From the Department Head

We are pleased to share the latest issue of Cowboy Economist with you. We hope you enjoy reading as we highlight key events in the life of the Department of Agricultural Economics over the past several months.

Our faculty members have been recognized at multiple events regionally and nationally. Dr. Brorsen is President-Elect for the Western Agricultural Economics Association while Dr. Lusk is President-Elect for the American Agricultural and Applied Economics Association. Read about Dr. Chung and his contributions to our profession, and our departmental graduate program in a feature story. We also shine a spotlight on Dr. Epplin and his contributions and leadership. Other faculty members were also honored for their outstanding contributions to our profession and service to our partners and clientele.

We feature Matt Waits, CEO of SST Software in our alumni section. Matt, and the company he leads, are having a tremendous impact on agriculture around the world. We also share information on the Aggie-X Alumni Endowed Scholarship and a group of alums making a difference. You will enjoy reading about these great role models for our current students.

Our students in our undergraduate and graduate program continue to excel. What a wonderful privilege to interact with these students and watch them grow and progress! Two of our students were recognized as 2016 OSU Outstanding Seniors! Kyle Hilbert and Alexis Wiebe were two of the fifteen OSU seniors selected for this prestigious honor. The Aggie-X organization is alive and doing well. Read about their activities this past year. Matt Fletcher served ably for the past two years as Aggie-X President. Jaclyn Shirley will take over the reins for the coming year and will do a great job.

The Oklahoma Women in Agriculture and Small Business Conference continues to be a successful effort providing opportunities for enhancing the success of participants. Mark the August 4-5, 2016 date on your calendar. The Rural Economic Outlook Conference will welcome participants from across the state, and will feature a host of speakers on October 21, 2016. Be sure to check the Extension Calendar for other planned programs in the coming months.

Best regards. We hope you enjoy this issue!

Mike Woods
Professor and Department Head
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Cowboy Economist Staff
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Editor and Contributing Writer - Judy Rudin

About the cover: Five generations of Aggie-X presidents: Montie Box, Jared Boe, Stacy Schroeder, Debbie Wedel, and Kent Miller. Photo by Sarah Carter.
At the 2016 Department of Agricultural Economics and Aggie-X Club Scholarships and Awards Banquet in April, 105 students received 120 scholarships totaling $136,875. Several students also received various scholastic awards.

As in past years, the readers who announced the recipients of the scholarships were CASNR alumni. This year Shannon Angle, Michelle Clogston, and Stacy Schroeder shared reading duties.

Shannon Angle is the International Terminals and Trading Finance Director for Koch Ag and Energy Solutions located in Wichita, KS. She joined Koch in 2002 and has previously held numerous roles in Koch Corporate, Koch Supply and Trading and Koch Audit Services including KII Financial Reporting Director, KII Corporate Accounting Director, KS&T Operational Risk Management Controller, KS&T Product Controller and KAS Audit Manager.

Angle graduated from Oklahoma State University in 2002 with a B.S. in Accounting and Agricultural Economics and led Koch’s OSU campus recruiting efforts for many years. She is a previous member of the Junior League of Wichita, where she served on the Board of Directors as Finance Director. She is also a member of the Wichita Chapter of American Society of Women Accountants and has served on the Wichita Salvation Army Young Professionals Board and the OSU Spears School of Business Accounting Advisory Board.

Michelle Clogston is the Marketing Coordinator for Oklahoma AgCredit, an agricultural lending cooperative that is part of the 100-year-old Farm Credit System. She has performed marketing, advertising, and public relations functions for the cooperative for eight years. When she joined the cooperative in 2008, it was named Farm Credit of East Central Oklahoma.

Prior to Farm Credit, Clogston worked at the American Hereford Association in Kansas City as a Creative Services Coordinator after

New Scholarship Donors: Henry L. Njoo Scholarship and Jack and Patricia Mount Endowed Scholarship

Recipient of the Henry L. Njoo Scholarship (Endowed), Yuetong Chen with her award.

Jack and Patricia Mount Endowed Scholarship recipient, Megan DeVuyst pictured with her award.
graduating in 2005 from Oklahoma State University with dual majors in agricultural communications and animal science.

Because she was an active FFA officer and member in high school, she was honored with an Honorary State FFA Degree at the state FFA Convention in 2015. She grew up near Afton in northeast Oklahoma and moved back to the area in 2011.

Stacy Schroeder currently serves as Manager of Global Training Development for John Deere’s Ag and Turf division. His group creates training programs that help dealers sell, operate, support, and manage John Deere solutions while profitably serving customers. He joined John Deere shortly after graduating from OSU’s agricultural economics department in 1993, and he has served in several marketing and customer support roles in the Ag and Turf and Construction & Forestry divisions.

Special thanks go to Koch Fertilizer LLC for providing funds to help support the banquet. The company also employs several former agricultural economics students. Klein’s Catering of Perry, Oklahoma supplied the dinner buffet.

Students with Special Recognitions Announced

Kyle Hilbert pictured with his award at the Wes Watkins Center

Outstanding Senior, Scholastic Achievement Citation

Kyle Hilbert
Major: Agribusiness
Year: Senior
Hometown: Depew, OK

Trenton Inselman
Major: Ag Econ
Year: Senior
Hometown: Morrison, OK

Amy White
Major: Agribusiness
Year: Senior
Hometown: Belvue, KS

Mark Andrews
Major: Ag Econ
Year: Fall 2015 Grad
Hometown: Dover, OK

Outstanding Senior Award of the Western Agricultural Economics Association

Trenton Inselman pictured with his award at the Wes Watkins Center

Dillon Rapp pictured with his award at the Wes Watkins Center

Dillon Rapp
Major: Ag Econ
Year: First Semester M.S. Student
Hometown: Marionville, MO

All-Around Senior, Campus Wide Activities and Academic Achievement, James S. Plaxico Award

Klein’s Catering of Perry, Oklahoma supplied the dinner buffet.
Feature Donor…

Aggie-X Alumni Endowed Scholarship

The Aggie-X Alumni Endowed Scholarship was established in 2011 by a group of alumni, all graduating from 2003 to 2005, who were active within the Agricultural Economics Department and in the Aggie-X Club. While in school, the group members received scholarships from agricultural economics alumni to help pursue their educational goals. After being out of school for a few years, the group decided to start their own departmental scholarship to help deserving students continue their education and to give back to the department that had enriched their lives. The scholarship is awarded to a junior or senior with a 3.0 GPA or above who is active in the Aggie-X Club.

Jocelyn Shirley, the current Aggie - X Club president, accepting the 2016 Aggie-X Alumni Endowed Scholarship award from Paul Goeringer, a past Aggie - X Club member.
Katelyn Garvie

Scholarship:
Oklahoma AgCredit and Farm Credit of Western Oklahoma-Panhandle

Major:
Double majoring in Agribusiness & Agricultural Communications

Year:
Junior

Hometown:
Burlington, Oklahoma

Future Plans/Goals:
I am interested in pursuing a career in marketing and communications for an agricultural related company.

What does receiving this scholarship mean to you?
"I am very grateful for being chosen as a scholarship recipient. These scholarships have reduced some of the financial burden and have allowed me to expand my college experience by being able to hold campus leadership roles."

Patrick Zeka presenting the Oklahoma AgCredit and Farm Credit of Western Oklahoma-Panhandle Scholarship to Katelyn Garvie.
If you, or someone you know, is interested in making a contribution to the Department of Agricultural Economics, please visit the OSU Foundation web page, osugiving.com/agecon, or contact:

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Ag Econ Students Elected for Student Council

Eight agricultural economics students were elected to the CASNR Student Council Association officer team this year. The purpose of this council is to represent the college in student government matters, promote the development of student leadership, and student welfare.

Department electees include Dillon Johnson as president, Lauren Clark as secretary, Jake Fanning as senator, Jenna Maltbie as VP of student affairs, Angel Molina as VP of business, Garrett Reed as treasurer, Logan Johns as assistant treasurer, and Morgan Vance as reporter.

Ag Econ Majors Serve as Success Leaders

To ensure the success of students, CASNR has several different student-led teams to help students transition to life at Oklahoma State University. The Department of Agricultural Economics is proud of our student success leaders.

Success Coaches for Outstanding Transfers: Paige Harjo, Caleb Kimberling, Zakary Laubach, Naomi Lemon, and Laura Winfield.

Student Academic Mentors: Abigail Arthaud, Paige Crawford, Megan DeVuyst, Jake Fanning, Katie Garvie, Kaitlyn Hanson, Addison Murray, Kaitlyn Sanson, Jaclyn Shirley, Morgan Vance, and Luke Werth.

CASNKR Ambassadors: Nicole Bayne, Lauren Clark, Megan DeVuyst, Kaitlyn Hanson, Kyle Hilbert, Angel Molina, Garrett Reed, and Luke Werth.

Freshman in Transition Student Academic Mentors: Jenna Maltbie, and Beth Theis.

Career Liasons: Madison Andersen and Kaitlyn Sanson.
Six agricultural economics students were initiated into the Oklahoma State University chapter of Phi Kappa Phi honor society in November of last year.

The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, founded in 1897, is the oldest and most selective honor society for top-ranking students from all academic disciplines.

Admission to the society is by invitation only and requires nomination and approval by chapter members. Invitation to membership is based on academic achievements and exemplary character and includes junior, senior, graduate, and professional students. Junior students must have completed 72 credit hours and rank in the top 7.5 percent of their class. Seniors and graduate students must rank in the top 10 percent of their class.

Department initiates for 2016 are Luke Chapman, agribusiness, Madill; Ethan R. Gingrich, agribusiness, Shawnee; Hannah McReynolds, agricultural economics, Stillwater; Lauren Clark, agribusiness, Eagle, Idaho; Dillon Rapp, agricultural economics, Marionville, Missouri; and Zadie Cook, agribusiness, Blanco, Texas.

2016 Livestock Judging Team

The 2016 livestock judging contest season is off to a great start.

They started off at the Arizona National Stock Show in Phoenix with High Team Overall. Our very own Kayla Hildebrand, an agribusiness major, was 8th Overall Individual.

Shortly after the team traveled to Denver, Colorado to compete at the National Western Stock Show. They left Denver with High Team Overall and champion team in the Carload. Kate Shaffer, another agribusiness major, placed 5th in the Individual Carload Competition.

The Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo was highlighted with 3rd High Team Overall. Next they made their way to the Dixie National where they once again placed as High Team Overall, with Shaffer placing 5th and Hildebrand placing 8th Overall Individual.

Finishing out the Texas Major season, OSU finished as High Team Overall at the San Antonio Livestock Show and Rodeo and Second High Team at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Hildebrand placed 1st High Individual in the Alternate division.

The team looks forward to teaching the industry’s youth at their upcoming OSU Livestock Judging Camp in June.
2016 Mortar Board Initiates

The 2016 Mortar Board Initiation took place April 3rd, 2016 in the Student Union Ballroom. Thirteen individuals from our department were inducted into this honor society.

Dr. Bailey Norwood was named the Honorary Initiate for 2016. Student initiates included Lauren Clark, Hannah Faulkenberry, Katelyn Garvey, Klair Hartzold, Bray Haven, Hammons Hepner, Aidan Justice, Katie Lippoldt, Angel Molina, Katlin Ramy, Garrett Reed, Tyler Schnaithman, and Morgan Vance.

Congratulations to our dedicated scholars!

2015 - 2016 Quiz Bowl Teams


2015 SAEA - (Atlanta, GA)
Team Members:
Hollee Koester
Matt Fletcher
Jordan Langan
Brady Mayfield
Vance Sharp
Logan Smith

2015 AAEA - (San Francisco, CA)
Team Members:
Hollee Koester
Matt Fletcher
Jordan Langan
Vance Sharp
Logan Smith

2016 SAEA - (San Antonio, TX)
Team Members:
Hollee Koester
Matt Fletcher
Jordan Langan
Brady Mayfield
Hannah McReynolds
Hanna Parker
Vance Sharp
Logan Smith
Andy Zahl
Brannon Daniels
Please join us October 1st, 2016

Reconnect with other alumni | Cheer on your favorite team
Eat some great tailgating food!

BEGINs 3 hours Before kickoff!

Sponsored by the Aggie-X Club and the Department of Ag Econ
It has been my honor to serve as president of the Aggie-X Club for the past two years, giving me the opportunity to share many great experiences with other members of the agricultural economics department, both students and faculty. We have seen increased membership and attendance at meetings, and have aimed to become more involved as a whole. The Aggie-X Club is looking forward to an even better year starting this fall, under the new direction of President Jaclyn Shirley, along with our wonderful advisers Dr. Derrell Peel and Dr. Mike Woods.

-Matt Fletcher
2015-2016 President
The Aggie-X club has had a great spring semester. The quiz bowl team traveled to San Antonio, Texas to compete in the Southern Agricultural Economics Association’s contest at their annual meeting. Members of the team won numerous different events. The team enjoyed the week touring the historic city.

Club members had the opportunity this semester to travel to Osage County, Oklahoma where we toured Woolaroc and the Tall Grass prairie. Students learned about the ecosystem and even how to raise and process buffalo.

The club also participated in CASNR’s Ag Day on the Lawn. We set up a game of The Price is Right with various agriculture commodities. Students across campus had the chance to guess the price of the commodities. It was a great way to educate consumers on how agricultural markets work and fluctuate.

We are looking forward to kicking off the fall semester with a new set of officers for the year. Our Back to School Bash is scheduled for September 6th. Our annual tailgate will be October 1st, when the cowboys play the Texas longhorns. We hope to see everyone around next year. Go Pokes!

-Jaclyn Shirley
2016-2017 President
The opportunities are endless.
Aggie-X
Gathering

Responding to recent interest, the department has scheduled a pre-banquet gathering for former Aggie-X members. All current and past members are invited to join us for a casual evening of storytelling, fun, and food. Please save the date and plan to join us for the first annual Aggie-X Gathering!

APRIL 7TH, 2017
The CAU-OSU joint program is a new partnership formed between OSU and China Agricultural University. Chinese students now have the opportunity to study two years in China, and two years at Oklahoma State University. This new cooperation will allow these students to graduate with a bachelor’s degree in agribusiness from both CAU and OSU.

The first group of students arrived in the fall of 2015. Although the students had already completed their English requirements, a major adjustment period was anticipated once the students arrived at OSU. The agricultural economics department and the college took this into consideration and planned accordingly.

The new program needed a strong as well as sensitive hand to guide it as it developed in its early stages. Arakssi Arshakian, the Academic Program Coordinator, and graduate of the OSU International Studies Program, was the perfect candidate. Arakssi was well aware how difficult the first few weeks would be for the new students, with so many lifestyle changes and cultural differences. The CAU-OSU students needed someone to look to for help. It was determined that a mentoring program would be a useful tool to help these students adapt in a quick and effective manner.

Four OSU juniors were selected to become the first CAU-OSU student mentors. The students went through an orientation where they were informed about Chinese culture, as well as the responsibilities they would be taking on in the coming year.

Each mentor group consists of four to six CAU-OSU students. The mentors are responsible for creating innovative activities that expand cultural awareness, assist with educational needs, and integrate American culture with Chinese culture through social activities. When asked the question: “How does becoming a CAU-OSU student mentor expand students personal leadership skills?” Arakssi answered, “The relationship between the mentor and the mentee creates an opportunity for the mentors to practice reliability, responsibility, and maturity while on the road to success at OSU. Mentors [are able] to improve their communication and interpersonal skills, assess needs in different situations, and react to them. Mentors are able to expand their network and connect with the broader student community. I believe that the more you give, the more you can receive back from the experience. For in helping others, you help yourself along the way too.”

Throughout the year, some of the activities that expanded cultural awareness were attending football games, participating in the international expo, and enjoying a thanksgiving dinner hosted by Professor Paul Weckler’s family. Although culture was a major part of the mentor program, the program also focuses on education. Group study nights assisted students with learning about typical American study techniques. A visit to the Payne County Fair allowed students to learn about American livestock, and a cooking demonstration taught the students and mentors about traditional Chinese cooking. Social activities throughout the year allowed students to have fun while learning about America. Some of these activities included eating steak at Texas Roadhouse, attending the Aggie-X Tailgate, and participating in homecoming activities.

Weekly reports and meetings kept Arakssi and the mentors in close contact, allowing Arakssi to guide the mentors as they encountered different obstacles. By analyzing the successes and failures of different activities, Arakssi was able to determine what improvements should be made as the program continues to expand and the department prepares for the arrival of the next cohort in fall 2016.
CAU-OSU student mentors Brian Barton, Hannah McReynolds, Courtney Morrison, and Adrian Wang stayed after one of their weekly meetings so a group photo could be taken.

CAU-OSU student mentors and mentees gather at Theta Pond for an Easter Event.
Q: How did becoming a CAU-OSU mentor expand your personal leadership skills?
A: Becoming a CAU mentor has allowed me to expand my personal leadership skills by understanding a different cultural perspective. Patience and understanding play major roles in being a good leader. Knowing how to communicate effectively, and understanding culture improves how we can relate to international individuals.
   -Brian Barton, Oklahoma

Q: What was your favorite part of the CAU-OSU mentor program?
A: My favorite part of the program has to be meeting students from halfway around the world and learning about another people’s culture that is so different from my own. After getting to know my mentees, I realized how similar we really are. I hope to study abroad in China with Dr. Schatzer this summer to immerse myself in their culture.
   -Courtney Morrison, Texas

Q: What cultural differences/shocks have you encountered?
A: The food in the U.S. is very different. In China we prefer hot water/drinks, even in the summertime. When I came to OSU as a freshman, I found that everyone here enjoys ice-cold drinks, even during the winter. This was very hard to get used to.
   -Adrian Wang, China

Q: What was the biggest difficulty you encountered, and what steps did you take to overcome it?
A: The biggest difficulty was getting everyone on the same page. The cultural differences made this even more challenging. The Chinese are brought up in a way that teaches them to never disagree, never say no, because it would seem rude. To overcome this, I used the mentee’s preferred form of communication and encouraged each of them to communicate openly with myself as well as the group.
   -Hannah McReynolds, Oklahoma

Q: What were some of the most helpful aspects about the CAU-OSU mentor program?
A: Right away, the program helps us become familiar with the community of Stillwater. Every week we would meet for group activities. Sometimes different American guests would be invited; this was very helpful in improving our English. Dinner and study sessions both allowed us to learn about culture and help us review for our classes. Overall I just think the program helped us feel more comfortable while we adjusted.
   -Echo Zhuo, China

A: The mentor program most significantly helped me adjust to living in America. From class to washing clothes, to getting our driver’s license and a car, it was nice having someone to point us in the right direction. Another activity that really seemed to help was participating in Dr. Adam’s international game night. I found this to really help me adapt to the American classroom.
   -Kevin He, China
Kyle Hilbert, agribusiness major from Depew, Oklahoma, and Alexis Wiebe, agricultural economics major from Hooker, Oklahoma, are two of the fifteen seniors named as OSU’s 2016 Outstanding Seniors by the OSU Alumni Association.

These students, chosen from the 49 students named as Seniors of Significance for 2015-2016, have excelled in academic achievement; campus and community activities, academic, athletic or extra-curricular honors or awards; scholarships and work ethic.

Dr. Bailey Norwood, advisor to Alexis Wiebe, and Dr. Shannon Ferrell, advisor to Kyle Hilbert, both have high levels of praise for their outstanding advisees.

According to Dr. Norwood, Wiebe has made a “…formidable transition from graduating in a high school senior class of eight people” to graduating as an OSU Outstanding Senior. Dr. Norwood says, “In the last year alone, some months would find her doing background policy research for a U.S. Representative, and other months she would be teaching more than a dozen students as a teaching assistant in our ag finance class, while making high grades, and holding leadership positions.

She’s not only talented, her talents are multi-dimensional. As a result, she performs well at everything she attempts, and students will tell you it is a pleasure working with her in groups and committees—she always contributes more than her fair share.”

Dr. Norwood relates that his “favorite thing about Alexis is hard to describe on a resume. She is simply a good person. She is always affable, always pleasant, always encouraging, always kind, always fair, and always honest. I hope my two daughters grow up to be exactly like her—what greater praise could I give?”

When asked her thoughts on receiving the award, Alexis stated, “When I think of the Outstanding Senior award, I think of extraordinary students like Chacey Schoeppel that I have looked up to for years. Incredible people receive this award and go on to change
the world. To be honored with this award and to be considered in the same category as the people I have looked up to is incredible. This is a huge honor and it is very humbling to accept this award.”

Dr. Ferrell credits Hilbert’s “academic record of high grades, Honors coursework, and undergraduate research” as one important reason for his success. But he also points to Hilbert’s “record of unprecedented devotion to service. Almost every one of his campus leadership roles (and the numerous leadership roles he holds off-campus as well) are focused on the highest levels of service. Put another way, these aren’t resume lines for a campus climber – they require extraordinary maturity and judgment, and demand a high degree of self-sacrifice.” Dr. Ferrell says, “Selflessness underlies everything [Hilbert] does and, I think, distinguishes him among student leaders as someone with a true servant’s heart. Just try to give him credit for something, and he will immediately turn that praise into credit for those who helped him along the way.”

In his nomination letter, Dr. Ferrell says, “Truly, I believe [Hilbert] to be one of the elite students at our university, and indeed, among the elite of all our world’s young leaders.”

Hilbert says, “It is a huge honor to be considered an Outstanding Senior by the OSU Alumni Association. I think of the incredible people in our department like Ashton Mese that have received this award in the past, and it makes it even more special to be considered in the same category as those that I looked up to as an underclassman.

There truly is something special about the CASNR family and I will never take for granted the countless friends, mentors, and life-changing conversations that have occurred in Ag Hall.

This recognition means the world to me not because of any accolade or award that I did to deserve it, but because of Dr. Ferrell, Dr. Terry, Kristi Bishop, and countless other faculty and staff in this college that pushed me to be the best that I could be. It is because of them that I receive this award.”

As a footnote to this story, and giving new meaning to the phrase, “Great minds think alike,” Alexis and Kyle are engaged. In addition, Kyle has filed to run for state representative in Oklahoma. Congratulations to both of them.

Annie’s Project

Level 1

anniesproject.org
State Coordinators: Dr. Damona Doye | Ms. Sara Siems

“Empowering Women in Agriculture”
Mark your calendar!

Rural Economic Outlook Conference
October 21, 2016

Terry Barr
Senior Director
Knowledge Exchange, CoBank

Mike Boehlje
Distinguished Professor of Agricultural Economics
Purdue University

Learn More
agecon.okstate.edu
Graduate Students

Fall 2015 Graduates

**Amadou Gouzaye, Niger**  
Ph.D. - Advisor: Dr. Epplin  
Switchgrass as a Dedicated Energy Crop: Fertilizer Requirements, Land Use, Yield Variability, and Costs

**Leon Hounnou, Benin**  
M.S. - Advisor: Dr. Stoecker  

**Seon-Woong Kim, South Korea**  
Ph.D. - Advisor: Dr. Brorsen  
Cross Hedging Canola, Forecasting Urea Price, and Effects of Social Pressure on Organic Food Purchases

**Nathan Thompson, Florida**  
Ph.D. - Advisor: Dr. Epplin  
Essays on the Economic Value of Genetic Testing in Beef Cattle Production

Three Minute Thesis (3MT) Contest Results

**3rd Overall** - Clinton Neill with his thesis about “Essays on the Market for Veterinarians”  
**Finalist** - Dylan Johnston with his thesis on “The Influence of Oil and Gas on Sales and Use

Tax Collections: Evidence from Oklahoma Panel Data”

NEW Grad Students

- **Larriann Chambers, OK** - MS.  
  Advisor: Dr. Chung
- **Leon Hounnou, Benin** - PhD.  
  Advisor: Dr. Shideler
- **Brian Mulenga, Zambia** - PhD.  
  Advisor: Dr. Chung
- **Dillon Rapp, MO** - MS.  
  Advisor: Dr. Holcomb
Meet the Graduate Student Association Officer Team

Aaron Ates is from Aledo, TX. He works with Dr. Jayson Lusk on consumer demand/behavior and food economic research. Ates expects to complete his Ph.D. by spring 2018 and hopes to find a faculty position with a research/teaching appointment.

Bart Niyibizi is from Rwanda. His research interests include commodity price analysis and climate change. He also expects to complete his Ph.D. by spring 2018. His goal after graduation is to become a faculty member within a department of ag econ.

John Ng’ombe is from Lusaka, the capital of Zambia. His research focuses on production economics and econometrics. After graduating in 2018, Ng’ombe plans to continue teaching and researching.

Kelsey Conley is a first year Ph.D. student from Pickerington, OH. Her major research area is consumer demand. Conley expects to graduate in 2018.

Blayne Horn is a first year master’s student from Chickasha, OK. His research is focused around options and futures, along with the cost constraint they have on the producer. After completing his master’s degree in 2017, Horn plans on pursuing a career as a commodity broker.

Meagan Rhodes is a master’s student from Fairview, OK. Her area of focus includes ag policy and finance. Her expected graduation is spring 2017. Rhodes plans to pursue a career in either policy for an ag-based organization or finance by working for an ag-lending institution or bank.
Alumni Spotlight

Waits Credits Ag Econ as Perfect Degree Program

Matt Waits, agricultural economics alumnus, credits ag econ as being “the right choice of degree program for me”. Now CEO of SST Software, an industry leader in agricultural information management, he says, “My time at OSU was fantastic. There I learned to think critically, to hone social skills, and to lead.

While working over the past 17 years with the team at SST to reshape agriculture through the use of geospatial software tools, I have found that my ag econ degree from OSU has served me very well. It not only gave me the micro understanding of farm operations that is needed to serve growers, but also an understanding of the macro level issues needed to deal with large multi-national firms.”

“I was at OSU from 1995 to 1999, and SST was founded in 1994,” he states, “and so it was really starting to hit its stride while I was in school. I was spending free time learning about SST’s products and then was able to use that information to apply in school and vice versa. At SST, I was pushing buttons to calculate the R-squared value of yield and potassium, and at the same time I was taking ag econ classes like quantitative methods that really taught me how to apply that statistical knowledge.”

After graduation, Waits was appointed director of the SST Information Lab program. In 2001, he guided SST Software in the development of an enterprise level, data management platform that encompassed what he envisioned as the essential components for meeting the needs of site-specific farm management.

This platform, later branded as agX, is now the underlying infrastructure that manages data on 125 million acres across the United States, Canada, Australia, South Africa, and South America.
In January of 2012, he took over as CEO of SST. The company now has 75 full-time employees with headquarters in Stillwater and offices in eight different cities in the United States, Australia, and South America. According to Waits, SST primarily serves ag retailers and crop consultants by helping them implement precision ag programs with their farmer customers.

“Today,” he says, “we have contracts with five of the top ten ag retailers and all three of the largest crop consultants in the US.”

An important aspect of information management for Waits is the vital role he believes it will play in meeting the food supply demands of an increasing population. At the annual Rural Economic Outlook Conference in Stillwater last October, Waits called “data science” the next agricultural revolution.

It is predicted that by 2050, we will need to feed nine billion people. To do that he says, we will need to double our current crop output. His data management process uses soil sampling, remote sensing, scouting, pictures and reports with mobile devices, and GPS Yield Monitors. The results can help with seed recommendations, profit mapping, and field problem areas.

Waits is a third-generation OSU graduate. His father, David A. Waits, founder of SST and now chairman of the board, received a BS in economics and a masters in geography. His grandfather, Jesse Waits graduated with a BS in ag education. While at OSU, Waits’ advisor was Dr. Dan Tilley. Waits served as president of Delta Tau Delta in 1998. Also in 1998, he met his wife Kristine Ireland. They were married in 2001. They have three children, Sam (9), Katherine (8), and Issac (5), who all attend Westwood Elementary in Stillwater.

Waits is also a third-generation pilot. “I am a private pilot and own a Beechcraft Bonanza airplane. Most of my flying is for business, to places that grow a lot of corn like Iowa, Illinois, and Indiana, but we also fly as a family quite a bit too. I travel a lot for business, usually in the US, but also take a few international trips per year. In December of 2014, I took the whole family with me to Brazil for a month. SST has an office there, so I worked down there for a couple of weeks and then played with the family for a couple of weeks. That was a great trip for all of us and really served to expand the kids’ horizons.”

Waits also stays active outside of work. “I run and bike”, he says, “and I have in the last few years done a lot of obstacle course competitions including competing in the World’s Toughest Mudder (WTM) in 2015. WTM is one of the most difficult physical challenges on earth because it is a 24 hour obstacle run. It is a 5 mile course in the Nevada desert that has 25 military-style obstacles and the winner is the participant that can complete the most laps in 24 hours. In addition, I am training right now for the OKC marathon.”

He has been involved with several charitable causes. Currently, he is a Stillwater Medical Center Foundation board member, and he previously served on the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) board.

For current ag econ students, Waits offered the following words of wisdom and encouragement:

Realize the need to be a good spokesperson to succeed. I’m not talking about selling products, I am talking about the fact that you cannot succeed without being able to sell yourself and sell your ideas to colleagues.

You will be greatly limited unless you are willing to speak in public. Very few genuinely like public speaking, but leadership requires this.

Writing is crucial. It is the best way to communicate ideas to others, and it is also very helpful in shaping your own thoughts.

Morality, integrity, intuition, and experiential knowledge are all far greater than intellect, so make sure you fully develop these parts of your life.

Don’t go to work immediately if you don’t absolutely have to, travel instead. Take the summer after you graduate and travel Europe, Asia or South America. You will learn an inordinate amount through this experience. I regret not doing this myself. I felt like I was going to miss out on something if I didn’t immediately go to work. I soon realized that the next time I would have the freedom to travel for weeks on end was after retirement. So travel now or it might be 40 years before you get the chance again.

The respect and high regard that Waits has earned in his business and among those in his profession is evidenced in a statement from Laurie Taylor, former marketing representative for SST, who said, “Matt’s diligent pursuit of the best deliverables to the precision agriculture industry and his humble approachable leadership style are among the qualities most mentioned among his employees and industry peers.”
A small group of Aggie-X alumni have taken it upon themselves to develop and see through a plan to endow the Aggie-X Alumni Scholarship. As the department continues to grow, it takes dedicated alumni like Jared Boehs, Bart Fischer, Paul Goeringer, Derrick Davies, and Autumn Williams to maintain scholarship funding. Scholarships not only help the recipients; they also make a huge impact on the department by attracting some of the very best students from across the world.

Why have these individuals put so much effort into making certain this scholarship would be available for years to come? Their passions grow from their own unique experiences.

Jared Boehs grew up on a farm and ranch operation in Fairview, Oklahoma. He came to Oklahoma State University and completed his Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Economics with a minor in Finance in 2004. He was actively involved with the Aggie-X Club, Ag Economics Quiz Bowl Team, the OSU Alumni Association Homecoming Steering Committee, and co-operated a video production business. After graduating, Boehs became a field landman for the oil and gas industry. He remained in that position for three years until he launched Canyon Land, an oil and gas lease brokerage firm. When an opportunity to become a land manager for BO-MC Resources Corporation arose, Boehs decided to sell the business and take the new opportunity. Currently he is developing a new land services firm, Cutter Energy, LLC. Boehs has obtained certifications as a Certified Professional Landman (CPL) and a professional Certified Minerals Manager (CMM). He is a member of the Oklahoma City Association of Professional Landmen (OCAPL), the American Association of Professional Landmen (AAPL), and the National Association of Royalty Owners (NARO). Boehs is still involved with his family’s farm and ranch operation. He and his wife Carissa are actively involved in LifeChurch, and reside in Piedmont, Oklahoma. Boehs said, “I am honored to have been a part of the Aggie-X Club and now find it a pleasure and blessing to serve with my fellow past club members in endowing this scholarship. I am hopeful that through this scholarship we can create a legacy of helping fulfill the financial needs of current and upcoming Aggie-X members, in order to help them pursue and achieve their educational and career dreams.”

Bart Fischer belongs to the fifth generation to grow up on his family’s wheat, cotton, and cattle farm just outside Frederick, Oklahoma. He graduated from Chattanooga High School in 1998 and then went on to Oklahoma State University. While at OSU, Fischer was a triple major in agricultural economics, accounting, and finance. After graduating Summa Cum Laude in May 2003, Fischer went on to get his master’s degree in Environmental Policy from Cambridge University in England. After a four-year stint with the U.S Government Accountability Office (GAO) in Washington, DC, he moved to College Station, Texas to work for the Agricultural and Food Policy Center (AFPC) at Texas A&M University while working on his PhD in Agricultural Economics, which he expects to complete this summer.

In May 2011, Fischer left College Station to work for Representative Frank Lucas, then the Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Currently Fischer serves as the Feature Scholarship Donor: The Aggie-X Alum
Chief Economist of the Committee on Agriculture in the U.S. House of Representatives. He has held this position since 2011. Fischer stated that, “My time at OSU was absolutely pivotal. Several experiences at OSU opened my eyes to opportunities that I never even knew existed. For example, prior to attending OSU I had never been out of the country, but I was fortunate to participate in multiple study-abroad trips while at OSU. During my time at OSU, I was encouraged to apply for several international scholarships and was ultimately named a national finalist in the Truman, British Marshall, and Gates Cambridge scholarship competitions which paved the way for me to attend Cambridge University on a scholarship funded by OSU donors. I was very actively involved on campus and was named an Outstanding Senior at the department, college, and university levels when I graduated in 2003.”

Fischer also said that Aggie-X was a big priority for him while at OSU. He served as President of Aggie-X for two terms. His years on the officer team were devoted to rebuilding and expanding the club, and it paid off when they were recognized as the National Chapter of the Year. Fischer recognizes that it was the generosity of OSU alumni that allowed him to attend not only OSU but Cambridge University as well.

“The Aggie-X Scholarship Endowment is one way for me to give back. It’s also a way to recognize students who are excelling and committing their time and energy to participating in an organization that was central to many of the great memories I have of my time at OSU.”

Fischer and his wife Karalyn, a 2006 OSU Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering graduate, live in Arlington, Virginia, where they are raising their two little boys, Luke and Liam.

Paul Goeringer, another individual with an ag-based background, grew up in Bessie, Oklahoma on his family’s wheat and cattle operation. After graduating with a B.S. in ag econ from OSU in 2004, he went on to law school and graduated in 2007. After deciding practicing law was not for him, Goeringer decided to move to Fayetteville, Arkansas. He then received a dual ag econ and legal master’s degree in ag law at the University of Arkansas. Currently Goeringer serves as the Extension Legal Specialist in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at the University of Maryland. Goeringer stated that the biggest reason they are working towards endowment is because, “Each of us benefited from scholarships while in ag econ at OSU and it was something we discussed after we graduated. We are returning the good blessings we [received] as undergrads [to] current and future undergrads in Ag Econ.”

Derrick Davies was born and raised in Fletcher, Oklahoma. He grew up around agriculture and was involved in FFA. He graduated from OSU in 2004 with a B.S. degree in agribusiness, and then went on to graduate from Oklahoma City University School of Law in 2007. Davies was a four-year member of Aggie-X, serving as vice president in 2003. He was also a member of the quiz bowl team. Aside from extracurricular clubs, Davies also worked as an Extension Assistant in the Department of Agricultural Economics for Dr. Damona Doye.

From 2007 until 2012 Davies practiced law with the private firm of Harrison and Mecklenburg. Their primary focus was estate planning, wills and trusts, tax law, oil and gas transactions, agricultural
law, and business transactions. He served as an in-house corporate attorney in the energy sector until 2013. Currently Davies holds the position of Vice President of Business Development and In-House Counsel for Philtek Services, LLC. He also is a part owner of Ferrell and Davies, a private practice law firm that focuses on estate and farm transition planning. Davies is a member of the Oklahoma Bar Association, American Agricultural Law Association, and the Association of Corporate Counsel. He and his wife Robyn live in Stillwater, Oklahoma with their two sons Brooks and Maxfield.

Davies explained, “A large group of Aggie-X Alumni have been contributing together to an annual scholarship for several years, and we felt that it was time to raise the funds necessary to endow the scholarship. For those of us involved with this project, Aggie-X was a big part of our education experience, and we are all still very close friends today because of our mutual involvement in Aggie-X.”

The lifelong friendships and exquisite opportunities that Aggie-X offered these individuals truly made an impact on their life. Davies stated, “Our goal is to reward dedication to Aggie-X while also encouraging educational excellence. We are looking for well-rounded, motivated leaders who are committed to serving their fellow students and their communities. We know that this special breed of agricultural economics or agribusiness students will continue to grow into the next generation of leaders for agriculture and America!”

This editor notes that in the beginning I believed this story was very unique, but after becoming acquainted with a few Aggie-X alumni, I came to realize that this story is not a new one. It is a similar chapter out of the same book. Although this particular group of individuals chose to work together to endow this scholarship, many other Aggie-X alumni give in other ways. Generations of this Aggie-X chapter have created close-knit groups of lifelong friends that continue to build off each other’s successes.
Faculty Awards & Recognition

Wade Brorsen: Western Agricultural Economics Association (WAEA) President Elect

Gerald Doeksen: Western Agricultural Economics Association (WAEA) Extension Career Award

Shannon Ferrell: American Agricultural and Applied Economics Association (AAEA) Distinguished Extension/Outreach Program Award Individual: Less than Ten Years’ Experience
OSU CASNR Student Success Leaders, Outstanding Advisor

Shida Henneberry: Western Agricultural Economics Association (WAEA) Fellow
President’s Cup for Creative Interdisciplinarity - team member

Notie Lansford: Honorary State FFA Degree

Jayson Lusk: American Agricultural and Applied Economics Association (AAEA) Fellow
American Agricultural and Applied Economics Association (AAEA) President Elect

Rodney Jones: American Agricultural and Applied Economics Association (AAEA) Committee Member
Outstanding Choices Article
Appointed holder of the Oklahoma Farm Credit Chair in Agricultural Economics

Bailey Norwood: Western Agricultural Economics Association (WAEA) Outstanding Undergraduate Teaching Award, More than 10 Years’ Experience
OSU Outreach Faculty Excellence Award for 2014-2015
Outstanding Faculty member Award from The Four Governing Greek Councils - 2015

Derrell Peel: 2015 Southern Region Regional Excellence in Extension Award, USDA-NIFA

Brian Whitacre: 2015 Southern Agricultural Economics Association (SAEA) Teaching Award
Stronger Economies Together, Excellence in Economic Development Work Award for Western OK I-40 Corridor Team
James A. Whatley Award for Meritorious Research in Agricultural Science from OSU

Mike Woods: 2015 Southern Agricultural Economics Association (SAEA) Lifetime Achievement Award

Outstanding Extension Program Award - Western Agricultural Economics Association (WAEA)
Team Members: Eric DeVuyst, Jody Campiche (KSU)

Oklahoma Quality Beef Network Team - Southern Agricultural Economics Association’s (SAEA)
Distinguished Extension Program Award 2015
Team Members: Damona Doye, Eric DeVuyst, Derrell Peel, Kellie Raper and others outside the department.
Top: (L-R) Quiz Bowl team members: Andy Zahl, Logan Smith, Hannah McReynolds, Hanna Parker, Dr. Derrell Peel, Matt Fletcher, Brady Mayfield, Hollee Koester.
Bottom Left: Anna Stehle with her poster display.
Bottom Right: Amy Boline with her poster presentation.
SAEA
Conference Summary

The Oklahoma State University Department of Agricultural Economics department members and students participated in multiple activities at the recent Southern Agricultural Economics Association annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas, in February.

A top honor went to graduate student Cortney Cowley who won the Outstanding Ph.D. Dissertation Award. Cortney’s dissertation was titled “Economic and Political Considerations for Anaerobic Digestion Technology Adoption on Animal Feeding Operations.”

Dr. Wade Brorsen, her advisor, stated “Cortney’s research has considerable real world interest. Anaerobic digesters can generate energy and reduce pollution at the same time. She is the first to conduct a nationwide survey, which she wrote and analyzed herself. She made the contacts with the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) to conduct her survey.

Her estimates are based on producers’ actual experiences rather than expert opinions or the experience of one or two operators as has been done in past research.

She has presented her work in Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) webinars. Her work is consistent with our land-grant mission by doing work that matters and communicating her results to key decision makers.”

Also at the conference, sixteen presentations were made in selected paper sessions by faculty and graduate students, five posters were accepted and presented, and three faculty members or graduate students chaired sessions.

Seven undergraduate students competed in the quiz bowl competition including Brady Mayfield; Matt Fletcher; Hollee Koester; Hanna Parker; Hannah McReynolds, Logan Smith, and Andy Zahl.

Logan Smith was a team member for the First Place Quiz Bowl Team and Hannah McReynolds was a team member for the Third Place Quiz Bowl Team.

“The Southern Agricultural Economics Association (SAEA) is one of the leading organizations in our profession,” said Dr. Mike Woods, agricultural economics department head. “Both undergraduate and graduate students receive outstanding opportunities to network and develop their professional skills. Our faculty members are leaders in this organization and many of our outstanding teaching, research, and Extension programs receive recognition from peers throughout the nation.”
The Importance of Teamwork When Aspiring to Success

Dr. Chanjin Chung discusses his role within the graduate program.

Modest, humble, and unpretentious are not words that commonly come to mind when talking about someone who has been awarded millions of dollars worth of grants and countless awards and published too many journal articles to list. The Graduate Program Coordinator for the Department of Ag Economics, Dr. Chanjin Chung, credits all the program’s success to the collective efforts of the departmental team.

Chung started at Oklahoma State University in the summer of 2002 as an assistant professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics. He had previously received his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota and held several different research positions leading up to his arrival at OSU. In June of 2005 Chung became an associate professor, and in 2009 he became a full professor.

Dr. Chung is an applied econometician, which combines economics, statistics, and mathematics to create models and tests to predict future trends. As a professor at OSU, Chung is assigned to teach 26% of the time and conduct research the other 74%. The courses he teaches include Advanced Agricultural Prices, Econometric Methods, and Advanced Agricultural Marketing, all of which are graduate courses. As far as research goes, Chung has spent a majority of his time evaluating check-off programs, like the commodity brand “got milk?”, helping them develop advertising and promotional strategies to maximize returns. Chung has also done extensive research on the market power of processors and retailers within the beef industry. Other areas he researches within the beef market are vertical price transmission, market integration, and traceability. All of this in the name of better quality for the consumer and better prices for the farmer.

As the graduate program coordinator for the department, Chung’s main responsibility is serving as the Chair of the Graduate Admission Committee. There are five total members and it is their job to recruit students, review applications, grant admission, and promote the program. They are constantly making efforts to develop new approaches and build the graduate program. Most importantly they allocate department resources for scholarships and assistantships, which plays a major role in recruitment success.

Chung holds the Charles Breedlove Professorship. He says he enjoys both the teaching and researching aspects of his job equally. “As a researcher at a land grant university, I enjoy making efforts to benefit the tax-payer directly. As a professor, and also as the graduate program coordinator, it is very rewarding to see the students leave with so much growth and success.”

There are 56 total graduate students coming from 11 countries, and representing 11 different U.S. states; 29 of which are international students, and 27 being domestic students. The diversity of students and programs offered are also things Dr. Chung and the department are very proud of.

“Dr. Chung is a recognized national scholar. His leadership in our department has had a significant, positive impact.” – Dr. Mike Woods, Department Head.
For more information about our graduate program please contact:

Dr. Chanjin Chung, Graduate Coordinator  
Anna Whitney, Student Services Specialist  
Email: agecgrad@okstate.edu

Department of Agricultural Economics  
Oklahoma State University  
417A Agricultural Hall  
agecon.okstate.edu
Dr. Francis Epplin has been studying switchgrass for over twenty years!
If switchgrass has been the major buzzword related to biofuels over the past few years, then Dr. Francis Epplin, agricultural economics Regents Professor, has been a major part of the team responsible for some of the buzz. He has been credited as “working on biofuels long before it became trendy.” According to colleague Dr. James Richardson, Regents Professor at Texas A&M University, Dr. Epplin’s “research on biofuels is the best in our profession.”

Dr. Epplin wrote his first article on switchgrass in 1995; it was published in 1996. Now, after 20 years of research, the conclusions about switchgrass and other grasses as biofuel have not changed much. As Dr. Epplin says, “it wasn’t economical then, and it’s not economical now.” All of that research, study, and reporting, according to Dr. Richardson, “provided real-world data to address relevant problems facing agriculture and the U.S. energy markets.” Dr. Epplin's perspective on the economics of biofuel production is still highly sought after by members of multiple disciplines.

Switchgrass and biofuels have not been the only objects of Dr. Epplin’s research in his long career. As Dr. Mike Woods, Agricultural Economics Department Head, states, “Dr. Epplin, an agricultural economist, has made significant contributions to the agricultural industry in traditional crop and livestock production and in biofuels production. Dr. Epplin has dedicated his career to improving the value of Oklahoma’s agricultural resources with research that is vital to Oklahoma agriculture as well as germane to U.S. agriculture as a whole. His outstanding research record has earned him a national reputation of excellence in multiple disciplines.”

Dr. Epplin has been honored not only as a researcher and a journal contributor, but as a teacher, as an advisor, as a scholar, and as a dedicated disciple of the land-grant mission. His research contributions are recognized both within and well beyond his own discipline. Most recently, he was presented the Southern Agricultural Economics Association (SAEA) Lifetime Achievement Award, one of the most prestigious awards in the field of agricultural economics.

While Dr. Epplin’s list of awards is lengthy and impressive, perhaps his most meaningful accolades however, have come from his students, who credit his selflessness, his guidance and mentoring through “grounded advice,” his genuine regard for his students, and his sense of humor for making their educational experiences both fulfilling and enjoyable.

Dr. Andrew Griffith, one of his former graduate students who is now an assistant professor in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at the University of Tennessee, says, “Dr. Epplin's experience and institutional knowledge related to the program and publishing in peer reviewed journals helped guide me seamlessly through the agricultural economics doctoral program at Oklahoma State. There is no doubt he is well respected in his discipline as well as other disciplines. However, the greatest attributes of Dr. Epplin are associated with his care and passion for his students, the department, and family. He has a way of drawing his students in with his dry sense of humor and his overall pleasant demeanor, which has them all enjoying being in his presence. These same attributes have a way of fostering comradery within the department and throughout Ag Hall.

I will forever appreciate his willingness to take me on as a student and groom me to be an...
agricultural economist. More importantly though, I am thankful for his reminder to not take myself too seriously, because ‘in 50 years my grandchildren will probably not be reading my publications anyway!’

A member of the OSU Agricultural Economics Department since 1979, Dr. Epplin has held the Neustadt Chair in Agricultural Economics since 2011. Prior to that, he had been the Charles A. Breedlove Professor since 2006. Dr. Epplin states, “The availability of chair dollars has enabled us to do a much better job of funding deserving, hard working students from around the world. It has also supported research activity, our graduate program, and graduate students.”

According to former student, Dr. Nathan Thompson, Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, “Dr. Epplin is a great professor, advisor, and mentor. To me, Dr. Epplin’s distinguishing feature is his genuine care for students and his willingness to put their needs above his own. Time and time again I have seen Dr. Epplin put his own interests aside to allow students to pursue research that they are interested in or passionate about, all the while providing excellent guidance.

Dr. Epplin has a genuine interest in seeing his students achieve their goals, whether that is going back to the farm or pursuing a career in academics, and has the ability to tailor each individual student’s experience to help them get the most out of their time at OSU. Dr. Epplin also impresses upon all students the importance of practical/applied research that has relevant implications for those we serve under the land grant mission. This is something that I have taken with me into my career as a faculty member, constantly asking myself why I am doing what I am doing and who stands to benefit from it?”

Dr. Epplin’s outstanding research record has earned him a national reputation of excellence. He has published 89 journal articles, many of which are coauthored by colleagues or graduate students. Interestingly, less than half of his articles are in traditional outlets for agricultural economists. The distribution of his research among journals outside of his home discipline is reflective of his contributions to agriculture as a whole and his multidisciplinary efforts.

Dr. Richardson also states that “Dr. Epplin has excelled in grantsmanship.” During his career, he has been involved in multidisciplinary grants totaling several million dollars. According to Dr. Woods, “Nearly all of the grants that he has been involved in are collaborative grants across academic departments – another strong indicator of his excellent research record and broadly recognized contributions.”

Raised on a farm near the community of Pinckneyville, Illinois about 60 miles southeast of St. Louis, he spent his early years working with his family on a “general crop” (soybeans, corn, wheat, oats, clover, and alfalfa) and “livestock” (hogs, chickens, and cattle) farm.

Dr. Epplin’s interest in agricultural economics began when he noticed that when his high school classmates entered farming after their schooling, “it was not the farming they were having problems with, it was the economics.” He also credits much of his involvement in agriculture to his high school vocational ag teacher, Mr. Louis Templeton, who involved his students in practical issues and provided hands-on training.

He attended Southern Illinois University (SIU) and received a B.S. in agricultural education in 1970. After his graduation in June, he was drafted into the army in July and served a tour of duty in Vietnam. Afterwards, he completed a M.S. degree in agricultural industries at SIU in 1973. He secured a position as an instructor at Western Illinois University (WIU) where he taught several classes including marketing, introduction to agricultural economics, ag policy, and statistics.

By chance, at a luncheon at the WIU student union, he met Dr. Earl Heady (Dr. Heady’s contributions to the agricultural economics profession and to Iowa State University (ISU) are most evidenced by Heady Hall, the building that now bears his name and houses the Economics Department at ISU). Heady offered Epplin a “job” as a researcher with the ISU Center for Agricultural and Rural Development, which he accepted. Epplin also began a Ph.D. program in agricultural economics, which he completed in 1979. He came to Oklahoma State University that same year.

Dr. Epplin met his wife Maryellen at ISU, and they were married in 1977. She earned a Ph.D. in Finance from OSU, is a CFA charterholder, and is an Emeritus Professor of Finance in the Department of Finance at the
University of Central Oklahoma. They have two sons, Alan and Eric. Eric, an OSU graduate and lawyer, is the assistant district attorney in Kingfisher County. His wife Amanda, an OSU interior design graduate, is a sales representative with Professional Furniture Consultants. They have two children, Kennedy and Logan. Alan earned degrees from Saint Louis University (SLU) and UCLA, and is a senior manager for Deloitte Consulting. His wife Mary, an SLU graduate, is a physical therapist with Mercy Therapy Services. They have two children, Courtney and Natalie.

Two things stand out as part of Dr. Epplin’s legacy, his humility and his sense of humor and contagious laugh. As Dr. Woods points out, “Dr. Epplin will be the first to tell you that any of his contributions are the contributions of the team – impossible without the group as a whole and credit for any impacts are deserved by all involved.”

In Dr. Epplin’s own words, in a 2012 article in the Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics, he says, “I realize that I don’t deserve this recognition, but I accept it on behalf of my colleagues at Oklahoma State and on behalf of my co-authors and graduate students who have been dragging me along for so many years. I think of myself on a good day as a singles hitter. Singles hitters are not worth much unless they are surrounded by an excellent team. It has been my good fortune to be part of excellent teams.”

Regarding his sense of humor, Dr. Nathan Anderson, says, “No matter the situation, you can count on Dr. Epplin for grounded advice, a unique perspective, and always a good laugh.”

Dr. Epplin continues his graduate teaching, earning students’ respect and continuing relationships long after they complete his class and graduate. Beyond the classroom, he serves as an academic advisor and is continuously mentoring students. The quality of his mentoring is reflected by the awards these students have received and their successful careers.
The Guys Behind the Scenes

Meet the IT Crew...

The department has high-tech labs, programs, and websites that we often take for granted. These resources do not maintain themselves. Andrew Lowery, Shawn Chiusano, and Senthil Moorthy make up the department’s information technology (IT) crew. They order, build, and maintain computers. They set up and manage computer labs as well as multi-media classrooms. It is their job to ensure that our printers, scanners, and other peripherals are all in good working condition.

On top of all of this, they assist in special projects such as the development of webinars, the setup of online surveys, and the launch of websites, as well as the task of keeping them up-to-date. When faculty and other staff are experiencing difficulties, they are right there with desk-side support. According to Dr. Notie Lansford, “They’re always available to assist people with connections and other mishaps during the county officer training webinars. They maintain the portable laptop lab for us, which we use for workshops. When it’s time to go, everything is charged, boxed up, and ready to go.”

Chiusano is the computer specialist for the department. He is considered a technology generalist so he is the first line of support for hardware, software, networking, printing, and peripherals for faculty, staff, and students. He also occasionally helps with DASNR IT requests. Dr. Eric DeVuyst states that, “Shawn has been phenomenal in supporting our extension efforts. He maintains the portable laptop lab for us, which we use for workshops. When it’s time to go, everything is charged, boxed up, and ready to go.”

His interest in computer science began in high school, after which he received his Bachelor of Science from Cameron University in Lawton, studying Electronic Crime in the Criminal Justice Department. Due to an unfortunate accident, Chiusano became ineligible for law enforcement positions. He continued his education at Oklahoma State, receiving his MA in Rhetoric and Technical Communication. He has now been a computer specialist for seven years, three of which have been here at OSU. When he’s not at work, Chiusano is quite busy. He has been an active Qigong student for seven years, which is an ancient Chinese system that incorporates physical postures, breathing techniques and focused intention. He soon hopes to become an instructor. He also has a big heart for child advocacy and spends a lot of time volunteering at the Payne County Youth Services Children’s Shelter. He has twice been honored with Payne County Youth Service’s “Volunteer of the Year” for his dedication to the program.

The department’s web developer, Senthil Moorthy, has been part of the team since 2011. He graduated with his Master’s Degree in Computer Science from Oklahoma State University. His primary responsibilities as the web developer include managing the department’s web and data server, maintaining and updating the department’s website as well as the various extension websites within the department.

A sincere “thank you” is due to our devoted IT crew, without them our days would be far more hectic and frustrating!
Oklahoma’s Statewide
Women in Agriculture
& Small Business
Conference

Mark Your Calendar!
August 4-5, 2016
Moore Norman Technology Center - 13301 S. Penn Ave. in OKC

- Networking opportunities and concurrent breakout sessions offered from several tracks - agricultural, alternative enterprises, and business and finance
- Vendors and mini-mall showcasing Oklahoma businesses and made-in-Oklahoma products
“Bridging the gap between land owners & lessees.”
Extension Calendar

May 23-25 | Goat Camp 2.0 | Ada, OK

June 2-3 | Budget Processing Workshop | Ardmore, OK

June 8 | Open Meetings Workshop | Lawton, OK

June 9 | Public’s Right to Know (Open Records) Workshop | Lawton, OK

June 16 | Statute Reference & Legislative Process Workshop | Ardmore, OK

July 14, 21 & 28 | Annie’s Project | Garfield County

Aug 4, 11 & 18 | Annie’s Project | Garfield County

Aug 4-5 | Oklahoma Women in Agriculture & Small Business Conference | Moore Norman Technology Center

Oct 1 | Aggie-X Tailgate | OSU - Ag Hall Lawn | 3 Hours before kick-off

Oct 21 | Rural Economic Outlook Conference | OSU Alumni Center

Nov 11 | Four State Crop Insurance Workshop | Enid, OK