



KEEPING in TOUCH

Volume 23, Number 2



Cheryl Dorschner

UVM Research Scientists David Kerr, right, and John Barlow made progress this year toward identifying causes of mastitis at both the cellular and population levels.

Comfort for Cows, Savings for Farmers

When, in 2005 a silky brown Jersey cow was the cover girl on “Nature Biotechnology,” she became the “poster bovine” for success in mastitis-resistance through genetic modification. University of Vermont molecular biologist David Kerr produced the gene that enabled that Jersey to ward off the common form of mastitis, *Staphylococcus aureus*.

But many species of bacteria cause mastitis; Kerr continues to find additional ways to prevent this widespread bacterial infection that is both painful to cattle and results in an estimated \$2 billion dollars annually in lost income to farmers due to veterinary costs, lower milk production, discarded milk and treatment costs. Despite advances in control of mastitis caused by some species, other important bacterial species and strains continue to emerge.

Even with Kerr’s breakthrough in 2005 – a scientific advancement does

not necessarily translate into a practice adopted commercially – he and other UVM research scientists continue to look for additional, and perhaps simpler, more affordable treatments of use to farmers.

Kerr’s current work looks for ways to improve cows’ ability to resist mastitis through traditional breeding. By studying cows challenged with mastitis, and their bodies’ response, he monitors the inflammatory response at the cellular level to tease out the details of the relationship between the host defense mechanism and the disease. By identifying the critical points during an infection, he hopes to identify targets for genetic selection of resistance.

In 2008, “Veterinary Microbiology” journal published results of Kerr’s progress in identifying an enzyme that may target the form of mastitis known as *Streptococcus uberis*, another important pathogen.

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UVM Farms to be Revitalized

Despite unprecedented budget cuts in the works, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs) will move forward to reorganize and ultimately invest some \$10.6 million into its farms.

Vermont’s land-grant college sustained more than \$100,000 in state cutbacks in the new year and another \$400,000 slated for FY2010, as part of university-wide and state budget cuts. More cuts will be coming, but await action from the state as it prepares its budget and the results of the federal economic stimulus package passed in mid-February.

“The changing economy will factor in the phasing of such an extensive project, however, the time to act is now,” said CALs Interim Dean Tom Vogelmann. “We cannot continue as is. It is important that University of Vermont Farms synchronize with our college’s and the university’s master plans,” he said. “And we want to be ready to go when things change economically for the university.”

The Paul Miller Complex, known as UVM Farms, has been costing \$1.2 million each year, reported Richard “Skip” Fanus, assistant dean of finance for the College.

Reworking the farms’ budget is the first step to a comprehensive plan to get the farms back on track, and then rebuild them to flourish as a model for Vermont agriculture.

The process was set in motion on Oct. 17, when the CALs advisory board voted unanimously that CALs move forward to reorganize its dairy and horse farms on Spear Street and UVM Horticultural Research Farm on Green Mountain Drive in South Burlington.

At that meeting CALs advisory board chair Cynthia Danaher recognized that “the farm is one of many worthy projects on UVM’s horizon, CALs has greatly benefited from recent University-supported projects, and we are all aware of the uncertain economic times our country faces.” She continued, “but we felt it was still important to be in process on the farm plan for the future.”

Next, UVM’s board of trustees voted Dec. 8 to put farm reorganization on the list of UVM-approved projects for capital construction. That’s the go-ahead for CALs to fundraise and begin to create plans and drawings.

Just getting on “the list,” follows a year-long study that included: details of financial losses, input from stakeholders and a panoply of brainstorm for what the farms could become. Rough estimates for these

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Richard Fanus

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Message from the Dean

Recoil Versus Reach How We Handle Adversity

I'm sure many of you wonder how our College is faring, as institutions of higher learning across the United States shrink to adjust to the severe economic downturn. UVM appears to be better off than most, but not immune to significant budget reductions. Since November, I have spent countless hours working with our College's associate deans, department chairs, faculty and staff to meet required cuts; I feel extremely fortunate to have the support of professional and dedicated colleagues to help forge our way forward.

We made some painful choices, but we preserved the elements most vital to our mission – our academic programs and the framework for research. I am confident that with our core faculty and staff and our concentrate of crucial courses, well-honed research programs and best practices, we will continue to be an outstanding academic community.

Meanwhile, in December, the board of trustees approved our reorganization plan for UVM's farms and added it to UVM's list of capital construction projects (this issue's cover story). This is not just new barns and equipment, ours is a bold vision for the future of the college – an infrastructure for modern research and a curriculum shaped for the decades ahead.

Now is the time to strengthen the foundation and plan for the economic rebound, when we will resume investing in new classrooms, labs and research facilities.

Despite the climate of fiscal uncertainty, Jeffords Hall construction is an uplifting sight as it changes shape and grows with Mount Mansfield and Camel's Hump as a distant backdrop. The building represents UVM's long-term investment in students majoring in biological sciences and in plant sciences research.

Yes, there were a few suspenseful days when the credit freeze at Wachovia Bank sent shock waves

through UVM and other universities unable to access funds needed to make their payrolls. Still, Jeffords Hall was deemed essential to the future of top quality academic programs at the University of Vermont. The building is slated for completion spring 2010.



Tom Vogelmann

Cheryl Dorschner

Although as I write this, the Class of 2013 has not made its college choices, we have already received more student applications than ever before – a tribute to our growing reputation and the high quality of the educational experience that is a hallmark of CALS. Our need for student scholarship funding is now greater than ever to help meet the growing demand for financial assistance.

Finally, the national economic stimulus package passed in February includes a substantial funding increase for the National Science Foundation and National Institute of Health. Due to the national-level competitiveness of CALS faculty, we are in an excellent position for some of those funds to further build our vibrant research enterprise.

Even in uncertain times, our core is strong, our buildings reach toward the sky, our long-range plans continue, our College attracts more students than we can accept and research grant funding remains steady and poised for growth.

We are focusing on our passions: our teaching, scholarship and mission as a land grant college. And we welcome your support as we strive to reach our goals.

As always, we'd love to hear your thoughts.

~ Tom Vogelmann

Gift Sparks Fund for Undergraduate Excellence

A new gift commitment from alumnus Donald McFeeters '63, PhD '86 to CALS' Fund for Undergraduate Student Excellence (FUSE) prompted Interim Dean Tom Vogelmann to give FUSE a more visible and active role in helping CALS undergraduates.

When McFeeters, 68, of St. Albans, Vermont and Deland, Florida, said he wanted his donation to help undergraduates develop or enhance their leadership skills, Vogelmann strategically placed the gift in the Fund for Undergraduate Student Excellence and invited students to apply for its grants.

"I am delighted by Don McFeeters' donation; it is a perfect match for why we created FUSE grants, and I'm making sure that our students take advantage of this opportunity," said Vogelmann. "Whether it's participating in a special research project, going to a professional meeting or attending a leadership development seminar, now we can support these excellent experiences that complement our undergrads' degree programs."

The college launched FUSE in 2001 with more than 150 donations, and offered occasional and limited assistance to undergraduates participating

in activities related to their majors or career intentions. While previous FUSE grants were ad-hoc in nature and varying in amounts, the McFeeters donation is the impetus for Vogelmann's more formal notification and application process that will broaden the FUSE program's reach.

"I think it's important for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences to offer some financial assistance to deserving students who are motivated to take advantage of special learning opportunities outside of their formal coursework, and I am pleased that my donation will be able to make a difference," observed McFeeters. "As someone who has worked with young people throughout my career in leadership development, I have seen how valuable it is for students to attend seminars and conferences or to take part in programs where they can demonstrate leadership skills." McFeeters earned his UVM degrees in animal science. He worked for 32 years as county agent, research professor and administrator for UVM Extension and nine years as director of Ohio State University's South Centers, regional research and Extension unit.

Now that FUSE will receive more student applications, Vogelmann hopes

that other alumni will follow McFeeters' lead by making contributions to the CALS Fund for Undergraduate Student



Donald McFeeters

Excellence. Because these grants boost students' abilities to attend conferences, seminars, professional workshops and the like, it doesn't take a large donation to make a significant difference.

"Even though our grants are modest, we want to help as many students as possible," said Vogelmann. "With tight finances everywhere – a FUSE grant can make the difference for a student being able to take advantage of a meaningful opportunity or having to pass it by."

Make a donation to the Fund for Undergraduate Student Excellence via the UVM Development Office's secure website at <https://alumni.uvm.edu/giving/support.asp> and by designating CALS FUSE as the preferred gift fund.

~Howard Lincoln

Two Buildings Shape Up: Jeffords & Terrill Halls



Cheryl Dorschner



Cheryl Dorschner

James M. Jeffords Hall rises on the eastern edge of campus to become a Plant Science teaching and research facility. Project supervisors say the structure should be complete in March 2010 and is on schedule and on budget.

Terrill Hall, home to the animal science department and a portion of nutrition and dietetics received an interior transformation, complete systems overhaul and some new classrooms and meeting rooms. Faculty and staff returned last fall.

Homecoming and Family Weekend Highlights

Center for Rural Studies 30th Anniversary Fete



Anna Masozera

RETIREMENT TOO – CALS Center for Rural Studies' 30th anniversary was also an opportunity to celebrate the career for one of its founders, Fred Schmidt. From left, Roger Allbee, Schmidt, Jane Kolodinsky and Bob Paquin.



Anna Masozera

ON CAMERA – Will "Chip" Sawyer gave an overview of the banks of data on Vermont communities that CRS gathers and offers to everyone via its website, <http://crs.uvm.edu>. The day's presentations can be searched for and viewed on CCTV's website at www.cctv.org.



Adina Karabegovic

MADE IT HAPPEN – Notable for their incredible conference planning and carry-out skills, more than for their attire are, CRS/CDAE staff, from left, Michele Cranwell Schmidt, Jessica Hyman, Leslie Barchard, Erin Roche and Anna Masozera.

Fourth Annual CALS Harvest Festival



uvmphoto

IN FULL BLOOM – UVM's Horticulture Club did a brisk business in gloxinias and chrysanthemums at one of everyone's favorite Homecoming weekend events.



Heather Palow

GOT DAIRY themed Homecoming Float by UVM Farms students was distinctive for its folk-art Holstein, udder attachments and shivaree-style milk cartons.



Heather Palow

PRAYING TO POMONA? The Goddess of the Orchards smiled upon the College's apple crop at the Hort Farm in time for cidemaking at the Oct. 4 CALS Harvest Festival, part of Homecoming Weekend.

Savings for Farmers

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While Kerr's research takes a cellular-level look at the disease, John Barlow studies mastitis at the population level. By identifying the characteristics of pathogens, Barlow explores both the diversity of bacterial strains within herds and how specific strains respond to control practices such as antibiotic treatments.

A veterinarian who recently completed a PhD and the faculty advisor for UVM's CREAM program (Cooperative for Real Education in Agricultural Management), Barlow is interested in how antibiotic use for mastitis control influences resistance to antibiotics, and how specific species and strains of bacteria may survive in the mammary gland.

His current work focuses on the major pathogens," *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Streptococcus uberis*, and a recently accepted publication in the journal "Preventive Veterinary Medicine" demonstrates how treatment of mastitis may be applied in dairy herds to reduce pathogen transmission. That means by identifying

the molecular characteristics of dominant bacterial strains in herds, Barlow's work provides information that can be used by farmers to optimize control practices.

Kerr's and Barlow's work is complementary in that each investigator examines different aspects of the host and pathogen interaction during mastitis, and both aim for ways that scientific discovery can be applied in the dairy barn. Their work is funded by the USDA - National Research Initiative.

"The research done in the labs and on the farm here in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences is of great benefit to farmers from Vermont to New Mexico – and in between," says John Burke, interim chair of CALS animal science department. "Our size advantage as a small research university is that we can more quickly change, try new methods and shift our research emphasis as new information becomes available. John and David's work demonstrates that CALS has a long history of mastitis research; we're always looking at new ways to thwart this persistent problem."

~ Cheryl Dorschner

Revitalized UVM Farms

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ideas total nearly \$10.6 million, according to documents recently approved by the UVM trustees.

The next steps: Vogelmann will continue to receive ideas, and a committee will begin plans.

"All ideas are measured against CALS' desire to best serve our students with courses and hands-on experiences, optimize the growing season, not duplicate nearby universities' efforts and run efficient and sustainable operations," he said. "Our ideal is to find research niches that serve students, faculty and Vermonters, while cultivating the strengths of the College's research scientists."

The reaction from key corners of Vermont agriculture has been positive so far.

"This is a very important decision that moves the College forward to help the farmers of Vermont including traditional dairy farmers," said Roger Allbee, secretary of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets and a CALS advisory board member.



Cheryl Dorschner

"I'm pleased that it was a unanimous endorsement of the concept in principle. Much discussion focused on the need to support all segments of agriculture, with a specific emphasis on traditional commercial agriculture," agreed Robert Foster, a CALS advisor and owner of Vermont Natural Agricultural Products, Inc., better known as the maker of Moo Doo. Foster noted that "many of the specific details of the plan will need to be fleshed out to take into account, funding, student programs, research objectives – all of which will need further community dialogue."

~ Cheryl Dorschner

Save the Date: May 9

Newly minted graduates will sit shoulder to shoulder with long-time alumni, award-winning achievers, faculty, staff and friends of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Saturday, May 9, at the Davis Center's Grand Maple Ballroom.

It's a "sit-down dinner" this year for the 16th annual Alumni and Friends Celebration and awards ceremony. Awards include: New Achiever Alumni, Outstanding Alumni, Robert O. Sinclair Cup and Lawrence K. Forcier Outstanding Senior.

Registration and reception begins at 5 p.m., dinner at 6 p.m., awards begin at 6:45 p.m. Tickets cost \$35. Online registration available at <https://alumni.uvm.edu/cals/> or call 1-888-458-8691. RSVP deadline is May 1.

For room reservations at the Sheraton Burlington Hotel and Conference Center at the alumni and friends rate (\$98 plus 10 percent tax). Contact: www.sheraton.com/uvmspecial or 802-865-6630.

Questions, accessibility or dietary issues: call 802-656-0321 or email Robin.Smith@uvm.edu.

Memoriam: Samuel Wiggins

University of Vermont Professor Emeritus Samuel Wiggins died Dec. 2 at his home in Newport News, VA. He was 86. Wiggins came to the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences in 1963 as chair of the horticulture department, whose name changed to plant and soil science. He served in that position for 17 years.

Living adjacent to UVM's Horticultural Research Center in South Burlington, Wiggins conveniently conducted research on fields of chrysanthemums, daylilies, peonies and irises. He established an official weather recording station at the UVM Horticultural Research Farm just west of the Blasberg Building. He retired from UVM in 1984.

Wiggins was educated at the University of Nebraska in agricultural chemistry and at the University of Wisconsin. He taught and conducted research at Iowa State University, where he met Ruth Littlefield, a home economics teacher, whom he married.

Among his professional accomplishments, he was principal horticulturist for the USDA's Cooperative State Research Service in Washington D.C. until 1990. Wiggins was a founding member of the American Horticultural Therapy Association. He was a Fellow in the American Society for Horticultural Science and a 50-year member of the American Society of Agronomy.

Donations in Wiggins' memory may be made to the UVM Horticulture Research Center Fund via mail to: College of Agriculture & Life Sciences Dean's Office, Morrill Hall, 146 University Place, Burlington, VT 05405 or by credit card using the secure UVM Development Office website at <https://alumni.uvm.edu/giving/>.

CALS Kudos



Mike Vayda



Jeanne Harris



Leonard Perry



Jane Kolodinsky



Sylvie Doublie



Abby van den Berg

Animal Science

Zhongzong Pan and an associate published research on autocrine regulation of cell proliferation by estrogen receptor-alpha in estrogen receptor-alpha-positive breast cancer cell lines in "BMC Cancer" in January.

Julie Smith continued presenting grant-funded workshop series in small towns statewide in January and February on "Prepare to Survive a Bio-disaster."

Community Development and Applied Economics

Dan Baker, Chris Koliba, Jane Kolodinsky, Kathleen Liang, Ned McMahon, Tom Patterson and **Qingbin Wang** will publish "Moving Toward a Transdisciplinary Approach in the Land Grant System" in an upcoming "North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture Journal." **Kolodinsky** also published in "Food Policy" in August about attitudes toward rBST-free and organic milk, and an "It's My Turn" op. ed. piece in the "Burlington Free Press" in mid-January urging shoppers to both save money and eat well.

Kathleen Liang delivered checks totaling \$3,655 to six area nonprofits on behalf of students in her Introduction to Community Entrepreneurship course. Student entrepreneurs raised the money with "Dollar Enterprise" businesses that they launched.

Environmental Studies

Senior **Daniel Lim's** honors thesis project, a sustainable landscape design for the space in front of the Davis Center was named the 2009 Senior Class Gift, officials announced in February. If the design is realized, edible fruits and vegetables and diverse plantings will highlight the space. **Mark Starrett** and **Sarah Taylor Lovell** are **Lim's** advisors.

One if by Mail, Two if by Email

If all of the friends, faculty, staff and alumni – some 12,000 of you – chose to receive your "Keeping in Touch" newsletter online, without spending a cent, you would be generously donating more than \$4,000 to the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. And you would reduce your and our "carbon footprint," even though Keeping in Touch newsletter is printed on recycled paper. And we would thank you.

In fact, we could send you free monthly updates, if you'd opt in – instead of receiving the colorful photos, accomplishments and news of your favorite College twice a year.

Just drop us an email with the words "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line to calsdean@uvm.edu

Stephanie Kaza had a "speaking part" in the documentary "Dalai Lama Renaissance" narrated by Harrison Ford, shown nationwide last fall and nominated for an Academy Award. Kaza also presented on Buddhist-Christian studies at the Merton Institute conference in Louisville, KY, Oct. 24-26.

Microbiology and Molecular Genetics

Sylvie Doublie and associates published research findings in "Nucleic Acids Research" in April.

Keith Mintz published two articles in the "Journal of Bacteriology" in 2008. He also published work last summer in the monthly "Infection and Immunity."

Nutrition and Food Sciences

Catherine Donnelly and colleagues published three articles on farmstead cheese food safety in 2008 in the "Journal of Food Protection." She was called on regularly by the popular press, as food recalls swept the country, including ABC News.

Jane Ross, director of dietetics, joined more than 100 professors and graduate students from U.S. and Canadian universities at National Institutes of Health Office of Dietary Supplements practicum in Bethesda, Maryland, late last summer.

Amy Trubek co-authored "Creating the Taste of Place in the United States: Can We Learn from the French", in "Geojournal" in October.

Plant Biology

Jeanne Harris and colleagues published research on node factor and cytokinin signaling in a recent issue of "The Plant Cell."

Abby van den Berg and **Tom Vogelmann** comments to the Associated Press about climate change's effect on fall leaf color blanketed the country last fall, including Huffington Post, San Francisco

Chronicle, MSNBC in Canada and New Zealand.

Brian Beckage's research on the midlevel forest's movement into conifer territory on Vermont mountains was featured in a cover story in the December quarterly "Northern Woodlands."

Plant and Soil Science

Don Ross and fellow scientists will publish this year in "Ecosystems" a comparison of factors influencing soil nitrification rates.

Leonard Perry and his department received the Exemplary Education Award from the national All-America Selections (AAS) program in January for last summer's AAS garden at Burlington's waterfront. The garden features award-winning plants and sneak-peek varieties to be introduced the next year.

Perry spoke at an invited presentation at a prestigious international conference on commercial floriculture propagation in Orlando, Oct. 1, about "Vegetative Propagation and Production of Perennial Liners." He will speak on perennial flower gardening techniques March 20-21 at the historic Adirondack Sagamore Resort on Lake George.

Mark Starrett will speak April 23 on Cary Award winning plants at the Great Gardens and Landscaping Symposium in Lake Placid, NY.

Norman Pellett, emeriti professor, published "Gardener's Quiz Book" in January.

College-Wide Kudos

The Horticultural Research Center's rain garden won first place in Chittenden County in a statewide contest of gardens designed to aid in stormwater management. Rain gardens are designed to divert runoff from storm drains, reducing pollution while nourishing plants and flowers.

UVM's Vermont Institute for Artisan Cheese was awarded a \$99,000 grant to help manage food safety issues for 20 Vermont cheesemakers.

Michael Vayda, associate dean, was one of 20 Fellows of the Food Systems Leadership Institute honored at the annual meeting of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges in Chicago in November. The Fellows completed a two-year program to develop leaders for organizational changes in national integrated food systems.

Cold-Hardy Wine Grape Study Begins in 2009 at UVM Horticulture Farm

- continued from back cover

She explained that after they planted the vines in spring 2007, most of the growth that year was out of sight – underground, the roots got comfortable in their new half-acre plot and spread out to form a stable base for what would become rampant vines, were they not handily pruned.

“In 2007, when we planted these pencil-like canes with their enormous roots, six feet between the vines and 10 feet between the rows, it looked like we planted a field of twigs,” Kingsley-Richards remarked.

Growth in 2008 was a contrasting story. As vines shot up, they were trained onto high-wire, cordon trellis, tended and monitored throughout the growing season.

“There is a lot of work in a vineyard. We assess winter survival, prune out winter damage, monitor growth stages, train, train, train (the vines), assess disease and insect activity and monitor berry development for sugars, pH and total acidity,” says Kingsley-Richards.

That acidity-to-sugar ratio is the challenge in Vermont’s short season, since sweetness develops with time. “(For wines,) you want low acidity and high sugar,” she says.

In August 2008, the payoff – the first crop of wine grapes ripened. But hold the corks. Birds beat the researchers to most of the harvest.

“We’ll figure out how to deal with that,” Kingsley-Richards said practically.

“The research goal is to evaluate the performance of named, released, cold-hardy and disease-resistant wine-grape varieties to determine their potential for Vermont,” explains Richards. UVM’s vineyard represents the coldest winters and coolest growing seasons of its research partners throughout the country.

Eight cultivars – four reds and four whites – are on trial: ‘Corot Noir,’ ‘Frontenac,’ ‘LaCrescent,’ ‘Marquette,’ ‘Prairie Star,’ ‘St. Croix,’ ‘Traminette’ and ‘Vignoles.’ Additionally, a planting of table-grape varieties forms a

buffer around the wine grapes. While table grapes are not part of the multi-state study, they are of great interest to Vermont’s expanding cadre of growers. Table grapes on trial are: ‘Beta,’ ‘Concord,’ ‘Einset,’ ‘Mars,’ ‘Reliance,’ ‘Somerset Seedless,’ ‘Swenson Red’ and ‘Vanessa.’

In 2008, UVM researchers’ records show that ‘La Crescent’ best survived the first winter, followed by ‘Prairie Star.’ More importantly, nearly all the vines survived.

This is all great news for Vermont growers and wine lovers.

Kingsley-Richards estimates that Vermont boasts 13-16 wineries, with the oldest having started in 1995.

Already Berkett works closely with a number of Vermont vineyards and developed a UVM Extension program on cold-climate, wine-grape production for Vermont’s developing wine industry.

Typical of those is Shelburne Vineyard and Winery, where Gail and Kenneth Albert grow five of the varieties in the UVM trials. Their vines hark back a decade, but as Kenneth Albert says, “we’re so far from grape-growing centers, that Lorraine Berkett has been a great help connecting us to resources and holding workshops with top experts. Her expertise in pesticide issues has been valuable as well. There’s nothing like having a university gather data on varieties we’re growing.” UVM students have interned at Shelburne Vineyard and Winery for nearly a decade with the obvious benefit to both parties. But an unexpected bonus Albert notes is that early interns went on to become welcome colleagues and resources. One owns a new Vermont vineyard; another is now one of the prominent winemakers in



‘Frontenac’ grapes ripe for harvest at the UVM Horticulture Farm; 2008 was the first harvest.

Lorraine Berkett

California’s Napa Valley. “We couldn’t have done this (business) without our UVM connections,” says Albert.

“The wine industry in Vermont is just gaining some traction. Agriculture and agri-tourism are huge ... and cheese is one of its main products and attractions. What goes better with cheese than wine?” wrote Mark Chien, wine grape educator for Pennsylvania State University Cooperative Extension, after visiting the UVM vineyard and a sampling of Vermont wineries, including the Alberts’ in August. “The people here are either brave or crazy or both. But one cannot help admire them for their fortitude and persistence under challenging conditions. They are true pioneers, forging a commercial wine industry with real and really good wines in a place where it was not realistically possible even a decade ago. It is thrilling to be here and share in their enthusiasm.”

The UVM Cold-Climate, Wine-Grape website is : <http://pss.uvm.edu/grape>. Vine phenology and IPM News updates appear during each growing season. Funding for this vineyard research comes from USDA, EPA, Viticulture Consortium-East, the Vermont Agricultural Experiment Station and UVM Extension.

~ Cheryl Dorschner

Purple is the New Red on Farms Across Vermont

In early March, when the bare landscape is leafless but not lifeless, only a keen eye will notice the change. Buds begin to swell along the stems of the ‘Vignoles’ wine grapes – truly a harbinger of spring in a new vineyard in Vermont. It’s pruning time, and time to see what survived the Vermont winter.

Sarah Kingsley-Richards has just such keen eyes. She records this baby step for ‘Vignoles’ and for each of the cultivars that she observes as part of her work at UVM’s Horticultural Research Farm – eight kinds of wine grapes and as many table grapes. The dates of bud swell, bud break, new shoots, bloom, the formation of grapes and other markers of growth known as “phenology,” form queues and columns in her notebooks. None of it escapes her attention.

Kingsley-Richards is a research technician for the University of Vermont’s new grape growing trials, which will get underway in earnest in 2009 as a multi-state research project. Under the



Lorraine Berkett

UVM Horticultural Research Center produced its first crop of cold-hardy, short-season wine grapes in 2008.

direction of UVM Professor Lorraine Berkett, she and Research Specialist Terry Bradshaw, as well as other members of the “UVM Grape Team” have prepared for two years on this collaborative research.

“The vineyard really took shape this year,” Kingsley-Richards told a group of colleagues at a seminar on campus in December.

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