

*The Morrill Act of 1862 established a Land Grant University  
in each state where **The Leading Object**  
would be instruction in agriculture and related fields*



## NMSU's College of Agriculture and Home Economics

Vol. 17, No. 2, February 2003

### The Dean's Perspective

On Feb. 12, we convened a homeland security meeting in conjunction with the New Mexico Department of Agriculture homeland security coordinator, Billy Dictson. Clearly, as we have troops deployed in Afghanistan fighting the war on terrorism and more troops on the cusp of a major conflict, we have a responsibility to do everything we can at home to secure America.

The range of activities are broad. Community education, personal vigilance against bioterrorism, laboratory security and security-related research are all issues on our radar screen. I challenge all faculty to place this issue in the forefront of their minds, both in terms of daily habits and possible major initiatives.

We are committed to doing what we can to help faculty respond to these needs by organizing ourselves to secure and allocate available resources for these purposes. If you have ideas, bring them to our attention so we can help.

## Ten bills affecting college introduced

University priorities for Water Task Force funding and money for a viticulturist have been introduced in legislation along with six other bills affecting the College of Agriculture and Home Economics as the session heads toward its midpoint deadline for new bills.

House Bill 97, introduced by Rep. Andy Nuñez of Hatch, and Senate Bill 66, introduced by Sen. Mary Kay Papen of Las Cruces, propose \$150,000 each for Extension and the Experiment Station for water-related education and research.

House Bill 98, introduced by Rep. Nuñez, and Senate Bill 47, introduced by Sen. Mary Jane Garcia of Las Cruces propose \$150,000 to hire and support a viticulturist who would develop the wine grape industry in the state.

Senate Bill 252, introduced by Sen. Dede Feldman of Albuquerque, includes among other proposed appropriations, \$300,000 to expand the Family Strengthening Partnership parenting education program, now run by Family and

Consumer Sciences and Extension Home Economics in pilot locations through grant funding.

House Bill 438, introduced by Rep. Joseph Cervantes of Las Cruces, would appropriate \$241,700 for the work of the Chile Task Force through NMSU.

House Bill 527, introduced by Rep. Ray Begaye of Shiprock, would appropriate \$500,000 to enhance operations of the Agricultural Science Center at Farmington.

Two bills would appropriate money to NMSU for operation of agricultural education programs in fiscal years 2003 and 2004.

House Bill 387, introduced by Rep. Brian Moore of Clayton, is for \$837,100. Senate Bill 566, introduced by Sen. Carroll Leavell of Jal, proposes \$250,000.

Sen. Timothy Jennings of Roswell introduced Senate Bill 566, which would appropriate \$250,000 for NMSU's Range Improvement Task Force to conduct quantitative forage monitoring and assessments on public lands.❖

## Students named USDA Public Service Scholars

Three NMSU students are among 14 inaugural members of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Public Service Scholars program, designed to promote public service and provide career opportunities in agriculture.

Kenneth Branch, Cissi Dzera and David Toledo will receive full tuition scholarships, leadership training, mentoring and career counseling while working as stu-

dent employees. After completing their degrees, they will become permanent USDA employees.

Branch, a junior majoring in range science, will work with the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Dzera, a junior majoring in agricultural economics and agricultural business, is with the National Agricultural Statistics Service. David Toledo, a graduate student in range science, is assigned with the

Agricultural Research Service.

Students were selected based on academic ability, leadership skills and commitment to public service.

"These students represent our leaders of tomorrow," Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman said in a news release. "USDA is making an investment in building our future workforce with talented men and women dedicated to public service who are choosing agriculture as a profession."❖

# New director joins Indian Resource Development

Joe Graham, new director of Indian Resource Development at NMSU, brings to the position eight years of teaching experience in New Mexico and seven years working with the tribes and tribal students at the University of Arizona.

His plans include generating and maintaining tribal students' interest in pursuing degrees in agriculture, natural resources, science, engineering and business.

He wants the IRD office to work with American Indian students on campus and develop connections with tribal communities throughout the state. New Mexico is home to more than 173,000 American Indian tribal members, who make up 9.5 percent of the state's population. The state surrounds or borders at least 22 tribal entities.

"I look forward to focusing our program and building relationships between the state institutions and the tribal communities," said Graham, a member of Laguna Pueblo and an NMSU alumnus. "We need to develop strong, mutually beneficial connections so the tribal communities can feel they have a comfortable access point to the state's university system."

Since coming on the job in January, Graham has been getting acclimated by setting up his work station in Jacobs Hall and trying to meet with leaders of the colleges, administration, faculty and campus groups. In his first week of work, he was on the road to Laughlin, Nev., for the Southwest Indian Agriculture Association's annual conference.

From 1995 to 2002, Graham served as coordinator for Native American activities in the University of Arizona's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. He is completing his doctorate in the arid lands resource science program at the University of Arizona, focusing on agriculture and natural resources issues on tribal lands. His master's degree in American Indian studies is also from the University of Arizona.

At NMSU, Graham earned bachelor's degrees in history and anthropology in 1984 and teacher certification in 1986. He taught social sciences classes and coached football and baseball for one year at Grants High School and for seven years at Gadsden High School.

# Agricultural engineer on board with Extension

Ed Eaton, an agricultural engineer who will initially focus on cultivating improvements in mechanically harvesting New Mexico's multimillion-dollar chile crop, has joined Extension Plant Sciences.

During the past few years, international competition and a shrinking labor supply have fueled interest among New Mexico's chile growers in adopting mechanical harvesting and improved cleaning equipment. Just a few years ago, little of the state's 20,000 acres of chile, which includes paprika, cayenne, jalapeno, New Mexican and other peppers, was mechanically harvested.

Now, much of the eastern New Mexico crop is machine harvested, and there's interest in the Mesilla Valley, West Texas and eastern

Arizona. A continuing problem, though, is that too much of the plants, particularly stalks, are picked along with the peppers.

"The easiest way to remove sticks is to not pick them in the first place," said Eaton, a Montana native who brings more than three decades of agricultural production experience and firsthand knowledge of developing new harvesting systems. "That being said, it's difficult to do, especially during the last weeks of harvest."

Once picked and processed, chile is the state's most valuable vegetable, worth more than \$200 million annually.

Prior to joining NMSU, Eaton served as a research associate and coordinator of the Arizona Extension agricultural safety program at

the University of Arizona's Maricopa Agricultural Center. Among the projects he developed were a dust particulate monitoring system for cotton field preparation and a prototype harvester for hesperaloe, a native desert plant with fibers that can be used in high-quality paper production.

In addition, for 30 years Eaton directed agricultural operations on a 100,000-acre grain and cattle family ranch in Montana. He earned his bachelor's degree in agricultural engineering from Montana State University and his master's degree in agricultural engineering from Colorado State University. He received his doctorate in agricultural and biosystems engineering from the University of Arizona. ❖

# Kircher new Roosevelt County 4-H agent

Patrick Kircher, a livestock specialist from Missouri who grew up in 4-H and FFA, will lead 4-H programs in Roosevelt County.

"The 4-H program has traditionally been very strong here and I intend to keep that tradition going," Kircher said. "4-H really helps youth develop into the best they can be. I know from personal experience."

Kircher grew up on a farm in Pleasant Hill, Mo. His family raised cattle, hogs, and sheep and grew corn, soybeans and hay. He spent 16 years in 4-H and FFA, mostly showing livestock and judging.

From July 2001 to December 2002, Kircher worked as a livestock

specialist with the University of Missouri's Outreach and Extension Service, where he managed educational programs in three counties.

He worked for six months in 1999 as assistant ranch foreman at Hutchins Ranch in Broadview, N.M., about 30 miles north of Clovis. From January 1997 to September 1998, he was assistant shipping and receiving foreman at XIT Feeders, a corporate feedlot in the Texas Panhandle.

Kircher earned bachelor's and master's degrees in animal science from Oklahoma State University. While at Oklahoma State, he assisted in a research project that evaluated best management prac-

tices for Old World bluestem, a grass widely used by livestock producers for soil conservation.

At NMSU, he will supervise livestock projects, direct leadership and character-building activities and help youth from Roosevelt County participate in state 4-H events such as Senior Leadership Retreat and Teen Getaway.

"Patrick grew up in 4-H and FFA and he has a lot of experience in the livestock field," said Floyd McAlister, Roosevelt County Extension program director. "I think he'll be an outstanding agent." ❖

# Registered dietitian to teach in Rio Arriba, Taos counties

Registered dietitian Cheryl Maxwell will offer Extension nutrition classes for low-income families and people with diabetes in Rio Arriba and Taos counties.

Maxwell, who joined NMSU in January, will direct the Ideas for Cooking and Nutrition (ICAN) program for food stamp recipients.

"More than 7,000 people in Rio Arriba and Taos counties are enrolled in the food stamp program, and many more families are eligible but not enrolled," Maxwell said. "I'll encourage more people to enroll, and I'll teach food safety, food preparation and basic nutrition. I want to help people manage their food budgets more efficiently and get the most from their food dollars."

Maxwell will offer nutrition classes for children and adults, as well as cooking classes for people with diabetes about healthy ways

to prepare traditional New Mexican dishes.

Unlike most county Extension programs, where a home economist trains and supervises a staff of nutrition educators, Maxwell will work directly with low-income families and people with diabetes, with her responsibilities divided between Rio Arriba and Taos counties.

"It's a new approach to have a professional dietitian work directly in the field rather than supervise nonprofessional staff," said Rey Torres, Taos County Extension program director. "We have a lot of need up here, so we decided to hire a well-trained and experienced nutritionist who can provide top quality education for youth and adults."

Roberta Rios, Rio Arriba Extension program director, said she's excited about trying a different model for the ICAN program. "Cheryl's a

registered dietitian with lots of hands-on experience working with people," Rios said. "We're lucky to have her."

Maxwell worked for nearly 24 years with Dairy Max Inc., a Midwestern organization funded by the dairy industry that works to promote milk and dairy products as part of a healthy diet. She worked as program director, supervising staff in Arkansas, Kansas, Oklahoma and Tennessee.

She left Dairy Max in September 2000 to work as a home economist with the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service in Dallas County, in south Arkansas. Maxwell has a bachelor's degree in home economics and a master's degree in foods and nutrition, both from the University of Arkansas. ❖



## Deans' Coffee Time

Wednesdays, 8:30-9:15 a.m. GTH Foyer



# Extension's e-commerce program taps new talent

Adriana Zavala-Badal, new Internet business specialist, will conduct statewide e-commerce training for Extension.

Zavala-Badal has served as a telecommunications and economic development consultant in New Mexico and Arizona. She will build on Extension's teleliteracy training programs that have taught rural business and community leaders how to harness the Internet to gain a competitive advantage, said Bob Coppedge, interim associate Extension director.

"Internet and technology use is becoming increasingly important to economic survival and growth for rural business," he said. "We in Extension want to help individuals, organizations and businesses adopt these new technologies."

Zavala-Badal plans to offer

hands-on community workshops in computer labs and follow up with individual consultations.

"I hope to bring the perspective of someone who's been there as a small business owner myself," she said. "Technology can be intimidating, but it helps to have someone you can trust show you what it will allow you to do."

Zavala-Badal foresees offering training initially in Portales, Clovis and Las Vegas. She plans to partner with telecommunications providers, local chambers of commerce, civic clubs and Small Business Development Centers.

Zavala-Badal, who is fluent in Spanish, has worked as a consultant on border trade and economic development issues. She edits *IMAGEN* magazine.

Since moving to Albuquerque in

2000, she has worked as a project consultant with CityNet Telecommunications and as a general consultant for Butch Maki and Associates.

She previously served as a government affairs manager for GST Telecom in Arizona and New Mexico. While working with the Arizona-Mexico Commission, she was project manager for economic development projects. She went on to lead the state's minority and woman-owned business development projects, which involved giving procurement workshops and assisting businesses with Internet research and business plan writing.

For more information about e-commerce training, contact Zavala-Badal at (505) 688-4715.

## Sullivan hired as dairy specialist

A booming dairy industry and potential for new environmental regulations prompted the hiring of a new Extension dairy specialist with a strong background in nutrient management.

"My training is in dairy nutrition and microbiology, so my plans are to help dairy farmers with nutrient management on the farm, both in feed nutrition and in terms of waste management," said Hilary Sullivan, who moved to NMSU in January from the University of Georgia's dairy research program in Athens.

Sullivan previously worked for six years as a research assistant in the animal science department at the University of Georgia.

"Hilary has already hit the ground running, and we're ex-

tremely pleased to have a person with her enthusiasm and knowledge here at the university," said Ron Parker, head of Extension Animal Resources.

Sullivan is becoming involved in a number of dairy-related projects and is devoting a portion of her time to getting acquainted with the New Mexico dairy industry and its producers, he said. She will also serve as an assistant professor in Animal and Range Sciences.

A native of Lexington, Mass., Sullivan grew up raising and riding horses. She earned a bachelor's degree in animal science and biotechnology from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, and master's and doctoral degrees in dairy science and

ruminant microbiology from the University of Georgia.

"New Mexico is an up-and-coming dairy state," Sullivan said. "There have been rapid increases in cow numbers and, therefore, nutrient management is going to become more and more important, especially with new Environmental Protection Agency regulations in terms of confined dairy operations."

In the past 20 years, the state's supply of dairy cows has grown exponentially. In 1981, there were about 49,000 dairy cows in the state. Today, the tally is 309,000, according to the New Mexico Agricultural Statistics Service. In the last year, the number of milk cows in New Mexico leaped more than 21,000.♣

# Ramirez chosen as department head for Agricultural Economics and Agricultural Business

Octavio Ramirez, a faculty member with Texas Tech University, will become head of NMSU's agricultural economics and agricultural business department June 1.

Ramirez has been strongly involved in education, teaching several undergraduate and graduate courses annually and advising thesis and dissertation research of numerous graduate students in the last 13 years. His experience includes eight years in research and leadership positions at a Latin American agricultural research center.

Ramirez earned bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in food and resource economics from the University of Florida. He has an admitted passion for teaching and for mentoring students.

"I'm looking forward to being part of a multicultural academic environment with a significant population of Hispanic-American students," he said. "The NMSU faculty members that I've met so far are highly committed to education, and the well-being and academic achievement of their students. It will be a pleasure to work in that kind of an environment."

Ramirez's specialty is econometrics, or building and applying statistical models for economic research. Leading agricultural economics journals have featured his

statistical analyses of U.S. crop yields and his economic models to forecast U.S. and international crop prices.

Some of his latest international research, which attempts to assign an economic value to environmental benefits from tropical forests, has been showcased in European economics journals and several book chapters.

Another of his research projects, recently featured in the *Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics*, uses econometrics to quantify the effects of irrigation water and fertilizer use on West Texas cotton yields and quality under different rainfall and temperature regimes.

"More water increases yields, but it sometimes worsens the quality of the cotton produced," Ramirez said. "In fact, under certain circumstances, because of the marked price differentials for quality, producers could substantially increase profits by reducing irrigation water use, even with somewhat lower yields."

Before joining Texas Tech, Ramirez worked for eight years with the Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza (CATIE), a Latin American research and postgraduate education center based in Costa Rica. "We focused on research, educational, and out-

reach programs to meet the needs of small and mid-sized farmers in Latin America," he said. "We also provided expert advice to policy makers, donor agencies, and other interested groups, on agricultural development and environmental and natural resource management issues."

From 1995 to 1998, he directed the center's environmental economics and sociology research program, which focused on environmental economic issues in agriculture, watershed management, sustainable forestry and agroforestry. From 1993 to 1995, he coordinated the center's Integrated Pest Management project, a component of a large environmental and natural resource management initiative funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

"At NMSU, I will try to promote an academic environment that motivates and helps the faculty continue developing and excelling in their teaching, extension and research careers," he said. "Faculty who are satisfied with their work and professional achievements translate their knowledge and enthusiasm into high-quality teaching and student mentoring, which are the most important activities of a university." ❖

## Need to meet with the dean?

No appointments necessary on Fridays, 3–5 p.m.\*

\*Occasionally the dean is called away, but time is blocked for drop-ins.

# Castillo takes on new role

Jaime Castillo, Extension specialist, assumed a new role this month as minority faculty recruiter for the College of Agriculture and Home Economics.

Castillo will retain his responsibilities addressing equal employment opportunity and affirmative action for Extension, while giving

up his Extension staff development duties.

"The university is offering financial support for Dr. Castillo's recruiting role, so we will be able to apply part of an FTE toward our staff development needs," said Dean Jerry Schickedanz. ❖

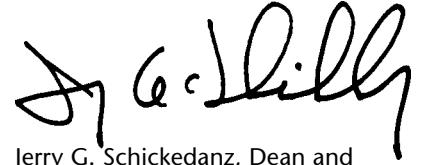
## *Flowers for Sale!*

Every Wednesday  
(8:30-11:30 am) through April  
Gerald Thomas Lobby

Proceeds support the NMSU Intercollegiate  
Floral Judging Team.

The Leading Object is dedicated to encouraging communication among all areas of NMSU's College of Agriculture and Home Economics.

Department of Agricultural  
Communications  
NMSU, MSC 3AI  
Las Cruces, NM 88003-8003  
(505) 646-2701  
Rm. 173, Gerald Thomas Hall



Jerry G. Schickedanz, Dean and  
Chief Administrative Officer



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