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## Fall 2009



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## State of the Department

by Dave Gerrard



Dear Alumni:

Nearly a year has passed since I arrived in Blacksburg, and though my familiarity with Virginia Tech has improved substantially, I still lack first-hand knowledge of many locales across the Commonwealth. Though I am feverishly attempting to correct this deficiency, I have been duly impressed with the quality and sincerity of those individuals I have met

during my travels thus far. More amazingly, is the genuineness and academic prowess of the students that are sent to campus for an education by this citizenry. It is simply humbling and reassuring to know the future of agriculture is in the hands of such a competent set of young adults. The legacy of greatness that many of you helped build at Virginia Tech will continue into the foreseeable future.

The economic climate has and will likely continue to create some challenges into the foreseeable future. We continue to evaluate critically everything we do. We have prioritized those activities that are most important and attempted to allocate our limited resources to these areas and plan to allow others less critical to our three-pronged mission to fall by the wayside. Though sun-setting programs or long-standing activities are always "tough business" and should not be considered a "bad thing", as we should, regardless of the availability of resources, continually evaluate all we do and modify programs according. Rest assured, however, that our commitment to education, outreach and discovery will remain intact, though it may have a slightly different "look and feel".

One of our biggest challenges and opportunities is addressing the "Land Use" issue that has been catapulted to the forefront by an unprecedented but necessary campus expansion. Though moving large animal facilities may take some time to materialize, we have entered discussions with a number of entities across campus to ensure a comprehensive

plan to relocate animal resources for the college is well-thought, visionary and reflective of Virginia's commitment to agriculture for years to come.

Another rather significant change that has occurred in the department is an expansion of the equine education program by adding undergraduate instruction to the Middleburg Agriculture Research and Extension Center portfolio of activities. Existence of this AREC was made possible by the late Paul Mellon, who was an ardent supporter of the horse and the creation and dissemination of knowledge for the betterment of this creature's existence. In the spirit of his wishes, we have relocated the warm-blood band of mares to Middleburg with Dr. Rebecca Splan. Together with Dr. Shea Porr, the two will be offering a host of equine courses to support those students driven to a career involving the horse. Even so, the equine program on campus remains vibrant and growing to serve an undergraduate population of nearly 500.

As I close, allow me to wish you a most Blessed Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. And as before, if you ever get the opportunity to be in Blacksburg, please don't hesitate to stop in for a visit.

Sincerely, Dave Gerrard



by Michael Sutphin, Public Relations Specialist, CALS

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## Faculty Awards & Achievements

### New Investigator Award: Rami Dalloul

Dr. Rami A. Dalloul, assistant professor of poultry immunology, received the 2009 Bayer-Snoeyenbos New Investigator Award from the American Association of Avian Pathologists. The award recognizes a member of the association who has been an investigator in the field of poultry medicine for less than seven years and who has made exceptional contributions to the field. Dr. Dalloul was recognized for his research efforts on host-pathogen interactions in poultry, with an emphasis on immune responses and modulation of enteric immune function, and the use of antibiotic alternatives.



(l-r) Dr. Barry Kelley, Bayer Poultry Business Unit and Dr. Rami Dalloul

### Paul Siegel



Paul Siegel was awarded the Poultry Pioneer and Legend Award by the American Poultry Historical Society for his long time contribution to the industry. Excerpts of the citations include: "...importance of inherited genes for growth...", "...effects of genes on genetic behavior...", and "...counseling graduate students has been invaluable..." are a testimony to his long and distinguished career in academia.

### Kenny Webb



Kenny Webb received the University of Kentucky Animal and Food Sciences Distinguished Alumnus Award for 2009. A pioneer in the field of amino acid nutrition, Dr. Webb discovered the importance of mechanisms for peptide-bound amino acid absorption by livestock species. He attended the University of Kentucky where he earned his M.S. in 1967 and his Ph.D. in 1969.



## In Memoriam: Larry Lawrence



Dr. Larry Lawrence

Dr. Larry Lawrence passed away on December 13th after a long battle with cancer. A native of Georgia, Larry received an M.S. in animal sciences from the University of Georgia and his Ph.D. degree from the University of Florida in equine nutrition under the direction of Dr. Ed Ott. His research at the University of Florida focused on mineral metabolism and bone physiology in growing horses.

Larry spent five years on the faculty of Washington State University before joining Virginia Tech in 1991, where he was an associate professor of animal sciences and the extension horse specialist. More recently Larry worked at Kentucky Equine Research in Lexington KY where he was the senior equine nutritionist. He provided support for KER team members and their stateside and international customers through formulation, product development, and technical field service.

"I had the pleasure of knowing Larry for over 25 years," said Joe Pagan, founder and president of KER. "I will always remember Larry as a superb horseman, a talented nutritionist and a friend. Larry had a rare gift that allowed him to communicate complex nutritional principles in terms that horsemen could understand. His contribution to equine nutrition and KER has been substantial and he will be truly missed."

## Alumni News: Zulkifli Idrus

Dr. Zulkifli Idrus presented the keynote address for the Syarahan Inaugural entitled: "Poultry Welfare in Modern Agriculture: Opportunity or Threat?" on November 13, 2009 at the Universiti Putra Malaysia.

"Zul" earned his received Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and M.S. degrees from Universiti Pertanian Malaysia in 1989 and 1992. He holds a Ph.D. degree from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, U.S.A. working under the direction of Dr. Paul Siegel from 1992 to 1994. In his Ph.D. work Zul elucidated the aspects of physiological and behavioral stress responses to nutritional and thermal factors in poultry. He began his professional academic career at the Department of Animal Science, Universiti Putra Malaysia as a Tutor in 1992 and was appointed a Lecturer in 1994. He was promoted to Associate Professor in 1999 and became a Professor in 2004. His research career has focused on the stress physiology, behavior and welfare of poultry. Zul was made the Deputy Director of the Research Management Centre, UPM in 2003 and was subsequently appointed as the Director of the Centre in 2005.



Dr. Zulkifli Idrus

## Graduate Student Awards & Achievements

### 98<sup>th</sup> Annual Poultry Science Meeting

Three APSC graduate students received Certificates of Excellence for their posters at the 98<sup>th</sup> Annual Poultry Science Meeting in Raleigh, NC in July 2009. More than 100 student presentations/posters were entered in the competition and only nine Certificates of Excellence were awarded at the meeting.

#### Jennifer Sottosanti

*Title: Incubation Temperature and Vaccination Effects on Early Post-hatch Immune Organ Weight and Yolk Sac Utilization in Commercial Broilers*

Jen is from Hamilton, VA and received both her B.S. (2007) and M.S. (2009) in Animal and Poultry Sciences at Virginia Tech. She is currently working as a Ph.D. student under the direction of Dr. Audrey McElroy. Her research focuses on non-optimal incubation temperature effects on early immunity and bird performance.

#### Carrie Walk

*Title: Effects of Phytase Supplementation During a Live Coccidia Oocyst Vaccination on Broiler Performance, Gut Morphology, and Apparent Ileal Amino Acid Digestibility*

Carrie was born and raised in Marthasville, Missouri and received her B.S. and M.S. in Animal Science from the University of Missouri - Columbia. She recently completed her Ph.D. at VT under the supervision of Dr. Audrey McElroy, and is currently working as a postdoctoral student in her lab. Her research focus involves the interaction of dietary ingredients and intestinal parasites in poultry.

#### Carin Mott

*Title: Development of PepT1 shRNA Lentiviral Vectors for Knockdown of PepT1 in Chickens*

Carin, who hails from Northern Virginia, earned a B.S. in Animal and Poultry Sciences at Virginia Tech along with minors in Biochemistry, Chemistry and Music. She received her M.S. at Virginia Tech in 2007 and is currently working on her Ph.D. under the direction of Dr. Eric Wong. Carin is an accomplished clarinetist and an avid horsewoman.



Carin Mott



Jennifer Sottosanti



Carrie Walk



Jessica Suagee

### Additional Accomplishments

**Jennifer Sottosanti**, while an M.S. student advised by Dr. Audrey McElroy, received two awards for oral presentations of her research. Jennifer was awarded a Graduate Student Certificate of Excellence (1<sup>st</sup> place presentation in the Physiology section) for her research presentation "Incubation temperature profiles and post-hatch transportation stress effects on innate immunity and heat shock response in commercial broilers" at the International Poultry Scientific Forum in January. More recently she received first place for her presentation at the

Graduate Student Assembly Research Symposium in March.

**Jessica Suagee** placed second in the Mid-Atlantic Nutrition Conference graduate poster competition (for all species), and first in the Equine Science Society graduate research competition (Production and Management division- oral presentation) in spring 2009. ESS is an international research conference in which attendees represented 10 different countries.



## Turkey Genome Sequencing Consortium Awarded Grant from United States Department of Agriculture

From [The Virginia Tech Daily e-Mail](#)

by Barry Whyte, Strategic and Research Communications Officer  
Virginia Bioinformatics Institute, Operations

Virginia Tech and the University of Minnesota have been awarded a two-year, \$908,280 grant by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to complete sequencing the genome of the domesticated turkey, *Meleagris gallopavo*.

The funding will be used by the Turkey Genome Sequencing Consortium to complete the genome sequencing using next-generation sequencing platforms, assemble the genome sequence, and identify genes and functions in the final genome sequence by use of a sophisticated annotation pipeline. The award will also help put in place a bioinformatics and comparative genome resource for both chicken and turkey.

**Rami Dalloul**, assistant professor of poultry immunology in the Department of Animal and Poultry Sciences at Virginia Tech, remarked: "We are very pleased that the USDA has recognized the value of this strong community-driven effort to fully sequence the turkey genome. The award supports our continued research effort over the next two years to put in place a gold-standard genome sequence for the turkey." He added: "The work funded by this grant will take us a long way towards our longer-term goal of discovering ways to improve the immune competence of the turkey. It will also provide invaluable information that will help develop new, more effective strategies for disease prevention."

Otto Folkerts, associate director of technology development at the Virginia Bioinformatics Institute at Virginia Tech, commented: "A year ago we announced the start of this project, and since then we have expanded our original consortium by addition of other community stakeholders and experts. Most importantly, two groups, one at the USDA Agricultural Research Service's Beltsville



Agricultural Research Center led by Curt van Tassell and Julie Long, and the other at the University of Maryland Center for Bioinformatics and Computational Biology led by Steven Salzberg and Jim York, have made substantial contributions to this project. As a result of this combined effort, we have now generated about 90 percent of the genome sequence and we plan to release the preliminary data to GenBank at the earliest opportunity to make it available to the scientific community."

Turkey is the fourth-most economically important source of meat for consumers in the United States. The genome sequence and genomic resources should provide turkey breeders with the tools needed to improve commercial breeds of turkey for production traits such as meat yield and quality, health and disease resistance, fertility, and reproduction.

Ed Smith, professor in the Department of Animal and Poultry Sciences at Virginia Tech, commented: "Over the years, the USDA has funded several projects that have been instrumental in establishing a framework for the complete sequencing and assembly of the turkey genome. The new award provides the crucial support needed to put in place a definitive genetic map of the turkey genome, a map that will serve as a vital resource for the poultry community and other interested scientists around the world."

Kent Reed, associate professor of veterinary and biomedical sciences at The University of Minnesota, commented: "An exciting prospect of this sequencing effort is the ability to compare the turkey genome with those of other species. Results from the initial sequencing are already making an impact on our research. The new sequence will not only provide information on the turkey genome, but will also help refine the chicken genome sequence."

## New Virginia Tech Equine Education Program in Middleburg, Virginia

by Lori Greiner

The Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences has announced plans to create a new Equine Education Program at the Middleburg Agricultural Research and Extension Center (MARE Center) located in Middleburg, Va.

An undergraduate student learning experience in equine sciences will serve as the cornerstone for the teaching program at the center. In addition, Virginia Tech will relocate its world-class group of sport horse mares from Blacksburg to Middleburg, adding to the band of horses in residence at the center at the end of 2009.

"We are extremely excited about the opportunity to expand the equine programs at Virginia Tech by taking full advantage of the facilities and location of the MARE Center. Providing a novel, cutting-edge learning experience in equine education is consistent with the high ideals and standards already set by the university. The MARE Center already plays a critical role in the college's discovery and outreach functions, and this addition enhances Virginia Tech's commitment to the education of tomorrow's leaders," said David Gerrard, head of the Department of Animal and Poultry Sciences. "Our long-term goal is simple: preeminence in the area of equine sciences."



Shea Porr, Superintendent of the MARE Center

Students will have the opportunity to participate in a semester-long experience, immersing them in an environment filled with horses. This experience will not only prepare students for positions in the equine industry, but will also provide them life skills, as the students will need to work as part of a cohesive unit during their stay at the center.



Aerial view of the Middleburg Agricultural Research and Extension Center

Along with the normal demands required by a structured curriculum, students will be expected to participate in all aspects of the daily operations of a large-scale equine breeding, show, and sales facility. Additionally, students will be able to participate in in-depth summer internship programs as well as a study abroad course.

"The difference between this program and the program offered in Blacksburg will be the amount of experiential learning that will be demanded of those enrolled in the program. This is a working operation, where horses require attention 24/7," explained Gerrard. "There will be ample outreach and discovery opportunities for these students during their stay at Middleburg, exemplifying the comprehensive scope of the three missions of a land-grant university."

Mimi Abel-Smith, vice chair of the MARE Center's Advisory Council, commented, "I am pleased that the emphasis will be on the management and research needs of sport horses — those used in eventing, dressage, and showing — and applicable to all other breeds and functions." Dr. Matthew Mackay-Smith, an advisory council member and former medical editor of *Equus Magazine*, added, "The activities at the center will benefit every horse and horse person, from a child's pet to the fastest race horse. This expansion provides the horses and programs essential to achieving excellence in both equine



## MARE Center, continued from p. 8

science and education, and adds to the layman's understanding of this marvelous animal."

As funds are secured, Gerrard anticipates significant expansion of the center's physical facilities. The program will require large indoor and outdoor arenas for teaching purposes, along with serviceable breeding facilities and additional classrooms and research laboratories.

Rebecca Splan, associate professor of animal and poultry sciences, will relocate to Middleburg to join Shea Porr, superintendent of the center, to develop and teach the curriculum. Faculty members at the Equine Medical Center in Leesburg, Va., have also expressed an interest in collaborating in the program.



Rebecca Splan, Associate Professor

The equine education program on the Blacksburg campus will remain largely unchanged but will likely benefit from future additions to the faculty. "Clearly, we have a rather large student body interested in an education centered on the horse, and we intend to do our utmost to ensure its viability and growth into the foreseeable future,"



Horses outside the MARE Center

said Gerrard. "The program at Middleburg simply adds to our equine education portfolio and increases the flexibility of our program to meet the needs of an ever-changing and outstanding undergraduates."

Situated at the heart of Virginia's horse country, the Middleburg Agricultural Research and Extension Center is one of Virginia Tech's 13 ARECs. Philanthropist Paul Mellon donated the 420-acre farm in 1949 to establish the Virginia Tech research hub dedicated to improving pasture and animal productivity while enhancing the land. During the 1980s, an impressive gift of horses shifted the center's research focus from cattle to

horses. Today, the Middleburg AREC has grown into one of the world's leading equine research units.



The MARE Center

## Turkey Genome, continued from p. 7

The original participants in the Turkey Genome Sequencing Consortium include: Dave Burt of the Roslin Institute, University of Edinburgh; Roger Coulombe of Utah State University; Rami Dalloul, Audrey McElroy, Ed Smith, and Eric Wong of the Department of Animal and Poultry Sciences, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Virginia Tech; Jerry Dodgson of Michigan State University;

Oswald Crasta, Clive Evans, and Otto Folkerts at Virginia Bioinformatics Institute at Virginia Tech; Rick Jensen in the Department of Biological Sciences, College of Science at Virginia Tech; Kent Reed at the University of Minnesota; Steven Salzberg, James Yorke, Aleksey Zimin of the University of Maryland; and Curt van Tassell and Julie Long of the USDA Beltsville Agricultural Research Center.

## Virginia Tech Hosts 12th Annual ISR/Oldenburg NA Mare and Foal Inspection

by Rebecca Splan

On September 19th, we were honored to host our 12th annual ISR/Oldenburg NA mare and foal inspection. Almost 90 students (and several alumni) helped with the event, which has grown to become one of the largest inspection sites in the country. ISR/Oldenburg NA is the largest independent sport horse registry in North America and Virginia Tech is a major breeder with the organization. We were delighted to welcome back as inspector Dr. Christian Schacht, Breeding Director for the registry. Dr. Schacht is a great friend to Virginia Tech, and has worked with us to organize many learning opportunities for our students, including our summer study abroad program and working studentships in Germany.

At the inspection, horses are judged in-hand on their conformation and gaits. They are given numerical scores for components of these traits. This information allows breeders to make appropriate breeding decisions for their mares or determine if they are on track in meeting the registry's breeding goals with the quality of the foals they are producing.

Twenty-five horses were presented for inspection. Virginia Tech took top honors in both the mare and foal divisions. Four of five mares presented by Virginia Tech earned their Premium Mare titles! The Champion mare was Virginia Tech's new acquisition, the 7YO Danish Warmblood Granlygaard's Feuty, by Blue Hors Future Cup. "Fleur", as she is known, was one of the top ten mares of her age group in Denmark and was recently hand-picked for importation by Olympic judge Anne Gribbons. This stunning mare scored 108 points. Reserve Champion mare was Nutmeg, a 13 year-old daughter of Nebelhorn, the Grand Prix dressage stallion who stood at Virginia Tech for many years. She scored 107 points. The high scores earned by these two mares also gained them Regional Year End Titles. Granlygaard's Feuty was Reserve Champion East Coast Mare for



Photo by Kelsay Johns

Above: Granlygaard's Feuty.

Below: Riot VT, Champion Colt, with handler Laura Krohn



Photo by Jennifer Grover

the entire 2009 ISR/OLDNA inspection tour, while Nutmeg was named Third High Score Mare for the East Coast!

Champion Colt was Riot VT, by Virginia Tech's own stallion Royal Appearance. He narrowly beat out Crossfire VT, who is sired by Concerto Grosso, who stands in the Abingdon area. Both colts are owned by

**Inspection**, continued, p. 11



## Leonard Land and Livestock Donates Quarter Horse Herd

by Celeste Crisman

In support of undergraduate teaching and equine research, Dave Leonard of Leonard Land and Livestock in Lebanon, Virginia has donated 10 Quarter Horse mares and a stallion to Virginia Tech. These horses will fill the void created by the move of the Warmblood breeding herd to the MARE Center in Middleburg, VA.

The herd, consisting of eight bred mares, two open mares and one stallion, are Foundation-bred quarter horses carrying the bloodlines of Joe Hancock, Poco Bueno and Doc Bar and have come from the world famous Waggoner, King and Leachman ranches. These are working cow horses that can adapt to any use and their temperaments will lend themselves well to 'hands-on' educational use by the equine-focused undergraduate students at VT.

In addition, the herd will also support teaching efforts for students of the Virginia/Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine who will administer health care and breeding services. Foals will be utilized for training and behavior classes and prepared by students for sale through auction venues.

The Department of Animal and Poultry Sciences is excited for the opportunity to further expand our equine programs to include another breed and discipline of horse and extends sincere thanks to Dave Leonard for his generosity.



Dave Leonard with Boons Hired Hand, red roan AQHA stallion that Dave donated to the Virginia Tech Equine Program.



### Inspection, continued from p. 10

Virginia Tech and scored 8.3 overall.

Champion Filly was Balsam VT, by Virginia Tech's senior stallion Baladin d'Oc. Balsam VT scored 8.5 across the board to also become the High Score Foal on the day. Balsam VT and her mother Primrose were purchased earlier this year by Dr. Gale Ford of Hickory, North Carolina. Reserve Champion Filly was Roulette VT, another foal sired by Royal Appearance. This jumper-bred filly earned a final score of 8.3. She was recently purchased by former APSC student Josephine Gomon, who just completed a summer internship here at Virginia Tech and has accepted a new position with Kent Island Sporthorses in Maryland.

In all, 9 of 12 foals presented by Virginia Tech were named Premium Foals. This is outstanding, considering the registry aims for only 20% of foals to earn Premium status! The generous donations of top quality mares and breeding services from our supporters in the industry, along with some smart breeding decisions, have allowed us to exceed this percentage by far! We are looking forward to seeing these promising foals develop their careers in sport.

Thanks to everyone who participated or spectated at the event! It was a great learning opportunity for our students and for the regional horse community!



## Block & Bridle Club

by Brittany Wilt

Fall 2009 has been another fun and exciting season for the VT Block and Bridle Club. A major highlight of the semester was club's annual BBQ sale at the Virginia State Fair. In addition, several club members traveled to this year's B&B National Convention in Louisville, KY. B&B also hosted a Horse Judging Clinic, helped with the annual Hokie Harvest Sale, served BBQ at the CALS Picnic, participated in Harvest Havoc and Agtoberfest, along with welcoming a new fall pledge class!

### CALS Student Picnic

On September 2, 2009, Block and Bridle held our first BBQ of the semester at the annual College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Picnic. B&B joined

many other CALS organizations including Sigma Alpha, Equestrian Club, Farmhouse Fraternity, Dairy Club, Poultry Club, and others to welcome back returning students to the college as well as to greet incoming freshman new to the college and its clubs. B&B prepared our famous pork BBQ, lasagna, and hot dogs for about 1000 potential guests. The club made a total of \$950 from this year's CALS picnic. The picnic was a great way for everyone to see old friends as well as welcome new ones to our amazing club and college!

### Virginia State Fair

From September 24 to October 4, Block and Bridle members and pledges were at the State Fair of Virginia at the new location in The Meadow Event Park in Caroline County, VA. After setting up the tents, campers, and equipment the night before the fair began, B&B spent their time at the fair serving plentiful amounts of pork, beef, lamb, and chicken BBQ along with the club's famous baked beans and cole slaw. Club members and pledges worked very hard to have another successful and profitable year at the fair. When not serving or cooking, members were able to see exhibits at the new fairgrounds and attend concerts. Thanks to everyone's hard work, the club profited a total of \$55,000 as well as collected \$3000 for the Emily Jane Hilscher Memorial Fund. A special appreciation also goes to Glen Martin, Curry Roberts, and Pam Deneker of the State Fair, Mike



B&B members Ashley Perry and Heidi Eberly serving BBQ at the CALS Picnic

**Block & Bridle Club**, continued, p. 13

## 2009-2010 Block & Bridle Officers

Office	Name	Major	Email
President:	Jessica Crockett	AAEC	j6r7c8
Vice President:	Ashley Kyle	APSC	akyle
Secretary:	Samantha Renalds	APSC	hokie34
Treasurer:	Cynthia Koontz	Ag Sci/APSC	ckoontz
Reporter:	Brittany Wilt	APSC	bwilt89
Alumni Relations:	Rachel Grosse	APSC	rgrosse
Marshall:	Elicia Tate	APSC	entate
Historian:	Kasey Arrington	APSC/DASC	starnkc
Membership Coordinator:	Sarah Weaver	APSC	seweaver
BBQ Chairs:	Blaine White	APSC	bswhite
	Stuart Saunders	APSC	mlss06
	Tommy Bramble	APSC	tbramble
Advisors:	Mark Wahlberg		wahlberg
	Dave Linker		dlinker

## Block & Bridle Club, continued from p. 12



Left: Children making crafts at the B&B table during Agtoberfest.

Middle: B&B member Amaris Wilbanks during a Western Pleasure demonstration at the Horse Judging Clinic.

Right: One of two teams of B&B members who participated in Harvest Havoc.

Carpenter, and numerous other suppliers and individuals whose help and kindness continue to make Block & Bridle's presence at the fair every year a success.

### Agtoberfest

On October 24<sup>th</sup>, Block and Bridle teamed up with other clubs and organizations from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences to put on Agtoberfest. Groups such as Alpha Zeta, Poultry Club, Equestrian Club, AGR, and Swine Club all contributed displays, activities, food, and crafts to ensure the day was fun and exciting for visitors. Block and Bridle members organized and helped with children's crafts and answered questions pertaining to the donkeys, cattle, and sheep in the arena. Thanks to everyone for their help and participation in making Agtoberfest a success!

### Hokie Harvest Sale

On Friday, October 30, 2009, the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Hokie Harvest Sale was held at Virginia Tech. Many Block & Bridle members participated in the event, several of whom were in the Livestock Merchandising class that is in charge of organizing this sale every year. Block & Bridle and the Merchandising Food & Beverage Committee cooked and prepared enough famous pork barbecue and sides to serve a total of 752 people. Whether it was helping make showing preparations for the animals, registering and helping visitors, or serving and cooking food, Block & Bridle members and Merchandising students worked very hard to make this year's sale a success.

### Harvest Havoc

On November 8<sup>th</sup>, Block and Bridle Members

and other CALS clubs and organizations joined the agricultural fraternity, Alpha Gamma Rho, and sorority, Sigma Alpha, in their annual Harvest Havoc. B&B organized two teams of six people to compete in such fun-filled activities as obstacle courses, tug of war, horseshoes, and hay bale stacking. All fundraising proceeds from the event served to help with AGR and Sigma Alpha's support of the Heifer International Program.

### Horse Judging Clinic

On an unseasonably warm fall day, Meredith Park and Tracey Maier, along with members of the Horse Judging Team, hosted this year's Horse Judging Clinic on November 14<sup>th</sup>. The clinic brought in a total of 286 4H and FFA students of all ages from around the state of Virginia. Through the help of the hosts and B&B members, these students went through several different teaching sessions in the Alphin-Stuart Arena, Campbell Arena, and Livestock Pavilion. Each session pertained to knowledge about equine anatomy, animal comparison and note taking, giving reasons, muscling and balance, as well as several equitation demonstrations including Western Pleasure, Hunters Under Saddle, and Hunters In Hand. All the information served to enhance the visiting students' judging skills and prepare them for competitions in the future. A special thanks to everyone who helped out for making the day a huge success!

### B&B National Convention

November 12-14 were the dates of the 90<sup>th</sup> National Block and Bridle Convention in Louisville, KY, hosted by the University of Kentucky. A total of 17 B&B



## Mark Stevenson, Meats Laboratory Manager

by Dave Gerrard

Mark Stevenson joined the Department of Animal & Poultry Sciences in Spring 2009 to assume the responsibilities of meat science research and teaching laboratory, formerly operated by the Food Science and Technology department. The facility is located in the Food Science and Technology building within a block of Litton-Reaves Hall. Mark brings the department and campus over 30 years of experience in the area of meat processing technology. His experience and past employers are quite diverse and span a number of well-known meat processing companies and three land grant universities. Moreover, Mark spent several years in Korea with a company responsible for producing American-style hams and sausages for the domestic market.

Mark is committed to all three missions of the land

**Stevenson**, continued, p. 15



Mark Stevenson (right) at the Virginia Tech Meat Center

### Block & Bridle Club, continued from p. 13



B&B members with advisor, Dave Linker, at the Keeneland Racetrack during National Convention in Louisville, KY

members, along with club advisor Dave Linker, made the six hour drive to KY. During the trip, members listened to numerous speakers, attended the North American Championship Rodeo, and toured places such as Churchill Downs, Kentucky Bourbon Trail Distilleries, Keeneland Race Track, The Thoroughbred Center, and the University of Kentucky Animal Research Center. The Virginia Tech Block and Bridle Club also won 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the Annual Yearbook competition, 4<sup>th</sup> place in Chapter Activities, 4<sup>th</sup> place for the Scrapbook, and the Outstanding Sophomore Award (awarded to club member Heather Bryan). The group had a blast

and came home with some significant awards! We all look forward to next year's Block and Bridle National Convention hosted by Michigan State University!

### Pledging

Pledging is a very exciting and memorable part of becoming a member of the Block and Bridle Club.

Pledge Coordinator Sarah Weaver worked to help 16 pledges through activities including cutting and signing B's, 8pms, Informals, skits, and a service project.

The pledges for Fall 2009, as always, have played an important part of the success of this semester's B&B activities. We look forward to welcoming them as active members next semester!



B&B member Cristie Edwards helping pledge Ben Cockerille during the pledge service project



## An Update from the APSC Extension Team

by Scott Greiner

The Animal Science Extension Specialists have been hard at work this fall educating producers as well as agents. A new monthly educational forum using Adobe Connect uses internet technology and is coordinated by Drs. Mark McCann and Scott Greiner to provide continuing education and serve as a discussion tool with Extension Agents. Conducted live over the internet, these Beef Forums have involved faculty from across campus, and provided an efficient mechanism for more frequent communication with agents in the field on important topics. Some topics have included age/ source verification, reproduction, genetics, and marketing.

In addition to the Extension Agent sessions, APSC Extension Faculty will conduct Winter Beef Series meetings via the Internet. This four-part Beef Webinar sponsored by Virginia Cooperative Extension is scheduled for 6:30 pm; December 10<sup>th</sup> and will feature a panel to discuss winter nutrition topics. Drs. Currin, McCann and Wahlberg of Virginia Tech will serve as the panel addressing important considerations for the upcoming winter feeding season. Questions from the audience can be submitted via an on-line chat box or over the telephone using a number provided during the program. The initial meeting will also include a discussion of future webinar topics with a poll of the audience to determine priorities. Details are available on the VT Beef Extension Site [www.vtbeef.apsc.vt.edu](http://www.vtbeef.apsc.vt.edu).

The Extension team has also been working to update and move the Extension web pages to a new server. This major overhaul of the Extension sites will provide producers and those interested in agriculture with the latest information from Virginia Tech in a more user-friendly format. This project is anticipated to be fully completed by the Spring of 2010 and will reside at [www.anr.ext.vt.edu](http://www.anr.ext.vt.edu) under the animal agriculture section.

Future projects in Extension include the Virginia Carolina Shepherd's Symposium, January 9, 2010 in Blacksburg, the Virginia/North Carolina Volunteer Horse Leaders Program, January 30-31, 2010 in Greensboro, NC, Angus Boot Camp, May 21-22, 2010 in Blacksburg, as well as many local extension programs in various areas of the state.

Stevenson, continued from p. 14

grant system. He currently helps teach the laboratory portion of our Meat Science course. This course is designed to educate junior-level students in all aspects of meat processing and fabrication. Mark's role in the area of extension is evolving. Though consumed by the time constraints of re-starting and re-directing the vision of the meats laboratory, Mark has begun to reach out to local processors in the Commonwealth. Having received his education from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, Mark understands well the role of university outreach programs to small and medium-sized processors in Virginia. He hopes to assemble all Virginia processors in the future.

The facility that Mark operates supports the activities associated with the land grant mission. In particular, the meats laboratory processes livestock on a variety of studies targeted at understanding issues such as: dairy cow nutrition, forage feeding of beef, mechanisms controlling pork quality and meat tenderness and food safety. As a result of these studies and those related classroom activities, Mark has developed a number of processed meat items for sale. This allows the department to recover a portion of the costs incurred by providing such a facility and affords a select number of students the opportunity to gain further insight and technical capabilities in the area of meat science. If ever in Blacksburg, don't hesitate to stop at the "Hokie Meat Shoppe" for some unique tasty VT meat products.

Mark, his wife Su, and two children, reside in Christiansburg.



## Omelet And Crepe Reception: December 18, 2009

Photos by Celeste Crisman

To honor the fall 2009 graduating seniors, faculty and staff hosted an omelet and crepe reception for students and their families in Litton Reaves Hall prior to the University Commencement. Celeste Crisman and her Social Committee, along with Paul Ruszler, organized the event. Faculty provided entertainment by cooking for the guests.



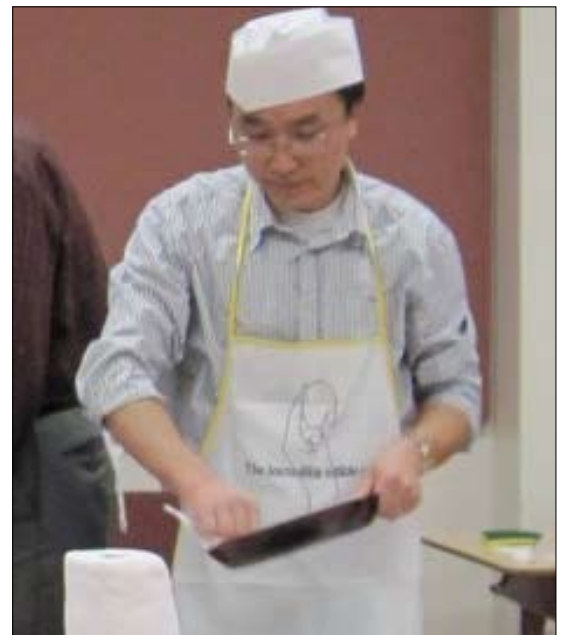
Dave Gerrard (left) looks for guidance in his culinary endeavors from Ed Smith (center) and Honglin Jiang



Mike Denbow, observed by Barb Self, creates an exquisite omelet for a student



Left:  
Jeffery Escobar  
amazes onlookers  
with his control  
(or lack of control)  
in making  
flaming crepes



Right:  
Honglin Jiang  
fashions a superb  
ham, cheese  
and onion omelet

## State 4-H Horse Judging Team Wraps Up 2009 In Style!

by Celeste Crisman

The 2009 State 4-H Horse Judging team has had a very busy and successful year. The teams competed this year at Southern Regionals (AR), American Quarter Horse Youth Worlds (OK), Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration (TN), Quarter Horse Congress (OH) and Arabian Nationals (OK). Team members included Andrea Oliver and Julia Wenger of Albemarle County, Shelley Brown of Gloucester County, Brittany Freeze and Caroline Warns of Rockingham County, Melody Stoneburner of Augusta County, Taylor Walters of Fluvanna County and Sarah Schobert of Botetourt County.

Highlights of their successes in 2009 include 4<sup>th</sup> place team overall at Southern Regionals, 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> place teams overall at AQH Youth Worlds, 1<sup>st</sup> place team overall at the Walking Horse Celebration with Melody Stoneburner finishing first place individual, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> teams overall at QH Congress and wrapping up at Arabian Nationals as the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> place teams overall. Within these team awards, there were many individual placings and awards! Combining talents in coaching the teams this year were Celeste Crisman - Extension Horse Specialist; Yvonne Miller - Rockingham County

4-H Volunteer Leader, Crystal Smith - Warren County ANR Agent and Beka Smith - Rockingham County 4-H Volunteer.



4-H Horse Judging Team (l-r): Shelley Brown, Caroline Warns, Brittany Freeze, Taylor Walters, Andrea Oliver, Julia Wenger, Sarah Schobert and Melody Stoneburner

## Graduate Students Graduating July 2009

Student	Degree	Professor	Hometown	Thesis/Dissertation Title
Sarah Blevins	M.S.	Lewis	Abingdon, VA	'Characterizing compensatory effects of silymarin on gossypol toxicosis in lines of chickens divergently selected for humoral immune response'
Jennifer Sottosanti	M.S.	McElroy	Hamilton, VA	'Incubation temperature and post-hatch stress effects on immune parameters, immune system development, and performance in commercial broilers'
Robert Van Wyht	M.S.	McElroy	Elkhorn, WI	'The effects of yeast derivatives and adult cecal droppings on growth performance and intestinal morphology in commercial broilers'
Scott Bowdridge	Ph.D.	Notter	Anderson, CA	'Characterizing physiological and genetic differences in the early immune response to Haemonchus contortus in resistant and susceptible sheep'



## 4-H Livestock Judging Team Successes

by Mark Wahlberg

Virginia 4-H livestock teams had great success at the recently held national contests in Louisville, KY. On Monday, November 16th the Skillathon team (we call it a Stockmen's Contest) blew through the competition and won handily. First, second, and fifth place individuals came from Virginia. This team was the first place team at the state contest held at the State Fair. Eric Stogdale, FFA teacher and volunteer 4-H coach, trained this group. They were Logan Turner, Bobby Strecker, Marshall Slaven, and Christian Deavers. A total of 17 states were represented in this contest.

The National 4H Livestock Contest was held on Tuesday, November 17th. Twenty-nine states participated. Virginia's team finished in 3rd place overall. They were tenth team in beef cattle, fifth in oral reasons, and 3rd in both swine and sheep judging, in addition to the 3rd place overall finish. Team members were Bobby Strecker, Lacey Koontz, Bly Patterson, and Laura Kate Reeves. I served as their coach. Bobby Strecker was 9th place individual, Bly Patterson stood 18th, and Lacey Koontz was 21st. Illinois was first, Indiana 2nd, then Virginia, Texas, and Colorado.

Another national championship was secured by the Virginia team at the North American International Livestock Exposition. The state-winning Stockmens Contest team from

Augusta County won the Skillathon contest from among the 17 teams in competition. In this contest the members must possess a large range of knowledge relating to cattle, swine, sheep, and goats. They must apply information about feeding, housing, marketing, health, quality assurance, and end product.

The Virginia team dominated the competition, winning by 80 points. Bobby Strecker took first

place overall, Logan Turner finished in 2nd place, and Christian Deavers was 5th. This resulted in an 80-point margin of victory over the second-place team from North Carolina. Marshall Slaven completed the Virginia team.

The Livestock Judging team also had their national contest at the North American. The Virginia team, consisting of Bobby Strecker, Bly Patterson, Lacey Koontz, and Laura Kate Reeves, finished in 3rd place over from the 29 teams which competed. Bobby took 8th place overall, the first time that any individual has finished in the top 10 in both national contests in the same year. Bly Patterson was the 19th place contestant, and Lacey Koontz finished in 21st place from among the 114 4Hers who competed. Bobby and Laura Kate also finished in the top 10 in swine judging.



Livestock team (l-r) Lacey Koontz, Bobby Strecker, Laura Kate Reeves, and Bly Patterson. Dr Mark Wahlberg is the coach, and Willie Hayes of Westway Feeds sponsored the awards.



Skillathon team (l-r) Logan Turner, Christian Deavers, Bobby Strecker, and Marshall Slaven. Eric Stogdale is the coach.

## Virginia Tech Horse Judging Team Activities

by Julia McCann



Students committed to the VA Tech Horse Judging Team program continued their successful ways that began last spring. With a win at MTSU and a top five finish at the largest spring contest in Ft. Worth, TX, the team set their sights on the All-American Quarter Horse Congress in Columbus, OH this fall. The team was challenged to learn the standards of many stock horse

events and is appreciative of the support given by the Virginia Quarter Horse Association and the Blue Ridge Quarter Horse Association at their fall horse shows. The team observed the shows and had the opportunity to learn from the judges by visiting and scribing for them on various days. Kyle Hughes, Jr. also was particularly generous with his horses and time to help the team learn about the Quarter Horse Halter industry.

The five students who represented Virginia Tech at the Congress included: Diana Campbell from Colonial Heights, VA; Tara Fickling from Boone, NC; Jeni Lamb from Colorado; Collins Mehford of Columbia, VA; and Danielle Wroblewski of Constantia, NY. Tracey Maier of Chesapeake, VA and Ashley Clark of Leesburg, VA also traveled to Congress with the anticipation of competing next year for Virginia Tech. At the end of the day, Virginia Tech stood seventh in halter, ninth in performance, eighth in reasons and eighth overall among 22 teams from across the nation. Jeni Lamb was ninth in halter judging. The contest was won by Middle Tennessee State University.

Along with supportive Block and

Bridle members, this team of students led the educational effort to host the Block and Bridle Horse Judging Clinic held at the Virginia Tech campus on Nov. 14, 2009. The team could not have shone more brightly as they "entertained" 230 youth from across the state in the skills development required in horse judging competitions. Morning sessions were held for beginner, intermediate, and advanced youth who came together for the judging of five classes in the afternoon program. Team members discussed the classes and horses confidently with sound terminology for the participants; thereby exhibiting some of the real benefits of the horse judging team activity. "Fun" was the final perspective of the day that was fulfilling in many ways. Looking back, little did the youth participants know how far this team had come in just 10 short months when many of them had never competed in a contest themselves! And the friendship that tightly bonds this group will last a lifetime!

A strong evaluation class has enrolled for the 2010 team that will quickly focus on the spring competitions in TN and Texas. The Virginia Tech team is appreciative of the "home state" support and hopes to visit several farms in the Commonwealth this spring!



(l-r) Tara Fickling, Jeni Lamb, Danielle Wroblewski, Ashley Clark, Tracey Maier, Diana Campbell, and Collins Mehford.  
Thanks to Carrolle Leather Company for the donated team jackets!  
Team was coached by Dr. Julia McCann.



## 2009 Virginia Tech Livestock Judging Team Summary

by Lance Leachman

The 2009 Virginia Tech recently completed the fall judging season. The team started practice in mid-August meeting three times each week. The team attended several contests across the country which included: Eastern National Livestock Judging Contest-Timonium, MD; Keystone International Livestock Exposition-Harrisburg, PA; Boilermaker Classic-West Lafayette, IN; Premier Stockmen-Frankfort, IN; and North American International Livestock Judging Contest-Louisville, KY.

Members of the 2009 team included: Amanda Virts from Leesburg, VA; Clara Nelson from Natural Bridge Station, VA; Tommy Bramble from Queen Anne, MD; Matthew Sponaugle from Doe Hill, VA; and Robbie Maxey from Scottsville, VA. The team was coached by Mr. Lance Leachman (graduate assistant). The dedication, work ethic, enthusiasm, and time management from these five students were admirable. Having begun livestock judging a semester later than most schools, each one of the students was dedicated to improve and all competed successfully.

Throughout the fall, team members traveled in excess of 6,000 miles across seven states to practice at more than 25 premier cattle, swine and sheep operations. The livestock units at Purdue University, The Ohio State University and Virginia Tech were also utilized for workouts. Support from the livestock community and alumni was tremendous and the quality of the people and the livestock in Virginia was a pleasure.

Thanks to all faculty and staff in cooperating with the students in making up course work or assignments they may have missed when traveling. The oversight of Dr. Eversole and financial support from the Department, Block and Bridle Club, Livestock



(l-r): Clara Nelson, Matthew Sponaugle, Lance Leachman (coach), Tommy Bramble, Amanda Virts.

Judging Team Alumni and the VA Pork Industry Board are also greatly appreciated in making this important activity possible.

Students with an interest in livestock judging are encouraged to enroll in APSC 3754: 'Principles of Livestock Evaluation' during the spring semester of their junior year.



## 2009 Hokie Harvest Sale

by Dan Eversole

The 2009 Livestock Merchandising Class entertained an enormous crowd of over 800 friends and supporters on a beautiful, autumn evening at the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Hokie Harvest Sale on Friday, October 30<sup>th</sup>. There were seven breeding swine sold via silent auction prior to the 28 university horses and 35 head (22 lots) of beef cattle that were sold concurrently at public auction in the Alphin-Stuart Livestock Arena (horses) and the Livestock Judging Pavilion (beef cattle). There were 191 registered buyers in attendance from Kansas, Texas, Ohio, South Carolina, West Virginia, North Carolina, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. The beef cattle sale grossed \$56,050 with a sale average of \$2,548 with the following breed totals: Angus - \$31,125; Hereford - \$12,325; Simmental - \$11,300; and Charolais - \$1,300. The horse sale grossed \$60,900 with a sale average of \$2,175 while the seven breeding swine averaged \$360. This year's sale gross totaled \$119,470.

The beef cattle sale featured four different purebred breeds. In the cow/calf division, Lot 5 was the top selling lot at \$4,200. This Angus cow is a daughter of the highly acclaimed sire, Bon View New Design 1407, and she ranked in the elite 4% on \$B with a \$52.97 value. Her \$QG and MARB placed her in the top 5% and 10%, respectively. This highly valued, four-year-old brood cow and her phenomenal February bull calf by GAR New Design 5050 was purchased by Mike and Tim Wells of Boones Mill, VA.

VPI Assertion U820 (Lot 16) topped the breeding-age bull division at \$3,600. This Hereford yearling bull is a DR World Class son that ranked among the elite 1% for Milk and Growth and the upper 5% for WW, YW, and Scrotal. He also charted in the top 5% for CHB\$. His new owner is Roger Smith, High Rock Hereford of Lexington, VA.

The high-selling horses were Lots 12 and 21, both of which commanded a \$5,000 bid. Remember VT (Lot 12) is an attractive ISR filly with a great character and above average gaits. She has the charisma and confidence to develop into an excellent event prospect and is versatile enough for any of the sporthorse disciplines. Remember VT was purchased by Peter Schwartz, Tupelo Stables, Delaplane, VA. Lot 21 is a 2008 bay Thoroughbred gelding sired by Kentucky Derby winner, Go For Gin, who was second in the Preakness and

Belmont Stakes. This unnamed, athletic youngster was purchased by Donna Rogers, Hillside Farm, Hamilton, VA.

The 76 students did a marvelous job of preparing for the sale. They gained 'hands-on' experience in sale management, budgeting, cataloging, advertising, livestock photography, clerking, and health requirements. Special thanks are extended to Col. Jeff Marsh of Eurosport Auctions, Ltd., Boston, VA and Col. Ken Brubaker of Brubaker Sales and Marketing, Harrisonburg, VA for serving as auctioneers for the horses and beef cattle, respectively. Students Jones Baker, Galax, VA; Nick Proud, Smyrna, DE; and Chris Terembes, Charlottesville, VA served as ring people for the beef cattle sale while Tom Liskey, Harrisonburg, VA worked the ring. Bid-takers for the horse sale were Heather Bryan, Forest, VA; Alex Northcutt, Radiant, VA; Amaris Wilbanks, Farmville, VA; and Lindsey Williamson, Reva, VA. Students who were clerking 'in the block' were Ashley Swindell, Wakefield, VA and Meredith Park, Philomont, VA for the beef cattle and horse sales, respectively.

The Food and Beverage Committee, with assistance from the Block and Bridle Club in the Department of Animal and Poultry Sciences, served a complimentary BBQ dinner to over 750 guests. Their support and cooperation are greatly appreciated.

The response from the 191 registered horse, swine, and beef cattle buyers and feedback from the students in the class continues to be overwhelming in favor of hosting another student-run livestock sale. Plans are currently underway for the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Hokie Harvest Sale on Friday, October 29, 2010. We hope that you are able to 'Experience the Harvest' with us next year!



## Dean's List Spring 2009

Agnew, Morgan E.	Foster, Kathryn E.	Norwood, Anna B.
Aguilar, Michelle	Gilbeau, Gabrielle M.	O'Laughlin, Kathleen M.
Alexis, Elizabeth .	Gilbert, Jessica M.	Ott, Jessica L.
Allen, Kimberly M.	Graham, Rachel C.	Park, Chaelee A.
Altholz, Kelsey S.	Grapes, Ashley L.	Park, Meredith K.
Andrews, Christopher M.	Greiner, Jacquelyn E.	Parks, Zachary S.
Barkley, Katharine L.	Hale, Meredith L.	Patel, Akash P.
Barlow, Jessica E.	Hall, Christina S.	Paulette, Morgan R.
Barrar, Elizabeth J.	Hall, Erin K.	Peeples, John T.
Bell, Ashley L.	Harris, Leah M.	Perry, Ashley K.
Bell, Morgan L.	Heller, Erin L.	Pierce, Callie S.
Bell, Tiffany D.	Hickman, Amber L.	Rakes, Kelly L.
Bennett, Whitney S.	Hilgartner, Eric T.	Reed, Jennifer L.
Benner, John K.	Hinderer, Jessica A.	Reeves, Heather F.
Berke, Kristin A.	Horner, Adrienne E.	Renalds, Samantha J.
Blatcher, Christina M.	Huff, Elise M.	Richard, Keziah E.
Blythe, Mollie P.	Imhof, Maria P.	Ritzi, Miranda M.
Bramble, Thomas W.	Jacob, Joanna C.	Rockwell, Erin L.
Brown, Christopher M.	Jacobs, Kaitlin N.	Romine, Jessica F.
Brown, Stephen M.	Jones, Christine S.	Ruffner, Kristina M.
Buckley, Colleen M.	Jones, Katherine E.	Schmidt, Abigail E.
Burczynski, Sarah E.	Jones, Kimberly A.	Sheets, Colby T.
Burner, Jonathan R.	Joyce, Kelly J.	Shores, Regina M.
Carrington, Anne C.	Kadotani, Saki	Singer, Lauren
Carrington, Julia L.	Keithley, Megan E.	Smith, Garrett P.
Chase, Allyson D.	Kilgore, Alexander J.	Snow, Laura M.
Clark, Christine, L.	Kim, Sooryung	Spivey, Allison J.
Cookson, Ariel N.	King, Quentin D.	Traywick, Riley E.
Correa, Bethany R.	Kinter, Lauren E.	Truban, Matthew A.
Cossaboom, Caitlin M.	Kitchen, Stefanie	Tubesing, Monica E.
Crawford, Christine C.	Knight, Katherine D.	Turner, Laurita F.
Criner, Sara E.	Knoebel, Nicole A.	Vega, Lindsay R.
Cromer, Michael Kyle	Knopp, Christopher J.	Virts, Kathryn A.
Crouse, Zachary J.	Koegel, Adrienne L.	Walket, Michelle
Davis, Carrie V.	Kopanko, Ashley M.	Walls, Lora B.
Dayton, Megan M.	Kyle, Ashley E.	Walters, Jessica N.
Deliere, Erin N.	Lacy, Kathryn A.	Washington, Cassandra M.
Dialectos, Rachel R.	Leith, Caitlin M.	Weakley, Amanda L.
Dodge, Whitney J.	Liskey, Thomas H.	Wheeler, Janice M.
Donovan, Sarah M.	Lowery, Aubery E.	Whipp, Megan E.
Dorman, Hunter A.	Martin, Brendan J.	Williams, Elizabeth A.
Dougherty, Blythe L.	Mastromano, Gabriel A.	Willing, Brittany
Dunn, Rachel	Mautone, Jessica M.	Wilt, Brittany N.
East, Caitlin M	Melton, Juliana M.	Won, Samantha G.
Eberly, Heidi R.	Messerly, Ellen L.	Woody, Jessica L.
Economos, Theresa J.	Mickey, Julie A.	Wyszynski, Megan J.
Eldred, Melanie M	Mitchell, Stephanie L.	Zezeski, Abigail L.
Elliott, Alyssa J.	Mollohan, Jill M.	Zwarycz, Bailey
Evans, Christine A.	Monahan, Virginia L.	
Faris, Laura L.	Moore, Brittany N.	
Fellows, Jillian A.	Neff, Laura E.	
Fiktus, Richard A.	Nelson, Clara R.	
Flinn, Candace D.	Niemeyer, Melanie S.	

*Congratulations!*

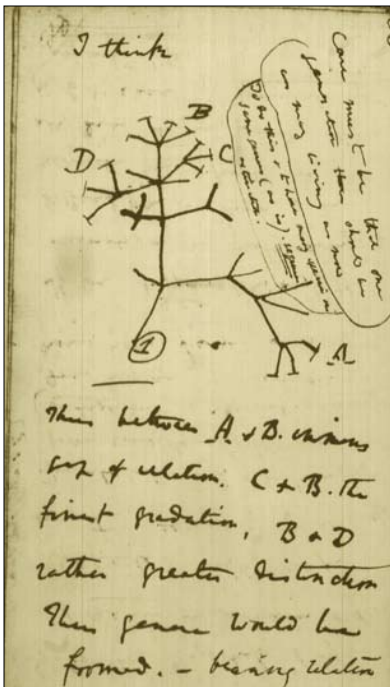
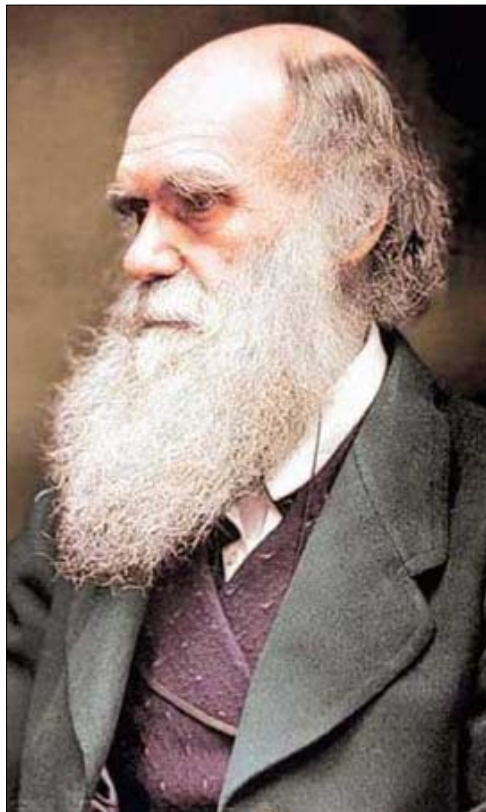
## "Celebration of Darwin" Conference Marks 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Origin of Species

by Ron Lewis

This year marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, and the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth. In celebration of Darwin's contributions - scientific, historical, and philosophical - an across-College committee at Virginia Tech planned a series of events in conjunction with these anniversaries. I was fortunate to serve as the chair of that Committee.

One of our central events was an academic conference held on November 4<sup>th</sup> at The Inn at Virginia Tech and Skelton Conference Center. "Charles Darwin's On the Origin of Species After 150 Years: Contemporary Evaluations and Re-evaluations" (<http://www.cpe.vt.edu/darwin/index.html>) was targeted at Darwin enthusiasts and scholars, wishing to discuss contemporary perspectives on the English naturalist's theory of evolution through natural selection. Clearly, there were many: the conference was oversubscribed with 165 participants.

The morning session began with welcomes and opening remarks by Provost Mark McNamee, followed by keynote lectures by three renowned Darwin scholars. After Darwin formulated his concept of natural selection, he turned to work out a theory of morality. Dr. Bob Richards (University of Chicago) demonstrated the continued soundness and relevance of those perspectives today. "The Galápagos," Darwin declared to botanist Joseph Hooker in 1846, "seems a perennial source of our culture, and our society. By all indications, that new things." Dr. Frank Sulloway (University of



California, Berkeley) described modern research involving the Galápagos Islands shedding further light on several key theories and arguments that Darwin set forth in the Origin. Dr. Sulloway also warned of the vulnerability of the islands' ecosystems to invasion by exotic species today. In the century and a half since the publication of Darwin's Origin, many people have attempted to draw conclusions from it about human nature and social life. Dr. Philip Kitcher (Columbia University) argued that we do better to emulate Darwin's methods of careful observation, and try to understand our social practices and institutions in terms of their historical development. The session closed with a panel discussion, with provocative debate among the speakers and participants alike.

The afternoon session consisted of three parallel sessions that expanded on themes introduced by the morning speakers. Each session consisted of six invited talks, with titles ranging from "Exploring the Origin: Translations as Prism," "Genome Landscape, Evolutionary Plasticity of Chromosomes, and Species Adaptation" and "Darwin's Influence on Early American Psychology." The conference closed with Living Darwin, an original theater performance produced by Virginia Tech's Theatre Workshop in Science and Technology Studies. The performance added a thoughtful, and thoroughly enjoyed, overview of the Darwinian tradition to end the day.

Our hope was that the conference would stimulate a living and ongoing dialogue over the implications of evolutionary thinking within biology, our culture, and our society. By all indications, that was achieved.



## Dates to Remember in 2010

January 18 (M)	Martin Luther King Day (No classes)
January 19 (T)	Spring Semester classes begin
March 6 - 14	Spring Break
March 23 - 30	Course Request for Fall Semester 2010 open
April 16 (F)	University Remembrance (No classes)
May 5 (W)	Last day of classes for Spring Semester
May 14 (F)	University Commencement Ceremonies (Graduate and Undergraduate)
May 15 (S)	Spring Commencement (College Ceremonies)

## APSC Contact Information

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Block and Bridle Club	
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Dave Linker.....	231-9154
Equestrian Club	
Teresa McDonald.....	231-3555
Poultry Club	
Audrey McElroy.....	231-8750
Pre-vet Club	
Mike Denbow.....	231-6843
Facilities Contacts	
Farm Supervisor, Dave Linker.....	231-9154
Beef Center.....	231-6280
Sheep Center.....	231-6988
Smithfield Horse Unit.....	231-4366
Swine Center.....	231-6250
Poultry Center.....	231-5810
Turkey Center.....	231-6283
Campbell Arena.....	231-3555
Judging Pavillion.....	231-9150
Alphin-Stuart Arena.....	231-9150

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Yes ☐ No ☐