dog trials, corn maze, hand milking of dairy cows, horse-drawn farm equipment demonstrations, feeding the pleasure horse, packing for a trail ride, sheep and cattle birthing, fun with foods, grandma's yellow pie plate, e-commerce, sawmilling, wood magic, Master Gardeners Program, apple trees for home use, soil testing, agricultural

education for fourth graders, silent auction, alumni activities, veterinary medicine.

Sept. 5 from 4 – 8 p.m. has been designated as family night. Activities planned for the entire family include a barbecue meal and bluegrass music.

Kentland Farm, located along New River, is Virginia Tech's newest and largest agricultural research and teaching unit. If you have comments or questions concerning this event, please contact Dwight Paulette, college farm coordinator, at kentland@vt.edu or call (540) 731-1289, or visit our Web site

(www.farmandfamily.vt.edu)

Former leader of Va. Dairymen's inducted into Ag Hall of Fame

John L. Miller, a leader in Virginia's dairy industry for more than 30 years, was inducted into the Virginia Tech Agriculture Alumni Organization's Hall of Fame Oct. 7 as part of the college's homecoming activities.

Miller, a resident of Harrisonburg, earned a bachelor's

degree in animal husbandry from Virginia Tech in 1956.

The Hall of Fame recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the college and to the agriculture industry of Virginia. Portraits of inductees to the Hall of Fame are displayed in Litton Reaves Hall.

Andy Swiger, dean of the college, presented Miller with a plaque during the ceremony.

"The word 'leadership' is a poor description for the many contributions John has made," Swiger said. "He is undoubtedly a leader. He has vision, drive, and commitment. He also has the rare ability to keep the big picture in view while focusing intently

– even intensely – on details."

Miller was executive secretary of the Virginia State Dairymen's Association from 1967 until his retirement in July. Prior to that, Shenandoah's Pride Dairy employed him as a field service representative and in management positions in bottling and milk manufacturing plants. He served as a town councilman and a member of the industrial development authority for Bridgewater.

At Virginia Tech, Miller was a key adviser to the Department of Dairy Science, served on the College of Agriculture and Life Science's leadership council, and is a past president of the Virginia 4-H Foundation. During the last five years, he was an effective proponent for state funding for new dairy facilities at the university.

Well over 300 alumni attended the homecoming activities.



Dean Andy Swiger, left, presents a plaque to John Miller.

Faculty news

Joe Marcy, associate professor of food science and technology, was appointed to the Virginia Winegrowers Advisory Board in October by Gov. Jim Gilmore. He was one of nine people appointed to the 16-member board this year.

Richard E. Schmidt, retired professor of turfgrass ecology, received the Fred V. Grau Turfgrass Science Award in November. The award was presented at the annual meetings of the American Society of Agronomy, the Crop Science Society of America, and the Soil Science Society of America in Minneapolis. The award recognizes significant career contributions in turfgrass science. Schmidt has conducted research into conditioning grasses to tolerate stressful environments.

W. Lee Daniels, professor of crop and soil environmental sciences, has been named a first-place recipient of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's 2000 National Wastewater Management Excellence Award in Biosolids Research. He was recognized as a

key member of a joint American-Polish team that successfully re-vegetated and reclaimed smelter waste in Poland. The team used biosolids and waste lime to establish a permanent vegetative cover, reducing wind and water erosion of several sites which posed serious health risks to the surrounding population. Portions of three Superfund cleanup sites in the United States are using the biosolids methodology developed by Daniels' team.

Kriton Hatzios, director of the Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station and associate dean for research in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, was named a Fellow in American Association for the Advancement of Science at that organization's annual meeting in San Francisco in February. Members of the association are elected to fellow status when "their efforts on behalf of the advancement of science or its applications are scientifically or socially distinguished."

Michael Kosztarab, professor emeritus in the Department of Entomology, received the L.O.

Howard Distinguished Achievement Award from the Eastern Branch of the Entomological Society of America in March. The award was for his lifetime achievements. His publications include four books and 168 papers, mostly on scale insects.

Tim Mack, head of the department, received the organization's Distinguished Achievement Award in Teaching. He is recognized as a national leader in distance learning and has had a large influence on the development of distance learning curricula in many departments of entomology throughout the United States.

Alexei Sharov, professor of entomology, received the Eastern Branch's Award for Excellence in Integrated Pest Management. His research has led to the development of a decision-support system for the Slow-the-Spread Project to reduce the progression of the gypsy moth to the West and South.

Faculty association elects new officers

Dixie Reaves, associate professor of agricultural and applied economics, was elected president of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Faculty Association in balloting April 9.

Other officers elected were: Don Mullins, professor of entomology, president elect; Eluned Jones, professor of agricultural and applied economics, vice president; and David Bevan, biochemistry, secretary-treasurer. Peter Kennelly, professor of biochemistry is past president.

Elected to represent the college in the faculty senate were Carlyle Brewster, assistant professor of entomology; Leon Geyer, professor of agricultural and applied economics; and Frank Gwazdauskas, professor of dairy science.

George Norton, professor of agricultural and applied economics, was selected to serve on the college's research and extension program policy commission. Brewster and Audrey McElroy, assistant professor of animal and

poultry sciences, were elected to the international program policies commission. Christine Alvarado, assistant professor of food science and technology, and Dennis Duncan, instructor, agricultural technology, were elected to the academic program policies commission.

At the university level, Bevan was elected to the research commission, and Dan Eversole, professor of animal and poultry sciences, was elected to the faculty affairs commission.

Food Science and Dairy get new leaders

Susan Sumner, a faculty member in the Department of Food Science and Technology for four years, has been named department head, while Dairy Science alumnus Stephen C. Nickerson will take over leadership of that department Aug. 1.

Dean Andy Swiger announced Sumner's appointment last September following a national search for a new department head. The post was vacated in July when Cameron Hackney left the position to become dean of agriculture at West Virginia University.

"Dr. Sumner has impressed both the faculty here and people in the food processing industry across the state with her knowledge and ability," Swiger said. "She has been an extremely productive faculty member, and she has the leadership skills and

vision to carry the department forward on many fronts over the next few years."

Sumner earned her bachelor's degree from North Carolina State University, and her master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Wisconsin. Before coming to Virginia Tech, she worked for the National Food Processors' Association and was a faculty member at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln.

Merle Pierson, professor of food science and technology, was acting head of the department following Hackney's departure.

Nickerson's appointment was announced in April following a nationwide search. He is currently a lactation physiologist at Louisiana State University's Hill Farm Research Station in Homer, La. He joined the LSU faculty in

1981, and has held professor rank since 1990.

"Dr. Nickerson brings a wealth of experience to this very important leadership position," said Swiger. "Not only does he bring with him knowledge of dairy science both in the areas of research and extension, he brings an understanding of dairy science at Virginia Tech and in the commonwealth."

Nickerson earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Maine, and his master's and doctoral degrees from Virginia Tech.

He fills the vacancy created when long-time department head Bill Vinson became associate dean for research at West Virginia University last fall. Charles Stallings, professor of dairy science, has been acting department head since Vinson's departure.

'Tax wise' gifts help college, donors

Ben and Betty Morgan are among many Virginia Tech benefactors who have established "life income gifts," such as charitable remainder trusts. These gifts provide income to one or more persons for their life or for a term they select between one and 20 years. The remainder is then used for charitable purposes the donor chose.

For example, the remainder can support an endowment in the donor's name to provide scholarships for deserving students. It can also be used to purchase educational equipment; for research or building funds; or simply as money to be used as needed. Charitable remainder trusts may be funded with cash, appreciated real estate, stocks, mutual funds, bonds, or other assets.

The Virginia Tech Foundation is trustee for charitable trust assets with a combined value of about \$55 million. Donors can elect to have the trusts managed by other trustees, including themselves, banks, trust companies, brokerages, accountants, attorneys, or other persons. The Virginia Tech Foundation offers a number of services – such as free preparation of draft documents, deduction and income illustrations, reviews of assets to be donated and other assistance – for supporters who wish to consider such gifts.

Life income gifts offer donors such benefits as an income tax charitable deduction; a reduction in the amount of the donor's estate subject to estate taxes and possible removal of the assets

from the donor's probate estate; and avoidance of all or part of the capital gains tax.

Another benefit is the opportunity to leverage unified credit exemptions, annual exclusions, and Generation Skipping Tax exemptions. Donors also receive an attractive income flow and potential asset protection for income beneficiaries; direction by the donor of the use of the gift remainder at Virginia Tech; and the personal satisfaction of making a gift to the university and the college.

For more information, contact Bryan K. Rowland, director of development for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, at (540) 231-5546, rowland@vt.edu, or write to 104 Hutcheson Hall, Blacksburg, Va. 24061.

Ag School,

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"Our researchers are making world-class contributions to science, but they are doing so by working harder and in increasingly crowded and outdated facilities," said Kriton Hatzios, associate dean for research in the college and director of the Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station.

While the college is doing more research with the same staffing level and largely the same facilities it had 10 years ago, the university is depending on it to a greater degree in its bid to join the ranks of the top 30 research institutions nationally. Currently, the university stands at No. 50 among institutions in terms of funding for all kinds of research.

"Agricultural research accounts for 36 percent of the research and development at Virginia Tech," Hatzios said. "Just four years earlier, agricultural research made up only 30 percent of total research spending here."

The NSF defines agricultural science to include such disciplines

as agricultural production, aquaculture, soil science, animal science, plant science, agronomy, forestry, fish and wildlife, and many more.

Also included is international agriculture. Virginia Tech agricultural scientists are working around the world on a variety of projects. The university's influence in international agriculture, however, reaches beyond the sum of the efforts of individual scientists. The university's Office of International Research and Development has garnered approximately \$57 million in contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements since 1991. The office provides leadership to agricultural researchers from institutions throughout the United States as they work on projects managed from Virginia Tech to benefit people in virtually all regions of the world.

The institutions ahead of Virginia Tech in the NSF rankings are the University of California at Davis, the University of Florida, the University of Georgia, and North Carolina State University.

Anti-cancer drug goal of alum



Alfred H. Merrill Jr., 1974 graduate of Virginia Tech's biochemistry program and now a faculty member at Emory University, prepares to give a seminar at the Fralin Biotechnology Center. The late-January seminar was concerned with his work on anti-cancer drugs based on sphingolipids, a category of compounds that restore many cell behaviors that are out of control in cancer.

VTAAO,

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among the citizens of the state. County coordinator is a pivotal position, a position that can do much good for the college.

Right now too much of our active participation in VTAAO is centered in the board of directors. The time the members of the board devote to their duties is extremely important and it is effective. But the entire organization is much more effective when county coordinators are effective.

The problem is, there are not enough people involved as county coordinators. It's a wide-open field where an energetic person can make a difference. It's a place you can make a difference.

To become involved as a coordinator, or in any other way, contact Lynn Young at youngl@vt.edu or call her at (540) 231-5809.

De Datta garners national and international honors

S. K. De Datta, director of Virginia Tech's Office of International Research and Development (OIRD), and associate dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, has been named a 2000 Fellow of the Crop Science Society of America. The honor was bestowed on De Datta in Minneapolis last November at the annual Tri-Societies meetings of the American Society of Agronomy, the Soil Science Society of America, and the Crop

Science Society of America.

De Datta also received the 2000 International Service in Crop Science Award from the Crop Science Society of America at the meetings, which were held in Minneapolis.

The awards recognize De Datta for his contributions to the Green Revolution in Asia, and his leadership of OIRD, where he has garnered \$57 million in contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements during his tenure.

Ag Econ supports legislative effort to bring prosperity to rural Virginia

The Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics is providing key staff support to a legislative study commission that is seeking ways to bring prosperity to rural areas of the state.

"The support given us by Virginia Tech has been outstanding," said Del. R. Steven Landes of Weyers Cave, chairman of the Rural Virginia Prosperity Commission. "As the commission begins the task of crafting policy recommendation, we are relying on the analysis of the issues by the staff at Virginia Tech. They are providing us with some very important insight into many of the underlying causes of problems

affecting rural communities."

Jim Hite, a retired agricultural economist from Clemson University and an adjunct professor at Virginia Tech, is staff director for the nearly two-year life of the study commission. Professors Wayne Purcell and George McDowell are assisting Hite, providing in-depth analysis of the numerous issues the commission is investigating.

Also supporting the commission are Karen Mundy, public relations specialist for the Rural Economic Analysis Program, and Karen O'Conner, a program support technician in the department. Additional key support is being provided by the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service.

"The commission is looking at barriers that prevent rural areas of

the state from participating fully in the economic prosperity that urban and suburban areas are enjoying," Hite said. "The commission has spent many months collecting information from around the state, and now it will spend the summer analyzing it and developing recommendations."

The Virginia General Assembly established the commission this spring to analyze rural economies in Virginia and to recommend flexible but targeted state policies to foster sustainable economic growth in non-urban areas. The commission is scheduled to submit a final report to the General Assembly by Dec. 1.

There are 18 members on the commission: six members of the House of Delegates, four members of the state Senate, and eight citizen members.

Club Leadership

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club built up to the national meeting, which it co-hosted at the Hotel Roanoke. From that experience, she moved into a succession of officer positions in the club, culminating in her election as president.

The MANRRS chapter has about 60 members, and can muster about 40 of those at each of its meetings. Ankoma-Sey says she is proud of the readiness of club members to step forward and participate in the club's projects, such as supporting the Christiansburg Institute Museum and mentoring children.

A native of the West African country of Ghana, Ankoma-Sey moved to the United States with her family when she was 8 years old. She spent a semester at the University of the Orange Free State in South Africa as part of the college's exchange program with that university.

Turf program draws participants from China



Five Chinese nationals traveled to Blacksburg to attend the Turfgrass Ecology and Management Short Course presented by Virginia Tech Professor David Chalmers, at left, and Assistant Professor Erik Ervin, second from left. The group was escorted by Bill Young III, an extension specialist at Oregon State University, at the far right. The group spent two weeks in the United States on a Seed Industry Fellowship.

College to host governor's school for agriculture

More than 50 high school students from throughout the state will study at Virginia Tech this year as the college hosts the newly established Governor's School for Agriculture. The school for gifted students will be conducted on campus from July 8 to Aug. 4.

The Virginia Board of Education's designation of Virginia Tech as the host for the annual school is renewable for five years.

"We certainly appreciate the Board of Education looking favorably upon our proposal," said Andy Swiger, dean of agriculture. "We also appreciate the strong support for this project shown by Del. Jay Katzen and the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation."

Katzen was a major proponent of establishing the school, and he was a strong advocate for the program with both the governor and General Assembly.

"This will be among the highest quality faculties instructing high school students in the nation," Katzen said. "Many of these people have international reputations as instructors and as research scientists. They need to be the best, because I expect the students to be among the best Virginia has to offer."

Professors from the college

and other units at the university are providing instruction. Faculty members in agriculture and natural resource programs in other state institutions will be invited to participate, as well. In addition, agricultural education teachers from school divisions around the state will be members of the school's faculty.

Applications were accepted from rising juniors and seniors at all Virginia public and private high schools and from home schoolers, said William G. Camp, professor of agricultural education and director of the school.

"We're talking about not just what happens on farms, but about the science and business of an industry that has a \$35 billion annual impact on Virginia," Camp said. "Our instruction will be about natural resources, it will be about economics, it will be about genetics and biotechnology, it will be about veterinary medicine. Some of our instruction, in fact, will be tailored to the interests expressed by the students."

The students will live in supervised dormitories on the campus and eat in university dining facilities. The school is being funded by Virginia's taxpayers through a \$150,000 appropriation by the

General Assembly, by matching funds from the school districts of participating students, and by Virginia Tech.

Entomologists check for killer bees

Entomologists from Virginia Tech joined state agriculture officials in setting traps to monitor for the presence of Africanized bees in the Low Moor area of Alleghany County this summer.

"This is entirely a precautionary measure," said Eric Day, manager of Virginia Tech's Insect Identification Laboratory. "We suspect we destroyed all the Africanized bees last summer. We just want to be sure."

Africanized bees attempted to take over a hive of domestic bees in Low Moor last summer. The bees killed a goat and stung the goat's owner and emergency personnel who were summoned to the scene. Day and Virginia Tech entomologist Rick Fell destroyed the swarm. A subsequent analysis proved the bees were Africanized, the only time the species has been found in Virginia.

Day said the bees are thought to have been inadvertently transported from Texas or other states in the Southwest on a train or by truck. The site of the attack is adjacent to both a rail line and Interstate 64.

A total of 10 traps were set near the site of the attack.

Africanized honey bees were accidentally released in Brazil in the mid-1950s. The species has slowly spread north, and is now established in the border states of the Southwest. The bees appear similar to European honey bees, but attack in greater numbers and with less provocation when defending their nests.

Aquaculture research center dedicated

Visitors inspect the Southwest Virginia Aquaculture Research and Extension Center in Saltville during the facility's dedication last fall. Unlike research-scale systems, the center operates as a business, sustaining itself primarily from the sale of fish it raises, and yielding real-world data for analysis and the creation of economic models. It is a demonstration and teaching facility, assisting farmers and entrepreneurs make the transition to fish farming.



Dairy scientist advances field of transgenics

One would expect a dairy science professor at a major research university to advance the understanding of milk synthesis and lactation physiology and increase productivity in the dairy industry. In less than 20 years, Virginia Tech dairy scientist R. Michael Akers has also greatly advanced the understanding of mammary gland development, discovered new information about growth factors, and contributed to transgenic technology worldwide.

For his long-term excellence in mammary gland research in dairy cattle and humans, Akers has earned Virginia Tech's Alumni Award for Research Excellence. The award was presented Sept. 20 during the university's Fall Awards Convocation. Akers also recently received the Pharmacia and Upjohn Physiology Award, presented at the American Dairy Science

Association annual meeting.

"It's been quite a year," he says.

One of Akers main areas of research is the hormonal regulation of mammary development in young animals in relation to stage of development, nutrition, and hormonal manipulations. His studies yielded important new knowledge concerning the role of the ovary and ovarian hormones in regulation of mammary development.

He was the first to note the absence of growth hormone-receptors in mammary tissue and was among the first to characterize the hormones associated with mammary cell growth and with differentiation of the secretory epithelial cells that make up the lining of the mammary gland. His research involves mice, cows and sheep. One of his achievements is the creation of transgenic mammary epithelial cells in cows that

secrete a recombinant growth factor from sheep.

"Dr. Akers has been an extremely important contributor to the American Red Cross transgenic animal research program," said William Drohan, a senior scientist with the American Red Cross. "His contributions and insights into the basic science of transgenic technology and mammary gland development have contributed ... to transgenic research worldwide."

Other scientists credit Akers with providing important insights for researchers studying breast cancer.

"Any success that I have had has depended on the excellent students and collaborators that I have had over the years," Akers says. "I have also been very lucky to have had an excellent technician in my lab, Ms. Patricia Boyle, for many years."

New wheat varieties really cook

The Virginia Small Grains Association and Virginia Tech researchers joined with representatives of the Bread Bakers Guild of America last fall for a field-to-table show-and-tell about Virginia grains. The two-day meeting in Richmond included a workshop allowing each group to learn how the other group operates.

Robert Pitman, superintendent of the Eastern Virginia Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Warsaw, described the process of testing new varieties from seed to market.

The bakers were then given a number of varieties of Virginia-grown wheat flours produced through the breeding programs of Carl Griffey, professor of crop and soil environmental sciences. Soft and hard wheats along with French

wheat varieties were provided.

On the second day of the meeting, the two groups gathered in a commercial kitchen to see if these flours could really rise to the occasion.

Eight new varieties were used as well as a test flour, a commercial variety that bakers usually use in their kitchens. All of the flours were mixed by the same baker and were made into the same type of bread. Four of the new varieties Griffey is working on were as good, if not better, than the test variety.

The meeting allowed farmers the opportunity to meet one-on-one with the end-user of their products and to demonstrate the potential that exists for the varieties in Griffey's breeding program.

Johnson gets science award



Cliff Lilly (left), vice president of technology for Philip Morris USA, congratulates Charles Johnson on receiving the company's 2000 award for distinguished achievement in tobacco science.

Johnson, professor of plant pathology at the Southern Piedmont Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Blackstone, received the award for his work concerning tobacco cyst nematodes. (Photo courtesy of Philip Morris USA)

State Fair

Hokies were at the Virginia State Fair in force last fall, spreading news about the college and supporting the agriculture industry. Popular stops were the Block and Bridle Club's barbecue booth and the Dairy Club's dairy bar. Virginia Cooperative Extension showed off 4-H's Virtual Farm to children and adults alike. Many other clubs and organizations from the college took part in the fair.



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