



Animal Sciences News

Week of August 9, 2015

NDSU Veterans Ed Program Adds Horsemanship Course – Erika Berg with Ellen Crawford, NDSU Agriculture Communication

Faculty in North Dakota State University's Equine Science and Veterans Educational Training (VET) programs have teamed up to offer a horsemanship component as part of VET's summer coursework.

VET is a state-funded program that's available at no cost to veterans. The program is designed to prepare individuals academically for post-secondary education and ease their transition into life in higher education.

Jeri Vaudrin, VET project coordinator, and Erika Berg, associate professor of animal science, began brainstorming ways to incorporate equine work into veterans programming in 2013. The result was a small pilot project that began this summer.

Berg and co-instructors Carrie Hammer, associate professor and Equine Science program director, and Tate Eck, Equine Science lecturer, teach the two-hour, weekly horsemanship course at the NDSU Equine Center. The 10-week program focuses on basic horsemanship skills and incorporates weekly reflection questions into writing assignments that fulfill the course's English requirements.

"But the course is more than simply learning about horses and fulfilling academic requirements," Berg says. "It provides student veterans with an opportunity to more fully engage in their surroundings, connect with the horses and, consequently, people."

Vaudrin notes that many of the veterans VET serves have a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or other traumatic brain injuries.

"Traumatic experiences reduce an individual's sense of safety and trust, resulting in social isolation and detachment," Vaudrin says. "Being in a state of constant anxiety and becoming easily angered are often seen as well."

Course instructors conduct brief self-assessments before and after each class to help participants rate their mood, anxiety level and physical pain.

"Horses provide immediate, nonjudgmental feedback to people," Berg says. "Plus, horses live in the moment because their survival depends on it. The idea that about 95 percent of their communication is through body language makes them especially tuned in, not only to what other horses are doing, but what every living being around them, including human beings, is doing. These attributes make many horses outstanding partners for this type of work."

Knowing that participants have reported improvements in their mood and anxiety levels after almost every class has been exciting, she adds.

Efforts are under way to expand the horsemanship programming.

New Extension Publications

V 561 – Anthrax by Charlie Stoltenow

AS 1369 – Water Needs and Quality Guidelines for Dairy Cattle by J.W. Schroeder

AS 1763 – Livestock Water Requirements by Miranda Meehan, Gerald Stokka, and Michelle Mostrom

AS 1764 – Livestock Water Quality by Miranda Meehan, Gerald Stokka, and Michelle Mostrom

Newman and Sun Receive Grant – David Newman

David Newman and Xin (Rex) Sun have received an \$80,325 grant from the National Pork Board. The project title is "Prediction of pork quality using online computer vision system." The grant duration is 18 months. The project will:

1. Validate a novel tool to predict pork quality utilizing the vision method which characterizes lean color and surface texture features, fat color and texture features, and marbling.
2. Establish a model to predict pork quality grading values using imaging software through correlation analysis between traditional objective and subjective pork quality measurements and image processing analysis.
3. Gather and correlate quality attributes from whole, boneless pork loins of varying degree of quality to assess pork quality data by taking standard industry meat quality measurements and comparing them to imaging data from multiple locations on the whole loin.

The data will, hopefully, create a tool for future research on whole carcass quality with further implications for other pork primals and processed meats. Also, it is hoped this will lead to future research to validate and establish time-points and locations for quality measurements, during both slaughter and processing.

Professional Development Day Held *(photos by Julie Nash)*

The Animal Sciences Department held the second annual professional development day on Thursday, August 13. Following a light breakfast, Kristine Paranica (pictured at left below), JD, NDSU Ombudsperson, provided insight into conflict resolution in the morning session. Following lunch, Donna Moenning (pictured at right below) from the Center for Food Integrity spoke on consumer perception in agriculture. A potluck family picnic followed at Trollwood Park.

Thank you to Julie Nash who organized the event.



Banquet in a Field – Loren Baranko

On Tuesday, August 11, Spencer Wirt and Loren Baranko (who represented the NDSU Meat Lab and BBQ Boot Camp, respectively) grilled lamb kabobs and beef tenderloin at the Banquet in a Field held at Peterson Farms Seed near Harwood, ND. Tony and Sarah Nasello from Sarello's restaurant in Moorhead, prepared the other dishes.

The purpose of the event was to bridge the gap between non-ag consumers who have questions about food and farms by talking with farmer volunteers who answer questions about the food they raise. Eleven North Dakota crops and three meats were featured.

The event was hosted by CommonGround North Dakota which is a group of North Dakota farm women working to dispel myths about modern agriculture and build trust in farming communities and farm families.

There were 120 people in attendance.



Position Changes in Animal Sciences – Greg Lardy

“I wanted to let you know about a couple of changes in duties and responsibilities that have recently occurred or will occur in the near future.

“We have restructured Carrie Hammer’s position such that she will no longer have Extension responsibilities in the youth equine program area. This will allow her to focus on the teaching and research aspects of her appointment. Justin Crosswhite will also change his appointment to focus on teaching, giving up the small portion of duties he had related to youth livestock extension programming.

“We are not abandoning youth livestock and Extension programming efforts, but are strengthening them by putting more resources into a new full-time youth equine and livestock Extension position. At this point, the administrative home for this position has not been determined (Animal Sciences or the Center for 4-H). In the meantime, Carrie and Justin will continue to coordinate the various youth events and activities through the fall while the search process is completed.”



Pork Quality Presentation at Purdue –

David Newman (photo from Angela Fredericks Anderson, National Pork Board)

Austen Germolus, NDSU Meat Lab manager, and Dr. David Newman gave a presentation on pork marketing and pork quality to a group of retailers at Purdue University as part of the Indiana Summer Farm Tour the week of August 2. The presentation was sponsored by the National Pork Board.

A Star is Born!

Macy Fritz, granddaughter of Animal Sciences secretary Deb Thomson, will be featured in a back-to-school promo on WDAY TV beginning the week of August 17. Macy is shown here with Drew Trafton after the filming was over. (photo by Andrea Fritz)

