

# THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL AND POULTRY SCIENCES



College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Summer 2007

## THE STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT

**Dr. K.E. Webb, Interim Department Head**



I have been struggling mightily with trying to somehow collect my thoughts after the events of April 16 and to find the words that would adequately allow me to share my thoughts with you. Try as I may, my every attempt seems to come up short of capturing the gravity of what occurred and how the events of that day have changed so many things. I have read the words of many others and very likely this is true for you as well. They always seem to be able to express their feelings so clearly and with great insight and sensitivity. Because of my inability to complete this task, I choose to share the words of Ann Cassell with you.

*"I was lucky enough to be born in Blacksburg and have never been more proud to call it home. The sorrow I have felt this week has been matched only by the overwhelming love and pride I feel for this community. Those of us who grew up here have especially grieved for our town, a place that we'll always think of as home no matter where we may live. For many of us, it has been hard to explain, even before this tragedy, how this place can mean so much to us. Now the world knows Blacksburg and yet it seems even harder to explain. They know it by tragedy. We know it by heart.*

*The Virginia Tech campus provided the backdrop for our childhood, the landscape for our imaginations. We grew up feeding the ducks at the Duck Pond while wearing our favorite Hokie t-shirts. We watched the Highty-Tighties practice and clapped along with Tech Triumph. We ate Carol Lee Donuts, our legs swinging from those funny little stools, while looking out the windows at the downtown we would grow to love. We learned the words to Old Hokie and kept score at countless basketball and football games. We looked at Tech students and saw the people we hoped to be someday...one became Miss America, another went to the Olympics, most were just older and smarter and more fun than us. We learned that people from all over the world call Blacksburg home. As we grew up, the campus was home to classes, concerts, camps, prom, and high school graduation. We learned that we are loved here – by our parents, our friends' parents, our teachers, our entire community. We learned that intelligence is worth celebrating, but kindness is more important. We*

*learned to be "bicycle friendly" and that recycling is a virtue. We learned to tailgate. We learned that leaving a sporting event before it's over, whether winning or losing, is not an option. We learned to appreciate the beauty of a country day and the steady support of lifelong friends. We learned – and took to heart – the messages on the pylons: Brotherhood, Honor, Leadership, Loyalty, Service, Sacrifice, Duty. We learned what Ut Prosim meant, both literally and by the examples of so many around us. Later, we learned that no matter what corner of the world life led us to, we would still be Hokies at heart. We watched in amazement as our football team played in the National Championship game. It was so exciting we sometimes had to re-read the newspaper coverage because we couldn't believe they were actually talking about us. We learned that we are all in this together. We learned that there really is no place like home. And over the years, we learned that sometimes it snows in April around here, never imagining that one day an April snowstorm would carry death on its shoulders and evil in the wind.*

*As I stood on the Drillfield Tuesday night, so achingly beautiful bathed in candlelight, I realized that my Blacksburg upbringing did not prepare me for this. It seemed that even Burruss Hall might cry. How could this be the same place we played "capture the flag"? Where we had those late-night high school conversations and gathered to watch fireworks on the 4th of July? How could any of this be?*

*On April 16, we found out there are a lot of things we didn't learn here: the type of hatred that spawned this crime; the etiquette for*

*continue on page 2*

Ann Cassell grew up in Blacksburg and is the granddaughter of the late Stuart K. Cassell (Animal Science B.S., 1932 and former vice president for administration of Virginia Tech, 1966 to 1975). Ann penned the following short essay the week following the campus tragedy.



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walking on a bloodstained sidewalk; the right words to say when reality hurts this badly. We didn't learn how to handle condescending national media critics, so sure in their criticism and suffocating in their superiority that they never took the time to learn that there is no such thing as "Virginia Tech University." We certainly didn't learn how to make sense of it all. It was so horrifying we sometimes had to re-read the newspaper coverage because we couldn't believe they were actually talking about us.

Now, the whole world wears orange and maroon. It is overwhelming, comforting, and disorienting all at once. They ask if we knew any of the victims. We know them all. Because last week they were in line behind us at the grocery store, or at church with us, or just breathing the same glorious mountain air. They loved this place as much as we still do, but were robbed of the chance to enjoy it any longer.

We know this place by heart, but now our hearts are broken. Though it feels at times as if things will never be the same, I realize that some things haven't changed. Last week, I looked at Virginia Tech students and once again saw in them the person I hope to be someday. The Duck Pond still glistens in the sunlight. Brotherhood, Honor, Leadership, Loyalty, Service, Sacrifice, and Duty have never been more evident. More than ever, we are all in this together. We will not let one person destroy what is, and what always has been, so good and so true. We are a community, not a crime scene. And on April 16, we learned again through the heroism of our police force, the bravery of our neighbors, and the lives of 32 beautiful people that there is still no better place to call home."

*Ann Cassell*  
Blacksburg, Virginia



In closing, it is impossible to escape the impacts of the horrific events of April 16, 2007, but being Hokies, we will not permit the acts of that day to define us. Of course, our memories of that day will remain vivid and our thoughts will often be driven towards those who were lost or injured and their families. Please know, however, that many good things are happening at Virginia Tech and in the Department of Animal and Poultry Sciences (e.g., acceptances by new students for fall 2007 are up considerably over last year, granting success by the faculty is at an all time high, etc.). You will find numerous indications of the good things that are happening throughout this newsletter and when we send you our next newsletter, we will share more about all of the positive things that do define who we are. Thank you for your continued support of our department.

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Turkey Center.....	231-6283
Campbell Arena .....	231-3555
Judging Pavilion.....	231-9150
Alphin-Stuart Arena.....	231-9150



## BILL BEAL IS AWARDED THE SPORN AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING INTRODUCTORY SUBJECTS

The 2007 Sporn Award for Excellence in Teaching Introductory Subjects will be presented to Professor Bill Beal of the Department of Animal and Poultry Sciences. Beal has made a career of outstanding teaching at Virginia Tech over the last 28 years, earning a Certificate of Teaching Excellence in 1984, the Wine Award in 1990, and the Purina Mills National Teaching Award from the American Society of Animal Sciences in 2003. He is a specialist in teaching the Introduction to Animal and Poultry Sciences course, which is recognized by his colleagues as a very important course in the APSC curriculum and a challenging course to teach successfully.



*Dr. Bill Beal*

Beal's students deeply appreciate his contagious and invigorating enthusiasm for the course material – one student called his enthusiasm “addictive.” But what students really value and respond to are Beal's explicit social objectives for the course, his effort to create an atmosphere of freedom, accountability, and trust, which

they know lays the foundation for their success both here at Virginia Tech and beyond. Students unanimously praised Beal for his exceptional concern for his students, his efforts to help them make the difficult transition from high school to college study, for his set of “rules to live by” at the university (like, “How to inquire about a grade without making the professor defensive.”), for learning the names, hometowns, and high schools of each of the 150 students in the class and getting them to know each other as well. As one student

put it, “I used to be the kind of person to merely go to class, receive my grade, and leave, without any other interest. But after having Dr. Beal as a professor, I now realize the importance – and the ease – of walking up to my professors and talking to them after class, thereby encouraging a relationship that will help me long into the future.” In short, Beal's teaching in his introductory classes is nothing short of transformative, and for that reason he will be the recipient of the 2007 Sporn Award.

## REMEMBERING EMILY JANE HILSCHER

Victim of the April 16 tragedy

Emily Jane Hilscher was the beloved daughter of Eric and Elizabeth Hilscher, best friend and sister of Erica, and granddaughter of Gilman and Mary Carlson and Carl and Merle Hilscher.

Emily was a 2006 graduate of Rappahannock County High School. She was a skilled horsewoman, animal lover, enthusiastic cook, and imaginative artisan. She was wise beyond her years and insisted on fairness in everything. She wanted people to be happy and was eternally trying to save someone or something.

Emily had a passion for horses. In fall 2006, she began what would have been an eight-year journey at Virginia Tech, which would have culminated in her becoming a veterinarian and then working in an equine practice. She was a member of the university's equestrian team and the Intercollegiate Horse Shows Association and competed successfully in her first show on Feb. 12, 2007, with her second show scheduled on April 21.

According to her coach, “Emily was just entering her intercollegiate riding career. She showed great promise and had a perfect attitude that would have made her a very successful intercollegiate rider. Her strong work ethic and determination were always displayed as she spent long hours at equestrian club events, always with a smile on her face.



*Emily and her friend Jack*



## A.J. “JEFF” MARSH

### Outstanding Agricultural Alumni Citation Award *(Alumni out of school longer than 10 years)*

A.J. “Jeff” Marsh is the recipient of the 2007 Outstanding Agricultural Alumni Award in the Department of Animal and Poultry Sciences for alumni out of school longer than 10 years. Marsh has contributed in exceptionally effective and productive ways to the department for many years, including support of the undergraduate teaching program and the Horse Judging Team.



*Jeff Marsh (second from left) with several students who were bid takers at the Hokie Harvest Sale*

While an undergraduate in the Department of Animal Science at Virginia Tech, Marsh worked at the animal facilities and was a member of the Livestock Judging Team. After graduating in 1971, he became a professional auctioneer and developed a national and international reputation as a highly successful auctioneer of horses (European sport horses as well as other breeds), beef cattle, alpacas, and other animals. He is an auctioneer of farm machinery and real estate and is the sole proprietor of Eurosport Auctions, Ltd.

He has been a tireless supporter and proponent of the Department of Animal and Poultry Sciences since his graduation. He continually informs business associates in the sport-horse business about Virginia Tech’s breeding herd and equitation programs and has never been shy about requesting their support for the programs through the donation of horses and stallion services.

Marsh has served as a guest lecturer in the undergraduate Livestock Merchandising course and as the auctioneer for

the annual Hokie Harvest Horse Sale since its inception in 1995. He is tremendously popular because of his quick sense of humor, ability to entertain the crowd, and talent for enticing prospective buyers to spend considerable amounts of money on the purchase of horses. Many folks say that they attend the sale because they are fascinated and delighted by Marsh’s auctioneering skills.

Over the last decade the annual Hokie Harvest Sale of horses and beef cattle has generated in excess of \$1.28 million to support undergraduate teaching in the department. Each year, Marsh donates his auctioneer’s fee from the Hokie Harvest Sale back to the Equine Program and the Horse Judging Team. This has approached \$70,000 over the past 12 years.

Another indication of Jeff’s allegiance to Virginia Tech is the fact that both his sons, Carter and Andrew, graduated from Virginia Tech in May of 2000. Carter earned a B.S. from the Department of Animal and Poultry Sciences and Andrew earned a B.A. in international studies.

Marsh’s contributions to undergraduate education and his generation of financial support for the undergraduate teaching programs in the department have been extremely important to the development of the Tech Equine Program. Marsh truly does deserve to be recognized as an outstanding alumnus of the department.

## ROGER ALTON TEEKELL

Roger Alton Teekell, 77, retired professor and former head of the Department of Poultry Science, died April 12 at Montgomery Regional Hospital in Blacksburg. During his tenure at Virginia Tech, Teekell also served as dean of the Graduate School. He came to Tech from Louisiana State University where he was acting dean of the College of Agriculture and chairman of the Poultry Science Department. During his academic career Teekell directed many research projects and authored numerous scientific publications.

Born March 3, 1930, he was a son of the late James Harvey and Ada Smith Teekell and was raised on a farm near Elmer, Louisiana. He later served his country during the Korean Conflict in the U.S. Air Force and subsequently earned his Ph.D. at Louisiana State with a double major in biochemistry and animal nutrition. While raising his children he coached girls softball, served as a scoutmaster for several years, and was very active in the Optimist Club youth activities, serving for a time as a vice president of Optimist International. Teekell retired to Newport in Craig County, where he and his wife Helen raised cattle.



## SHANE HORSLEY

### Outstanding Agricultural Alumni Citation Award *(Alumni out of school fewer than 10 years)*

Shane Horsley received the department's 2007 Agricultural Alumni Citation Award. He earned both his B.S. ('99) and M.S. ('02) in animal and poultry sciences. He was named the Outstanding Senior in the department in 1999. He also served as the Virginia Tech Intercollegiate Livestock Judging Team coach in 2000 and 2001. While a student and as an alumnus, Horsley has been one of the most unselfish supporters of the department and the college.



Shane Horsley

Few alumni have had as great an impact on our department as Horsley. During his six years as an undergraduate and graduate student he served as everything from an undergraduate teaching assistant for nine semesters to student ambassador for the department.

All members of the Horsley family are Hokie supporters. Horsley's father Don (B.S. '69) and his brother Ryan (B.S. '02 and M.S. '04) both graduated from the Department of Animal and Poultry Sciences. Together with Horsley's mother Diane, they are active supporters of Virginia Tech. They host the department's livestock judging team for workouts by supplying animals and housing the team members in their home during weekend workouts. In the spring of 2006 Horsley was honored by the Virginia Tech Block and Bridle Club when he was named to judge the Little International Livestock Show.

Horsley is currently employed by Smithfield Foods as a cattle-feeding analyst. He makes his home in the Tidewater area and continues to be a proud supporter of Virginia Tech.

### NEW APSC UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE OPTION FOR THE CLASS OF 2010

This spring, the university approved a new degree option for the Department of Animal and Poultry Sciences. The Pre-Vet Option is available to students graduating in 2010 and later. Current students will find that the option looks very familiar: it is a specific set of courses that fit within the Science Option. The new option simply formalizes the pathway many APSC students have followed for years.

All APSC options (Production-Business, Science, and Pre-Vet) have the same university, college, and departmental requirements, and they also all require students to choose 26 restricted electives. Students tailor their curricula by taking restricted electives that are chosen in collaboration with their academic advisors. Within each option, a student chooses at least one emphasis area (livestock, poultry, or equine) that also may influence the restricted elective list.

The new Pre-Vet Option requires 19 specific credits in addition to the university, college, and departmental requirements. These are courses required for admission to the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine. These courses include Organic Chemistry (8 credits), Physics (8 credits), and Biochemistry (3 credits).

For more information about degree requirements in the Department of Animal and Poultry Sciences, please visit our website at [www.apsc.vt.edu](http://www.apsc.vt.edu).



### David S. Kronfeld

A memorial service was held for David S. Kronfeld on April 28 at Holy Family Catholic Church in Pearisburg. Four eulogists, his son Andreas Kronfeld, Dr. Jim Bowen, Assistant Professor Burt Staniar, and Kronfeld's nephew Christopher Parr from New Zealand, provided comments about Professor Kronfeld's personal and professional life. Later in the afternoon, friends and family met at his farm, Walkabout Farm, in Pembroke to bury his ashes on the property. Kronfeld, who held the Paul Mellon Chair of Agriculture, retired in 2006.



## APSC DEAN'S LIST FALL 2006

Agnew, Morgan E.	Correa, Bethany R.	Jackson, Lee B.	Pittman, Jessica A.	Traywick, Riley E.
Aitken, James S.	Cox, Chasity M.	Jones, Christine S.	Pollock, Sierra L.	Trefney, Maggie R.
Alberti, Kyle A.	Cromer, Michael K.	Jones, Kari B.	Preskitt, Jessica L.	Tubesting, Monica E.
Allen, Lindsay K.	Crouse, Zachary J.	Jones, Katherine E.	Ritter, Kate M.	Waddle, Ashleigh D.
Altholz, Kelsey S.	Damiens, Danielle N.	Kilgore, Alexander J.	Rockwell, Erin L.	Walawender, Kiley L.
Altizer, Samuel K.	Deahl, Lauren E.	Kinter, Lauren E.	Rogers-Cotrone, Thomas	Walls, Lora B.
Baker, Rose E.	Denzene, Kristin D.	Knopp, Christopher J.	Romine, Jessica F.	Walters, Jessica N.
Beauregard, Michelle A.	Dorman, Hunter A.	Kott, Julia M.	Scheepers, Gideon P.	Walters, Tiffanie L.
Beavers, Kelli N.	Dulaney, David R.	Lindsey, Whitney L.	Schoo, Corey E.	Walton, Ashley N.
Beck, Erika J.	Dunavant, Hilda D.	Lyle, Jennifer L.	Shores, Regina M.	Weakley, Amanda L.
Beckley, Katherine L.	Economos, Theresa J.	Marino, Amanda F.	Smith, Garrett P.	Werthmann, Catherine E.
Bensen, Jennifer L.	Evans, Emma K.	Marpet, Sarah A.	Smith, Shannon M.	Williams, Amy G.
Blatcher, Christina M.	Gershon, Aveetal	McCoy, Randolph S.	Snyder, Shannon C.	Williamson, Lindsey M.
Botting, Danielle N.	Gomes, Genna L.	McCrickard, Lindsey S.	Sottosanti, Jennifer R.	Wilson, Karen N.
Boyle, Matthew D.	Grams, Christopher T.	McGuire, Kirsten E.	Stull, Charley G.	Wiseman, Todd E.
Bramble, Thomas W.	Grove, Sylvia E.	Minnick, Kayla D.	Stump, Karen E.	Witt, Krishna R.
Brooks, Ryan M.	Harris, Leah M.	Mlynarczyk, Jacqueline M.	Surotchak, Jennifer L.	Wood, Jessica L.
Bui, Tam A.	Harris, Shannon R.	Moritz, Steven W.	Svendsen, Tara M.	Yokota, Emari M.
Byrd, Hannah V.	Hatch, Charlotte M.	Myers, Jonathan H.	Sweiter, Greg R.	
Carlidge, Megan C.	Hay, Daniel E.	Newman, Christina L.	Talley, Virginia A.	
Clark, Christine L.	Horner, Adrienne E.	Parsley, Sarah E.	Tomaszewski, Heather L.	
Clark, Meredith K.	Ihling, Jessica A.		Topp, Virginia L.	

## CURRENT YOUTH LIVESTOCK EXTENSION PROGRAMS

*By Mark L. Wahlberg, Extension Animal Scientist*

The youth livestock Extension program serves both 4-H and FFA members in their efforts to learn about beef cattle, sheep, and pigs. The people responsible for this effort are the Extension agents, volunteer leaders, and agriculture educators throughout the state. However, many of the major programs are coordinated and led by personnel at Virginia Tech.

There are more than 35 livestock shows annually throughout Virginia. In 2003, the results for the season were summarized. That year, 24 of the shows included sales of project animals raised by the exhibitors. Those sales generated slightly over \$2 million for the 4-H and FFA members who raised, showed, and sold those 3,259 steers, lambs, and hogs.

Judging programs continue to be popular. State livestock judging contests are held in June, the State Fair Stockmen's Contest is in early October, and the Virginia Tech Block and Bridle Club conducts a weekend of contests in mid-March. During 2006, there were a total of 1,477 contestants in these competitions. High-achieving teams

and individuals went on to represent the state at national judging events. In livestock judging, meats judging, and the stockmen's contest, Virginia members and teams received many top-ten recognitions at the respective national contest in 2006.

The Youth Cattle Working Contest program is designed to teach the concepts and application of Beef Quality Assurance. Teams of three members must determine how and where to administer various health care products, and then demonstrate their skill by processing a group of calves. In 2007, there were exactly 50 teams competing regionally, with 12 competing at the state finals held at the Beef Expo in April.

The young people who raise and exhibit livestock or train to excel in the various competitions learn many skills and abilities. The large number of participants in the programs indicates that another group of talented and capable young people is preparing to make their mark. I hope you will provide them with encouragement and support through this process.



## 2007-2008 ANIMAL AND POULTRY SCIENCES SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

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### **Litton Sheep Industry Student Leader Scholarship**

Samuel Altizer (\$1750)

### **Ralph Hunt Beef Industry Student Leader Scholarship**

Matthew Earman (\$1750)

### **Lorenz Neuhoff, Jr. Pork Industry Student Leader Scholarship**

Danielle Botting (\$1750)

### **Lou Dixey Beef Industry Student Leader Scholarship**

Jonathan Burner (\$1750)

### **Fred Campbell Horse Industry Student Leader Scholarship**

Kelli Beavers (\$1500)

### **Denver D. Bragg Poultry Science Student Leader Scholarship**

Ashley Randall (\$1400)

### **Rocco Lamb Farms Student Leader Scholarship**

Dixie Boyd (\$1750)

### **Animal and Poultry Sciences Scholarship**

Jessica Gilbertie (\$600)

Virginia Topp (\$600)

### **A.L. "Ike" Eller Scholarship**

Sarah Barlow (\$1000)

Thomas Bramble, Jr. (\$1000)

Nicole Browne (\$1000)

Kyle Cromer (\$1000)

Jacob Gilley (\$1000)

### **E.A. & H.H. Livesay Scholarship**

Morgan Agnew (\$850)

### **Ashe-Lockhart Scholarship**

DJ Bratcher (\$1000)

Christine Clark (\$1000)

Tracie Hundley (\$1000)

Tara Svendsen (\$1000)

### **Owen Thomas, Jr., Memorial Scholarship**

Amanda Thomas (\$1200)

Brent Wellings (\$1200)

### **K.C. and Polly Williamson Scholarship**

Kirsten McGuire (\$1000)

### **Tom and Christine Marlowe Freshman Scholarship**

Samantha Renalds (\$1200)

### **Richard S. Ellis, IV and Roy A. Meek, Jr. Scholarship**

Kari Jones (\$750)

Lora Walls (\$750)

### **George G. Green Scholarship**

Kayla Minnick (\$1000)

### **Harry Wyatt Scholarship**

Jessica Preskitt (\$900)

### **Lou Dixey Scholarship**

Andy Gibson (\$750)

Jessica Walters (\$750)

### **William Earl Browning Scholarship**

Ashley Bell (\$1100)

### **Ralph Hunt Scholarship**

Amanda Weakley (\$1100)

Lindsey Williamson (\$1100)

### **Rocco Lamb Scholarship**

Amanda Virts (\$600)

### **Virginia Pork Industry Scholarship**

Krishna Witt (\$800)

### **Mary Howe diZerega Memorial Scholarship**

Heidi Eberly (\$1200)

Kimberly Fisher (\$1200)

### **William T. Bailey, Sr., Livestock Judging Scholarship**

Tim Gregory (\$1200)

### **General J.E.B. Stuart-Real Daughters (of the Confederacy) Award**

Chasity Cox (\$200)

### **Jack S. Copenhaver Scholarship**

Kelly Doyle (\$1000)

Thomas Rogers-Cotrone (\$1000) - Declined

Benjamin Roudabush (\$1000)

Bobbi Salyers (\$1000)

## 2007-2008 ACADEMIC YEAR SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS FOR POULTRY

### **Tyson Poultry Scholarship**

Jessica Lyons, Hampton (\$1800)

### **Rocco Poultry Scholarship**

Caitlin Flynn, Centreville (\$2500)

Ashley Randall, Richmond (\$1750)

Erin Rockwell, Appomattox (\$1000)

Emilie Roush, Fairfax (\$1750)

### **Virginia Tech Poultry Science General Scholarship**

Erin Rockwell, Appomattox (\$1000)

### **Virginia Poultry Federation Scholarship**

Amanda Boerlein, Dunkirk, Maryland (\$800)



## JEFFERY ESCOBAR



*Dr. Jeffery Escobar*

Assistant Professor Jeffery Escobar joined the department in 2006 as part of the college cluster hiring in mucosal immunology and infectious diseases. He is currently developing a teaching and research program in nutrition and immunology. His goal is to use a multidisciplinary approach to study endocrine, cellular, and molecular mechanisms that regulate the growth and nutritional needs of healthy food producing animals and humans and the mechanisms known to regulate muscle growth, intestinal function, and nutrient requirements during immune activation. More specifically, he is interested in the amino acid metabolism and requirements of animals and humans suffering from chronic infectious diseases.

Escobar received his M.S. and Ph.D. from the University of Illinois and completed postdoctoral training at the USDA/ARS Children's Nutrition Research Center at Baylor College of Medicine. Thus, he has received training in practical monogastric (primarily swine) nutrition, biochemistry, immunology, and molecular biology, combining basic and applied research. Escobar currently is leading the efforts to renovate the large-animal facility in the basement of Litton-Reaves Hall. His teaching interests include, Animal Nutrition Seminar, Protein and Amino Acid Metabolism, and Methodology in Nutrition Research.

## RAMI A. DALLLOUL



*Dr. Rami Dalloul*

Rami A. Dalloul recently joined the Department of Animal and Poultry Sciences as an assistant professor of poultry immunobiology and diseases.

Dalloul grew up in Lebanon and earned his B.S. in Agriculture and Diplomate of Agriculture Engineer from the American University of Beirut in 1993 and subsequently obtained his M.S. in poultry science/microbiology in 1995.

He conducted his doctoral work at the University of Maryland, College Park, where he was awarded a number of research and teaching honors and received his Ph.D. in poultry science/immunology in 2002. His research continued as a postdoc working on collaborative projects of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the universities of Maryland and Delaware, mostly studying poultry immunobiology and functional genomics in association with coccidiosis.

His current research interests lie in the area of immunobiology of host-pathogen interactions and the underlying mechanisms of mucosal immune responses to antigenic stimuli. Of particular interest are poultry enteric pathogens of economic and health significance. Students working in Dalloul's Avian Immunobiology Laboratory will tackle such challenges employing both basic and applied methodologies, thus learning the most fundamental as well as the whole-animal approach to research.

## Virginia Tech Poultry Judging

In April, the Virginia Tech Poultry Judging Team participated in the 60th U.S. Poultry and Egg Association National Poultry Judging Contest at Louisiana State University. This year's team members were Courtney Snead from Warrenton who just graduated; Emilie Roush, a senior from Fairfax; Corey Schoo from Buckeystown, Maryland, who just graduated; and Jessica Lyons, a junior from Hampton. Team member selection was based on performance in Virginia Tech's Poultry Evaluation Course instructed by Assistant Professor Curtis Novak, Research Specialist Catalina Troche, and graduate student Lihong Li. This year there were more team entries than in previous years with Auburn University and University of Minnesota joining the competition. Fourteen teams judged production and market classes. Production classes included broiler breeders, past production hens, future production hens, and breed selection. Market products classes were interior egg quality, exterior egg quality, and broken out egg quality. Though the Virginia Tech team did not place within the top five, there were strong individual showings. Schoo placed within the top half of overall finalists and top third of breed selection finalists. Lyons placed within the top quarter of market products, and Roush was ranked in the top half of production finalists. These students had a superb showing, and we at Virginia Tech are proud to claim them. Congratulations and best wishes to the judging team of 2007.



## News from the Middleburg MARE Center

### **Congratulations to recent graduates of the equine science graduate program:**

- Kibby Treiber, who received a Ph.D. in September 2006
- Bridgett McIntosh (nee Byrd), who received a Ph.D. in May 2007
- Lindsey George, who received an M.S. in May 2007

### **Welcome to new students and interns:**

- Jessica Suagee, who holds an M.S. from the University of Maryland, will join the equine science program in August. She will work with Raymond Geor, the Paul Mellon Distinguished Professor of Agriculture, in the area of obesity and insulin resistance in equids. She has been awarded a Pratt Fellowship to support her studies.
- Two interns, Carina Clingman from California and Lindsay Williamson from Virginia, will be working at the center during the summer.

### **International students:**

- Between January and June, the MARE Center has hosted Joana de Silva, an undergraduate animal science student from Portugal. She has been immersed in research activities at the center, in particular, a project examining the effects of different dietary carbohydrates on the regulation of glucose and insulin dynamics in horses.

### **New postdoctoral positions:**

Currently there are two postdocs at the MARE Center:

- Kibby Treiber, a Ph.D. graduate of APSC, is continuing her studies on the pathogenesis of pasture-associated

laminitis in equids, focusing on seasonal changes in the glucose and insulin dynamics in ponies prone to this disease.

- Kristine Urschel, who holds a Ph.D. from the University of Alberta, has training and expertise in the application of the indicator amino acid oxidation (IAAO) technique for measurement of amino acid requirements. She intends to apply this methodology to horses, initially focusing on amino acid metabolism and requirements in geriatric horses.

### **International activities/conferences:**

Raymond Geor presented papers at two international conferences on equine laminitis during the spring:

- At the International Equine Laminitis Conference at the WALTHAM-Royal Veterinary College, University of London, London, England, on March 16 and 17 he presented "Metabolic predispositions to laminitis: Role of insulin resistance and obesity" co-authored a paper titled: "Nutritional countermeasures to equine laminitis."
- At the Havemeyer Foundation International Workshop on Equine Laminitis, which brought together 20 of the world's leading experts in equine laminitis research, Geor delivered two presentations on MARE Center research:
  - "Metabolic/endocrine risk factors for laminitis: clinical presentation and diagnosis"
  - "Current thoughts on the pathophysiology of pasture-associated laminitis"

## LIVESTOCK JUDGING TEAM

*By Tracy Tomascik, Virginia Tech Livestock Judging Coach*

The Virginia Tech Livestock Judging Team competed in the 2007 All-East Livestock Judging and Evaluation Contest on April 19 through 21. The contest was hosted by Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green.

Team members included Johnny Burner of Luray; Kelly Carter of Culpeper; Jacob Gilley of Madison; Laura Neff of Edinburg; Laura Parr of Lynchburg; Cameron Sasser of Albemarle, North Carolina; and Brent Wellings of West Union, West Virginia.

Virginia Tech placed fourth overall out of the ten schools competing, sixth in the Evaluation Contest, third in the Selection Contest, and fourth in the Livestock Judging Contest.

Individual honors were led by Wellings, who captured high-point individual honors in the Livestock Judging

Contest, first in Oral Reasons, second in Sheep Judging, and eleventh in Breeding Animal Selection. His total point accumulation slotted him in fifth place for all three contests. Burner placed sixth overall in the Livestock Judging Contest, fifth in Breeding Animal Selection, and ninth in the Sheep Evaluation Contest. His total point accumulation positioned him as the twelfth high individual of the combined contests. Parr obtained fourth place honors in Sheep Evaluation.

These students have displayed tremendous courage, desire, and passion while representing Virginia Tech over the past few months. They have done so with the class, dignity, and poise expected of them both as Hokies and as leaders in their college. Please join me in congratulating and honoring them for their hard work and dedication that has led to these accomplishments.



## ACADEMIC QUADRATHLON

The Academic Quadrathlon is a four-part competition for animal sciences students around the country. Teams of four students work together on a written exam, a lab practical, an oral presentation, and (in part) a quiz bowl over a two-day span. A local contest is held at each university to determine which team will represent that university at a regional competition. The Department of Animal and Poultry Sciences and the Department of Dairy Science jointly sponsor the event at Blacksburg, Virginia Tech participates in the Southern Regional competition, which was held February 3 and 4 at Auburn University and in Mobile, Alabama. This year's winning team from Tech was composed of all APSC majors: Morgan Agnew, a junior from Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania; Clair McGill, a sophomore from Monroe; Heather Quay, a junior from Ridgefield, Connecticut; and Jessica Romine, a senior from Alexandria. They faced stiff competition from ten other teams, and although they did not place among the top three, they did place first in the horse portion of the practical.



The "Dream Team" in Mobile, AL

*"Auburn has goats?!  
No one said anything  
about goats!"  
"They're just sheep in  
disguise, right?"*



Quiz Bowl competition at Virginia Tech

## VIRGINIA TECH POULTRY SCIENCE CLUB

### SPRING 2007 ACTIVITIES

The Poultry Science Club kicked off the spring semester in January with the annual Southern Poultry Science Society Poultry Expo in Atlanta, Georgia. The exposition offered students an opportunity to explore various aspects of the poultry industry and inquire about internships and careers throughout the world.

Club members assisted with several events within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The club prepared an omelet breakfast for Extension Specialist John Hall's Cow Camp workshop at the Alphin-Stuart Livestock Teaching Arena in March. Club members will be serving a barbecue chicken meal for the faculty/staff awards luncheon in June.

Club meetings, typically held on a biweekly basis, offer members an opportunity to socialize with one another and further educate themselves about the poultry industry. A dinner meeting at the Homeplace in March and several pizza meetings allowed for a fun environment in which to discuss club business.

Several club members, who also are members of the Virginia Tech Poultry Judging Team, traveled to Louisiana State University at the end of April for the U.S. Poultry and Egg Association National Poultry Judging Contest. The team competed against fourteen other teams from various universities and placed eleventh overall. Congratulations to the judging team and club members for a job well done!

The following club members will be serving as officers during 2007-2008: President: Ashley Randall, a junior from Richmond; Vice President: Emilie Roush, a senior from Fairfax; Secretary: Jessica Lyons, a junior from Hampton; Treasurer: Kristin Carr, a senior from Mt. Sidney; and Reporters and BBQ Chairs: Heather Quay, junior from Ridgefield, Connecticut, and Caitlin Flynn, a junior from Centerville.

The club is always looking for new service, social, and catering opportunities. Ideas and requests may be e-mailed to the club president, Ashley Randall, at [arandall@vt.edu](mailto:arandall@vt.edu) or senior club advisor, Associate Professor Audrey McElroy, at [amcelroy@vt.edu](mailto:amcelroy@vt.edu).



## WELCOME TO NEW STAFF MEMBERS

### AGNES SABAT

Agnes Sabat joined Assistant Professor Jeffery Escobar's lab in March. She has a baccalaureate degree in biochemistry and molecular biology from Sweet Briar College and comes from Charlottesville, where she worked in the departments of biology and chemistry at the University of Virginia.

Outside the lab, she enjoys hiking, rowing, cooking, and black and white photography. She will be in charge of the daily laboratory management and upkeep, cell culture, preparation of samples, and running diverse analyses. Most of all, her primary duty is to keep Professor Escobar out of trouble!



*Agnes Sabat*

### MEG BERGER

Meg Berger is a new laboratory technician in Associate Professor Audrey McElroy's Poultry Immunophysiology Lab. She will be contributing to all laboratory research projects as well as leading the collection and preparation of tissue samples for analysis of changes in tissue structure and cellular responses to disease challenges in poultry. Meg grew up in Sterling. After completing two years of college, she began her career in histology at an animal research lab in 1978. She has five children and four grandchildren, and she and her husband live in Christiansburg.



*Meg Berger*

### MATT BOYD

Matt Boyd is a new member of the work force at the APSC Poultry Farm. He was raised in Blacksburg and graduated from Blacksburg High School. He grew up helping his mother and stepfather on their farm in Price's Fork. He has a five-month-old son who keeps him busy when he returns home at night.



*Matt Boyd*

## ANNUAL SERVICE RECOGNITION AWARDS – SPRING 2007

The following individuals were recognized in April for their continuous service to Virginia Tech:

### THIRTY-FIVE YEARS

Ellie Stephens

### THIRTY YEARS

Jean Eaton

Jim Knight

### TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

Ann Dunnington

Mark Wahlberg

### TWENTY YEARS

Dave Mercier

### TEN YEARS

Teresa McDonald

## NEWS FLASHES

### 2007 HOKIE HARVEST SALE

Plans are underway for the 13th Annual Hokie Harvest Sale of top-quality horses, purebred beef cattle, and breeding swine. The sale is scheduled for October 26.

### OLIVER J. HUBBARD MEMORIAL POULTRY SCIENCE SCHOLARSHIP

Tammy Bui, a junior, was the 2006-07 recipient of the Hubbard Memorial Poultry Science Scholarship. This scholarship is a singular award to an individual who is among the academic top 10 percent of APSC students.

### POULTRY SCIENCE VISITORS

Recent visitors to the Department of Animal and Poultry Sciences worked on a poultry research project developed by Emeritus Professor Paul Siegel that involves the high and low body weight lines of chickens. The visitors included Weronica Ek, a Ph.D. student at the Linneaus Centre for Bioinformatics, and Greger Larsen, who holds a Ph.D. from Oxford and is currently a postdoc at the Swedish Agricultural University.



## VIRGINIA TECH EQUESTRIAN PROGRAM HOSTS IHSA COMPETITION

By Shelby Clark

Virginia Tech hosted the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association (IHSA) Zone 4 Finals on April 1 at the Alphin-Stuart Livestock Teaching Arena. This was the first time a show of this magnitude was held on campus.

The events began on Saturday night with a pre-show Virginia Tech Equestrian Team alumni banquet to which all the Zone 4 teams were invited. Well over 100 guests attended and enjoyed a great meal, social atmosphere, and music at the Blacksburg Country Club.

The Zone 4 Finals kicked-off with a grand entrance by the Virginia Tech color guard presenting the colors of our nation while Jonathan Matthews, a member of the Virginia Tech Equestrian Club, led riders and guests in our national anthem. Virginia Tech's mascot, the HokieBird, also made an appearance to welcome guests from near and far and pose for pictures with the crowd.

The classes began at 10:00 a.m. with the Individual Open Equitation on the Flat, which was won by Champion Katie Furches of Hollins University and Reserve Champion Lauren Hill of North Carolina State University. They will represent Zone 4 in that division at the IHSA National Horse Show on May 3 through 6 in West Springfield, Massachusetts. The top two riders from each division who will compete at the nationals include: Erin Richardson (University of Mary Washington) Zone 4 Champion Intermediate Equitation on the Flat, Kathryn Clapp (University of Virginia) Reserve Champion of Intermediate Equitation on the Flat, Kristen Stinson (Virginia Intermont) Champion Novice Equitation on the Flat, Kristen Ackerson (Randolph-Macon College) Reserve Champion Equitation on the Flat, Brittany Denton (Virginia Intermont) Champion Open Over Fences, Jessica Van Brocklin (University of Mary Washington) Reserve Champion Open Over Fences, Julie Fink (Goucher) Champion Intermediate Over Fences, Jen Cumming (Virginia Intermont) Reserve Champion Intermediate Over Fences, Kristina Macey (Virginia Intermont) Champion Novice Over Fences, Lindsey Woodburn (Virginia Tech junior from Glen Allen) Reserve Champion Novice Over Fences, Kylie Bell (North Carolina State University) Champion Walk/Trot/Canter Equitation, Meredith Hurd (Goucher College) Reserve Champion Walk/Trot/Canter, Susan Martelle (University of North Carolina – Charlotte) Champion Walk/Trot, and Maggie Woodward (College of William and Mary) Reserve Champion Walk/Trot.

The teams competing in the Collegiate Cup Classes for a spot at IHSA Nationals were Goucher College for the Region 1, Hollins University for Region 2, and Virginia Intermont for Region 3. The top two teams would progress to the nationals. Virginia Intermont took the lead in most of the Collegiate Cup Classes, to reserve its spot at the nationals, a spot it's maintained for many years. Goucher

College finished close behind to become the Collegiate Cup Reserve Champion Team and progress to the nationals.

Zone 4 will be very well represented at the nationals by great individual riders and two outstanding teams, Virginia Intermont and Goucher College, representing Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina schools.

The Virginia Tech team extends a huge congratulation to all riders and wishes the best of luck to all who are continuing on to compete at the nationals. Virginia Tech would also like to thank everyone who helped make this large, important show such a great success, including all coaches, teams, alumni, volunteers, donors, and horses.

### RECENT UPDATE!!

Lindsey Woodburn placed 10th at the IHSA National Horse Show in the Novice over Fences division.

Congratulations on a job very well done, Lindsey!!!



Lindsey Woodburn after qualifying for the IHSA National Horse Show



Awards for the IHSA Zone 4 Horse Show hosted by Virginia Tech – April 1, 2007

Virginia Tech's Kristen Marley and Jen Palmisano with the Hokie Bird during the 2007 IHSA Zone 4 Horse Show



## VIRGINIA TECH BLOCK AND BRIDLE RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION

*By Charley-Gail Stull, Block and Bridle Reporter*

Virginia Tech was well represented at the 87th Annual National Block and Bridle Club Convention sponsored by the University of Florida. Club advisors Mark Wahlberg and Dave Linker of the Department of Animal and Poultry Sciences, as well as Cindy Wood, the national Block and Bridle president, accompanied 25 students from the Virginia Tech Chapter to Kissimmee, Florida, where the event was held on January 25 through 27.

The convention began Thursday afternoon with an address by the Florida Secretary of Agriculture and a social where club members interacted with others from across the country. Members then spent Friday participating in one of ten tours that highlighted various aspects of Florida agriculture, including beef cattle operations, dairies, horse farms, fruit and citrus production, eco-tourism, and wildlife management. The convention continued on Saturday with educational speakers and seminars in addition to a recognition banquet.

The banquet finale was a grand conclusion to the weekend as the Virginia Tech Block and Bridle Club was recognized among the 567 delegates representing 42 colleges and universities. Chapter awards included second place in club activities and fourth place in club yearbook. Furthermore, Ed McCann, a senior from Lovingson, took home fourth place in the individual awards for outstanding junior and Colleen Buckley, a freshman from Warrenton, received second place in the individual awards for outstanding two-year scholars. While there is no award for outstanding chapter, Virginia Tech was the only chapter to receive recognition in four different categories of competition.

The Florida Chapter of Block and Bridle did a great job of coordinating this event. In addition to the 28 individuals and businesses hosting four stops on Friday, 47 families and organizations provided financial support for the event. The 88th annual convention will be held in Kansas City in October 2007, hosted by Kansas State University and Fort Hays State University.



*Virginia Tech's Block and Bridle Club at the National Convention*



*Holding the Block and Bridle Club awards:  
l to r: Laura Parr, Ed McCann, Laurel Alexander and Sarah Parsley*



*B & B students –  
Hokies all the way !!*



## DEPARTMENTAL DONORS

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## RESEARCH GRANTS RECEIVED BY APSC FACULTY 2006-07

INVESTIGATOR(S)	PROJECT TITLE	FUNDING AGENCY
Mike Denbow, Paul Siegel	Identification of genes that are involved in growth and development utilizing unique lines of chicken divergently selected for body weight	USDA, Agricultural Research Service
Mike Denbow, Paul Siegel	Does genetic selection for body weight in chickens alter the brain's ability to regulate feed intake and energy?	USDA, CSREES
Mike Denbow	Screening of medicinal plants as potential substitutes for dietary antibiotics in poultry	Virginia Agricultural Council
Mike Denbow	Effects of amylin on appetite and ingestive-related processes in two lines of chickens: one containing anorexic and the other obese individuals	Radford University
Jeffery Escobar	Using phytases to increase the bioavailability of phosphorus in distiller's dried grains with solubles for poultry and swine	VA Corn Board
Jeffery Escobar	The effects of quantum phytase on bone ash of nursery pigs fed reduced phosphorus diets	Syngenta Animal Nutrition Inc
Dan Eversole	Support of the livestock judging team	Virginia Pork Industry Board
Ray Geor, Burt Staniar	Waltham Graduate Training Program In Equine Research	Waltham Centre for Pet Nutrition
Ray Geor	General research - Middleburg AREC	University of Guelph
Ray Geor, Burt Staniar	Oxidative stress and apoptosis in pasture laminitis of ponies	Virginia Horse Industry Board
Ray Geor, Burt Staniar	A comparison of hullless barley with oats as carbohydrate sources in equine feeds	Virginia Agricultural Council
Ray Geor	Prevalence of obesity and insulin resistance in Virginian horses and ponies: a pilot study	Virginia Horse Industry Board
Ray Geor	Effects of sceos supplementation on insulin resistance in obese horses	Beghin-Meiji
Ray Geor	Genetic markers and phenotypic risk factors for laminitis	Welsh Pony and Cob Society of America
Scott Greiner, John Hall	Implementation strategies for National Animal Identification System at livestock markets	Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Scott Greiner, John Hall	Value-added forage-based growing beef cattle systems for Southwest Virginia	Virginia Agricultural Council
Scott Greiner, John Hall	Virginia beef quality assurance continuing quality program	Virginia Beef Industry Council
Honglin Jiang	Ovarian regulation of stem cells and igf i axis molecules in prepubertal heifer mammary gland	USDA, CSREES



## RESEARCH GRANTS RECEIVED BY APSC FACULTY 2006-07

INVESTIGATOR(S)	PROJECT TITLE	FUNDING AGENCY
Honglin Jiang	Are g protein-coupled receptors 41 and 43 receptors for volatile fatty acids in cattle?	USDA, CSREES
Honglin Jiang	Growth hormone regulation of igf-i gene expression	National Institute of Diabetes & Digestive & Kidney Diseases
Honglin Jiang	Role of mirnas in obesity	The Thomas F. & Kate Miller Jeffress Memorial Trust
Jim Knight, Mark Estienne	Effects of dietary supplementation with an organic selenium source on growth performance and reproductive characteristics in boars	Virginia Agricultural Council
Jim Knight, Mark Estienne	Effects of dietary organic selenium supplementation on boar reproduction	Virginia Pork Industry Board
Ron Lewis	National beef cattle evaluation consortium	Cornell University
Ron Lewis	Selective breeding on prp genotype in the UK sheep flock: evaluating the consequences and deriving optimal strategies	Scottish Agricultural College
Ron Lewis	The development of multi-trait selection indices for longwool sheep to breed halfbreed ewes of superior economic performance	Scottish Agricultural College
Ron Lewis	Solving an educational dilemma through collaboration: a graduate distance learning curriculum in animal breeding and genetics	USDA, CSREES
Audrey McElroy	Impact of incubation/hatcher temperature on performance and immune function of selected lines of commercial broilers	US Poultry and Egg Association
Audrey McElroy	Production of dha and epa-enriched algae for broiler chickens	US Poultry and Egg Association
Audrey McElroy, Curtis Novak, Rami Dalloul	Dietary Programs for Improved Broiler Performance during Coccidial Infections	Virginia Agricultural Council
Audrey McElroy, Curtis Novak	Evaluation of Maxiban and Coban for Broiler Performance in a Cocci Positive Environment	Elanco Animal Health
Dave Notter	Characterization of sheep breeds and development of composite lines suitable for range environments	USDA, Agricultural Research Service
Dave Notter	Technical support for the national sheep improvement program	American Sheep Industry Association Inc
Dave Notter	Identification of genes associated with resistance to gastrointestinal parasites in hair sheep	Virginia Agricultural Council
Curtis Novak, Paul Ruszler	Cage grow/layer	Virginia Egg Commission
Curtis Novak	Development of omega 3 rich algae from cull potatoes and biodiesel waste for use as a chicken feed supplement	Virginia Agricultural Council
Guillermo Scaglia	Pasture-based beef systems for Appalachia	USDA, Agricultural Research Service



## RESEARCH GRANTS RECEIVED BY APSC FACULTY 2006-07

INVESTIGATOR(S)	PROJECT TITLE	FUNDING AGENCY
Guillermo Scaglia	Fatty acid deposition in edible tissues from pasture and concentrate fed steers	Virginia Agricultural Council
Paul Siegel	Dissecting the genetics underlying growth and fatness using chicken lines divergently selected for growth	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
Ed Smith	VT-initiative for maximizing student diversity (VT-IMSD)	National Institutes of Health
Ed Smith	Exxonmobil-Bernard Harris Summer Science Camp at Virginia Tech	The Harris Foundation
Ed Smith	VT-uw postbaccalaureate research and education program (a supplement)	University of Washington
Ed Smith	Center for the study of natural genetic variation/cegs	University of Washington
Ed Smith	VT post baccalaureate research program	NIH, NIGMS
Ed Smith	Direct and comparative genomics-based analysis of immune response in chickens	Virginia Agricultural Council
Burt Staniar	Hulless barley's potential to improve the carbohydrate profile of equine feeds	Virginia Agricultural Council
Eric Wong	Molecular design of selective anticholinesterases for mosquito control	Foundation for the National Institutes of Health
Cindy Wood	Pork quality education for youth and adults	Virginia Pork Industry Board

## RESEARCH AND EXTENSION EFFORTS FOCUS ON ELECTRONIC IDENTIFICATION OF BEEF CATTLE

Using ear tags with radio frequency identification (RFID) technology may not only help the beef industry comply with the National Animal Identification System (NAIS), but may also provide the industry with tremendous opportunities to add value through enhanced data management and traceability.

Here in Virginia, we are conducting research on the impact of RFID technology on the industry and specifically on our cattle-marketing infrastructure. The work is funded by a competitive grant from the USDA to implement radio frequency identification for beef cattle in Virginia livestock markets.

We will be studying the impact of introducing animal ID and traceability on producers and market operators. We also will be looking at the reliability and accuracy of the electronic tag technologies, how their implementation affects the speed of commerce, and the economic impact of retrofitting the current infrastructure in livestock

markets. As the end of May approached, we were in the process of installing systems in two of the state's markets. These RFID systems will be used to test the current technologies for data capture in the markets and to collect data at Virginia Quality Assured feeder-cattle sales scheduled for the coming fall. We will hold several field days this summer where livestock market operators and producers can see demonstrations of a wide variety of data collection devices with live cattle.

It is exciting to note that a number of Virginia cattle producers have received premiums of \$25 to \$35 per head for source- and age-verified cattle this past winter and spring. We hope to continue to bring information and knowledge forward that will benefit the Virginia livestock producer. For more information on this project or animal identification, contact Scott Greiner, Extension animal scientist, 540-231-9159 or [sgreiner@vt.edu](mailto:sgreiner@vt.edu) or Laura Marks, animal identification coordinator, 540/231-0670 or [llmarks@vt.edu](mailto:llmarks@vt.edu).



## American Society of Animal Science - Southern Section

### STUDENT COMPETITIONS, 2007

By Allen Harper, Associate Professor

APSC was well represented in the paper presentation sessions at the American Society of Animal Science – Southern Section Meeting in Mobile, Alabama, February 4 through 6. Several undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty members gave well-prepared, well-delivered oral presentation papers.

One presenter deserves special recognition. In a strong field of nine presentations, Jessica Pittman, a senior in animal and poultry sciences, received the second place award in the undergraduate student competition. The abstract title for her presentation was “Pig Performance in a Split-weaning System Using Dry Feed and Limit-Fed Milk Replacer.” She conducted the animal component of this project while working at the Virginia Tech Tidewater Agricultural Research and Extension Center swine unit last summer. Pittman’s work with the project data and related literature formed the basis of her one-credit independent study during the fall 2006 semester.

In recognition of her achievement, Pittman received an engraved plaque and a modest monetary award from ASAS. Congratulations, Jessica!!



Jessica Pittman at work on her award-winning project

### ELIZABETH GILBERT

Elizabeth Gilbert, Ph.D. student in the Department of Animal and Poultry Sciences, won first place in the Agriculture and Animal Sciences division of the Virginia Tech Graduate Research Symposium held on March 28. The research symposium provides a unique opportunity for students to bring together ideas and research findings from different disciplines and showcase their scholarly pursuits and achievements.



Elizabeth Gilbert

The title of Elizabeth’s poster presentation was “Protein quality and feed restriction influence peptide transporter mRNA abundance in the small intestine of broiler chicks.” Her research showed that chickens fed a restricted diet containing soybean meal had an increase in mRNA abundance of the peptide transporter PepT1. In addition, chickens fed the higher quality soybean meal diet had increased PepT1 mRNA abundance compared to chickens fed a lower quality corn gluten meal diet.

### CELESTE CRISMAN

Celeste Crisman, equine Extension specialist, was named the In the VESA Spotlight Award winner for February 2007. This award, made by the Virginia Extension Service Association, recognizes members who deserve to be singled out for their professional and/or personal commitment to excellence in Extension.



Celeste Crisman

In addition, Crisman was awarded Educator of the Year by the Virginia Horse Council at its annual meeting in March 2007 for her work and dedication to Virginia’s youth through the 4-H equine programs.

### DAIRY CHALLENGE TEAM RETURNS FROM SOUTH DAKOTA WITH TOP HONORS

By Michael Sutphin

Virginia Tech’s Dairy Challenge Team won platinum first place honors at the North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge contest on March 30-31 in Sioux Falls, S.D.



The Dairy Challenge team:  
I to r standing: Dr. Ron Pearson, Todd Wiseman, Chad Craun and Dr. Mike McGilliard  
I to r seated: Aaron Cornman and Natalie Keene

The competition challenges students to recall basic dairy management principles as well as their applications and to use their organizational, time management, data analysis, public speaking, leadership and teamwork skills. Twenty-nine teams from U.S. and Canadian colleges and universities put their education and practical knowledge to the test by analyzing a dairy business.

This was the sixth consecutive year that Virginia Tech has placed either first or second. Animal and poultry sciences senior Todd Wiseman of Harrisonburg, was a member of the team along with dairy science students Aaron Cornman of Boiling Springs, Pennsylvania, Chad Craun of Bridgewater, and Natalie Keene of Canton, Maine. The team coaches are Ron Pearson and Mike McGilliard, professors of dairy science in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.



## ANIMAL AND POULTRY SCIENCES CLASS OF 2007

On May 12, 61 APSC seniors were included in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Commencement Program held in Cassell Coliseum. Added to the 12 who graduated last summer and fall, the class of 2007 included 13 male students and 60 female students.

All the graduates were honored at the university commencement ceremony the previous evening. During that ceremony a diploma was awarded to Emily Hilscher, who died on April 16. Her parents Eric and Elizabeth Hilscher and her sister Erica accepted it in her name.

The department has two events that focus on seniors at graduation in the spring. The APSC Student Picnic, traditionally held on Reading Day each spring semester, was originally started for seniors. When the new Alphin-Stuart Teaching Arena groundbreaking ceremony was combined with the picnic in 2003, it became an event to honor seniors while also rewarding all APSC students with a good meal and good time before exams begin the following day. In addition, the departmental graduation reception, organized by the APSC Advising Office's Wanda Grubb and Shannon Winters, is held directly after the college ceremony. This event gives faculty members, students, and families a chance to visit before our newest alums begin the next phase of their lives.

New APSC graduates pursue a number of avenues post-baccalaureate, including professional school, graduate school, farming, agri-business, the public sector, and research.



*The students were ready to play at the APSC Student Picnic, but the Faculty/Staff team won the games. Look for a rematch in 2008.*



*After the graduation ceremony on May 12, 2007, the Department of Animal and Poultry Sciences hosted a reception for seniors and their parents, families, and friends*

## 2007 GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL FOR AGRICULTURE

Over 90 rising juniors and seniors from high schools in Virginia have been selected to participate in this year's Governor's School for Agriculture. All the students will take the APSC course taught by Professor Bill Beal. The course emphasizes the economic importance of the 280 million broilers and turkeys, 700,000 calves, 540,000 pigs and 49,000 lambs produced annually in Virginia. It also acquaints the mostly urban students with the economic impact of Virginia's 170,000 horses.

Sixteen of the Governor School students choose animal and poultry sciences as their major for their four weeks on the Virginia Tech campus. Those students participate in a more in-depth course on the nutrition, reproduction, and genetics of livestock and poultry. The majors also participate in group research projects where they design, conduct, and report on their experiments. Last year's projects investigated the growth rates of foals, the digestibility of forages, the detection of bacteria in processed poultry, and estrus synchronization in sows.

*Governor's School students dissecting a bovine reproductive tract*



*Dr. Bill Beal explaining the parts of the cow reproductive tract to students*

