

AnSci

Connection

Department of Animal Science, University of Minnesota



Issue 58

March/April 2004

Notes from the Department Head

By F. Abel Ponce de León

I would like to thank all of you who took time to send comments, positive and not so positive, in response to my last column. One thing to remember is that I offered a view from 55,000 feet high and not an eye-height view. One issue common to all comments is that animal agriculture is at a crossroads and not a single solution need be implemented. I agree with this general principle. However, I would like to insist that animal agriculture is a business and to remain viable, it needs to be renewable (environmentally sound) and competitive (profitable). Anything less than this will continue to erode the infrastructure we currently have and will prevent future investments and growth. I insist there is a need for continued dialog and cooperation. Once again, I invite our readers to publish, in this newsletter, your points of view. And, remember, we do not practice censorship.

Let me give you a piece of good news about our College's New High School (NHS) recruiting efforts. As of January 27, 2004, our college has experienced an increase of 54% in applications from 352 in 2003 to 542 in 2004. Of these, 410 applicants have been offered acceptance and 59 have already committed, an increase of 14% over last year at this same time period. Of the 542 NHS applicants, 168 or about 31% are applying to the Animal Science Major and 40 (7%) students to ScAg and AIM Majors. From the latter two majors there will be some who want Pre-Vet and/or Animal Industries tracks, respectively; however, we do not currently know their preferences. At this point in time, 135 students (33% of accepted applicants) have been offered acceptance to the Animal Science Major and 30 (7%) to the ScAg and AIM Majors. As of January 27, twenty-nine of these students have committed to come to the U.

Dr. Ann Hill-Duin, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, is leading the recruitment effort in our College. Dr. Hill-Duin and her staff deserve our recognition for their continued efforts in recruitment and undergraduate student support. Likewise, Drs. Anthony Seykora and Les Hansen are to be congratulated for their continued commitment to undergraduate recruitment, the overall increase in undergraduate student numbers in the Animal Science Major and, in particular,

the increase in dairy students. The increase in undergraduate student numbers has also translated in an increase in the membership of the Gopher Dairy Club, Block and Bridle and Pre-Vet clubs. Kelly Sheehan, who started her appointment a few months ago, has done an outstanding job in promoting and recruiting undergraduates for our Major. Even though the numbers are good, we have not finished the job yet. I am asking each one of you, our readers, faculty, students, alumni and friends, to continue promoting the work that we do among potential undergraduate students. I am especially inviting our faculty and current students to help us contact prospective students and share experiences with them.

Support the University's Legislative Efforts

The University is seeking funding during this legislative session to correct vital health and safety issues, to renew old and outdated classrooms and buildings, and to complete infrastructure projects such as new roof replacements and ventilation systems. The quality of our facilities does have an impact on our ability to attract world-class faculty, well-prepared students, and millions of dollars in research and private funding — all critical to the University's excellence and the health of Minnesota's economy.

You can help support the University during this legislative session by participating in a "Calling Night" or "Thursdays at the Capitol". The goal of these activities is to have a visible presence of University supporters at the committee hearings. Volunteers are welcome at any of the Calling Nights or Thursdays at the Capitol sessions. A complete listing of the dates may be found at <http://www1.umn.edu/groots/phone.php> and <http://www1.umn.edu/groots/tatc.php>.

Consider joining the Legislative Network! The network, created by the University of Minnesota Alumni Association over 15 years ago, is a coalition of volunteers who share a commitment to higher education. The network, designed to keep alumni, students, faculty, staff and community involved in important University initiatives at the legislature, works to motivate and activate advocates to deliver the University's key concerns and messages to elected officials.

For more information about the University's request or to join the Legislative Network, visit <http://www.supporttheu.umn.edu>.

Department of Animal Science

305 Haecker Hall
1364 Eckles Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108-6118
Tel. (612) 624-2722
Fax (612) 625-5789
Email: bjrae@umn.edu
<http://www.ansci.umn.edu>

Department Head:

F. Abel Ponce de León

Administrative Director:

Dana Souther

Director of Graduate Studies:

Marshall Stern

Director of Undergraduate Studies:

Tony Seykora

AnSci Connection is a monthly newsletter of the Department of Animal Science at the University of Minnesota.

If you would like to contribute information (articles, upcoming events, announcements of special achievements, etc.), please contact Bonnie Rae, Editor.

Address:

205 Haecker Hall
1364 Eckles Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108-6118
Tel. (612) 624-4995
Fax (612) 625-1283
Email: bjrae@umn.edu

The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

The next issue of
AnSci Connection
will be published
in April.

The deadline for
submitting articles
is **March 29**.

Graduate Student Profile: Jeffrey Griggs

Jeffrey Griggs graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2002 with a B.S. in Bacteriology. His education also included 18 credits of Poultry Science courses taken at UW-Madison through the Midwest Poultry Consortium's Center of Excellence Scholarship Program. Jeff's goal after graduation was to start veterinary school, but his desire to be involved in research kept him from pursuing that goal full-time. Combining his Bacteriology degree with his Poultry Science training got Jeff to where he is today. Currently he is working on an RAR-funded project "Microbial safety of chicken grown without antibiotics" under the direction of Dr. Jacquie Jacob.

Jeff was born and raised here in St. Paul, and his family still live in the area. He has two brothers — one who started high school this fall, the other is an undergraduate here at the University of Minnesota.

In his free time, Jeff volunteers at the U of MN Raptor Center and at the Humane Society for Companion Animals in St. Paul — he has not totally given up the idea of becoming a veterinarian.

Come On Out to Cheer for The Haeckers

This winter, a few brave members of the Department of Animal Science formed "The Haeckers" to compete in broomball intramurals. Team captain Nicolas Di Lorenzo, along with players Rud Wasson, Jamie Larson, Beka Gill, Jon Holt, Claudia Ariza-Nieto, Eb Ballinger, Kelly Sheehan, Jeff Griggs, Brad Heins, and Tony and Rel Seykora have all participated in some intense competition and amusing tactics. The team plays at Ridder Arena on Thursday nights at 9:00. Their last two games before playoffs will be on March 11 and 25. All are welcome to attend the games. The Haeckers could use a cheer squad — their record so far is 0-3.



The Haeckers - top left to right: Kelly Sheehan, Rud Wasson, Jamie Larson, Jeff Griggs; middle row, left to right: Jon Holt, Claudia Ariza-Nieto; front row, left to right: Nicolas Di Lorenzo, Eb Ballinger. Not shown: Beka Gill, Brad Heins, and Tony and Rel Seykora.

Avian Influenza in the News

Avian Influenza (AI) has hit the news lately. Recent outbreaks in Asia, Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Texas and British Columbia, Canada have all made the news. While it may seem like AI is spreading, the outbreaks are all independent of each other.

AI is a viral disease affecting the respiratory, digestive and/or nervous system of many species of birds. Avian influenza virus infection can occur in most species of birds, both domestic and wild. Wild species of birds usually do not develop clinical disease, but can act as carriers of the virus.

There are many strains of the avian influenza (AI) virus that can cause varying amounts of clinical illness in poultry. AI viruses can be classified into low pathogenic (LPAI) and highly pathogenic (HPAI) forms based on the severity of the illness they cause. Most AI virus strains are LPAI and typically cause little or no clinical signs in infected birds. However, some LPAI virus strains are capable of mutating under field conditions into HPAI viruses. HPAI is an extremely infectious and fatal form of the disease of birds. It is rare for AI to be transmitted to humans. In such cases, direct bird contact is required. There is no fear of transmission through poultry meat or eggs.

Avian influenza viruses are subdivided into serotypes based on their hemagglutinin (H) and neuraminidase (N) surface antigens. As already stated, the recent outbreaks are independent of each other. The outbreak in Asia involved a HPAI, H5N1 virus; the Delaware/New Jersey outbreak a LPAI H7N2 virus; the Pennsylvania outbreak a LPAI H2N2; the Canadian outbreak a LPAI H7N3; and the Texas outbreak a HPAI H5N2.

For more information on Avian Influenza, see <http://128.101.246.6/outreach/ai/>.

New Calf and Heifer Research Facility to Hold Open House

The new University of Minnesota Calf and Heifer Research Facility at the Southern Research and Outreach Center (SROC) in Waseca has an Open House scheduled for Wednesday, April 21, 2004. Tentative plans include a ribbon cutting ceremony, lunch, and tour of the units.

The new facility has two 30 ft x 200 ft calf barns (40 calves per room) all-in all-out with 160 individual pens (birth to 10 weeks of-age), and a 65 ft x 150 ft grower barn (10 to 27 weeks of age) with 120 head in 20 pens. The latter will compliment the existing group pen barn with an additional 120 head. There is overflow capacity for about 100 individually-fed calves (hutches, condo, raised stalls and inside pens) and 70 head in group pens of 5 (a renovated sow-boar gestation barn).

The SROC raises animals for Bombay Dairy in Kenyon (700 cows) and Wolf Creek Dairy in Dundas (400 cows) from birth to 6 months. The heifers are moved to second stage growers at 6 months (Scherbrings in Minnesota City and Kenyon Farms in Austin).

Researchers at the SROC are looking for another dairy to attain their throughput of 700 heifers per year with at least 400 calves used for research studies each year. A partnership has been formed with Ridley Feed Operations to partially support building infrastructure and some of the applied research. There are opportunities for collaborative work in the future. For additional information, please contact Dr. Hugh Chester-Jones, telephone: 507-835-3620, email: chest001@umn.edu.

Gopher Dairy Club Held 20th Annual Recognition Banquet in February

The Gopher Dairy Club (GDC) had its 20th annual recognition banquet on Sunday, February 8, at the Northstar Ballroom in the St. Paul Student Center. A total of 175 people attended, including student members, parents, faculty, and industry sponsors of awards.

Kyle Sonnek, President of GDC, was emcee. Department Head Ponce de León provided a welcome, and Dean Muscoplat offered remarks from COAFES. Featured speaker was Libby Hupf Tate, alumnus and past president of GDC, who currently is a Program Director with the University of Minnesota Alumni Association.

The club's Distinguished Service Award was presented to Scott Ellinghuysen, alumnus and past president of GDC, as well as the regional and national associations of student dairy clubs. Scott has served as one of the coaches of the intercollegiate dairy cattle judging team for the past five years and was one of the co-chairs for the highly successful first annual Gopher Dairy Camp held last summer on the St. Paul campus.

Dairy Cattle Judging Teams and the Dairy Management Challenge Team were recognized at the banquet. Furthermore, Minnesota's two nominees to National Dairy Shrine's Student Recognition Program were announced — Abby Anderson and Kyle Sonnek; they received award plaques from Genex/CRI. Scholarship recipients were announced and the R.W. Touchberry Outstanding Junior in Animal Science Award (plaque and \$1,000) was presented to Sarah Olson.

Eleven new student awards (freshmen and transfer students) of \$1,500 each were presented by the Gopher Dairy Club. Profit from the club's Dairy Bar at the cattle barn during the Minnesota State Fair provides the funding for these cash awards. Recipients were Brent Czech, Little Falls; Brad Davis, Cokato; Katie Deutsch, Elko; Kevin Griffin, Rochester; Sally Loeschke, Milbank, SD; Nathan Mueller, Lime Springs, IA; Luke Olson, Hutchinson; Brian Paulson, Owatonna; Kristen Reiman, Princeton; Matt Sellner, Sleepy Eye; and John Takala, Iron.

The Outstanding Rookie Award was presented to Morgan Schaff, and the Outstanding Senior Award was presented to Kyle Sonnek. The ten seniors who traveled to California (including a 3-day cruise from Los Angeles to Mexico) presented a slide show of their 11-day trip in early January, which included stops at eight large dairies in the central valley of California and concluded with a weekend in San Francisco.

Congratulations...

Sally Noll received \$25,000 grant from the Minnesota Corn Research and Promotion Council for the project "Improving the nutritional value of corn distiller dried grains with solubles (DDGS) for poultry diets from Minnesota ethanol plants".

Kim Reno, husband Jim and daughter Megan are expecting a new family member; Kim is due in mid-August.

Mark Whitney passed his Ph.D. thesis defense and final oral exam on January 27, 2004.

This semester, Guowu Xu began a Ph.D. program under the direction of Dr. Jerry Shurson. Welcome to Animal Science, Guowu!

Fred Hrbek is Back!

Fred Hrbek has returned safely from Iraq where he has been serving in the military for over a year. Fred has not yet returned to his job in the turkey unit at the Rosemount Research and Outreach Center, but he plans to do so in the next few weeks. A "Welcome Back" reception is being planned for April. Details to be announced.

2004 Turkey Research Review

March 16, 2004 at RiverCentre in St. Paul

For more information, contact Sally Noll at 612-624-4928 or nollx001@umn.edu.

Positive Reviews Received from Turkey Health School Participants

The 3rd Turkey Health School was held February 3 and 4 at the Earle Brown Center on the U of MN St. Paul Campus. Participants were quite positive about the workshop with comments such as "very useful...", "very informative", "excellent overview of turkey health issues." Participants especially liked the interaction with other producers and instructors as well as the hands-on opportunities to learn how to take blood samples and swabs, and conduct a necropsy.

Two new topics were added to the program this year; especially timely was the discussion on avian influenza and monitoring and control plans.

Instructors participating in the school were Dave Halvorson, Sally Noll, and Andre Ziegler, University of Minnesota; Jim Trites, Elanco; Gorica Spasojevic, Willmar Poultry Company; Helen Wojcinski, Hybrid Turkeys; Dale Lauer, Minnesota Board of Animal Health; Mahesh Kumar, consultant; Carl Heeder, Brian McComb, and Don Roepke, Jennie O Turkey Store. Thanks to the instructors for their excellent presentations, and to Elanco and Best Veterinary Solutions for their sponsorship of the program.

2004 Minnesota Beef Cow/Calf Days Well Attended

The 2004 Minnesota Beef Cow Calf Days was held from February 4 to 14 at ten locations (Staples, Bagley, Greenbush, Grand Rapids, Isle, Glenwood, Pipestone, Waterville, Rochester, and Rushford). Program speakers were Alfredo DiCostanzo and Deb Roeber of the Department of Animal Science, Cliff Lamb of the North Central Research and Outreach Center, and John Rodgers of Pfizer Animal Health. The program was a success with a total of 500 participants at all locations. Some of the comments received were "probably the best one I have attended — good work", "keep up the good work", "excellent program", and "good, upbeat, interesting speakers."

Thanks to the 2004 statewide program sponsors — ABS Global, Inc., Big Gain, Inc., Elanco Animal Health, Fort Dodge Animal Health, Land O'Lakes Feed, Merial Animal Health, Pfizer Animal Health, Tru-Test, Inc., and Westway Feed Products — for their support of Minnesota Cow/Calf Days.

A Successful Season for the Livestock Judging Team

The University of Minnesota Livestock Judging Team completed its winter contest schedule and enjoyed some success along the way. The highlight of the schedule was at the National Western Stock Show held in Denver, Colorado, in mid-January where the team won the high team overall award in the Senior Collegiate Carload Cattle Judging Contest with 31 teams competing. The team then competed at the Sioux Empire Stock Show contest in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, on January 31 and finished 5th out of 12 teams. Jay Thissen was 2nd high individual overall for the Minnesota team. A week later, the University of Minnesota team placed 6th out of 15 teams competing at the Iowa Beef Expo contest held in Des Moines, Iowa. Jay Thissen was 3rd high individual overall in this event.

Congratulations to the Livestock Judging Team members — Jason Anderson, Nathan Bostrom, Penni Dicke, Jeff Nelson and Jay Thissen — and to J.D. Hawton and Greg Harder (alumni assistant) who coached and traveled with the team.

The team thanks the St. Paul Campus Animal Science livestock barn employees, especially Bill Hansen, Mark Lostetter, Tiffany Bobendrier and student workers, Derrick Sommers, Ryan Donnelly and Jared Tessmer for all their help in making livestock classes available for the team's preparation.

Mark Your Calendars for...

2004 Ag Awareness, the annual outreach event organized by graduate students of the Departments of Animal Science and Applied Plant Sciences, will be held on May 18, 19 and 20 in the St. Paul Campus Livestock Arena.

Ag Awareness is a learning experience that encompasses many aspects of agriculture. The goal is to provide an interactive, hands-on learning environment for urban and/or suburban elementary students with little or no exposure to agriculture. Booths will be on display with fun facts about the sheep, dairy, beef, swine and poultry industries as well as two booths on plant science — one about what plants need to grow, another on identifying common crop plants.

In the coming weeks, the Ag Awareness committee will begin recruiting volunteers to serve as group leaders and assist with daily event activities. Let's plan on helping them out again this year. Questions may be directed to Jon Holt 612-625-3743 or holt0288@umn.edu.

Dates Set for 2004 Gopher Dairy Camp

Gopher Dairy Camp, an activity camp for 4-H and FFA youth grades 6-11, will be held June 10, 11 and 12. Activities will include Dairy Workshops, Dairy Showmanship, a Gopher Gold Auction, Dairy Judging, and a St. Paul Saints ball game. Additional information, registration forms, and a complete camp schedule will be available on-line soon (<http://www.ansci.umn.edu/dairy/gopherdairycamp/>). The camp is presented by the Gopher Dairy Club and the Minnesota State 4-H Dairy Committee. Questions may be directed to Brad Heins (612-625-9294 or hein0106@umn.edu).

William J. Boylan Will Be Remembered by Many

Professor Emeritus William J. Boylan, born on Christmas Day 1929 in Bozeman, Montana, died on February 16, 2004 in Maplewood, Minnesota. Survived by his wife of 45 years, Teresa; sons, Christopher, John and Todd; daughter Mary Kate; and 9 grandchildren.

Boylan obtained a B.S. degree in Animal Industry from Montana State University. His M.S. and Ph.D. degrees, both in animal science, were from the University of Minnesota. Upon completion of his graduate studies, Boylan was appointed to the faculty at the Department of Animal Science, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada. In 1966, he was hired by the Department of Animal Science, University of Minnesota, as an associate professor of animal genetics, and in 1971 he was promoted to full professor.

During his tenure at Minnesota, Boylan taught undergraduate courses in animal breeding and graduate courses in quantitative inheritance, advised several M.S. and Ph.D. students, served on several Department and University committees, conducted intensive sheep breeding research programs, and published numerous scientific articles. Much of his research efforts were devoted to studying responses to selection and the genetic characterization of traits and populations. He was the first U.S. researcher to explore and determine the usefulness of prolific sheep breeds to increase productivity of sheep.

Boylan was recognized, both nationally and internationally, for his many contributions to sheep breeding. He was solely responsible for the first importation of Finnsheep into Canada in 1966 and into the U.S. in 1968, and he was one of the first importers of Romanov sheep in 1987.

The importation, subsequent research and utilization of the Finnsheep breed was one of the most significant and important contributions to the U.S. sheep industry. He was regarded by many of his colleagues as one of the leading sheep geneticists in the country.

Before retiring in 1995, Boylan established the "Professor William J. Boylan Fund for Parkinson's Disease" with the Department of Neurosurgery, University of Minnesota Medical School. The fund was set up in support of Parkinson's Disease research.

Thursday, March 11

Minnesota Livestock Breeders Association Annual Banquet and Awards Program

Northstar Ballroom, St. Paul Campus

For more information or to register, contact Steve Pooch at 651-288-4314.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



Mar 15 - Poultry Processing Workshop for Home Flocks and Small-scale Producers, 125 ABLMS, St. Paul Campus. For more info, contact Jacquie Jacob at 612-624-2766 or jacob150@umn.edu.

Mar 15, 16, 17 - Midwest Sections of ASAS/ADSA Annual Meeting, Polk County Convention Center, Des Moines, IA. Contact the Business Office at 217-356-3182.

Mar 16 - MN Foundation for Responsible Animal Care (MnFRAC), Libby Conference Center, MN State Fairgrounds, St. Paul. For more info, contact Juanita Reed-Boniface 763-753-4636.

Mar 18, 19, 20 - 2004 North American Farm & Power Show, Four Seasons Arena, Owatonna, MN. Contact Tradexpos by email (tradexpo@tradexpos.com).

Mar 20 - MN Cattle Women Quarterly Meeting, Andover, MN. For more info, contact Juanita Reed-Boniface.

Apr 2 - Welcome Event for 2004 Freshmen, Northstar Ballroom, St. Paul Student Center. For more information, contact Cairin Mullan at 612-624-3045 or mull0230@umn.edu.

Apr 5 - Minnesota-Wisconsin Dairy Policy Conference. Radisson Hotel, 200 Harborview Plaza, La Crosse, WI. Contact Wisconsin Federation of Cooperatives (WFC) at 608-258-4400.

Apr 5 & 6 - Dairy Directors Leadership Conference (WFC-MAC Two-State Dairy Program), Radisson Hotel, 200 Harborview Plaza, La Crosse, WI. Contact WFC at 608-258-4400.

Apr 12-17 - MN Royal, St. Paul Campus. For more information about the 2004 events, contact Andy Sorsoleil by email (sors0005@umn.edu).

Apr 21 - Open House: New Calf & Heifer Research Facility, Southern ROC, Waseca, MN. For more info, contact Hugh Chester-Jones at 507-835-3620 or chest001@umn.edu.

May 18, 19, 20 -

Ag Awareness, Livestock Pavillion, St. Paul Campus. For more info, contact Jon Holt at 612-625-3743 or holt0288@umn.edu.

MN Dairy Conference, St. Paul Campus. Contact: Veterinary Outreach Programs at 1-800-380-8636 or 612-624-3434.

Jun 10 & 11 - Gopher Dairy Camp, St. Paul Campus. For more info, contact Brad Heins at 612-625-9294 or hein0106@umn.edu.

Jun 12-16 - American Forage & Grassland Council (AFGC) 2004 Conference, Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center, Roanoke, VA. Contact the AFGC Conference Registrar at 540-231-5182.

Everyone is welcome to attend...

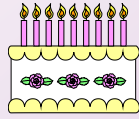
Animal Science Seminars

Mondays at 3:00 p.m. in Room 365 Haecker Hall

Topics and Speakers to be Announced

(Due to Spring Break, No Seminar on March 15)

Happy Birthday!



MARCH

1 - Yang Da
 Deb Roeber
4 - Jamie Larson
5 - Samuel Raser
8 - Scott Welch
11 - Daniel Carlson
 Sarah Zwach
12 - Jay Watje
13 - Charlie Peterson
14 - Shelly Christman
15 - Luis Espejo
18 - Marshall Stern
19 - Kyle Sonnek
20 - Brian Crooker
 Nduka Omeoga
23 - Mark Whitney
26 - Sheila Groth

APRIL

1 - Alan Hunter
2 - Danielle Gaetz
4 - Nicole London
6 - Mariana Carriquiry
8 - Mindy Spiehs
17 - Mark Lostetter
 David Plath
20 - Lee Johnston
 Derrick Sommers
21 - Jonathan Holt
22 - Tara Schneider
26 - Doug Foster
30 - Sara Davis

Tech Tips...

by Chris Buzzetta

is on a break.

Through education and research, we serve people by providing continued improvements in the efficient and humane production of animals and wholesome animal products.

AnSci Connection has gone PAPERLESS! Our Departmental newsletter may be found on-line at <http://www.ansci.umn.edu/newsletters.htm>.

After each new issue has been published, an email message will be sent to our readers with notification that the most recent issue has been posted to the Web.