On Saturday, October 22, the AgEds 450 class held a celebration tailgate at ISU’s homecoming game against Texas A&M. The class’s public relations committee started planning the event last fall. We had T-shirts for sale, BBQ pork for lunch, and Ag 450 Farm Koozies to take home. We were fortunate enough to have the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Dr. Wendy Wintersteen, present to speak. The AgEds department chair, Dr. Wade Miller, made an appearance along with other ISU professors and staff. Everyone enjoyed themselves and the food. Current and past class members alike spent three hours sharing stories and experiences from now all the way back to 1959 about the Ag 450 farm.

New at the Ag 450 Farm

Everyone at the farm has been working hard this semester and we have a lot of new things to show for it. The garage attached to the farm operator’s house has a new steel roof, put on by the class during a teaching activity from the Buildings and Grounds Committee. Rachel Enfield the PR Committee members put together a new barn quilt in ISU colors! This semester we also started selling Ag450 “Keeping it Rural” T-shirts to help raise money and promote the farm. Finally, our Farm Operator Greg Vogel now has a new grandson.

Future Changes for the Ag 450 Farm

The AgEds 450 class has been expanding and this semester there were 37 students enrolled. There are over 50 students signed up to take the course in the spring. Because this increased class size is bigger than the current farm classroom, the structure of the course may have to be altered. With this in mind we have started to consider the need for a new, larger, classroom. In 1988 this same challenge moved class out of the farmhouse basement to the Murray Classroom. What’s next?
Custom Operations

During the semester the Custom Operation committee focused mainly on repairing the hog finishing facilities, custom soybean combining, fall tillage, and manure applications. They also did some updating in the hog finisher with a new Hotsy pressure washer, and installed a vital alarm system to alert the farm operator if anything should go wrong with our swine heating and cooling systems.

Finance

The main goal for the fall committee was to keep up to date on the cash flow and bills. Keeping good quality records for the transition between semesters remains a constant focus. Members worked with the net worth, monthly income and expense sheets, cash flow, and worked to minimize errors. For their experiential teaching activity, they led committees in a budget-building workshop. It definitely has been busy!

Crops

The crops committee has had a great fall. The Ag 450 farm had strong yields, with 195 bu/acre corn yield and 62 bu/acre soybean yield. The crops committee completed purchasing seed corn for early discount to be planted in spring. Additionally, all of the fertilizer inputs have been contracted for 2012. With the beautiful fall weather, the crops committee has had the time to remain focused and busy.

Public Relations

Aside from the tailgate, the PR committee has been busy working on implementing various social media. We now have a Twitter account, @ISUAg450Farm, blog and Facebook page which have all been kept up-to date with pictures and activities from the farm. All of these and more are on our website, www.ag450farm.iastate.edu. The PR committee’s also been working to increase farm tours and exposure.

Machinery

The machinery committee has been very busy this semester keeping the farm’s machinery moving. The farm currently leases three tractors from Van Wall Implement including an 8360RT and is implementing the online JD Link system. They also installed a new scale from Scale Tec on the farm’s grain cart.

Marketing

Throughout the Fall 2011 semester, we have experience a very bullish commodity market that makes our job on the Ag 450 farm moderately easy and enjoyable. We were also able to harvest a bumper crop that will enable the committee to generate the revenue needed to continue improving the financial state of the Ag 450 Farm.