

Floriculture Focus . . .

**News from the Ellison Chair in
International Floriculture
Department of Horticultural Sciences**

Volume 2 Issue 3



June/July, 2006

Chair Website – <http://EllisonChair.tamu.edu>

Introductory Comments

Our principal focus in this issue will be on the Vision and Strategic Plan for the Chair. A condensed Executive Summary will be presented here. Recaps of national meetings in which we participated will also be given. Updates on other ongoing activities including progress on entry-

level worker training tools, internship programs, increased program funding, a center of excellence, . . . will be provided in future newsletters. Floriculture faculty member **Scott Ludwig** of our Overton Research and Extension Center will be highlighted in this issue.

Chair Activities and Progress

Vision and Strategic Plan for Ellison Chair – Executive Summary (condensed)

In this document, floriculture is defined as the science and art of cultivating and managing flowers, flowering plants, and ornamental plants. The primary focus of this Chair is on floriculture. However, results of Chair activities will be shared with all sectors of the 'green' industry, as these are interrelated.

The 'green' industry is the fastest growing segment of Texas agriculture and is now among its top three segments in the area of economic impact. Texas is among the top three-four states in the US in the area of nursery/floral crop production.

The initial International Floriculture Chairholder was charged to serve as an 'architect' and champion, developing a well-conceived plan and focused, workable process to achieve preeminence for International Floriculture at Texas A&M. A '*Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats*' (SWOT) Analysis was conducted as a guide to achieving this overall goal. Based on this SWOT analysis, it was determined that there is a strong, outstanding faculty in place in the floriculture area, at TAMU in College Station and at Research and Extension Centers statewide. Also, facilities both at College Station and statewide are excellent, particularly in the TAMU Department of Horticultural Sciences and at our Dallas Research and Extension Center (an urban center focused on the 'green' industry). Additionally, the Chair has an excellent, strongly committed external Advisory Committee dedicated to the success of the Chair in

elevating TAMU and the floriculture industry (in Texas first, but also nationally and worldwide) to premier status.

While we have strong individual programs in floriculture, there is a need for greater collaborative, partnering efforts to capture the synergy that is possible and thus elevate the overall program. Also, there is a lack of needed sustainable fiscal resources, both internally and through external grants and contracts, to adequately support the program and best serve the industry. Additionally there is a need for increased recognition of the TAMU floriculture program, through better marketing of the program and through increased publication of research results in peer-reviewed publications and through more presentations at industry-led meetings and more high-impact stories and articles in industry publications.

Given this, the *Role of the Chair* should encompass the following and the Chairholder should:

1. Be an individual who has sufficient breadth and expertise in bringing faculty together working toward common goals, capturing synergy for the enhancement of the total program,
2. Be an individual who can facilitate strong, unified team efforts to obtain significantly increased sustainable program funding from all appropriate sources, including internal (state and federal) and external (grants and contracts from industry, state and federal agencies, and private endowments),
3. Be an individual who can work effectively with university leaders, industry leaders, fellow faculty members on a multidisciplinary basis, as well as state and national governmental leaders, determining priorities and acquiring funds necessary to address issues critical to the “green” industry,
4. Be an individual of sufficient national and international stature to bring high recognition to the TAMU floriculture program,
5. Be an individual who enjoys working with undergraduate and graduate students and is an effective teacher and mentor,
6. Be an effective communicator with all groups, and
7. Have the ability to facilitate strong programs in the currently identified programmatic areas of emphasis including: first, (1) people development and (2) environmental sustainability with focus on water; and also (3) marketing and (4) efficient production systems.

Based on the SWOT analysis, five *Strategic Objectives* have been identified for a five-year planning period. These are:

1. **Increase funding** for our research and extension program in floriculture and related areas,
2. **Increase partnerships** in this area among TAMU faculty on a disciplinary and multidisciplinary basis, with faculty at other universities nationally and internationally, and with the floriculture industry,
3. **Increase numbers of top-quality undergraduate and graduate students** in floriculture to meet growing needs,
4. **Increase program recognition** for the TAMU floriculture program, and
5. **Increase vitality and productivity** of programs in the identified areas of emphasis.

An *Implementation Plan* is given with Goals for each of the Strategic Objectives along with target timelines for accomplishment of the Goals.

Areas of Emphasis represent top-priority areas of need for the floriculture industry and are areas where the Chair will **facilitate and support strong, enhanced programs** to elevate the TAMU floriculture program and the floriculture industry. Primary emphasis will be placed initially on **People Development** and

Environmental Sustainability with focus on Water, with secondary emphasis on **Marketing** and **Efficient Production Systems**. These areas are recommended by the Chair based on listening sessions with industry leaders and university faculty and were endorsed by the external Chair Advisory Committee. Further elaboration of programs in each of these areas of emphasis is provided in the body of the Plan.

The complete Vision/Plan can be viewed by linking to the home page at <http://EllisonChair.tamu.edu>

USDA-ARS Floriculture and Nursery Crops Researchers Workshop

This meeting was held in Portland, Oregon on June 12-15. Researchers for USDA-ARS and several universities nationally made presentations on their research that is funded through this Initiative. We also had wonderful tours at Monrovia Nursery and the Portland Rose Garden. **Jim Ellison** and I participated in the meeting, as did **Kevin Heinz/Fred Davies/Scott Ludwig/Carlos Bogran/Jay Spiers** (Fred's doctoral student) who presented results of our Texas A&M research. This Initiative represents an excellent model for joint university/federal government/ industry research programs. We are working to help increase its overall funding.

Seeley Conference – Cornell University – June 24-27

This was my first Seeley Conference; it was the 21st Conference overall. The focus of the Conference this year was “The Globalization of Business: Will Floriculture Prosper?” Participating members of our Chair Advisory Committee were **PJ Ellison, Stan Pohmer and Ernesto Velez** (one of the speakers). The Conference provided an excellent forum for discussion of important issues facing the floriculture/nursery industry. Our hosts at Cornell did a superb job. There were stimulating presentations, with ample opportunity for networking among the participants. The Conference is patterned after the highly successful Gordon Conferences held in New Hampshire each year.

Floriculture Faculty Highlights

Our featured faculty member this month is Scott Ludwig of our Overton Research and Extension Center.

Scott Ludwig is an Extension Program Specialist-IPM located at The Texas A&M University System Agricultural Research and Extension Center at Overton. His applied research and extension program focus on developing pest management programs for the greenhouse and nursery industry in East Texas. This is the first position in the Texas IPM program to address the ornamental and greenhouse industry.

Ludwig conducts a number of applied research projects. Scales and mealybug were a major emphasis of his efficacy testing program the last two years. This work conducted through funding by USDA's IR-4 Project and the chemical industry is resulting in additional insecticides being labeled for control of scale and mealybugs. A large project is underway this year to evaluate insecticides against western flower thrips. Hopefully this project will identify new insecticides that can be used to target this often destructive pest.



Scott Ludwig (left) working with grower Bobby Murray

Since the spring of 2005, he has been spending a large part of his time working on USDA's Q-biotype whitefly taskforce. Although this whitefly has not been detected in Texas, it has caused significant damage to growers in other states who did not manage it properly. His responsibilities on the task force involve working to develop management programs for whiteflies on ornamental crops and providing educational materials to growers. This has been accomplished by publishing seven articles in national trade journals and by presenting current findings at national grower meetings.

To help better understand how insecticides can be used to manage whiteflies, a project is currently underway to evaluate the residual activity of over 15 insecticides. This information will better enable growers to properly manage whiteflies by better understanding how long insecticides provide effective control after being applied to the plants.

Ludwig publishes a semi-regular newsletter for ornamental producers summarizing trial results and other relevant grower information. He organizes the East Texas Nursery and Greenhouse Conference in Tyler. This meeting includes both local and national experts on many issues impacting the industry. This year's meeting will be held October 31st at the Harvey Convention Center.

Concluding Comments

We are off to the OFA Short Course in another week. The program looks to be outstanding. Have a great Summer!

Upcoming Events

OFA Short Course, Columbus, OH
Southwest Greenhouse Growers Conference, Tyler, TX
TNLA Nursery/Landscape EXPO, San Antonio, TX
Ellison Chair Distinguished Lecture, College Station, TX
Ellison Chair Advisory Committee Meeting, College Station, TX

July 8-11
July 26-27
August 18-20
October 11
October 12



Mission of the Ellison Chair

The mission of this Chair is to advance the health and vitality of the floriculture industry, on a national and international scope, through exemplary academic leadership, cutting-edge

applied research, innovative extension outreach programs, and by mentoring well-educated, impassioned leaders to support the future of floriculture.



Tammy Landry, Editor/Program Coordinator
Ed Hiler, Ellison Chairholder
225D Horticulture/Forest Science Building
College Station, Texas 77843-2133
979-458-3277
t-landry1@tamu.edu e-hiler@tamu.edu