

# Texas Rice

Texas A&M University System Agricultural  
Research and Extension Center  
Beaumont, Texas

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## Communication, Education and Outreach: Highlighting Rice Research and Production in Texas

Research, education and outreach are the main goals of the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, and in 2001 the Beaumont/Eagle Lake Center launched a communications program that greatly enhances fulfillment of these objectives. While three of our scientists have Extension appointments and work closely with growers, it wasn't until the Communications Department was officially opened that comprehensive outreach efforts began. The following summarizes activities and programs directed at farmers, political officials, students and consumers.

One of the most important aspects of our communication outreach is *Texas Rice*, a 12 to 16-page full color newsletter that focuses on the Texas rice industry. Published 9 times a year from the Beaumont Center, the newsletter includes research profiles; grower interviews; rice physiology articles; historical highlights; insect overviews; crop updates; networking leads; marketing information; and current news in rice. The mailing list contains over 1000 recipients, including hard copy and e-mail. In 2002, funding for *Texas Rice* is generously being provided by our rice producers through the Texas Rice Research Foundation.



Delana Horn with her Wolf Cub pack from China, TX came to tour the Center this spring. The boys each got a project kit that included seeds, a container and instructions for growing their own rice at home.

Last year the Communications Project hosted over 20 tours of the Beaumont facility. Guests included 4-H kids, high school science teachers, industry representatives, government officials, interested consumers, farmers and visiting scientists. Foreign dignitaries and scientists visiting the Center came from Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, China, Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Japan, Mali, Mexico, the Philippines, Russia, South Korea, and Vietnam. These tours are very effective for increasing awareness of the research being conducted by TAES and USDA rice scientists, and research being conducted in the visiting countries.

Communications Specialist Jay Cockrell participates in career days

and recruitment seminars every spring at area schools. The career days are an excellent opportunity to expose young people to the careers that are available in agriculture. The recruitment seminars are conducted with the express purpose of identifying intelligent, highly motivated students to fill summer positions at the Center.

The staff also work with younger students. During National Rice Month two presentations were coordinated for elementary school children emphasizing the importance of rice to our local economy. Jay also worked with the Hamshire-Fannett Middle School 5<sup>th</sup> grade science classes to plan and carry out a rice cultivation project located at the school. The children were familiarized with the physiology and development of rice plants, and methods of cultivation and harvest of the grain. They planted the crop and tended to it throughout the school year, continually monitoring plant health, insect populations and development of the grain.

Community outreach is a year-round endeavor with programs presented to area garden clubs, civic associations, Chambers of Commerce and church groups. Our Communications Specialist also

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## From the Editor...



The cover story for this issue of *Texas Rice* discusses some of the different ways the Beaumont/Eagle Lake Center develops and delivers information to our user groups. This issue of *Texas Rice* also gives recognition to our office staff, in many ways the front line of our interaction with our clientele groups. From the hundreds of phone calls that come in each week, to the hundreds of copies of dozens of reports and scientific papers that many of our office staff help our scientists produce each year, to the copious amount of paperwork involved with purchases and record-keeping, our office staff represent an essential component of our Center. The next time you drop by or call the Center at Beaumont or Eagle Lake, please give a word of thanks to Brenda, Coleen, Cynthia, Davee, Robert, Robin, Tammy, Teco, and Wendy.

This issue of *Texas Rice* also coincides with the Beaumont Field Day, an important event and opportunity for the Center to show the public what we are working to accomplish. The morning field and lab tour starts at 8:00 AM with presentations by Bob Fjellstrom, Anna McClung, Arlen Klosterboer, Lee Tarpley, Fred Turner, Mo Way, and Ted Wilson, on topics ranging from drip irrigation, varietal improvement, weed management, entomology, fertilizer management, rice physiology, and rice molecular genetics. The field tour is followed by a morning program, with the MC for the program being Ed Hiler, the Vice-Chancellor and Dean of COALS, and Director of both TAES and TCE. Charlie Scifres, the Deputy Director of TAES, will give an exciting presentation titled *Future of the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station*. Chandler Mazour, the Technical Market Manager for BASF Corporation will provide an update on the Clearfield 161 approval process. Bob Papanos, the Vice President of International Programs for the U.S. Rice Producers Association, will follow-up with a presentation on rice exports. The morning program will be followed with our Field Day luncheon that is graciously funded by BU Growers. The afternoon program that will start immediately after lunch will in-

clude presentations by Garry McCauley and Mike Chandler on recent weed control research. I hope you are able to attend this year's Field Day.

What exactly do the scientists at the Beaumont/Eagle Lake Center do for a living? Who do they serve and how do they serve? Half of the scientists located at the Center are employed by the Texas A&M University System, with the other half employed by the USDA Agricultural Research Service. Research and extension activities at the Center largely focus on rice production and management, with a smaller amount directed at the production and management of alternative crops. An overriding goal of our Center is to provide Texas rice producers with a competitive advantage over producers in other states and other nations. But our service goes beyond just the boundaries of Texas. Our USDA scientists specifically have the additional mandate of developing scientific knowledge that will serve the agricultural needs of the entire US.

The majority of our scientists hold professorial appointments with the Texas A&M University System. As professors, a primary focus is the development of fundamental knowledge of how rice responds to the environment and to agronomic inputs such as plant nutrients, and to injury or competition from insects, plant disease, and weeds. Some of their research also focuses on unraveling the biology and ecology of the major pest and beneficial organisms found in rice. Together this information serves as a foundation for the development of new rice varieties and improved production and management systems.

An increasing number of our university scientists actively participate in teaching Texas A&M students how to think critically and how to develop solutions to problems so that they will become better at what they do as they prepare to enter the job market. Students are our future leaders. As such, the teaching role of our faculty is a very important part of our research and extension outreach efforts. Our scientists and sup-

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# Farming Rice

## a monthly guide for Texas growers

*Providing useful and timely information to Texas rice growers, so that they may increase productivity and profitability on their farms.*

### Controlled Ambient Aeration as a Pest Management Strategy in Stored Rice

*A Research Project to Benefit the Rice Producers in  
the Mississippi Delta/Gulf Coast Rice-Growing Region.*

Stored rice can be infested by a variety of insect pests that can cause product damage and reduce quality. Chemical controls are often used to control insects in rice storage systems, but currently there are only two conventional chemicals that are labeled safe for use on stored rice, the organophosphate insecticide chlorpyrifos-methyl (Reldan) and the fumigant phosphine. Use of both of these chemicals could be affected by regulatory action from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Restrictions on organophosphates could be imposed as a result of the 1996 Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA), and the EPA has proposed new risk mitigation requirements for phosphine. Producers must have adequate, safe alternatives to protect stored rice from insect infestation without sacrificing product quality.

Controlled ambient aeration is a potential alternative to chemical treatment of stored rice. The process calls for the cooling of grain to temperatures below 15.6°C (60°F), which is near the lower limit of development for most stored-product insects. Simple aeration controllers can be wired into bins to operate fans when the outside temperature drops below this level and to record the total amount of hours of fan operation. These new controllers are less complex and less expensive than those that have historically been used on storage systems. By reducing the temperature of the grain mass more quickly than

would occur naturally, insect growth and propagation can be limited.

This project will, first, survey county extension agents and producers in the southern rice-growing region to learn about on-farm storage capabilities and practices. Second, experiments will be conducted to determine the effectiveness of controlled, ambient aeration as a means to reduce insect numbers while maintaining grain quality. Then, models incorporating climate data will be used to provide producers with practical guidelines for effectively using controlled aeration, and lastly, the technique will be demonstrated to county agents and producers through field days and extension publications.



Storage bins for seed rice at the Texas A&M Research and Extension Center in Beaumont. The bins are carefully cleaned and treated after each use to prevent contamination of seed rice, and to prevent the spread of insect pests.

The controlled Ambient Aeration Project is funded by a nationally competitive grant awarded to scientists from Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri and Texas. Dr. Terry Howell from the University of Arkansas is the project leader. Rice producers and county agents from across the rice belt are encouraged to go to <http://www.uark.edu/depts/foodsci/howell/aeration/aeration.htm> to fill out a survey that will be used to deliver baseline data on current grain storage practices.

## Grower Profile... Stoesser Ag Company:

### A Family Partnership

*Ray Stoesser and his son Neal farm all across Liberty County - producing rice, milo and soybeans.*

Ray Stoesser is a third generation rice farmer with a true appreciation for the value of research and education. The Stoesser family has participated in the rice check-off program since its conception in the early 1950's. "Research is critical to the farmers," said Ray, "for new varieties, new technology and innovative management programs. We would be dead in the water without it."

Not surprising, Ray is considered one of our most successful and consistent producers, bringing in an exceptional crop year after year. When asked what the secret is behind his success, Ray is quick to point out there is no 'secret' saying, "I believe that God gives me the talent and the strength to be a good farmer. He has also blessed me with a wonderful wife, and two sons that will still be farming long after I am gone." The farming tradition that Ray continues traces back to a grandfather that he never even knew.

Ray's grandfather, Emil Joseph Stoesser, emigrated from Germany around the turn of the century and settled in DeKalb, Illinois. He learned about rice farming through a friend and decided to move his family to SE Texas. He brought two Clydesdale horses along, and hoped to use them to plow his rice fields. Soon after moving to Texas, though, the Clydesdales succumbed to the heat, humidity and mosquitoes common in this area. After that, a mule team pulled the plow.

In 1942, Ray's dad began acquiring his own land and actively farming rice. Ray remembers as a boy working long hours to clear the new property and get it ready for rice production. "Dad had 3000 acres that was completely unimproved," said Ray. "We had to clear the trees, pull up the roots, build canals and dig the wells to get it ready." Ray's dad, Edward Joseph, was a dedicated and talented farmer, and Ray attributes his strong work ethic to the teachings of his father. Every day after school, Ray would meet his dad on the farm and work until well after dark. His older brother Jack also worked on the family farm and went on to farm his own land until his death in 1982. Jack's son, Mark, still farms on his father's land in Liberty



(L to R) Ray, Grant and Neal Stoesser catching a bird's eye view of milo and rice fields that surround their drying and storage facility just west of Dayton.

County.

Like Jack, Ray also had a son that has followed him into farming. Neal Stoesser is 26 and has been farming since his senior year in high school. And although he works in partnership with Ray, Neal also farms 1000 acres of rice, milo and soybeans independently of his dad.

This year Ray and Neal have 2000 acres of rice, all in Cocodrie, 5000 acres of milo and 650 acres of soybeans. The father/son team farms land from one end of Liberty County to the other, with 60 miles separating their farthest fields. Needless to say, Ray and Neal depend on their cellular phones to keep them on top of things, and have also supplied phones for their six full time employees to make sure everyone stays connected.

The Eastgate farm just west of Dayton is the center of operations for the Stoesser farming operation. They have 4 dryers with storage facilities that hold 90,000 cwt of grain, a 20,000 sq. ft. shop and numerous barns and outbuildings. The Stoessers also provide housing for all their employees.

The season begins in early March with the planting of milo. This year, due to uncertainties with the farm bill and concerns over the rice market, the Stoessers planted more milo than in past years. This pushed back planting the rice to early April, so a ra-

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## Stoesser Ag Company continued...

toon crop may be out of the question, depending on whether the rice harvest falls before August 15<sup>th</sup>.

For planting rice, the Stoessers run three 4-wheel drive and three front wheel assist tractors, using a 35' drill on 10" spacing. A pre-plant fertilizer including ammonium sulfate is incorporated, giving longer residual of the nitrogen. Command is also applied at this time. Two more aerial applications of urea at jointing and PD complete the fertilizer program. Early season pests such as armyworms are treated with Karate, and stinkbugs are treated with SevinXLR Plus at heading. This year they had a late season outbreak of fall armyworms as the plants approached booting, well after establishment of permanent flood. All seed rice is treated with Icon, and fungicides are used when scouting indicates a need, with the main threat being sheath blight. In the years that they ratoon crop the rice, fungicides are regularly used as a preventative treatment on the second crop.

Once the rice was planted they moved to the soybeans, with roughly 50 acres of the 650 acres planted to Round-Up Ready beans. They use a row planter with 30" spacing and 12 boxes, although they have planted with 10" spacing in past years. Neal said the row planter is more precise and gives you a better idea of pounds planted per acre. The wider rows also allow for cultivation of noxious weeds, rather than depending exclusively on chemicals for control. When I asked Ray about the uncertainty of bringing in a consistent crop of soybeans in this area, he said there are a few things farmers can do to increase their chances of success. First, the fields must be well prepared and the beans planted into moisture. The second and most important factor is making sure the fields do not hold water. The Stoessers do not pull rows,



A tractor with steel wheels used to make drainage ditches in the Stoesser's soybean fields to avoid standing water.



Grant Stoesser with his dad Ray checking a field of milo. The Stoessers do all their own scouting, but also receive advice from Walter Chrisco, manager at Helena Chemical Company.

however, as the land is not graded and water run-off cannot be channeled in only one direction. Instead, they plant the beans on flat ground, and then use a tractor with steel wheels to make narrow ditches that allow the water to run off in whichever direction is appropriate. "Drainage is critical," said Ray, "the beans will not yield as well if the roots are allowed to stay wet and soggy." The Stoessers do not irrigate their beans, but instead depend on rainfall.

At harvest time, they run 4 John Deere CTS combines, although they have used others in the past. "We like the performance of the John Deere combines," said Ray, "but parts availability is another benefit." With the John Deere shop just down the road in Liberty, Ray can have parts ordered one day and delivery the next morning. With nearly 8000 planted acres, equipment downtime must be kept to a minimum for things to run smoothly. Between Ray, Neal and the six employees, most repairs can be made at the farm, but sometimes major overhauls are taken to the John Deere shop in Liberty.

In good years, the Stoessers average 7300 lbs/ac on the main crop of rice and roughly 1300 lbs/ac on the ratoon. They sell to Beaumont Rice Mill, Gulf Rice and occasionally to ARI. Ray has considered joining the Riceland Co-op out of Arkansas, but prefers to have his rice sold and milled in Texas. "Declining infrastructure is a real problem for our Texas industry," said Ray, "and we want to do everything

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## Stoesser Ag Company continued...

possible to support our local mills.” Ray feels that government policies regarding food exports have really hurt American farmers. He recalls the years when Iran and Iraq were two of our best export markets, buying the lion’s share of U.S. rice. Not surprising, Ray feels the Cuban market should be open to U.S. farmers, as export embargos only serve to hurt our farmers at home and are not really effective in dealing with problem governments.

Keeping up with national and international farm policy is important to Ray and Neal, who use computer technology on the farm to track everything from current policy to weather, to the latest commodity prices.

Not to be left out, though, Ray’s younger son Grant is also very involved in the family’s farming operation, as well as promoting the rice industry in Texas. In 1995, when Grant was nine, he participated in the National Rice Month celebrations coordinated by the USA Rice Federation and took the top honor in Texas for Best Promotion by an Individual. He made poster displays for area businesses and grocery stores based on information he gathered during a tour of the American Rice Growers Cooperative in Dayton. He also led a group of 78 students from the CHARIS Home School Association on a field trip to his father’s rice farm, where they learned how the crop is planted, grown and harvested. Grant won \$100 prize for his efforts promoting rice, but the real prize was on his mom’s face when he was presented with the prestigious award.



This picture was taken nearly 14 years ago when the Stoesser boys were still very young - but not too young to ride a combine with their dad!



A panoramic view of milo, rice and soybean fields from atop the Stoesser’s storage facility.

Eileen Stoesser is very proud of all her ‘boys’ (she includes Ray in this group) and had many happy stories to tell of their life on the farm. Eileen was raised in Corpus Christi, a ‘city girl’ by Ray’s standards, who didn’t even know rice was grown in Texas. She remembers taking a trip with her family and driving past endless fields of green. Eileen thought this was the most beautiful sight she had ever seen, and asked her parents what was growing in the flooded fields. Little did she know how important this beautiful crop would be, and how it would come to shape her life. Eileen and Ray met while pursuing degrees at Baylor University, Ray in Business Administration and Eileen in Secondary Education. After their first date, Ray called his sister in Waco and said ‘I’ve met the girl I’m going to marry.’ That was in October and they were married in June of the next year. This past June, Ray and Eileen celebrated their 32<sup>nd</sup> wedding anniversary.

Besides being an active Christian and a loving wife, Eileen is totally dedicated to her children. She has home-schooled Grant since he was in the first grade, and tried to provide him with a quality education. Grant is 16 now and this year he will study Algebra 2, American History, World History, Latin 2, English 3, Biology and Bible. When the family travels (Baylor season tickets) they never miss an opportunity to visit historical sites and museums with Grant to bring his studies to life. When Grant was giving me a tour of his classroom in the family’s home, he was proud to inform me that he had already visited 28 states. His knowledge of history and government is most impressive, as is his understanding of current events and how politics affect the rice industry.

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## Stoesser Ag Company continued...



Grant holding the plaque he was awarded in 1995 by the USA Rice Federation for Best Promotion by an Individual during National Rice Month.

According to Eileen, the boys have lived and breathed farming since before they were old enough to walk. She remembers when Neal was just a baby and Ray loaded him up in his car seat and headed out to the farm. “Being raised in the city, I was terrified that something would happen to him on the farm, with all the tractors and large equipment,” said Eileen, “but Ray was confident that the baby would be okay and that he needed to start going to the farm early on.”



Ray with his wife, Eileen, at their home in Dayton.

She also recalls many hours the boys spent playing ‘farmer’ - making fields, roads and canals in the piled carpet in their den. Then they would drive their toy tractors around cultivating or harvesting. So when Eileen would walk through to check up, they would

say ‘Watch out mom you’re stepping on my rows!’

It is clear that rice is a way of life for the Stoesser family, and it seems only natural that Neal has followed his dad into farming, with Grant most likely to follow when he completes his college education. The boys certainly have an excellent role model, as Ray has been a shining success in the rice industry, not only as a farmer but also as an industry leader. In spite of his busy schedule, Ray serves as Deacon at the First Baptist Church in Dayton and is active on several boards including the Texas Rice Producers Board, the Texas Rice Research Foundation, the American Rice Growers in Dayton, the Texas Rice Council (part of the US Rice Producers Association), and the Liberty County Farm Bureau. And in 1997 Ray was honored at the Texas Rice Festival as Farmer of the Year.

Despite all the honors and Board appointments, though, Ray is a humble man who believes that all his success comes from God. “I can plant the crop but I can’t make it grow, only the good Lord can do that. I have been blessed with a wonderful upbringing, a beautiful family, and the talent to serve God by producing food for his people.” \*

### **Congratulations, Fellow!**

This year Dr. Fred Turner, Soils and Plant Nutrition scientist at the Beaumont Center, was named Fellow by the American Society of Agronomy. This is the highest recognition bestowed by the Society and reflects outstanding achievement in the area of agronomics. Dr. Turner has worked for Texas A&M since 1974, and has made numerous contributions in the area of plant nutrition, soil chemistry and alternative crop research.

Please join the faculty and staff of the Beaumont/Eagle Lake Center in congratulating Dr. Turner on this outstanding achievement!

## Support Staff in the News...

### Behind the Scenes at Beaumont and Eagle Lake

Most people don't realize the work involved in conducting scientific research. Besides the scientists and their technicians, there are numerous people behind the scenes that contribute to the success and smooth operation of the Research Center. In this issue of *Texas Rice*, we want to introduce these hard-working individuals and describe the role they play in Center operations.

#### Robin Clements – Receptionist - TAES

While greeting Center guests and fielding phone calls is Robin's primary duty as receptionist, her days are filled with much more than that. She also provides support for many projects, including Communications, and assists the other secretaries in compiling reports and entering data. She is in charge of sorting and posting mail, and daily entry of weather data. And finally, Robin also works part-time for Dr. Jim Stansel on the Rice Crop Survey. She calls the survey participants each Thursday to get the information, then enters all the data in spreadsheets and delivers it to the scientists, survey participants and the Center's Communication Specialist, so the information can be included in *Texas Rice*. Since she began assisting with the survey, Robin has set up databases that streamline the work making her time more efficient.

Robin grew up in Groves, TX the youngest of 3 children. She has two older brothers, one who still lives in Groves and the other in Austin. Robin's husband, William, works at Onyx Environmental Services and they have a home in Port Acres with their three children Chad (9), Allison (9) and Blake (3). Robin enjoys reading, fishing with the family and cake decorating, but there has not been much spare time lately for hobbies. Robin's older brother Damon is in the process of starting his own business in construction and remodeling, but doesn't have Robin's computer skills. As a consequence, she spends much of her time with her brother in Groves helping him set up the books for his new business.

#### Tammy Tindel – Administrative Assistant – TAES

Performing administrative duties for the Beaumont Center Director is first on Tammy's list of priorities, but her responsibilities go much further. She coordi-



(L to R) Beaumont Center support staff Robin Clements, Cynthia Tribble, Tammy Tindel and Wendy Carrell.

nates agendas and reports for meetings; coordinates publication of scientific documents; supervises arrangements for the annual field days, research and extension events and special programs; supervises clerical staff in the preparation of reports and manuscripts for faculty; assists in training programs for new personnel; prepares travel vouchers, coordinates Trans Texas Video Network (TTVN) conferences; coordinates voice mail programming, training and repairs; assist other administrative faculty with special needs; and maintains correspondence files, administrative records, work plans and annual reports.

Tammy was born in Austin and has two brothers. Her older brother Todd and his wife Shelley just had their first baby on June 29, a little boy named Wes. Tammy's younger brother Trey and his wife Michelle had their first baby on June 18, her name is Kelli. Tammy went to Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos and got her BS in Wildlife Biology. After college she worked for Cisco Systems in Austin before coming to the Beaumont Center in June of 1998. Just one year later, in 1999, Tammy won the Employee of the Year Award, which indicates how quickly she became a critical part of the Center staff. Tammy enjoys jogging with her 3-year old Yellow Lab, Toby, and doing home improvement projects.

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## Support Staff continued...

### Wendy Carrell – Accounting Assistant - TAES

Assistant to the Center's accounting officer, Wendy is responsible for processing purchase requisitions and completing purchase orders in the automated book-keeping system. She processes invoices for payment, prepares purchase vouchers for authorization to pay invoices (including the source of funds and object classification codes.) Wendy also assists in maintaining vacation/sick leave records, weekly fuel consumption reports, and maintains files for completed purchase orders and purchase vouchers.

Born in Silsbee, but raised in Buna, Wendy is the youngest of 4 children. She graduated from Lamar University with a Business Administration/Marketing degree in 1979. That same year she met her husband, Randy, through a mutual friend at a birthday party (they have the same birthday) and they were married in 1981. Wendy lives in Pinewood with her husband and two boys, Wes (18) and Tyler (15). Randy is a project manager at Petrocon and loves to play golf with his sons. Besides golf, Wes and Tyler participate in other sports including basketball and soccer. In her spare time Wendy enjoys reading and home decorating projects, and the entire family likes to go boating and fishing on the Gulf.

### Cynthia Tribble – Secretary – TAES

Cynthia came to work at the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station in 1999. Her current position is Senior Secretary and she supports many projects, but conducts most of her work within the Entomology and Soils and Plant Nutrition projects. She maintains databases for cotton, rice, sorghum, soybean and sugarcane statistics. She also assists with proposal interim progress and final reports for research endeavors funded by agrichemical, federal, state and private entities. Her additional duties include overseeing and maintaining the electronic review process for Dr. Fred Turner, Professor of Soils and Plant Nutrition. He is associate editor for the Soil Science Society of America Journal. She provides technical support to Dr. Mo Way, Associate Professor of Entomology, by overseeing a pheromone trapping program that monitors the movement of the Mexican rice borer, a serious pest of sugarcane and rice.

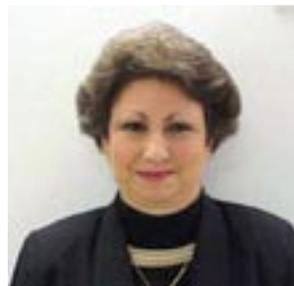
Cynthia was born in the oil-boom city of Corsicana, TX, the eldest of three. She was very active in high

school as secretary/treasurer of the Student Council; a member of the National Honor Society; participated in Drama and the Debate team; was a cheerleader; a typist for John Gray, a renowned artist in Texas, and Howard Peacock, a well-published author in Texas. She also volunteered through the United Methodist Church youth group to visit residents of local nursing homes. During her senior year of high school she represented her community as Miss Tyler County and participated in the Miss Texas pageant. She attended Lon Morris Junior College in Jacksonville. Cynthia completed her education at McNeese State University in Lake Charles, Louisiana. She relocated to Beaumont in 1981 and began dating a long-time friend, Ricky Tribble. They were married in January, 1983 and their eldest son, Brandon, was born on November 2, 1983. In 1984, Ricky and Cynthia relocated to Dallas to open a video retail business. Their youngest son, Christopher, was born on December 2, 1985. In 1988, after much success in the video retail industry, they sold their business and settled in Gilchrist, where they currently reside.

Brandon is now a senior and Christopher a sophomore at High Island High School. Both boys are active in academic and sports programs. During Friday night football you will find Cynthia with video camera in hand inside the press box assisting the sports commentator at home games.

Cynthia's hobbies include cooking, reading, fishing, painting landscapes and abstracts with acrylics, and designing floral arrangements with driftwood she collects on Bolivar peninsula. She practices holistic versus conventional approaches to health and ultimately wants to operate a health and nutrition facility that focuses on the uniqueness of each person.

### Davee Crowell – Secretary USDA/ARS



Davee Crowell

As secretary and receptionist for all four USDA scientists at the Beaumont Center, Davee generally has her hands full. She answers the phone, processes mail, does typing, scheduling, compiles reports and handles

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## Support Staff continued...

researcher correspondence. Davee also makes any special preparations needed for meetings and for visiting scientists.

Davee was born and raised in Beaumont, and studied English Literature at Tyler Junior College. After college, she went to work at Lamar University as secretary for the Campus Police Chief. After that she worked for the Department of Justice in Beaumont and came to work at the Texas A&M Research and Extension Center in February of 1988. Davee and her husband Will have two sons, Aaron (24) and Jason (22). Aaron is retired from the Marines and is now a policeman in Baytown. Jason is an Account Representative for MCI WorldCom. Davee enjoys reading, cross-stitching and caring for her 'sweetheart' roses. She also likes to spend time with their newest addition to the family, a one-year old miniature Schnauzer named Craig.

### Teco Johnson – Administrative Officer – USDA/ARS

Accounting and book-keeping is the main focus of Teco's job, and like Davee, she handles all the necessary paperwork for the Center's USDA employees. She is responsible for purchasing supplies, property control, personnel records and budgeting. Teco came to the Center as a clerk back in 1974, but quickly moved up to her present position in administration.



Teco Johnson

Born in Beaumont, Teco lived in Orange, Silsbee and Houston during her youth. Her dad was an entrepreneur and had many businesses throughout the years, his favorite was being a golf pro. Teco has one older brother and two younger brothers, and she spent much of her youth tailing her older brother around. She was something of a 'tom boy' and didn't care much for girls activities. In high school though, she was a cheerleader, a member of the drill team and the Spanish club. She attended college at Lamar University and studied accounting. Teco's husband Fred is retired from Huntsman Corporation and enjoys fishing and hunting. Teco has 3 daughters, Kimber, Shelli and Sandra,

and 7 grandchildren. She enjoys reading, yard work and home improvement projects. And after her August 2<sup>nd</sup> retirement she will have plenty of time to spoil her grandkids!

### Robert LaBorde – Business Administrator I – TAES

Robert is in charge of payroll and book-keeping at the Beaumont Center. He handles insurance questions, employee benefits and taxes.

Born in Beaumont, Robert graduated from Lamar University with a BA in Accounting. After college he worked in various accounting positions before coming to the Beaumont Center in 1986. He met his wife Sandra in college and they have two sons. Robert's favorite hobby is freshwater fishing.



Robert LaBorde

### Coleen Meitzen – Secretary/Receptionist – TAES

Coleen went to work at the Eagle Lake Station in January of 2000. As the sole member of the secretarial staff Coleen has a wide range of duties including answering the phone, greeting guests, coordinating special events such as Field Day, compiling reports, entering field data, maintaining station correspondence and keeping personnel records.

Coleen was born in Houston and moved to Eagle Lake when she was in kindergarten. Her family moved several times after that, as her dad was a highway patrolman and then worked for the Sheriff's Department. Coleen moved back to Eagle Lake in 1975. She has three children; Brandy (18), Kayla (14) and Logan (12). They raise quarterhorses and paints, and the whole family enjoys riding. Coleen also likes to read, crochet and go dancing. \*



Coleen Meitzen  
in Eagle Lake.

## Education and Outreach continued...

participated in the Jefferson County Master Gardeners program, presenting an 8-hour workshop as part of the regular training program for new recruits. We have filled additional requests for 1-hour workshops by other county agents who coordinate Master Gardener programs.

Last year the Eagle Lake Station hosted its 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Rice Field Day and the Beaumont Center hosted its 54<sup>th</sup> Field Day. In Beaumont we had the highest producer turnout on record. Other attendees included consumers, industry representatives, scientists and elected officials. Leading up to the events we had press releases placed in 16 newspapers and did 4 radio and TV appearances. In Beaumont, there was a live TV remote the evening before Field Day when Center scientists were interviewed regarding current research in rice production. We also had a segment on the noon news show prior to the event, in an effort to encourage consumers to attend.

But media appearances are not limited to field day promotion. In 2001 the Center Communications Specialist appeared on 6 News at Noon shows and had 3 radio engagements. We also had 4 TV interviews at the Center dealing with current topics related to the rice industry. As a result of the media exposure, dozens of calls came in regarding rice production and research. The Center has also gained national and international exposure in *Lifescapes* (Summer 2002, Rice Genetics), the *Rice Journal* (March 2002, Organic Rice) and the 2002 Rice Almanac published by the International Rice Research Institute.

With the age of computers upon us, the Beaumont Center has worked to establish an on-line presence to make information readily available to the general public. In 2002, we began development of a website for the entire Beaumont/Eagle Lake Center that will achieve this goal. Designed by Yubin Yang and Peter Wu, the website should be on-line by the end of this year. In the meantime, The Agroecosystems Research Group website (<http://aesrg.tamu.edu>) provides information about AESRG scientists, staff and research conducted at the Beaumont Center - with over 7900 hits in 2000 and 2001. Visitors can also download current and back issues of *Texas Rice*, the Center newsletter. Also available on-line is the monthly Rice Crop Statistics Report, which provides information on acreage and varieties planted, as well as the current stage

of crop development. This information is very useful to producers in planning their current management decisions and future planting schedules.

Numerous special events throughout the year present opportunities for promotion of the rice industry. In 2001, Beaumont Center staff participated in the annual Texas Rice Festival through a poster presentation, which won the award for best display. The booth was staffed throughout the festival to answer questions about rice research and production.

In December of 2001 our Communications Specialist was invited to participate in the planning meeting for the upcoming JASON Project, hosted by Lamar University. JASON was founded by Dr. Robert Ballard, the scientist who discovered the remains of the Titanic. Since the discovery of the Titanic in 1985,

Ballard has involved school children in expeditions across the globe through live satellite feeds from his research sites. Lamar University was designated as a primary transmission site by the JASON Project, so that area school kids can visit the University and participate in the annual expedition. Beaumont Center staff manned displays during the week-long event to familiarize the kids with career opportunities in agriculture.

Although travel to remote locations is often necessary, much of the work in education and outreach is done at the Center. Scientists and staff field hundreds of questions each year by phone regarding everything from rice information to turf grass problems. There are also numerous visitors to the Center who come with diseased plants, unknown weeds and unusual insects for identification and clarification by Center scientists.

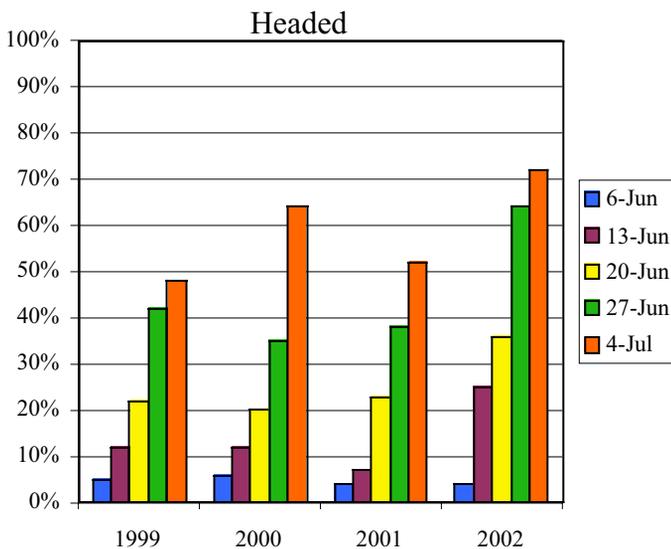
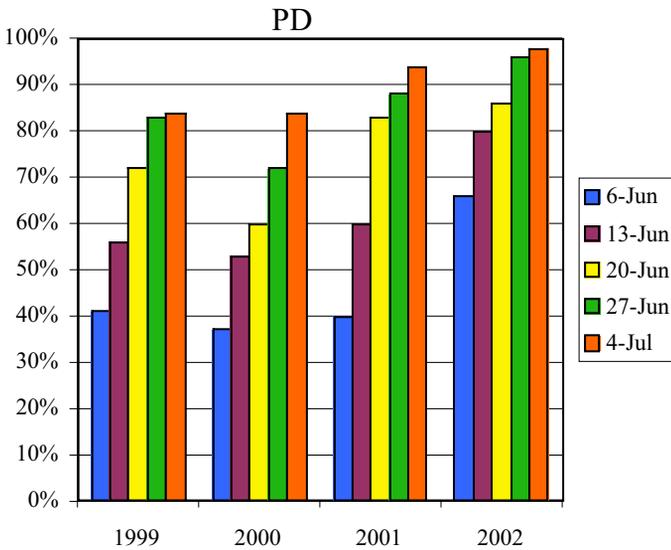
In these times of budget cuts and dwindling research dollars, it is more important than ever to make sure that information gets out to the people who need it – our farmers and the communities they support. The Communications Project at the Beaumont/Eagle Lake Center will endeavor to see that this vital information continues to reach the largest possible audience, maximizing the benefit of taxpayer dollars. \*



Ag Communications Specialist Jay Cockrell.

## 2002 Rice Crop Update

As of July 4<sup>th</sup> 98% of the Texas rice crop was at PD, compared to 94% in 2001 and 84% in 2000. 72% of the crop was headed, as compared to 52% in 2001 and 64% in 2000.



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<http://aesrg.tamu.edu>

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## Editors Page continued...

port staff are also heavily involved with extension outreach at the elementary and high school level through class room presentations and by giving lab and field tours of our programs and facilities. Our Center has an extremely active community outreach program, providing numerous news releases and television and radio interviews.

A goal at our Center is to have a research program that is a complete package from the development of basic scientific knowledge to the development and delivery of solutions to real world problems. While the more practical results from research can be almost immediately used by our producers, some research takes years of concentrated effort. In many cases our basic and applied research programs are so intertwined that it is difficult to clearly say where one ends and the other starts. For example, while basic science, such as the use of molecular markers is used to determine which advanced breeding lines have desirable genes that control disease resistance or grain quality, the improved varieties that result from this process represent a very important practical end product. A continuum from basic research to applied research, combined with a strong emphasis of delivering information helps to insure the Center's ability to continue to serve the needs of all of our clientele.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Texas Rice*. Keep on sending us your ideas on what you would like to see in future issues.

Sincerely,

Ted Wilson

Professor and Center Director

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