

# AG NEWS

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## Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As for many of you, summer was a busy time in the College of Agriculture. Many of our faculty members were in the field, and we prepared for the Wyoming State Fair. The Wyoming Brucellosis Coordination Team, which I chair, has had several meetings and is preparing recommendations for the governor. The state had a bit of a setback when it heard that another case of brucellosis was identified in Teton County. I say "a bit of a setback" because this new outbreak should not bring any new restrictions, but it will prolong the time until we are able to apply for "brucellosis-free" status again.

An important change of leadership is taking place in the college. Nicole Ballenger is joining us as the new head of the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics. Ballenger worked for several years in leadership positions with the USDA Economic Research Service. As you are aware, providing a strong economic and business background for folks in rural and agricultural communities is one of our most important tasks. In addition, the research that is done in this department impacts many rural communities and Wyoming's way of life.

Jordanka Zlatanova has taken the reins as chair of the Department of Molecular Biology this summer also. She has done internationally recognized research into a molecular type of "tweezers" that can be used in many scientific applications. In addition to providing a molecular biology degree, which can give students a head start for medical school or in research, the department also has a leadership role in the microbiology program.

We just learned that Ron Delaney, the current head of the Department of Plant Sciences, also plans to retire this year. Thus, we will be looking for leadership for this department soon. Ron's distinguished career is a topic for this issue. There are also features on the new Early Care and Education Center, a collaborative project looking at boosting dryland forage production, our involvement in the Vore Buffalo Jump development, and an example of the kind of help that a farmer can receive from our horticulture program.

This fall will again bring our annual "Agricultural Appreciation Day." We will be thanking and congratulating Robert Sackett and Curt Rochelle as our distinguished alumni, Connie and Lydia Kercher and their family as our outstanding supporters, and DuPont as our corporate partner.

Obviously, we are experiencing lots of change. We will miss our outgoing leaders, but we are also excited about our new folks. Thomas Edison was right. Our new departmental leaders have an opportunity to build for the future. Your voice does count; please stay in touch.



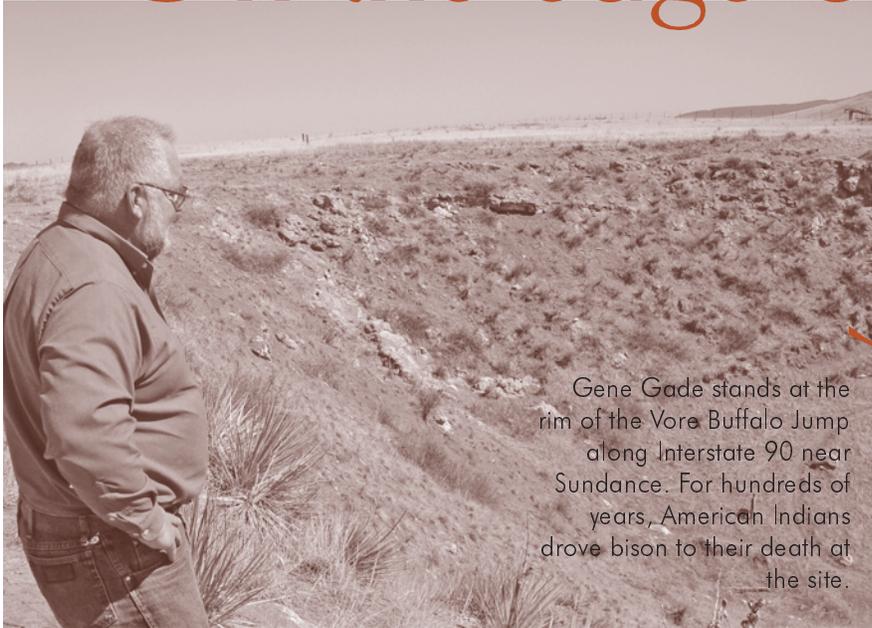
Dean Frank Galey speaks at the groundbreaking ceremonies for the new Early Care and Education Center.

Dean Frank Galey  
College of Agriculture

"I start where the last man left off"

Thomas Edison

# On the edge of history



Gene Gade stands at the rim of the Vore Buffalo Jump along Interstate 90 near Sundance. For hundreds of years, American Indians drove bison to their death at the site.

by Vicki Hamende,  
Senior Editor  
*Office of Communications  
and Technology*

To sway in the wind at the bluff of the 200-foot-wide sinkhole is to “hear” the thunder of 20,000 buffalo stampeding hundreds of years ago toward their impending death.

To stare tentatively into the deep, natural pit is to “see” the haunting skulls of butchered 1,200-pound animals and the remnants of tools crafted by American Indians to harvest their livelihood.

The Vore Buffalo Jump in northeast Wyoming is eerily silent and still now, the once 50 to 80-foot subterranean with its hidden treasures cloaked by thick layers of sediment, vegetation, and centuries gone by.

Gene Gade of the University of Wyoming intends to see the bowl-like landform spring to life again. When he stands on the rim of the ceremonial hollow to listen and gaze, he imagines “the Pompeii of Plains Indian archeological sites.”

His dream transforms an accidental discovery between Highway 14 and Interstate 90 near Sundance into a thriving research laboratory that uses the well-preserved bones and artifacts buried underneath

the cavity to re-create a fascinating history of how pre-horse Native Americans from 1300 through 1800 lured and captured buffalo, leaving behind only the bone pieces they could not use.

Gade’s eyes and thoughts bespeak his passion.

As president of the Vore Buffalo Jump Foundation, Gade says he is currently trying to raise \$11 million from public and private funding sources to build a semi-circular development of environmentally friendly Indian-style dwellings complementing the shape of the sinkhole. They will house centers for visitors and researchers and

also support the renewed excavation of the historical ground by UW and other institutions.

A College of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service educator in Crook County, Gade says the spot is a hotbed for scientific research and educational programs.

“It offers a panorama for telling the whole story of the culture and everyday life of the Indians who crossed the plains several hundred years ago and left their calling cards,” he notes, adding that he hopes to work with regional tribes to craft a living history, “a Williamsburg of the West.”

The footprints of the past tell the story of when the hunts occurred, what strategies were effective, weather cycles, ecological change, population and mobility statistics for animals and humans, the nutritional habits of each, and the differences and similarities among the nomadic tribes that crisscrossed the land.

UW has been a player in the project since the 1970s when the site was discovered by engineers during the construction of Interstate 90. The Vore family, which owned the property, deeded it first to

the university and then to the private Vore Buffalo Jump Foundation to be developed into a research, education, and cultural sanctuary. Partnerships now extend to a variety of state and federal agencies as well as corporations, foundations, and individual private donors.

One of the most active collaborators is Associate Professor Charles Reher of the UW Department of Anthropology, vice president of the foundation and the lead archaeologist in the excavation.

Reher has examined tons of the 20 layers of bones, tools, and artifacts beautifully preserved intact under protective sediment, safe for centuries from being eroded or scavenged. The researcher has been able to date the undisturbed materials with greater precision than at other less sheltered kill locations. So far Reher has studied just 5 percent of the relics left behind.

He has determined that at least five different tribes converged at the pit for their ceremonial buffalo hunts during a 300-year period ending in 1800. Use of the site ended when In-

*(Continued on page 4)*



## By the time they reached the edge, it was too late

*By Vicki Hamende, Senior Editor and Writer  
Office of Communications and Technology*

*They planned each jumping season for months, boosting their intensity with ceremonies of rebirth and spirituality in anticipation of a successful hunt.*

*For several days when the time was right, elders strategized. Shamen “called to the game.” Scouts amassed hundreds of animals in a prime location, maneuvering them through miles of stone-lined pathways and natural boundaries.*

*A decoy wearing a buffalo robe disguise acted like a calf in distress to lure cows in the direction of the sinkhole. Strategically placed tribal members waited silently behind rocks, cairns, and bushes in the “drive line,” slowly hazing the nervous bison and finally stampeding them into a deep, deadly trap.*

*By the time they reached the edge, it was too late.*

*In the final chaotic moments, dozens of buffalo careened, bodies askew, into a waiting sinkhole, landing lifeless or crippled on top of each other in the bottom of the pit.*

*The thunder of the herd segued into the excited shouts and thanksgiving chants of the hunters. The Indians would have food to sustain them, clothing and lodges to protect them, and scores of other raw materials derived from the animals to assist them.*

*But first there was work to do.*

*Wasting nothing, men, women, and children united in kinship to quickly and efficiently butcher hundreds of tons of meat, cutting it into small strips to dry. They gathered marrow and soft bone matter, boiling every joint and saving every nutriment. They tanned the hides. There would be no spoilage.*

*Leaving just stripped bones and a few spent tools behind, the families carried their labors home, where they would celebrate their triumph and bless the buffalo that gave them life.*

## Buffalo Jump *(continued from page 3)*

dians gained more access to horses for chasing the prized animals.

Gade envisions hundreds of 21st century travelers along the highway stopping by each day to weave a cultural path through tipis and museum exhibits featuring Indian motifs and field schools, witnessing ongoing excavation at close range, and “living” history through interactive programs.

“In this spot, the tribes butchered 200 buffalo a day with nothing but stone tools. They rendered the fat, dried the meat, and tended to the hides. Every man, woman, and child participated, and nothing was wasted,” Gade notes.

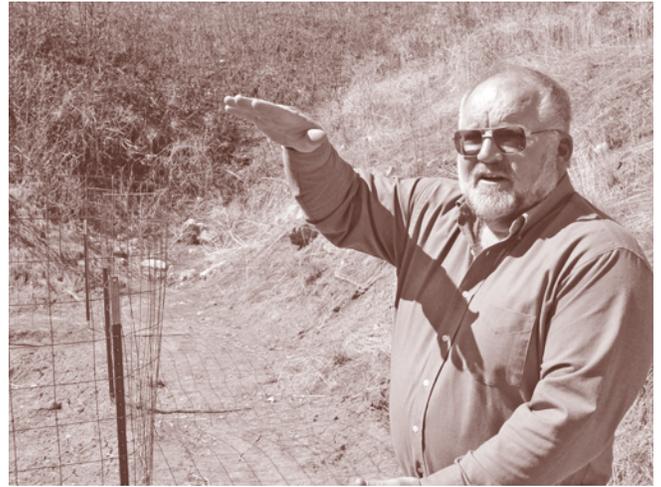
Architect Dennis Holloway of New Mexico, who has designed plans for the interpretive facility, says it will “communicate to a global audience about the profound physical and spiritual relationship between Indian culture and

the great free-roaming bison herds of the plains.”

Aside from being “one of the most spectacular archeological sites in the world,” Gade sees the Vore Buffalo Jump as a sure boon to the state’s economy.

With its location along Interstate 90 and its close proximity to Devils Tower and other tourist attractions in the Black Hills, the spot could host more than 120,000 visitors and generate more than \$3.5 million in regional business each year, also providing jobs for some 60 employees at the site.

Even in its current undeveloped state and near invisibility from the road, tourists from New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Aruba, France, Austria, Japan, Sweden, Canada, Iowa, Minnesota, Louisiana, Indiana, Texas, Oregon, Florida, Virginia, Kansas, California, New Mexico, Maine, Idaho, North Carolina, Missouri, New York, Utah, Alabama, and Illinois have stopped by in the past few months to read posted information



At the center of the sinkhole, Gade explains how “tree rings” of sediment have preserved 20 layers of buffalo bones left over from tribal hunts. The UW educator hopes to turn the area into an archaeological field laboratory that will educate students as well as visitors to the state.

about the jump and to sign the visitors’ book.

As a temporary measure while funds are being raised for all phases of the building project, the foundation enclosed one small key area of the crater with a metal cover containing large trap doors that open to show visitors an exposed bone bed. Gade hopes that summer travelers who gained a sneak peek into the past will return when the facility is operational in just a few years.

As Gade stands in the center of the sinkhole and points out some of its his-

torical secrets, he says he stays involved because he believes in promoting an economic development project for the university and also because he carries a personal interest. “It is something to leave as a professional legacy, a gift to Wyoming,” he explains.

“It’s an exciting project scientifically, historically, educationally, and economically,” Gade says, “and the University of Wyoming can train the next generation of archeologists at this very spot.” 🐾



## Interseeding rangelands with yellow-flowering alfalfa may benefit livestock and wildlife

by Robert Waggener,  
Editor

Office of Communications  
and Technology

There is nothing mellow about this yellow. It has survived the test of time on a ranch in South Dakota, standing up to spring downpours and summer droughts, hail, sleet, snow, fierce winds, waves of ravenous insects, and herds of hungry livestock and wildlife.

It's a yellow-flowering subspecies of alfalfa, *Medicago sativa ssp. falcata*, known simply as falcata or yellow-flowering alfalfa.

State and federal researchers, including a team from the University of Wyoming's College of Agriculture, are optimistic that falcata could thrive in some dryland areas of the Cowboy State, and they have launched three studies near

Laramie, Cheyenne, and Lusk to try to prove it.

"I am excited to see whether it can be established in the semiarid rangelands around here. If we get enough moisture, I think it will work," predicts Terrill Weston, a graduate student in the Department of Animal Science who is focusing his research on falcata planted on the McGuire Ranch 35 miles north of Laramie. The ranch near the mouth of Sybille Canyon was given to UW to benefit the Cooperative Extension Service and is used by the animal science department for summer grazing pasture.

Just why are Weston and his co-advisers, College of Agriculture Associate Professor Bret Hess and Professor Rich Olson, excited to see if falcata can establish itself in the sagebrush-mixed grassland near Sybille Canyon?

They believe interseeding yellow-flowering alfalfa into the rangelands with a no-till drill will increase forage quality and production for both livestock and wildlife.

"In so doing we can ultimately decrease the winter feed costs by extending the grazing season, thereby decreasing one of the most expensive economic inputs of our livestock producers' operations," says Hess, of the Department of Animal Science.

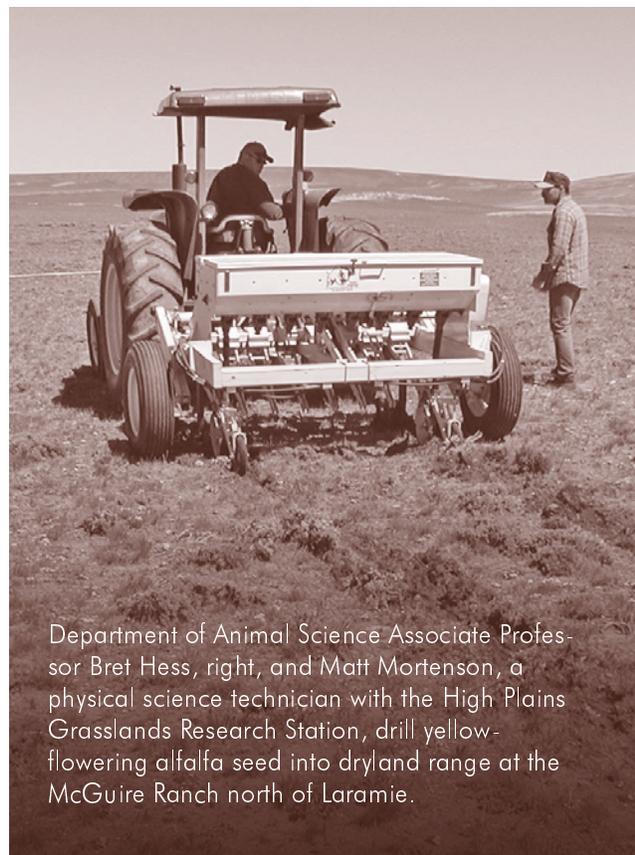
"And by interseeding this yellow-flowered alfalfa, you are adding another species to the plant community. It's a very adaptable forage, and I am sure deer, antelope, and other wildlife species will utilize it," notes Olson, of the Department

of Renewable Resources.

Cooperators on the McGuire Ranch project are rangeland scientist Justin Derner and soil scientist Gerald Schuman of the High Plains Grasslands Research Station operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) near Cheyenne.

The UW and ARS researchers received a \$54,139 grant from the Agricultural Experiment Station Competitive Grants

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Department of Animal Science Associate Professor Bret Hess, right, and Matt Mortenson, a physical science technician with the High Plains Grasslands Research Station, drill yellow-flowering alfalfa seed into dryland range at the McGuire Ranch north of Laramie.



Rich Olson, left, a professor in the Department of Renewable Resources, and UW graduate student Terrill Weston mark a deer mouse caught the night before in a “live trap” placed at the McGuire Ranch research site.

Program to fund the study through September 2005.

Researchers are confident the project will provide valuable baseline data that will lead to substantial funding for more ambitious projects relating to sustainable range livestock production systems including interactions between livestock, wildlife, and native plants in response to the falcata interseeding.

It will take the help of Mother Nature. The study got off to a slow start last year because little moisture fell on the range, which had been interseeded with falcata in May. Another seeding took place earlier this spring, and finally the rains came.

“There are new little seedlings coming up all over,” says Schuman as he walks through one of three plots planted at varying rates with falcata seed. Three other plots are being used as controls.

“The range is in really, really good shape,” remarks Olson as he and Weston check “live traps” for small mammals.

On this day in late June, the scent of wet sage fills the air. And so does optimism.

Surrounding healthy stands of Wyoming big sagebrush, rubber rabbitbrush, fringe sage, several species of grasses including Sandberg bluegrass, prairie

junegrass, and western wheatgrass, and a host of forbs including aster, American vetch, pussytoes and stonecrop, are hundreds of tiny falcata seedlings.

What if the yellow-flowering alfalfa establishes itself? Could it take over the native plants?

Researchers don’t believe so after working on a ranch owned by the Norman “Bud” Smith family east of Lodgepole, South Dakota. Smith is a descendant of a homesteader who was given a small packet of alfalfa seeds by a plant scientist who had collected it in Mongolia in the early 1900s. The homesteader

sprinkled the seeds on a small section of his place, and soon plants were growing.

In the 1950s, Smith noticed that the quantity and quality of native plant species were higher in areas where falcata was growing versus nearby sites which had been left undisturbed.

Hess explains that alfalfa, like other legumes, fixes nitrogen, which is one of the most limited nutrients in rangelands. In turn, higher levels of nitrogen increase the rate of soil carbon storage and improve the water-use efficiency by plants.

To boot, Hess notes, the yellow-flowered legume provides additional protein-rich forage for livestock and wildlife.

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Interseeding yellow-flowering alfalfa into native rangelands could be a win-win situation for both wildlife and livestock.

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Smith recognized the potential of *falcata*, nurtured the small stand, and harvested five pounds of seed. Now, *falcata* covers about 1,500 known acres on his family's place.

"I interseeded it, meaning I placed the alfalfa among my existing shrubs and grasses to increase forage production and palatability," Smith was quoted in the October 2003 issue of the ARS publication *Agricultural Research*.

Schuman caught wind of Smith's work, toured the ranch, and immediately became interested in collaborating with him to unlock the mysteries of *falcata*'s success.

The ARS soil scientist says the idea of interseeding alfalfa into dryland pastures was nothing new, but he emphasizes that previous studies used more typical alfalfa plants having one long taproot instead of *falcata*, which has a fibrous root system similar to the native grasses.

"A lot of the rainfall events in this area are one-quarter to one-half inch, and 80 percent of the grass-root systems are in the top

12 inches of soil," Schuman explains. "The taproot alfalfa species just don't survive in dryland conditions because they can't compete with the root systems of the native grass species."

Hess notes, "Researchers have been struggling for years to find legumes that would survive in a rangeland setting, and low and behold here is a rancher from South Dakota who has had the yellow-flowered

alfalfa on his place since 1915."

Hess and Schuman speculate that *falcata* has done so well on the Smith ranch because it is native to Siberia and Mongolia, which have similar growing conditions.

"The South Dakota site is very encouraging. It is the reason we initiated this study," says Hess, who notes that seed for the

UW/ARS project came directly from Smith's ranch.

"I am excited about the research because of the potential to improve rangeland resources in Wyoming and across the region. It could mean more livestock production on a given ranch, and it could also offer the opportunity for a ranch wishing to keep the same number of animals to reduce supplemental feeding, which will reduce costs," Hess says.

Olson adds, "Wildlife could also benefit because wildlife diversity and numbers are related to the quality of habitat and the diversity of plants. We are using small mammals as the indicator species in this study because they are very responsive to minimal changes in habitat."

As Olson and Weston weigh and mark a 13-lined ground squirrel before releasing it unharmed in a stand of mixed sagebrush and grass, Olson remarks with optimism, "Interseeding yellow-flowering alfalfa into native rangelands could be a win-win situation for both wildlife and livestock." 🐿



This 13-lined ground squirrel was measured, weighed, and checked to determine its sex and age before being marked with fingernail polish and released unharmed.

# The man who would not be king

by Vicki Hamende,  
Senior Editor  
*Office of Communications  
and Technology*

It is obvious that Ron Delaney does not relish talking about himself.

He has no choice. One cannot retire after a 32-year career as a renowned plant physiologist and, albeit reluctant, department head without telling his story.

The facts, the background, are secured on paper.

It is only through a hem and a haw, though, that the interviewer gleans what lies between the lines. That's where the emotion for three decades well spent is hiding.

"The students are my highlights," Delaney offers. "I enjoy teaching more than anything. That's probably why I have still taught three courses as department head."

He is on a roll.

"I have always taken pride in working with what I call the underdog students, the ones who are really struggling. Helping them get excited about science has been real positive for me." He finally smiles.

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"For more than three decades, Ron has been dedicated to students, teaching, and research. At the same time, he knew how to connect to producer clientele, and they hold him in high regard. Ron understands Wyoming and knows how to work at the grassroots level. He leaves a lasting legacy to his students, to his colleagues, to his profession, and to the state of Wyoming."

*Professor Alan Gray, director of the Powell  
Research and Extension Center*

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"Faculty members tend to get a little carried away sometimes with pride in their research. I have had 2,000 to 3,000 students go through. That has produced a much bigger impact on society than any discoveries I might have made."

Yet make them he did.

Alfalfa research Delaney conducted resulted in a morphological change – bigger leaves on the plants to allow for the more efficient fixation of carbon, a boon to the atmosphere and to crop yields. Commercial plant breeders snatched his discoveries for

their new alfalfa varieties.

The professor's mark is also on cultivated dry-land cropping systems that can weather drought. Experiments with annual legumes in place of summer fallow bear his footprints. Promoting the sustainability of Wyoming agriculture is etched throughout his efforts. His publications and areas of academic expertise are extensive.

Lest he has revealed too much to the listener, he pauses to emphasize the powerful role played by collaborators in all of his successes.

Degrees? He's got 'em: Two from Montana State University and a doctorate from the University of Arizona. He also has a love for the land that dates back to growing up on a farm in western Montana and relieving his dad at the plow everyday as soon as he climbed off the school bus.

Seventy-two people applied for the assistant professorship in the College of Agriculture's Department of Plant Sciences that Delaney accepted in 1972. "If Alaska had made its offer two weeks earlier, I might have ended up there," he jokes, his bashfulness briefly sidetracked again.

Be patient for 30 minutes or so and he will confess that he was the first faculty member in his department to be named as a distinguished fellow by the American Society of Agronomy.

With more prodding, he quietly admits that he has been honored by Gamma Sigma Delta students and the Cooperative Extension Service. "There's another one from the Wyoming Crop Improvement Association. I don't remem-



ber the title. It's on a jacket I don't have with me today." All of this is missing on his Web site.

Crop physiology, forage crop science, horticulture, turf grass management, plant biology, agroecology, agronomy, he has taught them all. "I have always enjoyed what I was doing."

His colleagues dragged Delaney, kicking and screaming a bit, to the department's leadership post seven years ago. "I had no interest in being an administrator and still don't," he sputters. "I am not one who can stand to sit around. That's the biggest problem with this kind of job – too much time in the chair."

But a faculty member cornered him. "Delaney, you often said that the best administrator is the one who doesn't want the job. So you have got to do it."

He did it well.

During his tenure, the University of Wyoming and the Wyoming Department of Agriculture partnered to open a new state seed laboratory in Powell, critical to the infrastructure of the state's agriculture industry.

"I imagine I played a big role in that," he says softly.

Delaney also revitalized his department's horticulture program, helping to institute a minor in the rapidly growing field. His persistence led to the hiring of a plant agroecologist to help meet the needs of a tripling enrollment. He promoted the importance of extension programs that are helpful to producers.

Again it is time to turn the spotlight back on his fellow plant scientists.

"The faculty members in this department are very productive. They are in contact with the public on a daily basis. As a result, they know what the problems are in agriculture in Wyoming, and they are dedicated to solving those problems," he says. "They make being a department head as easy as it can be."

As full professors begin to leave in the next few years, Delaney says the college will lose "a tremendous amount of expertise" but will also have the opportunity to hire people "more oriented toward the ecology and sustainability of agriculture and to horticulture."

Steve Miller, a professor who has been with the department since 1984, will step in as interim department head for the coming school year until a permanent replacement is hired.

Although Delaney's official retirement date is October 15th, his last day will come at the end of August. "I'll be hunting sheep on September 1st," he grins, not at all sheepishly.

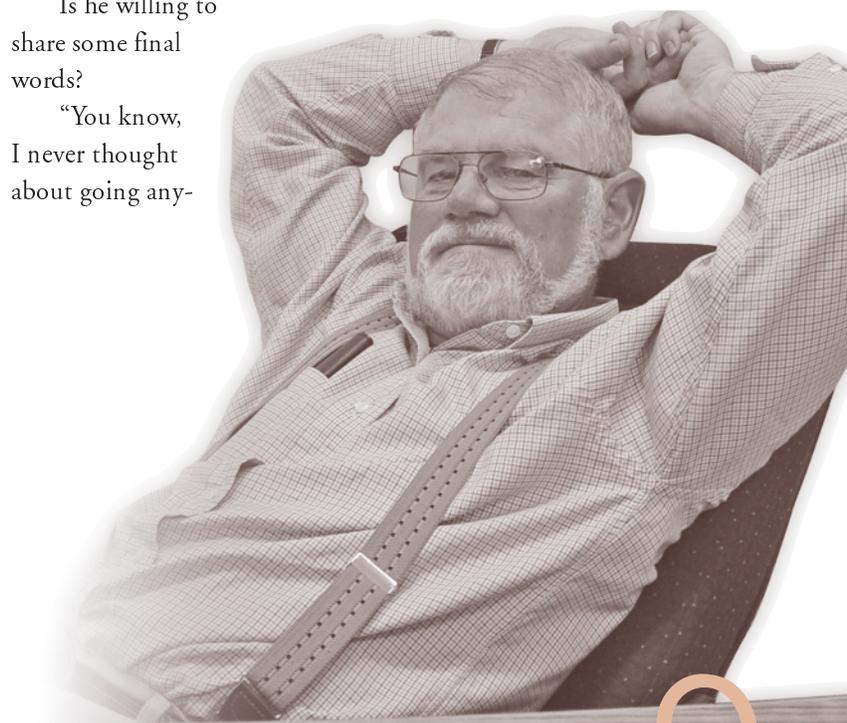
He hasn't closed the door on coming back to UW as a "rent-a-professor" to fill in when there are teaching gaps.

Is he willing to share some final words?

"You know, I never thought about going any-

where else. I never applied for another job. It must have been treating me right. The college has a great bunch of people to work with. I think agriculture is unique in that way, and I think it's because of the stellar work ethic that goes along with it. You learn that growing up in ag," he muses.

"I will miss the people, but I will enjoy being gone. I'm absolutely not worried about finding something to do with retirement, not at all." 🐏



Ron Delaney is retiring as a professor and department head in plant sciences.

# “If you would have a lovely garden,

by Vicki Hamende,  
Senior Editor  
*Office of Communications  
and Technology*

**I**dle Thyme. The name on the sign is a misnomer.

True, Shelly Elliott does grow spices on her certified organic Community Supported Agriculture and market farm in Carpenter, the first of its kind in the state.

But she has no “time” for idleness.

For every naysayer who tries to convince her that she can’t make a living cultivating organic vegetables or raising pastured chickens on 10 acres in the middle of the prairie, Elliott answers by erecting a high tunnel for year-round production or building haybale walls in her hen house or setting up a drip irrigation system.

“My neighbors must think I’m the biggest flake on the planet,” confesses Elliott.

Not so, says Catherine Wissner, a University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service horticulturist in Laramie County.

“One day about three years ago Shelly called the office and wanted information about growing vegetables in southeastern Wyoming,” Wissner recalls.

“I explained to her the difficulties she would face due to the lack of water, the altitude, the wind, and the soil condition. I knew she was going to have a challenge, but she was extremely lucky and found the perfect spot,” the educator says.

The address of Idle Thyme Farm? “Paradise” Road.

Elliott, a native of Illinois, has been interested in organic growing most of her life.

With the help of Wissner (“She has been my devil’s advocate. She makes me do my homework.”), UW soil scientist Kelli Belden, and fellow organic farmers, Elliott has overcome government and agency hurdles to establish her operation.

The Wyoming Women’s Business Center even paid for her to receive training in how to use a high tunnel (an unheated,

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“Diversity and creativity” are Shelly Elliott’s mottos. She grows 140 different varieties of foodstuffs and is adding grape vines to her collection.

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hoop greenhouse) to help create an appropriate microclimate for the winter growth of a variety of vegetables and fruits. Her tunnel is the first one being used in the state for commercial production.

Elliott points that “diversity and creativity” are her mottos. She grows 140 different varieties of foodstuffs and is adding grape vines to her collection.

The families and individuals who share her bounty in a Community Supported Agriculture program are benefiting from the experiments underway at Idle Thyme.

On the list of certified organic crops supplied by Elliott’s enterprise are vegetables such as arugula, asparagus, beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, chard, chiles, cucumbers, dry beans, soybeans, garlic, green beans, green onions, hot peppers, kale, leeks, lettuce, mustard greens, onions, parsnips, peas, potatoes, radishes, red cabbage, rutabagas, salad greens, salad mix, spinach, sweet peppers, sweet potatoes, tomatillos, tomatoes, and turnips.

Customers also purchase her cantaloupes, melons, strawberries, pumpkins, squash, zucchini, edible and fresh flowers, ducks, duck eggs, geese, turkeys, and dried, fresh, and medicinal herbs.

In addition, Elliott sells organic, pastured poultry (“Once you have eaten a fresh range chicken, you notice how much better the flavor and texture and taste are.”) and green, blue, brown, and white eggs (“bursting with flavor”) that come from her mixed breed flock of pasture-raised laying hens.

you should live a lovely life.”



Idle Thyme’s Shelly Elliott, left, shows Laramie County CES Horticulturist Catherine Wissner how she protects growth in a small hoop house on her farm.

The Carpenter resident has devised her own Excel-based recordkeeping system for tracking the history of her plots and animals. She carries a hand-held device in a waterproof case to make notes in the field and then downloads the information to her computer spreadsheets.

“I’m a firm believer in local food systems,” she says. “I would love to see

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“To me there’s nothing more miraculous than planting a seed in the ground and watching it grow. It’s amazing.”

*Shelly Elliott*

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our farmers’ markets filled with all local farmers.” Elliott offers a series of free summer workshops to fellow growers.

Idle Thyme visitors will likely meet the Elliott family – 8-year-old Maia, who oversees a kids’ garden and helps her mom teach classes; 6-year-old Kellen, an aspiring entomologist; 3-year old Sadie, “a poster child for cute and hug-

gable” who “loves being a farm child” but is wary of roosters; and Ostara, Ofallon, and Orion, the livestock guard dogs. Shelly and her husband Kevin team up to home school their children. The enrollment will soon grow with a fourth child due on Valentine’s Day.

Life on the farm is not easy work, Elliott admits. “It involves a lot of sweating and toiling and facing the pressure of having to constantly think six to eight weeks ahead of the game.”

She reads volumes of materials related to her trade. “You can’t just throw seeds in the ground. Every plant likes different things. People who think you just go out and put in your garden one weekend don’t understand everything that is involved.”

Elliott advises others who are interested in organic farming to do research to become knowledgeable about the standards and avoid costly mistakes.

*(Continued on page 12)*



Elliott offers some of the farm-fresh eggs she sells at markets and to cooperators in her Community Supported Agriculture program.

“Seek support from the great resources that are out there,” she adds, nodding at Wissner. “Do a market investigation. Write a business plan. Know where your money is coming from and going to. Develop a long-term vision. Put your eggs in more than one basket. Like anything else, before you do it, it’s scary.”

As her own farm thrives and she overcomes any qualms she may have had in the beginning, Elliott is able to enjoy the

fruits and vegetables of her own labor. She is modeling the Shaker saying that is attached to her Web site: “If you would have a lovely garden, you should live a lovely life.”

“To me there’s nothing more miraculous than planting a seed in the ground and watching it grow. It’s amazing,” Elliott says.

“I love what I do. I don’t know too many people who wake up every day and can say that.” ☺

## Governor to speak at Consumer Issues Conference

Wyoming Governor Dave Freudenthal will be a keynote speaker at the fifth annual Consumer Issues Conference October 7 from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Wyoming Union. The gathering will focus on consumer activism related to health decisions.

Other speakers will include University of Wyoming President Philip Dubois, Wyoming State Legislator Jane Warren, Wyoming State Senator Charles Scott, Dean Robert Kelley of the College of Health Sciences, Wyoming Department of Health Director Deborah Fleming, and Trudy Lieberman, director of the Center for Consumer Health Choices at the Consumers Union.

Representatives of the Wyoming Department of Insurance, the state attorney general’s office, the Wyoming State Hospital, and the Colorado Health Institute will also be featured.

The purpose of the conference, which is being organized by Professor Virginia Vincenti of the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences and Associate Dean and Professor Dee Pridgen of the UW College of Law, is to help develop an understanding of consumer health issues and the resources available to tackle them.

Sessions will deal with health insurance claims, rural health, law and policy issues, tobacco and alcohol preventative programs, mental health concerns, the marketing of weight-loss products, and other health-related topics. ☺



2004 Consumer Issues Conference

# Early Care & Education Center to open next year



Joining UW Child Care Center students breaking ground for the new Early Care and Education Center were, from left, College of Education Dean Pat McClurg, College of Agriculture Dean Frank Gale, UW President Philip Dubois, facility co-directors Mark Bittner and Clela Booth, and College of Education faculty member Peggy Cooney.

Preschool students from the University of Wyoming's Child Care Center sank small shovels into the soil to mark the official groundbreaking of the new Early Care and Education Center.

"I think this is going to be a great facility. It's not only going to be an excellent place for young students to be cared for and learn every single day in a safe and clean environment, but it's a wonderful opportunity for our faculty and staff to combine the best of education and service for our community," said UW President Philip Dubois during the summer ceremony.

The \$2 million, 9,220-square-foot training and

research laboratory being built at 30th and Lodgepole streets in Laramie is a joint effort of the colleges of Agriculture and Education.

It will merge the current UW Child Care Center, Child Development Center, School-Age Care Program, and College of Education Pre-K program and also allow for the addition of infant and toddler care.

"This is really a wonderful opportunity to consolidate several of our facilities. It is truly an interdisciplinary effort," said College of Agriculture Dean Frank Gale.

"In addition to providing care for our children, it will provide a good, positive learning experience for

our college students who will have that important role in later years of taking care of kids all over the state and region," Gale said.

Scheduled to open in the summer of 2005, the center will serve approximately 90 to 100 children. It will offer university-level preparation for students in family and consumer sciences, nursing, kinesiology and health, developmental psychology, and communications disorders.

Special features will include a multi-purpose area for gross motor activities, parent meetings, and multi-age programs; a breastfeeding support room; an on-site nursing station with temporary

sick-child facilities; a science/solar room to encourage children's understanding of nature and how to grow plants; an observation room with computers and video capabilities to better serve college students' training needs; and a full kitchen with child-sized space to encourage cooking and nutrition-awareness activities.

Associate Professor Karen Williams, head of the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences and a key player in the development of the new center, describes it as academic based and says the level of interdisciplinary involvement it will afford will be a "model" for the nation. ☘

# AG APPRECIATION

Alumni, supporters, and corporate partner to be honored during Ag Appreciation Weekend

The College of Agriculture's outstanding alumni, supporters, and corporate partner for 2004 will be honored October 1 and 2 as part of Ag Appreciation Weekend, a celebration of the importance of agriculture to Wyoming's history, culture, and economy.

Curt Rochelle, a philanthropist who has long supported the University of Wyoming and the agricultural industry, and Robert Sackett, whose work and teachings in seed certification helped improve the quality and production of crops across the state, will be recognized as the college's outstanding alumni.

DuPont has been named the corporate partner of the year for its gifts to the college, and Department of Animal Science Professor Emeritus Conrad "Connie" Kercher, his wife Lydia, and their family will be honored for their long-standing involvement with the college and its students.

The honorees will be special guests at the Dean's Appreciation Dinner on October 1 and will also be introduced in a ceremony during halftime of the University of Wyoming versus Louisiana-Monroe football game on October 2.

Prior to the game, which is scheduled to begin at 1 p.m., the college will host its annual barbecue at Tailgate Park.

For more information about the Dean's Appreciation Dinner, contact the College of Agriculture Development Office at (307) 766-3372. Tickets for the Ag Appreciation Weekend football game may be reserved by calling (800) 922-9641 and asking for seats in the Ag Day block.

## Robert Sackett praised

by Robert Waggener,  
Editor  
*Office of Communications  
and Technology*

Robert Sackett's roots go deep in Wyoming agriculture, and many farmers can thank him for greatly improving the quality and production of crops across the state.

Sackett has been named a 2004 College of Agriculture Outstanding Alumnus for his work in seed certification in Wyoming and for his training of students and cooperation with fellow faculty members during his nearly 20-year career with the University of Wyoming.

Along with teaching classes relating to crop production and seed identification, Sackett served as assistant manager and then manager of the Wyoming Seed Certification Service (WSCS) before being hired by the University of Arizona in Tucson as the manager of seed certification and executive vice president of the Arizona Crop Improvement Association.

"I would hope my work did something for Wyoming farmers. I think it may have because they sure hated to see me leave. I also hated to leave the state because I loved my work, I loved the farmers, and I loved to teach," says Sackett, who is spending his retirement in Tucson with his wife Emily.

"His biggest contribution to agriculture in Wyoming was in the certification and testing of crop varieties," says Bernard Kolp of Laramie, a retired UW professor of crop science.

"The development of new crop varieties and hybrids would be of no value if they were not kept pure and of the type that was originally released by the plant breeders. If not certified, they would soon be lost," adds Kolp. "Bob's research was thorough, and he was also a very good instructor."

Unlike most of his peers at UW, Sackett didn't start college until he was in his late 30s. And he didn't start college for the same reasons most people do.

# WEEKEND

## for contributions to Wyoming agriculture

“I was working in the UW agronomy research greenhouse, and I got tired of everyone talking terms over my head,” says Sackett, who was hired by UW shortly after moving to Laramie from Minnesota in 1952.

Sackett’s frustration with not being able to understand “big talk” began to change when he took his first college course – botany – at UW.

He excelled in the class and at the urging of his adviser, Jack Walters, he went on to earn bachelor’s and master’s degrees in agronomy. He worked full time while completing his studies, first as an employee in the greenhouse, then as a crop and seed identification instructor, and finally as assistant manager of WSCS.

“It kept me hopping, but I enjoyed both work and college,” Sackett remembers.

While at UW, he coached College of Agriculture crop judging teams and worked with students to establish Future Farmers



of America agronomy judging contests.

His list of research papers, honors and recognition, offices held in state, national and international associations, and community service takes up six single-spaced typed pages. It reads like a “Who’s Who in the UW College of Agriculture and Wyoming agriculture.”

Sackett was elected to the Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies (AOSCA) board in 1971. He was elected vice president in 1977 and became president two years later. His involvement in

AOSCA allowed him to influence the seed certification process internationally, associates emphasize.

“I am lucky and proud to have been a professional colleague of Bob Sackett, whose entire career has been central to agriculture and the land-grant university tradition,” says Kurt “Cub” Feltner, a retired UW professor of crop physiology who now lives in Pinedale.

“Bob’s courses in seed technology benefited students in many curricula as well as professionals returning to the campus for special training. Wyoming’s agriculture also benefited from Bob’s dedication to making available to farmers

and ranchers the newest seed of the highest quality,” Feltner notes.

Promoted to manager of the WSCS in 1960, Sackett performed the majority of field inspections in the state for the next nine years.

“Bob is a quiet, thoughtful agronomist who has worked long and efficiently to improve agriculture through better seed production in Wyoming and Arizona,” says retired Powell grower Lloyd Snider.

Another retired Powell grower, Jim Spiering, notes, “Bob was instrumental in raising respect for Wyoming certified seed on an international level. His dedication, honesty, and integrity are beyond question.”

Colleagues say that next to the development of the state’s seed program, Sackett’s second biggest contribution to Wyoming farmers was his work with Kolp in the 1960s to intro-

duce malt barley production into the state.

*(Continued on page 23)*

## outstanding alumnus

# AG APPRECIATION

## Curtis Rochelle honored for philanthropic efforts

by Robert Waggener,  
Editor  
*Office of Communications  
and Technology*

For his philanthropic efforts on behalf of the University of Wyoming and the College of Agriculture, Curtis Rochelle of Cheyenne has been named a 2004 Outstanding Alumnus for the college.

Rochelle and his family have donated a record \$5.5 million to UW. Their contributions funded the Curtis and Marian Rochelle Athletic Center and established the Curtis and Marian Rochelle Professorship in the College of Agriculture. The professorship is in memory of John Hill, dean of the college from 1923 to 1950.

Rochelle earned a



Curtis Rochelle

acious graduate of UW best exemplifies, and he has been most generous in his support of his alma mater," says retired U.S. Senator Clifford Hansen of Jackson. "He makes friends easily and listens to other people, which are real attributes in my opinion."

Rochelle was born in Lusk and graduated from Natrona County High

school in Casper in 1933. He founded Rochelle Livestock Company, a sheep ranch located near Rawlins, in 1942 and is a former president of the Carbon County Wool Growers Association. Rochelle backed research in the agricultural industry including the development of the Warhill breed of sheep by the Warren Livestock Company and John Hill. The white-faced composite breed was founded in the 1950s for its outstanding wool and ability to "take advantage" of Wyoming's harsh range conditions, says Hansen, and "that's a pretty big order. Curt was keenly aware of what the producers were shooting for, particularly with wool, and he closely followed the success of Warren Livestock and Dean Hill," Hansen says.

"His inquiring mind and his ability to listen resulted in the development of programs and policies that led to sustained progress in agriculture, managing land, and grazing as well as the development of the Warhill," he adds.

Such attributes spilled over to other ventures for Rochelle.

He is a director and principal of United International Holding, Inc., a cable television firm which serves 33 companies around the world, and he is a director of the Rawlins National Bank.

Previously, Rochelle was a director and principal of United Artists Entertainment and a former director of United Cable Television.

"He is a very, very good inquirer, and he knows what questions to ask," Hansen says. "He is certainly a born leader."

Rochelle's contributions to UW started when he was a student. He served as president of his senior class and was an active member of the College of Agriculture's honor society.

The Rochelle family contributed to the College of Agriculture's "Excellence in Agriculture" fund in 1980, and he has been an annual supporter of the Cowboy Joe Club since 1981.

The ag college named Rochelle and his wife Marian as "outstanding donors" in 1990, and he was honored with the 20th UW Medalion Service Award four years later. The award recognizes outstanding service and dedication to the university.

Rochelle was also presented with the UW Cornerstone Award.

"The award is to recognize individuals who have strengthened the very foundation of this institution," says UW President Philip Dubois. 🐾

## outstanding alumnus

bachelor's degree in animal science from UW in 1941, served as the UW Alumni Association president in 1946, and was a member of the university's board of trustees from 1983 to 1989, earning a trustee award of merit.

"Curt stands as a symbol of what a devoted, gra-

School in Casper in 1933. He founded Rochelle Livestock Company, a sheep ranch located near Rawlins, in 1942 and is a former president of the Carbon County Wool Growers Association.

Rochelle backed research in the agricultural industry including the development of the Warhill



# WEEKEND

## Kercher family recognized for supporting college

by Vicki Hamende,  
Senior Editor  
*Office of Communications  
and Technology*

The Kercher family has been dedicated to the University of Wyoming for 50 years.

Conrad “Connie” Kercher joined the faculty of the College of Agriculture in 1954 as an assistant professor of animal nutrition, retiring as a professor emeritus in 1996.

His wife Lydia earned bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees from UW and taught in the College of Education for 22 years.

Three of their four daughters graduated from UW.

Along the way, the Kercher family began giving. They started by supporting the Wheel of Brands scholarship program and then purchasing a box seat at the Cliff and Martha Hansen Livestock Teaching Arena. The Kerchers are now establishing a scholarship for an international graduate student in the Department of Animal Science.

Some 15 years ago, Connie says, the Laramie couple “decided we had enough ‘stuff’ in the house” and suggested that their children make contributions to the College of Agriculture in lieu of purchasing birthday and Christmas gifts for their parents.

“We receive acknowledgements every year that they have given in our name,” Kercher says. Their adult grandchildren make donations as well.

During Ag Appreciation Weekend October 1-2, Connie, Lydia, daughters Kathryn, Nina, Jane, and Kise, sons-in-law John, Mark, and Todd, and the Kerchers’ six grandchildren will gather at UW to be honored as the College of Agriculture’s Outstanding Supporters for 2004.

“It has been a pleasure to give something back to an institution that has provided a happy, comfortable life for us,” Connie says.

The Kerchers were married 58 years ago in

Montana, where Connie earned a bachelor’s degree in animal industry at Montana State University - Bozeman.

They left the rural lifestyle of the West to move to New York, where Connie was awarded an M.S. and a Ph.D. in animal nutrition at Cornell University.

“When we went from Montana to New York, it was like going to another country,” Lydia recalls.

“We know the loneliness people feel when they are out of their normal environment. That’s one of the reasons to help those who are away from their homeland,” she adds, referring to the Kerchers’ efforts to establish an international scholarship.

“We really struggled financially through school,” Lydia notes. “We want to help others with their struggles.”

The Kerchers laugh now about their introduction to Wyoming. Connie



Conrad & Lydia Kercher

was hired over the telephone. “University positions were very scarce then,

and no one paid your way to come for an interview,” he says. “We were just happy to get to the West again.”

They have never left.

Connie jokes that he didn’t expect his first job to be his last job. “We worked here for 64 years between us. It took perseverance,” the couple says, “but Laramie has been a good home.”

Connie still maintains a campus office, keeps u

*(Continued on page 24)*

# outstanding supporters



# DuPont named Corporate Partner of the Year

by **Vicki Hamende,**  
**Senior Editor**  
*Office of Communications  
and Technology*

**D**uPont has a long history of supporting research in the College of Agriculture. For more than 20 years, the company has funded projects annually in areas such as weed management and has boosted the work of many faculty members.

In recognition of its generosity, DuPont has been named the college's 2004 Corporate Partner of the Year.

"They have been a very consistent supporter," says Professor Steve Miller of the Department of Plant Sciences. He estimates that he and colleague Tom Whitson, a professor emeritus, have received between \$20,000 to \$40,000 a year from the company for their research in weed control and herbicide resistance in rangelands and in small grain operations.

"The company comes in with particular studies that they want to look at, and then we select what treatments we feel will fit into the program," Miller notes. DuPont supplied a

particular herbicide to help control weed problems at the University of Wyoming/Colorado State University's Y Cross Ranch between Laramie and Cheyenne.

The professor adds that funds from the corporation have also helped to support the work of graduate students. Other faculty members in the College of Agriculture who have ben-

efited from DuPont support include Associate Professor Bret Hess, Professor Jim Krall, Professor Alan Gray, and Assistant Professor Stephen Enloe.



*The miracles of science*

The relationship between DuPont and UW extends beyond research partnerships. Over the years the company has recruited College of Agriculture graduates in plant and weed sciences. Craig Alford, a temporary associ-

ate research scientist in the Department of Plant Sciences who earned a Ph.D. in agronomy from UW in May, has accepted a job as a research and development scientist for DuPont in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Founded in 1802 in Wilmington, Delaware, the company conducts business in 70 countries worldwide and benefits states like Wyoming with its pro-

grams in crop protection, vegetation management, and seed development.

In addition to its agricultural pursuits, DuPont focuses on science-based solutions in fields such as food and nutrition, health care, apparel, safety and security, construction, electronics, and transportation.

According to information supplied by the company, "DuPont has been a leader in vegetation manage-

ment for more than 43 years. Our herbicides offer control of vegetation in ways that are often more efficient and environmentally sound than mechanical methods such as mowing, chain sawing, or grading.

"Our unique chemistries give us the opportunity to act as responsible environmental stewards. Part of this responsibility is to help the land develop the healthy diversity of vegetation as nature intended."

Whitson says he has been involved with DuPont for "many, many" years. "They are great to work with, and we have developed some good partnerships. We have been able to learn what their products can do for Wyoming people."

Miller adds, "DuPont has provided enough funding that we can rely on it to operate our programs. The company has really tried to help maintain research in the ag college, which is very much appreciated." >

corporate partner  
of the year



# PROGRAM NOTES



## Ag and Applied Economics

Nicole Ballenger, a former economic researcher with the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C., is the new head of the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics.

She replaces Associate Professor Ed Bradley, who is rejoining the faculty after seven years at the helm.

Ballenger has a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of California, Santa Cruz, and master's and doctoral degrees in agricultural economics from the University of California, Davis.

Prior to coming to Wyoming, the new department head led a program of economic research designed to assist public and private decisions on food safety, diet and health, and other food policy issues.

She also served as an assistant administrator for the USDA's Economic Research Service, was a

deputy director for research in market and trade economics, and served as a study director analyzing the future of land-grant colleges of agriculture.



## Animal Science

A group of graduate students in the Department of Animal Science has received awards in professional competitions.

Doctoral candidate Scott Lake of Gardnerville, Nevada, won first place for a written and oral presentation at a graduate student competition during the annual meeting of the American Society of Animal Science's Western Section in Corvallis, Oregon.

Lake, who has been studying ruminant nutrition with Associate Professor Bret Hess since February of 2002, was honored for his discussion of "The Effects of Supplemental High Linoleate or High-Oleate Safflower Seeds on Adipose Tissue Fatty Acids, Apparent Mobilization, and

Potential Uptake and Storage in Postpartum Cows."

His co-authors include Hess, Professor Dan Rule, graduate students Eric Scholljegerdes and Becky Atkinson, and assistant research scientists Venerand Nayigihugu and Charles Murrieta, all of the Department of Animal Science.

The purpose of the society, which publishes the monthly *Journal of Animal Science*, is "to advance animal agricultural research and education in North America by providing a forum to develop and communicate scientific and technical knowledge to enhance economic and ecological sustainability."

Lake competed against 14 students representing universities throughout the western United States in the event.

Graduate students Alex Wolf of Laramie, Shane Thompson of Upton, and Michelle Schwope of Deaver developed a recipe for bluegrass bacon that won second place during the Reciprocal Meat Conference of the American

Meat Science Association (AMSA) at the University of Kentucky.

The trio used beef plates that were cured and smoked into beef bacon. Sixteen universities competed in the event, and the judging was done by a team of industry experts.

Wolf is pursuing a doctoral degree in meat microbiology. Thompson and Schwope are completing master's degrees in meat science. Thompson is also the College of Agriculture meat laboratory manager, the coach of the livestock judging team, and a newly elected member of the AMSA student board.



## Family and Consumer Sciences

Associate Professor Rhoda Schantz of the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences and students in her food systems production class will spend the fall semester conducting nutritional analyses



# PROGRAM NOTES

of standardized recipes used at senior centers in Wyoming to make sure that the food served meets the latest federal guidelines for the dietary needs of senior citizens.

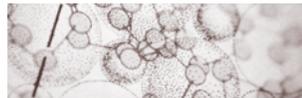
Her students will use computer software to analyze the nutrient content of each recipe and will also visit senior centers in cities like Rawlins, Casper, Cheyenne, and Laramie to meet with cooks and with individuals who eat meals served in the various facilities.

“The one-on-one contact is important for both the students and the sites preparing the recipes,” Schantz says. “The project will be more meaningful for everyone when that connection is made.”

She is working with the Wyoming Department of Health’s Aging Division to update standardized menus used throughout the state to meet revised nationwide nutritional guidelines and in anticipation of additional food safety protocols expected from the

federal Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point.

Schantz and three other University of Wyoming faculty members have received service learning grants aimed at incorporating hands-on community programs into traditional coursework. She credits Rollin Abernethy, associate vice president for academic affairs, and Elizabeth Jennings, program adviser for the UW Center for Volunteer Service, for making the nutrition project possible.



## Molecular Biology

Professor Jordanka Zlatanova, formerly of the Department of Chemical and Biological Sciences and Engineering at Polytechnic University in Brooklyn, New York, is the new head of the Department of Molecular Biology.

She replaces Professor Jerry Johnson, who is rejoining the faculty after nearly nine years in the leadership role.

Zlatanova received a master’s degree in biochemistry from Leningrad State University in Russia. She did graduate research at the Ernst Boehringer Institute for Drug Research in Vienna, Austria.

The new department head earned a Ph.D. in molecular and cell biology at the Institute of Molecular Biology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in Sofia, Bulgaria. She also has a doctor of sciences degree.

Prior to her work in New York, Zlatanova was employed in the Department of Cell Biology and Physiology at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine in Pennsylvania.

Zlatanova also conducted research at the Argonne National Laboratory at the University of Chicago in Illinois and the Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics at Oregon State University in Corvallis.



## Plant Sciences

The College of Agriculture and Sheridan College are exploring options to expand an existing joint horticulture program that currently operates at the community college campus in Sheridan.

The University of Wyoming awards a bachelor of science degree in either agroecology (a joint major offered by the plant sciences and renewable resources departments) or rangeland ecology and watershed management (available through the renewable resources department). Sheridan College gives an associate of applied science degree in horticulture.

To meet the growing need for graduates skilled in these fields, the two institutions would like to collaborate on a new third-year program in Sheridan that would emphasize the “green” industries as well as the propagation and use of native plants and grasses in reclamation and landscaping.



Under the proposed program:

- Upper-division horticulture and agroecology classes would be offered on site in Sheridan as well as via the Web and compressed video.
- Students would complete their first three years of college in Sheridan and would be enrolled at UW during their third year.
- Upper-division classes would be taught by UW faculty members based at the Sheridan Research and Extension Center.
- Students would spend their fourth year in Laramie taking the necessary classes to complete a bachelor of science degree.

The two institutions hope to implement the program by securing funds to add a faculty member based in Sheridan who would teach upper-division classes, conduct research on native plants, and provide educational programs for the public.



## Renewable Resources

Faculty members, scientists, and students in the Department of Renewable Resources conduct research on water resource issues relating to health, drought, sustainable agriculture, irrigation, livestock, wildlife, natural resources, ecosystems, rangelands, coal-bed methane products, and recreation.

To continue a variety of educational pursuits involving the critical importance of water in Wyoming and the western United States, the College of Agriculture and the Department of Renewable Resources hope to establish a new faculty position in water resources.

The position would enable the University of Wyoming to enhance its well-recognized and respected research programs in water quality and to provide increased opportunities for training students to

meet the nation's growing need for professionals in the field.

The addition of a new faculty presence would connect basic and applied research in water resources, helping to provide information to the public and to policymakers.

The position would also enable the college to augment its offerings for graduate students pursuing the water resources option and for students seeking degrees in rangeland ecology and watershed management.

For further information about water resource programs in the College of Agriculture, contact Professor Tom Thurow, head of the Department of Renewable Resources, at (307) 766-2263 or at [tthurow@uwyo.edu](mailto:tthurow@uwyo.edu).

To help with the campaign to establish an endowment to expand these programs, contact Anne Leonard, director of development, at (307) 766-3372 or at [aleonard@uwyo.edu](mailto:aleonard@uwyo.edu).



## Veterinary Sciences

Because of the work of faculty members in the Department of Veterinary Sciences, the University of Wyoming is considered a research leader for chronic wasting disease, brucellosis, West Nile virus, myeloencephalitis, and plague.

Professor Beth Williams is an internationally recognized expert in the fight against chronic wasting disease, and Assistant Professor Todd Cornish directs the college's research into West Nile virus. Professor Merl Raisbeck was a key player in the diagnosis of lichen as the probable cause of mysterious elk deaths in the state. Dean Frank Galey chairs the Governor's Wyoming Brucellosis Coordination Team, leading the effort to help the state regain its brucellosis-free status.

The College of Agriculture and the veterinary sciences department hope

# PROGRAM NOTES

to expand current research and teaching programs by establishing an endowed faculty position in wildlife and livestock diseases.

Such an endowment would allow UW to:

- Secure additional resources and enhance a nationally recognized program,
- Study animal health problems that impact both agriculture and tourism – two major sectors of Wyoming’s livelihood,
- Increase the body of critically needed knowledge about animal diseases,
- Attract the “best and brightest” minds in animal disease research, and
- Maximize the potential of the department’s involvement in the Wyoming Wildlife/Livestock Disease Research Partnership.

To learn more about this opportunity, contact Professor Donal O’Toole, head of the Department of Veterinary Sciences, at (307) 742-6638 or dot@uwyo.edu.



## Academic Programs

Seven classrooms in the College of Agriculture building received extensive facelifts during the summer to update technological resources and offer more flexibility in terms of room arrangements.

In all of the facilities, computer projection systems known as “wall talkers” have been installed to allow faculty members to utilize cutting-edge, interactive technology in the instruction of students. Chalkboards have been replaced with smooth writing surfaces.

One classroom on the lower level in the older section of the building boasts a new ceiling plus new lighting, window coverings, carpet, paint, cabinet, sink, moveable tables and chairs, and a doorway allowing access from the room into the outdoor patio.

Other renovated and cosmetically improved rooms are located on the

lower level and on the second and fourth floors of the newer section of the building.

Podiums, desks, tables, and chairs in all of the classes can now be moved to suit the needs of students and instructors.

Two years of planning went into the project, with funding provided by grants, departments inside and outside the college, and UW sources.



## Agricultural Experiment Station

Roger Hybner, the director of the Sheridan Research and Extension Center for nearly 18 years, has resigned to accept a position as an agronomist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service in Miles City, Montana.

After earning a bachelor’s degree in agronomy at Montana State University-Bozeman

in 1985, Hybner started his career with the College of Agriculture at the Torrington Research and Extension Center.

He transferred to Sheridan the following year and earned a master’s degree in agricultural education at MSU in 1999.

During his tenure in Sheridan, Hybner conducted extensive research in the areas of forages, horticulture, and turf grass. He was also a key player in the development of Sheridan College’s new agricultural complex, where he taught classes and coordinated projects.

Hybner also taught a variety of horticulture classes at the research and extension center.

“I’m proud of helping make the center a place people can use and have used more and more each year,” said Hybner, citing the support of his co-workers.



## Cooperative Extension Service

“Oh, the Places You’ll Go” is the theme of the annual Extension Professional Improvement Conference (EPIC), which will take place September 20-23 in Lusk.

Cooperative Extension Service (CES) educators from throughout the state will attend sessions dealing with teaching skills to enhance presentations and programs, how to use PowerPoint technology, tips on teaching ethics to youth and adult audiences, how to write media releases and newsletters, and suggestions on how to plan programs that will produce community impacts.

Participants will also learn about grant writing, attend professional association and initiative meetings, and receive an administrative update.

Awards will also be presented for outstanding accomplishments.

The event will be hosted by the Niobrara County CES. Further information can be obtained by calling (307) 766-3562.



## Ag Development

The College of Agriculture and the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences are seeking support to equip the new multi-disciplinary Early Care and Education Center that is currently being constructed at the University of Wyoming.

While funding for the building itself has been provided by the UW Board of Trustees, “furnishing the inside and completing the playground are the college’s responsibility,” notes Anne Leonard, director of Ag Development.

Special features of the center in addition to its general child care facilities will include a multi-purpose area for gross motor activities, parent meetings, and multi-age programs; a

breastfeeding support room; an on-site nursing station with temporary sick-child facilities; a science/solar room to encourage children’s understanding of nature and how to grow plants; an observation room with computers and video capabilities to better serve college students’ training needs; and a full

kitchen with child-sized space to encourage cooking and nutrition-awareness activities.

“This is a wonderful project that will help generations of people,” says Leonard. She asks anyone who wishes to help support the new center to contact her at (307) 766-3372 or at [aleonard@uwyo.edu](mailto:aleonard@uwyo.edu).

## Robert Sackett *(continued from page 15)*

“We showed breweries the possibility of producing malting barley in Wyoming,” recalls Sackett, who made several trips to Colorado with Kolp. “When I left for my new job, Wyoming was producing a lot of malting barley, mostly for Coors.”

Since then, malt barley production has contributed significantly to Wyoming’s economy.

Martin Massengale, former head of the University of Arizona’s Department of Agronomy and Plant Genetics, wrote to the UW College of Agriculture: “I urge that Bob’s nomination be given your highest consideration. He is the most deserving individual and exactly the type of person this award was established to honor.” 🍷

# Conrad and Lydia Kercher *(continued from page 17)*

to date with research in his field, and acquaints himself with new faculty members and graduate students.

The highlight of his career, he says, was being a full professor with the opportunity to teach and to work with producers studying such areas as protein sources for growing ruminants. More than 48 pages of his vitae list his publications, and several more pages outline scores of awards and activities.

Although the student body has grown from the 3,000 it was 50 years ago to today's 13,000 and College of Agriculture faculty and staff members no longer share one coffee room, the Kerchers say the friendly atmosphere of the university community has not changed.

"We have been blessed to know so many people in Wyoming," Connie says. "Everyone here knows you by your first name." ☺

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"It has been a pleasure to give something back to an institution that has provided a happy, comfortable life for us"

*'Connie' Kercher*

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## AG NEWS

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