

# *Have You* **HERD**

UF/IFAS Department of Animal Sciences Newsletter  
Vol. 14 | SUMMER 2025





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UF/IFAS  
DEPARTMENT OF  
ANIMAL SCIENCES

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Letter from the Chair

Dear alumni, friends, and supporters,

Welcome to the Summer 2025 issue of our department’s Have You HERD newsletter. It’s been an exceptionally hot season, but that hasn’t slowed us down.

Naturally, youth Extension is particularly active during the summer. This year’s Florida 4-H Horsemanship School taught equine handling and care techniques to 4-H members over the two-week program; 4-H also celebrated its 10th Livestock Judging Camp, a huge milestone for an amazing program where 4-H and FFA members build skills in livestock evaluation and reasons. Notably, this year’s camp coaches included two former FFA members who themselves participated in the Livestock Judging Camp.

Our teaching focus for this newsletter involves our department’s poultry education offerings, which are growing quickly thanks largely to the Dr. Bobby Leon Damron Poultry Science Endowment recently established by Mrs. Vera Damron, as well as the Rowland/Fehr Poultry Science Endowment. We were even featured on The Coop Scoop, a podcast by Poultry Times, where we talk about our expanding educational offerings, such as the Chicken Lab, and the new UF Poultry Science Club.

Our summer teaching initiatives have also given students the opportunity to travel nationally and internationally: The summer industry tour brought 15 students to producers across the northeast United States, while Dr. Antonio Faciola’s annual study abroad trip exposed students to agricultural practices in Italy.

Students aren’t the only ones traveling internationally! Our department sent three pregnant slick Holstein heifers to DayZee Farms in Pakistan, where they hope to incorporate the slick gene into their herds to improve heat tolerance.

On a personal note, I want to share that I will be stepping out of the Department Chair role this month. At the start of 2026, Victoria and I will be moving back to Punta Gorda, where I will resume my faculty role based at the Range Cattle REC in Ona. Over the past 20 years, I’ve had the privilege of serving IFAS in a variety of administrative roles and have been grateful for the opportunities to work alongside our stakeholders, faculty, staff, and students. We’re excited for this next chapter, and I’m especially looking forward to reconnecting more closely with the clientele we serve.

As always, I remain deeply appreciative of all you do to support the ANS mission. We could not do our work without the generosity of our alumni, friends, and stakeholders—whether through financial contributions, time spent speaking with students, or the internships and jobs you provide. If you’re interested in learning more about how to support our efforts, please visit <https://give.ifas.ufl.edu/animal-sciences-giving/> or feel free to reach out directly to the department.

Sincerely,

John Arthington  
Professor and Chair



John Arthington  
PROFESSOR & CHAIR





# UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA Buck Test and Sale

By Dr. Brittany N. Diehl

We are excited to announce our 2nd annual buck test at the University of Florida is underway! This program is designed to standardize environmental conditions to evaluate and quantify individual buck performance in the harsh southeastern US, with a primary emphasis on natural parasite resistance and growth. This is a forage-based buck performance test where bucks have continuous access to Bahiagrass pastures and are supplemented daily with a commercial concentrate ration. Upon entry to the program, all bucks receive triple-combination anthelmintics to ensure they do not harbor drug-resistant parasites. After the acclimation period, the bucks begin the 84-day gain test. Throughout the test period, measurements of body weight, body condition score, FAMACHA score, and fecal egg count are obtained. Data collected during the test is available to the public and is shared on our website.

We launched the buck test program in 2024 in response to goat producers in the southeast

requesting a way to evaluate individuals who produce progeny with higher growth rates and innate parasite resistance. The University of Florida has also been hosting a ram test since 2020 in response to a similar request from sheep producers. We appreciate the unique opportunity to host both programs simultaneously, yet separately. A unique characteristic of our programs is that we do not require the test individuals to be a specific breed, our tests are open to any breed.

Buck tests provide breeders with a way to objectively compare performance of different bucks in controlled conditions. We believe Florida is the ultimate location to evaluate these individuals, as it is one of the harshest climates in the US to attempt to grow and perform. Ultimately, the goal is to identify and reveal those who have superior genetics related to those desired traits. At the conclusion of our test, all individuals enrolled receive a USDA carcass grade and carcass ultrasound measurements.

The data generated from the test allows us to rank individuals based on performance, which provides a benchmark for producers to strive for. We aim to promote participating producer's breeding programs by offering the top performers in a sale at the conclusion of the program. The goal is for the top individuals to go on to be herd sires, therefore disseminating these superior genetics. **This year we have 70 bucks consigned to the test, with 38 different producers represented from 13 different states.** Our buck test is open to any breeder in the United States. We welcome your participation and an opportunity to work with you!

Another goal of our program is to enhance producer education and networking opportunities. This is not only accomplished through the test but also through the UF Small Ruminant Short Course (SRSC) that we host annually in the fall. The ram & buck test sales coincide with this event in Gainesville, FL. This year our SRSC will be on October 10-11, 2025, with pre-conference seminars on October 9. The full agenda is posted on our website, and registration is now open for this year. We welcome your attendance at our event!

Please feel free to contact us with questions:

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Scan the QR codes for more information:





**UF Buck Test**  
<https://animal.ifas.ufl.edu/smallruminant/buck-test/>



**UF Small Ruminant Short Course**  
<https://animal.ifas.ufl.edu/smallruminant/small-ruminant-short-course/>

Follow us on social media:

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# A Resurgence in Poultry Science Education at the University of Florida

By Dr. John Arthington

The Poultry Science program at the University of Florida is undergoing a remarkable reemergence. Since the program concluded operations years ago, a series of unique events have sparked renewed interest, particularly in the Department of Animal Sciences’ teaching mission. Central to this resurgence is an endowed gift, which has funded our department’s membership in the Midwest Poultry Consortium—making us the southernmost member of this prestigious group.

This membership has provided our students with invaluable educational experiences and opened doors to meaningful careers in the poultry industry. At the heart of our program’s success is a dedicated faculty team committed to fostering student achievement. Each year, this group organizes a trip to the International Production & Processing Expo (IPPE), where students engage with industry leaders and explore a range of internship opportunities. Many of these internships lead to career positions students hadn’t previously imagined upon entering the department.

While our department’s poultry science investment may not yet match the scale of some other programs, we’re actively working to change that. Several faculty members are collaborating to create a strategic plan for a greater investment in poultry science education within our undergraduate curriculum. One of the most exciting developments has been the establishment of the “Chicken Lab” by Dr. Tracy Scheffler. This hands-on laboratory course complements our required Growth and Development lecture and gives students the opportunity to rear broiler chicks from day-old through harvest and fabrication. The course has been so well-received that Dr. Scheffler now offers it both in the Fall and Spring semesters, with a waiting list of students. All of this activity and excitement



Dr. John Arthington and Dr. Tracy Scheffler spoke on The Coop Scoop, a podcast by Poultry Times, about the department’s poultry education initiatives. Check it out here!



has led to the development of an undergraduate poultry science club, with an increasing number of members and activity.

These efforts are further bolstered by the support of generous donors. Mrs. Vera Damron recently honored her late husband, Dr. Bobby Damron—former UF Professor of Poultry Science—by establishing an endowed gift in his name. Together with the sizable Rowland/ Fehr Poultry Science Endowment, this gift is enabling us to offer new opportunities, including the development of an Introduction to Poultry Science course.

Moreover, Bruno and Maritza Ramos, founders of Morning Star Fields, have pledged a modular laying hen unit to complement our existing broiler modular along with an operational pledge linked to the future growth of their new egg production facility in Vero Beach, FL. This exciting partnership and facility addition to our department will allow students to gain even more hands-on experience in poultry production.

While the University of Florida may no longer lead in poultry science research, our renewed focus on poultry science education is creating exceptional opportunities for our students. These efforts are truly proving to be a rewarding experience for our undergraduate learners, and we are excited to continue growing and expanding our program.

To learn more about our program and the passionate individuals making it successful, please reach out to John Arthington via email [jarth@ufl.edu](mailto:jarth@ufl.edu).



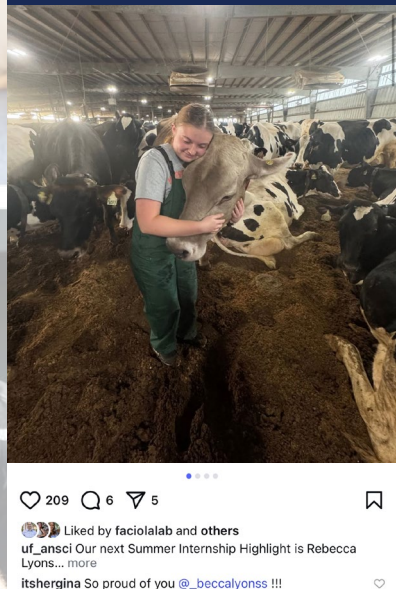
# HIGHLIGHTS IN COMMUNICATIONS

## SUMMER SEMESTER ANALYTICS



**@uf\_ansci**  
134,262 Views  
110 New Followers  
2,722 Total Followers

**Top Instagram Post**  
221 Interactions  
3,321 Views



**UF Animal Sciences Department**  
255,887 Views  
4,089 Interactions  
238 New Followers  
9,965 Total Followers

**Top Facebook Post**  
13,910 Views  
1,164 Engagement  
12 Net Follows



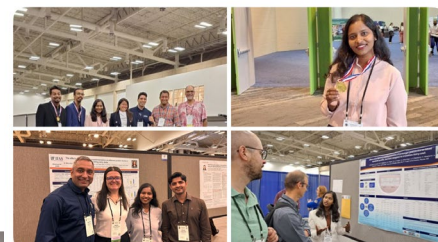
**Top X Post**  
136 Impressions  
26 Engagements



**UF IFAS Animal Sciences Dept.**  
@uf\_ansci

We would like to congratulate two of our students for their accomplishments at the 2025 American Dairy Science Association Meeting last week!

We are so proud of these students and their supportive faculty members as they've represented the department well this year! Go Gators!



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**@ufanimalsciences2065**

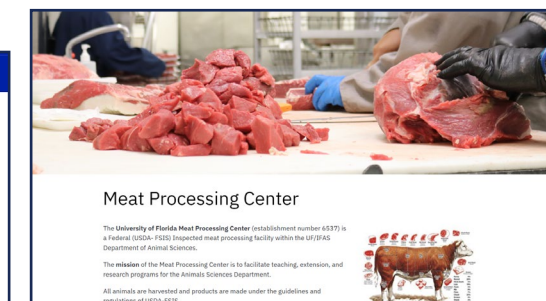
Scan the QR code to check out our featured video!



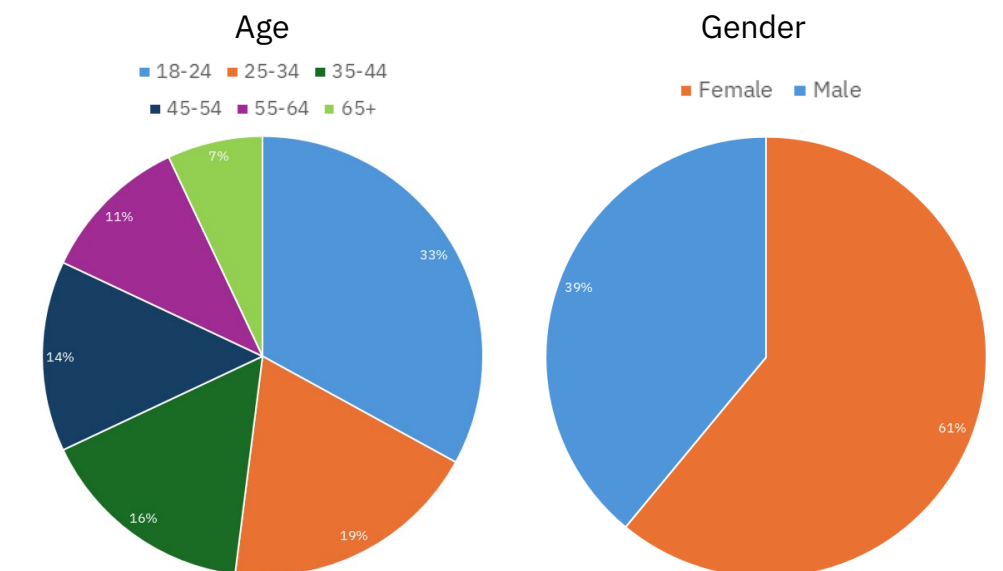
**@uf\_ansci**  
1,358 Followers  
36 New Posts

## WEBPAGE VIEWS

1. <https://animal.ifas.ufl.edu/facilities/meat-processing-center/> 5,010
2. <http://animal.ifas.ufl.edu/extension/youth/horse/4h-shows/statehorseshow/> 3,575
3. <https://animal.ifas.ufl.edu/students/have-you-herd/> 974



## VISITOR ACTIVITY





# Animal Sciences

## LECTURE SERIES

The UF/IFAS Department of Animal Sciences hosts three recurring lecture series that bring distinguished scientists from around the world to speak about their research:

### WILLIAM W. THATCHER LECTURE



Dr. William W. Thatcher is a Graduate Research Professor Emeritus in the Department of Animal Sciences. His research program in cattle has been associated with ovarian follicular development, maternal-embryo interactions, and developmental approaches for regulating reproductive function to enhance production and health. His major focus has been dealing with effects of the postpartum period, nutrition, and heat stress on ovarian follicular and corpus luteum functions and embryo survival.

This year's Thatcher Lecture, titled "Hydrogen Production and Hydrogen Utilization in the Rumen: Key to Mitigating Enteric Methane Emissions," was presented on March 13 by Dr. Roderick I. Mackie of the Department of Animal Sciences at University of Illinois.

### CHARLIE STAPLES LECTURE



The Charles R. Staples Lecture Series was created by colleagues and family of Dr. Charlie Staples to honor his contributions to the Department of Animal Sciences. Dr. Staples was a devoted mentor to colleagues and graduate students.

This year's Staples Lecture, held February 27, was titled "Biochemistry and Physiology of Vitamin D." It was presented by Dr. David Fraser, Emeritus Professor in Animal Science at the The University of Sydney who in 2015 became an honorary member of the General Division of the Order of Australia, an honor which is awarded to individuals for distinguished service to Australia or humanity at large. Dr. Fraser's research and teaching focuses on the nutrition of domestic animals, with particular interest in vitamin D status and function.

### ALVIN C. WARNICK LECTURE



The Warnick Lecture Series sponsored by the Department of Animal Sciences was instituted to recognize the accomplishments of Dr. Alvin C. Warnick, who joined the department faculty in 1953 and served for 20 years as Assistant Chairman of the department.

Dr. Warnick was elected Fellow in the American Society of Animal Science (1984), was honored by Utah State University in 2004 and was inducted into the Florida Agricultural Hall of Fame in 2015. The most recent Warnick Lecture, titled "Where are we now with conceptus elongation, implantation, and placentation in livestock?" was presented on November 20, 2024, by Dr. Gregory Johnson of the Department of Veterinary Integrative Biosciences at Texas A&M University.

# University of Florida

## Slick Holsteins Head to Pakistan

By Dr. Peter Hansen

For the first time, the University of Florida Dairy Unit has exported live cattle overseas. In May of this year, three pregnant slick Holstein females were delivered by air and truck to DayZee Farms in Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan. A major focus of the company is to use cutting-edge embryo technologies and genomic sequencing to improve cattle for milk and beef production.

The slick mutation is a naturally occurring mutation that causes short hair in cattle and increased resistance to heat stress. The phenotype was first discovered by Dr. Tim Olson of the University of Florida and dairy cattle with the mutation have been selected for genetic improvement at the university since the 1980s. Semen from bulls produced at UF has been distributed globally since 2006.

Summer temperatures in Pakistan can reach 120°F or more and incorporation of the slick gene into dairy cattle should reduce the negative effects of heat stress on milk yield and reproduction. According to Dr. Masroor Sagheer, Director of Animal Reproduction at DayZee, who oversees the IVF program, "As Pakistan's summer temperatures rise and heat waves intensify, keeping dairy cows cool is crucial. By choosing slick Holsteins, farmers can boost milk yields, cut down veterinary bills and make our dairy industry stronger against rising temperatures."

The three registered Holstein females from UF all arrived safely in Pakistan. Exportation was handled by Strickland Exports of Myakka City, FL.



SLICK HOLSTEIN HEIFER ELIZABETH ARRIVES IN PAKISTAN

Reneé Strickland, who organized the movement of the cattle, stated, "I don't think these heifers could have gone to a better farm in Pakistan. They really seem to be putting their best foot forward and it's truly a country that is crazy about their milk!"

Strickland has long been interested in slick-haired cattle. "I've been waiting for years to be able to ship some of the genetics from UF because as we all know at this point with climate change....the only way we will be able to keep people fed is through research and development of ag technology. The slick haired gene cow (whether it be dairy or beef) combined with embryo flushing and insemination and transfer will hasten the production of more animals that can tolerate and survive and thrive in hotter climates and already needed in most parts of the middle east and Africa, tropical Asia, Central and South America."



# EXPLORING AGRICULTURE IN THE NORTHEAST

## 2025 Summer Industry Tour

By Eadie Turner

This summer, a group of 14 undergraduate students accompanied by four dedicated faculty and staff went through an unforgettable agricultural tour of the northeastern United States, exploring agriculture industries in New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Maine, and Massachusetts.

### Pennsylvania: Agriculture Meets History

Our first Pennsylvania stop was Kreider farms, where we gained insight into laying hens and egg production, and sampled “probably the world’s best ice cream.” From there we headed to Philadelphia for a taste of history and culture, visiting the Liberty Bell, exploring Independence National Historical Park, running up the iconic Rocky steps, and trying authentic Philly cheesesteaks.

The next day we traveled to New Holland Sell Barn, where we met with a USDA marketer, and also toured Senseig’s Feed Mill. Days three and four brought us behind the scenes of Clemens Food Group, a pork processing plant in Hatfield. Then we took a fascinating visit to Trans Ova Genetics.

Imler’s Poultry hosted us next, giving us a tour of the facility and warehouse. Of course, we couldn’t pass up another ice cream stop, this time at the Penn State creamery for a cup of their legendary ice cream.



### Natural Wonder and Farm Visits of New York

Day five was a breathtaking highlight visiting Niagara Falls. We experienced the falls up close aboard the “Maid of the Mist,” a moment made even more special for fans of The Office, who would know this is where Jim and Pam tied the knot.

The next day, Thunderview Farms welcomed us with open arms, great hamburgers from their production, cherry peekaboo pie, and a scenic hay ride. On day seven, we visited GMP Farms and then connected with UF alumnus Cash Rice in Saratoga at the Whitney Horse Race.

### Innovation and Industry in Vermont

Our tour of AgroChem introduced us to the founder, John DeMarco, who still is working hard in the lab. We gained a deep appreciation for the efforts behind each agricultural product created.

### Maine: Agriculture by Land and Sea

We began our next day with more ice cream! This time at Ben and Jerry’s with a tour of the factory. Next we were able to meet a dairy herd of Jersey cows and tested some maple syrup from the farm’s trees at Taft’s Milk & Maple Farm.

Day nine took us to CJEJ Farm, featuring cattle, horses, pigs, chickens, and turkeys. Afterwards, we stretched our legs hiking Flume Gorge.

We next headed to the coast for an unforgettable lobstering trip aboard the Lucky Catch Lobstering Charter. Pulling up traps, we discovered the hard work and skill behind this sector of the aquaculture industry.

After a brief rest we boarded Dr. Kate Domenico’s boat, where she gave us a tour of the islands with her co-captain pup, River. Her background as a veterinarian made this a one-of-a-kind experience, offering perspective about animal health among the islands. We also had the opportunity to meet a kelp Extension agent who introduced us to the kelp industry.



Our tour continued at Wolf Neck Research Center Organic Farms, ending at a nearby cheesery where we sampled delicious cheese from Balfour Farm.

### Final Stop Machinery and Memories

Our final stop was the Reiser, a company that designs machines for everything from cookie dough production to meat processing, with a private in-house chef on staff. After the tour we returned to our hotel for a night of pizza, reflection, and celebration of new friendships formed along the way.

### A Journey of Growth and Gratitude

This trip was more than just travel and course work: It was an opportunity to grow academically, professionally, and personally. We extend our heartfelt thanks to our department, staff, donors, host, and students who made this learning experience possible. These experiences and knowledge gained will continue to inspire us long after the summer of 2025.

“My favorite part of the industry tour was when we rode through Casco Bay on Dr. D’s boat, getting a first-hand look at the niche, influential role this veterinarian plays in her community—it was euphoric and empowering to hear the passion behind her work, it opened my eyes to the unexpected paths a veterinary degree can take.”

– Bianca Hernandez

“One of my favorite aspects of the Animal Sciences Summer Industry Tour was being exposed to industries that I haven’t had the chance to engage with in Florida. In Maine, we had the opportunity to take a trip on a commercial lobster boat, where we pulled traps, caught lobster, and learned about the intricacies of such a unique industry. Furthermore, we learned about aquaculture and the cultivation of seaweed, which has potentially massive implications as a livestock feed additive. I am incredibly thankful for such a wonderful trip!”

– Hayden Hawes

“My favorite part of the trip was learning about the aquaculture industry in the Northeastern United States. It was so much fun to experience the lobstering industry and learn about kelp production and other fisheries, all of which are rather unique to the area.”

– Rebecca Lyons



# IN FIVE YEARS

By Meg Alexander

CLASS OF SPRING 2020

*Checking in with our 2020 Spring and Summer graduates.*



**Chalise Brown**

**Specialization:** Biology  
*Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Candidate*

Chalise graduated from the department in the Spring of 2020 with a Biology specialization. She is currently a Field Veterinarian for the US Army Veterinary Corps. In the next five years, she hopes to return to food animal medicine or become an anatomic pathologist. She described her experiences in animal science as fun, busy, and worthwhile; she was involved in multiple research labs focusing on ruminant nutrition and reproduction, participated on the Meats Evaluation Team, and worked at the UF Dairy Research Unit.

Throughout her time as an undergraduate and veterinary student, she was able to complete research projects through our department that helped her to focus on her interests. She said her hands-on opportunities in dairy and beef cattle handling were beneficial to her undergraduate experience, in addition to skills like independence and problem solving that she gained as part of the Meats Evaluation Team.

Chalise said the department offered her a solid support system that provided her with a foundation to feel comfortable asking for guidance as she selected her career.



**Shelby Kirton**

**Specialization:** Equine  
*Master of Science, Agricultural Communications*

Shelby is a Spring 2020 graduate of our department with a specialization in Equine and a minor in agribusiness and later received her master's degree in Agricultural Communications from Oklahoma State University. She is currently the Manager of Communications & Marketing at Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association.

Shelby said her time in the department was rewarding and allowed her to develop valuable relationships. "The department felt like a close-knit community, where professors knew your name, classmates became lifelong friends and there was always support when you needed it," she said. The most beneficial part of her time at UF was "the closeness of the Animal Sciences department. Being in classes with the same group of people created a real sense of community. We learned together, leaned on each other, and pushed each other to be better," she said.

As an undergrad, Shelby was a member of the Delta Gamma Sorority, UF Block & Bridle, and Gator Collegiate Cattlewomen's club, and completed an internship through Rabon's Country Feed in Okeechobee, FL. In the next five years, Shelby hopes to continue her work in the agricultural industry through advocacy and communications, as she has a deep, personal investment in the cattle industry.



**Micah Gallagher**

**Specialization:** Food Animal  
*Master of Science, Extension Education*

Micah graduated from the department in the Spring of 2020 with a Food Animal specialization and received her master's degree in Extension Education from the University of Florida. She currently serves as a Livestock Extension Agent in Levy County. She said the hands-on components of her courses and her involvement in departmental clubs were the most beneficial part of her undergraduate experience, as she was able to strengthen her understanding of agriculture and develop a strong support system.

Micah completed an internship through the Levy County Extension Office during her undergraduate studies, which helped to shape her career path. She said, "I believe that my internship led me to my extension focused jobs after graduation and prepared me for some of the expectations as an agent."

As an undergraduate student, she was involved with Gator Collegiate Cattlewomen's club, UF Block & Bridle, and served as an ambassador for the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. In the next five years, Micah hopes to continue serving in her position as a Livestock Extension Agent!



**Lisa Wilson**

**Specialization:** Biology  
*Doctor of Veterinary Medicine*

Lisa is a Spring 2020 graduate of our department with a biology specialization. She is currently a veterinarian at All Animal Care in Calhoun, GA. She was heavily involved in her coursework within the Animal Sciences department and participated in various suborganizations through the UF Black Student Union.

"My most beneficial part of my undergraduate experience was registering for Careers in Animal Science my fall of sophomore year," she said. "In this class, I attended the lecture of Dr. Natalie Lamneck, who talked about her experience as a double gator and a practicing ambulatory large animal veterinarian. Joel McQuagge and Amie Imler were my cheerleaders and I am more grateful for their small acts of kindness and service than they know. Joel gave me Dr. Lamneck's number and that connection is what made my college experience the best I think it could've been."

In the next five years, Lisa plans to be proficient in soft tissue and orthopedic surgery in small animals, as well as flourishing in her own practice venture.



# IN FIVE YEARS

CLASS OF SUMMER 2020



**Samantha Holland**

**Specialization:** Food Animal  
*Master of Food Technology*

Samantha is the Packing Standards Manager at Monterey Mushrooms in Tennessee. After graduating in 2020, she earned her master's degree in Food Technology in 2024. Her career has included roles at a beef jerky plant and as a USDA Consumer Safety Inspector before moving into her current position.

Samantha said her time as an Animal Sciences student was pivotal to her academic, personal, and professional growth. An internship with Adena/FM Meats gave her a strong foundation in beef slaughter and fabrication, helping shape her post-graduate career.

Though she expected to work in quality assurance or meat processing, her current role has allowed her to stay in food manufacturing while also achieving personal goals.

As an undergraduate student, Samantha was a member of the 2018 Meats Judging Team and the 2019 Meat Animal Evaluation Team. These teams taught her lessons not found in the classroom, developed her independence, and helped her build lasting connections.

In the next five years, Samantha plans to focus on family, while maintaining a work-life balance through her expertise and continued growth in the industry.



**Case Emerson**

**Specialization:** Food Animal  
*Master of Science, Agricultural Education and Communication*

Case is currently an agriculture teacher at Lafayette High School in Lafayette, FL. He said his time in the department felt like being part of a family, surrounded by knowledgeable professors and mentors. Over the last five years, he earned his master's degree in Agricultural Education and Communication, which led to his current role.

Case applies knowledge from both animal sciences and agricultural communications in the classroom, offering students a well-rounded education. "Heading into my 4<sup>th</sup> year, I'm constantly teaching high schoolers many of the things I learned in the Animal Sciences department—from food safety to meats evaluation," he said.

As an undergraduate student, Case was involved in CALS Ambassadors, Alpha Gamma Rho, CALS Leadership Institute, Collegiate Farm Bureau, Student Government, and Florida Blue Key. He also competed on the Meats Judging and Meat Animal Evaluation Teams, where he said he made some of his favorite memories traveling with Kyle Mendes and Dr. Chad Carr. Through a UF/IFAS Extension internship with Escambia County 4-H, Case saw the value of both formal and informal education. In the next five years, he hopes to grow as an educator and possibly pursue a PhD.

## WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR ANIMAL SCIENCES CLASS OF 2025?

Appreciate the "wins" you have already accomplished and those you will accomplish in the future. It's easy to forget about accomplishments that took years in the making to achieve, e.g. going to UF, graduation with a bachelor's, getting accepted into vet school, landing a dream job. You might celebrate for a brief moment then already start planning out your next long term goal, but try to savor those moments rather than constantly shifting the goal post of "success."

— Chalise Brown

During my time at UF I feel I relied on my professors and advisor a lot when making decisions about internships, jobs, and classes. I relied on my professional network of industry-related people for assistance on school projects, recommendations on applications, and more. Looking back, I think that this was something that not only benefited me academically but also personally in building relationships with a multitude of people across different backgrounds.

— Micah Gallagher

Don't stress about having everything figured out. It's normal to feel nervous, but stay open to opportunities and trust yourself. Take things one step at a time, and remember that your path will unfold the way it's meant to.

— Shelby Kirton

Take a deep breath and live in the moment! This is the last year/semester of being an undergrad. Enjoy everything UF, CALS, and Animal Sciences has to offer, especially in a social sense. Soak it in. There's no need to be nervous! Post grad life is where you get to use all the things you learned in college, even if you work in an industry completely different than your major. The social skills and ability to accomplish goals that you learned will set you up for success in anything you do.

— Case Emerson

You may think you have life figured out and the perfect plan in place, but you don't. And that's okay! Life will throw you curve balls. Once you graduate and leave the structured scheduled daily classes and activities, there will regularly be twists and turns. Instead of trying to fight them, learn to roll with them. Adapt to the times you face and learn to do it with grace.

— Samantha Holland

You made it through this very challenging program. If you can do that, you can do anything you set your mind to. Your mind has been set, don't sway because you made it to the end of one leg of your journey.

— Lisa Wilson



# Animal Science in Italy *Study Abroad Program*

By Dr. Antonio Faciola



The 2025 Animal Science in Italy study abroad program, led by Dr. Antonio Faciola, offered 20 students a two-week immersive experience blending education, culture, and agriculture. Students visited various farms, cheese and salami production facilities, and an agricultural biotech center, gaining insights into Italy's animal agriculture and food systems.

They toured top veterinary schools in Bologna and Naples and explored cities like Florence, Rome, and Sorrento, visiting historical landmarks. Cultural activities included cooking classes and tastings. Assignments reinforced learning, encouraging reflection and comparison with US practices. The program fostered technical knowledge, cultural competence, global awareness, and personal and professional growth. We look forward to continuing to create opportunities like this for our students!







# Florida 4-H Horsemanship School

By Meg Alexander

The Florida 4-H Horsemanship School program is offered nearly every summer to 4-H members between the ages of 11 and 18 years old. Dr. Saundra TenBroeck, Joel Mcquagge, Dr. Samantha Brooks, Justin Callaham, Allyson Trimble, and Alyssa Ohmstede dedicate many long hours toward this program each summer to share their knowledge with attendees, and we are grateful for their commitment to educating our youth.

Over the span of two weeks, they supervised 37 participants as they cared for their animals and applied techniques learned during the duration of the courses. Alyssa Ohmstede, Animal Sciences Youth Horse Programs Coordinator and Horse Judging Coach, said, “We were blessed with great participants, chaperones, instructors, and UF faculty/staff who created an affirming learning environment for all.”

The program is divided into two areas, providing students with the option to attend Western Week

or English Week depending on their interests and specialties. Both focus on safe handling, grooming, tack selection and fit, behavior and psychology, suppling exercises, rail work, and posting, aiming to improve the riders’ confidence and strength in the saddle. To emphasize their respective riding styles, Western Week features roping exercises, trail obstacles, and cattle work while English Week features two-point and dressage exercises, trail riding, and fence and pattern work.

Attendees stayed in Cypress Hall on main campus, providing students with a real-life example of student life at UF. She also explained, “When not on a horse, attendees enjoyed roping, art activities, field trips, snacks, as well as hands on educational presentations. Dr. Samantha Brooks taught them about the use of artificial intelligence in Gait Analysis, and Justin Callaham taught them about the use of diagnostic ultrasound in mare reproductive management.”

Ohmstede said that Horsemanship School, while providing a fun and uplifting “summer camp” experience, is also a valuable educational experience. “Our hope is that each and every attendee takes home new skills and knowledge that will be useful in the saddle as well as in their day-to-day horse care and management,” she said. “We were excited to see each attendee grow as horsemen and horsewomen, forge new friendships, and take on new challenges throughout their time at the 2025 4-H Horsemanship School.”

We are thankful for our amazing facilitators who make this program possible each year, and the University of Florida Horse Teaching Unit for providing a space to conduct camp.



“We were excited to see each attendee grow as horsemen and horsewomen, forge new friendships, and take on new challenges throughout their time at the 2025 4-H Horsemanship School.”

– *Alyssa Ohmstede, Coordinator*



# Celebrating 10 Years of Livestock Judging Camp at UF/IFAS Animal Sciences

By Matti Moyer

Each summer, some of Florida’s brightest 4-H and FFA members make their way to Gainesville to sharpen their skills in livestock evaluation. This year marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UF/IFAS Department of Animal Sciences Livestock Judging Camp, and we couldn’t be more proud of how far this program has come.

Since its start in 2015, the camp has provided a place for youth to build knowledge in livestock selection, oral reasons, and industry terminology. What began as a small initiative to give students extra judging experience has evolved into a multi-day event that draws participants from across Florida and even a few from neighboring states like Georgia.

“We saw there was a need to provide 4-H and FFA members with an additional opportunity to work on their livestock evaluation and reasons skills. In the 10 years we have grown and adapted to create a format that provides a learning opportunity for participants of all experience levels,” said Academic Program Specialist Allyson Trimble.

## A Camp for All Experience Levels

This camp is designed for all experience levels and is divided into three tracks to meet students where they are. Beginning Basics is a one-day camp focused on the foundations of anatomy, breed identification, note-taking, and judging priorities. Intro to Reasons is a one-day session that teaches participants how to structure and deliver a solid set of oral reasons. Advanced Reasons is a two-and-a-half-day immersive camp designed for more experienced participants. Campers evaluated several classes and delivered about 20 sets of reasons throughout the event. Beginning Basics and Intro to Reasons overlapped on Wednesday, while Advanced Reasons took place from Thursday afternoon through Saturday. This structure allowed for a smooth learning transition for campers advancing their skills year to year.



## Meet Our Camp Coaches

Current Livestock Judging Team members Leydializ Aviles, McKenzie Locke, Jasmyn Billano, Allison Bennett and future Livestock Judging Team members Clayton Brauman, Aubrey Reppert and Gracie Fletcher coached this year’s camp. We are incredibly grateful for their dedicated support, feedback, and encouragement to every camper. Thank you all for the time and talent you each brought to this year’s camp!

## Full Circle Moments and Future Gators

One of the most rewarding parts of this camp is seeing returning students improve and grow. Many have attended year after year, and their progress is nothing short of inspiring. This year, we experienced a “full circle” moment as two current UF Livestock Judging Team members who once attended this camp as FFA members returned as camp coaches to teach the next generation.

The camp also serves as a valuable recruitment opportunity. It’s a chance to meet prospective students and introduce them to the Animal Sciences department and UF’s nationally recognized judging team.

We would like to thank those from our department who helped with camp logistics, setup, and instruction: Kyle Mendes, Allyson Trimble, Chad Carr, Amie Imler, Thachary Mayer, and Dr. Sandra TenBroeck.

## Congratulations to Our Contest Winners!

The camp concluded with a contest that gave participants a chance to put their skills to the test. Congratulations to our top individuals!

Advanced Division:

- High Individual: Madison Stein – Alachua
- Reserve: Adelyne Ruiz – Citra
- Third: Kelsey Reddish – Apopka
- Fourth: Lillie Salerno – Tampa
- Fifth: Julie Portillo – DeLand

Novice Division:

- High Individual: Isaac Short – Miami
- Reserve: Grace Box – Orlando
- Third: Anika Benfant – Orlando



## Community Collaboration

We also extend a huge thank you to the livestock suppliers who generously provided quality animals for our students to evaluate:

- UF Sheep Unit
- UF Beef Teaching Unit
- CK2 Show Pigs – Kyle Mendes
- Sacred Silence Farms – Dr. Faith Hughes
- Rogers Livestock – Wade Rogers
- 3D Boer Goats – Nicholas Domingo
- Gulf Coast Cattle – Jerry Mullins

Special appreciation to Lizzie Whitehead (Bradford County Extension) and Jessica Cooper (Gilchrist County Extension) for their teaching contributions to the Beginning Basics camp. Their expertise helped lay a solid foundation for our younger and newer participants.

As we reflect on a decade of camp, we’re reminded that livestock judging is more than evaluating animals it’s about building confidence, critical thinking, and communication skills that last a lifetime. Here’s to the next 10 years of learning, leading, and judging!

To stay up to date with our events throughout the year, visit our blog at <https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/animalsciencesdept/>.





# Animal Sciences Shows Up Strong at Florida Cattlemen’s Association Convention

By Savannah Linzmaier

The UF/IFAS Department of Animal Sciences was well represented at the 2025 Florida Cattlemen’s Association (FCA) State Convention and Allied Trade Show in Marco Island, FL, in June. This annual event is an important opportunity to strengthen our department’s longstanding and valuable relationship with the FCA—an organization that continues to advocate for our program, including lobbying efforts for funding that directly enhances the quality of our education, research, and extension programming.

Several department faculty and staff, including Dr. John Arthington, Dr. Todd Thrift, Dr. Nicolas DiLorenzo, Dr. Philipe Moriel, Dr. Sandra TenBroeck, Dr. Samantha Brooks, Joel McQuagge, Clay Whitehead, Jesse Savell, Matti Moyer, and Savannah Linzmaier, were present at the Agricultural Research & Education Committee meeting. Dr. Arthington shared exciting updates, including Dr. DiLorenzo and Dr. Thrift’s new professorships.

Twelve undergraduate students from the UF Block and Bridle (B&B) Club and Gator Collegiate Cattlewomen (GCCW) joined for this year’s convention. These students volunteered to help by taking committee meeting minutes and assisting with registration, FCA merchandise sales, and the silent auction. They also sold their own B&B and GCCW merchandise, which helps fund educational experiences like this convention.

One of the highlights of the department’s participation at the conference is the Big Loop Dummy Roping and King of the Reach competitions, led by McQuagge, Savell, and Moyer with help from B&B members. The event is always a hit, with more than 100 participants this year. Thank you to



Furst-McNess, who generously donated the new Smarty Shorty Dummy Roping Dummy to B&B for our use at this event and others. Moyer and Linzmaier spoke with the Junior Florida Cattlemen’s Association about the Have You Herd program and led a “Career Bingo” game designed to introduce youth to career opportunities in animal sciences. Each square on the bingo card highlighted ANS alumni currently working in the cattle industry—many of whom were present at the convention.

Linzmaier and the GCCW members participated in the Florida CattleWomen (FCW) general membership and breakfast meetings. Peyton Chandley, a 2025 UF graduate, was presented with this year’s Outstanding Gator Collegiate Cattlewoman Award for being an active and valuable member of GCCW and FCW. Chandley was also featured as a keynote speaker at the FCW breakfast, joining her mother and grandmother to reflect on their family’s generational legacy in the cattle industry—perfectly embodying the FCW motto, “Our roots run beef.”

It’s always a pleasure to catch up with ANS alumni and to network with industry professionals each year. 2024-2025 FCA President Dale Carlton’s theme, “Loyal to the Land,” resonated deeply with our department, which remains committed to Florida’s cattle industry through teaching, research, and Extension. As we look toward the year ahead, we’re excited to “Lead the Way” alongside our industry partners.





# Awards & Accomplishments



Nicolas DiLorenzo

2024 Large Grant Leadership Award from the UF/IFAS Dean of Research



Lori Warren

2025 CALS Innovation in Teaching Award



Samantha Brooks

Promoted from Associate Professor to Professor



John Arthington

Florida Cattlemen's Association 2025 Researcher of the Year



Adeel Manzoor

Florida Association for Food Protection Annual Educational Conference - Special Recognition Award



Arie Havelaar was named an American Association for the Advancement of Science Fellow, a distinguished lifetime honor within the scientific community.

Photo credit: <https://www.linneafarnsworth.com/event>



The Livestock Education and Certification for Agriculture Law Enforcement (LECALE) program, organized by Carissa Wickens, was selected as a State Winner for the Search for Excellence in Livestock Production award.

## ANNUAL MEETING AWARDS

### American Dairy Science Association



Antonio Faciola

Purina Animal Nutrition Teaching Award in Dairy Production



Emily Miller-Cushon

2025 ADSA Foundation Scholar Award in Dairy Production



Mikayla Johnson & Adisa Harding

ADSA 2025 Final Sciencing Challenge Competition - Third-Place Winners



Savitha Saikumar

ADSA-GSD Three-Minute Thesis - First-Place Winner



Rebecca Lyons

USD-Dairy Production Oral Competition - Third-Place Winner

### American Society of Animal Science



Nicolas DiLorenzo

American Feed Industry Association Award in Ruminant Nutrition Research



Antonio Faciola

2025 ASAS-CSAS Animal Management Award



Vinicius de Souza Izquierdo

Wettemann Graduate Scholar in Physiology Award



Castle Cavender

2025 ASAS Master Student Poster Competition - First Place Winner




Jose L. Infante

2025 ASAS Master Student Poster Competition - First Place Winner



# UPCOMING EVENTS



10/09/25	•	Internship Seminar
10/09/25 - 10/11/25	•	Small Ruminant Short Course
10/10/25 - 10/11/25	•	Ram and Buck Test Sale
11/08/25	•	Little International
11/08/25	•	UF Cow Sale
11/12/25 - 11/13/25	•	Dairy Roadshow
12/06/25	•	Weanling Extravaganza
12/08/25 - 12/12/25	•	Livestock Education Certification for Agriculture Law Enforcement (LECALE)

## GIVING

Your generous donation to the UF/IFAS Animal Sciences Department will provide support for our students, faculty, and staff.

To support our department, our scholarships and more, scan the QR code or visit  
[give.ifas.ufl.edu/animal-sciences-giving/](https://give.ifas.ufl.edu/animal-sciences-giving/).

