



DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SCIENCES

NEWSLETTER

DEC. 2024

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We're hiring

Assistant Professor - Beef Cattle Extension Specialist

Assistant/Associate Professor - Extension Veterinarian

Lecturer - Livestock Judging Coach

Happy holiday wishes from the Department of Animal Sciences



As the holiday season approaches, the Department of Animal Sciences extends warm wishes to all students, faculty, staff and alumni. This festive time of year provides an opportunity for reflection, gratitude and connection with loved ones, both human and animal. The department recognizes the importance of this season not only for its joyful celebrations, but also for the meaningful role animals play in our lives and communities.

The field of Animal Sciences is deeply intertwined with nature, compassion and care. Whether it's the domesticated animals that enrich our daily lives or the wildlife that helps sustain the delicate balance of ecosystems, animals are central to our understanding of the world. The holiday season is a perfect moment to appreciate how these creatures contribute to agriculture, biodiversity and even the companionship they offer to many families. It reminds us of the importance of nurturing, protecting and respecting all living beings.

In the spirit of Christmas, the Department of Animal Sciences reflects on its mission and the incredible achievements that have been made throughout the year. From groundbreaking research that improves ani-

mal production, management, health and welfare to academic and educational programs that inspire the next generation of producers, industry leaders and animal healthcare professionals, it has been a year of growth and progress.

At this time, we extend our gratitude to the faculty members who dedicate their time and expertise to the advancement of the field. Their commitment to education and research shapes the future of Animal Sciences. We also appreciate the support from staff and students who contribute to the department's vibrant community. The holiday season is an opportunity for all of us to take a moment of rest and recharge, and come back in the new year ready to continue our work with renewed energy and purpose.

As we look forward to the new year, let us remember the values that guide us: empathy, knowledge and a commitment to the betterment of all. The Department of Animal Sciences is proud to be part of a global network working to ensure a brighter future for animals and the humans who care for them.

May this festive season be one of reflection, gratitude and hope. Happy Holidays!!!

Best regards,
Guillermo

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Fall kicks off with Ag Olympics

by Dr. Lisa Christenson
Associate Professor of Practice

The Department of Animal Sciences is all about fostering community, learning and having a blast along the way. This fall, the department kicked off the semester with its highly anticipated Ag Olympics, a welcome-back event for students, faculty and staff. This event has become a cherished tradition, bringing together everyone for an evening of fun and connection.



This year's Ag Olympics was a huge success, with over 100 students from all majors in the department—Animal Science, Equine Science and Veterinary Technology—joining in the festivities on the Shepperd Arena lawn. The event was packed with activities, including lively yard games (udder toss, anyone?) hosted by various student organizations as well as some delicious food. Students had a chance to mingle with faculty and staff, and the highlight of the night was an epic game of human foosball in Shepperd Arena. To top it off, many lucky students went home with door prizes. It was an evening filled with laughter, camaraderie and plenty of memorable moments!



From top: Ag Olympics participants try to stay dry during the udder toss game; students gather on the Shepperd Arena lawn as they learn more about student organizations; (bottom left) the action gets intense during the evening's human foosball tournament; and a roping dummy has no chance against the Rodeo Club.



Department comings and goings since July 2024

Warm welcome to...

Megan Kavanagh – swine unit manager

Lydia Trandem – lecturer

Ellis Mae Gunkelman – born July 6 to equine science instructor Mattia Gunkelman

Rhett Havelka – born Sept. 10 to beef unit manager Garrett Havelka

Fond farewell to...

Carrie Hammer – professor in equine science

Wanda Keller – research specialist in meat science lab

Veselina Valkov – assistant manager of nutrition lab



ASGSO members share their talents through Carnivore Catering (left) and during events such as Moos, Ewes and More (below).

Active ASGSO keeps full schedule

Members of the Animal Science Graduate Student Organization (ASGSO) have been busy this past semester with research, professional development, class and social events. Members of ASGSO have presented their research at the MN Nutrition Conference, NDSU Beef Field Day and NDSU All Ag Conference. Grad students also helped out with Moos, Ewes, and More by running various booths and serving concessions. ASGSO members have also been busy with Carnivore Catering events such as NDSU Tailgate and Jungles Shorthorn Sale.

ASGSO held its annual Testicle Festival this fall which was an absolute ball, and members of the social committee are planning the Animal Sciences Department holiday party. Lastly, ASGSO will be writing Christmas cards



for the residents of Serenity Assisted Living as well as spending an afternoon visiting with the residents.

— Brooklyn Kuzel, ASGSO president

December 2024 graduates

Graduate students:

Anas Muhammad, Ph.D.

Undergraduate students:

Animal Science:

Skye Althoff
Kalea Blanchard
Mariah Braasch
Chiara Cutts
Naomi Kelly
Kamilla Knippling
Harley Lardy
Rachel Larson
Kaylee Lyter
Keyahna Musland
Anna Rustad
Ashley Swanson

Vet Tech:

Hailey Arth
Brenna Boucher
Abigail Brininger
Kristina Hollerung
Savannah Holtzmann
Taylor Ramsdell



Poultry networking event connects experts, students

More than 100 students braved the season's first snowstorm to attend a panel discussion at the Peltier Complex with experts in the poultry industry. The event was sponsored by the Midwest Poultry Consortium, Minnesota Turkey Growers Association and the Department of Animal Sciences. Chelsea Russell of the Midwest Poultry Consortium moderated the discussion.

Sheep enthusiasts gather for convention

Event includes 2 tours, 12 lamb dishes

by **Dr. Travis Hoffman**

Associate Professor and Extension Sheep Specialist



The signature producer event for education and camaraderie for NDSU Sheep Extension was hosted in Fargo on Dec. 6-7 with the ND/MN Lamb & Wool Producers Association joint convention. Dr. Travis Hoffman, NDSU Extension Sheep Specialist, coordinated and hosted 100 sheep enthusiasts for a fun, interactive and educational experience.

Friday was highlighted with a tour hosted by Skip Anderson, NDSU shepherd, and multiple speakers at the NDSU Sheep Unit. Travis also showcased our new meat laboratory with a Peltier Complex tour. The evening social featured 12 different lamb dishes for a unique culinary experience to Excite the Palate, plus a fundraiser auction.

Key educational outreach convened on Saturday with a panel discussion on precision livestock technologies featuring Drs. Rachel Gibbs, Miranda Meehan and Rex Sun, and moderated by Dr. Guillermo Scaglia. They shared future applications for producers regarding virtual fencing, drones, sheep feed intake monitoring, and thermal imaging for animal health.

Updates were provided for the American Sheep Industry Association and American Lamb Board entities. Further, open discussion of attendees provided insightful input as producers shared their knowledge and experiences for dynamic topics of lamb marketing, producer mentorship and wool value. Eat Lamb, Wear Wool.



Above, the sheep at the NDSU Sheep Unit appear unconcerned by all the attention during the tour.



Left, Chef Brandon Larson of Ramada Fargo sears up lamb double rib chops for convention attendees.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Tandi Thompson

What was your field of study at NDSU?

- Animal Science

When did you attend/graduate?

- Fall 2011 to Spring 2015

What are you doing nowadays?

- I work at Farmer Mac on the Transaction Management team headquartered out of Washington, D.C. My team supports the closings of syndicated and wholesale financing deals in the corporate agfinance and rural infrastructure industries. In my free time, I can be found enjoying time with friends and my English Bulldog, Axel, as well as attending Washington Capitals games when I'm able!



What is one of your favorite classroom/campus memories?

- There are so many great memories I have from NDSU — specifically, the hands-on experience with livestock. It's one thing to discuss concepts in the classroom, but I greatly appreciated seeing the impacts in the field.

What did you learn at NDSU that has helped you the most in your career/life?

- NDSU was a great place to meet others with the same passion for agriculture that I have. Working in the financial services space, not everyone is aware of all the hard work that goes into animal agriculture. I enjoy sharing the experiences I had at NDSU so colleagues get a better understanding and appreciation of the farming and ranching sectors.



If you would like to be featured in an upcoming Alumni Spotlight or know someone you'd like to nominate, please contact Darla White at 701-231-7401 or darla.white@ndsu.edu with the information.



Activities at this year's Moos, Ewes and More included wagon rides (left), hands-on "surgery" of stuffed animals (above), and lots of interaction between young people and NDSU livestock, with some apprehension at times (below). The event even prompted Santa Claus himself to drop by from the North Pole!

Festivities on the farm

Families flock to Moos, Ewes and More

by **Dr. Taw Scuff**
Assistant Professor and
Extension Swine Specialist

The Department of Animal Sciences hosted Moos, Ewes and More on Nov. 23 at the NDSU Equine Center. Moos, Ewes and More is a free, family-friendly outreach event showcasing the department's faculty, staff and graduate students and how we all work together for the people and animals in North Dakota.



The animals were the stars, of course.

More than 900 individuals joined us this year for this fantastic event. Upon arrival, individuals were given a drawstring bag and activity passport to fill up with the handouts and

prizes from the activities.

Participants were able to meet swine, sheep, horses and dairy cows that call NDSU home. Additionally, the farm managers who care for the animals — and faculty and staff who teach about the animals — engaged the community with interactive booths and fun activities. Some of these activities included "ask a veterinarian," animal facemasks, "surgery" on stuffed animals, wagon rides, feed identification, and seeing the inside of a cow's rumen. Santa Claus arrived from the North Pole and took note of all the Christmas wishes he received to fill his magical sleigh this year.

From all of us here at NDSU Department of Animal Sciences, we wish you all a happy holiday season and hope to see you at our events in the new year.

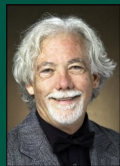


Briefs

An article by sheep unit manager Steven “Skip” Anderson was published in the August issue of North Dakota Stockman. It was titled “Picture perfect: marketing images could yield value difference in livestock.”



Anderson



Reynolds

Professors Lawrence Reynolds and Joel Caton and Emeritus Professor Dale Redmer all landed among the top 2 percent of scientists in the world for last year, according to the annual list

of most influential researchers released Sept. 16. Drs. Redmer and Reynolds

were also cited on the list of top researchers over a career. The list pulls from citation metrics such as h-index, co-authorship and adjusted citation counts.



Redmer



Associate Professor Kasey Carlin had an article in the September issue of North Dakota Stockman titled “U.S. Department of Agriculture makes changes in beef grading.”



Carlin



Mikayla Faust, new ag research technician, received the Spirit, Pep, and Motivation Award, commonly known as the SPAM Award, in September. She was recognized for going above and beyond at the swine barn while the staff was down a person.



Faust



Veselina Valkov, assistant manager of the Nutrition Lab, received a Campus Kudos award in October. Campus Kudos is a certificate of appreciation for NDSU employees, issued as a heartfelt thanks for contributions to campus and the people on campus. She was nominated by nutrition lab manager Yssi Entzie.



Valkov

Graduate student Omowumi Olatinwo participated in the “Communicating Agriculture Beyond Academia Program” Conference in October, which was held in Sioux Falls, S.D. The program focuses on “enhancing graduate student communication skills with non-academic audiences and providing direct exposure to commercial livestock production.”



Olatinwo

Omwumi successfully presented on her M.S. thesis project, which focuses on practical methods for reducing pain and improving wound healing following surgical castration in piglets.



Huber

Alex Huber, a senior in Animal Science, won the North Dakota Farm Bureau Collegiate Discussion Meet in November. The win qualifies him for the national meet in March.



Senior lecturer Tara Swanson, ag research technician Ron Johnson, and department head Guillermo Scaglia all received the Core Value Award during Fall Semester. The award is a peer-to-peer



Swanson



Johnson

traveling award given to those who reflect NDSU Agriculture’s core values – Community Driven, Student Focused, Stakeholder Driven, Integrity, Impact and Innovation. Associate professor Miranda Meehan was a previous recipient.



Scaglia



Dr. Joel Caton is serving as past president of the national American Society of Animal Science after being the president for 2023-2024. He is also a member of the national ASAS board of directors and on other ASAS committees.



Caton



Dr. Carl Dahlen shares insights about grazing technologies and research that’s under way.

Researchers go to Cattlemen’s College

Dr. Miranda Meehan, Dr. Carl Dahlen and graduate students Jennifer Hurlbert and Josh Wianecki spoke at the Cattlemen’s College at the North Dakota Stockmen’s convention in September. They talked to producers about several different grazing technologies that are being used in production and some that they are testing in research settings at the Central Grasslands Research Extension Center and in Fargo at the beef facilities. They were joined by several of their colleagues from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.



Faculty, staff receive awards from college

Four members of the department were recognized by NDSU Agriculture at the 2024 Faculty and Staff Awards in November. Ron Johnson was awarded the Rick and Jody Burgum Staff Award, while Tara Swanson received the H. Roald and Janet Lund Excellence in Teaching Award. Dr. Erika Berg won the Celebrate, Integrate and Embrace the Power of Diversity Award. Dr. Travis Hoffman was the recipient of the Excellence in Extension Early Career Award.

NDSU's Equine Center a hub of learning as well as healing

Therapeutic riding is helping people with a variety of challenges

by Darla White
Administrative Secretary

About four miles west of NDSU is one of the treasures of campus: the Equine Center. It boasts indoor horse stalls, an indoor riding arena and outdoor turnout space. As Equine Center Manager Shannon Eck will tell you, it's a constant hub of activity.

"There are so many moving pieces here, not just the horses," she says. But let's start with the horses. An average of 50-75 horses call the center their home during each school year. Dozens of horses are leased from the community each year and

used for equine classes. Another dozen are the therapy horses. The rest of the horses are boarded at the center by NDSU students of all different majors, who appreciate having their personal horses nearby while they work on their degrees.

The equine science program got going when the Equine Center was built in 2003 within the North Dakota Horse Park. The students have many of their classes here, and it's also a home away from home for students on the NDSU Equestrian Team as well as the Rodeo Team.

Class and team members help do chores along with Shannon, two part-time employees and approximately 10 student workers. Most everything is done by hand – hand-catching the horses, hand-feeding them and hand-cleaning the



This is one of the 50-75 horses that make their home at the Equine Center during the school year.

Continued on page 8

Bronc-riding brilliance



Tate Eck competes in bronc riding during an NDRA Rodeo in the summer. Photo by Section 20 Photography.



Tate Eck, former Animal Sciences Department instructor and Rodeo Team coach, was honored as the 2024 North Dakota Rodeo Association Saddle Bronc Riding champion. On the final results board, he had 750 points compared to the second-place finisher's 480 points. He is photographed with his wife, Shannon, NDSU's Equine Center manager.

Horses at Equine Center get lots of love

From page 7

stalls. Everyone has to work hard to keep things running smoothly, says Shannon. Her bachelor's degree in mass communications has come in handy in this role, she says. "You deal with people non-stop."

Shannon has been the manager since 2006, and one of the biggest changes she has seen during that time is the growth in therapeutic riding. Bison Strides is a beloved equine-assisted services program offered through the Department of Animal Sciences. It teaches horsemanship skills to people with physical, cognitive, emotional, behavioral or mental health challenges through weekly adapted therapeutic riding lessons. Dr. Erika Berg is the director of the program.

Jessie Bailey, program assistant for Bison Strides, described one of the memorable activities. Children wrote letters to some of the horses at the Equine Center, and Bison Strides volunteers wrote back as if they were the horses. At the end of the letter exchange program, the children got to come to the Equine Center to meet the horses they'd been "corresponding" with.

Jessie said that some of the kids who visit the center have never been able to go on a field trip before, so it's gratifying to see their excitement.

Other people who are excited to visit the Equine Center are the groups who come to tour the facility or do clinics, Shannon says. These include 4-H groups, Girl Scouts, preschool classes or home school groups.

People headed to horse shows or rodeos regularly stop at the Equine Center as well; not to see what's there, but to have their own horses "lay over," or spend the night in a safe facility.

It seems the Equine Center is the place to be, a haven for horses, students, the community – and even jackrabbits and hawks. Just to clarify, those are real animals that sometimes make their way into the building, not disgruntled SDSU or UND fans. At least not yet.



Above, mini horses are among the animals that can be seen hanging out at the Equine Center.



Left, Equine Center Manager Shannon Eck has been keeping things running smoothly since 2006.

Right, a student works efficiently to get the stalls nice and clean. Many of the chores at the Equine Center are done by hand, including the cleaning and feeding.

