Animal Science students receive Senior Merit Award

COLLEGE STATION -- Four students in the Department of Animal Science were honored with the Senior Merit Award at the 2011 College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Convocation held at the Briarcrest Country Club on April 16, 2011.

The Senior Merit Award is the highest award bestowed to undergraduate students by the College. The award was presented to Shay McDonald, from Davis, Calif.; Greta Monson from Houston; Laurie Jansky from Taylor; and Colton Atkins from Bryan.

To be eligible for this award, students must have completed over 95 hours and be projected to graduate during the 2011 calendar year. Students are selected based on academics; Texas A&M University leadership activities; community involvement, professional and civic activities; employment, internship and research; and a written essay.

McDonald, a dairy science major, has served as president of the TAMU Dairy Science Club, was a member of the TAMU Dairy Challenge Team, and also a member of the Phi Kappa Phi National Honors Society and Gamma Sigma Delta National Agricultural Honors Society. She has attended the Southern Great Plains Dairy Consortium Teaching program for the past two years. McDonald plans to pursue a career in veterinary medicine.

Monson, an animal science major, has been an active member of the COALS Student Council, a member and coach of the TAMU Wool Judging Team, and a member of the Saddle and Sirloin Club. In addition, she has been named to the Dean’s Honor Roll list for academics and completed an undergraduate research project. After graduation, Monson will work for a youth camp in East Texas where she will oversee the female staff, head the horse program and coordinate missions to Haiti.

Jansky has maintained a 4.0 GPA as an animal science major. She has served as a member of the COALS Student Council, an Aggie REPS, and also a member of the Undergraduate Studies Student Advisory Committee. She was a member of the 2010 Texas A&M Meat Judging Team, is a member of Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, Gamma Sigma Delta Honor Society and also the National Society of Collegiate Scholars. Jansky plans to pursue a doctorate of medicine degree specializing in orthopedic surgery.

Atkins is a double major in animal science and agriculture communications and journalism. He has served as vice president, reporter and ag council rep for the Saddle and Sirloin Club, the service officer for the Texas A&M Alpha Zeta Honor Society, as well as a member of the COALS Student Council. In addition, he has been named to the Dean’s Honor Roll list, selected as a national winner for the Who’s Who academic award, and has also completed an undergrad research project. Atkins plans to pursue a career in livestock marketing and promotion.
Horse Judging Team dominates at National Reining Breeders Classic

KATY -- The Texas A&M Senior Horse Judging Team dominated for the third consecutive year at the National Reining Breeders Classic in Katy on April 20, 2011, leaving a more than 150 point margin between themselves and their closest competitor.

Laramie County Community College, University of Wisconsin and Iowa State University rounded out the top four, respectively.

Texas A&M was the only team with five team members in the top 10. The team members and their placings include: Libby Hallet of Sugar Land, high individual; Cassie Holloway of Maryland, fourth high; Karinda Dickens of Magnolia, fifth high; Amber Marcum of Dickinson, seventh high; Megan Webb of West Virginia, ninth high; Rebecca Muller of Round Rock; and Courtney Phillips of San Antonio.

The team is coached by Dr. Clay Cavinder. Assistant coach is Jeannette Mawyer of Virginia.

Aggieland youth camps planned for this summer

COLLEGE STATION – Send your child to learn from the champions in Aggieland. The Department of Animal Science at Texas A&M University will host several youth camps this summer that can increase your child’s understanding of livestock through hands-on experience.

Topics range from livestock and horse judging, to showing cattle, sheep and goats. Camps and details are as follows:

Livestock Judging Camp

**Dates:** Camp I – May 27-29, 2011 & Camp II – June 24-26, 2011
**Cost:** $300. Camp fee includes lodging and meals.
**Registration Deadline:** (Camp I) May 20, 2011 & (Camp II) June 18, 2011
**About:** Designed for 4-H and FFA members interested in building their knowledge of evaluating market and breeding animals, including beef, swine, sheep, and goats. This camp focuses on selection principles, oral reasons, live market evaluation, and breeding animal performance data.

**Website:** [http://animalscience.tamu.edu/workshops/youth-workshops/livestock_judging_camp.htm](http://animalscience.tamu.edu/workshops/youth-workshops/livestock_judging_camp.htm)

**Contact:** Jake Franke at jfranke@tamu.edu or 979-845-7616.

Show Cattle Camp

**Dates:** Camp I – June 10-12, 2011 & Camp II – June 17-19, 2011
**Cost:** $150 per participant. $75 per adult.
**Registration Deadline:** (Camp I) May 27, 2011 & (Camp II) June 3, 2011
**About:** For children ages 8-18 years old. The camp emphasizes showmanship, day-to-day management and creating your own champion.

**Website:** [http://animalscience.tamu.edu/academics/beef/beef-center/camps/show-cattle-camp/index.htm](http://animalscience.tamu.edu/academics/beef/beef-center/camps/show-cattle-camp/index.htm)

**Contact:** Paul Maulsby at 979-862-4736 or beefcenter@tamu.edu.

Horse Judging Camp

**Dates:** Camp I – June 22-24, 2011 & Camp II – July 6-8, 2011
**Cost:** $275 per participant. Camp fee includes meals, housing, judging manual, notebook and t-shirt. Adults, coaches or parents may attend for the same fee. However, additional chaperones may or may not be needed. $245 per participant if commuting.
**Registration Deadline:** (Both camps) May 15, 2011
**About:** These camps are for youth 12-18 years of age. New format with instructions for beginners/intermediate and advanced. Learn halter classes, performance classes and oral reasons.

**Website:** [http://animalscience.tamu.edu/workshops/youth-workshops/tamu-horse-judging-camp.htm](http://animalscience.tamu.edu/workshops/youth-workshops/tamu-horse-judging-camp.htm)

**Contact:** Dr. Clay Cavinder at cac@tamu.edu or 979-845-7731.

Lamb and Goat Camp

**Dates:** Lam Camp – July 15-17, 2011 & Goat Camp – July 22-24, 2011
**Cost:** $120 per participant. $60 per adult. Does not include lodging, but it does cover breakfast and lunch on Saturday and Sunday, as well as snacks during breaks.
**Registration Deadline:** Open to the first 150 paid youth applicants.
**About:** Aggieland Lamb & Goat Camp is a 3-day program dedicated to teaching parents and students the fundamentals of feeding, nutrition, health, facilities, selection and showmanship. There will be lots of hands-on learning for all participants.

**Website:** [http://animalscience.tamu.edu/academics/sheep-goats/sheep-center/youth-camps/index.htm](http://animalscience.tamu.edu/academics/sheep-goats/sheep-center/youth-camps/index.htm)

**Contact:** Dr. Shawn Ramsey, Katie Fritz or Kelsey Willberg at 979-845-7616 oraggielandlambandgoatcamp@gmail.com.
COLLEGE STATION – The Texas A&M University Saddle & Sirloin Club spring banquet was held at the Brazos County Expo Complex on April 16, 2011 during the Texas A&M University Parents’ Weekend. The banquet is the culminating event for the club’s year of activities, and many members and contributors are recognized for their accomplishments. Highlights include:

**2011 honorary member named**
Joe Behrens from Voca, Texas, was named the 2011 honorary member. Behrens is a graduate of Texas A&M and served as president of Saddle & Sirloin in 1975. While president, he started fundraising events still in use today and implemented full support of the judging teams by Saddle & Sirloin. Behrens remains active in the club and attends and supports the ham auction every year. He has had two children who also served as officers in the club.

**2011 distinguished service award**
Penny Frederick from College Station received the 2011 distinguished service award. She works in the Student Organization Finance Center for the Department of Student Activities. During her time there she has continually helped Saddle & Sirloin by training and assisting new officers in dealing with the finance center and making sure the finances are in order.

**Student awards presented**
Several students were presented the following Saddle & Sirloin Club awards for their outstanding involvement in the club. These include:

- **Workhorse Award** - Zach Nowak and Christine Mesecher
- **Hesby Spirit Award** - Alyzabeth Looney
- **Dr. Ronnie Edwards Service Award** - Katie Moore
- **Outstanding Member Award** - Freshman, Jacob Brown; Sophomore, Kirby Day; Junior, Alyssa Looney; and Senior, Heather Hirsch

- Each member, coach and the assistant coaches of the Aggie Judging Teams were recognized. These include the junior and senior Livestock, Horse and Meat Judging Teams and the Wool Judging Team.

- The outgoing senior Aggie REPS were recognized. These include Sydney Wilkinson, Kaitlyn Grimshaw, Greta Monson, David Salinas, Baylie Miller and Bryan Weaver. The Outstanding Member Award for Aggie REPS was presented to Henry Hilscher.

- The new Animal Science Aggie REPS for 2011-2012 were announced. They are Jenny Bohac from Bolingbrook, Ill.; Carina Cedillo from Laredo; Rachel Glascock from Pilot Point; Katie Heinrich from Slaton; Jessie Hoffman from Hobson; Cassie Holloway from Darlington, MD; Whitley James from George West; Kley Pruski from Stockdale; Lauren Thompson from Grandview; Kristin Valadez from Mission; and Susan Waldron from San Angelo.

- The 2011-2012 Saddle & Sirloin officer team was named. The incoming officers are Henry Hilscher, president; Kirby Day, vice president; Katie Fritz, sweetheart; Alyssa Looney, treasurer; Katy Knox, Ag Council representative; Katie Muehlstein, secretary, Ashleigh Sowell, public relations officer; and Megan Webb, reporter.

- Dr. Clay Cavinder was recognized as the new Saddle & Sirloin Club advisor. He will serve a three-year term. Dr. David Forrest and Dr. Jodie Sterle are also advisors.

**Monson presented Brewer Award**
Greta Monson from Houston was presented the Department of Animal Science Brewer Award. This award was established in 1948 and is given to an outstanding senior in the department. As a student, Monson is active in the COALS Council, Aggie REPS, the Wool Judging Team, both as a member and assistant coach, and is a member of the Saddle & Sirloin Club. After graduation, Monson plans to work for a youth camp in East Texas and will oversee the female staff, head the horse program and coordinate missions in Haiti where she will educate the Haitians about agriculture and raising livestock.
Event Results

Little Southwestern
Grand Champion Overall
Katie Fritz
Reserve Champion Overall
Megan Webb

“Swede” Hanson, Jr. Memorial Ham Auction
Grand Champion Ham Buyer
Haas-Litterst Foundation
Reserve Champion Ham Buyer
Ebeling Family
Champion Volume Buyer
Haas-Litterst Foundation

Ham Sales Awards
Grand Champion Salesman
Jessica Holland
Reserve Champion Salesman
Claire Luensmann

Ham Trimming Contest
Grand Champion
Jae Ebeling
Reserve Champion
Alyssa Looney

L.D. Wythe Memorial Judging Contest
Grand Champion Team
Mike Helle, Kandi Knippa, Katy Knox and Paul Wunderlich
Reserve Grand Champion Team
Jonathan Chachere, Matthew Reinhardt, Daniel McAfee and Tanner Banks

Spring Barbecue Cook-off
Grand Champion Team
Los Compadres
Reserve Champion Team
Chorizo De San Manuel

A complete list of the scholarship recipients will appear in next week’s issue of Animal Science Weekly.

Spirit of Aggieland Sale

COLLEGE STATION – The second annual Spirit of Aggieland Sale was held during Parents’ Weekend on April 17, 2011 at the TAMU Beef Center and was met with great success. The averaged $2,500 on 56 lots for the Beef Center and its guest consignors which included Steven Lastovica and family from Salado; Robert Lastovica and family from Fredericksburg; Hudson Pines Farms from Tarrytown, NY; Sunset View Farms from Auburn, KY; Hunter Creek Farms from Marion; Worrell Enterprises from Fredericksburg; Turkey Feather Ranches from Ada, Okla.; and Santa Terez Agropecaria of Washington. Females, bulls and cattle were sold into all regions of Texas as well as three states. Paul Maulsby, beef center manager, the beef center staff and members of the ANSC 335 Purebred Beef Cattle and Sales class were responsible for the management and work force of the sale.
I n the early 1990s my graduate students and I attended a major meeting of animal activists in Austin. It was a star-studded event with many well-known activists, and it was an eye-opener for many of us. When People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) co-founder Ingrid Newkirk finished speaking, one of my graduate students, Doug Pierce, raised his hand and asked Newkirk if PETA would fund objective research on animal welfare issues rather than basing their campaigns on emotion. Ingrid responded saying, "Emotions? What’s wrong with basing decisions on emotions? We are all emotional." The audience wholeheartedly agreed with Newkirk, and then everyone turned their attention to Doug and our group.

Very few livestock issues have aroused the concern and public outcry in the United States as horses being slaughtered for consumption by people. In the early 1990s, the horse slaughter industry had not yet become a favorite cause of activist groups although there were indications the industry needed to do a better job. At that time I suggested to the chairman of the trade organization that represented the then-12 U.S. horse slaughter plants that they be proactive and fund an animal welfare audit of their industry. Such an audit could be confidential and would serve as a means of identifying potential problems that could then be addressed through their trade association. He responded that there was no need for such a project, and that the 12 plants that were members of their association were doing well because of steady demand for horse meat in pet food, and for human consumption in Europe and Asia.

The slaughter of horses for human consumption was an ideal target for activist groups because the meat was not popular in the U.S. Perhaps more importantly, breed associations and other trade groups did not rally to the defense of the small industry for fear they might alienate a good portion of their membership who were repulsed by the idea of slaughtering horses for consumption by people. Activist campaigns continued to grow and the horse slaughter industry did nothing to position themselves as good stewards of unwanted horses.

Congress added language to the 1996 Farm Bill authorizing the Secretary of Agriculture to issue guidelines for the commercial transportation of horses to slaughter. Both House Speaker Newt Gingrich and President Bill Clinton supported the program. I believe it was Speaker Gingrich who added a $400,000 line item to fund the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Slaughter Horse Transport Program, saying it was the least we can do for our horses. Dr. Tim Cordes, a doctorate of veterinary medicine with the USDA’s Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (Veterinary Services Program, Equine Programs), was asked to head up the program. My lab at Texas A&M University, University of California, Davis, Texas Tech University, and Dr. Temple Grandin received a portion of the funds over several years to research aspects of the issue. After we had researched the issue, the USDA had a series of meetings that included representatives from the industry and moderate welfare groups, and a reasonable set of regulations were proposed by Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) in 1999. The regulations went into effect in February, 2002. Enforcement was based on inspection of the horses, the trailer, and the Owner-Shipper Certificate that provided documentation of the origin and health status of the horses.

**Was it a blunder to stop the slaughter of horses for human consumption on welfare grounds?**

Part I of II:

Setting the Stage

by Ted Friend, Ph.D.

Faculty Fellow and Professor, 
Animal Behavior and Wellbeing
Department of Animal Science
upon arrival at one of the three U.S. plants. Although there were many other small operations that processed horses at the time the regulations went into effect, there were only three plants that had the inspections that were required to export meat for human consumption to Europe and Asia. Two of the plants were in Texas and the third was in Illinois. Each load of horses that arrived at the Texas plants was inspected by three different people, including an APHIS animal welfare inspector, a Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association (TSCRA) brand inspector, and Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) (USDA’s meat inspector). I am not sure if there was a brand inspector in Illinois.

The APHIS’s animal welfare inspection started as an educational program while stakeholders became familiar with the requirements. When some horses were unloaded and the APHIS inspector pointed out to the truck driver that the rubber bumper that contacted the unloading chute on his trailer was worn out and left a gap in which a young foal could catch a hoof during unloading. Although the driver pointed out that he was not unloading foals, he was told that it reflected poorly on the industry and he needed to replace the bumper on the trailer or risk a fine (up to $5,000 per violation) in the future. When the program evolved to actual enforcement, the APHIS animal welfare inspector took photos of the worst cases to help with investigations. Initially, fines were fairly common for a range of infractions, and they got everyone’s attention. People stopped shipping horses that were at risk of not surviving the trip to the plants. Major injuries became rarer, but some graphic photos were obtained from APHIS by activists through a Freedom of Information Request. Although many of the injuries occurred before the horses were shipped, those photos were publicized on many activists’ websites and inflamed the issue.

The 1949 Texas law that ended the slaughter of horses in Texas only banned the processing of horses for human consumption. Although the Texas law dated back over 50 years, there was ambiguity because its original intent appeared to be to prevent horse meat from being misrepresented as beef, the Texas slaughter plants exported the meat that was consumed by humans so none was consumed in Texas, and for food for carnivores kept at zoos and sanctuaries. It is unlikely, however, that any horse meat has gone into U.S. pet food in the last decade because of fear of consumer reaction. As the industry shifted to human consumption, there was much more focus on the quality of the end product. The plants did not want emaciated or starved animals, and owners bringing horses to the plants were heavily docked for bruises or other injuries. There was a strong financial incentive to keep horses in good condition and reduce transport stress so a horse would bring a better price at slaughter, and there was also the APHIS animal welfare inspection at the plants.

In my opinion, Dr. Cordes was the best person APHIS could have picked to develop the regulations and run such a controversial program. His program researched the issues and worked diligently with all stakeholders to implement an excellent set of regulations. In spite of this, some activist groups had congressmen hold up implementation of the regulations for many months because they did not think the regulations went far enough to protect the horses.

Editor’s Note: Part II of this series will appear in next week’s issue of Animal Science Weekly and will present data on the horses transported to Mexico and Canada for slaughter and discuss options for disposing of unwanted horses.
Reception held in Spencer’s honor
A farewell reception was held April 21, 2011 to celebrate Dr. Tom Spencer’s 19 years of service in the Department of Animal Science as professor of reproductive physiology and physiological genomics and AgriLife Research Faculty Fellow. Spencer started a new position in May as professor with the Center of Reproductive Biology in the Department of Animal Sciences at Washington State University. Spencer was presented a plaque in recognition of his outstanding performance as a researcher and teacher. He is pictured here with, from left, Drs. Paul Harms, Tom Welsh, David Forrest and Jodie Sterle, all members of the physiology of reproduction group. The Department wishes Tom great success in his new job.

Animal Science faculty participate in School for Successful Ranching event
SAN ANTONIO -- Dr. Dennis Sigler, professor and Extension horse specialist, made presentations on Care and Management of Ranch Horses at the Texas Southwest Cattle Raisers Convention during the School for Successful Ranching on April 1 in San Antonio. 479 ranchers attended this event.

At the same event, Dr. Ron Gill, professor and Extension livestock specialist, conducted two live demonstrations on cattle handling, Dr. Rick Machen, professor and Extension livestock specialist, presented Seven Things Every Small Producer Show Know, and Dr. Joe Paschal, professor and Extension livestock specialist, conducted the How a Rumen Works and Injections Site Lesions.

Genomic Short Course to be held in May
COLLEGE STATION -- A short course entitled Linkage Disequilibrium and Genomic Selection will be held May 23-27, 2011 on the campus of Texas A&M University. Dr. Ben Hayes, an associate professor from Latrobe University in Melbourne, Victoria, Austrailia, will present. The event is hosted by the Departments of Animal Science and Soil and Crop Sciences, the Faculty of Genetics, the TAMU Whole Systems Genomics Initiative, and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Hayes is a renowned quantitative geneticist/genomicist, and is recognized world-wide as a leader in the development of computational strategies for utilization of genomic information for selective improvement of food animals and crops. He has extensive research experience in genetic improvement of livestock and aquaculture species, with a focus on integration of molecular information into breeding programs.

Cost to attend is $100 per researcher, faculty or industry professional and $50 per graduate student. No charge for Texas A&M researcher, faculty or graduate student.

Hayes also is an invited speaker for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Centennial Lecture Series and will speak on May 26, 2011 at 10 a.m. in Kleberg 113.

A registration application and more information can be accessed at http://animalscience.tamu.edu/images/pdf/workshops/genome-short-course-reg-form.pdf.

Texas Beef Quality Producer programs slated for May
The Texas Beef Quality Producer program sponsored by AgriLife Extension, Texas Beef Council and Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association is holding three trainings during May. The TBQP was developed to assist cattlemen in producing a safer, more wholesome food product. The events will be held May 25 in Edinburg; May 26 in Bay City; and May 27 in La Grange. To register, call TSCRA at 800-242-7820 or call the respective county extension office - (Edinburg) Hidalgo County Extension Office at 956-383-1026; (Bay City) Matagorda County Extension Office at 979-245-4100; or (La Grange) Fayette County Extension Office 979-968-5831. For additional information, go to www.texasbeefquality.com.
Recent publications


Southwest Dairy Day (May 5, 2011 - Stephenville - 9:30 to 4 p.m.) - For more information, please visit http://texasdairymatters.org/2011-southwest-dairy-day/.

TAMU Department of Animal Science Horse Center Horse Sale (May 7, 2011 - Freeman Arena) - Viewing of horses will begin at 9 a.m. with the sale beginning at 11 a.m.

Animal Science Graduate Student Association 2nd Annual Crawfish Boil (May 26, 2011 - 2 p.m.) - Tickets on sale now. Cost $10 per adult and $5 per child. Open to all faculty, staff, students and family. Contact Shannon Garey at sgarey@tamu.edu or (515) 290-8275.

Texas A&M Livestock Judging Camp (May 27-29, 2011 & June 24-26, 2011) - For more information, please contact Jake Franke at (979) 845-7616 or visit http://animalscience.tamu.edu/workshops/youth-workshops/livestock-judging-camp.htm.

Texas A&M University's Club Lamb Sale (May 29, 2011 - College Station) - For more information, please contact Colt Sharpton at (979) 862-5099 or <cmsharpton@tamu.edu> or visit http://animalscience.tamu.edu/images/pdf/sheep-goats/lamb-sale-2011.pdf. Viewing begins at 10 a.m. with sale beginning at 1 p.m.

Grassfed Beef Conference (June 8-9, 2011 - College Station) - For more information, please contact Dr. Rick Machen at rmachen@ag.tamu.edu or 830-278-9151 or visit http://animalscience.tamu.edu/images/pdf/beef/Grassfed%20Conference%20Program%20Flyer.pdf.

Texas A&M Show Cattle Camp (June 10-12, 2011 & June 17-19, 2011 - College Station) - For more information, please contact Paul Maulsby at 979-862-4736 or email <beefcenter@tamu.edu> or visit http://animalscience.tamu.edu/academics/beef/beef-center/camps/show-cattle-camp/index.htm.

Texas A&M Horse Judging Camp (June 22-24, 2011 & July 6-8, 2011 - College Station) - For more information, please contact Dr. Clay Cavinder at (979) 845-7731 or email <cac@tamu.edu> or visit http://animalscience.tamu.edu/workshops/youth-workshops/tamu-horse-judging-camp.htm.

Aggieland Lamb & Goat Camps (July 15-17, 2011 & July 22-24, 2011 - College Station) - For more information, please contact Dr. Shawn Ramsey, Katie Fritz or Kelsey Willberg at (979) 845-7616 or email <aggielandlambandgoatcamp@gmail.com> or visit http://animalscience.tamu.edu/academics/sheep-goats/sheep-center/youth-camps/index.htm.

57th annual Texas A&M Beef Cattle Short Course (August 1-3, 2011 - College Station) - For more information, please contact Beef Cattle Extension at (979) 845-6931, email <extansc@ag.tamu.edu> or visit http://animalscience.tamu.edu/ansc/BCSC/index.html.

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Please forward additions to the mailing list and future requests and events to Courtney Coufal <cacoufal@tamu.edu>