Corvins national runner-up at convention

David and Meghan Corvin of Dresden, Tenn. can't remember a time when agriculture wasn't a vital part of their lives.

“I love to be outdoors and be around farm animals, that’s what I’ve done my whole life,” said David. “That’s been Meghan’s experience, too.”

That love for agriculture and sharing it with young people recently earned David and Meghan the Excellence in Agriculture award at the Tennessee Farm Bureau Convention.

The award recognizes successful individuals, 35 or younger, who are involved in production agriculture, but who don't farm as their primary occupation.

Criteria for the award include farm involvement as well as participation in Farm Bureau and other community organizations. As state winners, the Corvins received a John Deere Gator, compliments of Farm Credit Mid-America.

After winning their state competition, the Corvins competed for national honors at the American Farm Bureau Federation’s annual convention, held in January.

David and Meghan met in college while studying agriculture at Virginia Tech. After graduation, they moved to Kansas, where David managed an Angus ranch.

Then in 2005, the couple relocated to northwest Tennessee after Meghan was offered a position as head coach of the University of Tennessee at Martin’s NCAA equestrian team.

David took a position as a technical service advisor for Tyson Foods, where he works directly with 23 farm families that annually grow 10 million broilers for McDonald’s.

The couple also operates their own small, diverse farm where they have a 25 cow-calf herd consisting of Angus-Simmental genetics.

The couple are also involved in a variety of community activities, many of them involving youth. Meghan conducts riding camps and clinics and David speaks to more than five thousand young people each year, bringing them the positive message of today’s agriculture.
Rarely do athletics and agriculture mix, but the partnership is a winning combination at UTM.

In the fall of 2010, Skyhawk golf coach, Jerry Carpenter, and former UTM golfer and graduate, Bill Rhodes, had a chance meeting that would have a significant impact on the athletic and agriculture departments at UTM. The two had a vision for a golf practice facility and with the contribution of many people, the dream allows limitless opportunities for success for students of all fields.

During Christmas break of the same year, Carpenter and Dr. Wesley Totten put together a plan for the facility and a list of things that would be needed. Rhodes met them half way in covering the costs. With the land secured, ground broke for the building in April 2011 and in June for the practice golf course.

The dirt work for the course was done by Green Tee Golf, a highly esteemed club that also does the work for the Augusta National. By October 2011, one calendar year later, the pipe dream was a reality. According to Totten, this kind of project usually takes two years to complete.

“It was through the great leadership of Dr. Jerry Gresham, Phil Dane, Lorie Donavant, Mindy Miller and Al Hooten that this was possible. They believed in us,” says Totten.

This state of the art practice facility has already “seen fruit”, according to Totten. The golf team has seen two of the best recruiting classes they’ve had and in 2012 the team won their own Grover Page Invitational, a tournament in honor of former golf coach, who Rhodes played under while at UTM.

Not only is it used for practice, but also for science. This outdoor lab provides experience. With its $50,000 equipment, $45,000 irrigation system, and USGA putting construction, students are getting hands on learning.

“This is everything they will be working with in the real world. It allows them experience with equipment, and also allows them to study USGA putting construction,” says Totten.

It is the site of research conducted by the partnership of a graduate student and an undergraduate student. Colton Jones, University Scholars and honor student, is using the facility to perform research, required from the honors program, in his future field.

The band is also using the building as a practice facility until the new fine arts building is completed.

“This is a long term partnership between athletics and agriculture,” says Totten. “This is something that is unheard of and especially in one calendar year. So many people worked together on this project and it is because of that, that this has been such a success for UTM.”
Culvahouse’s childhood paved way for UTM career

By Jesi Ogg

Elige Culvahouse has traveled all over the United States, but teaching at UTM for 30 years made Martin his home.

Growing up on a dairy farm in Meigs County was a hard life for Culvahouse, but he was glad his family did it. It was his background in the dairy industry that made him an excellent prospect for a teaching position at UTM.

Culvahouse received a call in 1954 from Professor Wiley, head of the dairy department at UT Knoxville. It was a position filling a leave of absence at UTM for two years.

At the end of his term, Culvahouse was told there was a position there for him if he wanted to stay. He stayed at UTM for 30 years teaching dairying courses, introduction to farm animals and reproduction physiology of farm animals.

During his 30 years, Culvahouse enjoyed watching students develop and succeed.

“It was a thrilling time while I was at UTM. I was there when we hit 1,000 students,” Culvahouse said.

When he began teaching, UTM had 600 students, and half of them were enrolled in agriculture. He also noted that the small school and personal touch were his favorites parts about this campus.

Culvahouse retired in 1986, but not before receiving the National Alumni Association Outstanding Teacher Award in 1982.

While living in Meigs County, Culvahouse made the move from Meigs County High School to Sweetwater High School his senior year. It was a good thing he did, too, because that is where he met his wife of 66 years, Evelyn.

“We were classmates and towards the end of the year I asked her on a date. Maybe to the junior/senior prom, I can’t remember,” he says, laughingly.

The two were married while Culvahouse was in the Army, which he joined right after high school. While serving, he served time in the Philippines, Tokyo and Korea with the occupational forces. Culvahouse’s GI bill paid for his B.S. degree from Knoxville.

When he retired, he and his wife bought an airstream trailer and took up traveling the United States.

“We’ve been to almost every state, except maybe five or six,” he said. “We’ve also been to Alaska and Hawaii, not with the airstream of course. Some of the trips were taken before retirement.”

Currently, Culvahouse is living with one of his daughters in Sevierville where she and her family own Alewine Pottery outside of Gatlinburg.

Pictures, story ideas, and other newsletter contributions can be e-mailed to Jesi Ogg at jeslogg@ut.utm.edu
In January, a group of students and faculty traveled to Magdelena Milpas Altas in Guatemala for a service learning trip. The group worked closely with the 12x12 Love Project who primarily builds homes from concrete blocks for impoverished families.

The goal of 12x12 was to build 12 homes in 12 months, however, over 2.5 years, they have built 100 homes. The group from UT Martin helped begin the 100th home.

Other projects the group participated in was the installation of two "rocket" stoves to reduce smoke in the kitchens of the Guatemalan families. The UT Martin group also painted two homes and built a kitchen out of corrugated tin and lumber. In Guatemala, the families have a kitchen that is separate from their homes and they cook over an open fire.

In addition to the service projects, the group spent one day sightseeing in the colonial city of Antigua. Ziplining, mule rides and a tour of a coffee plantation were some of the activities available to the group. They also did some shopping and ate at a wonderful French restaurant. Sandy and Joey Mehlhorn were the trip leaders and they hope to make this an annual trip. If you would like more information about the trip or future trips, please contact Sandy Mehlhorn at smehlhorn@utm.edu.

Mehlhorns lead UTM travel study

The UTM Livestock Judging team recently returned from Denver, where they competed at the National Western Stock Show Collegiate Judging Contest. The team did well against several big name schools. The seven-member team consisting of Dakota Brasher, Brandon Fletcher, Gina Locke, Mary Wortham, Jacki Cook, and Jacque Vaugh, battled freezing temperatures to judge. Sophomore Gina Locke was the high scoring individual for the team.

The team prepared for their first competition of 2013 with nightly practices while school was out for Christmas break and weekend practices while school is in session. Led by Coach Jason Duggin, the team travels to various breeders in the area to examine livestock. While cattle are relatively easy to find, swine classes produce a bit of a challenge.

“We will probably travel to Arkansas to view sire classes since there aren’t that many in this area, or at least none like they’ll see in while judging,” says Duggin. “We want to make it as close to the contest as possible.”

This spring, the team will travel to Dixie Nationals in Jackson, MS, and the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Each member is only allowed one year on the team to ensure schools have equal chances. The end of the contest season will be at NAILE in Louisville, KY. in the fall.

For more information regarding the livestock judging team or questions about joining, you can contact Jason Duggin.