

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING in the MARGINS

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL AND APPLIED ECONOMICS

Faculty Profile: John Ritten

By John Ritten, Assistant Professor

I grew up in the Black Hills of South Dakota, so I'm no stranger to the great state of Wyoming. However, it took me a while to land here at UW. Upon graduating from Rapid City Central, I decided I was done dealing with the cold and snow and moved to Arizona. I graduated from Arizona State University and worked a few more years in AZ before pursuing a Masters Degree at New Mexico State. Finally, after about a decade in the southwest, I decided the heat was worse than the cold, and moved to Fort Collins to get a PhD from Colorado State. While finishing my degree at CSU, I began my relationship with UW, teaching an occasional class up here. Upon completing my degree, I took a full-time Assistant Professor position at UW. However, I'm not roaming the halls in Laramie as often as most of my colleagues as my position is housed off-campus at the James C. Hageman, Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension Center (SAREC), near Lingle.



According to my business card, my official title is "Agricultural Systems Specialist," although I'm still not quite sure what that means. I mainly work on production agriculture issues, with an emphasis on innovative systems to improve profitability and sustainability. I was trained in Production Economics and Natural Resource Economics at CSU, and I am really interested in areas where agricultural production and other natural resource use overlap. While I technically split the majority of my time between research and extension, it's often hard for me to distinguish between the two. I try to get all of my research results to the public through extension publications or in outlets such as the weekly UW extension column in the *Wyoming Livestock Roundup*, in addition to extension programs across the state.

I am currently working on quite a few livestock-related projects. A lot of my work in this area focuses on ways to add flexibility into existing livestock systems to help producers cope with variable precipitation. Chris Bastian and I have done a fair bit of work analyzing optimal livestock strategies to respond to prolonged drought in our state. I have also been working with Steve Paisley and Scott Lake in the Animal Science Department to examine alternative weaning/feeding strategies to try to lower feed costs while improving carcass quality of finished steers. With the help of Kendall Eisele (MS Student) and Chris Bastian, we are hoping to show which strategies are most profitable across a wide range of potential economic situations. Given the rising cost of feedstuffs, this project will likely be very relevant to livestock producers in the coming years. I have also been peripherally in-

involved with Dannele Peck and Trent Roberts (MS student) in estimating the costs of various brucellosis management activities on area cow/calf producers.

While a lot of my focus so far has been on livestock systems, I am beginning to move into cropping system as well. I will be working with Chris Bastian and Brian Lee (MS student) in conjunction with Andrew Kniss in the Plant Science Department to analyze the impact Roundup Ready sugar beets are having on local producers. I am also working with Dannele Peck and John Hewlett (as well as numerous other researchers across the college) to compare alternative cropping systems (no/till, organic, and conventional) to determine long-term profitability and sustainability of these systems. Along these lines, I am looking at alternative organic soil amendments and their impact on both long-term soil dynamics and profitability with Jay Norton in Renewable Resources and Urszula Norton in Plant Sciences.

I am also involved in a few demonstrations out at SAREC. We are looking at the production potential of small wind generator, primarily for residential use, as well as the inclusion of a high tunnel in small-scale agricultural production. If you're ever in the area, feel free to stop in and take a look these demonstrations. The SAREC field day is scheduled for July 21 this year – it's a great time to stop out and see all the research projects, and get some good food too! ■

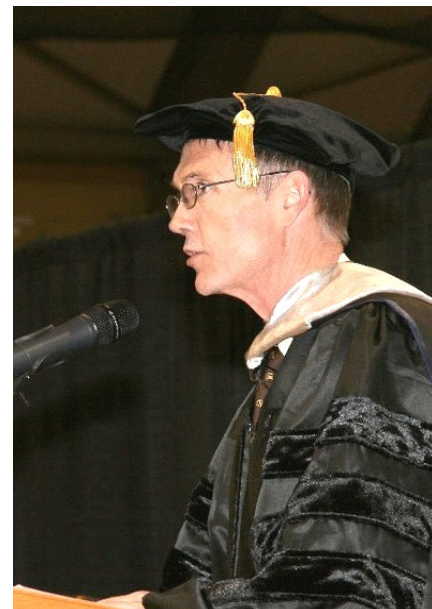
Andersen Recognized for Research

Matt Andersen, an assistant professor in the AgEcon Department, has just received the Quality of Research Discovery Award from the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association – the largest and most prestigious organization in agricultural and natural resource economics – in addition to receiving awards from two other organizations. His work appeared in the book *Persistence Pays: US Agricultural Productivity and the Benefits from Public R&D Spending*. The book examines the path of US agriculture in the 20th century and the role of public research and development. The authors found new evidence linking state-specific agricultural productivity measures to federal and state government investments in agricultural research and extension. The authors also indicate an accelerated investment in public agriculture research and development is warranted by the high returns to the nation and that investments may be necessary to revitalize the nation's agricultural productivity growth, although the benefits may not become reality for many years. ■



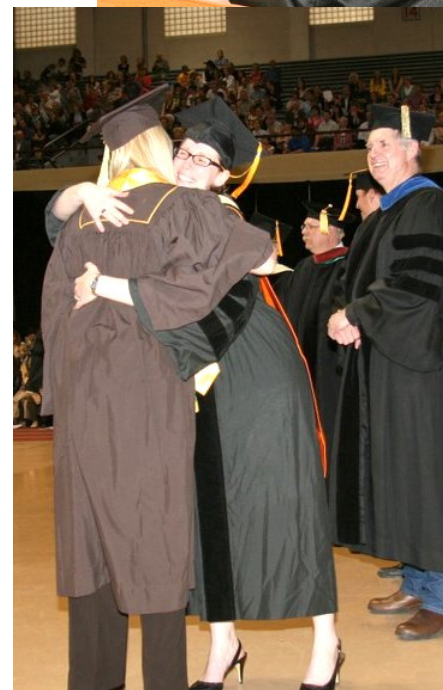
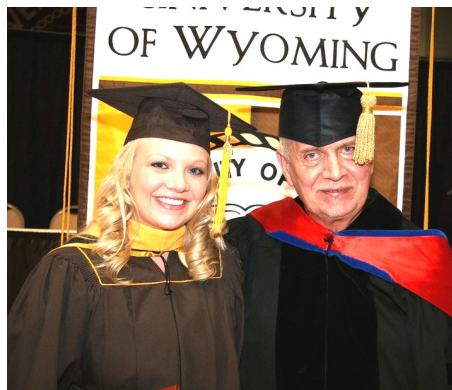
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Department of
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Applied Economics



Graduation 2011

The University of Wyoming's 121st annual commencement was Saturday, May 7. Above, the AgEcon contingent at the UW Fieldhouse. Above right, Dean Frank Galey addresses those gathered for the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources event. Right, Professor Dannele Peck hugs Kimberly Kuhn. Below, Professor Larry Held sees off his last graduate student, Tanya Madden. Below left, Professor Ed Bradley and Tanya Madden. Photos courtesy of Photos courtesy of Mariah Ehmke and Steve Miller. More photos are on the department Facebook page.



Head's Column

Roger Coupal, Head and Associate Professor

Hello, This has been a year of both good news and challenges for our region. The Pine Bark Beetle continues to wreak havoc in the area, with more than 1.5 million acres affected in Northern Colorado and SE Wyoming. Most mature lodgepole pine are dead or almost dead. However, the snow pack around Laramie is considerable. Some of the North Platte area (lower) has reached over 155 percent of normal. This suggests a good water year but also the possibility of some flooding, as we've seen.



This has also been a year of both notable accomplishments and challenges for our department. Overall student numbers have remained stable but our graduate program has grown considerably. We are continually impressed by the quality of students that

enter our program. We really appreciate the interest in our program instilled by our colleagues in region's community colleges. Transfer students are an important component of our student community here.

Our graduate students have been wildly successful. This year most of our graduate students' research projects were accepted into the Western Agricultural Economics Annual Meeting in Banf, Alberta at the end of June. Our students competed along side faculty nationwide in the Association for presentations at the meeting. There were over 240 submissions with 178 available slots.

Our extension work continues to be appreciated and in demand. We are continuing our work on risk management, and agronomic and livestock economics analysis with the work of Cole Ehmke, John Hewlett, and John Ritten. These three are incredibly productive in this area. However we are also working with physical scientists in areas of the economics of reclamation of disturbed lands, ecosystem services, local government fiscal and environmental planning, and more. We are continuing work in the economics of wind power and transmission, carbon sequestra-

tion, and renewable energy analysis. We just hired a new temporary faculty member, Dr. Scott Lieske, to work on extension and research in local government planning and community development.

On the research side Dr. Matt Andersen has won a third national award on returns to agricultural research. Matt should be congratulated for his award-winning work. Our experimental economics work continues to be very active with Dr. Mariah Ehmke, Dr. Chris Bastian, and Dr. Dale Menkhaus taking the lead in this area. Several of us are working on research aspects related to energy and natural resource economics. These topics of research include transmission planning, flue gas CO2 sequestration, the economics of reclamation, water resource planning, open space issues, and others.

Thank you for your continuing interest in the department and do not hesitate to drop by when you are in town. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely, Roger Coupal
Department Head

visit <http://www.uwyo.edu/agecon>

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Held Announces Retirement

34 years of dedicated teaching and research celebrated May 6

After a long and successful career at UW, Professor Larry Held celebrated his upcoming retirement among his students, friends, family and colleagues.

Held joined the AgEcon Department in 1977 after graduating from the University of Nebraska. During his time with the department he has become a respected researcher in the area of farm and ranch management, financial management and production economics, publishing widely.

But he is certainly best known for his teaching. As an instructor his teaching is highly regarded, having won teaching awards both at the college university, and national level, and the respect of all.

His teaching was at the core of agricultural economics: his classes included Farm and Ranch Business Records, Farm and Ranch Business Management, Agricultural Finance, Advanced Farm/Ranch Management and Problems in Agricultural Economics, reaching more than 2,000 students.

Two of these students joined him at his retirement party. Richard Zink, was Held's first graduate advisee (in 1980) and Tanya Madden will be his last, graduating in 2011.



Suffering a stroke in late 2002 he continued his work but decreased his teaching to a half time appointment.

At the party, Department Head Roger Coupal, Associate Dean and Director of Teaching Jim Wangberg (via letter), and Associate Dean and Director of the Ag Experiment Station thanked Held for his many years of excellent service. They and others then shared stories about Held's down-to-earth approach to teaching and his comradely approach to advising.

His retirement is effective this summer, when he plans to move to Fort Collins. So that he will keep his loyalties clear, Ed Bradley presented him with some UW gear, including a cowboy hat with



Top: Professor Larry Held with his last and first graduate advisees: Tanya Madden and Richard Zink. Bottom: Students past and present, colleagues, and friends gather at the American Heritage Center.

the bucking horse and rider. But his graduate student Tanya Madden and her family presented him with some University of Nebraska items (Nebraska being from where Held received his PhD and Tanya's home state). We wish Larry and Vera the very best. ■

Recent AgEcon Happenings

Publications

Rashford, B.S., C.T. Bastian and J.G. Cole. 2011. Agricultural Land Use Change in Prairie Canada: Implications for Wetland and Waterfowl Conservation. *Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics* (59, 2:185-205).

Rashford, B.S., J.A. Walker and C.T. Bastian. 2011. Economics of Grassland Conversion to Cropland in the Prairie Pothole Region. *Conservation Biology* (25, 2:276-284).

Presentations

Rashford, B.S., M. Kauffman and D. Peck. *Predicted Impacts of Elk Feedground Closure on Demand for Hunting*. Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO, February 23, 2011.

Peck, D., M. Kauffman, T. Roberts, B. Wilson, B.S. Rashford, J. Ritten and R. Coupal. *Costs of Brucellosis Prevention and Outbreaks in Greater Yellowstone Area*

Cattle. Animal Science Seminar Series, University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY, February 11, 2011.

Trips

Mariah Ehmke and others from UW attended a Wyoming EPSCoR conference in Anchorage, Alaska, in February on climate change research.

John Hewlett and Tom Foulke presented at the 18th Int'l Farm Management Conference in Christchurch, New Zealand in March.



In the Margins

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Nonprofit Organization
US Postage
Paid
Laramie, WY 82072
Permit #75

Congratulations!

AgEcon Spring 2011 Graduate Candidates

Stuart Beitel
Hadley Berger, Saratoga, WY
Sydney Burek, Elizabeth, CO
Amanda Cooley, Fort Collins, CO
Blake Gade
Samuel Hansen, Lingle, WY
Kaycee Hodges, Green River, WY
Aaron Hutson, Laramie, WY
Kimberly Kuhn, Cheyenne, WY
Michala Lindley, Laramie, WY
Sheridan Little, Leiter, WY
Sehou Nounawon, Laramie, WY
Jason Peterson, Gunnison, CO
Shane Ruff, Laramie, WY
Kodee Schell, Green River, WY
Cindy Shumway, Powell, WY
Brandi Simonson, Mullen, NE
Casey Sorenson, Deaver, WY
Albert Strickert, Yuma, CO
Jeffrey Stull, Casper, WY
Robert Teter
Emily Wotkins, Durango, CO
MS Degree
Kaytlyn Cooksey
Kendall Eisele
Tanya Madden



Recent MS Thesis Presentations

Trenton Roberts

Costs and Expected Benefits to Cattle Producers of
Brucellosis Management Strategies in the Greater
Yellowstone Area of Wyoming

Kendall Eisele

An Economic Comparison of Feeding and Weaning
Strategies in Southeastern Wyoming Beef Production

Kaytlyn Cooksey

Market Impacts of Exogenous Supply and Demand
Shocks in Private Negotiation: A Laboratory
Market Approach

Darlington Sabasi

The Potential Impact of Captive Supplies on Spot
Market Outcomes: Evidence from Laboratory
Market Experiments

Katrina Krutkramele

Young Consumers' Demand for Natural Sweeteners

Two Promotions Announced

The Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics would like to announce the promotion of two department members. Chris Bastian has been promoted from assistant to associate professor, and Cole Ehmke has been promoted from assistant to associate extension educator.