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September 2014



Annual Luncheon Spotlights Farm Staff Skippa Daily Night Out

It's a tradition of the Department of Animal Science that each year, the faculty hosts an "Appreciation Luncheon" for the farm staff.

Held as a way to say thank you and show appreciation to Vaughn Skinner, Director of the Experiment Station, and his farm staff. This is the group of people who help maintain the facilities and grounds, in and around the Animal Science facilities located at the Experiment Station along Garland Avenue and Dean Street.

This crew handles a lot: from mowing and maintaining the lawns and pastures; to preparing ground for various

projects; to helping maintain equipment and buildings; and helping support all the things we accomplish at the experiment station. We depend heavily on this group, and very much appreciate their service and cooperation.

It's also an opportunity to thank our own staff and the students that we employ, as well as others at the Experiment station, that are often called on for help or assistance.

Approximately 35 faculty, staff, students and guests attended the Luncheon which was held at Agri-Park.

"As supervisor of one of the prominent facilities on the Experiment Station I get many visitors who often comment on how attractive, and well maintained the grounds and areas around the Center are kept. I just say, 'Thank You'. We are well aware of the dedication and hours of hard work it takes to keep the place looking like this. Know that you are appreciated," said Danny Belcher, supervisor of the Pauline Whitaker Animal Science Center.

Danny addressed the group on behalf of Dr. Mike Looper, Head of the Department, who was unable to attend. }



Introducing Skippa Daily Night Out, which is his registered name, but we call him Daily. He is a 13 year old black and white Tobiano Paint gelding. Daily is 14.3 hands high and weighs about 1025 pounds. He has a wonderful disposition and can serve beginners or advanced students.

Daily is a member of our new resident teaching herd, he was generously donated by Shannon McCarthy of Fayetteville. }



Honors Thesis Project Helps Undergrad Gain Experience and Confidence

Omega Sanders wasn't sure what she wanted to do for her honors thesis project, she just knew she needed to figure it out.

Over the course of a semester, Omega spoke with various Animal Science professors to see what projects they were working on, and finally found one that interested her. "I wanted to do something that had to do with large animals, Dr. Coffey was about to start a study with cannulated cows," Omega, who is senior Animal Science major explained.

"He gave me the background on the study and I jumped on it," she said. The purpose of the study, "Intake and Digestibility of Fescue Hay Supplemented with Co-Product Feeds," was trying to increase nutritional intake of low quality hay. It was also used as a way to determine what will help the cows digest and use the nutrients better.

The study utilized seven cannulated cows, which are cows that have a cannula inserted in their rumen that allows researchers to determine how the animal is digesting its food. Over the course of three, three-week treatment periods, Omega fed them one of three feed mixtures everyday at 4 p.m. The three feed mixture options were: distiller's grains, soybean hulls

or a 50/50 mixture of the two. They were allowed free choice of hay in the pasture. The mixtures were measured out based on the weight of the cow. The hope is that the co-products will help increase nutritional value of fescue hay.

On the final day of each treatment period hay was removed from the cannula, and the fluid was wrung into a collection container. The hay was then placed back into the cannula for continued digestion. This process was repeated every two hours from 4 p.m. to midnight. The fluids collected will help show what happens during digestion, especially in regards to volatile fatty acids (VFA) and ammonia.

During the last week of the final treatment period bags containing 5 grams of hay from the pasture were placed in the cannula at specific time intervals to allow the researchers to track digestion.

With collection of the samples complete, now it is time to begin feed analysis on the hay and co-product samples; dry matter, VFA and ammonia tests. These will be some of the tests run to determine the final results.

Animal Science students Ashley Young and Kris Bottoms helped Omega with feedings and collection

of samples. "Kris was a big help," she said. "When I wasn't able to feed Kris would be there; he also helped set-up and with the collection process." As a part of an honors class she was enrolled in Omega wrote a grant proposal about her chosen project. The grant proposal had to include: an abstract; introduction; objective of the study; literature review; materials and methods; hypothesis; expected results and deliverables; timeline; and a works cited page. Once the proposal was completed and turned in, it was evaluated and five students were awarded grants. Omega was awarded \$1000 from the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences towards her project.

Though she is still processing the samples collected during the project, Omega says she has already met the goals of personal growth included in her grant proposal. "I had never worked with large animals before," she explained. "I was more comfortable working with them than I thought; once I learned their personalities it was easier to work with each animal."

After she graduates Omega hopes to attend veterinary school and eventually have her own small animal vet clinic. }

