

MAFES Notes



Summer 2008

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

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—Important Dates—

Oct. 2

- Ornamental Horticulture Field Day
Central R&E Center
8:30 a.m.

Oct. 17 – 18

- Fall Flower and Garden Fest
Truck Crops Station, Central R&E Center
9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Nov. 5 – 7

- Annual Conference
TBA
TBA

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From the Director's Desk

There have been many recent changes in the administration of the Division of Agriculture, Forestry, and Veterinary Medicine at Mississippi State. Dr. Vance Watson has assumed the duties of interim president of MSU, following the resignation of Dr. Robert Foglesong. On April 1, I assumed the duties of interim vice president of the division, as well as interim director of the MSU Extension Service and the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station. I am also serving as interim dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Another change is the creation of this publication, *MAFES Notes*. We intend *MAFES Notes* to be a quarterly publication that helps us better communicate important issues within MAFES. Published electronically only and archived online at www.mafes.msstate.edu, *MAFES Notes* will bring you important news and information, outline personnel transitions within the organization, highlight achievements by our faculty and staff, and alert you to important upcoming events. To make *MAFES Notes* successful, we need your help. Each quarter we'll ask you to provide us information that should be included in *MAFES Notes*, and we hope you'll take a few minutes to share those items with us. Also, if you have questions you'd like to see answered in upcoming issues, please feel free to ask them.

It is a challenging yet exciting time for agriculture and natural resources in Mississippi. More challenges are no doubt on the horizon, but with your dedication and expertise, I'm confident MAFES is fully capable of meeting those challenges with success.

Thank you for all you do.

Melissa J. Mixon

Please help us make *MAFES Notes* a valuable source of information to you and your staff. We need you to share news about new programs, upcoming meetings, staff and student accomplishments, and other activities with the MAFES community. To submit news for future issues, please email your information to Antoinette McHann (mchann@mafes.msstate.edu). When possible, also attach high-resolution electronic photos to go with your submissions.

News and Information

Wildlife and Fisheries Mesocosm Open for Business

Thanks to a MAFES research capacity grant, the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has constructed a state-of-the-art mesocosm facility — a system to culture fish larvae — to conduct research addressing numerous management issues important to Mississippi landowners. The 6,000-square-foot facility is located at the South Farm Aquaculture Unit. Presently, 24 1,000-gallon tanks have been installed with another 24 tanks planned.

Each tank has an independent aeration and heating system to allow independent experiments to be conducted that vary water temperature and dissolved oxygen levels. Even before construction of the facility was completed, we received a grant to study the growth and control of hydrilla, a plant that has invaded many Mississippi lakes and reservoirs. When the facility is fully operational, we will have the capacity to address many different types of research that we were not previously capable of doing. The planned studies for this facility are of regional and national interest in aquatic research. Specific types of research may include 1) limnological studies to understand mechanisms responsible for water quality in lakes, reservoirs, and aquaculture ponds; 2) fisheries studies to determine optimal diet and growth; 3) hatchery-related studies to determine optimal husbandry and support of fisheries stocking programs; 4) health and disease (i.e., parasitic, fungal, bacterial) management of aquatic organisms (i.e., wild and commercial fish populations); 5) aquatic management of invasive species, both plant and animal; 6) applied ecological studies to address mechanisms important to the management of lakes, reservoirs, and ponds; 7) basic ecological studies to determine important interactions between fish, plants, and nutrients; 8) efficacy studies of chemical and biological treatments to manage invasive aquatic plants and other pests; and 9) controlled manipulative experiments on the environmental impacts on rare and threatened plant and animal species.



Outside view of the new 6,000-square-foot mesocosm facility.



Forty-eight 1,000-gallon tanks will have independent aeration and heating systems.

Update on Major Construction Projects

LLOYD-RICKS RENOVATION

Bureau of Buildings project GS # 113-115

The scope of the project is to renovate the interior and exterior of the building. Funding is \$13.3 million. Architect is completing bid documents. Project should bid in fall 2008.

PACE SEED WAREHOUSE STORM REPAIR

Bureau of Buildings project GS # 113-114

The scope of the project is to repair damages caused by a tornado during Hurricane Rita. Project is complete.

SOUTH ENTRANCE ROAD

IHL project # 205-232

The scope of the project is to construct a new road from Poor House Road to the south side of campus. The environmental study is under way and should be completed by the end of 2008. Final design and construction will depend on further funding.

RESEARCH PARK ROAD

IHL project # 205-234

The scope of the project is to construct a new road from Highway 182 East to the Research Park. The environmental study is under way and should be completed by the end of 2008. Final design should be completed in 2009 with construction to follow.

BUILDING 1532 R&R

(STONEVILLE, Three-Story Building)

Bureau of Buildings project # 113-121

The scope of the project is to reroof the building and renovate the exterior of the building. The architect is working on the design development documents.

BUILDING 1533 R&R

(STONEVILLE, B. F. Smith Building)

IHL project # 213-136

The scope of the project is to reroof the building and renovate the exterior of the building. Construction is just beginning and should be completed in the spring of 2009.

Grant and Contract Issues

We experience a number of questions and problems daily about grants and contracts. Below is a summary of our current operating procedures, which will help us process your grants and contracts more efficiently.

- When a PI submits a proposal to an organization, it must be submitted through MAFES/SPA with a completed Internal Approval Sheet. Even if the PI thinks the total amount will change before it is awarded, we still need the Internal Approval Sheet prior to the submission of the original proposal.
- An Internal Approval Sheet must be completed for proposals that are electronically submitted. The Internal Approval Sheet should be submitted prior to the submission of the proposal.
- As soon as you know you are submitting a proposal, please email Tina Hood (thood@spa.msstate.edu) and Mary Ann Latham (mlatham@mafes.msstate.edu) the RFP (guidelines). Also email the draft budget as soon as possible.
- When you need to do a budget revision on a restricted fund, please email Tina Hood in Sponsored Programs (thood@spa.msstate.edu) so she can obtain sponsor approval.

Once you have sponsor approval, attach it to the Restricted Fund Change Request Form, and forward it to MAFES for signatures. Even though the form states for it to be sent to Sponsored Programs Accounting, it needs to come to MAFES Administration for signatures first.

- When you want a no-cost extension on a sponsored project, please email Tina Hood in Sponsored Programs (thood@spa.msstate.edu) so it can be requested from the sponsor. Please give a brief justification for the no-cost extension request.
- Grants and contracts documentation should be sent to MAFES Administration before being sent to the Vice President's Office for signature.
- Expenditures at the end of a project must apply to the project. It is never a valid reason to spend funds at the end of a project "just to use up the funds."
- Every MAFES researcher should be associated with a CRIS project. If not, please contact Mary Ann Latham for more information.

MIRS Updates

As many of you know, we've been in the process of updating the MAFES reporting system, affectionately known as MIRS (Manuscript Information Retrieval System). We'll highlight and detail the changes in a future issue of *MAFES Notes*, but here's a summary of the system changes:

- (1) Easier Reporting – Departments will now be able to easily produce basic reports to summarize productivity by faculty member, publication type, year, etc.

- (2) Expanded Tracking – In addition to papers and presentations, MIRS will now allow departments to track activities like service, student recruitment, and awards/honors.
- (3) Easier Data Entry – We've revised MIRS to hopefully make it easier to enter data, as well as catch the most common data entry errors.

Upcoming Events

Entomology and Plant Pathology Hosts 12th Insect-Rearing Workshop

The Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology will host the 12th Principles and Procedures for Rearing Quality Insects from September 28 to October 3, 2008. This five-day workshop is designed for insectary managers and insect rearing specialists. A team of experts from MSU, USDA, BASF, and the University of Florida provide train-

ing and education that focuses on the science and technology of insect rearing. Past workshop attendees from around the globe have benefitted from the quality education received at MSU. The 2008 workshop will be attended by participants from Spain, The Netherlands, Switzerland, South Africa, Taiwan, British Columbia, and the United States.

MAFES Accolades

Peng Inducted as Distinguished Fellow

Dr. Zhouhua Peng of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology was inducted by the MSU

Life Science Biotechnology Institute as one of the inaugural LSBI Distinguished Fellows in June 2008.

Entomology and Plant Pathology Students Win Awards

Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology graduate students received a number of awards in their various fields of expertise. Following is a list of the students and the awards they received.

Mark Alexander, M.S. graduate student, was recently chosen as recipient of the 2008 Forest Fungal Ecology Research Award given by the Mycological Society of America. The award, which holds a cash value of \$1,000, will be presented at the association's annual meeting to be held at Penn State University, August 10-13, 2008.

Joseph Young, M.S. graduate student in turfgrass pathology, won First Place in the 2008 Mississippi Agricultural Pest Management Association Graduate Student Poster Competition. Mr. Young also received the 2008 Frank Killebrew Memorial Scholarship, which is awarded by the Mississippi Association of Plant Pathologists and Nematologists, and the 2007 Outstanding Graduate Student at the Master Level, which is awarded by the Mississippi State University Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology Club.

Sandra Woolfolk, Ph.D. graduate student, has won numerous awards in the last year, including the Entomological Society of America (ESA) Student and Young Professional Award, February 2008; the ESA Student Activity Award sponsored by Monsanto, December 2007; National Pest Management Association's Minorities in Pest Management (NPMA MPM) Scholarship, October

2007; Mycological Society of America (MSA) Barr-Bigelow Student Mentor Travel Award to attend the MSA Annual Meeting in Baton Rouge, August 6-9, 2007; Sigma Xi Grants-in-Aid of Research recipient, March 2007; and MSU Women's Club Scholarship for female graduate student (Ph.D. level), March 2007.



Award-winning entomology photo.

Cheri Abraham, M.S. graduate student, received one of two 2007 Outstanding Graduate Student at the Master Level Awards given by the Mississippi State University Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology Club. He also received the "Best for Traditional Macro" award and "Best in Show" award for his photo (above) at the 2008 Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Branch of the Entomological Society of America Meeting held in Jacksonville, Florida, on March 2-5, 2008.

Two MSU Teams Win First and Second Place in Quiz Bowl

Two undergraduate teams from the Department of Animal and Dairy Sciences and the Department of Food Science, Nutrition, and Health Promotion competed for the first time at the American Meat Science Association Intercollegiate Quiz Bowl Competition held at the 2008 Reciprocal Meats Conference in Gainesville, Florida, on June 22 and 23.

The two MSU teams took home top honors by being the first- and second-place teams out of a total of 20 collegiate teams from across the nation. An epic battle of Maroon and White took place in the championship round between Mississippi State University's two teams. In the end, the Mississippi State Maroon Team won first place. The Maroon Team consisted of Joe Buntyn, a junior from Union, Mississippi; Jonathan Greene, a senior from Birmingham, Alabama; and Emily Irwin, a junior from Carrollton, Mississippi. Winning second place was MSU's White Team, which consisted of Tribetta Spears, a senior from Jackson, Mississippi; Jenny Heath, a senior from Memphis, Tennessee; Megan Bullard, a junior from Southaven, Mississippi; and Rebecca Stiles, a sophomore from West Helena, Arkansas. Both teams were coached by Shollie Behrends, a graduate student in the Department of Animal and Dairy Sciences, and the faculty sponsor was Dr. Ty Schmidt.

"This is only the second time a university has had two teams compete in the final round. That is a fairly historic event in itself but it's especially remarkable since MSU has never competed before," said Dr. Benjy Mikel, head of MSU's Department of Food Science, Nutrition, and Health Promotion.

"I don't know who was more excited...me or the students, but I am extremely proud of their accomplishments," said Dr. Terry Kiser, head of MSU's Department of Animal and Dairy Sciences.

The Quiz Bowl competition is designed to test the knowledge of undergraduate students on topics including nutrition, meats evaluation, harvest procedures, muscle biochemistry, muscle contraction, growth and development, and the rules, regulations, and history of meat science. The Quiz Bowl is a double-elimination competition consisting of 40 question rounds. Winning teams receive team and individual plaques. Although Quiz Bowl is highly competitive, it also gives undergraduate students a chance to meet professors, industry leaders, and other undergraduate students in the meat industry and start relationships that will last a lifetime.

Faculty and Staff Transitions

Riggins Hired as New Forest Entomologist

Dr. John J. Riggins, assistant forest entomology professor, began serving his tenure at MSU in the Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology on July 16, 2008. Dr. Riggins replaces Dr. T. Evans Nebeker as forest entomologist after Dr. Nebeker's retirement in June 2007. Dr. Riggins received his Ph.D. in 2008 from the University of Arkansas at

Fayetteville, specializing in GIS and remote-sensing technology for identification of tree decline and for prediction of stand hazard for red oak borer attacks. The Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology welcomes Dr. Riggins to the faculty and looks forward to a productive future during his tenure.

Chromiak Moving to Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

Anna Chromiak will be moving from the Department of Animal and Dairy Sciences to the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology as a facilities coordinator. How-

ever, she will remain facilities manager for the USDA-ARS-funded Biophotonics Initiative and continue as coordinator of the biophotonics labs in Animal and Dairy Sciences.

Brown Joins Biochemistry and Molecular Biology in August

Dr. Ashli Brown will start in August 2008 as an assistant professor in the Department of Biochemistry and

Molecular Biology.

Frequently Asked Questions

In this issue's Frequently Asked Questions section, Anne Cook offers some answers to the questions she frequently receives as the MAFES administrative officer. For more information on these topics, contact her at Anne@mafes.msstate.edu.

Fund 10 (MSU) lets me carryover budget to cover my encumbrances. Why doesn't MAFES?

- The university has set aside funds each year in its 10-fund budget to cover encumbrances outstanding from the previous year — they're not really carrying money from one year to the next. MAFES can do the same... and to do so, we need either a good funding year to be able to set these funds aside (without affecting our ability to provide for salary adjustments or other critical needs) OR we need to pull funds from departmental budgets to establish this pool. We continue to consider the possibility of establishing a pool for prior year encumbrances.

Is there any way to run just the summary sheets without detail for our departmental ledger sheets?

- Yes, and it's to Denise Peoples's credit at the last budget managers' meeting that this was shared. You can run Banner's job submission report FWGDEXP and get only the summary pages for a grant. This is much nicer than having to sift through the detail when all you want is the totals. And FYI — running this paper report for grants is generally considered more accurate than what you can pull up on a Banner screen.

Whatever happened to the lapsed salary reports?

- They're still here! Departments now run them independently. NWRMLSR is the Banner Job Submission report to run a lapsed salary report. **It does not work in June for the end of the fiscal year**, but otherwise, after a month is closed, you can run this report to see excess or deficit funding by position.

Can I find a list of active CRIS numbers for my department, even for a specific PI?

- The link <http://daisy.uvm.edu/efd/prinlist.exe> is your source! Select MIS from the drop-down list, and click the "Proceed" button. You'll then have options to retrieve your department or PI specific CRIS information.

News to remember: With implementation of the E-Verify system in Human Resources, it has been requested that "start dates should be effective to coincide with the first day of university payroll cycles to allow adequate time to prepare paperwork." This can impact when a prospective employee gives notice with his/her current employment. Please be sure to work with the prospective employee on the timing of his notice and start date with us.

