

Animal Science Weekly

December 13, 2010



TEXAS A&M
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TAMU Horse Judging Team places second



From left, Jeannette Mawyer, Megan Webb, Libby Hallett, Courtney Phillips, Cassie Holloway, Rebecca Muller, Karinda Dickens, Amber Marcum and Dr. Clay Cavinder.

OKLAHOMA CITY - The TAMU Horse Judging Team competed in their first major contest at the National Reining Horse Association Futurity where they placed second behind West Texas A&M University. Only 20 points separated the top two universities. TAMU was the only team to have four out of the five individuals to place in the top ten. Karinda Dickens of Magnolia, placed fifth high; Megan Webb of West Virginia, seventh high; Rebecca Muller of Round Rock, eight high; and Libby Hallett of Sugar Land, tenth high. Team members also include Amber Marcum, Dickinson; Courtney Phillips, San Antonio; and Cassie Holloway, Maryland. The team is coached by Dr. Clay Cavinder and assistant coach Jeannette Mawyer.

Research grant awarded

Dr. Fuller W. Bazer (PI), Dr. Guoyao Wu and Dr. Greg Johnson have been awarded a grant by the USDA CSREES AFRI to study "Arginine and Secreted Phosphoprotein 1 Mediate mTOR Cell Signaling for Conceptus Development and Survival." The award is for a total of \$500,000 from Dec. 1, 2010 to Nov. 30, 2014. The aims of the research are to determine cell signaling pathway(s) activated by arginine and/or secreted phosphoprotein 1 responsible for changes in cytoskeletal proteins required for elongation of conceptus trophectoderm and implantation which is critical for pregnancy recognition signaling and implantation. Effects of feeding arginine as a dietary supplement to enhance growth and development of embryos/fetuses and placentae during key periods of placental growth between Days 15 to 75 of pregnancy will also be evaluated. The studies will be with sheep, but findings are expected to impact all livestock industries. Emerging evidence from studies led by Dr. Wu indicate that dietary supplements of arginine improve pregnancy rates and litter size in pigs, sheep and rats. With development of rumen protected arginine, this amino acid is expected to become a routine dietary supplement to increase reproductive performance of cattle, sheep and goats.



<http://www.facebook.com/tamuanimalscience>

Department of Animal Science hosts

Holiday Luncheon and Awards Ceremony

The Department of Animal Science hosted its annual Holiday Luncheon and Awards Ceremony on Dec. 9 in the Kleberg atrium. More than 200 faculty, staff, retirees, graduate students and student workers gathered for a barbecue brisket and chicken meal.

The 2010 Animal Science Department's Outstanding Support Staff Award was presented to Travis Roitsch. Travis may not be a familiar face around Kleberg because he is the Beef Cattle Systems Research Service Manager and spends most of his time at ASTREC or the Beef Cattle Systems Research Unit on Highway 50.

Travis is responsible for the establishment and maintenance of perennial pastures, the annual planting of 160 acres of small grains, daily feeding of over 100 feeder cattle on research projects, oversight of an 80 head permanent herd, and 300 head of research stocker cattle on pasture. He has contributed significantly to the department over the last year and a half with the development and growth of the Feed Operations business at ASTREC. He was directly involved in the mixing and delivery of over 650 tons of feed during the last year alone.

According to his nominators, without Travis, it would be impossible to conduct beef cattle research programs at the volume and scale we currently experience. Travis is always willing to help and to find a way to get the job done to accommodate the needs of investigators. Through his efforts and the rest of the team at Beef Cattle Systems, Travis has helped a start-up unit become well established as a critical component of many research programs. His versatility and skills make him an invaluable component, and his attitude and work ethic make him a pleasure to work with. Travis was presented with a plaque and monetary award, which is generously supported by the Haas-Litterst Endowment. Congratulations, Travis!



Dr. Jason Sawyer, associate professor and associate head for operations, presents the Outstanding Support Staff Award to Travis Roitsch.

Food Drive Contest



The department of Animal Science hosted a team-based Food Drive Contest with all collected donations going towards the KBTX Food for Families Food Drive on Dec. 9 to benefit the Brazos Valley Food Bank and area pantries.

A total of 1,314 pounds of non-perishable food items and \$1,167 in monetary donations were collected from four teams. According to the food bank, \$1 equals five pounds of food. Total food items and monetary donations from the department equated to 7,149 pounds of food.

The department doubled the pounds of food donated from last year's contest and hopes to continue the tradition of surpassing previous years' contributions.

The winning teams were announced at the annual Holiday Luncheon and Award Ceremony, and each person received hours of administrative leave.

We would like to recognize and pay tribute to our former students who recently passed away:

Edwin C. Zieschang '53

Kenneth L. Guest '66

We extend our condolences to friends and families of these former students.

Dr. Bill Ellis Passes Away



We note with sadness the passing of Dr. W. C. "Bill" Ellis on Dec. 5 after battling cancer for several years. Dr. Ellis was a professor of Animal Nutrition in the department until his retirement in 2004 after 44 years of service. He was a respected faculty member who brought great distinction to his career in the area of ruminant nutrition.

Dr. Ellis is survived by his wife of 55 years, Bobbie; his children Linda, Pamela and William Keith; six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Services for Dr. Ellis were held on Dec. 11 in Clay, Louisiana. We extend our sympathies to the Ellis Family.

Upcoming events

Equine Hoof Care and Shoeing Short Course (Jan. 3-6, 2011 - College Station) - For more information contact Dr. Dennis Sigler, Extension Horse Specialist, at 979-845-7731 or by e-mail at <dsigler@tamu.edu>.

Equine Reproductive Management Short Course (Jan. 11-13, 2011 - College Station) - For more information visit <<http://animalscience.tamu.edu/academics/equine/workshops/equine-repro-short-course.htm>> or contact Dr. Vogelsang at 979-845-7731 or by e-mail at <m-vogelsang@tamu.edu>.

Southwest Beef Symposium (Jan. 18-19, 2011 - Amarillo Civic Center) - For more information visit <<http://swbs.nmsu.edu/>> or contact Bruce Carpenter at 432-336-8585 or by e-mail at <bcarpent@ag.tamu.edu>.



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