College honors 2012 award recipients

An expert in finding and controlling biothreat agents and a 32-year faculty member are outstanding alumni award recipients from the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Presented during Ag Appreciation Weekend September 14-15, Ron and Lynne Pulley will also receive the Legacy Award, BP America the college’s Outstanding Research Partner Award, and Professor Emeritus Stephen D. Miller the Andrew Vanvig Lifetime Achievement Award.


Outstanding Alumni

Kennedy Gauger received his Ph.D. in 1981 and now is principal scientist in the Department of Chemical Engineering at Southwest Research Institute in San Antonio, Texas. The Boulder, Colorado-native would use his experience in environmental microbiology and soil science to find and control biothreat agents due to terrorism or through natural presences. He’s spent the last 17 years as a technical consultant to the U.S government defense community.

Gauger’s understanding of the science related to biological threats has been instrumental in improving the nation’s ability to respond to these threats in the hands of those intent on harming us, says Michael Regester, vice president of Signature Science, LLC, in his nomination letter.

“In many ways, he also contributed to the safety of the world as a whole,” says Regester.

Mervin “Mick” Botkin enrolled at UW in 1942, fought in World War II, returned to UW and graduated in 1948. He received his Ph.D. from Oklahoma State University in 1952 and returned again to UW as an assistant professor in the Animal Production Department. He particularly focused on mentoring students, judging 4-H and state fair livestock contests, publishing articles and manuscripts, and contributing his expertise to bettering the Wyoming sheep industry. He retired as professor emeritus in 1984.

Botkin recounts the relationships he developed with colleagues and students.

“I enjoyed knowing them and working with them,” Botkin says. “Some of the best memories are the trips I made with students out in the field and putting them to work. We were lucky that a lot of them became good friends.”

Legacy Award

Ron and Lynne Pulley, formerly of Huntley, recently left their 24/7 life in agriculture. They’ve now retired after a lifetime of taking care of just about every four-legged animal a person would find on a farm or ranch. They’ve lived in western Iowa, eastern Nebraska, Grand Junction, Colorado, and Cheyenne then Huntley. Ron and Lynne raised swine, managed swine operations, and Ron, in a career turn, worked in banking.

“In a nutshell, we’ve been agriculturally oriented most

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of our lives,” says Ron. “Yes, I’ve had white-collar jobs but until about two years ago it was 42 years of the famous 24/7, where someone was home taking care of some type of four-legged creature.”

The couple established the Seneca Graduate Assistantship in 2008 to fund graduate students studying food and nutrition.

Research Partner

BP America is receiving the Outstanding Research Partner Award for its support of reclamation research and its funding for the Wyoming Reclamation and Restoration Center (WRRC) housed in the college.

The funding has paid for several projects with the WRRC to identify effective and timely reclamation practices.

“Getting reclamation right is good business,” says Chad Calvert, director, government and public affairs for the Rocky Mountain region. “It’s good for the land, it’s good for the ranchers, it’s good for us, and it’s good for the state of Wyoming.”

Lifetime Achievement Award

Professor Emeritus Stephen D. Miller is the first recipient of the Andrew Vanvig Lifetime Achievement Award. Miller received his bachelor’s degree in agronomy at CSU in 1968; a master’s in agronomy at North Dakota State University (NDSU) in 1970; and a Ph.D. in agronomy at NDSU in 1973. Then, Miller spent the next 12 years on the NDSU faculty before he started work at UW in 1987. He became director of the Wyoming Agricultural Experiment Station in 2005 and retired in 2010.

During his career, Miller finished 65 graduate students at UW and NDSU – 39 master’s and 26 Ph.D. students. He says all made and continue to make significant contributions to weed science.

“My biggest enjoyment teaching at UW was working with graduate students and making them productive weed scientists,” says Miller.
Agricultural economics associate professor receives fellowship

Associate Professor Mariah Ehmke in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics has received a $2,406 Sylvia Lane Mentor Fellowship from the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association.

The fellowship provides an opportunity for young female scholars working on food, agricultural, or resource issues to collaborate with an established expert at another university, institution, or firm, according to the AAEA.

Princeton University Professor Janet Currie is Ehmke’s mentor. She is a professor of economics and public affairs and remembers as a graduate student the first tenured female economist she met.

“She had a well-developed and original research program,” says Currie. “It was enormously helpful to me just to meet and talk with her. If I can help someone else in the same way, then that would be great.”

Only about 25 percent of the AAEA members are women, says Ehmke. Lane, a professor at the University of California, Berkeley, was the first woman to be named an AAEA Fellow.

“It’s hard at times to find a mentor to guide us through the ranks, to find a mentor in our field,” Ehmke says, and adds the mentor does not have to be a woman.

Ehmke had served on the fellowship selection committee in past years and decided to apply in 2011. She and her husband, Cole, an agricultural entrepreneurship and personal financial management specialist in the department, have two children. She wanted a mentor who is not only a successful economist but has a family to consider.

Ehmke’s research examines household economics and childhood outcomes, and Currie is also director of the Center for Health and Well-being at Princeton.

Ehmke looks to increase her research and publication expertise.

“It’s valuable for me to make a connection with someone who has extremely good economics training and experience in publishing in the top journals and to understand how she goes about her work in the research area,” says Ehmke.

Ehmke met with Currie this June and will have bi-weekly contact throughout the year. She plans to spend time with Currie at Princeton next summer.

Hixon receives Distinguished Service Award from Western Section, American Society of Animal Science

The head of the Department of Animal Science received the Distinguished Service Award from the Western Section, American Society of Animal Science.

Professor Doug Hixon was presented the award in July during the society’s convention in Phoenix, Arizona.

“Certainly a person is grateful for this type of recognition,” says Hixon, who joined UW in 1982. “I was very humbled and very appreciative that someone thinks what you’ve done has had an impact since it encompasses one’s entire career. At this stage of one’s career, it’s not so much about what you’ve done or haven’t done but the relationships that you’ve built over your career that are special.”

Hixon, a native of Donovan, Illinois, has been a nationally respected leader in bringing animal science research to cattle producers, says Jim Magagna, executive vice president of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association.

“As a respected teacher, he has played a critical role in preparing the next generation of agricultural industry producers and leaders,” he says.

Hixon earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees and his Ph.D. in animal science at the University of Illinois. He joined the UW animal science faculty in 1982.

“It was an opportunity to learn about the beef industry in a range environment,” he recalls. “This gave me a different perspective, and we thought Laramie would be a great place to raise a family since we had a young family at the time.”

Hixon was named the department head of animal science at the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources in 2001; he oversees an integrated program in teaching, research, and extension.

“UW has been fortunate to have had a string of talented and respected animal science professors over the years,” says Magagna. “Doug ranks at the top with them. Most importantly, as a professor and in particular as department head he has strengthened the bond between the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the ranching industry in Wyoming.”
The driver pulling the trailer slowed and paused for a group of people crossing the parched yards at the James C. Hageman Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension Center near Lingle – an unspoken invite for a ride.

Betty Deeney of Hawk Springs waved the driver on. “They want to see the equipment,” she said, pointing to the men she was walking with and then, as a way of explanation, added, “Farmers.”

An estimated 150 attended the revamped SAREC field day Thursday, August 23. The field day, switched to late afternoon followed by a cream can dinner, was preceded by three-minute research presentations but also by trailer tours during which those attending could climb down and see and stay at whatever research plot they wanted. UW scientists awaited them.

“I like this,” says Deeney, who attended with her husband, Lindsey Arnold. “I think you have a chance to go on your own more, and we stayed longer in one place than another. In whatever area of interest you like, you have more time to spend and visit with people.”

Beth Burritt of Utah State University began the field day showing how cattle can be trained to graze forage they normally wouldn’t graze.

That struck Robert Lewis of Lingle, who has rented out his background feeder calf feedlot. He lamented the pressures drought and loss of forage and high feed prices dealt producers.

High grain prices coupled with high forage prices means cattle had to be sold. This will decrease prices but also decrease cattle numbers. Prices will eventually rebound, he believes, and perhaps in another year or two the costs will be more relative to cattle values.

“There are a lot of dynamics in the short-term,” says Lewis. “It’s going to be kind of sporting to see where the equilibrium is about whether people can get through the bottleneck. It’s going to require they use some unconventional things that maybe they hadn’t looked at before, such as alternative feedstuffs. It’s going to be a really challenging year for producers.”

Those attending heard scientists discuss weed research, Roundup Ready alfalfa studies, shade avoidance in sugar beets, omega-3 supplementation in cattle, a project that examines organic, conventional, and no-till operations coupled with livestock, forage research and more.

SAREC operations director Jim Freeburn says he believes the field day was the best they’ve had. “It seemed more relaxed and people were more at ease,” he notes.

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Research posters were attached to a large truck and the sides of buildings, and there were tents under which people could escape from the late-afternoon sun and visit.

“There were many things for which people gave me positive feedback,” Freeburn says. “They liked the new tour format, the posters, and the fastest three-minute presentations. Having the big tent and the opportunity to mingle and visit with UW faculty members and researchers in a nonstructured way seemed to be very well-received.”

Deeney says she liked seeing the research, especially pertaining to livestock, and says there is information she can put to use on their wheat, irrigated corn, and cattle operation.

The field day was the first for Lewis, who says his schedule had never allowed him to attend.

“I think there is value seeing what research there is, the work going on here,” he says. “What is really good is not only was it agronomy and crop-growing aspects, but there was also an animal science side to it, particularly the beef feedlot experiments and the guest speaker talking about how animals decide what they are going to eat and that animals can be trained to eat different types of plants.”

Lewis adds, “In a day and age when we are short on feedstuffs, the high cost of feeds, people have to really be creative on how they can get through the tough times and open the door to look at alternatives and unconventional things that hadn’t been considered before.”
SAREC field day slide show
(See it on the web: http://bit.ly/2012sarec)

Department of Molecular Biology Seminars

Fridays, 2:10-3 p.m., Berry Center Auditorium, Room 138

September 7 – “Endosomal transport and human disease,” Sean Connor, University of Minnesota

September 14 – “Prion strain targeting in the central nervous system,” Jason Bartz, Creighton University

September 21 – “Planar cell polarity: From cell biology to human disease,” John Wallingford, University of Texas, Austin

September 28 – “Gene regulatory mechanisms that build a nervous system,” Oliver Hobert, Columbia University

Publications


Calendar

**September 5, 12, and 19:** Food Preservation 101, 5:30 p.m., at Fort Caspar, Wyoming State Fair and Rodeo Fairgrounds, Douglas

**September 5-6:** High Plains Ranch Practicum, SAREC, Lingle

**September 6:** Savvy Parent Webinar Series: Budgeting for the College Student, 12:10 p.m., online webinar

**September 6, 13, and 20:** Food Preservation 101, 5:30 p.m., at the Niobrara County Fairgrounds, Lusk

**September 10-17:** High Tunnel/Hoop House and Horticulture Extravaganza, at the EWC Campus, Torrington

**September 15:** Ag Day BBQ, 2-3:30 p.m. at Tailgate Park, prices: $10 adult, $5 kids under 12, kids under 5 free, Laramie

**September 21:** Wind River Agricultural Summit, at the Frank Wise Business Plaza, Fort Washakie

**September 21:** Preserve the Harvest, 5:45 p.m., in the Albany County office, University of Wyoming Extension, Albany County Fairgrounds, Laramie

**September 22:** Preserve the Harvest, 6 p.m., in the Albany County office, University of Wyoming Extension, Albany County Fairgrounds, Laramie

**September 26-27:** High Plains Ranch Practicum, Casper

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For a statewide calendar, please access the ag college Web site at [www.uwyo.edu/UWAG/](http://www.uwyo.edu/UWAG/)

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Proposals Submitted

**Beck, Jeffrey:** $10,000 to Wildlife Heritage Foundation of Wyoming for “Habitat Ecology and Effects of Habitat Alteration for Bighorn Sheep Translocated to the Seminole Mountains, Wyoming,” $9,000 to Wyoming Game and Fish for “Evaluation of the Wyoming Governor’s Sage-Grouse Executive Order,” and $1,200 to Black Diamond Minerals LCC for “Factors Influencing Pronghorn Survival and Reproduction in South-central Wyoming.”

**Freeburn, Jim:** $282,879 to USDA NIFA for “2012 Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Professional Development Program (PDP) State Implementation Grants,” $168,670 for “2012 Western SARE PDP Administrative Support,” and $43,057 for “2012 Western SARE PDP Special Outreach Travel.”

**Hufford, Kristina,** Jeff Walck, Kay Havens, Andrea Kramer, Jeremie Funt, Pati Vitt, and Shannon Still: $288,136 to National Science Foundation (NSF) for “Collaborative Research: Plant Recruitment Under Climate Change: Understanding Current and Future Patterns of Seed Germination with Implications for Conservation and Restoration.”

**Norton, Urszula,** Brent Ewers, Elise Pendall, and **Naomi Ward:** $1,528,134 to NSF for “Collaborative Research: Mechanisms Underlying Increased N Availability and Trace Gas Emissions Following Bark Beetle Caused Forest Mortality.”

**Norton, Urszula,** and **Judith Odhiambo:** $50,000 to Schlumberger Foundation for “Faculty for the Future Fellowship: The Effects of Different Conservation Agriculture Practices on Sustainable Food Production in Eastern Kenya and Western Uganda.”

**Norton, Urszula,** and **Brekke Peterson:** $25,000 to USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) for “Assessment of Biological Symbiotic and Non-symbiotic Nitrogen Fixation in Alfalfa/Grass Mix Hay Production in Southeastern Wyoming.”

**Norton, Urszula,** and **Jay Norton,** Lisa Philander, and Virginia Sutter: $149,987 to USDA NIFA for “Wind River School Garden Network.”

**Russell, Justina:** $3,250 to USDA NIFA for “Wind River Agriculture Summit – Coordination, Support, and Planning of the Tribal Farmers and Small Farmers Conference Sponsored by the University of Wyoming.”
**Changing Faces, Changing Places**  
(effective date in parentheses)

**Welcome:**

- **Christman, Justine:** Powell Research and Extension Center, research associate II (5/14)
- **Enyeart, Kara:** Molecular biology, accountant (4/23)
- **Gigley, Jason:** Molecular biology, assistant professor (8/21)
- **Gilch, Sabine:** Veterinary sciences, research scientist, senior (3/1)
- **Greet, Brandon:** Washakie County Extension, Northwest Area Profitable and Sustainable Agricultural Systems educator (9/10)
- **Klinginsmith, Jacquelyn:** Family and consumer sciences, temporary assistant lecturer (8/2)
- **Oswald, Benjamin:** Molecular biology, postdoctoral associate (7/23)
- **Skinner, Christy:** Family and consumer sciences, temporary assistant lecturer (8/22)
- **Spear, Stephanie:** Family and consumer sciences, temporary assistant lecturer (8/22)

**Farewell:**

- **Belden, Ramona:** Laramie Research and Extension Center, greenhouse manager (8/1)
- **Edwards, Alexis:** Molecular biology, office assistant, senior (7/6)
- **Fambrough, Kathryn:** Veterinary sciences, laboratory technician I (7/13)
- **Ferrell, Mark:** Plant sciences, extension educator, senior (6/30)
- **Frye, Eleanor:** Family and consumer sciences, temporary assistant lecturer (8/3)
- **Hearne, Carol:** Veterinary sciences, laboratory technician II (5/14)
- **Keele, Jacque:** Molecular biology, postdoctoral associate (5/18)
- **Kern, Jessica:** Animal science, research scientist (6/7)
- **Meyer, Sonya:** Family and consumer sciences, professor (5/5)
- **Pate, Jessica:** Veterinary sciences, laboratory technician I (4/5)
- **Randall, Brenna:** Family and consumer sciences, assistant lecturer (5/25)
- **Vance, George:** Ecosystem science and management, professor (5/5)
- **Zhu, Meijun:** Animal science, assistant professor (5/5)

**Monies Awarded**

- **Baumgartner, Robert:** $400 from various sponsors for “Crop Research.”
- **Brown, Donna:** $300 from various sponsors for “Family and Consumer Sciences Support.”
- **Ford, Stephen:** $714 from various sponsors for “Fetal Programming.”
- **Hufford, Kristina, and Mollie Herget:** $1,000 from The Nature Conservancy for “An Investigation of Grassland Plant Diversity, Adaptation and Resilience: Implications for Restoration Success.”
- **Lake, Scott:** $3,250 from various sponsors for “Research Laboratory Expenses.”
- **Nachtman, Jerry:** $9,000 from Crop Research Foundation of Wyoming for “FY2013 Wheat Variety Trials.”
- **Peck, Dannele:** $19,959 from University of California for “Assessment of Socio-economic Indicators of Progress in the Implementation of Conservation Agriculture Practices in Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda.”
- **Raisbeck, Merl:** $6,849 from various sponsors for “Miscellaneous Analysis

**Presentations**