College of the Ozarks Agriculture Department

Spring Semester 2014

PREVIEW
◊ Faculty Spotlight: Eric Bright
◊ Student Spotlight: Sam and Joey Ledford
◊ New Farm for the Ag Department
◊ Ag Alumni Chapter: Dawn Earnest, President

CALENDAR OF EVENTS
◊ February 27~ Career Day
◊ March 1~ FFA Workshop 8:30-12:00
◊ March 12~ NAIA Division II National Men’s Basketball Tournament: Keeter Gymnasium
◊ March 24-28~ Spring Break
◊ April 3~ Awards Assembly Reception at The Keeter Center.
◊ April 14~ Annual Agriculture Awards Assembly 4:00 upstairs Youngman Ag Center
◊ April 18~ Good Friday-No classes
◊ Baccalaureate~ May 11– 11:00
◊ Graduation~ May 11- 2:00

1 Corinthians 15:58
Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. (NIV)
Eric Bright joined the College of the Ozarks staff June 12, 2013. He assumed the roles of managing the Farmers’ Market and Gardens as well as assisting in milk processing. Eric spent most of his life in southern Colorado and has been married for 30 years to Hope, who is from southeastern Kansas. He graduated from Colorado State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Vocational Agriculture (the previous title for Ag Ed). Additionally, Eric has been involved in production agriculture for over 30 years. He has operated his own family dairy farms in Colorado and two different locations in north central Missouri. He has two children that graduated from C of O: Darcy in 2012 and Jesse in 2008. Jesse was an Agriculture major who worked at the dairy and Darcy a Hotel and Restaurant Management major. Both were student body Presidents during their time at C of O. Eric’s responsibilities at College of the Ozarks include planting and harvesting the gardens and presenting the market to the public. He also assists in processing roughly 3,000 pounds of milk every week. His personal goal for being a work supervisor is “to give direction and purpose to the students, and to train them in life-skills they can use beyond what they do here.” When asked about his thoughts on the Farmers Market and Gardens, Eric said, “the Farmers Market has exceeded everyone’s expectations. I have been very pleased with the feedback from the public. The students do a terrific job of growing, harvesting and selling what they raise.” Thus far, Eric says his favorite experience at C of O has been working with great staff and students.
Student Spotlight: Sam and Joey Ledford

Samantha and Joey Ledford are both Dairy Science majors within the Agriculture Department at C of O. Sam is a senior and works at the dairy. Joey is a junior and works at the beef farm. Sam and Joey were recently married and now live at the College’s Winfrey Farm. This college beef farm is located off-campus near Reeds Spring, Missouri. Sam and Joey were both raised on beef cattle farms. Sam’s father and grandfather manage a cow-calf operation of 100 Hereford and Black Baldy cattle. Joey’s family raises commercial beef cattle and manages 120 acres of hay forage. When asked what made her want to become an Agriculture major, Sam stated; “I enjoy agriculture and I want to be able to learn all I can before my husband and I (hopefully) start our own dairy farm.” Joey’s reply to this same question was; “I worked as a herdsman on two different dairies for a total of six years before coming to the college. I wanted to take all the dairy classes the college offers to further expand my knowledge of the dairy industry.” After graduating, Sam hopes to be hired by DFA as a field representative and Joey plans on pursuing a job within the dairy, banking, or insurance industries. Both want to eventually own a dairy farm along with Sam’s brother-in-law. When asked how he likes living at the Winfrey farm, Joey replied, “I like living out here because it gives me the opportunity to be responsible for checking the cows and making sure that everything is healthy by myself...It gives me the chance to prove myself to Tammy [the beef farm manager] and I hope that this responsibility will give me a leg up with future employers.” Sam said living on the farm reminds her of home: “I love it. It’s just like being home in Ava…. being back in the woods away from town…..I love being able to come home and go out to watch cattle graze.”
On July 1st, College of the Ozarks officially took possession of a 120 acre farm located adjacent to the Belt farm south of Hollister on HWY BB. The former owners were Sonny and Marilyn Clevenger, and the farm will likely be called the “Clevenger Farm”. The farm is about 50% open pasture and the remainder in mixed timber, including three ponds, a creek, and a glade. There is no residence on the property but there is a general purpose building with a shop. Since the college took possession, old fence lines are being bulldozed and replaced with new corner posts, t-posts and barbed wire. Debris and other dilapidated buildings have also been removed as part of improving the farm. When the Ag Department begins operating on the farm, we will test the soil, apply fertilizer, lime as needed and begin to improve the forage quality. We will also cross fence much of the interior for stocking the farm with beef cattle. This new and much appreciated farm makes a total of 544 contiguous acres of farmland all located on HWY BB south of Hollister. The Department is truly blessed with quality farmland to help educate our students and provide a quality work experience.
Ag Alumni Chapter President:  
Dawn (Cope) Earnest

Please give a brief summary about yourself since graduation.

I am a first generation college student (from my family). After graduating in the last School of the Ozarks' class on Mother’s Day 1990, I returned to my birthplace of Bakersfield, CA. I began my career in mortgage banking. I did have a short season when I specifically worked in Ag Lending in California’s San Joaquin Valley.

I completed an MBA from University of Phoenix, Northern California campus in 2000. Upon completion of my MBA, I pursued [my] dream of becoming an Agriculture Instructor and FFA Advisor. I landed my first teaching assignment at Frazier Mountain High School in Lebec, CA. The agriculture program had less than thirty students and negative $658.00 in the program account. At the end of three years, I had built the program to over 150 students and generated over $29,000 for the club.

I returned home to Jenkins/Cassville, MO area in the Spring of 2003 to assist with elderly parents. I worked several years for Jack Henry and Associates in Monett, as a Corporate Instructor. It was during this time I accepted the Lord calling both parents to their eternal home.

In 2008, I accepted a position with Health MedX, LLC in Ozark, MO. We provide software for the post-hospital industry. Currently, I serve as a Senior Quality Assurance Analyst in the clinical area.

In February of 2013 the Lord WOWed me. I became a first time bride. I married Raymond Earnest, a former Merchant Marine Captain, who now serves in law enforcement in Barry County.

I currently serve the College as the Alumni Secretary and Agriculture Alumni Chapter as the President.

What are your goals for the AG Alumni Chapter?

We have an amazing institution. My primary goal is to attract and involve as many alum to the AG Alumni Chapter and ultimately the college as possible. There are still many, many opportunities for our AG Alum here in the agriculture department and college. I was once told of all the people in your life that you can count on, they could be represented by the five fingers on your right hand. For me, three of the five are S of O Aggies!

Do you have any advice for the current student’s at C of O?

Work is given to us from the Lord to build our character. Every interaction is an opportunity to build your character and spread the good news of Christ. Learn to lean on the Lord. Get still, get quiet, and realize you are not working for ‘the man’, but rather working for the Lord! When you acquire that attitude and approach, you will learn to love your work more than ever…Never cease praying about everything! Remain humble. Relationships are the only thing you take with you. Work hard at building more and better relationships. Get connected to S / C of O and stay involved. We have an amazing Alumni Network.

What is your favorite Bible verse?

James 4:7 “Submit yourself to the Lord! Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”