

# Fall 2006

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# Exchange

## AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

## MAB Alumni Trip Tours Russian Agribusinesses

Most students have the opportunity to learn about foreign countries while in the classroom. The Master of Agribusiness (MAB) distance-education program at Kansas State University offers students and alumni a chance to visit some of those countries.

In August, twenty-four MAB students and alumni, faculty and staff, and other agriculturalists traveled to Russia and participated in the second MAB international food and agribusiness trip. The purpose of the trip was to learn more about Russian

agriculture and during the 12-day tour, the group visited various agricultural and food related facilities including a dairy farm and broiler facility.

Max Irsik, MAB alumnus and Assistant Professor of Large Animal Clinical Sciences at the University of Florida in Gainesville said, "It was a great trip -- a wonderful chance to interact with not only MAB faculty, students, and alumni, but also other agriculturalists from across the U.S."

Occupying more than one tenth of the agricultural land on earth including large

areas of black soils and favorable climactic conditions, Russia has enormous agricultural production potential. Russia could become a major supplier of world food markets. However as trip participants discovered, due to cultural and economic constraints, the Russian farmer has a long road ahead and continues to rely heavily on outside resources. Many of the professional sites visited, such as the dairy farm and broiler facility, are managed or advised by Americans and individuals from other Western countries. **continued page 4**

## Alumni Are A Priority for New Department Head

*A Note From Dr. Bryan Schurle*



It is a tremendous opportunity for me to be associated with and to facilitate the faculty in the agricultural economics department in their mission of providing relevant and timely economic information for our stake holders. Relevant and timely economic information is of great value to everyone as they try to compete in this extremely competitive marketplace. The agricultural economics department at Kansas State University is truly an outstanding department--one of the best in the country by many measures.

Being part of a nationally recognized department is a long way to come for me. I grew up on a farm near Green Kansas (11 miles northeast of

Clay Center, Kansas). We raised hogs until we could afford to get rid of them, and then raised cattle, wheat and milo. My father substituted labor for capital which is a nice way of saying we worked hard with old machinery. I enjoyed the farm a great deal, but I would have had to start over paying my 6 brothers and sisters for their share, so the feasibility of my farming was a long shot.

So, I kept going to school and going to school, and finally ended up on the faculty of the Agricultural Economics department at Kansas State University. I began my teaching career teaching farm management, principles of agricultural economics and agricultural finance

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## Consumers Will Not Let Ready-to-eat Meat, Poultry Products Treated with Viruses Bug Them

Here's a revolutionary idea to tempt your palate: Your favorite cut of meat purchased from your local grocer could soon be treated with a mixture of six bacteria-killing viruses that, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, can safely combat common microbes that kill hundreds of people a year.

Recently approved by the FDA, this mixture of special viruses, called bacteriophages, is designed to be sprayed on ready-to-eat meat and poultry products just before they are packaged and would target strains of *Listeria monocytogenes*.

A Kansas State University consumer marketing expert thinks consumer reaction to the meat will probably be minimal.

"The product won't be labeled with anything to indicate that it has been treated, so consumers won't know about it," said John A. "Sean" Fox, a K-State associate professor of agricultural economics.

"Furthermore, when you have a group like the Center for Science in the Public Interest, a consumer advocacy group, agreeing that the process is safe, I'd say it's unlikely that we'll see any sort of campaign against it."

Fox has conducted numerous studies to determine how consumers react to food safety risks and how much they are willing to pay for safer food.

His other research interests include consumer response to irradiated meat and genetically modified food, and the impact of mad cow disease on the U.S. beef industry.

If you'd like more information about Sean Fox's consumer/food safety research, contact him at 785.532.4446 or email him at [seanfox@agecon.ksu.edu](mailto:seanfox@agecon.ksu.edu).



For more information on the latest research being produced by the Department of Agricultural Economics, please visit our website: [www.agmanager.info](http://www.agmanager.info). On this site you will find papers, decision tools, spreadsheets, radio interviews, and contact information for our faculty and staff.

[www.agmanager.info](http://www.agmanager.info)

## Bus Tour Highlights Kansas Value-Added Enterprises

It's no secret that more and more farmers are feeling the squeeze of high input costs and low commodity prices. Many producers, however, are finding creative solutions and ways to add value to their agricultural products.

Some of these producers were highlighted in a value-added bus tour Aug. 30. The tour will depart from the Douglas County Fairgrounds in Lawrence.

Sponsored by the Kansas Rural Center and K-State Research and Extension, the tour included stops at six farms. The farms are adding value to agricultural products in different ways, including direct-marketing of grass-fed beef, apple cider and apple butter, pumpkins, flowers and wine.

"Producers are being squeezed in a market with few input suppliers and few buyers for their commodities," said Vincent Amanor-Boadu, director of the Ag Innovation Center at Kansas State University. "We have to look for ways to go to the buyer – to do simple things that you will be rewarded for."

Adding value can include different ways of producing or de-

livering products, small-scale processing or alternative marketing strategies, said Amanor-Boadu.

Many forms of adding value were showcased on the tour, the sixth in a series. Past tours have included visits to a cider mill, specialty dairy, direct-market meat producers, cookie dough company and salsa and jelly producers.

"Most people have not been exposed to the nitty-gritty of manufacturing and processing," said Jana Beckman, coordinator of the Kansas Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Alternative Crops. "The tours provide an opportunity to see the various types of equipment and machines used in small scale processing."

Beckman also said that seeing the facilities first hand is especially valuable to producers considering value-added enterprises.

"Talking with current small scale processors, seeing the equipment – all of the experiences on the tour will help the producers and entrepreneurs considering value-added envision how their small-scale processing business might look and work."

If you'd like more information about the Ag Innovation Center please contact Dr. Vincent Amanor-Boadu at 785.532.3520 or email him at [vincent@agecon.ksu.edu](mailto:vincent@agecon.ksu.edu).

## Empowering Employees Can Take Family Ag Business to the Next Level

Sometimes the best business manager may not be the one who works the hardest and gets the most accomplished, but the one who learns to delegate and trust his or her assistants the best.

"Growing your people is a key aspect in a business and means that sometimes to be a better manager, you may need to take a step back and let your assistants do their job," said Sarah Fogleman, Kansas State University Research and Extension Southeast area agricultural economist.

Fogleman spoke on "Growing People: Taking Your Workforce to the Next Level" at K-State's annual Risk and Profit Conference held Aug. 17-18, 2006 in Manhattan.

In many agricultural operations the principal employees are family members and it's easy to forget about the stress that can be placed on family members in a family-owned business. At any given time, there are at least three roles that these people must play such as the "business" role (manager, accountant), the "family" role (husband, mother, daughter) and the "personal" role (basketball fan, reader, hunter), Fogleman said.

It can be challenging to keep these roles separate in a family business, but it is important for the overall success of the business as well as the quality of life for each family member.

It is not only vital that family members appreciate the different roles each person plays, but also the way those roles relate to each other especially when working with non-family employees, she said.

A common problem in family businesses is that family members will each try to give an employee different instructions for the day because they have not communicated with each other. "If you're going to grow an effective team, you need to either assign the management of that employee to one person or use some of the time in the morning

to talk about the day and where the employee should spend his or her time," Fogleman said.

Job descriptions are quickly becoming a popular means of employee management, she said. They give current and potential employees an accurate description of what will be expected of them so there is no confusion. Job descriptions may also change as the business grows.

"An individual's job description should change and evolve with the business, position and employee," Fogleman said. "It can be as detailed or general as needed, as long as it conveys the requirements an employee will have to meet to be successful in the position."

One of the most important jobs a manager has is making sure that she hires the right person in the right position. It can be difficult to tell if someone an employer hardly knows will be the right person for a position, but Fogleman advises employers to take an applicant's references' comments with a grain of salt. Everyone has different personalities and what one employer may expect out of her employees may be different from other employers. One employer may view someone as unaccountable while another employer may view him as self-motivated.

"Turnover is a vicious cycle," Fogleman said. "It isn't important that you find a person to fill a vacant position, it's important that you find the right person to fill that position. If you don't, chances are you'll be filling it again in a few weeks or even worse, dealing with an employee who isn't well-suited for the position or the business."

If you'd like more information about Sarah Fogleman's labor management resources contact her at 620.431.1530 or email her at [sfoglema@oznet.ksu.edu](mailto:sfoglema@oznet.ksu.edu).



The Risk and Profit Conference is hosted every year by the faculty of Department of Agricultural Economics. Its goal is to provide research-based information on the latest trends and issues surrounding agricultural economics and agribusiness. The dates for 2007 are August 16 and 17th. For more information about the conference contact Rich Llewellyn at 785.532.1504 or email him at [rllewelly@agecon.ksu.edu](mailto:rllewelly@agecon.ksu.edu).

**MAB Trip to Russia** continued from page 1

“The trip to Russia gave me a much greater appreciation for agriculture in the United States. We are light years ahead of them, and without inputs from both European and US scientists, economists and producers, I am not sure Russian agriculture could feed their own populace let alone compete in a global market for agricultural (food) products,” Irsik said. “With that said, there is a tremendous untapped potential with regard to the Russian agriculture industry. Without assistance from not only the United States and other developed countries, I believe it will be very difficult, if not impossible for them to develop their agricultural industry efficiently and in a timely manner.”

The tour also included visits to Cargill’s refined vegetable oil and sweetener plant in Efremov and a Caterpillar welding facility in St. Petersburg, as well as presentations by representatives from Monsanto and the Analytical Centre of Agri-Food Economics in Moscow.

“It was great to see companies like Cargill and Caterpillar making a difference in the country as well. Cargill was an excellent neighbor to the city and geared a lot of attention to keeping a good reputation locally, while offering the locals opportunities for employment,” Sara Sellers, MAB student and Assistant Manager for Stoney Point Agri Corp. in Melissa, Texas said. “Caterpillar really impressed us with their safety and organization implemented in their manufacturing warehouse.”

Participants also learned about Russian agricultural educational opportunities at Moscow State AgroEngineering and St. Petersburg State Agrarian universities. The group met with instructors and administrative leaders at both universities and heard presentations about their educational programs. Both universities teach extensive training of tractors and ag-related equipment. Sellers said, “The tractor utilization education that the students have the opportunity to obtain was incredible and the faculty of both universities seemed to be very dedicated to their students and programs.”

With stops in Moscow, Tula and St. Petersburg, time was set aside for sightseeing and learning about the extensive history of the Russian people. Visits were made to Red Square and the Kremlin, Peter & Paul Fortress, the Hermitage, and many other famous sites.

“It was an excellent experience. We really enjoyed the exposure to all the historical sights and getting to learn about the history of such a challenged nation, as well as being really impressed with the agriculture systems,” said Sellers.

Previously, the MAB has lead a tour of South America, visiting Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay in 2004, and is beginning to plan for the next international trip in 2008.

“Given the increasing global nature of agriculture, it is important for our students and members of the ag industry to stay current with what is going on around the world,” Professor of Agricultural Economics and MAB Program Director Allen Featherstone said. “These kinds of trips allow us to experience global similarities and differences first hand.”

Overall, participants learned how important the contributions of Western countries have been for the Russian agricultural industry and there is a lot of potential for growth and development even with the many challenges and cultural differences between the Russian people and Western nations.

Keith Kennedy, MAB alum and Owner of Agrimind LLC of

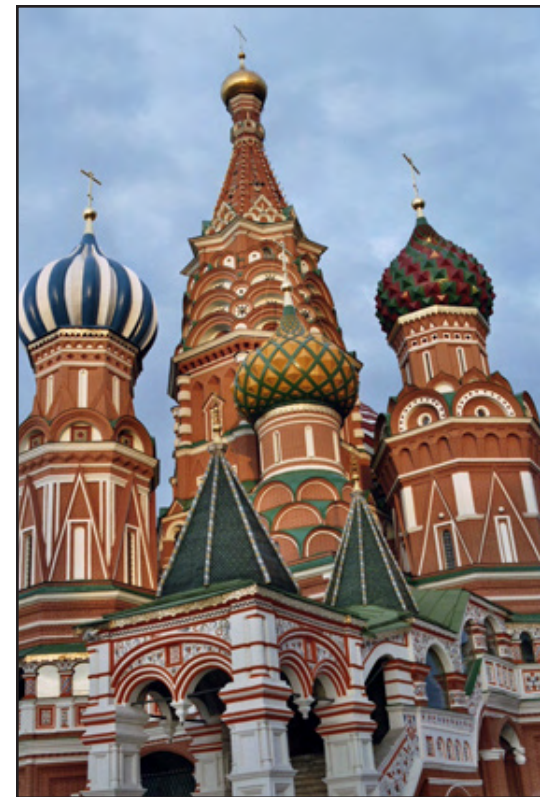
Burns, Wyoming summed up the trip, “Whenever I think about this great trip to Russia, I just keep coming back to a comment from one of the interpreters: ‘visiting Russia will make you appreciate that the definition of normal is different for each person on earth.’”



Top: MAB student Sara Sellers inspects cows at the Dmitrov Dairy Farm outside of Moscow. The farm milks 500 cows three times a day. Above: Group at Caterpillar welding facility outside of St. Petersburg. Below: MAB students Marcella Warner, Catia Jorge and Joel Phelps pose on a tractor at Moscow State AgroEngineering University.



Clockwise from top left: The group listens to a presentation about Caterpillar’s operations in Russia by Managing Director Jim Sickinger. Inside the Hermitage museum, formerly the Tsar’s Winter Palace, in St. Petersburg. The Kremlin in Moscow. At Peterhof, the summer palace of Peter the Great. St. Basil’s Cathedral in Red Square.



The MAB Program is currently taking applications for their January 2007 class. For more information please contact Mary Bowen at [mjbowen@agecon.ksu.edu](mailto:mjbowen@agecon.ksu.edu) or visit their website at [www.mab.ksu.edu](http://www.mab.ksu.edu).

# Survey of the South

*Ag Econ Professor Brings Students to the World*

Over the past several years, undergraduate agribusiness students have looked for more experiences internationally.

“My advisees were telling me that a semester in Prague, Czech Republic or a semester in Toulouse, France were just too long and not really focused on agriculture. And, to be honest, I was not ready to do a semester abroad when I was 18 either,” Michael Boland noted. “The more I questioned my students, the more I realized that what they wanted was an international experience in agriculture and they wanted an experience where they would interact with students their own age. Because many of them were enrolled in Spanish courses, they wanted an experience in a Spanish speaking country.” In addition, Boland had a graduate student, Alena Bosse that wanted an international experience as well.

With that in mind, Boland began making connections. He found an opportunity for Alena to work on a school nutrition project in Honduras in the summer of 2005. Alena worked with Land O’ Lakes Development Division with their school nutrition program and the three students worked with an agribusiness faculty member at Zamorano.

Boland enrolled in an intensive eight week, six hour a day Spanish immersion program. In addition, three undergraduate agribusiness students participated in an agribusiness internship at Zamorano University in Honduras.

Upon their return to the K-State, Boland and Alena began thinking about an opportunity for a larger number of students. Boland has taught in graduate programs in agribusiness in Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay and it was natural to think about using those contacts as a base. So, he and Alena created a class entitled AGE 450 International Agribusiness which would include students participating in various weekly activities in the spring of 2006 followed by a four-week study tour in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay.

In the fall of 2005, Alena and four MBA students worked with Boland on case studies of various agricultural industries in these countries. Each of the cases was co-authored by a faculty member in each of the four countries where the students would be visiting. “I thought we would be lucky to have 12 students sign up for the class,” Boland noted. Much to his surprise, he had nonrefundable deposits from 28 students within three weeks of announcing the class. “It was a good problem to have,” he said. In the spring of 2006, Boland met weekly with the students to discuss culture, history, trade, public policies, agricultural issues, exchange rate and other macroeconomic policies, and general information about each country.

On May 14, the study tour departed for Santiago, Chile to study

the Chilean dairy industry. For many of the students it was their first time to leave the United States. Many did not know the other people on the trip. That would soon change since they practically lived on that bus over the next four weeks. In Chile, the students studied the dairy industry and the role of cooperatives in that industry. Chile is heavily focused on dairy and is growing their industry for exports. The students also visited a major supermarket where one of the managers gave a tour explaining the international marketing strategies of their company. The participating university, Catolica, presented information about the pasture grazing systems in Chile and why Chile can expand its dairy industry.

In Argentina, the students studied the beef and wine industries. This included a visit to Linier’s Market which is the world’s largest outdoor cattle auction with a capacity of 50,000 head and a drive across the Pampas, which is one of the largest cattle grazing regions in the world. The students listened to a variety of speakers from industry including Finexcor (owned by Cargill), Argentina’s Minister of Health, and a producer livestock association.

At the Universidad de San Salvador, students visited

with Argentinean students in a discussion of the beef industry case.

Meghan Meuseler (K-State B.S. degree in agribusiness, 1999) of Cargill Meat Solutions joined the students in Argentina. “It’s beneficial to have someone visit with us about the beef industry in the U.S. and help us compare it to Argentina,” Alena noted. Cargill sponsored a tour of its facilities in Buenos Aires followed by a lunch and presentation by a senior vice-president. “We arrived in Buenos Aires shortly after the president of the country had banned beef exports. My economic classes had taught me why this was not a good economic policy and it was interesting to hear someone from industry explain the political reasons why the president might have embarked on such a poor policy,” Alena said.

The students also studied the



Students catch some zzzz’s on the bus. Over the four week trip students travelled a total of 8539 miles.

wine industry, in Mendoza, Argentina, expected to be the world’s largest wine exporter by 2020. They conducted a wine tasting, listened to presentations about the wine industry and visited local vineyards. A case study on the wine industry was discussed with students of San Andreas University in Buenos Aires.

In addition, the students visited a chocolate factory and farm where horticultural crops were being planted by hand labor. The students spent two days on an estancia in Argentina. Students learned more about why beef was such an important part of the Argentinean culture. The students went horseback riding English style, watched a polo match, went hiking, enjoyed home cooked meals, tended the fireplaces in their rooms, and experienced traditional gaucho dances.

In Uruguay, the students toured an estancia, dairy farm, and vineyard. Lautaro Perez (KSU Masters in Agribusiness graduate, 2002) visited about the cattle passport system, which is one of the most sophisticated in the world. Uruguay has seen all-time highs and lows in land prices in the past four years and Lautaro explained what was happening with foreign investment. About one third of U.S. beef exports come from Uruguay. The demand for Uruguayan beef is due to its traceability, leanness due to a grass-fed system, kosher beef plants, and low-cost production systems.

In Brazil, students studied the coffee industry from a wide range of perspectives. They visited a coffee cooperative; saw coffee being produced, graded, stored, processed, packed, and marketed. They visited a farm of a North Dakota native who moved to Brazil 15 years ago and toured his cattle operation, melon production and processing systems, as well as their coffee production and processing systems. The owner talked to the students about staying

competitive in a changing global market and the importance of exchange rates in international business. The students worked with Brazilian students and Dr. Chaddad of IBMEC University on a coffee case study. The students had the opportunity to collaborate with IBMEC students analyzing the coffee cooperative and formulating strategies to ensure future competitiveness and viability. The students also visited Iguazu Falls which is four times the size of Niagra Falls and the world’s largest hydroelectric power generator at Itaipu Binacional Dam.

“It was a course of diverse experiences,” noted Boland. “We crossed the Andes Mountain Range. We drove over 8,500 miles and spent 230 hours on a bus. One of the biggest things the students noted was how virtually everyone we visited with knew what the exchange rate was that week. People with little education and people with a lot of education knew the exchange rate relative to the U.S. dollar. In each country, their currency has varied by as much as 40 percent in the last three years. In addition, they discovered that their agricultural economies were very competitive despite their lack of subsidies compared to the United States. They used different technologies and did not have access to credit and other factors. But they found ways to be competitive.”

Alena added, “We improved our Spanish speaking skills, had interesting shopping experiences in open markets, met people our own age in each country, consumed typical foods in each country, saw a wide variety of agriculture, and learned a lot about agriculture in other countries. We discovered that everything rarely goes as planned and all trips take longer than expected, yet everything always works out in the end.”



Left: Milk in bags? Danel Anderes investigates packaging at a grocery store in Chile. Right: Lindsey Altwegg and Ben Stockebrand look at unique packaging of dairy products in Chile.

## K-State/KFMA Study Shows Kansas Farms Continuing to Grow

On average, Kansas farms are continuing to grow at an annual rate of 2.87 percent according to a 10-year study conducted by the Kansas Farm Management Association (KFMA), said Michael Langemeier, an agricultural economics professor at Kansas State University. Langemeier spoke about his study, "Factors Impacting Farm Growth," at the 2006 Risk and Profit Conference held Aug. 17-18 at the K-State Alumni Center.

The KFMA program is a part of K-State Research and Extension and is one of the largest publicly-funded farm management programs in the United States, said Sam Funk, KFMA administrator.

The goals of the program are to provide Kansas farm families with information about business and family costs to improve farm business organization, decisions and profitability; and how to minimize risk. Current membership in the KFMA is approximately 2,300 farms and 3,000 families.

In the study from 1996-2005, the KFMA compiled data on 719 Kansas farms and divided the farms into four categories. The first category represented farms with less than \$100,000 in value of farm production. The second category included farms between \$100,000 and \$250,000. Farms in the third category had a value of farm production between \$250,000 and \$500,000 and the fourth category included those farms greater than \$500,000.

The average annual growth rate of KFMA farms ranged from 1.79 percent in the first category to 3.82 percent in the fourth category.

"From this study, we discovered that medium to large farms are growing at a faster rate," Langemeier said. "And that some smaller farms, particularly older farmers, are continuing to downsize."

The average KFMA farm in 1975 was 1,350 acres and in 2005 the average was 1,850 acres, according to the KFMA. This is a growth rate of about one percent per year or 500 acres over the 30-year period.

For more information about the Kansas Farm Management Association, please contact the office in your area or contact Sam Funk, KFMA Administrator at 785.532.1513 or email him at [funk@agecon.ksu.edu](mailto:funk@agecon.ksu.edu).

## Rich Porter Named 2006 Distinguished Alumnus



The Department of Agricultural Economics is pleased to present the 2006 Distinguished Alumni Award to Richard Porter. This award is given to an alum who has demonstrated significant professional achievement related to agricultural economics or agribusiness.

Richard Porter is an agricultural producer from Reading, Kansas. His education began with a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from K-State in 1972. He then pursued a law degree at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. While in law school Rich worked in the EPA enforcement division. Upon completion of law school in 1975, he was employed by Bethlehem Steel in air pollution control for four years. Rich returned to Kansas and for the past 28 years has farmed and raised cattle near Emporia. Rich began his master's degree at K-State as part of the inaugural class of the Department of Agricultural Economics' Master in Agribusiness program in 1998. During his degree program his thesis was on economies of scale in finishing cattle. He now runs 8,000 head which are received as 300 lb. calves and sold as finished cattle. Rich also farms 2,300 acres of corn and soybeans.

With a strong commitment to being a life-long learner, Rich has pursued many other educational and professional opportunities including the Department of Agricultural Economics' MAST program, serving on the Kansas Livestock Association board of directors and the Board of Technical Professions. Currently Rich serves on the board of the Risk Management Education Center. Rich's wife of 32 years, Sarah, is a systems programmer. They have three children.

Factors that positively affected farm growth rates were farm size, non-farm income and the debt to asset ratio, Langemeier said. Percent acres owned, operator age, the adjusted total expense ratio and labor costs as a percent of value of farm production were associated with downsizing farms.

The average age of farmers that owned growing farms was 49 years old, while the average age of farmers who were downsizing was 60 years old.

Farms that were growing at a slower rate, or downsizing, tended to spend more money on labor (about 43 percent of their value of farm production), but they also owned a higher percentage of their acres than the larger farms did. Larger farms spent about 14 percent of their value of farm production on labor.

While 31 percent of KFMA farms had negative annual growth rates, about 20 percent had an annual growth rate of 7.20 percent, which resulted in those farms doubling in size during the 10-year study, Langemeier said.

Farms in the fourth category or farms that were growing at the highest annual rates had younger owners, were larger operations and received more income off the farm, he said. They also owned a lower percent of their acres, had a lower adjusted total expense ratio, used less of their value of farm production to cover labor expense and had a higher debt to asset ratio compared to farms in the first category.

"As expected, the farms that were growing faster had a higher debt to asset ratio," Langemeier said. "In most instances, it takes both debt and equity capital for a farm to grow at a relatively rapid rate. Liquidity, on the other hand, was not significantly correlated with farm growth rates."

In the end of the study, it was discovered that the debt to asset ratio is the most positively correlated with farm growth and the age of operator was most negatively correlated with farm growth, Langemeier said.

## Ag Econ's NAMA Wins National Competition

Kansas State University's National Agri-Marketing Association student team placed first in the 2006 National Agri-Marketing Competition. The competition was at the National Agri-Marketing Association's annual conference and trade show, April 19-21, in Kansas City, Mo.

For the competition, students chose a product and developed a plan to successfully bring their product to the marketplace. David Lehman, K-State instructor of marketing and team coach for the competition, said the K-State team chose to market a fruit juice fortified with skim milk. In developing their marketing plan, the students followed the same principles used by today's marketing professionals. Teams made a formal presentation of their marketing plan to a panel of judges. The judges' panel consisted of marketing and agribusiness professionals.

Overall, 27 student National Agri-Marketing Association chapters participated in the marketing competition and more than 350 student members attended the conference. In the finals, K-State competed against the University of

Wisconsin-Madison, Michigan State University, the University of Florida, Iowa State University and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

K-State students on the team include:

Vincent Hofer, sophomore in agricultural economics, and David Widmar, freshman in agricultural economics, both of Franklin; Sarah Coover, senior in agribusiness, Galesburg; Annie Whitehill, senior in agricultural communications and journalism, Latham; Amanda Ahrens, senior in marketing, Oakley; Samantha Tracy, senior in agribusiness, Virgil; and Brett Stoll, senior in agribusiness, Yates Center.



The National Agri-Marketing Association began in 1957 and serves the food and fiber industry, focusing on members' professional development by providing access to solutions and opportunities in agribusiness.

## Online Community Launched for K-State Alumni

The K-State Alumni Association and Kansas State University Foundation have launched Wildcat Connection, a new online community created to help alumni and friends stay connected with each other and the university. The community currently is open as a free service to all visitors.

Users may view their biographical data maintained by the Alumni Association, update information, search for other K-Staters and utilize a career networking feature providing resume posting, job openings and business cards. Members of the community can create their own home page and insert a photo with the click of a few buttons. The community also links friends who share similar hobbies and special interests.

To participate, visitors are invited to join the community by visiting the Alumni Association's Web site at <http://www.K-State.com> and clicking on the "Wildcat Connection" button to access the community's homepage. They will then be requested to establish a user ID and password to begin using Wildcat Connection.

"We are excited to provide this online community as one of our ongoing efforts to help alumni stay connected, find jobs and fill position openings," said Amy Button Renz, alumni association president. "Networking is one of the strongest ways to accomplish this, and Wildcat Connection is all about K-Staters networking with other K-Staters. We look forward to hearing of the many renewed friendships and other connections made through this exciting new service."

## MAST Alumni Named Kansas Master Farmers/Master Homemakers

Of the six couples named 2006 Master Farmers/Master Homemakers, two are alumni of the MAST program. A Riley County farm couple, Vinton and Karen Visser, and an Elk County couple, Mike and Peggy Bellar, were among the honorees this year. Both Peggy and Karen have participated in the MAST program.

The award honors agricultural leadership, environmental stewardship and community service. It comes from Kansas State Research and Extension and the Kansas Farmer Magazine.

## Upcoming Opportunities to Participate in Department Programs

### 2006 Insurance Workshop

This workshop is hosted by Colorado State, University of Nebraska, and Kansas State University for insurance agents and agribusiness professionals. The workshop looks at current issues in the Farm Bill, reducing fraud and abuse, the AGR-LITE and GRIP, current RMA issues, and LGM/LRP insurance. Conference information including dates and fees is available on [www.agmanager.info](http://www.agmanager.info).

### Kansas Income Tax Institutes

November 7, 2006 to December 14, 2006  
Various Locations across Kansas

Covers information and changes for the 2006 tax year. Professionals in the tax or legal business including attorneys and certified financial planners. Earn sixteen hours of continuing education credit. See [www.agmanager.info](http://www.agmanager.info) for locations and more information.

### MAST

#### Management, Analysis, & Strategic Thinking

MAST begins its 2006-2007 class on November 13 & 14, 2006. This distance education program is for progressive producers who desire to strategically place their businesses. Enrollment is going on now. For more information or to register visit: [www.agmanager.info/MAST](http://www.agmanager.info/MAST) or call Alicia Goheen at 785.532.4434. Deadline to register is November 1.

### Master of Agribusiness

K-State's Master of Agribusiness (MAB) program is an award-winning, internet-based degree designed for food and agribusiness professionals. Not an MBA, and not an M.S. in Agricultural Economics, but a professional degree program aimed at training managers for one of the most rapidly changing industries today. The program utilizes today's technology, with a hands-on approach to instruction that provides an outstanding educational experience. We are currently accepting applications for our 10th class, which will begin in January 2007. For more information, please go to [www.mab.ksu.edu](http://www.mab.ksu.edu) or call 785-532-4495.

### Ag Profitability Conferences

December 2006 to February 2007

Various Locations across Kansas

Always a popular conference series, local agents request the agricultural economics specialists to address current topics in agriculture. For more information visit [www.agmanager.info](http://www.agmanager.info) and click on "Upcoming Events"

### Ag Innovation Center Symposia

The Innovation Center will conduct several classes beginning in the spring for people interested in starting small businesses, exploring different business markets, and for those already in business who desire to increase the level of their business' visibility. For more information visit [www.ag-innovation.org](http://www.ag-innovation.org).

### Employee Management for Production Agriculture Conference

Summer 2007

This conference is designed to help agricultural managers as they deal with the challenges of managing human resources. The speakers, sessions, and curriculum have been designed with agriculture managers in mind. Do not miss this opportunity to learn how to better manage your business' most important resource—its people. For more information visit the conference website at: [www.oznet.ksu.edu/employee/](http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/employee/)

### Risk and Profit 2007

An annual conference hosted by the Department of Agricultural Economics that provides an opportunity for key agricultural decision makers to interact with each other and with faculty. Next Session: August 16-17, 2007. For more information visit the [agmanager.info](http://agmanager.info) website.

### 12th Annual Alumni Weekend

Join the Department of Agricultural Economics as we salute our students, alumni, and special friends. Events include the Distinguished Alumnus awards banquet, the ever-popular K-State tailgate, and a action-packed football game.

See [www.ageconomics.ksu.edu](http://www.ageconomics.ksu.edu) for more information on the alumni weekend.

## A Note from Bryan Schurle

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courses. I also taught computer applications courses and some graduate level courses that involved the applications of computers to applied types of problems. In recent years I taught courses in the Masters of Agribusiness program, a program for individuals who want to get a masters degree after farming or working for several years in some agriculturally related business.

My research interests have been heavily oriented toward using data from the farm management associations to study the economics and risk associated with different sized operations. The farm management associations provide services to farmers to operate more efficiently, and the data allow us to study issues that no one else in the agricultural economics profession can study. The opportunity to become department head was a wonderful opportunity to work with the outstanding agricultural economists and farm management economists spread across the state who work directly with farmers. I look forward to helping them continue to produce outstanding research and relevant extension programs that benefit the stakeholders in the state.

The interview process we went through in selecting a head allowed me to spend time thinking about and comparing what we are doing at KSU with many around the country. The faculty are

proud of being a part of such an outstanding department and alumni should also really be proud in that they are connected to such an outstanding department. This is the same kind of pride one feels in being associated with a great football team--it feels good to be associated with a winner.

One of our weaknesses I feel is that we are not as connected to our alumni as we should be. Some of us in the department have been so busy being productive, that we have not had time to keep track of where some of our outstanding alumni have gone and what they have done, and I would like to reconnect with students from the past, and reconnect retired faculty with some of the students from longer ago. I can not come to your place--but I would really welcome input from our alumni. I would love to hear from you, and hear the success stories that are out there. I am hoping that you feel good about us, and we would like to brag about you--it makes us all look good. So, let us hear from you. Over the next few years we will be working harder at providing opportunities to get together with you. We would like to hear from you--tell us where you are and what you have done since you have left us. I look forward to hearing from you.

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## Tell Us What You've Been Up To

First and Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Maiden Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Year Graduated: \_\_\_\_\_

News You'd Like To Share:

Feel free to share this news in the next alumni newsletter.

I'd like to get in contact with: \_\_\_\_\_ who graduated in \_\_\_\_\_.  
Could you help me?

I'd like an informational packet that will help me learn how I can help the Department of Agricultural Economics.

Please contact me about participating in alumni events being planned in the department.

Please return to Alicia Goheen in 343 Waters Hall, Manhattan, KS 66506-4011. You can also call (785.532.4434) or email this information to [agoheen@ksu.edu](mailto:agoheen@ksu.edu).

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## **Faculty/Staff Awards and Honors Winter 2005 - Fall 2006**

John Crespi, Associate Professor, Outstanding Published Research Award, Western Agricultural Economics Association, 2006

Troy Dumler, Area Economist, Irrigation Water Management Team Award, K-State Research and Extension, 2006

Allen Featherstone, Professor, National University Continuing Education Excellence Teaching Award, 2006

Allen Featherstone, Professor, College of Agriculture Excellence in Graduate Teaching Award, 2006

Barry Flinchbaugh, Professor, KGFA Sunflower Award, Kansas Grain and Feed Association, 2006

Barry Flinchbaugh, Professor, Distinguished Service Award, American Farm Bureau Federation, 2006

Jeff Peterson, Associate Professor, Mentoring Award, K-State Research and Extension, 2006

MAST, National Association of Continuing Higher Education Non-Credit Program Award, 2006

NAMA Team (Amanda Ahrens, Sarah Coover, Vincent Hofer, Brett Stoll, Samantha Tracy, Annie Whitehill, David Widmar) 1st Place, National Ag Marketing Competition, 2006

Mark Wood, Kansas Farm Management Association Extension Ag Economist, Builder Award, K-State Research and Extension, 2006