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By The Numbers

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ISU Extension’s corn production team has completed a new publication, “Corn Growth and Development,” replacing “How a Corn Plant Develops,” the previous Iowa State publication that served as the standard reference on corn growth and development for more than 40 years. The first publication, written by ISU agronomists of previous eras, established the basics still used today for staging and communicating about crop development. The late John Hanway, a well-known ISU agronomist, wrote the first version in 1966, which was followed by a rewrite in 1982 by Steven Ritchie, Hanway and Garren Benson. Authors of “Corn Growth and Development” are Lori Abendroth, ISU Extension agricultural specialist; Roger Elmore, ISU Extension corn specialist; Matthew Boyer, former ISU agronomy graduate student; and Stephanie Marlay, ISU agronomy specialist. The 2011 publication provides an in-depth look at corn, from the moment the seed is planted all the way to maturity. It takes much of what is known about crop physiology and combines that with field agronomics to provide students, corn growers and agronomists current, relevant and technical information. To purchase a copy of the new publication or photographs visit www.ag.iastate.edu/stories.

Biofuels Digest named Iowa State its pick as Institutional Research Facility of the Year. The publication cited the BioCentury Research Farm for its integrated research approach. The farm provides researchers with the opportunity to integrate harvesting, transportation, storage and processing, while offering facilities for outreach programming and industry collaboration. It is located 10 miles west of Ames at the Iowa State Agronomy and Agricultural and Biosystems Research Farm. (Read about a collaborative biomass research project underway at the farm on page 34.)
$20 MILLION GRANT PUTS IOWA STATE AT THE HELM OF NATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE RESEARCH

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA) has awarded a $20 million grant to Iowa State University for regional research on keeping Midwest cornfields resilient in the face of future climate uncertainties. Iowa State researchers will coordinate a team of 42 scientists from 10 land-grant universities and two USDA Agricultural Research Service institutions to collect and analyze data over the next five years. Researchers will begin collecting data on carbon, nitrogen and water movement this spring from 21 research sites. Special equipment will be used to monitor greenhouse gas emissions at many of the sites. The team will integrate field and climate data to create models and evaluate crop management practices. “The goal is to create a database of plot, field, farm and watershed data that can be combined with climate data to develop scenarios based on different practices,” says Lois Wright Morton, Iowa State professor of sociology and project director. “Then, farmers in the region will have opportunities to participate in on-farm research and evaluate research models.” The USDA-NIFA program is focused on decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing carbon sequestration. The long-term national outcome is to reduce the use of energy, nitrogen and water by 10 percent and increase carbon sequestration by 15 percent through resilient agriculture and forest production systems.

CAMPAIGN TO WOO PROSPECTIVE PARENTS WINS ADDY AWARD

The Parents’ Postcard Campaign coordinated by college student services and marketing, and designed by ZLR IGNITION, received a gold ADDY award from the American Advertising Federation of Des Moines in February. Judges from around the country reviewed nearly 300 creative pieces. Entries receiving a gold ADDY are automatically forwarded to the district level competition. Ads similar to the postcards appear on the back of each issue of STORIES.

LIZARD’S LOCATION LENGTHENS (OR SHORTENS) PREGNANCY

ISU researchers have found the eggs of some lizards can take a few months to hatch, while others in the same species fully develop within several weeks. Researchers in the lab of Fred Janzen, ecology, evolution and organismal biology, recently published a paper in the American Naturalist journal on their work on geographic variation in gestation of lizards and turtles. They believe environmental factors in the various regions may have led to the evolution of differing gestation periods. The published research, led by Wei-Guo Du, a visiting scientist from Hangzhou Normal University, China, and ISU postdoc Dan Warner, has made news—including a spot in the New York Times.

A new study offers hope for children born with a rare genetic disease, according to a paper published by the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Matthew Ellinwood, animal science, led the research focused on a disorder called mucopolysaccharidosis type I, or MPS I. The disorder is caused by the lack of a key enzyme that breaks down substances the body needs to help build normal nerves, bone, cartilage, tendons, corneas, skin and connective tissue. Ellinwood has been studying the disease for 12 years in dogs, which also suffer from the disorder. He and collaborators demonstrated that beginning replacement of the enzyme shortly after birth prevented irreversible damage caused by the disease.

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