

Fall 2017

ANSC, Fall 2017

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Department of Animal Sciences

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Citation

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Department of Animal Sciences. (2017). ANSC, Fall 2017. *Animal Science Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.uark.edu/anscnews/12>

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fall 2017

ANSC

{animal science}



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In the Loop



Michael Looper
Department Head

Happy Holidays from the Department of Animal Science! This is a busy time of year; the semester is winding down and students are preparing for final exams. And yes, there have been a lot of other things going on at the University besides Razorback athletics!

Overall student numbers continue to increase in the Department with enrollment up almost 8% this fall. Faculty have been busy through the summer and fall semesters.

The Arkansas 4-H Veterinary Science Program conducted its 3rd annual camp at the Pauline Whitaker Animal Science Center in June. Thanks to Dr. Heidi Ward for coordinating those efforts.

During the summer, Bryan Kutz and Dr. Chelsey Ahrens hosted the first Arkansas Show Camp in Fayetteville with 37 4-H and FFA members from across the state.

In late August, faculty participated in a retreat to discuss financial resilience within the Department for the next 5-10 years. We are always looking for ways to improve our financial efficiency while continuing to provide outstanding student experiences, applicable research, and getting that information out with our Extension programs.

The 4th annual Animal Science Day was a big success with over 500 attendees. I hope you had a chance to attend this ever-growing event. A big thank you to Lauren Husband and the Animal Science graduate students for a family-friendly community event.

Take a few minutes to read in the following pages about all the Animal Science club activities. These clubs always seem to have a fun time working together while, in most cases, fundraising for a worthy cause.

ASGSA continues to sell their "EAT BEEF" vanity plates. The fundraiser will be taking place until supplies run out, so if you'd like to place an order, be sure to take a look at their ad on page 11 next to the Pre-Vet Club baseball caps. They have been very popular, and all proceeds go straight to the clubs!

The Department has great people that pro-

vide expertise for our research, teaching, and Extension programs. Staff receiving service awards this year include: Pete Hornsby (40 years), Manager of Stocker Unit, Savoy; Don Hubbell, III (35 years), Director of Livestock/Forestry Branch Station, Batesville; and Connie Stewart (20 years), financial program director. Faculty service awards were presented to Drs. Tom Yazwinski (40 years), Paul Beck (20 years), Bryan Kutz (20 years), Fred Pohlman (20 years), and Dirk Phillip (10 years). Congratulations to these staff and faculty.

In the Little Rock office, Phalon Montgomery was awarded the Extension Excellence Award for Early Career – Classified Staff, and Dr. Heidi Ward won the Extension Excellence Award for Early Career – State Extension Faculty. Well deserved! The Department of Animal Science and our students greatly appreciate all they do. Thank you!

Recently, teams of four undergraduate students competed for the chance to represent the Department at the Southern Section, American Society of Animal Science (ASAS) meeting in Fort Worth, TX. The Southern Section Academic Quadrathlon is a yearly competition featuring teams of undergraduate students from universities in the southern United States. Congratulations and good luck to the winning team consisting of Katelyn Barnett, Gabe Apple, Aaron Edwards, and Zoey Smith. They will represent Arkansas in February.

I truly appreciate your sincere interest and support of this Department. Please let us know if we can help you. I hope you are able to spend time this holiday season with family and friends.

As always, feel free to contact me [looper@uark.edu; (479) 575-3745] or stop by and visit when you are in Fayetteville.

Michael Looper
Department Head

ANSC

(animal science)

Fall 2017

Published by the University of Arkansas
Department of Animal Science

Editor: Lauren Husband
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<http://animal-science.uark.edu>



Animal Science - UA

U of A
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS
Dale Bumpers College of
Agricultural, Food & Life Sciences
Animal Science

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Microbiome research is exploding in the Department of Animal Science. Learn about emerging research and how the microbiome could be the key to some tough questions.

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Animal Science clubs enrich the community through fundraisers, events, and education.

8 Alumnus Update

UA Department of Animal Science PhD alumnus Elizabeth Backes discusses how education prepared her for her dream job.

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Check out what students have been up to this semester.

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Tell us how to reach you and what you have been up to!

11 Support our Clubs

Christmas is right around the corner! Purchase an Animal Science vanity plate or hat for the animal lover in your life.

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Support Animal Science Department Scholarships

By buying a chairback in the Pauline Whitaker Animal Science Center

You can support scholarships for Department of Animal Science students and receive permanent recognition by purchasing a chairback in the Pauline Whitaker Animal Science Center. Purchases are tax deductible and can be made in the name of an individual, a business, or in honor or memory of a loved one or friend. If you are a former judging team member and would like to purchase a seat in honor of your judging team, contact Bryan

Kutz at 479-575-4337.

Chairbacks are available for a minimum donation of \$500, although many individuals have donated more.

If you would like to help with scholarships by purchasing a chairback, fill out the form to the right and mail it with a check made out to Agricultural Development Council, with a notation of Arena Chairback to the address on the form at the right.

Chairback Order Form

Please use separate page if needed.

Donor Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please list information desired on chairback:

Make checks payable to:

University of Arkansas Foundation

Please make a notation: Arena Chairback

Mail to: Connie Stewart

University of Arkansas

1120 W. Maple

Dept. of Animal Science

Fayetteville, AR 72701

New Graduate Student Receives Competitive Scholarship

An exchange student working on her doctoral degree in genetics has been awarded a scholarship from the China Scholarship Council (CSC), a non-profit organization with the Ministry of Education in China.

Jingsi Tang is a student at Sichuan Agricultural University working on research in the UA Department of Animal Science and School of Human Environmental Sciences for the next two years as part of her dissertation.

Tang is working with Dr. Jiangchao Zhao in animal science and Dr. Jae Kyeom Kim in human nutrition. She is assisting with the collaborative “Impact of Glucosinolate-Rich Broccoli on Gut Microbiota, MicroRNA Profile and Immune Health in Infants” project, which was recently selected as one of the first 10 research grants to receive support from the Chancellor’s Discovery, Creativity,

Innovation and Collaboration Fund.

Tang was chosen for the award following a three-step process. She was named one of the top graduate students of her department at her university, then she was chosen out of all the students selected by different departments to represent the university as a whole and finally, she was selected as one of the 6,000 recipients by the CSC to receive about \$40,000 in the next two years.

Kim, Zhao and Tang are joined on the research team by associate professor of nutrition Dr. Sabrina Trudo, clinical instructor of dietetics Dr. Mechelle Bailey, assistant professor of nursing Dr. Allison Scott, and nursing instructor Dr. Marilou Shreve.

Their project researches how diets rich in broccoli-family vegetables can transform microbes living in infants’ intestines and strengthen the infants’ immune systems. }



Jingsi Tang, who goes by Jessie, is working on groundbreaking microbiome research.

Graduate Student Uses Journalism Background for Research

For graduate student Sarah Chewning, animal science was an unexpected path.

“I graduated with a degree in journalism, hoping to be a videographer,” said Chewning. “Due to some scholarship circumstances, I had an extra year to study whatever I wanted. I had already taken poetry and art, so I thought I’d take an animal science class. I got totally interested in research. It was like a whole new world for me that I had never experienced before.”

Shortly after graduating with her journalism degree, Chewning found a graduate assistantship position with geneticist Dr. James Koltes in the University of Arkansas.

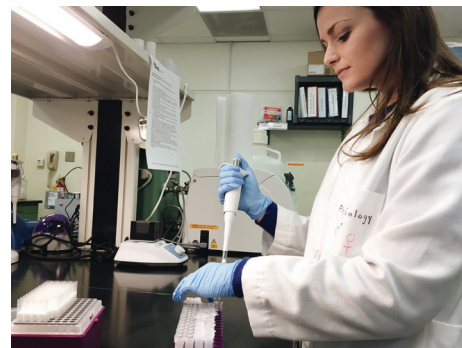
“He was kind of a young professor,” said Chewning, “so I think he was willing to take a chance on someone who didn’t really have a background in animal science. I started working really hard and trying to learn everything I could. It was actually an advantage for me because I wasn’t afraid to not know things. That allowed me to soak it all up like a sponge. That’s how I got into fescue toxicosis and how it’s affecting the cattle industry.”

Because of her background, Chewning approaches scientific problems in a unique way. For Chewning, her research is a complex story with nuanced characters and conflict.

Even the way she describes her research is journalistic, beginning her research timeline in 1950’s Kentucky.

“Back in the 1950’s,” said Chewning, “there was a professor in Kentucky who saw a field of grass that seemed to grow really well in both the summer and cool seasons. He collected its seeds and started selling it under the name Kentucky 31. Everybody loved it, and it spread across the East like wildfire.”

“However, after it started growing in farmers’ fields, people began to realize that livestock weren’t doing well on it. Coats were mangy, they were drooling, they had fevers, and they weren’t putting on weight. After



Sarah Chewning working in the lab.

years of research, they found that there’s a fungus inside it that helps the grass grow more than most others but produces toxins that are detrimental to cattle grazing on Kentucky 31, also known as toxic fescue.

“The challenge has become to either replant the fescue, or come up with fescues that are less detrimental. Since you can’t replant such huge amounts of grass, the side of the problem that I’m really interested in is ‘how do we pick animals that are less susceptible to the toxins that are in that grass?’”

For her research project, Chewning is using the bacterial communities found in cattle to determine if cattle that seem healthier while grazing on toxic fescue have different bacterial community structures than those who are doing poorly.

“Not only is the problem an interesting story,” said Chewning. “We’re at a unique time in history because we have these new technologies with which you can take into consideration a whole bacterial community at once with Next-Generation Sequencing. All of a sudden we understand the vastness of bacterial communities. These new technologies will enable us to answer questions that we never had before. There’s so much potential to make a big difference.” }

Industry Field Trip Inspires New Research Ideas in Students

At the close of the spring 2017 semester, Dr. Ken Coffey took a group of students from his Stocker-Feedlot Cattle Management class (ANSC 4621) to visit a stocker unit and a feedlot in Kansas. Four students went on the trip—Sarah Shelby, Tyler Crook, Jianmin Chai, and Santos Montano—which was almost cancelled due to a scheduling conflict, but was eventually preserved at the ardent request of the students who attended.

“We begged him to take us,” said Shelby, an undergraduate. “It’s the culmination of what we’ve learned throughout our undergrad careers. You can be shown pictures on a PowerPoint slide, and you can picture it in your mind, but you never quite understand it until you actually visit. It’s a whole operation working, and the pieces are what we pick apart in class. You have to see the entire functioning organism before you can com-

pletely understand.”

“The purpose of the trip was to take the students to see a real life situation—one they normally wouldn’t get to see—and to reinforce what we talked about in class,” said Coffey.

The group visited Neosho Valley Feeders in Parsons, KS and Sean Alloway’s stocker cattle operation in Edna, KS. The feedlot handled over 15,000 cattle, and the stocker operation handled several hundred.

“It was a really good day,” said Coffey. “They did such a wonderful job just being open and transparent about their operations. They were very up front with how they do things and why they do it the way they do, and that solidified what I had told my students—that there’s not one way to raise stocker cattle. There are lots of ways.”

The students had the opportunity to exper-

ience the differences in operations firsthand. Sean Alloway compared his unit directly with his neighbor’s, who ran a stocker operation about two miles from Alloway’s.

After visiting both stocker units, the group discussed the differences between the two operations, as well as the reasons the two stockers chose to use the methods they did. Though different in their methods, both stockers believed they were working in the most effective ways they could.

Shelby, who plans to have a future in animal science research, applied the trip to her academic aspirations.

“I think anyone who is going into research and development should understand who and what they’re working for,” said Shelby. “You’ve got to have a clear picture of what the industry is doing every day. As a scientist, you can propose something that might sound good on paper, but is completely impractical in the field.”

Shelby has also applied the information she learned to her own flock of sheep.

“The feedlot had some neat techniques. He does backgrounding on grass,” said Shelby. “I was big into the grass-fed backgrounding operation, and I’ve employed the techniques I learned. I’ve gotten my sheep to bunk feed a lot faster this way. You might miss stuff like that when you’re just reading a paper.

“That’s the great thing about trips like this. You can get ideas for future research. You can see what can be improved in your own animals. This is what college is about—you are preparing for a career.” }



Left to right: Tyler Crook, Jianmin Chai, Sarah Shelby, Santos Montano, and Dr. Kenneth Coffey.

Pre-Vet Club Fundraises for Fayetteville Animal Services

The UA Pre-Vet Club hosted two pancake breakfast fundraisers during the month of November. Both fundraisers raised over \$600 for Fayetteville Animal Services. Food for the events was donated by Walmart, Sam’s Club, Harps Grocery Store, Tyson Foods, and the Department of Animal Science. Leftover product from the fundraisers was taken to a local homeless shelter.

“We wanted to put our compassion for animals into action,” said Pre-Vet Club Sec-

retary Morgan Stanley. “The staff at Fayetteville Animal Services are an incredible group of people. They go above and beyond to provide exceptional care for these animals awaiting their forever homes. I know the money we worked to raise will be put to the best possible use and will help make their jobs a little easier.”

The pancake fundraisers were just two of several fundraisers hosted by the Pre-Vet Club this semester. }



Shelby Lowery serves pancakes to a customer.

Animal Science Day Hosts Over 500

More than 500 people attended the fourth annual Animal Science Day Halloween Party on Friday, October 27.

The public event, which was hosted by Department of Animal Science faculty, students, staff, and community volunteers, was held at the Pauline Whitaker Animal Science Center.

The night featured a demonstration by the ASHA DII national champion Arkansas Ranch Horse Team, a stock dog demonstration, costume contests for both humans and dogs, a haunted house coordinated by the Animal Science Graduate Student Association, kids' fun house, trick-or-treating, games, and education hosted by animal science clubs, a s'mores bar, and more.

It also gave the department a chance to educate and celebrate animal science with students, children, alumni, and members of the community. }



A contestant shows off her dog's "Mr. T" costume during the dog costume contest.

ASGSA Fundraises

The Animal Science Graduate Student Association (ASGSA) spent the fall semester fundraising for disaster relief organizations. The first event was a silent auction and bake sale fundraiser for Kansas wildfire victims, which raised over \$500 for the Kansas Livestock Association.

Later in the semester, ASGSA held a pancake fundraiser for Houston, TX hurricane victims, which raised \$500 for Houston Pets Alive. The donation helped many animals that were rescued following the disaster. }



ASGSA members Caleb Weiss, Danielle Frachiseur, Sarah Chewning, and Josh Knapp serve pancakes.

Livestock Judging Team

The 2017 UA Livestock Team completed their final contest this fall after a year full of individual successes.

This year's team competed in 12 contests and finished in the top ten teams overall in ten of the 12 contests. Additionally, they finished in the top five at the Dixie National and Fort Worth Stock Show and had several individual honors.

The 2017 Livestock Judging Team would like to extend their appreciation to Arkansas Livestock Producers, UA Livestock Judging Team alumni, Animal Science faculty, and Department Head Dr. Mike Loper for their continued support of the program. }



Left to right: Brittany Stettmeier, Chelsea Ellington, Anneke Carr, Katelin Hyman, Coach Bryan Kutz, Roger Shirley, Tyler Hamilton, Chance Brooks, and graduate assistant Blaine French.

A Busy Fall Semester for Block & Bridle

For Block & Bridle (B&B), the start of the fall semester brought the Carnival of Clubs and an impromptu ice cream social in AFLS.

The club also hosted and volunteered at



Students serve steak at the Fall Filet Fundraiser.

two horse shows in conjunction with the Association of Northwest Arkansas Riding Club. B&B members also fundraised at Animal Science Day with a concession stand.

B&B's big fall fundraiser, the Fall Filet Feed, raised over \$650 and was made possible by a large donation by Tyson.

Next year in the spring, the club will be sponsoring trips to the NCBA Convention, as well as the National Block and Bridle Convention. Club members are also looking forward to hosting the Razorback Classic Calf Show and two more horse shows. }

Animal Science REPS Visit Local Schools

The Animal Science REPS had a busy semester coordinating events and visiting local high schools. The students have been touring local schools in an effort to educate about animal science, veterinary medicine, and the University of Arkansas.

This year's REPS members are Amy Frank, Ashley Finney, Bailey Carpenter, Holley Hendon, Jacie Sweeney, Kelsey Johnson, Kelsey Treichler, Mersady Redding, Shannon Leonard, Shelby Lowery, and Sophia Mauldin. }



Left to right: Amy Frank, Bailey Carpenter, Mersady Redding, Shelby Lowery, and Shannon Leonard.

Cows Wear GPS Collars for Forage Quality Research

A multi-purpose orchard plot at the North Farm was used earlier this year in a study to better understand how environmental factors affect forage quality.

The study is multi-disciplinary, collaborative research between the USDA National Laboratory for Agriculture and the Environment and the University of Arkansas. The research is led by soil scientist Tom Sauer of USDA with the cooperation of Amanda Ashwell and forage agronomist Dirk Philipp of the University of Arkansas.

“It’s a root decomposition study in which the USDA is going to study how the roots of certain grass species, in this case native grasses and orchard grasses, decompose in a wetter or dryer environment,” said Philipp. “In addition, by equipping ten heifers with GPS collars for eight weeks, we want to figure out where the cows graze and how that is related to forage quality. The cows are there to essentially judge forage quality. We assume that the cows go back to a certain area where they find an acceptable forage quality. We want to see if there is a link between the soil quality parameters and where the cows go to graze.”

The orchard is made up of three rows of

native grasses spaced evenly, and the rest is 12 rows of orchard grasses. The grassy areas toward the middle of the plot are much wetter due to several rows of trees, while the outside grasses are dryer and exposed to more sun.

“We’ve already found that the cows high-

ly prefer native grasses over orchard grasses,” said Philipp. “Now we want to know if there’s a link between soil quality and forage quality.”

Various types of agroforestry research in this orchard will continue for several more years. }



Heifers graze the agroforestry research area with GPS collars around their necks. The collars will help researchers better understand grazing patterns and forage quality.

Toxic Fescue Research Dives into the Ruminant Microbiome

Groundbreaking research conducted by PhD candidate Saleh Alrashedi gives a glimpse into the invisible world of the sheep microbiome.

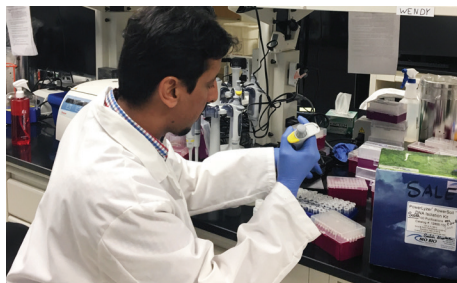
The first study of its kind, Alrashedi’s research has the potential to be useful for better understanding the fecal bacterial diversity in small ruminants. Moreover, Alrashedi’s research could stimulate additional studies to evaluate the correlation between fecal bacteria and growth in ruminants consuming toxic fescue. Advised by microbiologist Dr. Ji-angchao Zhao and ruminant nutritionist Dr. Ken Coffey, Alrashedi dove into the complex field of fescue toxicosis.

“Fescue toxicosis is a major problem for the livestock industry,” said Coffey. “Its cost is estimated to be over \$1 billion per year in lost production. Research in this area has been conducted since the late 1950’s, and we’re still searching for solutions. We know that the toxic compounds change in the ru-

men when cattle and sheep consume the fescue, and ultimately, what we would like to find are strains of bacteria that we can link with helping degrade those toxins faster.”

However, before research into toxin degradation takes place, Alrashedi had to conduct an initial study to survey how the microbial populations are changing in sheep in response to different levels of toxic fescue.

“This study was the first to evaluate the impacts of fescue toxins on bacterial popula-



Saleh Alrashedi tests microbial samples.

tions in the rumen and feces,” said Alrashedi. “Further studies are needed to more closely identify key bacteria that affect or are affected by tall fescue toxins.”

“It is a confusing issue,” said Coffey. “There’s lots more to do, but it hopefully will give us some information that we could use to go out and get additional funding.”

The team hopes to address their initial toxin degradation question in future research once they receive more funding.

“Ultimately, we wanted to look at the impact of fescue on overall production,” said Coffey, “but trying to explain what’s actually going on more in depth became our focus.”

This information can help researchers better understand how tall fescue toxins can affect a ruminant’s microbiome, as well as performance and production issues in those affected. It may ultimately lead researchers to specific bacteria that have potential to detoxify the toxins produced by tall fescue. }

Departmental Alumnus Lands Dream Job at Purina

Elizabeth Backes wakes up every day loving what she does. “I truly have the best job in the world,” said Backes, “I get to talk to producers every day.”

Many people wonder how Backes, who graduated with her PhD in 2016, hit the career jackpot so quickly.

“I was lucky to have a job waiting for me when I graduated,” said Backes. “My diverse studies gave me broad horizons. I started research in undergrad and really enjoyed it. I think this job is a good fit.”

Elizabeth Backes, 30, grew up on a small cow/calf operation in Saint Thomas, Missouri.

“I grew up in a small rural community,” said Backes. “My great grandfather was in agriculture, my grandfather was in agriculture, my father was in agriculture. We all had an animal background. That really laid the foundation for me.”

The decision to study agriculture was simple for Backes. She enrolled at Lincoln University of Missouri in 2007, where she studied agriculture with emphasis in animal science. She proceeded to earn her masters in ruminant nutrition, specializing in small ruminant grazing management, through a partnership between Lincoln University and the University of Arkansas. Through the partnership, Backes was able to conduct her research at Lincoln while doing class work and lab analysis at the University of Arkansas. With the assistance of her advisory com-



Backes collects data with Dr. Beth Kegley at the Savoy stocker unit while working on her PhD in 2013.

mittee, James Caldwell, Bruce Shanks, David Kreider, and Michael Looper, she received her Master’s in 2013.

Backes continued her studies at the University of Arkansas, where she received her PhD in cow/calf parasitology under Jeremy Powell, Tom Yazwinski, Beth Kegley, and Kelly Loftin.

“With my masters in nutrition, I thought parasitology would be a good complement,” said Backes. “Animal production is really driven by nutrition, and parasitology, which is important to understand in the field, really tied it all together. I wanted a good background in both.”

Although she knew she wanted a career in

agriculture, Backes saw her future as an open road. She used her diverse studies as a means of figuring out exactly what she enjoyed, as well as what she didn’t.

“By taking a lot of different agriculture classes, I could really dive into what I liked and what I didn’t,” said Backes. “I was able to help with some meat science projects [in graduate school], which helps me now. I can confidently answer some questions [from producers] that weren’t necessarily in my program of study.”

Waiting for Backes when she graduated with her PhD was a job with Purina Animal Nutrition.

“I’m a cattle nutritionist on the Beef Technical Solutions Team,” said Backes, “I provide technical information and support for the beef side of the company.”

She spends most of her time doing outreach work around the country. Producer education is her main responsibility—working with and educating animal producers on best practices and emerging research.

“Being able to present at animal science meetings and producer meetings while in school has really helped me in my job,” said Backes. “The best thing a student can do is get involved. Join clubs, do undergrad or graduate research...do anything! That will help you decide what you really enjoy. I’m really happy where I am. My number one goal is waking up every day and liking what I do, and I think I’ve achieved that.” }



Backes conducts nutrition research and outreach for Purina Animal Nutrition.

Farm Renovation Leads to Increased Diversification and Research

The North Farm, a Department of Animal Science farm near the Fayetteville campus, has been the location for years of education, research, and production. In an effort to fully use the space, Animal Science faculty have kick-started an effort to renovate and improve the land.

“We’re trying to diversify the operation on the North Farm,” said agronomist Dirk Philipp. “For all of the farm we do not use for meat or food production, we are trying to use it to boost other ecosystems.”

The renovation currently includes three



A butterfly pollinates a wildflower at the North Farm. Photo by Dirk Philipp.

main projects. The first project is to expand the agroforestry research area. An agroforestry research area is already being used for several research projects at the North Farm, but the researchers are looking to replicate it in order to expand on their current research.

The agroforestry research is through a cooperative agreement between Tom Sauer of the USDA National Laboratory for Agriculture and the Environment, Dirk Philipp of the University of Arkansas Department of Animal Science, and the Dale Bumpers Small Farms Research Center.

“We took a pasture of about five acres, and we are converting it to pretty much the same thing as the existing agroforestry area, except without trees,” said Philipp. “We planted orchard grasses and then native grasses in between. The grasses mirror exactly what is currently under the trees. We want to research microclimate questions, such as how soil moisture in areas with and without trees can affect cattle grazing behavior.”

The second project is a partnership between Darren Bignar, Ken Coffey, and Dirk Philipp. The three are looking to expand the current sheep herd with 21 Dorper ewes.

“We fenced in what was formerly just hay

pasture near the calf barn,” said Philipp. “That gives us the opportunity to do commingling grazing studies with cows and sheep, which has potential to be very beneficial because sheep are ruminants like cattle, but they have slightly different diet requirements. Sheep are browsers—they like to eat more weeds. We think that we can reduce the weed presence significantly by grazing sheep with cattle. Sheep also serve as a model for all types of nutrition and diet questions. Because they are smaller than cattle, we can stock more. They are easier to manage than cows when it comes to ruminant research. We can reduce pesticide use by grazing sheep on weeds, as well.”

In addition to research and maintenance benefits, the new sheep will also increase diversity in hands-on teaching opportunities. Students will have more opportunities to interact with sheep.

“For beautification, we are going to establish pollinator plots,” said Philipp. “They will have annual and perennial wildflowers. The plots should help all kinds of insects. In the end, the plants are good for insects, and the insects are good for birds, which increases the overall wildlife value and habitat.” }

Semester Snapshots

One of the greatest things about Animal Science is the huge diversity of things you can do in the field!

This semester included (pictured left to right) first-time horse interactions, muscular dissections in Veterinary Anatomy Lab, free hot dogs in AFLS, sausage making labs at the Abattoir, and forage quality education at the North Farm. There’s never a dull day in the Department of Animal Science. }



Faculty News

USDA, Livestock, Poultry and Grain Market News (LPGMN) held its annual two-day management meeting in Little Rock for 2017.

The meeting was held at the University of Arkansas, Division of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service (UAEX) building. UAEX hosted LPGMN supervisors from field offices across the United States plus LPGMN Washington DC headquarters staff including LPGMN Director Michael Lynch. The team came together to discuss this year's theme —“What are we doing today for the good of the people?”— a quote from Secretary Perdue's first remarks in April.

During this meeting, they examined the status of the Division, explored areas of growth, and ways to maximize customer service.

Additionally, Dr. Michael Looper gave a brief overview of how UAEX and LPGMN formed a cooperative partnership many years ago and how the two have been working together to provide unbiased, third party market information to stakeholders around the world.

Through this partnership, five UA Cooperative Extension market reporters record data at 14 sale barns across the state. In collaboration with the USDA Agriculture Marketing Service, market information is compiled in a weekly report.



Dr. Heidi Ward received the Extension Excellence Award for Early Career-State Extension Faculty. Excellence Awards are presented to recognize accomplishment on all levels—state, county, team and individual—and honor teamwork, innovation and diversity.



Phalon Montgomery received the Extension Excellence Award for Early Career- Classified. Great work, Heidi and Phalon! }



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News:

Student Raises Over \$2,500 for Therapeutic Riding Center

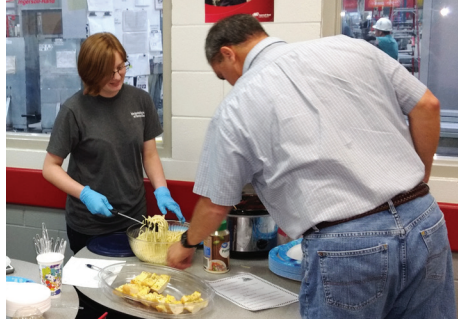
For animal science and psychology student Josephine Pigeon, the Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT) course she planned to take for the fall 2017 semester fit her areas of interest perfectly.

"I went into it hoping to get an idea of what my career would be like," said Pigeon.

Little did she know, by December she would be changing lives.

EAAT encompasses a range of activities and therapies with horses to promote human physical and mental health. These therapies are for individuals with and without special needs, including those with physical, cognitive and emotional issues. UA EAAT students are offered hands-on learning experiences throughout the semester.

An animal science service learning course, EAAT requires students to complete the service learning component in one of two ways: either by volunteering at a local EAAT facility or by working with an EAAT agency to determine and work toward an agency goal.



Josephine Pigeon serves spaghetti at Ingersoll Rand Trade Customs as a mounting ramp fundraiser.

Pigeon chose to work with the Courage Therapeutic Riding Center in Prairie Grove, a nonprofit co-founded by UA equine science graduates Jessie Kersh and Lexie Kerr.

"In August, she asked us if a mounting ramp would be something Courage was interested in," said Kersh. "Mounting ramps are crucial for any riding center for a multitude of reasons. Allowing the physically disabled to comfortably mount a horse and making it

possible for small children to see eye to eye [with a horse] is an incredible opportunity."

So, Pigeon set off to reach her goal. She needed to raise \$2,500 to purchase the mounting ramp. What was once just a college course became a project that would bring together and encourage an entire community.

"From corporate lunch fundraisers, spaghetti dinners, babysitting fundraisers at churches, online campaigns, thank you videos, getting her peers involved, and more," said Kersh, "Josie has whole-heartedly taken a task on that she created and made it happen.

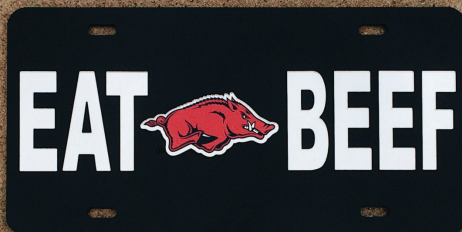
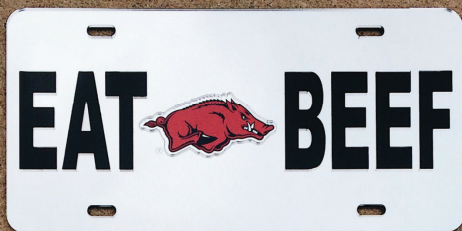
"As a lifelong supporter of the EAAT industry, Josie is a powerhouse in whatever she chooses to accomplish, and we couldn't be more blessed to have found her through this course. She has done hours of research, spoken in front of large crowds, made videos, networked, and reached out. I had no idea that the option for the 21 hour special project would get us here, but she's done it. It seems that where Josie finds a will, there is a way." }

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