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Letter from Division of Agriculture Communications

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Bumpers Students with Lifelong Passions for Agriculture Use Their Research to Better the World

In science-driven disciplines like those in the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences, research is key to ensuring students receive the highest quality education. Most of the teaching faculty in Bumpers College are also scientists in the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station, the research arm of the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. Their research goes straight into the classroom, inspiring the next generation of scientists who will make vital contributions to civilization. The brightest of these students, many of whom are represented in these pages, are already contributing to society.

The undergraduate research reports you will read in this journal are not simply paper-cutter laboratory exercises with no greater purpose than to earn a grade. These are genuine scientific inquiries that add to the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station's tree of knowledge. Each research project recorded here is an essential rung on a ladder of discovery that will help feed the world and improve the quality of life for this generation and those that follow.

Take honors student Clayton Parker, whose photo is featured on this issue's cover. Since childhood, when he rode the tractor with his father on the family farm at Carlisle, he has been on a lifelong trajectory toward discovery. After high school, he enrolled in Bumpers College to pursue a degree in agribusiness. He came seeking the knowledge and expertise to succeed as a businessperson and leader in Arkansas' agricultural industry. His research, on page 69, investigated the economics of on-farm rice drying in Arkansas.

"The experiences in the classroom and as a researcher have helped me gain the skills to create what I hope are valuable tools for other farmers in Arkansas," Clayton said. "Upon graduation, I plan to return home to the farm and start the fifth-generation of our operation alongside my father and grandfather."

While still in high school, Rachel Barry developed a passion for politics and policy and understanding how they affect production agriculture. She channeled her passion into action in FFA and Farm Bureau. "American Farmers and Ranchers deserve informed, dedicated, and effective advocates who can ensure that production agriculture is protected through legislation," she said. You can read about her research on the political preferences of Arkansas farmers and ranchers on page 8.

Rachel graduated Magna Cum Laude from Bumpers College in May 2020 with a degree in agricultural business marketing and management. She plans to work in the grain industry where she wants to work toward increasing supply chain efficiency and empowering farmers to utilize risk management tools to protect their businesses.

Hailey Hilfiker, a native of Piggott, Arkansas, grew up showing cattle in local, regional, state, and national competitions. She developed a passion for large animals and began raising purebred Shorthorn cattle. Hailey began her undergraduate career at the University of Arkansas as an animal science major with a pre-professional concentration. She became interested in beef nutrition and reproduction, and her Honors Program research focused on those areas. You can read about it on page 43.

Her interests led her to participate in the Block and Bridle Club, where she served as the livestock activities chair. She also served as a Bumpers College student ambassador. Upon graduating Magna Cum Laude, she was accepted into the University of Missouri's veterinary medicine program.

Research and education are helping Clayton, Rachel, Hailey, and the other nine student researchers whose work is recorded in these pages, grow into the next generation of world citizens who will build a better society.

Fred Miller,
Division of Agriculture Communications



5th GENERATION FARMER:
Clayton Parker (left) pictured on his family farm in Carlisle, Arkansas, with his dad and grandfather.

A PASSION FOR ANIMALS:
Hailey Hilfiker on her family farm in Piggott, Arkansas, with two of her Shorthorn heifers that she showed and has since added to her herd.

