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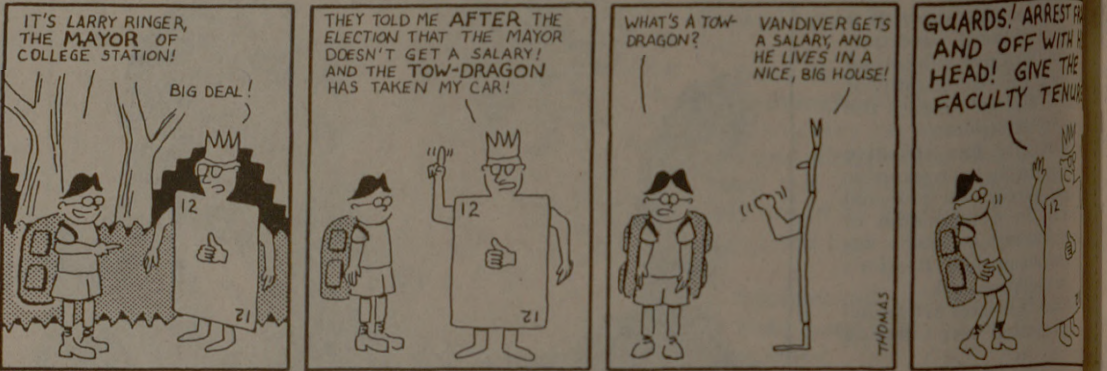
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**A&M professors present new research program**

Researchers say Texas economy may find shrimp the agricultural 'crop of the future'

By Bob Grube  
 Staff Writer

Although the Texas economy isn't exactly booming these days because of the state's dependence on the slumping oil industry, three Texas A&M professors think they have at least part of the answer to pump life back into the economy.

The professors described research programs that they believe will boost Texas' sagging economy at the "Shaping the New Economy of Texas" symposium at the Memorial Student Center Wednesday afternoon.

Dr. Addison Lawrence, professor of mariculture and a project leader for the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station at Corpus Christi, said the shrimp mariculture program could turn shrimp into the agricultural crop of the future for Texas.

"Shrimp is the new kid on the block as far as Texas agriculture is concerned," he said.

Lawrence said development of the shrimp mariculture industry could solve many of the state's economic problems.

"The potential profit for shrimp is high," Lawrence said. "The profit margin for shrimp is about \$400 per acre, compared to about \$250 per acre for grain sorghum and about \$50 per acre for cattle."

While the profit margin for shrimp is high, the crop value is even higher.

"The crop value of shrimp is \$2,000-to-\$4,000 per acre," Lawrence said, "as compared to \$350-to-\$500 per acre for cotton."

While agriculture could solve some of the state's economic problems, Dr. D.C. Kraemer, a professor of veterinary physiology and pharmacology, thinks transplanting embryos in livestock could also be part of the answer.

"In our efforts to improve the economy in Texas, we must revitalize industries that we have previously concentrated our efforts in," Kraemer said. "The industry we must look to revitalize in Texas is the beef industry."

Kraemer has done extensive work in the embryo transplanting field, and he said transplants can preserve endangered species, aid in the management of human infertility and produce superior livestock by selective breeding.

"The honeymoon with embryo transplanting is over," Kraemer said. "Before, it was primarily used for neatness. Now it will be used for economic gain."

Dr. Henry Taylor says he can help the state's economy.

Taylor, a professor in the Department of Electrical Engineering and a Fellow of the Optical Society of America, said the field of electro-optics is fairly new to Texas A&M and is on the way to becoming a major industry not only in Texas but in the world.

The field of electro-optics comprises fiber optics, integrated circuits and diode lasers. These applications are used in telecommunications, military defense mechanisms, laser surgery, and geophysical exploration.

There are currently six projects at A&M researching electro-optics and the department is expected to be one of the best in the world, Taylor said.

**Three A&M engineering professors show research in space commercialization field**

By Sondra Pickard  
 Senior Staff Writer

Three Texas A&M engineering professors Wednesday presented ongoing research in the commercialization of space including space power systems, robotics and closed life support systems.

Dr. Alton Patton, professor of electrical engineering, Dr. Norm Griswold, associate professor of electrical engineering and Dr. Oran Nicks, director of the A&M Space Research Center, were participants in the two-day economic symposium at A&M focusing on the importance of university commercial research.

Griswold focused on the role of vision in robotics, which he said had special applications to industries both in space and on Earth.

Scenes are more complex than they seem, he said, and to get a machine to see, several questions must first be answered — such as the nature of the output desired, the amount of control over the scene and lighting and the complexity of the scene.

The ideal would be to mimic in a machine the way vision is processed in the human brain, Griswold said, but attaining speed is one of the biggest problems.

Some of the potential applications for robotics vision research include autonomous vehicle guidance systems for land, air and sea vehicles and more advanced robot vision.

Griswold also mentioned applications to high-tech industry in Texas, such as use in clean rooms where parts are manufactured. He said humans naturally bring in dust and debris, but a robot is sterile and never leaves the room, thereby increasing production.

Robots with vision could also aid in agriculture and food processing, Griswold said. They could be used for sorting fruits, vegetables and grain, and could check for ripeness, quality and size.

Patton discussed terrestrial power systems, and emphasized that to sustain a manned presence in space, larger and more powerful systems will be needed.

His presentation included potential advantages of energy systems in space, such as reducing weight and cost of a spacecraft in the space shuttle.

Of the total spacecraft mass, 10 percent is made up of a power source. Patton suggested better independent electric components to reduce the mass and thereby greatly reduce the mass and cost of the space station.

Nicks presented information on closed life support systems as a means of sustaining life in space long periods of time.

He said designing a space station that is 100 percent closed is not likely to be the first place to experiment with closed systems because of its gravity and proximity to Earth.

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