

A New Half-Century

Delta Center Director Reviews Past, Pledges Renewed Efforts For Progress

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The recent Delta Research Center Field Day in Portageville, Mo., drew a record attendance and was an introductory event for the new director at the Delta Center, Trent Haggard.

“We were proud to hold the 51st Field Day at the Delta Research Center, and we look at this as a time of celebration annually much like harvest is for producers,” he said. Haggard replaced Dr. Jake Fisher who retired last year after serving as director of the research center for 50 years.

Just under 600 people attended the breakfast at the Delta Center, and simultaneously a record number of students from area high schools gathered next door to the Rone Hall where they were able to learn of the many and varied careers available in agriculture.

“Our student program continues to get more and more popular each year,” Haggard said. “Andrea Jones, Jeremy Angotti and the others do a tremendous job on the program to make sure the students realize the broad scope of agricultural careers.”

Haggard welcomed the crowd and pledged to arm producers with the best possible research so their farms can be financially profitable so they can feed and clothe more and more people.

“If you look at the most direct area that we serve, the counties in the southeast corridor of

“We have a beautiful situation with 60 advisory board members, so that means there’s a wealth of knowledge in our advisory board that can help direct us toward the best projects that we need to do to benefit our most direct constituents,” he added

The 60 member advisory board consists of agricultural producers, and common vernacular farmers; it consists of ag business persons, legislative members, members in the financial world in the bootheel, several different assets that any ag producer works with today.

“One thing we are actually highlighting is we want to make sure the future generation understands the huge or vast amount of careers in the agricultural community,” Haggard said. “What we find is, too often folks think that if they don’t come from a family farm that they aren’t looking at any possible careers in agriculture and that couldn’t be farther from the truth. There are countless numbers of careers that are periphery to landownership. There are numerous sales opportunities, finance opportunities.”

Then there’s also research. Perhaps many future researchers are next door to the Rone Center right now, he said.

“We have a record number of high school students two doors over,” he said. “We have over 520 high school students, the most we’ve ever had in our classes and we are trying to make sure they understand the bounty of ag opportunities that are more than farming, that deal



Dr. Jake Fisher (left) who retired last year after serving as director of the research center for 50 years visits with the Delta Center's new director Trent Haggard.

Missouri produce over a third of Missouri’s agricultural output annually,” he pointed out, adding he was speaking of yield and volume. “That’s phenomenal if you think of the state having 114 counties; there are nine counties in the southeast corner that we directly serve and those counties have a tremendous agricultural output.”

Haggard was raised in this region so he understands the capabilities of farmers in the area. Armed with that knowledge, he has a sure vision of what will help farmers accomplish even more.

“We have plans, first of all, to do more of the same that has been done here for years with excellent research; but in addition to that, we know that because of the state’s economy, the amount of funds coming to the University and therefore coming to the Delta Research Center has been less than in the past. So our aim obviously is to help maintain our past and our future budget and actually increase it and we have to do that through other means in addition to state funding,” he explained.

That, of course, will be part of his drive and a top priority for the coming year. With a super, well qualified research team, and department heads of the same caliber, there’s every reason to expect great things from the center.

“I want to make sure the Delta Research Center maintains it’s positive heritage for putting out top quality research, and secondly actually grow our capabilities here – not just maintain them, but grow them,” he said.

He plans to do this through additional ways of funding research projects, working with private individuals, and often farm producers in the area that just want to further the research and help make it better and maybe even widen its scale.

with all parts of where the commodity goes from the farm, to the processing, to be fed or transported. The financial aspects of agriculture are phenomenal, just phenomenal!” Δ

BETTY VALLE GEGG-NAEGER: Senior Staff Writer, MidAmerica Farmer Grower

In-Field Tours Highlight Delta Center Field Day

A wide range of topics and demonstrations was addressed at the 51st Annual Delta Center Field Day recently. The 12 speakers and their topics included:

- Dr. Gene Stevens - In-Field Testing for Crop Nutrients
- Chris Evans - Sweet Sorghum Harvesting for Bio-fuel
- David Dunn -Corn and Soybeans are Different
- Dr. Allen Wrather - Available Nutrients Impact Soybean Health
- Dr. Grover Shannon - Improved Soybeans for Missouri
- Scotty Smothers - Progress on Flood Tolerant Soybeans
- Dr. Hoe Henggeler - Using Wireless Sensors to Schedule Irrigation
- Andrea Jones - Cotton Irrigation Scheduling
- Dr. Earl Vories - Drought Tolerance
- Dr. Anthony Ohmes - weed Resistance Management with Growth Regulators
- Dr. Kevin Bradley - Considerations for the Management of Herbicide-Resistant Weeds
- Dr. Reid Smeda - Palmer Amaranth Management with Growth Regulators.

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