

Montana Agriculture in Volatile Times

*Procrastinator Theater, MSU-Bozeman
282B Strand Union Building
Friday, October 28, 2011*

Speaker Biographies



Dr. Douglas Steele

Dr. Douglas L. Steele is the vice provost and director of Extension for Montana State University and Vice President for External Relations. Prior to beginning his current position, Steele served as assistant director and state 4-H program leader at Colorado State University, and as an Extension specialist at Purdue University. He began his Extension career in 1981 as a county agent in Texas and then was hired as a state specialist in the Texas 4-H Office. Steele holds a doctoral degree in educational human resource development from Texas A&M, a master's in agriculture from West Texas State University, and a bachelor's degree in animal science/agribusiness from Panhandle State University. Some noted honors received by Steele include the Epsilon Sigma Phi Visionary Leadership Award, the F.A. Anderson Distinguished Service Award, and the USDA Group Honor Award for Excellence. Doug and his wife Lori and their four children reside in Bozeman, Montana, and take advantage of many of the outdoor recreational opportunities that the area offers.



Myles Watts

Myles Watts is a professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics at Montana State University. After receiving a Ph.D. at the University of Nebraska, he joined the Montana State faculty in 1978. He served as Department Head for 17 years, and his current responsibilities include classroom teaching, research, and outreach education. Dr. Watts has served in various editorial capacities for the *Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics*. He has also received multiple honors and awards from professional associations including the Distinguished Scholar Award from the Western Agricultural Economics Association. He has advised many governments and private organizations, including large international reinsurance companies on an array of financial issues, mostly focusing on agricultural insurance. He serves a variety of nonprofit economic education groups as a board member or in other leadership positions. He was recently appointed to the board of directors of Farmer Mac. His family still owns and operates the cattle and wheat ranch where he was raised in southeastern Montana.



George Haynes

George is an Agricultural Policy Specialist with the Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics at Montana State University. Prior to his current position, George was a professor with the MSU Department of Health and Human Development. George earned a doctorate in consumer economics and housing from Cornell University in 1993. His contributions to the field of consumer finance and economics have been in the area of family business finance. These lines of research have produced over 35 refereed journal articles, five book chapters, over 50 presentations and over 45 other monographs. An important contribution of George's family business finance work has been examining the intermingling of family and business financial resources. This research has been supported by funding from the National Science Foundation, U.S. Small Business Administration, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station.



Doug Young

Doug Young received a PhD from the University of Wisconsin – Madison and has been a faculty member at Montana State University since 1977 (Professor Emeritus, 2010). He has been a visiting professor at the University of Wisconsin, Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, and five universities abroad. Doug's research focuses on two areas: alcohol control policies, and state and local government finances. His writing has appeared in academic journals such as the *National Tax Journal* and *Public Finance* as well as local outlets including the *Montana Business Quarterly* and *Montana Policy Review*. He was a member of the Governor's Income Tax Advisory Council and served on the Department of Revenue's Tax Reform Review Group during the 2000's.



Vince Smith

Vincent H. Smith is Professor of Economics in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics at Montana State University and co-director of MSU's Agricultural Marketing Policy Center. He received his Ph.D. from North Carolina State University in 1987 and his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Manchester in 1970 and 1971. Professor Smith's current research program examines agricultural trade and domestic policy issues, with a particular focus on agricultural insurance, agricultural science policy, domestic and world commodity markets, risk management, and agricultural trade policy. He has authored nine books and monographs, including his widely known work with Dr. Barry Goodwin on *The Economics of Crop insurance and Disaster Aid*, and published over 100 articles on agricultural and other policy and economic issues. His contributions have been recognized nationally through multiple national awards for outstanding research programs. In 2008, he became a *Distinguished Scholar* of the Western Agricultural Economics Association. From January through July of 2010, he spent a sabbatical in the USDA Office of the Chief Economist examining the supply side of the U.S. federal agricultural insurance program.



Anton Bekkerman

Anton Bekkerman joined the Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics at Montana State University as an Assistant Professor of Economics after receiving his Ph.D. in Economics from North Carolina State University in 2009. His research interests include price analysis in grain markets, the economics of agricultural marketing, and applied econometrics with a concentration on spatial modeling. Anton's recent works focus on evaluating market-based risk management of invasive species, modeling grain price behavior in spatially separated markets, improving producers' price hedging ability using futures markets, and understanding the impacts of consumers' quality perceptions on bull prices. He has also performed research in information economics and across disciplines, investigating consumer behaviors in bull auctions and assessing the benefits of adopting cover crop farming practices. On campus, Anton teaches Econometrics and the Economics of Agricultural Marketing; he is also the advisor to the Collegiate Young Farmers and Ranchers student organization.



Eric Belasco

Eric Belasco joined the Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics at Montana State University in August 2011. Prior to this appointment, he was an Assistant Professor in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics at Texas Tech University from 2007 - 2011. He received both his M.S. and Ph.D. in Economics from North Carolina State University in 2005 and 2007, respectively. His main research interests are in the areas of agricultural marketing, risk management, and applied econometrics. The bulk of his research is focused on characterizing variability in cattle profits, production, and marketing. Examples of this research include evaluations into grid pricing risk, the use of forward contracts in mitigating profit risk, modeling multivariate risk in cattle production, and characterizing the link between weather and cattle production indicators. His research also extends to health economics, where he conducts cost/benefit analysis for different medical treatments using simulation to evaluate issues associated with cancer, chronic kidney disease, and nutrition.



Duane Griffith

Duane Griffith is an Extension Farm Management Specialist with Montana State University. His interests include production economics and financial analysis covering all aspects of farm and ranch business performance. His educational curriculum includes crop and livestock enterprise analysis, machinery management, marketing of agricultural commodities, complete farm and ranch financial analysis and emerging risk management issues for agricultural operations. Duane also develops on-farm decision aids for farmers and ranchers to analyze their operations. These decision aids are typically in the form of Excel spreadsheets and are available for download from the Web address listed below.

Duane is also involved in research projects such as the economic implications of adopting farming practices for carbon sequestration in farmed soils at the individual producer level and using livestock grazing to manage weed and insect infestations on agricultural operations. Web address: www.montana.edu/softwaredownloads



Jeff Jacobsen

Dr. Jeff Jacobsen is currently the Dean and Director of the College of Agriculture/Montana Agricultural Experiment Station, Montana State University (MSU) in Bozeman, Montana. Previously he has served as Interim Dean, Department Head of the Department of Land Resources and Environmental Sciences and a MSU faculty member with Soil Science expertise since 1986. Dr. Jacobsen's teaching experiences include multi-media educational programs in nutrient management, water quality, and environmental sciences while serving as a MSU Extension Specialist and instructor for on-campus courses in Nutrient Cycling, Applied Surficial Rehabilitation, Introductory Soil Science, and others. Dr. Jacobsen's research focused on addressing nutrient management and cycling in cropland, rangeland and natural systems with goals of understanding the efficient uses, environmental protection, ecology, and optimum economic returns. He had numerous publications on these topics in addition to self-study modules, fertilizer and water quality BMP sheets, videos, MontGuides, bulletins, slide presentations, and popular press articles. Dr. Jacobsen has a B.S. in Soil Science from California Polytechnic State University, a M.S. in Agronomy from Colorado State University, and a Ph.D. in Soil Science from Oklahoma State University. He has received numerous national awards for educational materials and their impact. In addition, Dr. Jacobsen has been recognized by the American Society of Agronomy (2000) and the Soil Science Society of America (2005) for career excellence through the designation of a Fellow for each society. He has two grown children.