The 2011 Agronomy Day was held at the South Farm on August 18, 2011.

Over 950 farmers, agribusiness, scientists, educators and the interested public attended the event. Four field tours were offered on topics such as plant breeding, corn and soybean pathology, weed sciences, crop production, entomology, crop production, crop markets and bio-fuel crops. Over 30 commercial exhibitors, along with several university groups and projects, were on display in the exhibitor’s tent.

A new event this year was the opportunity to tour the University Arboretum. The UI Plant Clinic offered free diagnosis of plants that were brought to the event.

Students from the Student Sustainable Farm conducted a sale of their produce and provided information about their production program. Field and Furrow Club members provided concessions with profits to be used for club activities.

Lunch was catered by Hickory River Smokehouse.

At the noon program attendees heard an update from our university administrators. Crop Sciences Dept. Head Germán Bollero, College of Aces Dean Bob Hauser, and former ACES Dean and Interim Chancellor Bob Easter addressed the crowd.

~ Bob Dunker
Grants, Awards, and Recognitions

**ACES AWARD OF MERIT**
Emeritus Professor Johnny Pendleton received the ACES Alumni Award of Merit for 2011, which recognizes the outstanding accomplishments of living University of Illinois College of ACES alumni who have excelled in their careers, leadership or service upon graduation from college. Awardees were honored at a luncheon on April 18, as part of the Award of Merit Alumni Recognition events.

**VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR**
On May 31 Jim Lang received an award for Volunteer of the Year from the Champaign Police Department in recognition of his dedicated and outstanding volunteer service to the citizens of the City of Champaign, and to the organization and employees of the Champaign Police Department.

**APS AWARDS**
The following students in Carl Bradley’s lab recently won awards at the American Phytopathological Society North Central Division meeting at Omaha, NE (June 15-17, 2011).

Ryan Shelby, M.S. student, won third place in the Graduate Student oral presentation competition. Ryan also won a travel award.

Guirong Zhang, Ph.D. student, won a travel award.

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**Illinois Maize Breeding and Genetics Laboratory Fellowship in Corn Breeding named in honor of Professor Robert J. Lambert**
The Illinois Plant Breeding Center (IPBC) announced in March that the Illinois Maize Breeding and Genetics Laboratory (IMBGL) has established a new graduate fellowship and has named the first fellowship in honor of Dr. Robert J. Lambert, an esteemed Crop Sciences emeritus faculty of the IMBGL. This fellowship was awarded to Christine Lucas and Jennifer Arp (both in the Moose lab).

**Illinois Corn Marketing Board Plant Breeding Fellowship**
The Illinois Corn Marketing Board (ICMB) has generously continued their investment in plant breeding education by providing two new graduate level fellowships to the Illinois Plant Breeding Center in 2011. Elizabeth Blisssett (Martin Bohn, adviser) received one of the 2011 fellowships. The first fellowships in 2010 were awarded to Cole Hendrix (Fred Below, adviser) and Sarah Potts (Rita Mumm, adviser).

**Illinois Plant Breeding Center Summer Interns**
During June and July the Illinois Plant Breeding Center sponsored six undergraduate interns from traditionally underrepresented groups, as funded by grants from USDA AFRI and Dow AgroSciences. Four of the students are from Puerto Rico and two are from Chicago (pictured below with two IPBC leaders). Over the six-week program the interns were able to rotate through three different labs for two weeks each, to give them an opportunity to experience graduate research activities. A big thanks to Dr. Moose, Dr. Juvik, Dr. Villamil, Dr. Brown, Dr. Kolb, Dr. Below and Dr. Mumm for allowing the interns to work in their programs.

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Front row: Michael Page, Wendy White (IPBC), Pedro Cruz, Sara Gonzalez, Virgilio Olivera. Back row: Eric Thomas, Rita Mumm (IPBC), Veronica Brotons
Visitors to Crop Sciences

Matthias Westhues, Visiting Scholar/Student Intern, will be working in the Bohn lab, June 16 - Nov. 15, 2011.

Amaregouda, Visiting Scholar, will be working in the Rayburn lab, June 29 - Oct. 5, 2011.

Tapan Kumar Mondal, Visiting Scholar, will be working in the Moose lab, July 1 - Sept. 29, 2011.

Pedro Sardoy, Visiting Scholar, will be working in the Seufferheld lab, July 25 - Nov. 30, 2011.

Personals

♦ To the Crop Sciences Department. Dear friends and colleagues: Thank you so much for the lovely going-away lunch last week. The book, “Illinois LOYALTY,” was very much appreciated and so were the other gifts! I will cherish my memories of you all. Warmest regards, Terry Niblack August 25, 2011

♦ Dear Marcia and Germán, Thank you once again for arranging the farewell luncheon Monday. It was much appreciated. Also, please extend my thanks to everyone for the card, monetary gift, and Larry Kanfer photo of Davenport Hall. I began my plant pathology career in Davenport as an hourly employee for Sung Lim in 1976. The photo has special meaning for me. Davenport Hall was almost not built. Andrew Draper, UI President, was not in favor of building the Ag building and when the legislature appropriated the money ($180,000, I think) to build the Ag Bldg. (which was not re-named Davenport until the 1940s - in honor of Dean Davenport who did an end run around Draper to expand the College of Ag in the late 1890s), Draper attempted to use only half of it for Davenport and to use the other half for other purposes - which he was not able to do. Ironically, a quote from Draper is one of the inscriptions on the front of Davenport Hall. Obviously, I'll enjoy the picture and it will bring back many memories. Thanks again, Snook August 17, 2011

A Note from Cem Ömer Egesel, Ph.D. Graduate

I studied in the Dept. of Crop Sciences between 1995 and 2001 and received my M.S. and Ph.D. degrees. After I left the U.S. in 2001, I was hired by Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University in my home country of Turkey. Since being promoted to the rank of Assistant Professor in 2002, I have been teaching several undergraduate and graduate classes, such as Plant Breeding, Cereals, Field Crops, Professional English, and Genetic Engineering in Plants; as well as conducting research on cereals, mostly on maize and wheat. I have advised six M.S. and one Ph.D. students during this period. I believe all of these accomplishments have been possible because of my education at UIUC. I am very proud of being a graduate of such a prestigious institution. I always feel fortunate for having the opportunity of being advised by Drs. R.J. Lambert and T.R. Rocheford, as well as sharing the same environment with some legendary people of maize breeding such as Drs. Alexander, Troyer, and Dudley.

The University of Illinois helped me to gain another aspect of my current life. I have been coaching the men and women volleyball teams of the Faculty of Agriculture at my university for 10 years. My teams have attended 14 tournaments and earned two medals. This story originates in Huff Hall in Urbana. I developed a love of volleyball in the late 90’s when I started following the Fighting Illini women’s volleyball team, even going to away matches in East Lansing and Ann Arbor.

Today, my life revolves around my family, teaching and research, and sports, garnished with the invaluable memories from Urbana-Champaign and the University of Illinois.
My personal life philosophy is that one’s ability to face and overcome challenges posed by different environments in academic development, as well as social life, goes a long way towards measuring a person’s resilience and success. When I woke up one morning in my tiny town in Ghana and found my admission letter for graduate studies at the U. of I. in my mailbox, it was a moment of great excitement, yet somber reflection, as the thought of having to leave family and friends and not being sure of what the future held for me out here dawned on me. In my sober reflection, I came to accept that “the die was cast and had to cross the Rubicon” or better still cross the Atlantic. The United States of America, and for that matter the University of Illinois, offering a great opportunity for me to explore and acquire scientific knowledge in the area of Plant Breeding and social life in general strengthened my resolve to pursue graduate studies at the U. of I.

About a year ago I arrived from Ghana to the U.S. for the first time to pursue a graduate program in Crop Sciences at the U. of I., not knowing exactly what to expect. Transitioning into a totally different culture, as far as education and social life were concerned, was a great challenge both mentally and emotionally especially during the first few months. I felt homesick several times, having been exacerbated by unfamiliar environments as well as foreign cultural contexts a while after my arrival. The weather in the fall was quite pleasant and convivial as I arrived, but this lasted only for a while until the biting cold of the winter arrived and took away the smiles from my face. Coming from a warm climate, I bundled up to battle the cold but however hard I tried, I could only manage it. The chill of the cold could be felt under the layers of clothes I wore. Well, it is pleasing to look back and know that I survived it, even though I dread it as the winter approaches again this year.

Coming from an academic culture which did not encourage easy interactions between students and faculty, it was tough for me to come to terms with the free and easy, though respectful, way of living with faculty and fellow graduate students out here. Amidst all these challenges, as the days went by, it did not take long for me to realize the vast opportunities around me. Great interactions with my advisor Dr. Randy Nelson, Dr. Brian Diers, the Director of the Plant Breeding Center, Dr. Rita Mumm, and my lab mates helped me find a home at the U. of I. My lab mates took me to nice places in town, while the faculty gave me helpful and selfless counsels, which gradually made me not miss home too much, as well as making me develop a positive attitude towards the M.S. program. These are people I am and shall be forever grateful to.

The first year academic journey has not been a rosy one, but with determination and hard work, the Lord has been faithful and I can comfortably say that it went well. I cannot help but mention the interactive nature of classes out here and the openness of lecturers to students once they were approached with academic problems. That for me if not the best, was one of the best ways by which I settled into the graduate program and has helped me to make progress this far.

With the first year of my M.S. program done, I look forward to more academic challenges in the coming years. With such expectation, I am preparing by doing lots of reading, as well as taking my research work very serious. This gives me confidence in the prospects of succeeding greatly in the coming years just as I have in the past year. I am humbled by the solid nature of the Plant Breeding program at the U. of I. that seeks to train students in the field of conventional breeding, as well as molecular breeding, that takes advantage of modern molecular tools to facilitate breeding. I therefore look into the future with great anticipation to acquiring vast knowledge in the field of genetics and breeding from this program to put me in a better position to contribute effectively to the breeding of important food and cash crops to my home country Ghana, Africa and the world at large. I also see myself as being an ambassador of the U. of I., Crop Sciences to be precise, in my country by serving as an encouragement as well as providing advice to future students who may be interested in pursuing graduate education in the U.S. To my fellow international students, I say, “Keep on with the hard work and the sky shall be the limit.” From a humble beginning in Ghana to the U. of I. and a greater future I perceive, Lord, I say thank you.

Abraham Akpertey
M.S. Graduate Student
Birth Announcements

**Annie Masako Stewart**, daughter of Aimee and Ryan Stewart, was born on June 5. She weighed 8 lbs. 10 oz. and was 20-3/4 inches long.

**Mirren Jill**, granddaughter of Kris Ritter, was born June 27. Mirren weighed 8 lbs. 5 oz. and was 21 inches long.

A daughter, **Ava Jacqueline**, was born to Laura and Lowell Gentry on July 14. She weighed 7 lbs. 5 oz. and was 21 inches long.

**Gurnoor Singh Farmaha**, son of Jaspreet and Bhupinder Farmaha, arrived on Tuesday, July 19, at 10:34 a.m. Gurnoor weighed 5.2 lbs. and was 18 inches long.

**John Michael** (left) and **Emma Pearl Somers** (right), grandson and granddaughter of Julie Price, were born on June 1. John was born at 2:27 p.m., weighed 3 lbs. 12 oz., and was 18.3 inches long. Emma was born at 2:44 p.m., weighed 4 lbs. 7 oz., and was 17.5 inches long. John and Emma had to stay in the hospital for a few weeks after being born but are now home with happy parents Shannon and Jessica Somers.

**Kelvin Justus Moose**, son of Shawn and Steve Moose, was born at 7:28 a.m. on Sept. 9. He weighed 7 lbs. 1 oz. and was 21 and ¼ inches.

**Bailey Lynne Malloch**, granddaughter of Sharon Conatser, was born on May 18, 2011 at 12:55 p.m. She weighed 6 lbs. 15 oz. and was 20.5 inches long.
Fall 2011 Academic Calendar

Oct. 14: Last day to drop a course.

Nov. 11: Last day to take final exam for Dec. doctoral degree; last day to drop a course without a grade of W.

Nov. 19-27: Fall vacation for Students.

Nov. 28: Instruction resumes.

Dec. 2: Last day to deposit Dec. doctoral dissertations; last day to add name to Dec. degree list.

Dec. 7: Last day of instruction.

Dec. 8: Reading Day.

Dec. 9: Last day to deposit Dec. master’s thesis.

Dec. 9-16: Final Exam Week.

Dec. 19: Dec. degree conferral (no commencement).

Dec. 5-6 - AGMasters Conference: (I-Hotel and Conference Center)

Jan. 10 - Mt. Vernon (Holiday Inn)
Jan. 11 - Springfield (Crowne Plaza)
Jan. 12 - Champaign (I-Hotel and Conference Center)
Jan. 16 - Bloomington (DoubleTree Hotel)
Jan. 17 - Malta (Kishwaukee College)
Jan. 18 - Moline (I-Wireless Center)
Jan. 19 - Quincy (Holiday Inn)

Visit our newly remodeled web site at http://www.cropsci.illinois.edu for more information.