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University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Department of Animal Sciences

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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 a 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 one. 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 completely 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

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.

“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 solidifies what I told them—that there’s not one way to raise stocker cattle. There are lots of ways.”

The students had the opportunity to experience the differences in operations firsthand. Sean Alloway compared his unit directly with his neighbors, who ran a stocker operation about two miles from Alloway’s.

After visiting both stocker units, the group discussed the differences between the two



Tyler Crook, Jianmin Chai, Sarah Shelby, Santos Montano, and Dr. Kenneth Coffey stand in front of silage at Neosho Valley Feeders.

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

“The feedlot guy had some neat techniques. He does backgrounding on grass,” said Shelby. “I was big into the grass-fed backgrounding operation because that’s what I want my industry to look like, and I’ve employed those 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.”

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Arkansas 4-H Livestock Judging Contest

Each year, the University Of Arkansas Department Of Animal Science hosts the Arkansas 4-H Livestock Judging Contest, at which youth from across the state compete for the opportunity to represent Arkansas at national livestock judging competitions for the upcoming year.

This year, for several days in July, 11 teams and 50 individuals competed in the state livestock judging contest held at the Pauline Whitaker Animal Science Center in Fayetteville. Participants evaluated 6 classes representing cattle, swine, sheep and goats. Participants were required to present oral reasons on three of the classes and then answer questions on one class.

Bradley County, the state champion team

this year, will represent Arkansas at the North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville, KY, the American Royal in Kansas City, MO, and the AKSARBEN in Grand Island, NE. Bradley County’s winning team consisted of Taylor Gwin, Lupe Martinez, Madison McGhee, Shelby Best, and Abby Johnson.

Washington County finished as the reserve champion team and is eligible to compete at the Western National in Denver, CO and the AKSARBEN. Greene County finished third and is eligible to compete at the AKSARBEN 4-H Livestock Judging Contest.

This contest is sponsored by the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture. }



Bradley County winning Livestock Judging Team and judging instructors from left to right: Bryan Kutz, Taylor Gwin, Lupe Martinez, Madison McGhee, Selby Best, Abby Johnson, and Chelsea Ahrens.

American Angus Assoc. Hosts Summer Interns

Elkins, AR native and Department of Animal Science alumna Morgan Marley was selected as the summer 2017 communications intern for Angus Productions Incorporated



Morgan Marley

(API), located at the American Angus Association headquarters in Saint Joseph, MO.

API is a for-profit subsidiary of the American Angus Association that provides a variety of communication and publication services to benefit the American Angus Association, Angus breeders, and their customers.

Marley has been assisting Angus Media’s teams in providing multimedia and editorial content to its various audiences.

Marley holds a bachelor’s degree in agricultural education, communications, and technology and a minor in animal science from the University of Arkansas. She graduated in May 2016.

She is currently pursuing a master’s degree in public communication and technology at Colorado State University. }

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