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2013–2014 REGENTS PROFESSOR AWARD

The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents established the Regents Professor Award program in 1996 to recognize and honor faculty members who have made exemplary contributions to their university, agency, or health science center and to the people of Texas. Nominees must be full-time faculty members who have held the rank of professor or equivalent in The Texas A&M University System for at least five years and have produced a distinguished record of teaching, research, and other scholarly activities.

Dr. Binayak P. Mohanty  
Professor, Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering and Department of Ecosystem Science and Management  
Texas A&M AgriLife Research Faculty Fellow  
Dwight Look College of Engineering Faculty Fellow

Dr. Mohanty earned his bachelor’s degree in Agricultural Engineering at the Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology in India; his master’s at AIT, Bangkok, Thailand; and his Ph.D. at Iowa State University. He brings cutting-edge science and world-class scientists to his classrooms and has trained many undergraduate, master’s, doctoral, and postdoctoral students who have successful careers at esteemed institutions. His internationally recognized expertise is a unique combination of disciplines that focus on the function of the earth-atmosphere-biosphere interaction. His research contributions have provided unprecedented tools and techniques to address the wide spectrum of challenges related to soil and environmental sciences, including water management, crop production, climate forecasts, flood prediction, groundwater recharge estimation, and pollution control.

2013–2014 REGENTS FELLOW SERVICE AWARDS

Established in 1998 by the Board of Regents, the Regents Fellow Service Award honors service, extension, and research professionals who have provided exemplary professional service to society that has created large and lasting benefits to Texas and beyond.

Dr. R. James Ansley, Texas A&M AgriLife Research  
Professor and Rangeland Ecologist, Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Vernon

Dr. Ansley earned his bachelor’s degree at Hastings College, his master’s at Utah State, and his Ph.D. at the University of Wyoming. He is respected worldwide as a rangeland ecologist based on his experience in semiarid mesquite and juniper woodlands. He is an expert in plant ecophysiology and the way managing natural resources affects plant communities. He conducts research on gas exchange, woody plant water use, wildlife predation of mesquite seeds, herbicide control, and fire ecology in rangelands. For more than 20 years he has conducted a respected research program that addresses problems related to agricultural production and ecological sustainability. He directs numerous graduate students at Texas A&M and teaches biology at Vernon College. He has won six awards for technical articles or posters and is associate editor of Rangeland Ecology and Management Journal.
Ms. Carrie T. Brazeal, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
County Extension Agent–Family and Consumer Sciences, Collin County

Ms. Brazeal received both her bachelor’s and master’s degrees at Texas A&M University-Commerce. For 34 years with Extension (32 in Collin County), she has excelled in improving lives, especially for children. She delivers about 15 classes per month with average attendance of 27 each, produces 4 newsletters, and writes a weekly column for print and online media with a circulation of 25,000. She has helped create such programming as Mini-Pride, a class for family members who parent children of relatives; weekly parenting classes for inmate groups since 1997; and childcare provider training, begun in 1994 and growing in attendance to 699 in 2013. She also excels in delivering Extension programs in diabetes education, disease prevention, and wellness. The National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences named her regional Educator of the Year in 2012.

Dr. Saqib Mukhtar, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
Extension Agricultural Engineer and Professor
Extension Program Leader and Associate Department Head, Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering

Dr. Mukhtar earned his bachelor’s degree in Agricultural Engineering at the University of Agriculture in Faisalabad, Pakistan, and his master’s and Ph.D. at Iowa State University. As Extension Agricultural Engineer for nearly 16 years, he is best known for his contributions in Extension education, technology transfer, and research to reduce the air and water quality impacts of manure and wastewater from animal feeding operations. He has authored or co-authored more than 170 publications and created a nationally recognized website on animal manure management (tammi.tamu.edu). His guides about reducing nuisance odors and dust, proper lagoon closure, and managing animal mortality are provided by state agencies to help poultry and livestock operations meet regulatory requirements. His publication on climate change won an ASABE Blue Ribbon Award in 2013.

Dr. Amy Swinford, DVM, Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory
Section Head, Diagnostic Bacteriology/Mycology Laboratory, College Station

In her nine years with TVMDL, Dr. Swinford’s contributions have expanded far beyond her original position as Diagnostic Bacteriologist. Proving to be a talented and versatile microbiologist, she has gained the respect of her colleagues, clients, and peers, both in Texas and nationwide. She has made lasting contributions to animal disease research as well as to the education and training of veterinarians and veterinary scientists. She has been an exceptional ambassador for TVMDL and has provided dedicated and distinguished representation of the agency at the state, national, and international levels. Dr. Swinford earned her master’s degree in Veterinary Pathobiology and her Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine.
2014 TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY DISTINGUISHED PROFESSORS

The title of Distinguished Professor is one of the highest honors given to Texas A&M University faculty. It is bestowed in perpetuity on faculty members who are pre-eminent in their fields.

Dr. Robert Chapkin
Regents Professor and University Faculty Fellow, Nutrition and Food Sciences, Biochemistry and Biophysics

Joining the Texas A&M University faculty in 1988 after a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of California, Davis, Dr. Chapkin has focused his research on colon cancer prevention. He and the members of his laboratory investigate the impact of dietary fat, fiber, and folate on the inhibition or activation of genes involved in the development of cancer in humans. Among Dr. Chapkin’s many accomplishments is developing a patented, noninvasive method for monitoring changes in intestinal gene expression. One of his current investigations concerns the mechanisms by which dietary lipids and phytochemicals affect the immune system. He has received a number of awards, including the Osborne and Mendel Award from the American Society for Nutrition, the NASA Space Act Award, and the Bio-Serv Award in Experimental Animal Nutrition from the American Society of Nutrition.

Dr. Jeffrey Savell
Regents Professor and E. M. “Manny” Rosenthal Chair, Animal Science; Cintron University Professor in Undergraduate Teaching Excellence

Dr. Savell’s research demonstrates the role of beef in a healthy diet and has provided an economic incentive for the beef industry to produce leaner beef. In addition, he is considered to be a thought leader in food safety. Dr. Savell has been recognized by the American Meat Science Association at the national and international levels. He has also received the highest award given by the American Meat Science Association, for “extraordinary and lasting contributions to the meat and livestock industry.” He has published 19 book chapters, more than 300 articles in peer-refereed journals, and hundreds of AgriLife Extension publications and presentations. His work has been cited more than 5,725 times. He earned his doctorate at Texas A&M University in 1978, briefly worked as a specialist in Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, and joined the Animal Science faculty in 1979.
Each fall, The Association of Former Students honors outstanding faculty members for their dedication to teaching. Since the program’s inception in 1982, recipients are recognized for their talent, expertise, and devotion in conveying knowledge to students.

Dr. Clinton Allred  
*Associate Professor and Associate Head of Academic Programs, Department of Nutrition and Food Science*

Dr. Allred joined the department as a faculty member after earning his doctorate at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. His motivating and caring demeanor brings out the best in his students as he helps them develop analytical skills and the critical-thinking process. He also brings real-world scenarios to the classroom and exposes students to the most current industry developments. A national leader in nutritional and cancer research, he focuses on the ability of diet to influence the development and progression of several forms of cancer. He has received many awards, including the International Life Sciences Institute Future Leaders Award and the American Society for Nutrition E. L. R. Stokstad Award. In one of many testaments to his skills as an educator, Dr. Allred was awarded his department’s Mentoring Award for Excellence.

Dr. Sandun D. Fernando  
*Associate Professor, Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering*

Dr. Fernando earned his doctorate from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, before joining the Texas A&M University faculty in 2008. Since then, he has earned numerous awards and honors for research, service, and teaching, including the Student-Led Award for Excellence in Teaching from The Texas A&M University System. He has a talent for connecting with students and has successfully recruited underrepresented students to the department’s doctoral program in bioenergy. Dr. Fernando is an exceptional mentor of graduate and undergraduate students, has impressive command of complex engineering courses, and devotes a great deal of personal attention to the academic needs of students. His evaluations consistently reflect an extraordinary level of student satisfaction. His expertise, kindness, and passion for teaching leave a lasting impression on his students.
Dr. Kerri B. Gehring

Associate Professor, Department of Animal Science

Dr. Gehring joined the Texas A&M University faculty in 2006; she earned her bachelor’s, master’s, and doctorate at Texas A&M University. Today, she is recognized nationally as a leading food safety expert, and her students are some of the most highly recruited in her field. One of Dr. Gehring’s many awards and honors is the North American Meat Processor’s Association Harry L. Rudnick Educator of the Year Award, which she received in 2005. Dr. Gehring has obtained more than $3 million in extramural support, built a very strong graduate program, and attracts outstanding students. She has an exceptional ability to effectively communicate and connect with each student. She continually improves her teaching methods. Her classroom approach encourages students to not only understand the subject matter, but to apply it to real-world situations.

2014 VICE CHANCELLOR’S AWARDS IN EXCELLENCE

Established in 1980, the Vice Chancellor’s Awards in Excellence recognize the commitment and outstanding contributions of faculty and staff across Texas A&M AgriLife.

TEACHING

Teaching

Dr. Sandun D. Fernando

Associate Professor, Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering

Dr. Fernando is an exceptional mentor of both undergraduate and graduate students. He has impressive command of complex engineering courses and prioritizes the academic needs of students. He is a powerful and dynamic communicator who makes complex subjects understandable by presenting an excellent balance of theory and practice. Students have shown their regard for him through many awards, including the 2014 Association of Former Students Distinguished Achievement Award for Teaching. In addition to teaching, Dr. Fernando leads a successful research program, is active in service to his profession, and promotes engineering education in developing countries. He earned his doctorate in Biological Systems Engineering at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, and joined the Texas A&M University faculty in 2008.

Graduate Student Teaching

Mr. Robert Koenig

Graduate Assistant, Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics

Mr. Koenig is a senior graduate student who has been a teaching assistant for eight semesters in two different classes. He fosters a great learning environment and tailors his teaching to each group of students. He learns over 60 students’ names each semester. When he calls on a student to answer a question, he tailors the difficulty of the question to the student. All of this creates the camaraderie that is needed in small, interactive classes. Mr. Koenig also puts a great deal of effort into presenting the lecture material. He differentiates his sections from the main lecture to prod the students’ thinking. He incorporates jokes, asks challenging questions, and helps students see the common pitfalls in problem solving. For Mr. Koenig, teaching is not a necessary chore to support his research but a responsibility and a privilege to help students go from struggling to successful.
RESEARCH

Research

Dr. James C. Sacchettini
Professor and R. J. Wolfe-Welch Chair in Science, Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics
Director, Center for Structural Biology

Since he joined the Texas A&M faculty in 1996, Dr. Sacchettini has gained worldwide acclaim for his work to understand how enzymes interact with their substrates and how this information can help combat worldwide diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria. He has obtained an impressive amount of research funding and assembled a laboratory of nearly 50 people. His team identifies and studies proteins that are critical to the life cycle of disease-causing organisms and then designs, creates, and tests molecules that can inactivate these proteins, killing disease-causing agents. He applies his scientific resources to the discovery of new drugs for infectious diseases, drug-resistant bacterial infections, and cancer. The team has published in some of the best scientific journals in the world. Dr. Sacchettini is a true scientific leader and a generous collaborator to faculty within and outside Texas A&M.

Graduate Student Research

Mr. Alfredo Erazo-Oliveras
Ph.D. Candidate and Graduate Research Assistant, Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics

A top student in his department, Mr. Erazo-Oliveras graduated from the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus, where he researched molecular enzyme inhibition. In summer 2007, he conducted NSF-sponsored research in Dr. James Sacchettini’s lab at Texas A&M through the REU program. He began his graduate studies here in 2008. His research focuses on developing a technology for introducing proteins into live cells with unprecedented efficiency and control and with the complete absence of toxicity. This work could be a game-changer in the field of novel drug delivery, and it required superb problem-solving skills in chemistry, biochemistry, and cell biology. Among his publications is a first-author paper in the journal Nature Methods, considered the highest among 75 journals in biochemical research. He won a graduate student teaching award in 2013.

EXTENSION EDUCATION

County Extension Agent

Mrs. Calley Runnels
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service–Family and Consumer Sciences, Swisher County

Serving Briscoe, Gaines, and Swisher Counties over the past 18 years, Mrs. Runnels has shown outstanding leadership in Extension education programs and volunteer engagement. Through her many collaborations, she has taught young people and adults about nutrition and healthy lifestyles; distracted driving; tobacco use and substance abuse; bullying; teen suicide; healthy relationships; farm, gun, fire, auto, and bicycle safety; chronic disease prevention; and child passenger safety. Over 4,600 youth in Swisher County have participated in programs such as Tough Talk for Teens, Ag Safety Day Camps, and Towards No Tobacco. A local internship and entrepreneurship program for high school and college students influenced many college graduates to come back to live and start a business in their home communities. This is a vital component of economic security in rural counties.
**VICE CHANCELLOR’S AWARDS**

*Extension Specialist/Program Specialist Serving State or Region*

**Mr. James S. Kamas**  
*Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist–Viticulture and Pomology, Gillespie County*

Mr. Kamas has been researching Pierce’s disease, which can devastate vineyards, since 2007. He was appointed coordinator of the Texas Pierce’s Disease Research and Education Center in Fredericksburg in 2010. When funding was lost in 2012, he kept the facility running with small grants until a benefactor purchased it in 2013 and donated it to AgriLife Extension. His *Pierce’s Disease Overview and Management Guide* is the leading publication on the subject for growers east of the Rocky Mountains. Through partnerships with researchers in California and Florida, he tests disease-resistant grape varieties and biocontrol agents. He assists commercial and home growers with fruit nutrition, orchard and vineyard management, and insect and disease control. His dedication has changed the face of the Texas grape industry and helped to add over $90 million annually to the Texas economy.

*SERVICE*

*Public Service in Forestry*

**Mr. Curt Stripling**  
*Geospatial Systems Coordinator, Texas A&M Forest Service*

Mr. Stripling has served Texas A&M AgriLife for 14 years as Geospatial Systems Coordinator and Geospatial Specialist. In his current role, he is responsible for managing the Resource Protection Division’s geospatial programs and employees. He has been the driving force and lead technical expert behind the successful development of the Texas Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal and the Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal. His extensive knowledge, communication skills, and leadership skills helped him lead a team of experts to deliver these innovative products, the first of their type in the country. Landowners, homeowners, and community planners can now access the information in the risk assessment portals to help them manage their lands, protect their homes, and develop wildfire protection plans for their communities.

*Diagnostic Services*

**Mr. Michael G. Beauvais**  
*Assistant Head of Diagnostic Services, Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory, College Station*

Since 1987, Mr. Beauvais has worked to provide quality service in diagnostic testing to veterinarians across Texas and the United States. He oversees the receiving and assigning of up to 800 submissions per day and supervises four to six employees. He puts the client’s needs first in assigning specimens to sections and shepherding elements of casework through the entire laboratory process. Each day, he and his team do a quick but detailed review of every generated preliminary case for errors or missed linkages. His consistency, timeliness, attention to detail, expertise, and good humor are commendable. He also has invaluable synergy with laboratory personnel, and his institutional knowledge of TVMDL earned him a seat on a recent external laboratory review committee. Mr. Beauvais also made important contributions to TVMDL’s laboratory information management system migration.
SPECIAL SERVICES

Ms. Stacy Morris  
*Chief of Staff, Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory*

In her 14 years with Texas A&M AgriLife, Ms. Morris has worked in the Office of the Vice Chancellor, in AgriLife Extension, in AgriLife Research, and, since 2009, at TVMDL. A few examples of her important work as TVMDL Chief of Staff include championing the development and implementation of the agency strategic plan, leading the integration of TVMDL into the AgriLife Human Resources system, and establishing a communications strategy for TVMDL. Ms. Morris is a strategic thinker who truly wants the best for the agency and its employees. She has a collaborative, inclusive leadership style that motivates those she works with. She also has outstanding organizational abilities, consummate interpersonal and communication skills, and an engaging and positive personality. Her skill set makes her well qualified for the job, and her attitude and personality allow her to excel.

STAFF

Business and Operational Staff

Ms. Kathy Wingate  
*Administrative Services Officer, Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Amarillo*

For 20 years, Ms. Wingate has provided outstanding service in business administration to the Amarillo Center. Currently she supervises six support staff and coordinates the business operations for both the Amarillo and Vernon Centers. Thanks to her, both units are known for their reliable financial and human resource records as well as detailed, accurate, and timely reporting. Ms. Wingate earned her bachelor’s degree in business administration from West Texas A&M University in Canyon and is a Certified Texas Purchaser. She is recognized as being the “best of the best” in her position, supplying in-depth knowledge, creativity, and strict adherence to AgriLife policies and procedures. She has received six awards, including the Texans Caring for Texans Award from the Texas House of Representatives.

Office and Administrative Staff

Ms. Linda Bice  
*Office Associate, Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Amarillo*

Since 2001, Ms. Bice has supported the 4-H, Gerontology and Health, and Cancer Prevention programs in District 1; has assisted with the switchboard rotation; and has served as assistant office manager for the Amarillo Center. She also helps train support staff and County Extension Agents. She manages her many responsibilities through exceptional organizational skills, efficiency, and attention to detail. She never complains and is quick to assist others when she sees a need. While carrying out the extensive responsibilities of her job, she completed her bachelor’s and master’s degrees, demonstrating a true passion for learning. Ms. Bice is a consummate professional with a strong work ethic, unquestionable character, and a commitment to serving others. Her positive attitude and friendly personality make working with her a pleasure.
VICE CHANCELLOR’S AWARDS

Technical and Programmatic Staff

Dr. Lawrence J. Dangott
Research Scientist, Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics

Since 1997, Dr. Dangott has served as director of the Protein Chemistry Laboratory. This facility offers researchers across the Texas A&M campus services such as protein microsequencing, amino acid analysis, peptide synthesis, and protein mass spectrometry. Dr. Dangott’s work goes far beyond these requirements. He uses his many years of expertise to solve critical research problems, offer suggestions on further analyses, and interpret data. For many of the facility’s clients, Dr. Dangott has become a collaborator and a co-author. In addition, he assists with student training; he has mentored graduate students, served on thesis committees, trained undergraduates in protein science research, and taught in the classroom. All these activities go beyond his job description, but he gladly carries them out to help students receive the best possible education.

AgriLife Services Staff

Ms. Ann H. Shurgin
Senior Writer and Editor, Promotional Media Team, Texas A&M AgriLife Communications

After 10 years in her position, Ms. Shurgin is the go-to person for copywriting, editing, and scriptwriting at AgriLife. Her writing is woven into much of what the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and AgriLife Research and Extension say and share about who they are, including brochures, fact sheets, marketing guides, video scripts, and the timeline history book The Land-Grant Legacy in the Lone Star State. Her work supports major events in AgriLife, including the AgriLife Conference and the annual Legacy and Leadership Banquet. She considers every project a team effort and jumps in when needed to mentor younger writers, work closely with graphic designers, and help with videography and video production. With the recent retirement of her supervisor, she has taken on some of his duties to keep the team’s projects on time, on track, and on point, to best serve her AgriLife clients.

INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT

Dr. Raghavan Srinivasan
Professor and Director of the Spatial Sciences Laboratory, Department of Ecosystem Science and Management  
Professor, Texas A&M AgriLife Blackland Research and Extension Center  
Senior Scientist, Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture

Dr. Srinivasan has brought international acclaim to Texas A&M over the past 15 years in spatial sciences, climate change impacts on water and crop production, and computer-based natural resource modeling. As one of the developers of the Soil and Water Assessment Tool (SWAT), he has contributed to sustainable agriculture and conservation in the U.S. and more than 90 other countries. SWAT has been used extensively in Europe, Africa, China, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. Almost all of the world’s major river basins are being studied using the model. A Swiss research group is using it to develop a water conservation assessment for the entire globe. Dr. Srinivasan offers workshops and participates in student and faculty exchanges in many countries. He has been instrumental in inspiring international researchers to start solving the water resources issues facing their nations.
Collaboration

Partnership

Urban Water Team, Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Dallas

Mr. Patrick E. Dickinson, Horticulturist and Project Coordinator, Texas A&M AgriLife Research
Mrs. Karen L. Sanders, Rainwater Harvesting Specialist and Program Assistant, Texas A&M AgriLife Research
Mr. Clint D. Wolfe, Program Manager, Texas A&M AgriLife Research
Dr. Dotty M. Woodson, Program Specialist–Water Resources, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Through effective teamwork and by collaborating with over 40 cities; local, state, and federal agencies; and over 30 major corporations, this AgriLife Research and Extension team delivers award-winning programs and innovative solutions that help conserve and protect dwindling urban water resources. A major focus is educating homeowners to reduce landscape water usage, the largest single use of potable water in North Texas. The team’s most popular program is rainwater harvesting, and in 2014 it completed its 10,000th rain barrel for homeowners. In partnership with the EPA Region 6 and Dallas Water Utilities, the team refurbished a house into a WaterSense Labeled Home in 2013 for public demonstration and training and also created a mobile version of the home. In 2014, it completed a WaterSense Labeled multi-family unit, the first of its kind in the world.

Team

National Earth-Kind® Rose Team

Ms. Kimberly Benton, County Extension Agent–Horticulture, Cherokee County
Dr. Derald Harp, Associate Professor of Horticulture, Texas A&M University–Commerce
Dr. John Sloan, Watershed Scientist, University of Illinois
Ms. Allison Watkins, County Extension Agent–Horticulture, Tom Green County
Mr. Todd Williams, County Extension Agent–Agriculture and Natural Resources, Rockwall County
Dr. David Zlesak, Associate Professor of Horticulture, University of Wisconsin–River Falls

Homeowners often waste water on their landscapes, misuse fertilizers and pesticides, and overburden landfills with leaves, grass clippings, and wood chips. To address these issues, an interdisciplinary team within AgriLife Extension introduced the Earth-Kind landscaping philosophy, which aims to create beautiful landscapes that are kind to the environment. The team chose the rosebush as its flagship plant due to its notoriety for being the hardest, most expensive ornamental plant to grow. The team’s many years of dedicated research and field trials have changed roses’ reputation. The team has designated 23 beautiful, low-maintenance rose cultivars with greatly reduced needs for irrigation, fertilizers, and pesticides. Their work on rose culture and soil management applies to most types of landscape and garden plants and has been adapted both nationally and internationally.
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE ADVANCED LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
Cohort III (May 2014–January 2016)

The Texas A&M AgriLife Advanced Leadership Program is an 18-month course that cultivates AgriLife leaders with a national and state outlook. The program focuses on the development of leadership skills and greater understanding of The Texas A&M University System and the land-grant mission. Participants interact with administrators, leadership professionals, and their peers, gaining experiences and tools that enhance their effectiveness as leaders. For more information, visit AgriLife.org/leaders.

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES

Dr. Clinton Allred
Associate Professor and Associate Head of Academic Programs, Department of Nutrition and Food Science

Dr. Allred received his bachelor’s degree in Animal Science from the University of Georgia in 1997. He completed his Ph.D. in Nutrition at the University of Illinois in 2002. He served as a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Molecular and Biomedical Pharmacology at the University of Kentucky College of Medicine until August 2006 and then joined the Texas A&M faculty as an assistant professor. In 2012, he was promoted to associate professor and named Associate Head of Academic Programs in Nutrition and Food Science. He is also a member of the Intercollegiate Faculties of Toxicology and Genetics and is an adjunct faculty member of the Department of Veterinary Integrative Biosciences. His research focuses on the prevention of breast, colon, and other cancers, especially on the role of dietary compounds in reducing the risk of developing these diseases.

Dr. Micky Eubanks
Professor and Research Faculty Fellow, Department of Entomology

Dr. Eubanks completed his bachelor’s (1989) and master’s (1991) degrees in Biology at the University of Mississippi and his Ph.D. (1997) in Entomology at the University of Maryland. He was the David G. Burpee Postdoctoral Fellow at Bucknell University (1997–98) before joining the faculty of Auburn University in 1999. He joined the faculty at Texas A&M in 2007 and was Assistant Department Head for Graduate Studies from 2008 to 2010. He teaches undergraduate and graduate courses. His research program focuses on applied insect ecology, especially the effects of insect herbivores on plants, and the biology and ecological impact of invasive pests. He has worked extensively with a wide variety of crops to increase the efficacy of pest management programs. His research on red imported fire ants has led to the development of more attractive and effective insecticidal baits.
Dr. Julie Harlin  
*Associate Professor, Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications*

Dr. Harlin received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Agricultural Science at Texas A&M in 1993 and 1994 and taught high school agricultural science for three years before earning her Ph.D. in Agricultural Education at Oklahoma State in 1999. She then became a visiting assistant professor in Agricultural Education at Texas A&M and moved into a tenure track position in 2001. She was promoted to associate professor in 2008. She teaches classes that lead to secondary agricultural science teacher certification and coordinates the student-teaching internship, working with high school agricultural science teachers and schools across the state. She earned the USDA Excellence in Teaching Award in the New Teacher Division in 2005. She is a faculty senator representing the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. She and her son, Hunter, show horses in the American Paint Horse Association.

Dr. Elizabeth “Betsy” Pierson  
*Associate Professor, Department of Horticultural Sciences*

Dr. Pierson received her B.S. in Biology (Honors) from Indiana University and her Ph.D. in Botany from Washington State University. She was a research faculty member at the University of Arizona for 19 years before joining the Department of Horticultural Sciences in 2009. She teaches HORT301, Garden Science, and HORT619, Plant-Associated Microorganisms. She is also a member of the graduate programs in Molecular and Environmental Plant Sciences and Plant Pathology and Microbiology. Her primary research interests are plant-associated microbes and their utility for biological control and sustainable agriculture. Her recent work also includes studies on biofuels and emerging diseases of potato and citrus. She is an associate editor for the journal *Molecular Plant Microbe Interactions*. She enjoys mentoring youth in science and team-building activities, especially sports.

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**TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE RESEARCH**

Dr. Christine Alvarado  
*Associate Professor, Department of Poultry Science*

Dr. Alvarado graduated from Texas A&M with a bachelor’s degree in Biomedical Science in 1994, a master’s in Food Science in 1997, and a Ph.D. in Food Science in 2000. She began her career as an associate professor at Virginia Tech, followed by Texas Tech, before returning to Texas A&M in 2010 as an associate professor in the Department of Poultry Science. Her current research and teaching position is focused on poultry processing and products. She conducts applied research on food safety and the quality of both meat and eggs. Dr. Alvarado is an active member of the Poultry Science Association and World Poultry. She is very involved with the industry and is an instructor for the National Egg Quality School, the National Egg Products School, the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) system, and Advanced HACCP. She developed Poultry 101 and 201 as industry courses.
Dr. Zhuping Sheng  
Associate Professor, Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at El Paso and Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering  
Dr. Sheng received his doctoral degree in Hydrogeology/Hydrology from the University of Nevada, Reno, his master’s in Engineering Geology from the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, and his bachelor’s in Engineering from Tongji University, Shanghai, China. He explores for alternative, sustainable water sources in Texas and around the world. His expertise includes hydrology, integrated management of regional water resources, modeling of hydrologic processes, and aquifer mechanics. He leads the U.S.-Mexico transboundary water assessment program and develops surface and groundwater models for protecting water quality and extending the “useful life” of stressed aquifers. He conducts research on river operations, salinity management, and the mitigation of impacts of climate change.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Dr. Brent Auvermann  
Professor and Extension Specialist, Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Amarillo  
Dr. Auvermann’s extension and research programs involve environmental quality (air and water pollution) and manure management associated with confined livestock production. He has authored more than 30 publications, papers, and reports on managing the environmental impacts of livestock operations. He has coordinated or presented numerous workshops on these topics and is an adjunct faculty member in the Division of Agricultural Engineering at West Texas A&M University. Dr. Auvermann earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Agricultural Engineering at Texas A&M. A two-year stint as an AgriLife Extension associate paved his way to a USDA National Needs Fellowship in water science, as well as a doctorate in Chemical and Bioresource Engineering from Colorado State University in 1996.

Dr. Courtney Dodd  
Assistant Professor and Extension 4-H Youth Development Specialist  
Dr. Dodd began her career with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in 1999 as a County Extension Agent in Calhoun County. She also served as a CEA in Navarro and Bell Counties. In 2004, she became an Extension program specialist for Texas 4-H Youth Development in District 11. In 2007 she transferred to the State 4-H Office in College Station as a 4-H Volunteer Specialist. Currently, she leads volunteer development for the agency, the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program, and the 4-H Healthy Lifestyles Program. She has helped create and implement many 4-H programs and conferences. She holds a bachelor's degree in Family and Consumer Sciences from Texas State University as well as a master’s in Health Education and a doctorate in Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications from Texas A&M University.
Dr. John Park  
*Professor and Extension Specialist, Department of Agricultural Economics*

Dr. Park is the Roy B. Davis Professor of Agricultural Cooperation in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Texas A&M University and a specialist for AgriLife Extension. His love for teaching and his ability to engage both students and industry leaders have been recognized nationally with teaching awards, including one from the Texas A&M Association of Former Students. He is a national leader in food marketing and agribusiness. He has led several professional organizations, including national research and extension committees and the Food Distribution Research Society, where he has served as president and received awards for his service. Since 2003, he has served as a director of the Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council; he acts as a liaison between the Texas cooperative industry and the professional resources of AgriLife Extension and Texas A&M.

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**TEXAS A&M FOREST SERVICE**

Mr. Don Hannemann  
*Emergency Operations Center Coordinator, Texas A&M Forest Service*

Mr. Hannemann received his B.B.A. in Management Information Systems from Texas A&M in 2004. Immediately after graduation, he played a key role in developing the TFS Emergency Operations Center and was soon named coordinator. He helped the center evolve into a national model for wildland fire service. The EOC also manages the TFS response to other disasters, such as Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Ike and the fertilizer plant explosion in West, Texas. He created the agency’s first online statewide dispatch program and managed the creation and deployment of the state-mandated online Fire Department Directory. Before the catastrophic 2011 Texas fire season, he filmed and produced *Southern Plains Outbreak*, a fire-safety video that was distributed to several thousand fire departments and emergency management officials and likely saved lives in the worst fire season in Texas history.

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Mr. Hughes Simpson  
*Coordinator, Water Resources and Ecosystem Services Programs, Texas A&M Forest Service*

Mr. Simpson earned a B.S. in Forest Resource Management from Clemson University. He provides statewide leadership on water resource and environmental issues, forest sustainability, and market-based conservation initiatives. This includes pursuing funding mechanisms, maintaining contact with the regulatory community, monitoring forest policy issues, and directing personnel and resources to achieve program objectives. He became a Society of American Foresters Certified Forester* in 2007 and graduated from the Texas A&M Forest Service Leadership Enrichment Program in 2012. Since joining the agency in 2000, he has been active in professional organizations and currently chairs the Texas Forestry Association’s Environmental and Regulatory Affairs Committee. He received the Forestry Leadership Award from the Texas Society of American Foresters in 2006.
Mr. Joseph C. “J. C.” Essler
Poultry Programs Administrator, Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory

Mr. Essler graduated from Texas A&M University in 2000 with a bachelor’s degree in Poultry Science. Two years later, he started his career with TVMDL as a poultry epidemiologist for South Texas. In 2007, he moved to his current position, where he coordinates the TVMDL poultry programs between the College Station, Center, and Gonzales laboratories. He coordinates four poultry epidemiologists throughout the state and serves as the state coordinator for the National Poultry Improvement Plan. Through this position, he teaches short courses to commercial poultry companies in Texas and works with other state coordinators. He advises the Texas Poultry Federation Board and works with the Texas Poultry Improvement Board and the Texas Poultry Improvement Association. In 2011, he received the TVMDL Director’s Excellence Award for his administrative work.

Dr. Amy Swinford
Section Head for Bacteriology/Mycology, Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory, College Station

A board-certified microbiologist, Dr. Swinford received a Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine as well as a master’s degree in Veterinary Pathobiology from the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine. She has enjoyed a diversity of positions in her career. In 2005, she joined TVMDL as section head of the Bacteriology/Mycology Laboratory. She served as a veterinary diagnostician, worked on collaborative research projects, and is an adjunct assistant professor in the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine. She assists in the training of visiting foreign scientists. She was awarded the TVMDL Director’s Excellence Award in the professional category in 2010 and the Texas A&M AgriLife Vice Chancellor’s Award in Excellence for Diagnostic Services in 2011. She became the TVMDL Microbiology Branch Chief in 2012.

Dr. Laura Carson
Assistant Director for Compliance, Undergraduate Research, and Student Success, Prairie View A&M University

Over the past 18 years, Dr. Carson has exhibited a passion for working closely with undergraduate students in research. In her lab, students learn to think critically and analytically as they perform hypothesis-driven research. As they move on to the next stages of their careers — to medical school, graduate school, or the workforce — Dr. Carson’s students prove again and again that Prairie View A&M produces productive people. She has published numerous abstracts and papers with undergraduates in peer-reviewed journals. Her research investigates the modifications of existing biodegradable polymer systems through both microbial growth and plant growth studies. In her current administrative position, she enjoys helping develop policy to assist in the daily operations of the Prairie View A&M College of Agriculture and Human Sciences.
Dr. Beverly Copeland
Assistant Professor and Program Coordinator, Undergraduate Human Nutrition and Foods Program, Prairie View A&M University

Dr. Copeland earned a bachelor’s degree in Nutrition and a master’s in Human Sciences from Prairie View A&M University, and a doctorate in Nutritional Sciences from Howard University, Washington D.C. Before joining Prairie View A&M as a faculty member, she worked as a nutrition specialist at Gulf Coast Community Service Association Head Start from 2006 to 2009. In 2009 she enrolled at Howard University to study childhood obesity in Head Start children. She is a Registered Dietitian and holds membership in the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the Texas Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, and the Golden Key International Honor Society. She has presented her research paper “The Risk Factors of Childhood Obesity in Head Start Children” at state and national conferences. Dr. Copeland is a native of St. Thomas, Jamaica.

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES 2014 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI AWARDS

The Outstanding Alumni Award recognizes graduates of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences for outstanding leadership and significant contributions in agriculture, natural resources, life sciences, or related areas.

Mr. Frank C. Litterst Jr. ’43
A living legend in the Texas beef industry, Mr. Litterst was raised on a small Houston-area farm. He served in World War II, along with most of his Texas A&M classmates. His first job was in feed sales, but one of his father’s former classmates, Herman Heep, helped him get started in raising cattle. In 1965, he became a beef cattle specialist with the Texas Agricultural Education Adult Specialist Program, teaching over 12,000 ranchers through beef cattle short courses. Recruited by Dr. O. D. Butler to teach Animal Science and manage the Beef Cattle Center, he translated his ranching experience into a colorful classroom style that educated over 8,000 Aggies in 14 years. After retiring in 1989, he stayed active in AgriLife Extension cow-calf clinics and as a popular speaker at beef cattle demonstrations. He received the Association of Former Students Distinguished Alumnus Award in 2009.

Dr. James O. “Bo” Reagan ’68
Dr. Reagan grew up on a ranch in Lampasas, Texas. After receiving his bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees in Animal Science at Texas A&M, he launched a career in meat science that has ranged from professor to meat industry consultant. As a researcher and executive with the National Live Stock and Meat Board and the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, he made important contributions in the control of E. coli contamination, beef quality and nutrition, and beef cattle genomics. He helped develop and still leads the Beef Industry Food Safety Council and led the largest beef sustainability project ever conducted. He worked for Zoetis and recently established the Reagan Group LLC, where he is a consultant to the food industry. He received the American Meat Science Association’s Signal Service Award in 2007 and was inducted into the Meat Industry Hall of Fame in 2013.
Dr. José Manuel Cabrera Sixto ’90
While on the faculty at the University of Guanajuato, Mexico, Dr. Cabrera received a fellowship for graduate studies at Texas A&M, where he earned his master’s and doctoral degrees in Agricultural Engineering. He returned to Mexico to continue teaching and also served the University of Guanajuato in a number of leadership positions. In 2011, he was named president of the university, overseeing its five campuses. Throughout his career, he has promoted engineering education in Mexico through collaborations with Texas A&M, in a student exchange program and through cooperative faculty research. A supporter of social and economic development through education, he has fostered programs for the underserved. He helped found the Mexican Association of Agricultural Engineers and is active in the Club of Bologna, a professional engineering association representing 49 countries.

2014 OUTSTANDING EARLY CAREER ALUMNI AWARDS
Established in 2012, the Outstanding Early Career Alumni Award recognizes and honors College of Agriculture and Life Sciences graduates who are 15 years or less post-graduation for outstanding leadership and significant contributions in career, public service, and/or volunteer activities.

Mr. Kenneth D. Hogan ’99
Mr. Hogan grew up on a family farm in El Campo, Texas, and received his bachelor’s degree in Agricultural Economics at Texas A&M, serving in the Corps of Cadets. He earned his Executive MBA from Tulane University’s Freeman School of Business. He worked for two major banks, Amegy and BOKF N.A., where he co-developed an online trading platform and became an expert in foreign exchange banking. He established one of the first deliverable Chinese yuan trading programs in North America. In 2012, he joined Cadence Bank, N.A., as a senior vice president and established the Foreign Exchange Division in just four months. He is known for his passion for sharing knowledge, his humility, and his infectious enthusiasm. A past president of the MBA Council of Houston, he is a mentor to students and is a frequent speaker on macroeconomics, finance, and global risk management.

Mr. Blaze K. Currie ’08
Mr. Currie grew up on a farm in Seagraves, Texas, and was an early leader in 4-H and FFA. As a senior majoring in Agricultural Leadership, he interned with the Norman Borlaug Institute, organizing coffee growers in Rwanda as part of the USAID SPREAD project. On graduation, he traveled with the U.S. military as part of Team Borlaug, helping rebuild agriculture in war-torn Iraq. After graduation, he worked for the Texas FFA Association and then the National FFA Officer Team, which represents more than 540,000 FFA members. He helped plan the National FFA Convention, which is considered the world’s largest convening of youth. In 2013, he became executive director of Texas-based AgriCorps, built on the Peace Corps and cooperative extension concepts. In 2014, he traveled to Liberia and Ghana, starting 4-H clubs and teaching agriculture and leadership to youth.
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES 2014 DEAN’S OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

The Dean’s Outstanding Achievement Awards, established in 2012, recognize, reward, and encourage excellence in the work of faculty, staff, and students in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The awards span 16 diverse categories.

EARLY CAREER TEACHING

Dr. Robert L. Strong Jr.
*Assistant Professor, Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications*

Over four years in the department, Dr. Strong has taught both graduate and undergraduate students in seven different courses as well as directed studies and research hours. He has served on a total of 38 graduate student committees, authored or co-authored 32 articles in 6 peer-reviewed journals, and is the managing editor of the *Journal of International Agricultural and Extension Education*. He has brought in competitive grants to fund his teaching program. He infuses high-impact learning experiences, traditional courses, and web-based courses with humor, relevancy, technology, and extensive expertise. His teaching style, which transcends cultural barriers and brings topics from the outside world into the classroom, helps students stay actively engaged in learning. Students of all levels praise Dr. Strong for being an excellent mentor.

TEACHING

Dr. David D. Briske
*Professor and Research Faculty Fellow, Ecosystem Science and Management*

During his 36 years in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Dr. Briske has established an impressive record of exceptional classroom instruction in large undergraduate classes, smaller graduate courses, and in one-on-one mentoring of graduate students. He makes complex topics understandable to students of all levels. By bringing his personal experience and knowledge regarding the subject matter to class, Dr. Briske inspires his students to consider the significance of ecological concepts in their daily lives. His students say he is approachable, dedicated, involved, and encouraging, and they offer vivid and enthusiastic comments long after having taken his courses. He received the departmental graduate teaching award in 2000 and 2009 and the Student-Led Award for Excellence in Teaching from The Texas A&M University System in 2011.
EDUCATIONAL ENRICHMENT/INNOVATION

Dr. Pete Teel  
*Professor and Associate Department Head, Entomology*

Dr. Teel has been with the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences for 35 years and has a career marked by innovation. He formed an interdisciplinary team to create and teach a course for elementary and middle school teachers that explores insects as teaching tools. The course received three Eisenhower grants through the National Science Foundation. He led the development of a smart-phone app for tick identification, biology, and control that within weeks of launch had been used in more than 60 countries. He helped create capstone courses that introduce students to real problems addressed by scientists, practitioners, and the public. He played a lead role in developing the Forensic and Investigative Sciences major, which is now among the largest in the college. His innovative efforts, dedication, and enthusiasm have truly enriched the education of students in his department.

EARLY CAREER RESEARCH

Dr. Craig Kaplan  
*Assistant Professor, Biochemistry and Biophysics*

At Texas A&M University since 2009, Dr. Kaplan has developed a vibrant and well-respected research group and is recognized by his colleagues as an outstanding scientist. He has set up collaborations with many world-renowned researchers. His laboratory has generated many publications in the most prestigious journals in his field, and he has been invited to write three reviews on RNA polymerase II, indicating that he has attained a high status among his senior colleagues worldwide. He received a prestigious National Institutes of Health R01 grant and a Welch Foundation grant after only two years at Texas A&M. Dr. Kaplan is not only an active researcher, but also is extremely dedicated to teaching his students and passionate about the quality of education they receive. He has also been very active in service to the university, his department, and his scientific community.

RESEARCH

Dr. Clare A. Gill  
*Associate Professor, Animal Science*

Dr. Gill has been with the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences for 13 years. She is recognized worldwide for her contributions to bovine genomics and her efforts to identify genes that affect production efficiency in beef cattle. From the time she was a postdoctoral fellow, she has led large, multi-institutional partnerships in her field. She co-founded the International Bovine Hapmap Consortium, helping recruit scientists from 40 institutions for a five-year project that culminated in a publication in *Science*, a top academic journal. She has 36 peer-reviewed publications, a patent, and two licensed technologies. She is sought after as a speaker and an advisory board member. She was instrumental in securing $10 million to facilitate initiation of the bovine genome project in 2002. Throughout her career, she has secured tens of millions of dollars in grants to support research and teaching.
INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH TEAM

Bacterial Source Tracking Team
Dr. Terry J. Gentry, Soil and Crop Sciences
Dr. R. Karthikeyan, Biological and Agricultural Engineering
Dr. Roel R. Lopez, Texas A&M Institute of Renewable Natural Resources
Dr. Saqib Mukhtar, Biological and Agricultural Engineering
Dr. Raghavan Srinivasan, Spatial Sciences Laboratory, Ecosystem Science and Management
Dr. Kevin L. Wagner, Texas Water Resources Institute

Through the work of team members in three Texas A&M University departments and two institutes, the Bacterial Source Tracking (BST) Team has created a program that has garnered respect nationwide and is a model of team building, cooperation, and education. The team collaborated to conduct the first statewide project in Texas to present large recent advances in BST technologies, methods, applications, and results. Among the team’s projects is the Lone Star Healthy Streams program, which educates Texas farmers, ranchers, and landowners about proper grazing methods and feral hog management to reduce levels of bacterial contamination in streams and rivers. The team’s work has had lasting impacts on the protection of the environment, betterment of public health, conservation of natural resources, and adoption of sound agricultural practices.

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

Mr. Aaron T. Griffin
Undergraduate Student Researcher, Biochemistry and Biophysics

A third-year student, Mr. Griffin first sought out opportunities for undergraduate research immediately after coming to Texas A&M. He joined Dr. Vishal Gohil’s lab, where his work has reaped valuable research results. He appears as a co-author on a recent publication from the Gohil lab. He was also actively involved in writing the lab’s successful application for a highly competitive National Institutes of Health grant. After just one semester in the Gohil lab, Mr. Griffin was selected as a Research Mentor in the Aggie Research Scholar Program, where he mentored and guided two other undergraduate researchers in the lab. He participated in the Undergraduate Research Scholars Program and was one of 14 students from the 2016 class to be named a University Scholar. In addition, he has sought out and excelled in high-level classes, all the while maintaining a 4.0 grade point average.

GRADUATE RESEARCH

Ms. Amanda M. Hulse
Graduate Research Assistant, Soil and Crop Sciences

As a Ph.D. Genetics student, Ms. Hulse has been instrumental in the department’s efforts to develop DNA single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) genotyping capabilities for cotton breeding. Collaborating with colleagues at other institutions and agencies both nationally and abroad, she has coordinated bioinformatics and experimental development of SNPs for five cotton species, helped develop the top-selling commercial Cotton SNP Chip, and completed the generation of 28 million data points for defining genotypes based on the chip. Her SNP research is closely tied to the department’s National Science Foundation–funded cotton genome sequencing efforts, which will establish high-quality web-based genomics resources. She is rapidly becoming a leader in the cotton research community and has won a number of awards. She is active in the Genetics Graduate Student Association.
GRADUATE TEACHING

Dr. Angela M. Durko  
Teaching Assistant, Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences

Dr. Durko provides students with extraordinary learning experiences in her RPTS 202 classes. This class introduces students to management and marketing practices in the tourism industry and is often the one that influences them to major in RPTS. Because this class is so important, only the most effective and engaging faculty members are chosen to teach it. Dr. Durko is quick to develop personal connections with her students, and she shares her passion for tourism and her extensive knowledge of the subject. She established the Legends in the Texas Travel Industry Speaker Series, in which industry leaders come to Texas A&M to meet with students and faculty. In 2013, she began collaborating with professors in Afghanistan, Ghana, and Dubai to organize virtual visits to other continents that often inspire students to study or work abroad. She is highly praised by her students and the department.

ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Gregory D. Reinhart  
Professor and Head, Biochemistry and Biophysics

Head of the department since 2000, Dr. Reinhart has created a positive “family” atmosphere where every person—faculty, staff, or student—feels like a valued part of the team. Under his direction, the numbers of students and faculty, grant dollars, and research publications have increased, and the curricula in Biochemistry and Genetics have been modernized. He still teaches at both undergraduate and graduate levels. He played an important role in getting the Nuclear Magnetic Resonance facility built and helped plan the Interdisciplinary Life Sciences Building. His guidance helped the Centers for Phage Technology and Structural Biology make national impacts, and he supported development of the computer infrastructure to teach genomics and bioinformatics. He is widely published, and his research has described new molecular insights into enzyme activity and homeostasis.

ADVISING AND STUDENT RELATIONS

Ms. Pam Vernon  
Senior Academic Advisor II, Agricultural Economics

Described by current and former students as compassionate, personable, and knowledgeable, Ms. Vernon has been advising students in the department for 24 years. She is considered the foundation of undergraduate curriculum management and is committed to students’ excellence and professional growth through leadership skills training, counseling, and mentoring. Her name comes up again and again when students talk about their college experience, and her warmth, encouragement, and hugs have earned her a reputation as “academic parent” to her students. She has increased student recruitment efforts and is often the first person to meet and greet new students and their parents. Her vast knowledge of Texas A&M’s admissions, class registration, scholarship, financial, and other systems also make her an invaluable asset to the department and its students.
DIVERSITY

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Recruiting Team

Dr. Danielle A. Harris, Assistant Dean for Student Success
Mr. Ray Person, Program Coordinator
Mr. David Salinas, Program Coordinator
Ms. Katie Swift, Program Coordinator

For thousands of prospective students, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Recruiting Team is the front door to the College and to Texas A&M University. The team members travel to meet students and their families in the community. They strive to connect with students by taking phone calls and text messages at all hours. They meet students for lunch to reassure them that going to school away from home is okay. They often work on evenings, weekends, and days off. They use their unique background to help students see the College as the right choice for them, and they often serve as role models. The team communicates with more than 6,000 students each month. In 2013, the team helped increase Hispanic students’ enrollment in the College by 39.2% and that of African American students by 90.5%.

FACULTY MENTORING

Dr. Thomas H. Welsh Jr.
Professor and Texas A&M AgriLife Research Faculty Fellow, Animal Science

Dr. Welsh began his teaching career in 1983 in the Department of Animal Science. The author of more than 250 publications and a respected leader in his field, he holds the faculty mentoring philosophy that “if we do our job correctly, then the contributions and accomplishments of the next generation of students and faculty will exceed ours.” He finds development of students and young faculty colleagues to be the most rewarding aspect of his career. He has played important roles in promoting the career and professional development of young faculty members in Animal Science and in Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension, the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biotechnology, and at other Texas A&M System universities. In 2011 and 2012, he engaged junior faculty as he managed the department’s strategic planning initiative and led a One Health initiative.

INTERNATIONAL IMPACT

Dr. Luis Cisneros-Zevallos
Associate Professor, Horticultural Sciences

Dr. Cisneros’s Plant Bioactives and Bioprocessing Research Program has been built on an extensive and highly regarded network of international collaborations. The program extends from Europe and Asia to his native Peru, to Mexico, Argentina, Honduras, Chile, and Brazil. Under his leadership, it has received $1.35 million in grants and contracts to conduct research in cancer and the metabolic syndrome, post-harvest biosynthesis of secondary metabolites, and microbe-plant surface interactions. He and his collaborators are building a bridge between the U.S. health market and growers and processors in the largest Latin American centers of biodiversity, while using the centers in a sustainable way. In his 16 years with the department, Dr. Cisneros has advised over a dozen doctoral and 10 postdoctoral students and has hosted more than 30 international visiting scientists in his lab.
DEAN’S AWARDS

STAFF

Mrs. Elke R. Aguilar  
*Administrative Assistant, Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications*

Mrs. Aguilar joined the department in 2006 to support the Hispanic Leaders in Agriculture and the Environment Fellowship Program, where she helped with recruiting, orienting, and mentoring. She also supports the Alfred P. Sloan Minority Ph.D. Scholarship Program and the TAMU-UNALM Capacity Building Project in Peru. Kind and courteous to everyone, she has managed several cohorts of students, faculty mentors, and agency representatives, as well as the details of workshops and research symposiums, including making all travel and lodging arrangements. She also helps maintain the department’s website, translates course materials into Spanish and English, and creates marketing materials for the department. She provides critical support in preparing funding proposals to assist minority and at-risk students and minority County Extension Agents.

Ms. Grace Glenn  
*Senior Administrative Coordinator, Animal Science*

As the sole administrative support person for the department head and three associate heads, Ms. Glenn has been an indispensable part of the Animal Science staff for the past 16 years. She has helped the department weather many changes, including the deaths of two administrators. With recent staff cuts, she now also assists faculty members with scheduling, correspondence, and other needs, and she is a liaison with other Texas A&M System offices. She stays busy helping with faculty reviews, graduate applications, human resource matters, building security procedures, and leave requests, but she always makes time to listen to and help faculty, staff, and students, treating each one with respect and genuine caring. She is admired by her colleagues for her knowledge and skill as well as her loyalty and dedication to the department and the university.

Mr. Terry Lovingshimer  
*Facilities Manager, Biochemistry and Biophysics*

Mr. Lovingshimer is praised throughout the department as an absolutely essential part of its day-to-day operations and its overall success. On the staff since 2008, he oversees all aspects of building maintenance and repairs for both the Biochemistry and Biophysics facilities and the Biomolecular Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Building. When the NMR building was nearing completion, he made sure that the infrastructure was in place. He ensured that all went well when the 800 MHz magnet was delivered to Texas A&M, a news-making event. He has systems in place to notify him immediately if anything goes wrong with cold rooms, autoclaves, incubators, and other instrumentation. His prompt attention to needed repairs, even after hours and on holidays, keeps the labs running smoothly and allows researchers to do their work without ever having to think about maintenance.
SERVICE

Dr. Summer F. Odom
Assistant Professor, Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications
Dr. Odom began teaching in 1999 as a graduate student and has moved up steadily in her career and in the ways in which she serves her students and her profession. She is active in the Association of Leadership Educators and the American Association of Agricultural Education. She collaborates with AgriLife Research and Extension and provides leadership in regional, state, national, and international programs. She has served the department as director of awards, as a member of the conference planning committee, and as a professional development facilitator. She reviews manuscripts for three journals and three conferences and served the College on the Undergraduate Review Committee for Experiential Learning and the faculty screening committee for the ANRP Program. Her passion and enthusiasm for service gets students excited about getting involved and giving back.

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE RESEARCH 2014 FACULTY FELLOWS

AgriLife Research established the Faculty Fellows Program in 1998 to acknowledge and reward exceptional research faculty within the agency. Upon second recognition, a Faculty Fellow is designated a Senior Faculty Fellow. Faculty Fellow and Senior Faculty Fellow designations are permanent and become a part of the individual’s title.

Dr. Stephen B. Smith
Regents Professor and Research Scientist, Meat Science Section, Department of Animal Science
Member of Intercollegiate Faculties of Nutrition and Food Science
Dr. Smith is among the top 2%–5% of animal scientists in the world, based on his scientific accomplishments, the depth and breadth of his research, and his commitment to disseminating knowledge through high-impact graduate courses and service to the Texas beef community. He is internationally known for his research on the growth, development, and composition of marbling adipose tissue as it relates to sustainable agriculture. His numerous scientific articles have been cited more than 6,300 times, and he is sought after as a speaker and mentor. Dr. Smith earned a doctorate in metabolic physiology from the University of California, Davis, in 1980. He began studying adipose tissue development in beef cattle as a postdoctoral researcher at the Meat Animal Research Center in Clay Center, Nebraska. He joined the Animal Science faculty at Texas A&M University in 1983.
Dr. Raghavan Srinivasan
Professor and Director of the Spatial Sciences Laboratory, Department of Ecosystem Science and Management
Professor, Texas A&M AgriLife Blackland Research and Extension Center
Senior Scientist, Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture

Dr. Srinivasan, with USDA-ARS scientists, developed the Soil and Water Assessment Tool (SWAT), a public domain, watershed-scale computer simulation model that predicts impacts of weather, soils, and land use on water supplies and pollution, soil erosion and fertility, and crop production. His contribution to the model was the pioneering integration of large-scale, internationally available natural resource databases and geographic information systems (GIS). As an ambassador for SWAT, he has traveled worldwide to help researchers apply this model to their natural resource problems. A recent review paper in the Journal of Soil and Water Conservation identifies SWAT as the world’s most widely used nonpoint source pollution model over the past 15 years and names Dr. Srinivasan as one of the two most productive authors in the world in nonpoint source pollution research.

2014–2015 TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE SUPERIOR SERVICE AWARDS

The Superior Service Awards recognize Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service faculty and staff members who provide outstanding performance in Extension education or other outstanding service to the organization and to Texans.

COUNTY EXTENSION AGENTS

Ms. Michelle Allen, CEA–Family and Consumer Sciences, Austin County
An Extension professional in Austin County for 22 years, Ms. Allen has been an FCS agent for the past 10 years. A strong advocate for health, wellness, and disease prevention and management, she helps people make lifestyle changes that lead to better health. For the past five years, she and her advisory board have coordinated the Walk Across Texas program in Bellville ISD. In 2014, 942 students and their families logged 65,856 miles, increasing their activity by 49.3%. In 2013, Ms. Allen received BISD’s Partners in Education Award. She used the Friend to Friend program to increase the number of women receiving the American Cancer Society’s recommended screenings for breast and cervical cancer. She also trained health care professionals to help her implement the Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes program in Austin County and started a worksite wellness program for county employees.

Ms. Rachel Bauer, CEA–Agriculture and Natural Resources, Bastrop County
An Extension educator who has gone beyond the call of duty for 21 years in Comal, Hays, Caldwell, and Bastrop Counties, Ms. Bauer has helped county residents through three major disasters over the past seven years: devastating cattle and agricultural losses during the severe drought of 2008–2009; the Bastrop County Complex Fire, the state’s costliest and most destructive in its history, in 2011; and one of the state’s largest vesicular stomatitis outbreaks in horses and cattle in 2014. In addition to interpreting research findings and coordinating relief efforts, she has continued to deliver exceptional programming in beef production, soil and hay testing, feral hog management, horticulture, water issues, Master Naturalist training, 4-H livestock and leadership projects, and “ag in the classroom” education that has reached almost 2,000 public school students in the past five years.
Mr. Lonnie Jenschke, CEA–Agriculture and Natural Resources, formerly Childress County

A dedicated Extension educator and leader for the past 17 years, Mr. Jenschke also served in Brown and Motley Counties. Over the past 10 years in Childress County, he conducted successful programs in 4-H, cotton and other field crops, youth development, and volunteer management. He holds several certifications, including 4-H shotgun instructor, artificial insemination technician, and noncommercial pesticide applicator. Agriculture is a major source of income in the county, and yet the number of family farms has been declining. In response, Mr. Jenschke helped put together school programs to teach elementary students about the dairy industry, cotton and wheat production, beef cattle, water, wildlife, and agricultural products. He has also worked with the Youth Board to help educate high school students on issues such as leadership, social media, teen health, and texting and driving.

Ms. Terrie Looney, CEA–Coastal and Marine Resources, Jefferson and Chambers Counties

Ms. Looney holds a dual appointment with AgriLife Extension and the Texas Sea Grant College Program, and she serves with distinction in one urban (Jefferson) and one rural (Chambers) county. She maintains two offices with the corresponding budgets, support staff and reporting requirements, which are adapted to either urban areas with complex county procedures or to rural areas with very informal procedures. In her role as an Extension agent, Ms. Looney participates in joint efforts on programs including 4-H Youth Development, Better Living for Texans, and Emergency Management. On the Sea Grant side, she carries out the agency’s mission to improve the understanding, wise use, and stewardship of Texas’s coastal and marine resources. Over the past five years, she has delivered over 770 high-quality educational sessions to serve approximately 20,000 people.

Ms. Shea Nebgen, CEA–Family and Consumer Sciences, Gillespie County

Ms. Nebgen maintains strong county programs in food safety, health and wellness, child safety, and childcare education. For example, she began the Food Protection Management program in 2002. Within the past five years she has added a food handler’s program to help retail food employees obtain certification. Hundreds of food handlers have been taught and passed the course. She has also conducted health education programs such as Walk Across Texas, Balance Food and Play, and “Witness the Fitness” education in schools. In addition, Ms. Nebgen assists parents with child safety seat education as a certified National Child Passenger Safety Technician. She has actively participated in and served as a leader on many Extension committees; she was the second vice president of the Texas Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences in 2011–2012.

Mr. Rebel Royall, CEA–Agriculture and Natural Resources, Glasscock County

Mr. Royall has a 21-year record of exemplary programs with clear, measurable results. His work has helped communities benefit economically and improve their quality of life. For example, he worked with other AgriLife Extension agents to implement an array of programs for the cotton industry in West Texas. The vast majority of producers there now follow Extension recommendations to select cotton varieties, determine fertilizer rates, use pesticides appropriately, and use crop rotation. In 2013, the estimated economic benefit for these growers was an additional $15.40 per acre. He has also helped improve rangeland management and livestock production in Glasscock County. Each participating ranch operation is estimated to reap a benefit of nearly $45,000. In addition, he has significantly advanced agricultural literacy through his numerous youth programming efforts.
Mr. Jim Kamas, Assistant Professor and Extension Horticulture Specialist

Mr. Kamas’s perseverance to help save vineyards from Pierce’s disease (PD) is said to have changed the face of the Texas grape industry. He began researching the disease in 2007 as outreach coordinator for the Texas Pierce’s Disease Research and Education Program. He won more than $1.2 million in grants to work on control strategies, including disease-resistant varieties and rootstocks. His studies allowed him to co-write and edit the *Pierce’s Disease Overview and Management Guide*, the definitive word on managing PD for growers east of the Rockies. In late 2014, his book *Growing Grapes in Texas* was published by the Texas A&M University Press. Dr. Kamas has given 90+ educational seminars and is co-author of the newsletter *PD Notes*. In 2010, he was appointed coordinator of AgriLife Extension’s Viticulture and Fruit Lab in Fredericksburg. He also wrote the *Texas Peach Handbook*.

Dr. Toby Lepley, Associate Professor and Extension 4-H Youth Development Specialist

Dr. Lepley’s passionate dedication to helping young people be their best and his innovative approach to programs have made him a popular 4-H leader both in Texas and at the national level. Since One Day 4-H began in 2009, he has led this statewide day of community service that has reached 2 million citizens and involved more than 57,000 youth and adults. He currently coordinates new initiatives to help with workforce and career development for youth, plays a large role in the Texas 4-H Congress, leads the Photography Project, and coordinates 4-H Day at the Capitol. He has led the 4-H Scholarship Program for the past 10 years, initiated the Technology Team in 2004, led adoption of 4-H Connect, and is technical advisor for the National 4-H Congress Design Team, handling all social media. He also coordinates the Texas 4-H Volunteer Conference and its recognition program, Salute to Excellence.


Ms. Kellner has been employed by AgriLife Extension since 1996 and has been in her current position since 2004. Her grant support from the Texas Department of Transportation and State Farm exceeds $5 million. She oversees 12 safety team members for the four grants she currently manages. These grants include a project to increase seat belt use, child passenger restraint use, and safe driving practices. In addition, she develops educational resources, events, and programs for Extension agents, safety instructors and officials, childcare providers, parents, and the public. Her efforts have been recognized through several awards, including the National Child Passenger Safety Instructor of the Year Award in 2013. Her grant acquisition and program development skills have upheld AgriLife Extension as a reliable and effective provider of safety education across Texas.
**DIVERSITY**

Dr. Rick Peterson, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist–Parenting, Family Development and Resource Management

Dr. Peterson has established new directions in innovative programming for children and adults with disabilities and special needs. More than 11% of Texans are living with a disability; those with a disability represent the nation’s fastest-growing marginalized group and at-risk population. Dr. Peterson has assembled a team of skilled professionals to provide education and programs for diverse audiences that include special needs children, at-risk parents, foster/kinship parents, and veterans and agricultural producers with disabilities. He and his team help provide these audiences with opportunities to access education, resources, and networks to improve their lives. Dr. Peterson has acquired over $4.76 million to support this work. His efforts have addressed the needs of Texans and have expanded the agency’s understanding of diversity.

**VOLUNTEERISM**

Mr. Roy Walston, CEA–Agriculture and Natural Resources, Kerr County

A CEA in Kerr County since 2003, Mr. Walston has worked extensively with volunteers in the Hill Country Master Gardener and Kerr County 4-H programs, spending countless hours and traveling many miles, long after his official workday was over. He works with Master Gardeners from six counties, planning activities that teach thousands about gardening and have provided over $12,000 in college scholarships to horticulture students since 2012. He helped build a new greenhouse, worked on a rain barrel project, and planned a demonstration garden. He helps with Kerr County 4-H’s Wild Game Dinner and is a leader for the Shooting Sports program. He helped secure funding for the Youth Livestock Project Center in Kerr County and has helped train 150 youth since 2010 in 4-H wool, mohair, and other judging contests. In 2013, the county wool judging team won its tenth national title.

**UNIT**

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)–Harris County

The Harris County EFNEP unit delivers effective nutrition education to limited-resource families and youth while fostering behavior change related to diet, food safety, food resource management, and physical activity. In 2013, the unit enrolled nearly 4,000 diverse, limited-resource families in nutrition education classes. The vast majority of participants reported positive changes in diet, improved food management practices (such as planning meals in advance), better nutrition practices (such as using food labels to make food choices), and improved food safety practices upon completion of the program. The program also provided fun nutrition lessons to limited-resource youth as part of after-school activities and summer programs. Most students improved their ability to choose healthy foods and to prepare simple, nutritious, affordable food.
SUPERIOR SERVICE AWARDS

TEAMS

Beef Production Boot Camp for Retailers
Department of Animal Science

Dr. Jason Cleere, Associate Professor and Extension Beef Cattle Specialist
Dr. Ron Gill, Professor, Extension Livestock Specialist, and Associate Department Head
Dr. Davey Griffin, Professor and Extension Meats Specialist
Dr. Dan Hale, Professor and Extension Meats Specialist
Dr. Rick Machen, Professor and Extension Livestock Specialist

Additional team members
Mr. Charlie Bradbury, Nolan Ryan Beef
Mr. Russell Woodward, Texas Beef Council

This team established two-day camps beginning in 2011 to teach Kroger Company meat market managers about pre- and postharvest beef production so they can in turn educate their customers and increase sales. They learned about how beef is raised, “from farm to fork”; production and harvesting, with live demonstrations of animal health practices and low-stress cattle handling; carcass grading, with hands-on experience; and the different types of beef, such as grass fed, grain fed, grass finished, natural, and organic. The camps conclude with a blind taste test using Kroger beef products supplied by team member Nolan Ryan Beef. To date, 11 boot camps have trained 307 managers; 98% said they would feel comfortable talking to customers about beef production, products, and safety. Following this model, trainings are being developed for other meats and an additional grocery company.

Community Transformation: Working on Wellness (WOW) in Starr County
Dr. Jenna Anding, Professor, Extension Nutrition Specialist and Associate Head, Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences
Mr. Vit Kaspar, Extension Assistant, Starr County
Ms. Alice Kirk, Extension Program Specialist–Child Health, Family Development and Resource Management
Mr. Michael Lopez, Extension Health Program Specialist, Family Development and Resource Management
Mr. Omar Montemayor, CEA–Agriculture and Natural Resources, Starr County
Ms. Yolanda Morado, CEA–Family and Consumer Sciences, Starr County
Dr. Carol A. Rice, Regents Fellow, Professor and Extension Health Specialist, and Program Leader, Family Development and Resource Management
Dr. Jamie Rae Walker, Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist, Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences

Additional team member
Dr. Catherine Cubbin, Associate Professor, School of Social Work, The University of Texas at Austin

Starr County, in the South Texas Rio Grande Valley, is one of the poorest counties in Texas. Almost 40% of residents live in poverty and lack health insurance. Two-thirds of adults and 15% of preschoolers are overweight; more than 20% of residents have type 2 diabetes. These data call for a way to improve the health outlook for the county’s residents. The interdisciplinary Working on Wellness team collected data to show that most of the county was a food desert with little access to recreational facilities. With the help of dedicated community members, the project has created 14 school/community gardens, improved or created seven recreational facilities, established two greenhouses, organized a mobile farmer’s market, and rallied community support. An assessment has shown that the county has undergone positive and sustainable environmental changes.
District 8 Holiday Classic
Mr. Mark Arnold, CEA–Agriculture and Natural Resources, Ellis County
Mr. Mike Berry, CEA–Agriculture and Natural Resources, Comanche County
Mr. Ryan Collett, CEA–Agriculture and Natural Resources, Hill County
Ms. Emily Cooper, CEA–4-H Youth Development, Erath County
Mr. Zach T. Davis, CEA–Agriculture and Natural Resources, Johnson County
Ms. Chelsea Dorward, CEA–Agriculture and Natural Resources, formerly Hamilton County
Ms. Kristen Greer, CEA–4-H Youth Development, Johnson County
Mr. David Groschke, CEA–Agriculture and Natural Resources, Limestone County
Mr. Micah Holcombe, CEA–4-H Youth Development, Bell County
Ms. Laura Huebinger, 4-H Program Specialist
Dr. Donald Kelm, District Extension Administrator
Dr. Shane McLellan, CEA–Agriculture and Natural Resources, McLennan County
Ms. Amber Moore, Program Assistant, Robertson County
Ms. Sheryl Raley, CEA–4-H Youth Development, Limestone County
Mr. Edward Schneider, CEA–Agriculture and Natural Resources, Robertson County
Mr. Pasquale Swaner, CEA–Agriculture and Natural Resources, Coryell County
Mr. Marty Vahlenkamp, CEA–Agriculture and Natural Resources, Hood County
Mr. Ron Woolley, Regional Program Leader
Mr. Lyle Zoeller, CEA–Agriculture and Natural Resources, Bell County
Additional team member
Ms. Cathy Wood, Treasurer

The Holiday Classic began in Hearne in 1991 as a hands-on educational event for youth, families, and volunteers involved in 4-H and FFA livestock projects. In 2007 it was offered throughout District 8 in place of the 4-H Progress Show. Now held in Belton, it is a two-day program in a show setting that teaches young exhibitors and their families about the economics, health and nutrition, showmanship, character, and ethics of raising their beef cattle, lambs, swine, and meat goats. The program is unique because it is completely free to the families, with all expenses paid by local sponsors. Total attendance in 2013 was 2,477, with 800 youth attending the sessions. The Holiday Classic has been called one of the most educationally impactful programs in Extension's history. It offers the best youth livestock educational clinic available in the world and sets the bar for all such programs.

Mini-Pride Foster Parent Education Program
Ms. Tanica Bell, Administrative Assistant, Tarrant County
Ms. Carrie Brazeal, CEA–Family and Consumer Sciences, Collin County
Dr. Margaret Jover, CEA–Family and Consumer Sciences, Denton County
Ms. Angel Neu, CEA–Family and Consumer Sciences, Cooke County
Mr. Jeff Owens, Maintenance Worker, Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Dallas
Dr. Rick Peterson, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist–Parenting, Family Development and Resource Management
Ms. Marian Ross, CEA–Family and Consumer Sciences, Tarrant County
Ms. Joyce White, CEA–Family and Consumer Sciences, Grayson County
Ms. Patti Wunneburger, Administrative Assistant, Family Development and Resource Management

The Mini-Pride Parent Education Project Team has helped the Texas Department of Family Protective Services serve a growing population of children placed in court-ordered protective custody of relatives, and it has fulfilled an urgent need for qualified staff to teach parenting education classes. The Mini-Pride program teaches foster families the importance of protecting and nurturing children, meeting children's developmental needs, addressing their developmental delays, and supporting relationships between children and their families. Having reached a diverse audience that had not been exposed to Extension programs, the team members work hard to show respect for each participant's unique situation and beliefs. The program has educated 908 caregivers and has affected more than 1,700 children since its inception in 2010.
SUPERIOR SERVICE AWARDS

Texas GROW! EAT! GO! (TGEG) County Implementation Team
Ms. Norma Davila, CEA–Family and Consumer Sciences, Nueces County
Ms. Sonja Davis, CEA–Family and Consumer Sciences, Harris County
Ms. Gloria Fernandez-VanZante, Extension Associate–EFNEP, Nueces County
Ms. Meredith Henry, CEA–Family and Consumer Sciences, Walker County
Ms. Rusty Hohlt, Extension Program Specialist (formerly Nueces County)
Mr. Reggie Lepley, CEA–Agriculture and Natural Resources, Walker County
Ms. Audry Lucia, Nutrition Education Associate, Nueces County
Ms. Tamra McGaughy, CEA–4-H Youth Development, Dallas County
Ms. Lexie McGrane, CEA–Family and Consumer Sciences, Dallas County
Ms. Tonya McKenzie, EA–EFNEP, Harris County
Ms. Ashley Moore, CEP EA–Family and Consumer Sciences, Harris County
Ms. Sheryl Nolen, CEA–Urban Youth Development, Harris County
Dr. Jeff Raska, TGEG Project Specialist, Dallas County
Ms. Stephanie Salinas, CEP EA–Family and Consumer Sciences, Nueces County
Ms. Kristy Titzman, CEA–4-H Youth Development, Walker County
Ms. Elizabeth Trejo, CEA–Family and Consumer Sciences, Harris County
Ms. Gail Warren, TGEG Project Specialist, Walker County

Additional team members
Ms. Laurie Combe, RN, Klein ISD Health Services Coordinator
Ms. Jennifer DeHoog, Dallas ISD Nutrition Specialist
Ms. Margaret Lopez, Dallas ISD Director of Nutrition
Ms. Marjetta Spriggs, Huntsville ISD Executive Director for Curriculum and Instruction
Mr. Richard Torres, Corpus Christi ISD Health and Physical Education Specialist

This four-county team of Extension and school district health experts came together to help prevent childhood obesity. By implementing Junior Master Gardeners and Walk Across Texas, the team helped start school gardens and nutrition and fitness programs, beginning in 2012. They recruited 80 classes of third-graders in 16 Title 1 schools, working with 82 teachers. They also engaged Extension and other volunteers to help build and plant gardens and conduct vegetable tasting and recipe demonstrations. And they reached out to families through many other health-promoting Extension programs, like Dinner Tonight and Fuel Up to Play 60. As a result, students began to prefer water over sodas and juices, wanted to eat healthy vegetable snacks, and increased their daily exercise. The communities benefited as families gardened and exercised together and meal practices became healthier.

Texas School Integrated Pest Management Program
Dr. Blake Bennett, Assistant Professor and Extension Economist–Management
Ms. Wizzie Brown, Extension Program Specialist, Travis County
Ms. Janet A. Hurley, Extension Program Specialist, Entomology
Ms. Molly Keck, Extension Program Specialist, Entomology
Dr. Michael Merchant, Professor and Extension Urban Entomologist
Dr. Paul R. Nester, Extension Program Specialist, Entomology
Dr. Don Renchie, Associate Professor and Extension Program Leader, Agricultural and Environmental Safety

Additional team members
Ms. Alva “AJ” Clinton, Springtown ISD Maintenance Director and School IPM Coordinator
Mr. Paul Duerrre, Killeen ISD Environmental Specialist and School IPM Coordinator
Mr. Tom Ohm, Frisco ISD IPM Coordinator

To protect children’s health, Texas requires that integrated pest management (IPM) techniques be used to combat pests in and around school buildings. The state also mandates that each school designate an IPM coordinator who must attend training courses on IPM principles and state regulations. The Texas School Integrated Pest Management Program conducts this required training and more. Since 2001, the team has provided training or direct assistance to over 600 school districts and nearly a thousand school employees. In addition, the team hosts a website, publishes a monthly newsletter, and creates other materials to educate schools about pest management. The website receives over 13,000 unique visitors each year, and the newsletter reaches 1,560 email subscribers each month. The team has acquired $1.3 million in competitive grants to fund its programs.
AGENCY LEADERSHIP

Mr. Marvin Ensor, Regional Program Leader–Agriculture and Natural Resources/4-H Youth Development, West Region

Praised as one of the most influential and visionary leaders in AgriLife Extension, Mr. Ensor has been in his current role for 11 years. He thinks creatively, establishes win-win partnerships, and keeps Extension’s mission relevant to everyday people. Over the past five years, his innovations have enhanced programs in livestock production, wildlife management, and cropping systems. His planning is evident in the annual Professional Development Catalog, offering both face-to-face and distance trainings for CEAs. He was the first regional program director to initiate development of regional evaluation instruments, and he designed a website to host result demonstrations and applied research reports for agents. He helped develop the 4-H Livestock Mentor Training Model now used statewide to train volunteers, and he led development of the statewide 4-H Livestock 101 course for new agents.

OFFICE SUPPORT STAFF

Ms. Alicia Bradley, Nutrition Education Associate, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, Harris County

For the past 27 years, Ms. Bradley has provided nutrition education classes throughout Harris County communities, using her bilingual ability to address diverse audiences. She enrolled over 1,000 families in EFNEP in 2011–13 and succeeded in increasing the consumption of fruits, vegetables, and dairy foods among class participants. She has implemented a number of programs by helping recruit for 4-H groups, working with food pantries, volunteering for food distribution, organizing health screenings, translating materials into Spanish, and training and mentoring her fellow EFNEP staff members. She developed a recipe book for elementary students’ families and designed a series of food safety flyers as a resource guide for her classes. Described as energetic and vivacious, she often gets class participants up to dance and stretch as she stresses the importance of exercise.

Ms. Susan Caraway, Texas 4-H Youth Development Secretary, Harris County

Harris County’s 4-H secretary for 17 years, Ms. Caraway supports about 18 County Extension Agents, 4-H’ers and their families, and agricultural science teachers. She makes phone calls; drafts letters and emails; and designs fliers, the quarterly newsletter, and annual reports. She also helps with the planning, marketing, implementation, evaluation, and interpretation of Extension educational programs. She is known throughout the county as the point of contact for “all things 4-H,” including 4-H Connect, charters, volunteer screenings, and member enrollment. She also manages registration for county, district, and state 4-H contests and projects, keeps track of tag orders for 4-H agents and ag science teachers, and is the point of contact for the Harris County Fair Board and Kids Expo to make sure all paperwork and requirements are met. Her patience and availability are legendary in the county.
SUPERIOR SERVICE AWARDS

Ms. Janet Case, District Office Manager, District 3
An employee of AgriLife Extension for 17 years, Ms. Case took on her present role in 2009. She leads a highly effective district office staff team. She has been an innovative, productive, and reliable staff leader. She quickly decided to create and maintain a website that has greatly assisted county Extension agents and county offices. Agents can now quickly submit required reports, review upcoming events and due dates, and obtain forms. Ms. Case has also created training to help Extension agents and staff manage effective county web pages, and she conducts online training sessions on office management for county staff. She has created a comprehensive digital orientation packet for new agents, which helps them to feel welcome and to excel in their jobs. Above all, she strives to help others succeed in their work.

Ms. Sue Ferguson, Assistant to the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program Director
Ms. Ferguson has served the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program Office for more than 30 years. As the 4-H Youth Development Program has grown and evolved, she has remained a constant, steady presence in the organization. In addition to her duties as assistant to the state leader for the Texas 4-H Program, she currently serves as the unit budget coordinator, the office building coordinator, and the unit’s only full-time office assistant. Since 2011, she has been helping oversee the process for chartering more than 2,400 4-H clubs in Texas. She has reviewed extensive documentation from all the clubs, making it possible for each club to attain non-profit status. She has also trained all other staff members on how to review club charters. Her work ethic, commitment to 4-H, and passion for the youth of Texas shines through in everything she does.

DISTINGUISHED CAREER

Ms. Nancy Granovsky, Regents Fellow, Professor and Family Economics Specialist–Family Development and Resource Management
For over 36 years, Ms. Granovsky has helped people learn about personal and family economic security. She has brought national and global recognition to AgriLife Extension throughout her career. An Extension educator and Certified Financial Planner, she is a prolific speaker and produces educational curricula for diverse audiences, including young couples, home-based business owners, military families, and students. Most recently she directed Wi$eUp, a project that improves the financial savvy of Generation X and Y women. An early adopter of computers, she developed the Family Spending Planner software. She was a think-tank member for the Kellogg/AgriLife Extension project Una Vida Mejor (For a Better Life) and served on the national Financial Security in Later Life team. Her international work includes helping women and families develop small farms and businesses. She has been on the Texas A&M System Employee Benefits Advisory Committee since 1993.

Dr. Connie Sheppard, CEA–Family and Consumer Sciences, Bexar County
Dr. Sheppard has been with AgriLife Extension for more than 30 years and has been in her current role since 2003. She has developed and supported community coalitions and task forces on issues ranging from child abuse prevention to health, literacy, food safety, nutrition, and academic success. To give just one example, she has been the primary Extension contact behind the preschool-through-college Learn and Share Program. The program works to increase parents’ involvement in children’s education and addresses the child-parent-school-community progression. Dr. Sheppard has also been a Better Living for Texans coordinator and supervisor since 2004. She holds numerous professional certifications as well as a doctorate in Educational Human Resource Development and a master’s degree in Adult and Extension Education from Texas A&M University.
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE AWARDS

2015 PARTNERSHIP AWARDS

Established in 1999, the Extension Partnership Awards recognize vital alliances with agencies, organizations, and others beyond The Texas A&M University System. We honor those partners whose dedicated collaboration and support have significantly enhanced the outreach and impact of AgriLife Extension programs for the people of Texas.

Texas State Rifle Association
When the Texas 4-H Shooting Sports program began in the 1970s, the Texas State Rifle Association (TSRA) was its first major donor. Recent studies show that the program benefits both youth and their families. Many TSRA members have attended the intensive instructor-training course and invested personally in the lives of youth and families. AgriLife Extension uses funds received from the TSRA in many ways, including as award stipends for individuals winning competitions. In addition to Extension, TSRA partners with many other organizations to educate youth on safe, responsible shooting and hunting skills. More recently, TSRA designated funds from its license plate income for both the Shooting Sports program and the Tubb Scholarship program administered by the Texas A&M Foundation. Through its ongoing support, TSRA helps today’s youth become tomorrow’s responsible citizens.

Texas Veterinary Medical Association
In its livestock programs and 4-H education, Extension relies on partners who have extensive knowledge and experience in animal care. The Texas Veterinary Medical Association (TVMA) is the perfect example of such a partner. With Extension, it helps students learn how to raise their animals and prepares them to pursue an animal care career. Collaborating with Extension and the Institute for Infectious Animal Diseases, TVMA sponsors the Veterinary Science Certificate Program for 4-H youth and high school students across the state. The program provides a sound platform for students who want to pursue an associate, undergraduate, graduate, or professional degree in the veterinary science field and helps them prepare for and take the Certified Veterinary Assistant qualifying exam. Extension’s partnership with TVMA prepares students for the workforce in the vital role of animal care.

2015 EXTENSION IN THE CITY AWARD

Urban programs are a key component in the impact that Extension education makes on the well-being and prosperity of Texas residents. This award honors elected leaders whose support of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service has significantly contributed to the success of our growing, vibrant outreach to urban audiences.

The Honorable Alan B. Sadler, Montgomery County Judge, Montgomery County Commissioners Court
Montgomery County Commissioners Court has long facilitated development of one of the state’s leading Extension learning centers. Over the past 24 years, Judge Sadler and other Court members have sustained the growth and expansion of Extension education with improved facilities, support of Extension staff during difficult budget times, and enthusiasm for Extension learning programs across the county. Judge Sadler helped with the Families Reading Every Day program and encouraged county employees to take part in Walk Across Texas. He was a familiar presence and a helping hand at Extension events and warmly welcomed Extension staff at Court, listening and responding to their ideas. Montgomery County has experienced rapid population growth and diversity, and the Court’s support helped Extension respond to the growing and changing needs of its residents.
2014 TEXAS A&M VETERINARY MEDICAL DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY DIRECTOR’S EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The TVMDL Director’s Excellence Award is the highest award given at TVMDL and recognizes accomplishments above and beyond the scope of duty.

Mr. Alonso Galvan
Mr. Galvan is the only student in the very busy Information Technology (IT) unit at TVMDL; however, he functions and is treated as a full-time professional staff member by both the IT team and the rest of the agency employees. He maintains basic desktop support and other fundamental IT issues for more than 165 TVMDL employees. He is always busy, with more requests for IT support than he has time to address in a day, but he never loses his pleasant, kind, and helpful attitude. When faced with a challenge he does not have the answer to, he does not rely on a full-time colleague to “fix it” but instead tackles the problem head on. TVMDL employees trust his recommendations and judgment. He is a great source of information, and his positive attitude boosts the spirit of those around him. Mr. Galvan meets all of these demands while carrying a full course load at Texas A&M University.

Ms. Sonia Lingsweiler
Ms. Lingsweiler joined TVMDL as a student worker in 1985; today she is Assistant Section Head of TVMDL’s Bacteriology Section at College Station. Her dedication to TVMDL clients is second to none. She handles each case with respect and ensures that tests are performed in a timely manner and results are accurate and reliable. She understands how much our clients depend on our lab results to make sound medical decisions and create effective strategies to ensure herd/flock health. She has mastered the science and art of being a diagnostic bacteriologist, with finely honed skills that are likely unmatched at any other veterinary diagnostic lab in the nation. Generous with her time, she is often sought to consult with veterinary pathologists and other scientists at TVMDL and other diagnostic laboratories. Clients and visitors are impressed with her positivity and passion for her job.

Mr. Travis Mays
Since his promotion to Assistant Section Head just one year ago, Mr. Mays has combined his technical skills and his servant style of leadership to realize significant, positive change in TVMDL’s Drug Testing Laboratory. He has worked to understand the needs of the Drug Lab’s clients, incorporated the latest testing technology, and ensured buy-in from and collaboration with his employees. These changes resulted in the prestigious awarding of ISO17025 accreditation for the laboratory. His staff members are some of the best trained and most technically proficient at TVMDL, and he has led the way in this transformation. Colleagues praise his insight, willingness to learn, and adaptability. He motivates his employees to new levels of teamwork and achievement, and the results have brought high praise and recognition to TVMDL.
Mr. Cullyn Winn

Mr. Winn is a Quality Assurance Manager in the TVMDL Drug Testing Laboratory. Relatively new to the agency, he was assigned to help the Drug Lab prepare for and obtain ISO17025 accreditation. With his guidance and expertise, the lab developed and implemented new processes, properly trained staff, and improved record-keeping and documentation systems that resulted in the agency’s first accreditation to the ISO17025 standard. Mr. Winn’s collaborative nature, tenacity, and patience were critical to ensuring that TVMDL met this goal. With the accreditation under his belt, he is now helping the lab pursue accreditation from the Racing Medication and Testing Consortium. He is also an asset to other testing sections striving for continuous improvement to their processes. His impeccable work ethic, professionalism, and drive to succeed make him an invaluable resource for TVMDL.

2014 TEXAS A&M FOREST SERVICE DIRECTOR’S AWARDS

These awards are presented annually to Texas A&M Forest Service employees who have made significant contributions to the agency’s efforts over the past year and are dedicated to building strong partnerships and the capacity of others.

TEAM EFFORT

Red-Cockaded Woodpecker Translocation Team

Members are Resource Specialists Mike Adams, Conroe; Mike Borski, Conroe; David Ivy, Smithville; John Settlocker, Woodville; Raymond Uballe, Conroe; District Forester John Warner, Conroe; and Biologist Donna Work, Lufkin.

This team represents the Texas A&M Forest Service’s finest efforts in its traditional mission of caring for the state’s forests. Their performance as a team goes beyond normal duties, and their innovative approach to problem solving ranks them above competition. To meet the conditions for the translocation of two pairs of the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker, the team quickly organized an effort to prepare suitable sites for the woodpeckers’ habitat. This was a challenging project with lots of hands-on work involved. From fund-raising to site improvement to public outreach and partnership building, this team met the challenge, and Texas now has a new site to boost its red-cockaded woodpecker populations as we seek to protect the bird’s future. This was a true team effort.
SUPPORT STAFF – FIELD

Ms. Michele Gonzales, Austin
Ms. Gonzales has been with the agency since October 2005. She is the Office Associate and Manager for the Texas A&M Forest Service’s Central and West Texas Operations Office in Austin. She excels at managing a diverse, geographically challenged office and a wide scope of responsibilities. Her responsibilities were exceptionally challenging as she supported the Austin office and ran eight other offices, doing the work of at least three people, according to her supervisor. As the face of the Forest Service with the public, she is recognized for her professionalism and the positive image she projects. She is the person who keeps the Forest Service’s technical experts free of administrative burdens as they work to serve all Texans.

SUPPORT STAFF – PROFESSIONAL

Mr. Chris Angerer, College Station
Mr. Angerer has been with the Texas A&M Forest Service since April 2013. As Chief Response Training Coordinator, he has led the agency into a new era of professionalism. He has an exceptional resume of recent accomplishments for improving and growing the agency’s training programs. Responsible for the Forest Resource Protection’s Training Section, Mr. Angerer makes an impact that is seen with every graduation of the Interagency Wildfire and Incident Management Academy, External and Internal Training, and the new Texas A&M Forest Service New Hire Academy. These and other accomplishments are proof of his lasting impact, but more important is the exceptional leadership that he provides in making the Forest Service a better service organization.

SUPPORT STAFF – OFFICE

Ms. Gwendolyn “Suzy” Cossey, College Station
Ms. Cossey has demonstrated exceptional skill and enthusiasm as she worked to enhance the efficiency of the Capacity Building Department as its Business Associate. Whether she is working on an improved web presence, partnership building, marketing and communications, or simply improving processes within the office, Ms. Cossey stands out through her drive and energy. Her support and enthusiasm for the agency’s communications and marketing objectives have provided well-thought-out and innovative improvements for the benefit of the Forest Service’s fire department customers. She demonstrates what selfless service is all about.

TECHNICAL FORESTRY

Mr. Curt Stripling, College Station
Mr. Stripling has been with the Texas A&M Forest Service since August 1997 and currently serves as the Geospatial Systems Coordinator in Predictive Services. He was the driving force and lead technical expert behind the Texas and Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal projects. He used extensive knowledge of forest science and his personal leadership to guide a diverse group of technical experts to complete these public-use projects. The Texas Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal (TxWRAP) is a first-of-its-kind suite of applications and is considered a game changer for increasing public knowledge of wildfire risks in Texas. Mr. Stripling’s efforts and leadership in the development of the risk assessment portal tools—and the breadth of the project’s impact across the southern states—make him an ideal candidate for this award.
D. A. “ANDY” ANDERSON INFORMATION AND EDUCATION (I&E) AWARD

The Arson Dog Team
*Members are Law Enforcement Investigator Jarred Lemmon (handler for K9 Tracker), Linden; Law Enforcement Investigator Kevin Pierce (handler for K9 Dozer), Lufkin; Web Developer Brian Hecht, College Station; Information Technology Administrator Jeremy Lang, College Station; and Conservation Education Coordinator Leslie Kessner, College Station.*

This group has worked tirelessly in promoting the Texas A&M Forest Service—specifically the Law Enforcement Department and its various programs. The team focused on information and education regarding the state’s natural resources and highlighted the agency’s efforts at resource protection. They receive high scores in public education, awareness, and activities. The K9 Teams are invaluable in strengthening interagency law enforcement and educational partnerships across the state.

CHARLES KRENEK AWARD FOR RESOURCE SPECIALIST

Mr. Fred Luecke, Smithville

Mr. Luecke has been with the Texas A&M Forest Service since April 2000, serving first as a seasonal employee and then becoming full-time in August 2013. He is a Resource Specialist II in the Planning and Preparedness Department and is the Forest Service’s aviation liaison to Texas Military Forces of the Texas Department of Public Safety for San Antonio and Austin. His contributions are well above the expectations of his title. As project team leader, he built the agency’s first Portable Air-Tanker Base for wildfire suppression support. Mr. Luecke’s responsibilities are statewide, and he has to his credit a number of aviation support accomplishments for wildfire operations and state fire cache management. He is considered a trailblazer in aviation support for wildfire suppression, and his commitment to this mission has had a very positive impact on the agency.