

# in the MARGINS

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL AND APPLIED ECONOMICS

## Faculty Profile: Dannele Peck

By Dannele Peck, Assistant Professor

Have you ever seen the bumper sticker that reads, “I wasn’t born in Wyoming, but I got here as soon as I could”? I couldn’t agree more with that sentiment. I was seventeen when I first moved to Laramie. Fresh off my family’s dairy farm in central New York, I was eager to finally be a “cowgirl” rather than a “dairy queen.” I never would have guessed back then though, as a wildlife biology student, that someday I would join UW’s faculty as an ag economist! Many things have changed since I first came to Wyoming (including my career plans), but one thing remains the same: I *still* love everything about Wyoming and UW, including my role as teacher and researcher in the Department of Agricultural & Applied Economics.



It’s hard to believe I’ve been with the Department three years already. Where *has* the time gone? The courses I teach [Theory of the Firm (AGEC5310), Rangeland Resource Economics (AGEC4700), and Risk Analysis (ENR4500)] keep me busy; however, I couldn’t ask for a more satisfying teaching assignment. My graduate course provides a great opportunity to get to know our incoming masters students, who always challenge me just as much as I challenge them! This year’s class is the largest I’ve ever had (twelve students), which speaks volumes about the Department’s grant-writing efforts over the last few years. In my range economics course (comprised largely of rangeland and watershed management students who tend to be a bit skeptical about economics at first), I have a unique opportunity to reach out to the next generation of land managers and convince them that economics can improve their management skills. I never tire of watching these students discover how relevant economics is to natural resource and environmental issues!



Last but not least is risk analysis, in which I strive to make probability distributions and decision-making under uncertainty interesting and relevant to students who come from an amazing diversity of majors.

After I clean the chalk dust off my hands and face (let’s ignore the chalk on my shirt and pants), you can find me in my office working busily on a new research program in wildlife/livestock disease economics. I devote much of my time these days to three brucellosis projects, funded by the Wyoming Wildlife/Livestock Disease Research Partnership, the State of Wyoming’s Federal Natural Resources Policy Account, and the United States Department of Agriculture. Thankfully, I’m not tackling these projects alone; four departmental colleagues (Ben Rashford, John Ritten, John Hewlett and Roger Coupal) and three masters students (Mandy Kauffman, Trent Roberts and Bryan Wilson) are my gracious collaborators.

The first research project will estimate the sensitivity of demand for guided elk hunts in Wyoming to changes in elk populations. Such an estimate will ultimately help determine the regional economic impact of closing of elk feedgrounds as a means to potentially reduce brucellosis prevalence in elk. The second project will estimate the cost to cattle operators of adopting various brucellosis management activities, such as adult-booster vaccination, fencing stackyards, delaying grazing on certain allotments, and running steers/spayed heifers instead of cow-calf pairs. These cost estimates should make it easier for cattle producers to identify brucellosis management activities that make sense for their operation. The third project will estimate and compare the regional economic impact of a brucellosis outbreak under current disease regulations versus a proposal to split the state into two regulatory zones. A split-state framework might reduce costs associated with a brucellosis outbreak by reducing the scope of testing. However, it might also

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*Continued on back.*

## Head's Column

Roger Coupal, Head and Associate Professor

Hello, Another semester is in progress, and I'm very pleased to report that the College has seen our highest enrollment level ever, with about 900 students. We do not have Departmental level estimates yet but Agricultural and Applied Economics enrollments seem to be doing well too. We have a very impressive group of students, and those of you that send your students our way should be proud.

We also are seeing the largest graduate student class in over a decade. They are working on agricultural projects, livestock disease projects, energy projects, and more. Just under half are from Wyoming while the rest are from all over the United States and as far away as Zimbabwe, China, Japan, and Iran.

In the research and extension area our faculty are busy with projects on wind power location, energy development impacts, land use conservation, obesity research, risk management education, water resource research, wildlife disease eco-



nomics, and much more. We have developed and/or enhanced working relationships with the Idaho National Laboratory in two projects, with the USDA Economic Research Service, Wyoming Reclamation and Restoration Center, and the Ruckelshaus Institute for the Environment and Natural Resources. This department has the only ongoing applied research the economics of reclamation in the country. Faculty from two departments continue to use our Experimental Economics Laboratory on a weekly basis to evaluate USDA agricultural policy, energy policy, and nutrition decision-making.

We recently hired a new Extension Economist, Kristi Hansen, in the area of water resource management. Dr. Hansen received a PhD from the University of California at Davis. Her dissertation won outstanding dissertation award for the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association this year. Her dissertation topic was on water markets.

I hope this winter you are doing well despite the national recession. These can be trying times for many people, but even with the University budget cut 10 percent, the College of Agriculture seems to be doing well. We thank you for your support and interest in the field and this Department. Please do not hesitate to contact me or any of the faculty if you have. ■

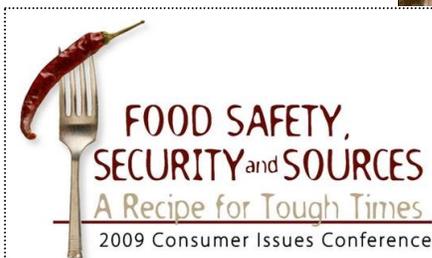
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## Consumer Issues Conference Held

The 2009 Consumer Issues Conference: Food Safety, Security and Sources, attracted a record audience September 24-25. The conference drew more than 300 registrants from around the state and country (including Colorado, Nebraska, Louisiana, Illinois and Alaska). Issues of how our food is produced and sold were at the core of the conference, and the participants interacted (sometimes strongly) over questions of choice, access, affordability, health, safety, and social and environmental responsibility – particularly during the discussion panel that followed the standing-room-only screening of *Food, Inc.*

The conference is a partnership between the Colleges of Agriculture and Law, and Cole Ehmke of the Department is a permanent member of the planning committee. "Our aim with the conference is to help citizens make informed decisions in their lives, assist responsible policy and bring people together. And we did that in spades this year. The topic happened at a time when people are thinking hard about their food and the food system," Ehmke said.

The audio from the sessions is available on the conference website, as are many of the presentation resources. Go to [www.uwyo.edu/consumerconference](http://www.uwyo.edu/consumerconference) and look under the program page. ■



Far Left. Master's student Xiaojia Yao with her poster on consumer preferences and organic food sales. Left. Professors Ed Bradley (of the Department) and Michelle Anderson (of Political Science) present on GMO policy. Right. Extension Specialist Suzy Pelican and Senator Cale Case discuss some conflicting food values people have. Above. Exhibitors included the UW student farm. Top. Devin Koontz of the FDA discusses food safety and security with Julie Balzan of Wheatland .



# Medicine Bow Peak Climb



**Hike and Picnic for Grad Students, Staff and Faculty Held August 18.** Late summer again found Department members exploring the heights in what has become the traditional welcome to new members (and welcome back to returnees). Organized by Tom Foulke and others, the hike and following picnic in Undine Park was on a lovely day and was an opportunity for good fellowship. ■

## Autumn Seminar Series

The Department has created a monthly presentation series to feature its work. The series includes

**September 22. Dannele Peck** *The Fun and Frustration of Developing a New Research Program on "Wildlife/Livestock Disease Economics."*

**October 20. Tom Foulke** *A Case Study in Applied Economic Research: Predator Management Benefits and Costs in Wyoming*

**November 17. Dale Menkhaus** *Do Producers Behave the Same as Students in Economic Experiments?*

**December 1. Benjamin Rashford** *Costs of Mitigating Climate Change: A site specific application to waterfowl production.*

All presentations are from 3:10 to 4:00 PM in AG 223 (the Reading Room). The series is organized by Graduate Student Liaison Eric Cropper. ■

## Leave a Legacy

As a friend of the AgEcon department, you know the value of what happens here. When you update your estate plan, we hope you will consider a bequest to help extend AgEcon's work and the experience of being in AgEcon to others. To learn more about how, contact Anne Leonard at (307) 766-4134 or [ALeonard@uwyo.edu](mailto:ALeonard@uwyo.edu). ■

## Senior Project Presentations Available

The presentations for last semester's seniors in the Department capstone course taught by Ed Bradley are on the web at the following link: <http://agecon.uwyo.edu/agecon/whatwedo/programs/seniortheses.htm>.

These presentations are an element of the evaluation of our students concerning the information they learned and did not learn. Through the presentations this information is passed back to the instructors. Copies of the written presentations are available from Professor Bradley. ■

## New Faculty: Kristi Hansen

**Kristi Hansen is a new assistant professor in water economics. She received her PhD and Master's from the University of California, Davis (2008). Kristi has a research-extension-teaching appointment. Her recent work in Brussels has focused on water economics. Next semester she will be teaching a new farm management course.** ■



We want your news! Alumni, faculty, staff, graduate and undergraduate students are welcome to submit news and photos. Send them to Cole Ehmke at [cehmke@uwyo.edu](mailto:cehmke@uwyo.edu).

# *In the Margins*

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## **Keith Geis named Outstanding Alumni 2009!**

Keith Geis, a 1975 AgEcon graduate, has been named by the College of Agriculture as one of two outstanding alumni during Ag Appreciation Weekend at the Dean's Dinner September 25. Keith has spent 35 years in the production agriculture banking business and is a committed to agriculture, his community and the state. Keith and his wife Marie live in Wheatland. Congratulations! ■

## **ILC Travel Scholarship Awarded**

Darlington Sabasi, an AgEcon MS student, was awarded an International Livestock Congress-USA Student Travel Fellowship. It will cover travel expenses to participate in the 2010 International Livestock Congress in Denver, January 9-14. Darlington is one of 12 selected from a world-wide pool of applicants. The fellowship selection committee was particularly impressed with Darlington's ability to maintain a high grade point average while also taking on leadership roles and being active in extracurricular activities. ■

## **Master's Thesis Presentations**

This summer the Department was busy with presentations by its MS candidates. Presentations included

**July 24. Bridgette White** *Reclamation Cost Analysis of Oil and Gas Development in Wyoming*

**July 10. Cheryl Higgins** *Consumer Preferences and Characteristics Regarding Farmers' Markets*

**June 19. Milton Geiger** *Federal Greenhouse Gas Regulation: Impacts on Wyoming's Energy Derived Tax Revenue*

**April 24. Jeffrey Cole** *Land Use Determinants in the Canadian Prairies: Implications for Waterfowl Habitat*

*Dannele Peck, Faculty Profile, cont'd*

change cattle-trade patterns within the state and create unanticipated costs. This project will shed light on the potential benefits and costs of a split-state framework.

There are many other wildlife/livestock diseases of relevance to Wyoming, such as foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), pasturellosis, and bluetongue. The next item on my agenda, as soon as additional research funds can be secured, is to explore the potential cost of an FMD outbreak in Wyoming's rangeland livestock/wildlife system. The cost of controlling and eradicating FMD in this setting could be high, particularly if the disease spreads to deer, antelope or elk. Losses could be minimized, however, by determining the relative cost-effectiveness of alternative response measures, such as vaccination, quarantines, and culling in livestock or wildlife in preparation for a future outbreak.

In closing, there is an abundance of wildlife/livestock disease work to be done in Wyoming, and many high-quality graduate students who are interested in doing it. There are also many undergraduates waiting for someone to help them discover their "inner-economist." This leaves me with great optimism for the future, and enthusiasm for the many years of fulfilling work I hope to have at UW! ■