

Green Notes

Fall, 2004

Congratulations are in Order!

Three More Plant Doctors Complete Their DPM Degrees



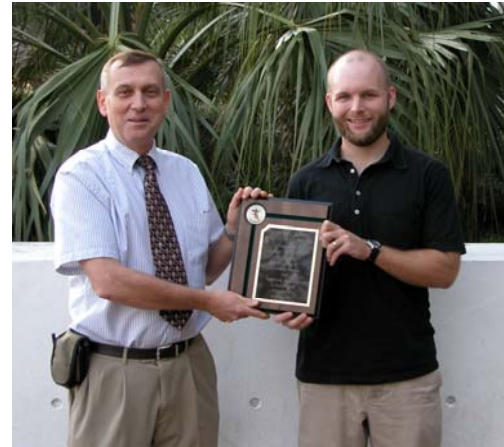
Newly invested Plant Doctors
Angela Jurick and Stephanie Bledsoe

In December 2004, Stephanie Bledsoe, Katherine Dover, and Angela Jurick received their Doctor of Plant Medicine (D.P.M.) degrees. Dr. Bledsoe is currently the Pest Management Specialist with the [Breakers Resort Hotel](#) in West Palm Beach, Florida and is interested in independent consulting in turfgrass and ornamentals. She was senior author of the recent University of Florida-IFAS publication [Professional Disease Management Guide for Ornamental Plants](#). Dr. Dover received a certificate in [Environmental Policy and Management](#) in addition to her D.P.M. degree and plans to pursue a law degree in the near future. Dr. Jurick recently completed an internship with the [USDA-APHIS-PPQ](#) that included development of plant pest risk assessments, and plans to embark on a career in plant health risk management. Dr. Jurick was honored at recent the DPM student social in the Plant Medicine Program's (PMP) traditional mugging ceremony.

George N. Agrios DPM Student Award to Jade Allen

Dr. Jade Allen, D.P.M. Summer, 2004, was named the 2004 recipient of the George N. Agrios DPM Student Award at the PMP awards social in January. Each calendar year the PMP Coordinating Committee consisting of 13 faculty members and 1 student selects a recipient for the award who has made outstanding professional and academic contributions to the discipline of plant medicine. This award was named in honor of Dr. Agrios, the first director of the program. Dr. Allen received both a plaque and \$300.00 check at the gathering.

Originally from New York City, Dr. Allen excelled academically throughout his course of study even while participating in a research project in the laboratory of Dr. Marjorie Hoy, Eminent Scholar and Davies, Fischer and Eckes Professor of Biological Control, Department of Entomology and Nematology, University of Florida-IFAS, Gainesville. He specialized and conducted internships in both urban pest and turfgrass management. He was a student member of both the [National Alliance of Crop Consultants](#) and [American Society of Agricultural Consultants](#) and plans to pursue a career in plant health risk management. Dr. Allen has made his mark as a DPM student and it is the belief of the PMP coordinating committee that he will advance the discipline of plant medicine as his career unfolds.



Dr. Jade Allen presented with George N. Agrios DPM Student Award by PMP Director Dr. Bob McGovern



Welcome Newbies!

Six New DPM Students Arrive

Six new students joined the Plant Medicine program: Woudich Angong (B.S. Agronomy, Kansas State University; M.S.

Horticulture, Northwest Missouri State University), Heidi Bowman (B.S. Agriculture and M.S. Horticulture, West Virginia University), Eduardo Canova (B.S. Agronomy, National University of Asuncion), Keun Ho Cho (M.S. Horticulture, University of Tennessee; Ph.D. Agriculture, Korea University), Timothy Durham (B.S. Plant Science, Cornell University), and Megan Gilbert (B.S. Horticulture, University of Georgia). See [profiles](#) of these and other students in the program.



Plant Doctors Reach New Heights!

Dr. Adam Silagyi, New FDACS/DPI-CAPS Coordinator



Dr. Adam Silagyi,

Dr. Adam, D.P.M. Summer 2003, was selected by Florida 's Department of Agriculture and Consumer Service's (FDACS) Division of Plant Industry (DPI) to be the state's new coordinator of the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) program. [The Division of Plant Industry](#) is a regulatory agency of FDACS which works to detect, intercept and control plant and honey bee pests that threaten Florida 's native plant and agricultural resources.

The Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) is a project managed by USDA-APHIS-PPQ that combines the efforts and resources of PPQ with those of State agricultural organizations and universities to collect and manage data on plant pests, biological control agents and weeds. Survey targets have included weeds, nematodes, plant diseases, insects, and snails and other invertebrates. The USDA-APHIS-PPQ has provided national and regional coordination and funding to supplement and enhance state pest survey and detection programs.

The CAPS program is responsible for supplying a means of detection,

New Florida CAPS Coordinator documentation and rapid dissemination of information on survey of plant pests and weeds in the United States. The program provides PPQ and State cooperators with distribution information on pests in the U.S. The survey information gathered is entered into a central database known as [National Agricultural Pest Information System \(NAPIS\)](#).

Prior to his appointment by DPI, Dr. Silagyi was department head of the food security program of [L'Agence d'Aide a la Cooperation Technique et au Developpement \(ACTED\)](#) in Khatlon, Tajikistan and coordinated the integrated pest management program at UF's [Plant Science Research and Educational Unit](#) in Citra, FL.

Dr. Stacy Strickland Hired as Regional Specialist Extension Agent



Dr. Stacy Strickland
Regional Specialized Extension
Agent
Tampa Bay Metro area

Spring 2004 D.P.M. graduate, Joseph Stacy Strickland started as the Regional Specialized Extension Agent for small farms in the Tampa Bay metro area of Florida (Citrus, Hernando, Pasco and Sumter counties) on November 22, 2004.

Based in Brooksville, FL, Dr. Strickland is responsible for assisting clients with 15-30 acre farms in the plant commodity areas of vegetables, fruit (citrus and blueberries), and forage as well as with cattle and goats. In addition to providing technical advice on pest management and production, he will also help small farmers become more profitable through improved marketing strategies. His plant medicine expertise is complemented well by his family farm background and both will make Dr. Strickland a valued resource to agriculture in his region of the state. See [careers](#) of other program graduates.



Major Events

Dr. Robin Spitko, 2004 Plant Medicine Program
Distinguished Plant Doctor Lecturer



Dr. Robin Spitko, Founder of NEFCON delivers
*2004 Plant Medicine Program Distinguished
Plant Doctor Lecture*

Each year an outstanding independent crop consultant is selected to deliver the *Distinguished Plant Doctor Lecture* in the PMP's capstone course, Integrated Plant Medicine. On December 3, 2004, Dr. Robin Spitko, founder of the New England Fruit Consultants (NEFCON), presented a lecture to capstone course and other DPM students entitled Independent Crop Consulting: Perceptions, Opportunities and Challenges. In her presentation she explored the establishment of NEFCON and its development over the past 20 years and shared insights into the approach that has made the company the premier fruit consulting firm in New England. Dr. Spitko's topic and presentation hit a very responsive chord among the DPM students; following her lecture, she engaged DPM students in an hour-long discussion on independent consulting that was continued in both an unscheduled confab with students at a local restaurant and a subsequent scheduled dinner with two additional

students.

Dr. Spitko received her Ph.D. degree in Plant Pathology from the University of Massachusetts. She along with her husband, Glen Morin, founded the independent agricultural consulting firm New England Fruit Consultants (NEFCON) in 1982. Located in Montague, MA, NEFCON contracts with commercial fruit growing operations throughout the Northeast to provide Integrated Crop Management (ICM) information and recommendations pertinent to all aspects of tree fruit production. NEFCON currently directs ICM programs for approximately 3,000 acres of apples, peaches and pears throughout the region. Spitko and Morin are authors and editors for the [New England Apple Pest Management Guide](#), produced by the University/Cooperative Extension Service for the 6 New England states, which is the definitive spray guide for commercial producers in the region.

NEFCON personnel currently serve on several USDA and EPA advisory committees, state and regional IPM steering committees and occupy a seat on the Executive Board of the [National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants \(NAICC\)](#).

In addition, Dr. Spitko chaired the NAICC Legislative Advisory Committee for the past 7 years and is well known in agricultural circles in Washington, DC. She is an adjunct professor with the [Department of Plant, Soil, and Insect Sciences](#) at the University of Massachusetts . To learn more about NEFCON contact Dr. Spitko at nefcon@aol.com .

Capstone Course Field Trips

Reviewing the concepts of plant medicine and honing diagnostic skills through in-class case studies and external field trips are the objectives of the Plant Medicine Program's capstone course, Integrated Plant Medicine. Despite the onslaught of four hurricanes, course participants engaged in a series of three field trips during the Fall 2004 semester.

Their first field trip took the students to woody ornamental production sites in Bunnell, FL operated by [Skinner Nurseries](#) based in Jacksonville, FL. Dr. Javier Garces, DPM Spring 2004, Plant Health Specialist and Bruce Hammersmith, General Manager-Production with Skinner guided the students in an examination of the major challenges for the production of 1000 acres of large containerized ornamentals (oaks, magnolias, etc.). Students were housed overnight during their visit at Skinner's guest lodge overlooking Crescent Lake.



Bruce Hammersmith, General Manager-Production, Skinner Nurseries discusses production techniques for ornamentals with DPM students



Dr. Javier Garces, Plant Health Specialist, Skinner Nurseries assesses the nutrient status of azaleas



View of Crescent Lake from Skinner's guest lodge

Dr. Adam Silagy led capstone course students on a tour that included an examination of agronomic and horticultural crops

at UF's [Plant Science Research and Education Unit](#), while serving as the unit's IPM coordinator. He tested the student's diagnostic acumen by presenting them with both biotic and abiotic plant problems including hurricane damage.



Dr. Adam Silagyi discusses whitefly damage on squash with DPM students Tina Duperron and Johanna Welch (on the left and right, respectively).

A DPM student field trip to North Florida was hosted by [Dr. Tim Momol](#), Associate Professor, Plant Pathology and Director of the Florida Extension Plant Disease Clinic at the [North Florida Research and Education Center](#) in Quincy. Dr. Momol pointed out and discussed common plant diseases faced by growers in the area during visits to a tomato production site and ornamental nursery. He also presented an overview of research that he and colleagues at NFREC are conducting on biofumigant replacements for methyl bromide.



Dr. Tim Momol, Plant Pathologist, NFREC-Quincy examines a discolored root system with DPM students.

PMP Director Invited Speaker at BSPP-EFPP Meeting and Guest of Scottish Agronomy

Dodging between two hurricanes in Florida, Dr. Bob McGovern, Director of UF's Plant Medicine Program, attended the 7th Conference of the [European Foundation for Plant Pathology](#) (EFPP) that was held in conjunction with the 2004 [British Society of Plant Pathology BSPP](#) Presidential Meeting. The conference took place in the Old Aberdeen Campus at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland from 5th - 10th September 2004. Dr. McGovern participated as an invited speaker in the conference session entitled: Delivery Converting research to practical messages decision support, advice in developing countries, training methods and the involvement of growers, buyers and policy makers in decision-making. He presented the rationale, organization and accomplishments of UF's PMP in his talk entitled: University of Florida's Plant Medicine Program: Changing the Paradigm of Plant Health Education.

Following the conference Dr. McGovern participated in a 3-day tour of Scottish Agriculture graciously hosted by Allen Scobie of the independent consulting firm [Scottish Agronomy, Ltd.](#) Established in 1985, Scottish Agronomy is a leading independent agriculture consulting firm in Scotland and provides up-to-date information to farmers on production practices, pest management strategies, and the results of company-run research trials. Mr. Scobie, a prominent consultant with

Scottish Agronomy is also the Immediate Past President of Europe's Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants. Crops visited by Scobie and McGovern included wheat, oats, canola, crucifers, strawberries and squash.



Wheat field near harvest in Scotland



Allen Scobie, Scottish Agronomy consultant
with client



Scobie in action on the phone
in a canola field