



May 2009 Update

- Chuck Rice, professor of agronomy, has been named University Distinguished Professor. Rice, an internationally recognized expert in soil and carbon sequestration, is the national director of the Consortium for Agricultural Soils Mitigation of Greenhouse Gases, and served as a member of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which was recognized by the Nobel Prize Committee. Recently Rice also was elected president-elect of the Soil Science Society of America. Another agronomist recently elected to a national leadership role is Bill Heer, associate professor, who was elected Division A-7 board representative for the American Society of Agronomy.
- Research results by Karen Garrett, associate professor of plant pathology, were presented at the International Scientific Conference on Climate Change. She presented an analysis of biocomplexity in response to climate change developed by a new international and interdisciplinary collaborative network. The work explored means to determine effects of climate change on species in multispecies systems. The conference held in Copenhagen synthesizes scientific knowledge and promotes use of it in societal decision making. It provides the findings to the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP-15) in Copenhagen in December 2009.
- University Distinguished Professor Bikram Gill and colleagues recently published an article in the journal *Genetics* focused on the nature of gene action in wheat. The work analyzed the genetic structure of wheat generally used to make bread. The team identified a relatively high percentage of genes that may, through selective breeding, be used to create higher-yielding and hearty wheat varieties. The work also provides an historic context. “The authors show that our ancestors, in their quest to feed themselves, exploited variation in the expression of genes in hybrid wheat,” said Mark Johnston, *Genetics*’ editor-in-chief.
- Collaboration between K-State Research and Extension and Native American groups and institutions in Kansas has secured more than \$300,000 to develop riparian buffer and streambank stabilization demonstration areas on reservation lands. Through his Extension program, Charles Barden, associate professor of forestry, has developed strong relationships with Haskell Indian Nations University and the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, the largest Native American tribe in Kansas. The goal of these projects is to build tribal capacity to install and manage these conservation practices. The current focus is more research-oriented, with geo-referenced data to be collected this summer in a reservation-wide stream condition survey and the on-going monitoring of the erosion rates at various project sites.