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A New “Ag Campus” Is Coming

The landscape of the Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment is changing. This means changes for the Department of Animal and Food Sciences. In the future, the W.P. Garrigus Building will no longer be the department’s home. Offices, labs and classrooms will be relocated to the new Agricultural Research Building and the Martin-Gatton Agricultural Sciences Building (*see artist’s renderings below*). Construction for both buildings has begun on the south side of Cooper Drive.

Pictured clockwise:
W. P. Garrigus Building,
Agricultural Research
Building, Martin-Gatton
Agricultural Sciences
Building



2024 Animal and Food Sciences Reunion

As a result of the ongoing construction, the AFS Reunion will look a little different this year. Instead of gathering under “the tent,” we’ll meet on **October 11 at 6:00 pm** inside the **E. S. Good Barn**. We hope you’ll join us to reconnect and reminisce and to learn more about all the exciting changes that are underway around campus and on the farms.

Some things are just too good to change, however, so you’ll still be able to graze your way through delicious smoked beef, lamb and pork served by some of your favorite faculty members. The old-fashioned fruit cobbler topped with ice cream will also be back. In between grazing and socializing, you’ll have the opportunity to bid on some great items in the **Annual Silent Auction** to benefit the AFS Undergraduate Scholarship Program.

After supper, the “Hoofprints of Knowledge” trivia game will put your expertise to the test with questions ranging from agriculture to UK sports and from fact to fiction.

The evening will conclude with presentation of the 2024 Distinguished Alumnus Award and induction of the 2024 Animal and Food Sciences Hall of Fame Member (*see page 7*).

So come join us in “The Barn” to reconnect, graze and celebrate. It won’t be a reunion without YOU!

Please RSVP your intention to attend - [details on last page.](#)

Department Update

Note from the Chair

It has been quite a first year as Chair of the Department of Animal and Food Sciences!

We are constructing new facilities, including the Martin-Gatton Agricultural Sciences Building and the Agricultural Research Building on south campus, the Meats & Foods Workforce Development Center at the COLRC, and we are completing the Princeton re-build.

The **Martin-Gatton Agricultural Sciences Building** will be attached to the Barnhart Building and will house 15 state-of-the-art classrooms, event space and the Center for Student Advising and Recruiting.

The **Agricultural Research Building** will span more than 260,000 square feet and will house eight teaching labs, a 250-seat auditorium, 60,000 square feet of research lab space, a food sensory lab and a vivarium along with faculty, staff and graduate student offices.

Three of the teaching labs will be dedicated to Animal and Food Sciences. The vivarium will replace and improve upon animal research space currently located in the basement of the Garrigus Building.

The **Meats & Foods Workforce Development Center** will be located at the C. Oran Little Research Center in Woodford County. Phase 1 of this project will replace the abattoir currently located in the Garrigus Building and will include a classroom, ready-to-eat processing and research space and a food sensory lab as well as office and conference room space.

Finally, the Princeton rebuild is well underway with the main lab building under construction and beef research and extension facilities planned for construction in the next year.

In addition, an office complex and egg washing facility are in the early design phases at the Poultry Unit.

We are excited about the impact that these facilities will have on the department in the future!

Two new endowments have been established to support our undergraduate programs. The **McCarty Meats Judging Team Endowment** was established with a generous donation from Joe McCarty to help support our Meats Judging Team. The **Stanley O. Gillespie Scholarship in Animal and Food Sciences** is being supported by a new endowment created from a donation of over \$787,000 as part of the Hazel Gillespie estate.

The next few years will see much needed change to the “Ag Campus” and on our farms. It is definitely an exciting time in Animal and Food Sciences as we lay the foundation for the future!



John “Scott” Radcliffe

2023 Award Winners



Distinguished Alumnus
Mr. Jim Akers



Hall of Fame Inductee
Dr. Roy Burris

Retirements

Two members of the Animal and Food Sciences faculty retired in September.

Dr. Bernhard Hennig began his career at UK in 1984 as Assistant Professor in the Department of Nutrition and Food Science (now Dietetics and Human Nutrition). Dr. Hennig was promoted to Professor in 2000, the year he joined the Animal and Food Sciences faculty. He served as Director of the UK Superfund Research Center from 2003 to 2020. Dr. Hennig's research resulted in publication of more than 240 peer-reviewed articles. The recipient of numerous national awards, he is a Fulbright Scholar and a UK Research Professorship Awardee. In addition, Dr. Hennig served as Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Nutritional Biochemistry* for over 20 years.

Dr. Anthony "Tony" Pescatore joined the Animal and Food Sciences faculty in 1986 as an Assistant Extension Professor and in 1996 he was promoted to Professor. During his 38-year tenure he played a critical role in all three tiers of the land grant mission: teaching, research and extension. He taught the senior capstone course, the poultry science class, and assisted frequently in teaching hands-on poultry labs in other courses. Although he had no formal research appointment, his work resulted in four book chapters, and more than 100 peer-reviewed articles. He trained 12 graduate students. Dr. Pescatore's involvement in extension ranged from the state BBQ contest to teaching elementary students about eggs and chick hatching. Under his guidance broiler production within the state went from a rank of 25th to 8th highest in the country. Additionally, he was instrumental in several poultry mergers, resulting in Kentucky now having nearly 30% of the world's meat chicken genetics. Also, during his tenure Kentucky became a major force in pasture egg production. Dr. Pescatore received numerous awards during his career, including the 2024 PSA Fellow Award, the highest honor presented by the Poultry Science Association for professional distinction and contribution to the field of poultry science, the 2014 M.D. Whiteker Award for Excellence in Extension Programming at the University of Kentucky and the PSA James H. Denton Distinguished Service Award.

New Faculty

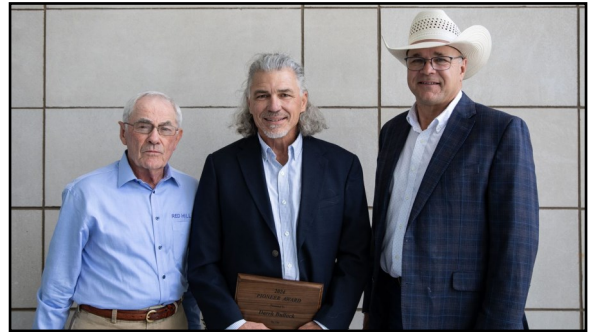
During the past year there were two additions to the Animal and Food Sciences faculty.

Dr. Amber McNamara joined the faculty in January as Associate Professor and Director of Pre-Veterinary Advising. Her appointment is focused on expansion of the pre-veterinary program.

Dr. Ronald J. Trotta joined the faculty in July as Assistant Professor of Ruminant Nutritional Physiology. His appointment is primarily research, but he will also teach graduate-level nutrition courses.

Faculty Awards In 2024

Dr. Donna Amaral-Phillips (retired) — Hoards Dairyman Youth Development Award, American Dairy Science Association



Dr. Darrh Bullock (pictured above) — Pioneer Award, Beef Improvement Federation (BIF)

Dr. Donald G. Ely — Outstanding Specialist Award, Kentucky Association of County Agricultural Agents

Dr. David Harmon — Sturgill Award and University Research Professorship, University of Kentucky

Dr. Robert Harmon (retired) — Award of Honor, American Dairy Science Association



Dr. Tony Pescatore (retired, pictured above, on left) — James H. Denton Distinguished Service Award, Poultry Science Association

Dr. Gregg Rentfrow — Extension Impact Award, Martin-Gatton CAFE

Dr. Mary Rossano — Ken Freedman Outstanding Faculty Advisor Award, University of Kentucky

Dr. Suman Surendranath — Signal Service Award, American Meat Science Association

Dr. Kristine Urschel — Outstanding Teacher Award, University of Kentucky

Dr. Katie VanValin — Outstanding New Specialist Award, Martin-Gatton CAFE

Dr. Youling Xiong — Bill Gatton Foundation Distinguished Professorship, University of Kentucky

Around the Farms

University Sheep Command Interest at National Sale

One-hundred and sixty-two head of premium breeding stock were sold at the 2024 Center of the Nation National Sheep Improvement (NSIP) Sale in Spencer, Iowa on July 27. Five Polypay sheep were consigned from the UK flock. Polypay fall-born ram UK 23-3467, shown in the photos on the right, was purchased by Hurley Farms, Curlew, Iowa and Meinders Stock Farms, Buffalo Center, Iowa. Described by sales personnel as “sneaky-good,” he was the highest-selling Polypay in the sale and was the second-highest selling sheep overall. Based on Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs), he ranked in the top 5% of all 2023-2024 born Polypay sheep for weaning weight, maternal weaning weight and post-weaning weight and in the top 20% based on the U.S. Maternal Index, making him one of the highest ranking rams in the sale for genetic potential.

The four 2023 fall-born Polypay ewes consigned by the UK Sheep Unit were among the highest-selling Polypay ewes and went to flocks in Iowa and Nebraska.

Participation in the national sale allows UK to build genetic connectedness among flocks and drives genetic improvement of the entire Polypay breed.



Pictured left to right: Dr. Debra Aaron, Ram UK23-3467, LeeAnn Jacks and Matthew Hamilton, University of Kentucky, Carrie and Kyle Hurley, Hurley Farms, Zack Meinders, Meinders Stock Farms. Inset, Ram UK 23-3467.

New Meats and Foods Workforce Development Center to be Built at C. Oran Little Research Center

The Meats & Foods Workforce Development Center is designed as a “one-stop-shop” facility that will support the state’s multibillion-dollar animal agriculture industry, family farms, value-added production, food safety, promotion of agricultural products and the state’s recent \$6 million investment in expanding processing capacity. The facility will be located on the C. Oran Little Research

Center, across from the Farm Service Center and will house a meats lab, classroom, offices and other spaces associated with value-added food production and processing. It will serve as a research and extension hub for clientele in central Kentucky. Ground-breaking for the 64,000 square foot center (*see artist’s renderings below*) is expected in early 2025.



Artist’s renderings of the Meats & Foods Workforce Development Center

Undergraduate Programs

Animal Sciences Majors Receive Prestigious Awards



Evan Byers (center)

Evan Byers, B.S., Animal Sciences, May 2024, received the prestigious **Elite 90 Award** for the 2024 NCAA Division I Baseball Championship.

The Elite 90, an award founded by the NCAA, recognizes the true essence of the student-athlete. It honors the individual who has reached the pinnacle of competition at the national championship level in their sport, while also achieving the highest academic standard among their peers. The Elite 90 is presented to the student-athlete with the highest cumulative GPA participating at the finals site for each of the NCAA's championships.

Evan, a redshirt junior from Nicholasville, Kentucky, graduated with a perfect 4.0 GPA. During the 2024 baseball season he appeared in 22 games, going 3-1 with 23 strike outs.

Evan is currently pursuing a Master of Business Administration degree at UK and will be on the mound for his final season as a Wildcat in 2025.



Walter Baker (on left)

Walter Baker, B.S., Animal Sciences, December 2023, was one of two recipients of the Veterinary Information Network (VIN) Foundation's first annual **Mike Dunn, DVM Veterinary Student Scholarship**. Each awardee will receive up to \$35,000 per year, for a total of up to \$140,000 per student for the duration of their enrollment at veterinary school, up to four years.

Walter, a native of Columbia, Kentucky, was an outstanding student at UK. He is currently in his first semester at the Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine. After graduation, he plans to return home and practice veterinary medicine in Adair County. When Walter was notified of the award, his response was, "I won't be burdened by the enormous debt load faced by so many of my peers. It truly is a blessing and a privilege to have been chosen for such a prestigious award."

This is the largest monetary award ever received by a UK Animal Sciences graduate entering veterinary school.

Animal and Food Sciences Alumni Scholarship

Charity Moore, a senior majoring in Animal Sciences with an Agricultural Economics minor, is the recipient of the 2024-2025 **Animal and Food Sciences Alumni Scholarship**. She grew up on a grain farm in Germantown, Ohio and has been involved in the beef cattle industry since childhood. At a young age Charity was bitten by the livestock showing bug and began exhibiting cattle at shows as part of her involvement in 4-H and FFA. As a college student, she continues to raise and show beef cattle to promote her family's farm. Charity is a member of Block and Bridle, Sigma Alpha and Collegiate Farm Bureau. She is a 2024-25 Martin-Gatton CAFE ambassador. Upon graduation, Charity plans on to have a career in the beef cattle industry.



Charity Moore

UK Block and Bridle Celebrates 100th Anniversary

Story originally published in *Martin-Gatton Weekly News and Updates*, 12-18-23

UK Block and Bridle celebrated its 100th anniversary connecting current students, faculty, staff and alumni at the E.S. Good Barn on December 6, 2023.

The event invited alumni to share in celebrating this momentous occasion. For some, like LeeAnn McCuiston, Block and Bridle was about finding a sense of belonging, creating lasting memories and supporting students in continuing the chapter's legacy.

"Every college student needs to find a place to belong. Block and Bridle was my place," said McCuiston, class of '93 and current Todd County 4-H Agent in the Martin-Gatton CAFE. "I always felt welcomed by fellow members and had amazing advisors/professors who had the same interests as me. So many memories were formed in this club. I returned for the 100th year celebration to see my old friends and encourage current student members to continue making the club the very best at UK."



Pictured left to right: Dr. Don Ely, Laura Utterback Swango, Corinne Ferris, LeeAnn McCuiston, Dr. Debra Aaron.

Shannon and Dale Wolfram (class of '73), married and living in Midway, Kentucky, shared what celebrating five decades as Block and Bridle alums meant.

"What a wonderful honor and opportunity to acknowledge 50 years of comradery and friendship with this year's pledge class," says Wolfram. "We will always remember Tot Days, horse shows and the Little North American livestock show. These relationships have survived the test of time and are a tribute to the college and Block and Bridle Club."

According to alumni in attendance, Block and Bridle faculty advisors are special. Long-time advisors Don Ely and

Debra Aaron and former advisor Fred Thrift always did more than simply advise. "They were our 'parents' away from home," said Corinne Ferris, B&B class of '93, and Shelby Co. Extension agent in the Martin-Gatton CAFE. Current members feel the same way about Ann Leed, the newest advisor to UK Block and Bridle.



Current members (pictured left to right): Julieanne Stiles, Amanda Carrithers, Whitney Dunklee, Kennedy Shoemaker, Paige Mehlhorn, and Sarah Kenney.

The Kentucky chapter received its charter from the National Block and Bridle Club on December 3, 1923. Since the charter, the chapter has initiated approximately 5,000 members. There are currently 60 UK students in this year's cohort.



Original Block and Bridle charter dated December 3rd, 1923

"Block and Bridle has always carried a special place in our college," Debra Aaron, Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies in Animal Sciences, said. "As former students have shared, it was 'their place.' It was, and is, a family and a shared love of livestock has always been at the club's heart."

Aaron reinforces that Block and Bridle will continue to be a home for all students who share a passion for animal agriculture. Its strong legacy will continue.

2024 Distinguished Alumnus

Dr. Steven I. Smith earned his B.S. (1978) from the University of Illinois and his M.S. (1981) and Ph.D. (1984) from the University of Kentucky. After graduating from UK, he worked initially as a dairy nutritionist for Hubbard Milling Company in Mankato, Minnesota. In 1988, he was lured back into research by Cargill, Inc. While there he developed a model for managing risk of pesticide contamination from byproduct ingredients, conducted a research effort with bST, which resulted in development of a proprietary feeding and management program for bST-treated cows, and developed and patented a feeding program to address amino acid needs of lactating dairy cows. These accomplishments led to his receiving the Corporate Achiever's Circle Award for technical achievement of fundamental value to Cargill.

In 1993, Dr. Smith joined Southern States Cooperative in Richmond, Virginia. In his 16 years with Southern States, he served first as a nutritionist and then as a business analyst. In the latter role he developed and managed a database of 750,000 customers that allowed Southern States to target producer needs and develop marketing programs specific to those needs.

Dr. Smith's experience in nutrition research, product marketing and project supervision led to his being named the Nutritional Program Leader, Animal Production Systems, of the USDA/NIFA in 2009. He continues to serve in that role

today, interacting with academic researchers throughout the U.S.

He is the agency's scientific and technical authority in the area of animal production systems. As such, he establishes and leads programs, formulates technical recommendations and fosters solutions to critical national issues in animal research, education and extension. In addition Dr. Smith provides national leadership related to grant proposals. He has overseen competitive peer-review of 4,000 applications which resulted in 800 proposals being recommended for funding, with award amounts totaling \$650 million. In aggregate, Dr. Smith has been connected with \$2 billion invested in facilities and research related to U.S. animal agriculture.



Dr. Steven I. Smith

Dr. Smith lives near Palmyra, Virginia with his family. He is active in his church, which extends to service opportunities. As hobbies, he likes to hunt and fish.

2024 Hall of Fame Induction

Dr. Donald G. Ely is one of the most respected authorities on sheep nutrition and management in the U.S. A native of Oklahoma, Dr. Ely received his B.S. (1961) and M.S. (1963) from Oklahoma State University. He received his Ph.D. (1966) from the University of Kentucky, where he has served on the faculty of the Department of Animal and Food Sciences for 55 years. He has had an exceptional career as a research scientist, extension specialist and teacher.

Dr. Ely is recognized for his work on ewe and lamb nutrition. His management systems for early-weaned lambs have increased producer profitability and resulted in increased economic efficiency. He was one of the first scientists to examine the relationship between nutrient restriction in ewes and growth and development of lambs in the post-natal period. Dr. Ely has always embraced the "farm to plate" concept. His studies have incorporated evaluations of how nutrition and management affect carcass composition as well as product acceptability. Over 450 research and extension publications have resulted from his work.

Research in the animal sciences is useless if it never reaches the target audience. It is perhaps in this area that Dr. Ely has had his greatest accomplishments. During his career, he has increased the animal management skills of more than 5,000 undergraduate students through his courses, Introduction to

Livestock and Poultry Production and Sheep Science. He has advised the UK Block and Bridle Club for over 40 years, helping develop animal industry leaders. In addition, his graduate students have become leaders in research, education and government. One former graduate student noted that "Dr. Ely instills a sense of duty in his students to give back to agriculture and the sheep industry."

Dr. Ely has been the recipient of numerous awards. His extension efforts were rewarded in 2024 when he received the Outstanding Specialist Award from the Kentucky Association of County Agricultural Agents. Awards from the American Society of Animal Science include the Animal Industry Service Award (2013), Fellow Award (2013) and the Distinguished Teaching Award (1988).

Dr. Ely and his wife Martha Ann have two sons, Brandt and Brenen, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.



Dr. Donald G. Ely

Graduate Programs

Outstanding M.S. Candidate

Amanda Bauman was recognized as the 2024 Department of Animal and Food Sciences Outstanding M.S. Student. The awards committee believed she had demonstrated exceptional academic prowess, dedication to research and outstanding leadership.



Amanda Bauman

Her passion for equids began early through 4-H but her appreciation and interest in equid research was sparked

during a summer internship at Kentucky Equine Research. Her academic record, both at Washington State University and during her graduate program at UK, attests to her exceptional abilities as a student.

Amanda's thesis project, conducted under the leadership of Dr. Kyle McLeod, investigates the relationship between dietary carbohydrate and fat supply and stress and their impact on gastrointestinal health in equids. Her work represents a pioneering approach to addressing contemporary issues in equine nutrition.

Her leadership contributions extend beyond the laboratory as she served as Secretary and Treasurer of the AFS Graduate Student Organization, and has played a pivotal role in fostering a sense of community and camaraderie among the AFS graduate student body.

Other Awards

Macy E. Ragsdale, M.S. candidate, working under the guidance of Dr. Don Ely, received First Place in the M.S. Three-Minute Thesis Student Competition (*Red clover as a functional feed: Effects on rumen microbiota for finishing ram lambs*) at the 2024 Southern Section American Society of Animal Science Meeting. She also had the winning poster in the 12th Annual AFS Graduate Student Association Poster Symposium.



DEPARTMENT OF
ANIMAL AND FOOD SCIENCES

2024 REUNION

October 11

E. S. Good Barn

Registration 6:00 pm "Grazing" Begins 6:30 pm Program 7:30 pm

Tickets are \$20 for adults and children under 12 are free. Purchase tickets at

[Animal & Food Sciences Reunion 2024 | Office of Philanthropy and Alumni \(uky.edu\)](https://www.uky.edu/AFS/Reunion2024/)

or RSVP by Friday, October 4 to Shawna Banks at 859-257-7507 or AFSAlumni@uky.edu.