COWBOY ECONOMIST
Oklahoma State University • Department of Agricultural Economics • Spring 2018

Top Ten Freshmen

Jacob Sestak
Ridge Hughbanks
Luke Hale
Levi Baker
Allison Wilton
Hunter Starr
Mckenzie Carvalho

Angel Molina
Gatlin Squires
Hammons Hepner
Megan DeVuyst

Outstanding Seniors
Welcome! We hope you will enjoy the latest issue of Cowboy Economist published by the Department of Agricultural Economics. Our intent is to highlight key events in the life of the department over the past several months, including news about students, faculty members, and staff. We also highlight accomplishments of distinguished alums, and share information about research and Extension programming efforts.

Our faculty members have been recognized at multiple events nationally and internationally. Dr. David Henneberry received the Ohtli Award from the Mexican Government. Dr. Chanjin Chung was selected as the OSU Outstanding Graduate Coordinator. Dr. Wade Brorsen received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Southern Agricultural Economics Association (SAEA). Shannon Ferrell received an award for undergraduate teaching from the Western Agricultural Economics Association (WAEA) and Dave Shideler received an award for Extension programming from the Agriculture and Applied Economics Association (AAEA).

We spotlight a distinguished graduate, Karen Eifert Jones, who is a leader within the Oklahoma agricultural industry. Karen has a long and distinguished history serving in the agricultural industry and her story is inspiring!

Read about the successful Extension program led by Keima Kamara which assists individuals and communities throughout the state with solid waste issues. Our profile on Dr. Cheryl DeVuyst highlights one of our excellent faculty members.

Our students in our undergraduate and graduate program continue to excel. Placement of Ph.D. graduates to Land Grant University faculty positions has been impressive. We are proud of our graduate students and the contribution they make to the department. Aggie-X is doing well and has an outstanding group of officers and members. Be sure to read about their recent activities.

We are thankful for all the wonderful students in our program. This issue highlights several students who received special recognition at the departmental, college, and university level. I continue to marvel at the abilities and dedication demonstrated by our students!

Best regards. We hope you enjoy this issue!

About the cover:
The Agricultural Economics department had seven outstanding freshmen and four seniors of significance for the 2017-18 school year.

Department Head Dr. Mike Woods
Editor/Graphic Designer Mattie Moore
Editor/Contributing Writer Judy Rudd
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The 2018 Department of Agricultural Economics and Aggie-X Scholarships and Awards Banquet was a great success.

On April 14, 2018, at the Wes Watkins Center, the department was able to honor 93 students with 111 scholarships totaling $133,062.

Dr. Mike Woods, the Agricultural Economics Department Head, welcomed everyone to the banquet. He said, “Students in the Department of Agricultural Economics are the foundation for our programs. We are so pleased to hold these students up and celebrate them tonight. We have outstanding and successful students, thanks in large part to our friends and supporters.”

Three alums of the department served as readers – introducing donors, scholarships, and student recipients:

Ted Peeper is with the Oklahoma Attorney General’s office as an Assistant Attorney General in the Criminal Appeals Division and was a 2000 Honors graduate from the agricultural economics department.

Joey Meibergen is now president and CEO of Johnston Enterprises and Johnston Seed Company and was a 2004 graduate of the agricultural economics department with an agribusiness major.

Bambi Sidwell is now Vice President of the Sidwell Insurance Agency and was a 2003 agribusiness graduate.

There were five new scholarships awarded at the banquet:

The Haidar D. Haidary Scholarship in Agricultural Economics (Endowed) was established by Kay Haidary, Anisa Haidary, and Deana Atwood.

The Israel Study Abroad Program Scholarship was established anonymously.

The Koch Discovery Scholarship was established by Koch Industries, Inc.

The Henry L. Njoo Scholarship (Endowed) was established by Mita and Christopher Butschek.

The Judy Rudin Memorial Scholarship for Agricultural Economics and Communications was established by Judy Rudin.

The department prides itself in producing career-ready, successful individuals. They not only serve as great leaders to our industry, but also as impressive role models to current and future students in our program.

The department would like to once again thank all of the individuals who give their time and donate resources to support our students.
Oklahoma Chapter of American Society of Farm Managers & Rural Appraisers Awards
Outstanding Appraiser, L.A. Parcher Award ........................................... Katlin Ramy
Outstanding Farm Manager, E.E. Huff Award ....................................... Ben Beck

Outstanding Senior, Scholastic Achievement Citation
Recipients .................. Kelli Case, Megan DeVuyst, Jake Fanning, Abigail Paugh, Katlin Ramy, and Luke Werth

Outstanding Senior Award of the Western Agricultural Economics Association
Recipient .............................................................. Katlin Ramy

CASNR Dean’s Award of Excellence
Recipients .......................................................... Megan DeVuyst and Gatlin Squires

CASNR Seniors of Distinction
Recipients ..................... Megan DeVuyst, Hammons Hepner, Grayson Kuehny, Jenna Maltbie, and Gatlin Squires

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

**Scholarship:** Oklahoma Chapter of the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers Scholarship (Endowed)

**Major:** Agribusiness

**Year:** Sophomore

**Hometown:** Chickasha, OK

**Future Plans and Goals:**

My future plans and goals may seem like the typical agriculture student’s dream, but to me, they are very personal. I hope to achieve many of my educational and career goals and lay the foundation for the rest of my life. My first priority is to focus on my education. I plan to receive a Bachelors in Agribusiness.

My goal is to secure a job in financing or an agricultural-related business in Oklahoma. My father has been a part of Farm Credit for the past 33 years, and I am truly inspired with the impact he makes on rural agriculture and small town farmers every day. I hope that I too can one day make this kind of impact in Oklahoma. In addition, I deem that my understanding of the agricultural industry and my work within an agriculture financing company will hopefully multiply the benefits of the industry, the support of the economy, and the image of Oklahoma.

My passion is obviously within the agriculture finance side, but within the last two years, I have found a deeper understanding of the study of law. This may be a new long-term goal for myself, but I am currently looking into possibly attending law school. This came as a surprise to not only me, but my family, but you never know what new things you’ll fall in love with here at Oklahoma State University.

With all of these dreams I have planned, I also expect to begin a small cattle operation. I am currently raising shorthorn cattle and hope to continue growing my herd upon graduation. I believe that through this I will add numbers and quality to the largest segment of the state’s livestock industry.

Because of my many goals, I expect to make the state of Oklahoma a better place by inspiring others and serving the state, its people, and its industries.

**What does receiving this scholarship mean to you?**

Once being informed of receiving this specific scholarship, I was truly honored. College is very expensive and I am someone that doesn’t like to put a burden on my parents. I try my hardest to make things less stressful on them and that sometimes makes things more stressful on myself.

As a full-time student, I am also working part time here at a bank in Stillwater. Life gets extremely busy especially this time of the year with scholarship deadlines as...
well as finals, but I make sure to do absolutely everything I can, so I can continue my passion here at Oklahoma State University. I am truly grateful for this specific scholarship since this is the career field I am wanting to be in.

Because of the Oklahoma Chapter of the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers’ generous contribution, I am able to keep from taking out any further loans. My goal is to graduate without any debt and the only way that is possible is with the donations and support the Agriculture Economics Department has.

Without all of our donors, students like myself wouldn’t be able to make our dreams come true without having the scary thought of being in debt upon graduation. I am grateful that this following semester I will be able to comfortably pay for my tuition without being that burden for my parents.

Jack and Patricia Mount Endowed Scholarship

The Jack and Patricia Mount Endowed Scholarship is awarded to a student enrolled full-time in CASNR, pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Economics, participating in campus leadership activities, and demonstrating a commitment to academic excellence, with a strong desire to pursue a career in the agricultural economics field.

Jamie (Jack) Mount, a 1995 graduate of the agricultural economics department with an emphasis in accounting and marketing, and his wife Patricia now reside in Colorado, where he is Owner and Operator of M5 Consulting. With over 20 years of experience, Mount’s expertise is known not only in the state of Colorado but also across the U.S.

The Mounts created their scholarship in 2013 and traveled to Stillwater this year to present the scholarship to Luke Hale. Mount relates his desire to create a scholarship to his own experience as a student. He says he struggled financially to obtain his degree, and because “The Good Lord has blessed me and my family in my career; we wanted to give back so that we could help students like me have the opportunity to finish their degrees. That is why,” he says, “I request financial need as one of the requirements.”

During his time at OSU, Mount says he met “a tremendous number of people who have become lifelong friends. We worked together to create future relationships, and in our classes, we learned how to function and succeed in the business world.”

Mount particularly remembers one of his professors, Joe Williams, for whom he served as a teacher’s aide. “I was a Joe Williams prodigy,” he says. “I have a tremendous amount of respect for Joe Williams. He was like a family advisor on a long-term basis. He was my uncle’s advisor when he was at OSU, and I also recommended that my sister use him as her advisor.” Mount’s oldest son Brady also attended OSU.

Mount has these words of wisdom for current students preparing for their future careers, “Be slow to speak; be fast to listen.”
Ted Peeper, a 2000 Honors graduate from the agricultural economics department, is now with the Oklahoma Attorney General’s office as an Assistant Attorney General in the Criminal Appeals Division. Prior to that, he was an Honors College counselor at OSU. Peeper received his law degree from the University of Oklahoma, graduating with Honors in 2003. A Stillwater native, he still lives in Stillwater with his wife Rebecca Perry.

Peeper says, “As an Assistant Attorney General in the Criminal Appeals Division, I handle state direct appeals, appeals arising from probation revocations, and the acceleration of deferred sentences, as well as federal habeas corpus petitions filed in Oklahoma’s three federal district courts, and appeals taken to the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals. My duty is advocating to uphold jury verdicts in criminal trials and striving to ensure that victims of crime receive justice and closure. I also serve as a peer review team leader for other attorneys in my division, reviewing their work to promote accuracy and consistency.”

As an agricultural economics major with a pre-law option, Peeper says one class was particularly helpful. “Marcia Tilley’s course on ag law was an excellent introduction to legal concepts which I still use every day. I did an Honors Contract for this course, writing an extra paper on the subject of eminent domain. This introduction to Supreme Court case law and legal writing was invaluable.”

He also remembers that, “Dr. Oehrtman’s tests were the most difficult I took during my undergraduate days. He had a passion for teaching Agricultural Economics and was fully dedicated to his students.”

Another enjoyable memory was “working the concessions with Aggie-X, where I got to witness some great OSU basketball games.”

Peeper’s advice to today’s students about preparing for their future careers is to “Keep an open mind about your career options. If you find a class or subject that really clicks with you, it might be a strong indication of the way you should go.”

While at OSU, Peeper completed an internship with the Oklahoma Wheat Commission. At OU, he served as Note Editor for the OU Law Review and earned the OU Legal Clinic Distinguished Student Award.

A 2004 graduate of the agricultural economics department with an agribusiness major, Joey Meibergen is now president and CEO of Johnston Enterprises and Johnston Seed Company. He states, “I try to stay out of most details and day-to-day operations, but I am involved in most all strategic decisions.”

He currently resides in Enid with his wife Lezlie and their children Lewy, Ellie, and Weston.

Meibergen is a fifth-generation family member to provide leadership within the Johnston Family’s operating companies. His primary experience had been with his family’s ag retail and grain business. He
Bambi Sidwell, 2003 Oklahoma State graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness, is currently Vice President of Sidwell Insurance Agency, Inc, with offices located in Goltry and Piedmont, Oklahoma.

Before joining Sidwell Insurance in 2009, Sidwell worked with Sun Life Financial and GE Financial in Southern California as a Sales Representative for Group Medical Benefits and Self-Funded Stop Loss Insurance for Large Corporations.

Prior to working in the insurance industry, Sidwell was a part of Boeing’s Business Career Foundation Program, in which she worked in Long Beach, California as a Lobbyist for the Boeing C-17 Globemaster III Aircraft.

Sidwell was raised on a farming operation in northwest Oklahoma and has first-hand experience with producing and marketing grains and livestock. She is very passionate about the agriculture industry and working with producers in Oklahoma to manage crop risk.

Sidwell says, “I come from a family background of all Oklahoma State Cowboys. My mom and dad both went to Oklahoma State, and from an early age, I knew I wanted to follow in their footsteps.”

“I cannot say enough about Oklahoma State, the staff, and the facilities.” Sidwell states. “They gave me the opportunity to travel and opened my mind to dream big. With the encouragement of the people [at Oklahoma State] and my determination to step outside of my comfort zone and challenge myself, I was able to achieve things I might not otherwise have dreamt possible.”

Growing up on a farm, taught me the value of hard work and determination. Farming has its share of up and downs, but the life lessons you learn are invaluable. I wouldn’t change those experiences for anything. Furthering my education at Oklahoma State opened many doors for me and directed me in the right direction to achieve my goal of working in this great industry. Today, I am more passionate than ever about the importance of the future of agriculture as we continue to strive to educate and feed the world.”

To today’s students preparing for their careers, Sidwell says, “I would say never miss an opportunity to engage in what you are passionate about! You will never work a day in your life, if you love what you do! I would try to take advantage of all the resources, mentors and networking tools that Oklahoma State offers and utilize those connections to expand your horizons to all the endless possibilities. Working hard will always make you stand out, so whatever you decide to do, do it with enthusiasm, good attitude and determination and you will succeed.”
In the spring semester of her sophomore year, Jackie Elliot’s academic schedule included two agricultural economics classes, a Chinese class, and a speech class. However, her classroom was not in Ag Hall at OSU, it was in the ICB International College building at China Agricultural University (CAU) in Beijing, China.

Elliot, an agribusiness and agricultural communications double major, was in China as part of the CAU-OSU program, which provides opportunities for students from both universities to study and benefit from the academic and cultural environment of the other school. In fact, some of Elliot’s fellow classmates in China would be coming to Stillwater to study at OSU after completing their first two years of the program at CAU.

Elliot’s desire to spend six months studying in China started when watching a PowerPoint presentation in her freshman Intro to CASNR seminar. The purpose of the presentation was to develop students’ interest in a two-week trip to China. And Elliot was definitely interested. She went on that trip, and she says, “I loved it.” And, she had to go back.

Elliot characterized her trip as “every day an adventure – learning something every single day. I could talk about China for hours.” She relates that “there is lots to do in Beijing, I was always finding new places and new ‘stuff’ to see. I would take the subway to some random spot, get off, and just explore.”

During her explorations, to become more familiar with the Chinese language, Elliot says, “While traveling through the streets, I would copy down words and symbols and other things I saw on signs and buildings. Then I would take them to my teacher and have her translate them for me. Along with some rigorous study, I got a lot better [at the language] while I was there.”

Elliot says the Beijing subway is very convenient. “It is fantastic public transportation, and I always knew that I could find my way back to the university. There are lots of events going on in the parks. One day, I stopped and did the same tai chi moves that a Chinese man was doing. He never said a word, but seemed pleased that I chose to stop and learn from him. I also played chess with a random group of guys in another park.”
“I never felt worried,” she continued. “Before I left, I was warned about my safety and I heard many stereotypical comments, none of which were true.”

According to Elliot, the Chinese people are extremely receptive and kind and are very friendly to foreigners. She and her non-Chinese companions were often stopped and asked where they were from and to pose for photos.

“One time I was on the subway,” she says, “just sitting. I would read while riding. A little boy was sitting across from me with his mother. When they got up, he stopped, pointed at me, and said, in Chinese, ‘You’re a foreigner.’ Then he laughed and they got off.”

Elliot says, “I made several friends while I was there. Once a week I would go to one friend’s house and hang out. It was a good learning experience about the culture and the language. When I was in China, people often invited me to their homes. It means a lot, especially when food is involved. It is a bonding experience – makes you feel at home as an international student.”

She relates a story about one person’s kindness that is especially memorable to her: “One day I was walking, and it was raining, and I love the rain. I didn’t have on a coat. I was on a highway bridge and a woman stopped me. She had an umbrella, and she put it in my hand. She did not know English, and I tried to explain [in limited Chinese] that, no I do not want the umbrella; that I like to walk in the rain. She kept insisting. I tried to walk around her, but she put the umbrella in my hand and walked off.” Later, Elliot says, she was able to “pay that kindness forward” when OSU professor Dr. Weckler and his wife visited China, and they needed an umbrella on another rainy day.

Elliot also serves as a mentor to the CAU students studying at OSU. She says she helped plan and produce the Thanksgiving celebration in the department last year for the Chinese students. She also performed, reading a poem in Chinese.

Elliot then had some CAU students join her at her home in Newcastle for Thanksgiving. A few days before, she and the students had a Chinese Thanksgiving. “So, a lot of eating took place during that week,” she says.

Spending time in China for Elliot was a “very cool experience.” “I love how their traditions are entwined into the current culture. But the most awe inspiring thing to me is their huge mass of history – the number of years things have been there – one person was celebrating the 500th anniversary of their school. America is a baby compared to China.”
As we round up yet another semester of courses, we look back on the year with gratitude and appreciation. The Aggie-X Club has seen another year of continued success in many programs. Meeting attendance has remained steady, with member involvement increasing dramatically. New this year is a very successful point system. Members had the opportunity to earn points each semester through participation. The members earning the most points will have the opportunity to travel with the club to Denver, Colorado for our annual Aggie-X trip.

The club members have made this an exceptional year. Their active engagement has made our club stand out in the agricultural economics department and CASNR alike. At the beginning of the year, the annual Back to School Bash welcomed students from across the world to campus. The exchange students from China Agriculture University attended the Bash with their peers and mentors to meet their new classmates and professors in the department. The Aggie-X Tailgate and Cookout saw a great turnout of students, faculty, and alumni as well. Our members’ creativity was showcased during Homecoming Week and CASNR Week. The Aggie-X Club painted windows, designed lawn signs, competed in a chili cook-off, and facilitated a carnival booth for the youth in the community. Our club also participated in Ag Day on the Lawn where we promoted agriculture and advertised our organization to students of all backgrounds at OSU.

Recently, the Aggie-X Club elected officers for the upcoming year. By nomination and popular vote, our new officers for the 2018-2019 year are as follows: Amanda Higgins, president; Kalee Horn, educational vice president; Kelsey Briggs, administrative vice president; Rio Mohrmann, treasurer; and Amanda Upton, secretary/reporter. I have great confidence in these individuals, and they will undoubtedly exceed all expectations set before them. They have already started preparing for their roles, and they have wonderful plans in store for the organization.

At our banquet held April 14, 2018, the agricultural economics department and Aggie-X Club jointly recognized extraordinary students, faculty, and staff who have gone above and beyond to represent the department on campus and in the agriculture industry. The new officers were officially placed in their respective positions, and scholarships were awarded to many of our very deserving students in recognition of their accomplishments. The date for the next Aggie-X Tailgate was also announced to be September 22, 2018. Please join us this fall!

I am very grateful for the opportunity to serve the students of this department as president of the Aggie-X Club. Each experience was made possible because of the support and hard work of our members. The strong relationship between our club and the department continues to create opportunities for our students to be engaged on campus and beyond.

Sincerely and Go Pokes,
Grayson Kuehny
2017-2018 Aggie-X President
The Agricultural Economics GSA has been busy during the Spring 2018 semester. We kicked things off in January by hosting a brain break for the departmental faculty and staff.

Monthly GSA meetings featured guest speakers on presentation tips before several graduate students traveled to present at the Southern meetings. OSU had several graduate students represent the department at the SAEA Conference. Those students were Sunjin Ahn, Abby Biedenbach, Mark Buda, Lauren Clark, David Cuautle-Parra, Kwideok Han, Courtney Hurt, Brian Mulenga, John Ng’ombe and Joe Stefenoni. We also had guest speakers share tips on publishing journal articles and applying for grants. Dr. Woods presented a seminar on “Interview Expectations,” sharing tips for ‘fly-out’ interviews and a sample interview schedule.

As graduate students we also had several social events including a new favorite...trivia night! We also had a great turnout for our annual International Dinner. We celebrated the diversity and various cuisines of the students within our graduate program...we even had to add another food table! We played bingo with answers featuring the various countries and states of graduate students.

We are blessed by a very supportive department with top-quality faculty and staff that help us to achieve our professional goals!

Go Pokes!
Kelsey Conley
2017-2018 GSA President
With a wide range of expertise and valuable work experience in the agriculture industry, it was no surprise when Karen Eifert Jones, who is an OSU Agricultural Economics alumni, was named as an Oklahoma Significant Woman in Agriculture in 2017. Jones also received the honor of Master Agronomist, which acknowledges her cooperation with OSU Extension to further research in the field of agronomy on her farming operation in Northwest Oklahoma.

When asked about her Oklahoma Significant Woman in Agriculture honor, Jones described it as humbling. “I looked at the women I would nominate and it seems they’d all made an impact on the Ag industry in ways I didn’t feel I had.”

After graduating from OSU in 1985, Jones began working for Dow AgroSciences where she served as an Ag chemical representative and worked in sales, promotion, and education.

“What I loved most about this job was teaching ranchers how they could be more efficient in grass production and increase their profitability.”

After working for Dow AgroSciences for several years, Jones took a position with the USDA/Farm Service Agency (FSA). Today, Jones serves on the FSA State Committee where she is one of four in Oklahoma who were appointed by Secretary of Agriculture, Sonny Perdue.

“We use our knowledge of the local ag situation to apply those regulations and make certain recommendations on what is realistic in Oklahoma.”

Jones is the primary operator on her family’s farm and has been for the last 13 years. Her husband, Dr. Rodney Jones, is a professor of Agricultural Finance in the Agricultural Economics Department. Their farming operation includes land her family has farmed for more than a century, but also includes recently purchased and rented land.

“I’ve changed jobs several times within my career, but looking back I realized the common thread
was always agriculture. No matter what I’ve done it’s always been in agriculture.”

In Jones’ time off the farm, she volunteers on the statewide Women in Agriculture planning committee. Jones’ daughter, Caroline, helps her on the committee preparing for their meetings and conferences.

She “works to provide an opportunity for bonding between women that doesn’t always happen when you’re at a meeting that’s all men except for you.”

Reflecting back upon her life experiences, Jones discovered another common thread—education. Her most rewarding experiences in the agriculture industry are all tied to educating others in some form or another.

“In every one of those jobs I took knowledge I had that I knew could help the people be better at their jobs, whether that was being a rancher, a loan officer, or whatever, and transferred it to them.”

This mindset of transferring knowledge was instilled in Jones at a young age. Both her parents were born during the Dust Bowl, being very passionate about soil and land conservation. Jones’ parents instilled in her the importance of taking care of the land. This is one of the reasons her farm is a no-till operation.

“When I’m not farming it anymore, I want to make sure it’s better land than the day I started farming it.”

From Jones’ experiences growing up on the farm and her parents’ passion for the land, she knew she wanted to study agriculture. Her father had graduated from OSU, back when it was Oklahoma A&M, so she grew up in a Cowboy family. To her there was literally no other option. OSU was her only choice.

“An Ag Econ degree is a very versatile degree. You can do a lot of different things with it.”

Jones is an excellent representative who utilizes all aspects of her degree in Agricultural Economics. When she first graduated, she used a lot of the business and marketing side of her degree with her job in sales. While employed with the USDA, she used the finance side more, including analysis and statistics.

Now that she farms, she “uses the rest of it”—enterprise budgeting, farm and ranch management, appraisals, and so on.

With all her experiences working with Dow AgroSciences, USDA/FSA, farming, among others, Jones uses her knowledge to make tomorrow better.

“I’m most passionate about the truth. Right now agriculture is under fire from a lot of well-meaning, but misinformed consumers. If there’s one thing I can use my work and voice for, it’s sharing the truth. Some people make decisions that are not based on facts. Whether it’s a production decision on the farm or a purchase decision at the grocery store, we all need to use facts.”
Oklahoma’s Statewide

Women in Agriculture & Small Business Conference

August 9-10, 2018

Mark your calendar!

• Networking opportunities and concurrent breakout sessions offered from several tracks: agricultural, business and finance, alternative enterprises and beginning farmer

• Vendors and mini-mall showcasing Oklahoma businesses and products
The success of this program has pleased us greatly and we look forward to the increase in participation. Good luck to these students in their future graduate studies and careers!

Xuecheng (Albert) Cai
Xuzhi (Kevin) Chen
Fayu (Florence) Chong
Hang (Jennifer) Cui
Xiaoran (Nancy) Du
Yun (Iris) Fan
Ke (Franco) Feng
Wenxuan (Lavender) Li
Wenlu (Rachel) Sun
Xing (Henry) Sun
Junxiang (Vincent) Wang
Shiyi (Shirley) Wang
Heng (James) Wei
Xiaoyang (Larry) Xue
Shuyu (Billy) Zhang
Xinyi (Sarah) Zhang
Yuan (Aiden) Zhang
Heng (Six) Zhao
Ruomeng (Luna) Zhao
The Southern Agricultural Economics Association’s conference and annual meeting was held February 4 through 6 in Jacksonville, Florida. OSU Agricultural Economics department faculty and students had a successful conference representing the university in various activities and contests. Faculty and students returned with many awards and honors. At the conference, there were five selected papers presented, three selected paper session chairs, three lightning round presentations, and six poster presentations. Congratulations to all on a successful conference!
David Henneberry Receives the Ohtli Award from the Mexican Government

David Henneberry, Regents Service Professor in the agricultural economics department and former Associate Vice President at the School of Global Studies and Partnerships, received the 2018 Ohtli Award in recognition of his more than 30 years of involvement with Mexico.

The Ohtli Award is the highest recognition granted by the Government of Mexico to those individuals who have made an exceptional contribution to promote the well-being, prosperity and empowerment of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans living in the United States.

Dr. Henneberry has promoted awareness of Mexican cultural and social heritage on the OSU campus; developed several programs in Mexico and the U.S., including doctoral and agricultural extension programs; and has mentored Mexican graduate students in the U.S., encouraging them to apply to OSU and helping them to find funding.

Chanjin Chung Selected as OSU Outstanding Graduate Coordinator

During the recent graduate College Awards Ceremony, Breedlove Professor and Graduate Coordinator in the Department of Agricultural Economics Chanjin Chung was honored with the OSU Outstanding Graduate Coordinator award for 2018. The award is given to recognize the exemplary service of the faculty and staff who lead and manage graduate programs.

Dr. Chung has been the graduate coordinator for the department since 2011, and has advised over 65 graduate students at OSU, either as an advisor or as a committee member, since 2002. The award nomination was initiated by Dr. Chung’s students.
Waste No More:

Keima Kamara

Environmental advocate shares her passion for waste control and management.

Keima Kona Kamara began working in the agricultural economics department in October 2017 as an Assistant Extension Specialist in the Solid Waste Management Program. She says, “I am finally getting to do what I have wanted to do all my life: working hands-on in environmental management, doing research and educating people.”

Her interest in environmental management began in her native country of Sierra Leone in Africa where she observed the environmental issues prevalent there, especially water quality and waste management. She says she asked herself, “How can I be a part of the solution to fix these problems?”

Early on in her education, Kamara knew what she wanted to do. However, it was not until she started at Njala University in Sierra Leone that she was able to concentrate her studies in Environmental Management and Quality Control. At the university she was frustrated with the lack of field work, hands-on training, and experiences. She says most of her studies were in the classroom and were more abstract.

Then a group of students from OSU visited Sierra Leone to work on graduate research projects in environmental management. She immediately saw an opportunity to broaden her knowledge and volunteered to assist the students. She refused the payment the students offered, stating she “learned so much by being able to experience things first hand.” One of the professors who accompanied the OSU students was former Agricultural Economics professor Mike Dicks.

Because of her interest and dedication, the students encouraged her to go to OSU, saying the program there was exactly what she said she wanted. The only problem for Kamara was finding the funds to attend school in Oklahoma.

She kept in touch with the students and after she graduated from college, they helped her with the application process for a masters degree at OSU. She was accepted, but still lacked the funds.
Once again, the students worked with her to help find a professor who could offer her an assistantship. That professor was Dr. Jason Vogel, then a member of the Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering department. Kamara received her masters degree from OSU in May 2017.

The Extension Solid Waste Management Program is funded under a USDA grant, which focuses primarily on Native American tribes and rural communities. Kamara recently worked with the Otoe-Missouria tribe near Red Rock on a recycling project. Kamara says communities call on her to attend events and talk about environmental issues. She was in Idabel, Oklahoma, in March for a trash-off poster contest event where she was the speaker for the program. She says, “It was both an educational and award presentation event organized by the McCurtain County OSU Extension team.”

She spends time teaching children about a number of things affecting the environment, especially water quality. She covers a broad range of subjects, such as recycling, composting, reusing, and dumping. Kamara says the primary environmental problems in Oklahoma, like water quality and waste management, are much the same as she witnessed growing up in Sierra Leone.

Kamara also does environmental law enforcement training with county commissioners, police officers, and other law enforcement groups. She conducted training sessions in Canadian County and in Tulsa where illegal dumpings have become an issue of concern. She also does in-service training through Extension with county educators on solid waste management.

Along with all of that, she also manages the program’s website and social media pages. “I have created a new solid waste management website, a Twitter page for our program, and I am currently working on the YouTube page,” she states. “I want to start creating educational videos.”

About her job, Kamara says she is “enjoying all of it. As long as I am making a difference in the environment, that is my goal.”
Record books and finances—two things that are not everyone’s cup of tea. But for those who prefer their tea while reading the newspaper’s financial section, record books and finances are sparked from an inner passion and a history with numbers.

At a young age, Dr. Cheryl DeVuyst was involved with the financial aspects of her family’s dairy farm in Indiana. From running after her dad to help out wherever needed to managing record books and tracking finances, DeVuyst enjoyed her time spent on her family’s dairy farm and learning finance basics. It was those experiences that led her to pursue an education in exactly that.

“I have a real passion for working in agricultural finance and I found when I was an undergrad, I enjoyed the finance-related classes,” said DeVuyst.

She earned a bachelor’s degree in Agricultural Economics from Purdue University. After completing her undergraduate studies, she began working with the Farm Credit administration, specifically the auditing body over Farm Credit institutions, during the Farm Credit crisis in the 1980s.

Deciding to continue her education, DeVuyst left her work with Farm Credit to further her education and go back to Purdue University for a master’s degree. She later earned a doctorate degree from the University of Illinois. While working on her master’s degree and employed as a teaching assistant, she discovered another passion.

“I enjoyed trying to explain the...
DeVuyst credits her teaching style to her experiences with LASSO, which is now called the University of College Advising and LASSO Center, and various other positions across campus. Those positions were specifically tied to at-risk students to help them discover their learning styles.

“It’s wonderful to see those top students do great things, but sometimes it’s even better to see the students who might struggle a little bit have a great semester or figure out where it is they want to be in life.”

Like other professors, advising is a part of teaching responsibilities. DeVuyst advises her students by using a “take ownership of your future” philosophy.

“I have goals in helping students achieve theirs. That’s what really brings me a lot of satisfaction and joy in what I do.”

In addition to her duties at OSU, DeVuyst is on the National Farm and Agribusiness CDE Committee for the National FFA Association. Her responsibilities for this committee include working with students across the country to helping develop case studies and exams for the contest.

“I honestly just really enjoy seeing students accomplish things they never thought they could. I am very blessed to be able to work with a wide range of students.”

Within OSU, DeVuyst serves as the Oklahoma Collegiate Cattlegirls advisor where she lends guidance to members and encourages them to be involved at state and national levels.

It is her passion for agricultural economics, desire to teach, and dedication to help students succeed that make Dr. Cheryl DeVuyst such an asset to the Agricultural Economics Department.