



Clarence Watson (left), associate director of research, and James Trapp, associate director of extension, are new administrators for the Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. (Photo by Gail Banzet)

DASNR associate directors primed for progress

By Gail Banzet, Edna, Kan.

One college, two professors and 60 years of leadership experience have combined to preserve Oklahoma State University's land-grant mission. The OSU Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources welcomed two associate directors to its administrative team in 2006.

Dedicated leaders in agriculture, James Trapp and Clarence Watson joined Ed Miller this past spring to manage extension, research and teaching programs within DASNR. With diverse backgrounds in education and career experience, both administrators found a home at OSU.

James Trapp

James Trapp, former OSU agricultural economics department head, became the new associate director for the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service on May 1, 2006.

After serving as the interim associate director for one year, Trapp accept-

ed the permanent position of managing agricultural extension programs.

"When I started, I just wanted to learn more about how the division operated," Trapp said. "But the longer I held the position, the more I began to enjoy it and see challenges."

A native of Russell, Kan., Trapp attended Fort Hays State University for two years before finishing his bachelor's degree in agricultural economics at Kansas State University in 1969. After receiving a master's degree in agricultural economics from K-State, he joined the U.S. Army and served as a second lieutenant at Fort Benning, Ga.

Trapp continued his education at Michigan State University, where he received a second master's degree in economics. He completed the final phase of his education at Michigan State in 1976 when he earned his doctorate in agricultural economics. With four degrees under his belt, he set his sights on Stillwater.

"I started as an assistant professor

in the agricultural economics department and rose through the ranks to regents professor," Trapp said. "I worked as a faculty member for 24 years where I taught and advised at the undergraduate and graduate levels."

As a professor, Trapp also conducted research on areas such as beef marketing and production. In 2000, he accepted the position of OSU agricultural economics department head.

Trapp said his experiences as a professor and department head are valuable to his new role in DASNR.

"It gives me a thorough understanding of Oklahoma agriculture and the way the division of agriculture serves the industry and its students," Trapp said. "My administrative experience has taught me how to organize programs, work with people and manage budgets."

Trapp's duties involve communicating with county extension offices and extension agents or, "county educators," on a daily basis.



EXTENSION



RESEARCH

James Trapp (left) works with county extension programs across Oklahoma on a daily basis. Clarence Watson devotes his time to research projects and oversees 17 Oklahoma branch experiment stations. (Photos by Gail Banzet)

"I oversee the operation of about 40 on-campus faculty with extension appointments and roughly 330 off-campus county educators," Trapp said. "I have four district directors who work with the county educators and then report to me."

Accepting a position in extension is like returning to his roots, Trapp said. He is the product of a livestock and farming background where 4-H and county extension agents played an influential role in his life.

"I work to provide leadership to extension by improving existing programs and developing new ones to meet the needs of the people of Oklahoma," Trapp said. "For example, some of our major new programs in the last year emphasize canola adoption, goat production and drought management."

After a 30-year career at OSU, Trapp is still devoted to the university that gave him his start. His wife, Carol, and their two children, Scott and Wendy, received degrees from OSU.

Trapp said there is always room for fresh ideas and improvements.

"Looking to the future, extension needs to be more aware of our ability to serve urban as well as rural clientele," Trapp said. "The job of extension is to take the university to the people, which means we take research that's done and make people aware of it and how to apply it to their situation."

Trapp said OSU extension pro-

grams are useful resources of information for Oklahomans.

"Because our county educators work and live across the state with the people of Oklahoma, we are also a very good source of information to guide researchers," Trapp said. "We can advise them on what research will help the people of Oklahoma the most."

Clarence Watson

Another educated agriculturalist, Clarence Watson began his 30-year professional career at Mississippi State University, but today, he resides in Stillwater. Watson's new position of associate director for the Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station became effective on April 27, 2006.

As chief operating officer for the Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station, Watson manages budgets, research reporting and research direction while contributing to final policy decisions.

"I serve as a liaison for commodity groups, and I provide general administrative support for faculty and staff," Watson said. "I do a lot of strategic planning and oversee the management of 17 Oklahoma branch experiment stations."

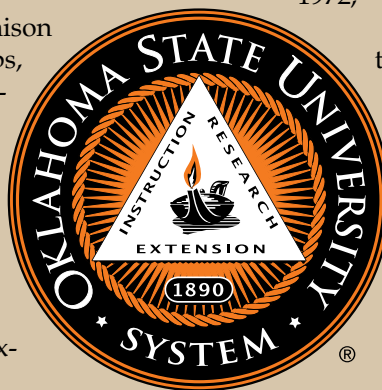
Communication with legislative members, producers, banking organizations and other external clientele is important to Watson, along with regular communication with DASNR department heads and faculty.

"I have visions for the Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station," Watson said. "OSU is a leader in agricultural research, and I want to maintain that. I would like to enhance partnerships with sister agencies and institutions such as the United States Department of Agriculture and the Department of Energy."

Born in Stillwater, Watson is tied to Oklahoma, but he spent his childhood in southern New Mexico where his father taught agronomy at New Mexico State University for 25 years.

"My father was an agronomist and graduate of Oklahoma A&M, but I received my bachelor's degree in agronomy from New Mexico State in 1972," Watson said.

Watson earned his master's in agronomy two years later and completed his doctorate in crop science at Oregon State University in 1976. That same year, he began an assistant professorship at Mississippi State University in agronomy, working as a forage grass breeder.



"I was head of the experimental statistics unit for 10 years and served as the interim head of the plant and soil sciences department in 2000," Watson said.

Working with congressional staff and legislative members, Watson was the associate director of the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Experiment Station for four years before retiring in 2006.

When Watson was offered a position in DASNR, he and his wife, Alice, packed up and made the journey to OSU. Their two sons stayed behind for their own jobs: Ethan in Atlanta and Tim in Omaha, Neb.

"I welcomed the challenge of coming to a new place," he said. "I saw some areas where I thought I could contribute, and I was confident OSU would be a positive environment in which to work."

Similar to Trapp, Watson accepted his new position to make a difference. He said now is the time to restaff and replace vacancies and even redirect positions in DASNR departments.

"I'd like to see more incentive pro-

grams such as workshops or awards," Watson said. "There should be more start-up opportunities for new faculty, and I would like to see more funding available for research."

Watson also said he appreciates his fellow associate directors and the efforts staff members demonstrate to develop students.

"I've really been impressed with the loyalty and enthusiasm of the alumni and students here," he said. "A lot more resources are being put into student development, and recruiting efforts are strong."

Ed Miller, associate dean of academic programs, completes the three-prong system of teaching, research and extension in DASNR.

"Dr. Trapp has a great sense of history, and this is important in establishing a vision for the future," Miller said. "Dr. Watson brings excellence in research and new ideas to the division. With this combination, I am looking forward to working with Trapp and Watson on cooperative programs in teaching, research and extension."

The three associate directors are

led by Robert Whitson, vice president of OSU agricultural programs and dean and director of DASNR.

"Dr. Watson's experience includes an impressive record of research achievements and leadership accomplishments that can be applied to our experiment station system," Whitson said. "Dr. Trapp's agricultural roots run deep, and his knowledge of the land-grant system and interdisciplinary issues are tremendous assets to DASNR and the cooperative extension service."

Whitson said all three associate directors are a good fit for the division and its continued success.

"We are lucky to have a top-notch leadership team, and I am confident Dr. Trapp and Dr. Watson will greatly contribute to the success of DASNR," Whitson said.

Watson, a new face in a new place, and Trapp, a long-time professor and friend of DASNR, are primed to contribute to Oklahoma agriculture and preserve OSU's land-grant university traditions. ☺