

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY ANIMAL SCIENCES AND INDUSTRY

FAMILY & FRIENDS

OCTOBER 5, 2024 | STANLEY STOUT CENTER | MANHATTAN, KS



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WELCOME

Laughter and storytelling filled the air as alumni and friends of Kansas State University Animal Sciences and Industry (ASI) gathered to celebrate the department's accomplishments at the 10th annual K-State ASI Family & Friends Reunion. A highlight for the many members of the K-State community, the event brought together individuals from various generations, all united by their passion for the department and its continued success.

More than 900 attendees enjoyed the event Oct. 5, 2024, at the Stanley Stout Center in Manhattan, Kansas. Hosted annually by the Livestock and Meat Industry Council Inc. (LMIC) in cooperation with the ASI department, this event fosters connection and community within the K-State family.

This publication highlights the unforgettable moments shared by attendees at this year's event. Alongside coverage of the event, we highlight the 2024 Don L. Good Impact Award presented to Dr. Dell and Joyce Allen, as well as stories and successes from other members of the K-State ASI family.

Sincerely,

FAMILY & FRIENDS PUBLICATION STAFF

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Don L. Good IMPACT AWARD



Honoring Excellence

Dr. Dell and Joyce Allen receive the Don L. Good Impact Award for their impact on the meat industry.

STORY BY LAUREN GATZ

Dr. Dell Allen's influence in the field of meat science is immeasurable. From developing new technologies that changed meat grading systems to ensuring food safety standards, Dell's career has impacted many different corners of the industry. Alongside him every step of the way has been his wife, Joyce. Their journey exemplifies a balance of professional achievement and personal partnership.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Originally from a farm in southeast Kansas, Dell's career trajectory began with somewhat unusual aspirations to attend Kansas State University. "I went to college to be on the livestock judging team, not to earn a degree, but I ended up achieving both," Dell says. While his initial plan was focused on livestock judging, unexpected opportunities would pave the way for a career in meat science.

"When I came to K-State, I found out I couldn't be on the livestock judging team until I was a junior, so I went out for the wool judging team followed by participating on the meat judging team," Dell states. "I felt fortunate when Don Good hired me to work at the beef barn."

These experiences not only broadened his skills but also introduced him to many mentors in the industry.

"One of my responsibilities as a beef barn employee was showing K-State beef cattle at major livestock shows including the American Royal and the Denver National Western," Dell explains. "While in Denver, I started to think about my future career."

In 1961, while at the National Western, Dell met Dr. T. Donald Bell, University of Idaho department head. He offered Dell a graduate assistantship, which would pay his tuition and living expenses while he worked on his master's.

Today Dell jokes about this experience, "I had never been paid to go to school before so I thought I might try it. I didn't enjoy school until Idaho, but in the two years I was there, I really enjoyed learning."

In Idaho, Dr. Leon Orme, one of the faculty members, encouraged Dell to study for his doctorate at Michigan State University. There Dell reunited with Dr. Bob Merkel who had been his meat judging coach at K-State. Dell received his doctorate in animal husbandry at Michigan State and met Joyce Bey, who would become his wife.

A HISTORY OF INNOVATION

Dell's career at K-State began when Good, his long-time mentor, recruited him to join the ASI faculty in 1966. Good became department head at that time and saw potential in Dell beyond his student years working in the beef barn.

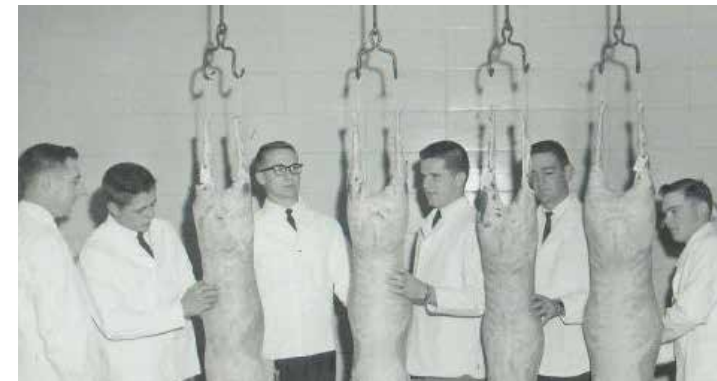
"Dr. Good offered me the opportunity to join the faculty and coach the meat judging team, so I jumped on it, even though the last thing I ever thought I would do was become a teacher," Dell says.

During his 22 years at K-State, Dell earned numerous teaching awards and coached two National Champion Meat Judging Teams, solidifying his legacy in both academia and the meat science industry. Along with teaching, he conducted research with his various graduate students and enjoyed speaking to agricultural groups throughout Kansas. During the summer months, he spent some time judging county fairs.

Dell fondly recalls the years he spent part of the ASI faculty. He explains, "One of the most enjoyable parts of my job was the camaraderie shared by the faculty under Don's direction. We become professional as well as life-long friends."



Several family members were in attendance to celebrate Dell and Joyce's special evening.



The 1959 K-State meat judging team including Dell who is second from the left.



Willie took time to congratulate the award winners along with their daughter Melanie.

Dell's impact on the meat science field is rooted in his ability to tackle challenges and find solutions. "Dell is a natural born teacher and leader. What my dad loved about him was that he was a charger, he got things done, and he was fearless in trying to address problems and issues," says Craig Good, Good's son and one of Dell's former students.

While on the faculty at K-State, he was tasked with addressing a serious issue facing the integrity of the beef grading system in Southern California.

"I was approached by the General Accounting Office (GAO) to study and establish the uniformity of beef grades across the country. That was a great opportunity because it took me into plants from the East Coast to the West Coast," Dell explains. This experience led Dell to the role of a consultant for meat packers across the country where he uncovered a significant error rate in both

quality and yield grading. "I found that there was about an 8% error rate in quality grading and about an 11% error rate in yield grading," Dell says. This discovery would spark an idea that would change the meat industry.

Reflecting on the early days of digital technology, Dell recalls, "The digital camera had been recently invented and I thought if we could couple that with a computer and use it for grading purposes, it would help unify the grading system."

Teaming up with a colleague in electrical engineering in 1980, Dell helped develop the first electronic grading machine, which would eventually bring greater precision and accuracy to meat grading.

In 1988, when Dell took a job at Cargill, then known as Excel Corporation, he revisited the challenge of uniform grading. "I was granted access to the machine that I helped develop and sent the machine to the Cargill owned High River Packing Plant in Canada," Dell explains. The camera grading machine was adapted and first used in Canada and eventually adopted by all major U.S. beef plants.

Dell's contributions to the meat industry extend beyond grading innovations. His role at Cargill marked a pivotal shift towards developing solutions for food safety, particularly in response to the E. coli outbreak. In 1993, the E. coli O157:H7 pathogen outbreak occurred. As vice president of quality assurance, solving the E. coli problem for Excel became Dell's responsibility.

"We developed a whole system and worked extensively with the Meat Animal Research Center in Clay Center, Nebraska, to identify the source of E. coli," Dell explains. "We determined that the primary source of E. coli was present on the animal's hide, which led to contamination of the carcass during the

slaughtering process. The breakthrough which significantly reduced E. coli contamination in packing plants, came with the development of the hide washing machine."

This machine greatly reduced the presence of E. coli on cattle hides and led to decreased contamination on the beef products.

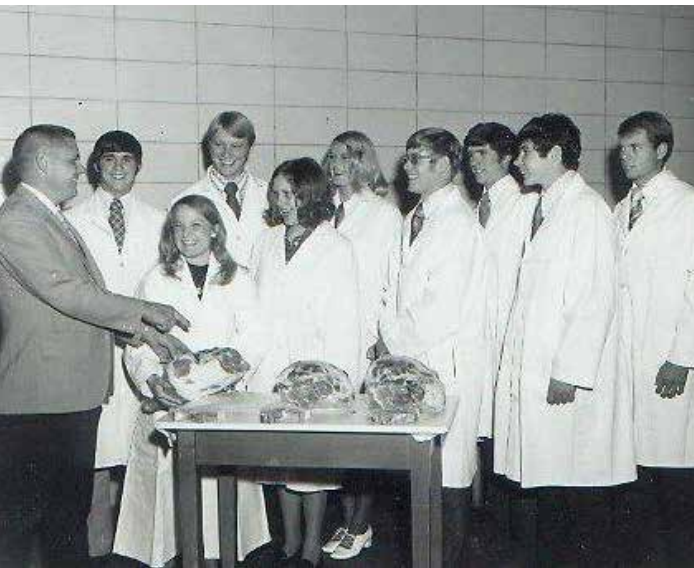
Dell's commitment to quality assurance included long-term improvements in safety and quality that have now become standard industry practices. "It wasn't about product quality; it was quality of everything," he says. "The idea was to eliminate mistakes throughout all the systems." His dedication led to his promotion to vice president of food safety and technical services at Cargill.

A LIFELONG PARTNERSHIP

While Dell was pursuing his career, Joyce was by his side, contributing in ways that ensured their mutual success.

"I couldn't have done any of the things I did without her support," Dell emphasizes.

Joyce, born in Alpena, Michigan, grew up on a dairy farm, where she learned the values of hard work and perseverance from her parents. After graduating from Michigan State University in 1965 with a degree in speech and hearing pathology, she married Dell and they moved to Manhattan. Joyce worked as a speech therapist for the Institute of Logopedics (now called Heartspring), which was located in Wichita, Kansas, but also served communities throughout Kansas. Her commitment to education extended to volunteering at the Manhattan Adult Center, where she taught English as a second language to a diverse group of students, many of whom were refugees from Vietnam and Cambodia. Joyce also served as a hospice volunteer for many years.



Members of the 1973 Meat Judging Team with Coach Allen.

In 1993, the Allens experienced the tragic death of their son, Damon, in an accident caused by a drunk driver. In response, Joyce dedicated herself to raising awareness about the impact of drinking and driving on family members and friends, sharing her story in schools across Kansas. She relayed her personal experiences in a video titled, “Someone Chose to Drink and Drive,” which became a mandated educational tool in Texas, reflecting her commitment to making a difference.

“It touched us greatly to see how Dell and his wife, Joyce, responded to the accident. I know it was very difficult, but I always admired their strength,” Craig says. “They wanted to give back and try to save some other parent from experiencing the heartbreak they had gone through.”

Family values have become a cornerstone of their lives. Their daughter Melanie (Marty) Turner lives three miles from Dell and Joyce in Derby, Kansas. During the past 20 years, they enjoyed chauffeuring their four grandchildren — Katrina, Danielle and twins Asher and Nathan — to events, editing papers, consulting on sheep and baking projects for 4-H, cheering them on at sports events and attending band, orchestra, and choral concerts.

Joyce’s impact on agriculture is subtle yet significant, particularly through her involvement with Dell’s meat judging teams. Many former team members have shared how her willingness to prepare meals, engage in conversation, and provide support during Dell’s busy schedule positively impacted their lives.

“Joyce is one of my favorite people on the planet,” one former meat judge wrote. “There aren’t many ladies in the world who have the grace and wisdom of Joyce.”

AN HONOR OF A LIFETIME

Reflecting on their award, Joyce says, “What a thrill to receive an award that honors Dr. Don Good. The impact award is not only about how Dell impacted the agricultural industry, but also the positive impact we, and countless others, were blessed to receive because of Don and Jane Good.” She emphasized how their examples of marriage, faith and kindness served as vital role models for both Dell and her.

“I can’t think of anybody, especially as a couple that would be more deserving,” Craig explains. “My folks would be overjoyed if they were here today that Dell and Joyce, and their family are receiving this award.”

For Dell, the recognition is deeply personal, as he reflects on the impact Don Good had on his own career.

“I have such a high regard and respect for Don Good; this is the most meaningful award I have ever received.”

Dell also emphasizes the importance of seizing opportunities saying, “My career was simply taking advantage of opportunities presented to me.”

The partnership he shares with Joyce has been a crucial foundation for their lives, allowing them both to achieve success in their chosen fields.

As they accept the Don L. Good Impact Award, Dell and Joyce honor not just their own achievements, but also the mentors like Don Good who guided them. Their legacy of leadership, mentorship and innovation will continue to inspire future generations in the agricultural community. **K**

Editor’s Note: Scan to watch the award video.



Former team members gathered to reminisce about their time in the meat cooler before the Reunion.



Dell was named the Stockman of the Year in 2013.



Several of Dell’s former Cargill colleagues attended the event, including Jarrod Gillig.

FOOD & friends

At the K-State ASI Family & Friends Reunion, food brings everyone together. Plates filled with beef, pork and chicken along with dairy products represented diverse animal science interests. As guests shared stories and laughter, the evening became a celebration of food and friendship, making the meal memorable.





Building on

TRADITION

Four new faculty join the department.

STORY BY KAITLYN CARLSON

Kansas State University has a rich history of hiring exceptional Animal Sciences and Industry faculty. The faculty members are leaders in their respected fields, bringing fresh perspectives and a wealth of experience to the department. Recently, K-State ASI welcomed four new faculty members.

DR. KELSEY BENTLEY

Growing up in the sheep and goat industry in Micro, North Carolina, Kelsey Bentley always knew she wanted to return to her roots and focus her career on small ruminants. Bentley joins the ASI department as assistant professor of sustainable small ruminant production. Her appointment is 60% extension, 25% research and 15% teaching.

During her undergraduate studies in animal science at North Carolina State University (NC State), Bentley developed a passion for research while conducting undergraduate projects with swine. Determined to continue her career in research, she returned to her roots by focusing on sheep and goats. She eventually left North Carolina to study under the mentorship of Dr. Scott Baldrige at West Virginia University (WVU), where she earned both her master's and doctorate degrees. While attending an American Sheep Industry Association meeting, she began her job search.

"A ton of people were telling me to apply for the K-State job," she shares. "So I did, and when I came here, I immediately felt the connection and warmth of the department."

During her time at WVU, Bentley received several prestigious awards, including the WVU Ruby Doctoral Fellowship and the American Sheep Industry Association "Sheep Heritage Memorial" Scholarship. She also won the 2022 Davis College Student Research & Creative Scholarship where she received first overall in the Ph.D. oral presentation.

Bentley's research was primarily focused on antibodies in sheep, specifically Katahdin sheep during her academic career. With her move to Manhattan, Kansas, she plans to shift her research to Midwest sheep breeds, such as Polypay sheep.

"We hope to set up a Polypay flock here at K-State within the National Sheep Improvement Program (NSIP)," Bentley explains. "We'll start doing research with

them and see if we can replicate the antibody findings, we observed in the Katahdin sheep with the Polypay breed.”

Since extension is a major part of Bentley’s role, her addition to the ASI department is not only welcomed by faculty but also sheep producers across the state of Kansas.

“It’s often difficult to end a conversation with producers, as many haven’t had someone to discuss their sheep with for quite some time,” Bentley shares. “Seeing the level of support from both the department and producers makes me feel like this is where I’m meant to be.”

DR. ERIN BEYER

A passion for meat science and a commitment to education led Erin Beyer to return to K-State as an assistant professor of sustainable fresh meat industry. In this role, Beyer’s appointment is 60% extension and 40% research.

During her time as an undergraduate at Texas Tech University (TTU), Beyer was a member of the 2015 meat judging team while completing her bachelor’s degree in food science. She was awarded National Champion and was a top 10 finisher at the International Meat Judging Contest and was also selected as a 1st Team All-American Judge. As she pursued her master’s degree, focusing on brain connectivity studies following meat consumption, Beyer also coached several meat judging teams at TTU, leading them to multiple national and reserve national championships. Beyer was honored as the most Outstanding Student in the College of Agricultural Sciences and National Resources (CASNR) at TTU and her research was award winning at the 2019 Reciprocal Meat Conference. After completing her master’s

degree, Beyer spent a year and a half in the industry working for H-E-B Food Retailers in Texas, where she focused on developing new products and updating nutritional labels.

Dr. Travis O’Quinn reached out to Beyer and invited her to pursue her doctorate at K-State under his mentorship. Her doctorate research focused on studying the effects of different freezing parameters on meat quality and examining how various degrees of doneness impact color. During her time at K-State, Beyer was recognized as the Larry Corah Most Outstanding Ph.D. Student. She took on teaching and extension roles, coordinated consumer research projects and participated in the National Beef Quality Audit.

Beyer took her first academic position at North Dakota State University (NDSU), where she had a split appointment between research and teaching. While there, she also served as the meat judging coach and played a significant role in supporting undergraduate programs, all while continuing the research she had begun during her doctorate.

“K-State was always my number one choice to come back to,” Beyer explains. “When this position opened up, the timing was perfect, and I knew it was the right fit.”

Her primary goal in this role is to connect with as many people as possible in the Kansas, Manhattan and extension communities. Her research will focus on exploring the effects of different degrees of doneness and examining the changes within certain proteins that influence whether meat appears medium versus medium rare.

“A huge part of why I love being here is the opportunity to teach graduate students and build connections with the future leaders and scientists,” Beyer says. “I really enjoy the mentorship aspect of being an advisor.



Kelsey Bentley



Erin Beyer



Ahmed Hammam



Mandy King

DR. AHMED HAMMAM

Egypt, is where Ahmed Hammam originally grew up. Now he calls Manhattan, Kansas, home after joining the ASI Department in November 2024 as an assistant professor in dairy food processing and innovation. His appointment is 60% research and 40% teaching.

Hammam completed his undergraduate degree from Assiut University in dairy science. He then moved to South Dakota to attend South Dakota State University where he earned his master's and doctorate degrees in dairy manufacturing. During his master's program, Hammam focused on the manufacture of culture-based acid curd using micellar casein concentrate. His doctorate was centered around the study of the manufacture of imitation Mozzarella cheese without emulsifying salts using acid curd and micellar casein concentrate.

Throughout his studies, Hammam had the opportunity to coach the dairy products judging team and teach multiple undergraduate-level courses related to dairy and food science. He was also awarded with the Alfred and Hilde Tobkin Memorial Awards as well as the John Brandt Memorial Scholarship.

After his time at SDSU, he worked in the industry for almost three years. His time was split between Lactalis as an R&D scientist and Idaho Milk Products as senior R&D scientist.

While at K-State, Hammam is planning on introducing dairy foods evaluation courses into the ASI curriculum.

"Students will be exposed to different training on different dairy products, such as milk, cheddar cheese, cottage cheese, ice cream, butter and yogurt," Hammam explains.

Hammam intends to establish a judging team as well, and eventually hopes to add dairy

product judging trophies to K-State's reputable judging collection.

Hammam's research while on campus will be focused on dairy process optimization, development of new value-added products and addressing challenges in the dairy processing industry. He is also looking forward to the new innovation buildings on campus, specifically the pilot plant, and the hands-on learning opportunities it brings for future students.

"K-State motivates me," he says. "Working with the next generation of future leaders in the dairy food industry is so important and aligns with my personal goals."

DR. MINDY KING

Originally from Rock Island, Tennessee, Mindy King joined the ASI department in early 2025. King was hired as assistant professor of animal nutrition, with a 60% teaching and 40% research appointment.

King earned her bachelor's degree in animal and veterinary science from the University of Tennessee at Martin, her master's in ruminant nutrition physiology from the University of Kentucky (UK), and recently completed her doctorate at Oklahoma State University (OSU).

King received the Outstanding Master's Graduate Student in the UK Department of Animal and Food Science during her schooling. She also received several awards, including the Dr. Dennis and Marta White Graduate Fellowship and Sitlington Graduate Enriched Research Fellowship.

"Looking at the top animal science programs in the country, K-State really stands out." King says. "I wanted to end up at a land-grant university with a similar appointment to what I will have at K-State. The university's

strong reputation in the beef industry made it my top choice."

During her time at UK, King's master's research focused on the effect of endophyte-infected tall fescue seed consumption on gut and satiety hormones related to intake regulation in steers. She also managed UK's campus animal research facility, supervised undergraduate student workers and assisted in various research projects. At OSU, her research examined identifying markers in ruminant digesta, signaling pathway differences in cattle muscle and liver, and the effects of abomasal propionate infusion. She plans to continue this line of research at K-State, with a focus on understanding mechanisms related to feed efficiency in beef cattle.

One of King's goals is to continue to develop a strong undergraduate research program, providing students with useful experiences and opportunities. "Undergraduate research is important to K-State, and it is important to me as well," she notes. One course King will be teaching is ASI 302 – Advanced Animal Nutrition.

King says she is looking forward to the opportunity to contribute to advancements in the beef industry. "K-State ASI is a leading department that dedicates significant time and resources to advancing its faculty, as well as enhancing both the undergraduate and graduate programs," she says. "As a result, it stands out in both the research and education realm of animal science." **K**

AWARD WINNERS



Larissa Becker
ASAS Young Scholar Award



Alicia Bohren
K-State ASI Outstanding Senior



Katelyn Gaffield
Larry R. Corah Outstanding PhD Student
Midwest ASAS Outstanding Graduate Student



Olivia Harrison
Midwest ASAS Young Scholar Award



Eda Kaya
Outstanding K-State Food Science
Graduate Student



Jordyn Seamans
Outstanding K-State Food Science Senior



Weston Schrader
National Beef ASI Academic Performance Award



Danielle Stock
Larry R. Corah Outstanding Master Student



Emma Sutherly
National Beef ASI Academic Performance Award



WILDCAT *Rhythms*

A highlight of the K-State ASI Family & Friends Reunion is the Pride of Wildcat Land Marching Band, energizing past and present Wildcats. With Willie the Wildcat, the K-State Classy Cats and cheerleaders, the performance embodies the K-State spirit and creates an unforgettable atmosphere.



GENERATIONS

of Wildcats

Three generations of the Perrier family share their K-State Animal Sciences and Industry experience and the department's close-knit, family-like atmosphere.

STORY BY EMMA BALISKY

The heart of the Kansas State University atmosphere comes to life through a fourth-generation K-State family, the Perriers from Eureka, Kansas. With K-State roots stretching back to the 1930s, the family represents a legacy of commitment and pride, with numerous relatives continuing this multigenerational tradition of attending K-State. The true spirit of the K-State family is captured through conversations with three generations — Tom Perrier, his son, Matt, and Matt's two oldest children — Ava and Lyle, who are current Wildcats. Their experiences capture what it means to be part of the K-State family.

STARTING A TRADITION

The Perrier family's K-State legacy began when Francis Perrier attended K-State in the 1930s. His son, Tom, a 1967 graduate in animal husbandry, followed, along with his brothers. Tom admits to a slight over-commitment to student involvement, which seems to run in the family.

Some of Tom's involvements included being a member of the meat and livestock judging teams, serving as the ag chairman for ag science days, as well as being a member of multiple honorary clubs and the historic Block

& Bridle club. Through these experiences, he learned about the industry, how to interact with others and built lifelong relationships. The connections and foundation he built at K-State helped him network and grow his business when he and his wife, Carolyn, returned to the family ranch full-time in 1969.

Many recurring themes became evident when visiting with the third-generation, Matt Perrier, a 1996 K-State Animal Sciences and Industry (ASI) graduate. "Kansas State has a very welcoming atmosphere campus-wide," Matt explains. "It did when I was there, but the College of Ag and specifically animal science and Weber Hall just took that to another level."

He adds that it is a testament to the ASI Department's values as it continues to remain the same friendly and welcoming department today as it was in the past.

"You just felt like you were amongst friends and still do to this day, thanks to the connections I made there when I was in school and continued to make working with different researchers and other folks in ASI and the cattle industry. There is a certain bond you have with K-State alumni and supporters who makes you feel like you're in the right place," he adds.

The social aspect and networking are Matt's highlighted memories from Weber Hall. Like his father, he was incredibly involved, active in FarmHouse fraternity, student senate, student alumni board, ag ambassadors, ag student council and both the meat and livestock judging teams. These experiences were key to building the connections that have benefited him in the livestock industry today. "I learned a lot from my classwork, but my real growth was probably from the communication and human interaction, learning how to work with other people on teams, clubs and through leadership opportunities," Matt recalls.

FAMILY ATMOSPHERE

Alumni, students and visitors can all speak to the welcoming atmosphere in the ASI department. "Now it's termed the K-State family," Matt explains. "I never heard that term used when I was there in the 90s, but it was there all the same."

As a land grant institution, K-State combines research and extension with strong state agricultural ties. This builds a tight-knit group of producers, researchers, industry leaders and professors.

A huge part of making the students feel welcome and a part of the ASI family is the dedicated faculty and staff, who are committed to student success. Matt says ASI faculty have a genuine interest in each student and explains that both the size of the college and staff who sincerely care helps preserve the true legacy of K-State and uphold the reputation that the department is known for.

Another backbone of the K-State family is the balance between growth opportunities and a close-knit environment which allows you to connect with peers in class and have a real student-advisor relationship. “K-State is just big enough to give you new experiences especially when you grow up in a small town like Eureka, Kansas, but not so big that you can get lost,” Matt says. “It teaches you that you’re never just a number and that you always do have friends and family that want to see you succeed.”

MOST RECENT WILDCATS

Now that the next generation of Perriers are experiencing the same dynamic at K-State, both Tom and Matt have a sense of pride knowing their family tradition continues in the halls of Weber. Currently, Ava, Matt’s daughter, is a senior at K-State majoring in ASI and carrying on her family’s legacy as a wildcat. Ava grew up wearing purple and attending football games, reunions and FFA competitions on campus were some of her earlier memories. However, it was during her own tour of the university that Ava truly embraced her decision to become a Wildcat.

“Weber really just felt like a place where I could branch out but also still be connected to my roots. I’m literally walking the same halls as my parents, both grandparents and so many other family members did,” Ava explains, “In



Three generations of Perriers — Matt, Ava, Lyle and Tom — attended this year’s Family & Friends Reunion.

the end, it felt like I could really grow here but stay rooted in my family tradition.”

Just like her family, Ava follows the Perrier theme of being an actively involved student at the university. The Sigma Kappa sorority, KSU Student Alumni Board, silver key honorary program, meat judging team, ASI mentors, and the meat animal evaluation team are just a few of her commitments. Some of Ava’s most enjoyable moments as a Wildcat involve her love for K-State football. She shares that attending football games and seeing alumni gives her hope that she will continue to see her friends at future games even after graduation.

Decades after both of Ava’s parents and all four grandparents attended K-State, the same



Lyle and Ava on the first day of classes in August.

K-State family atmosphere remains. Ava spoke about walking through Weber Hall and seeing advisors, staff, faculty and coaches who care and are willing to provide advice or assistance in any way. Ava speaks about how she feels the faculty are supportive and are willing to build connections that will last beyond the classroom walls. “The relationships that I have made are so much deeper than just a teacher that is there for four years. I am confident that those relationships will continue and that just makes me so much more secure and happy about my decision to come to Kansas State,” she says.

Additionally, Ava talks about the friendships with her peers and the people who she will do business alongside. “I think that the best thing that I love about K-State is that you have such a broad network of people who are all doing such different things but that will help you through whatever. I’ve met so many people in different aspects of the ag industry and even outside the ag industry.”

Lyle, Ava’s brother, started his K-State ASI journey last fall. Joining a competitive judging team, making industry connections with both peers and professors and the potential of research are some of the things he hopes to accomplish during his time as a Wildcat. Although he was encouraged to tour elsewhere, it was an easy decision to choose K-State and follow the family tradition of wearing purple.

“I know the quality of the College of Ag at K-State and that is what drew me in the most,” Lyle explains.

Even though his university journey is just starting, Lyle has already noticed the genuine people that make up the department and the quality of the professors that he will be learning under. Lyle spoke highly of his K-State tour which grew his confidence in the decision

to continue the Perrier family tradition and take root in Manhattan.

While Tom shared a bit about the early development of the K-State ASI Family & Friends reunion, both Ava and Lyle reminisced about their younger days at the reunion when the farm toys, kids drawing and fingerprinting the letter of intent were thrilling to the young wildcats.

Now both fourth-generation K-State ASI students appreciate the reunion from an industry level where they can learn from past alumni, connect with their parents’ friends and recognize the departments achievements and industry advancements. All four Perriers claim that their favorite part of the reunion is getting to see the people from all over.

“For some of us I think it’s probably exceeded our expectations,” recalls Tom as he reflected on the original vision of the reunion.

“The two words that I would use to describe the ASI department are exciting and caring. It always brings me so much joy to talk to any of the people in Weber Hall,” concludes Ava. This spoken energy and excitement are

heard when talking with all generations of the Perrier family, regardless of their ASI era. The dedication of a fifth-generation ASI family highlights the true character of the K-State ASI department, as they remain committed to preserving their family legacy and staying true to their Wildcat roots for generations at K-State. **K**



Lyle, Tom and Ava all made their mark during the Bilbrey Family Event Center beam signing.



The Tom Perrier Family recieved the honor of being named the 2023 Stockman of the Year.

RECRUITING *Wildcats*

The first Family & Friends Student Edition welcomed prospective students to explore animal sciences through hands-on experiences ranging from swine and beef reproduction to consumer meat tasting, as well as a tour of the Stocker Unit and an industry browsing fair, showcasing diverse career opportunities in the field.





THIS PLACE IS *for You*

Animal sciences offers hands-on learning, endless opportunities and a pathway to success in animal science.

At Kansas State University's Animal Sciences & Industry department, it's more than just education; it's a family. With a reputation for excellence and a commitment to student success, K-State ASI offers a unique hands-on learning experience that prepares students for a career in animal science.

ASI is the largest major on campus with undergraduate enrollment reaching an all-time high of 1,056 students, a 12.4% increase from last year. This includes a record number of 349 new students. Combined with dual major, graduate, and certificate students in animal and food sciences, the Department's total enrollment stands at 1,342 students.

The program's unique focus on hands-on learning is a key factor driving this growth. The proximity of animal units to campus offers students unparalleled opportunities to work directly with livestock, gaining invaluable practical experience. A recent survey revealed that a significant majority of new ASI students cited the accessibility of these units as a major reason for choosing K-State.

"A degree in Animal Sciences & Industry is incredible versatile and high value," says Dr. Cassie Jones, K-State ASI teaching coordinator. "K-State's program is one of the most accessible in the country, with more than 87% of freshmen applicants being admitted; this is a hallmark of being a land-grant institution whose mission is to teach the people and meet the needs of the state's economy."

Jones goes on to point out, "We have 170 more students in the animal science major than we had two years ago but have been able to maintain student retention rates and employability, with 96% of graduates employed or furthering their education within six months of graduation. We know there are tremendous workforce needs in the state;

we take seriously our charge to recruit and train talent to be the leaders of the animal agriculture industry."

K-State ASI has a world-class faculty, renowned for their research and dedication to teaching. Students benefit from the advising and mentorship from industry experts.

The department's commitment to applied learning aligns perfectly with the university's Next-Gen Strategic Plan. By requiring all new students to complete an applied learning experience, ASI ensures that graduates are well-prepared for the workforce.

Beyond the department's dedication to teaching, the enrollment increase also reflects ASI's commitment to research and extension. A priority of the program is to keep exceptional faculty who maintain nationally recognized research and/or extension programs in the classroom. Their relevance outside the classroom enriches the student learning experience. *ScholarGPS.com* currently ranks K-State as eighth in the U.S. in Animal Sciences research.

As K-State continues to invest in its ASI program, it reinforces its position as a leading institution in teaching, research and extension. By providing students with exceptional academic and practical opportunities, KSU ASI is shaping the future of the animal agriculture industry.

In this editorial section, we feature stories about current and former students, faculty and staff in the K-State ASI department, highlighting why KSU ASI is the No. 1 animal science department in the U.S. as reported by *Collegeraptor.com* for the past two years. **K**

1,056

ANIMAL SCIENCE MAJORS

LARGEST MAJOR AT K-STATE

#1

BEST COLLEGE FOR ANIMAL SCIENCES

by *CollegeRaptor*

IN THIS SECTION:

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Incorporating Animal Unit Tours into prospective student visits has provided an invaluable opportunity for students to experience the hands-on learning available through ASI courses from day one. A recent survey of new students revealed that 76% identified the proximity of the animal units to campus as having a significant or very significant influence on their decision to attend K-State.

Being able to share the experience with them virtually when we are speaking at events and with groups is a great resource for our recruitment process.



“

I understand why generational Wildcats are excited about K-State. As a first-generation K-State student, not even from America, I didn't know K-State existed five-years ago. But now, I love K-State and all things purple. I'm so happy to start that tradition for my family and pave the way for international students. Even if you're not from Kansas or the U.S. – you have a place at K-State.

–Emma Balisky

”

IN STATE
541

VS

OUT OF STATE
534



Check out the department's new podcast "Voices of #KSUASI - Where Legacy Inspires Tomorrow's Excellence." Host Weston Schrader explores the department through interviews with students, faculty, alumni and industry professionals. Voices of #KSUASI offers a backstage pass to the people and ideas shaping the future.



96% CAREER
PLACEMENT
RATE

100 STUDENTS
EMPLOYED AT
ANIMAL UNITS

37% TRANSFER
STUDENTS

BUILDING YOUR OWN PATHWAY

The Animal Sciences and Industry (ASI) curriculum is changing its requirements to better meet the needs of its students and the agriculture industry.

The ASI Department's teaching and advising committee conducted an in-depth curriculum review facilitated by Dr. Brandi Disberger, K-State. The goal of this review was to align academic plans with the evolving needs of the animal agriculture industry and better prepare students for successful careers in the field. The updated curriculum incorporates feedback from graduates, current students, stakeholders, and faculty, gathered through the Developing a Curriculum (DACUM) process and Delphi surveys.

These efforts refined the six curriculum options into two academic plans — Management & Industry and Pre-Vet/Science and provided students the flexibility to tailor their degrees with concentrations for greater depth and breadth in their pathways. Additionally, new certificates were added, and old ones were revised. A key addition to the curriculum was the Applied Learning Experience overlay, which allows students the ability to apply knowledge learned in the classroom in an environment that fosters a purposeful experience, intentional observation, and critical reflection.

Students began being advised on the new curriculum by faculty advisors this past fall. This collaborative process ensures ASI students receive an education that meets industry demands and equips them for meaningful careers in animal agriculture.

“From the outside, this new curriculum may look like it's reducing the variation and choices a student can make with their minor or certificate, but personally, I see it as more doors being opened,” explains Dr. Cassie Jones, ASI teaching coordinator. “The new requirements will allow students to take more classes within the ASI department therefore allowing them more freedom to explore their minor. They also get to spend more time interacting with the amazing animal science faculty who have shaped the program into what it is today, which is No. 1 in the country.”

To learn more about the new pathways, visit asi.k-state.edu/academicplans.

BEYOND

THE CLASSROOM

Students are stepping out of the classroom to strengthen their knowledge in hands-on classes and labs in their chosen field.

STORY BY KAITLYN CARLSON

Who doesn't love getting their hands dirty? At Kansas State University, the Animal Sciences and Industry Department offers many opportunities for students to do just that. By applying what they learn in lectures, students engage in hands-on classes at the livestock units or in labs on campus. K-State is also implementing applied learning experiences into various departments' curriculum, including ASI. These classes are highly influential, helping students prepare and solidify the career path they choose. ASI encourages students to participate in hands-on classes so students can gain background knowledge in their specific career choice.

A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Andrew Kirmer, an ASI senior, wants to specialize in farm animal reproduction. One of

the classes that helped aid in his career choice was a palpation lab with Dr. David Grieger, KSU ASI professor.

"In lecture, we learned the science behind palpating. But actually palpating the cow and touching the fetus, the ovaries, and other landmarks within the cow was very different from what's in the book," Kirmer says.

He emphasizes that the lab taught him more in depth about the process and feel of palpation that he could not receive from a textbook. It is important in the ASI department that every student gains a better understanding of what they are learning in lectures. Labs test that learning and make students apply it in a real-world situation. The hands-on classes offer a more personal way of learning as well.

"You get to know your professors on a more personal level, they are teaching you

what they know from a field standpoint versus just classroom lectures," Kirmer explains.

Farm Animal Reproduction (ASI 400) lecture is a 100-plus student class, the palpation lab (ASI 401) is a lot smaller, around 15 students. Students are able to directly learn from professors and stay engaged in what they are teaching.

Regan Ast, an ASI senior with a concentration in business, also earned an Equine Science Certificate. To earn the certificate, she took several classes at K-State's Horse Unit, a key factor in her college decision.

"The fact that there's the opportunity to go out and touch horses and work with them, K-State is one of the only colleges with a horse unit in Kansas," Ast says.

Ast valued the hands-on teaching at K-State, which helped her gain industry specific knowledge. After graduation, Ast

wants to train horses and eventually have her own ranch. The classes out at the unit influenced her decisions about her future facility, including whether she wants to stand studs and foal out mares.

“I get to experience what I like and don’t like, and learn things that I would like to do down the road,” Ast adds. The beginner and advanced horse training classes have been some of her favorites. “I get instruction and feedback on my training, which helps me feel more confident in myself and what I’m doing,” Ast says.

She trains horses on her own outside of school but “being in a place where I have guidance and support is really nice because at home I don’t have that,” she says. K-State gave Ast the opportunity to work with different horses, each one with their own personality that helped her learn new skills.

A PROFESSOR’S PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Payton Dahmer, ASI instructor and livestock judging coach, incorporates hands-on classes into his teaching approach.

“I teach more effectively in a hands-on environment; simply standing at the front of the classroom and lecturing isn’t my style. I’m at my best when I can be out teaching at one of the farms or in the arena,” Dahmer explains.

Dahmer integrates labs into every class he teaches, giving students the opportunity to apply lecture material in real-world situations. “Hands-on classes force students to apply the knowledge they learn rather than just memorizing definitions or memorizing words they see on a screen,” Dahmer says. “They have to be able to retain that information, think about it critically and accurately and actually apply it to a situation.”

He wants to make sure students are understanding what he is teaching in his classes and that they will be able to take it and use it in their future career.

“We have so many options and opportunities, I encourage students to take one class that is maybe a little outside their comfort zone. They may learn a lot and find something they really enjoy,” Dahmer says.

Teaching Coordinator Dr. Cassie Jones played a pivotal role in leading the integration of the Applied Learning Experience overlay into the new curriculum, emphasizing its value in enhancing hands-on learning and real-world application for students this fall.

“Part of my job as an educator is to help make sure that there are opportunities for students to implement and apply concepts from the classroom to real-world experiences,” Jones says. “Whether that is gaining some sort of experience in a work or research setting, studying abroad, or being in a 15-passenger van on a competition team, these experiences are a way to apply learning in a whole different avenue that is much richer than what we can do within a classroom lecture.” **K**



Andrew Kirmer palpates a heifer to determine pregnancy under the guidance of Dr. Grieger.



Reagan Ast, ASI senior, values the hands-on opportunities she’s had at the K-State Horse Unit.

KSU ASI Applied Learning Options

K-State’s wide range of hands-on classes, labs and applied learning experiences encourage students to pursue different career paths. Many students would never have the opportunity on their own to have these hands-on experiences, depending on the background they are coming from. These opportunities allow students to gain practical experience in their chosen fields, enhancing their resumes and improving their job prospects post-graduation.



Editor’s Note: Use this QR Code to check out ASI’s hands-on classes.



OPEN DOOR *Policy*

ASI advisors go above and beyond to ensure student success.

STORY BY LINDSEY LEHMAN

Walking through the doors of Weber Hall as a freshman or transfer student can be overwhelming. Filling the shoes of many legacy holders who are framed in the halls of Weber, and upholding the character of the No. 1 animal science program in the country is no small feat. However, the name plaques next to the open door of professors and faculty often lead to smiling faces and welcoming conversation.

Dr. Karol Fike, who has been welcoming students into her office since 2008, knows the

importance of intentionality in advisor/advisee relationships. Those relationships not only lead the way to smooth class scheduling and keeping students on track, but also for letters of recommendations, internship opportunities, positive morale, graduate school and beyond.

Tate Anderson, a May 2024 ASI graduate from Baldwin City, Kansas, started at K-State College of Veterinary Medicine in fall of 2024. His freshman year at K-State, he was paired to be an advisee of Fike's and has deep gratitude for the ways she has led him through the

journey of applying to vet school. Although Fike is humble and gives much credit to all the department advisors, Anderson shares how impactful her guidance was.

"Not only was she helpful in the process of applying to vet school, but helped me get a competitive application together," he explains.

Fike sent Anderson internship and job opportunities, as well as scholarship applications he would be a good fit for. An acceptance letter for vet school is no small feat, and students like Anderson who have the

endurance and passion to go above and beyond make it easy for advisors to provide assistance. Fike recognized the effort Anderson was putting toward his education and says advisor/advisee relationships are certainly a two-way street. Fike says she can remember Anderson when he came to her office as a freshman and admits there were some bumps in his first year, as there are for most new college students.

“He has become a confident, articulate leader amongst his peers in the department, which is rewarding to see,” she adds.

In her 15 years of advising ASI students, she has grown to appreciate the diverse backgrounds students come from and learning about why they choose to study animal science. Fike prioritizes the two-way street which relationships with students are meant to be and knows each advisor in the department does the same.

One of Fike’s advisees, Ashtyn Griffin, who is an ASI senior from De Kalb, Missouri, says the ASI advisor model is extremely beneficial. “Faculty advisors can provide guidance that is valuable to us students because they have been in our shoes. They are knowledgeable on the department itself as well as the course work required for certain degrees. They can connect students with research and internship opportunities with industry professionals from within their field.”

Griffin says she believes a good advisor is not only knowledgeable and experienced but also someone who creates a supportive and encouraging environment. “A good advisor should help you to navigate academics while also empowering and challenging you to be the best student and person you can be,” Griffin adds. “My advisor, Dr. Fike, is personable and someone that I feel I could go to for anything whether that be academics, internships or even personal struggles. Through her mentorship,

she has helped me to identify my strengths and set goals that will help me in my future career path whatever that may be. Even after my time at K-State has finished, she is someone I could go to for guidance during my professional career. I am truly grateful to Dr. Fike for her role in my college experience.”

Griffin encourages other students to make it a priority to develop a relationship with their advisor. “I would recommend being open, honest and communicative with your advisor because after all they are assigned to you to help you,” she summarizes.

Another example of a success story in the ASI department is ASI 2024 Graduate Sierra Collier, coming from Fresno, California. After hearing about the education and opportunity K-State has to offer at a recruitment event, Collier says, “That is the place for me.”

Collier recalls enrolling for classes her first semester and Dr. Bob Goodband had pre-planned her schedule for the next three semesters; all she had to do was make sure they aligned in her schedule. Fast forward a few years and Collier graduated in May 2024 and started graduate school to study and research Applied Swine Nutrition in August. However, when she first got to Manhattan, she had no thoughts of pursuing a master’s degree.

Collier credits Goodband’s open door for guiding her into this next phase with a welcoming attitude. Collier recalls many conversations with Goodband in his office. In that office, he would not only tell Collier of internship and scholarship opportunities, but also student and professor resources for guidance in high level courses and eventually an offer for graduate school.

Collier says if Goodband hadn’t seen her in a while, he would make sure she sat down and had a genuine chat with him about her

journey at K-State. Collier explains, “The advisee program has been my favorite thing here so far,” which speaks to the depth of care Goodband has provided, along with the swine team and ASI department.

Collier says she is excited about her graduate research and enjoys the tight-knit community and how each member of the Swine Nutrition team works together. She knows who she will go to in her studies when she needs help in statistics and scientific writing, because each individual has their strengths to collaborate for the good of the cause. Goodband helped Collier land an internship with JBS for the summer of 2024, along with many scholarships to help on the financial aspect of education.

Goodband notes the joy he gets from seeing the excitement in students when they are new to K-State and watching that grow into furthering education and landing internships and jobs is rewarding. With about 50 advisees, Goodband emphasizes the worth of students who seek out relationships with the professionals they get to learn from, and appreciates the relationship he had with his advisor, Dr. Bob Hines, while completing his master’s and doctorate at K-State.

At the heart of faculty-based advising is a commitment to empowering students not only during their time at K-State but also for their future careers. Whether it’s Fike’s intentional guidance or Goodband’s open-door, advisors in the department go beyond academics to help students discover their passion for the agricultural industry. **K**



STUDENTS AT WORK

Five ASI students share the knowledge they have gained from working at various ASI units and labs.

STORY BY MARGOT STEWART

Q: What is your day-to-day like at your job?

CHAPMAN: “My job title consists of everything but driving the feed tractor! I milk and take care of cows, hook up tanks, manage herd health and help with calving.”

LOVESEE: “I spend my day helping all the different people we have come through. I scoop their ice cream; answer any questions they may have and assist my coworkers with any help they need. I make sure orders are completed in a timely manner and work hard to keep things flowing as smoothly as possible.”

PRESTER: “My day-to-day duties consist of grinding meat product that will be sold at the meat sale later in the week, cutting up carcasses for the retail case, lots of cleaning to ensure facilities are well kept and working with customers at the Friday meat sale.”

PARKER: “I get to do laboratory work and work on research projects for graduate students and my professor. I also get to perform various assays, grow and proliferate cells and perform different experiments.”

SWANSON: “I assist graduate students with whatever lab work needs completed like grinding feed samples, cleaning bones, and various other tasks. I also assist with weigh days, fecal sample collection, and blood collection out at the swine unit.”

Q: Why did you seek a campus job?

CHAPMAN: “I knew I had an interest in the ruminant area and wanted more experience, specifically with large ruminants. I enjoyed my dairy lab course my first semester of college, which drew me to this job.”

LOVESEE: “Freshman year, I started off-campus work first and it was pretty difficult as a student. Working on campus is so much easier and flexible with your schedule.”

PRESTER: “I have worked on and off-campus and on-campus has been a better option for me. On-campus jobs are flexible and work with my class schedule.”

PARKER: “I was looking for an on campus job because I wanted to get involved in research so working in this position has been a great way to get into the research field as an undergraduate student. Seeking a campus job was very advantageous because they have flexible hours so they can easily work around my school schedule.”

SWANSON: “I wanted to learn more about research, so I took the undergrad research course. During that time, I did research in the swine nutrition area and really enjoyed it so I looked for a campus job that would give me the opportunity to learn more in that area.”

Q: What have you learned from working at your job?

CHAPMAN: “I have learned a lot! Everything is hands-on and covers everything from calving, calf care, reproduction, milking, herd health, forage testing and learning how to hook up tanks and repair them. I think the most important thing I have learned is how everything works together as one big system.”



Rylee Chapman
Dairy Unit



Paisley Lovesee
Call Hall Dairy Bar



Mason Prester
Meat Lab



Chanae Parker
Muscle Biology Lab



Samantha Swanson
Swine Lab

LOVESEE: “I have improved my leadership skills and learned how to better interact with customers of all backgrounds too.”

PRESTER: “All of my meat skills. I have learned lots of new processing techniques, management skills, how to work with others, conduct sales and fill out paperwork.”

PARKER: “Working in this position, I’ve learned a lot of communication skills as well as lab and research skills like scientific writing and presentations.”

SWANSON: “I’ve learned a lot about the research process and what it looks like to do research in an applied setting, as well as doing presentations and writing abstracts. It has helped me grow in a research setting and a personal one as well.”

Q: How has your job prepared you for your career or continuing your education?

CHAPMAN: “I didn’t really know what I wanted to do before working at the Dairy Unit. I would say my work experience has streamlined my opportunity and interests. My job has given me a bird’s-eye view of everything going on and all the moving parts associated with it.”

LOVESEE: “Working at Call Hall and talking to people in my major has helped me to make decisions on what I want to do. I am more of an animal person than a people person, but as much as I want to work with animals, I have to be able to work with the owners as well. Working at Call Hall has helped me with this and learning how to react to certain scenarios.”

PRESTER: “My job has taught me a lot of the skills needed to work in the meat industry, and I have made many connections that will be useful for me when I graduate.”

PARKER: “I didn’t expect to be passionate about muscle biology. I was just looking to get into the research space and see where that

led me. I knew I wanted to pursue graduate school, and this job showed me what graduate school looks like and how to prepare myself for that experience. My experience has taught me a lot about the biology of the animals we study and has further developed my passion for muscle biology and showed me this is the field I want to continue to work in. I would not have found my passion to pursue graduate school if I didn’t work in the lab.”

SWANSON: “For me personally, working with the Swine Nutrition team as an undergraduate student has been a good learning experience and has provided me with a lot of skills I will be using in the future. The graduate students have taught me various animal handling skills, and proper lab techniques. I also learned what going to graduate school looks like and how to prepare for it. Working on various research projects sparked my interest in doing more research and helped me find a passion for swine nutrition that led me to pursue graduate school.” **K**





STUDENTS *in Action*

The K-State ASI Family & Friends Reunion wouldn't be possible without the dedication of student volunteers. From ASI club members to rodeo and judging team participants, each student plays an essential role in the event's success. Their hard work and commitment help bring the reunion to life.







FUTURE *Wildcats*

The K-State ASI Family & Friends Reunion offers fun for all ages, especially the kids. Youth can enjoy the Junior Wildcat Barnyard, sign their K-State letter of intent, or play on the football field. A highlight for many is the toy drawing at the end of the night. These activities make the reunion memorable for everyone.

MORE THAN

The value of peer discussion in helping prospective students find their place in the department.

STORY BY ABI LILLARD

Choosing where to further your education is more than just picking a school; it's about finding a community you will thrive in. At Kansas State University, the Animal Sciences and Industry Mentor Program is making that choice easier for prospective students looking to continue their educational journey.

When Lauren Wolter, a second-year ASI student from Illinois, was looking to further her education, she admits, K-State was never on her list to visit. After a quick visit on a rainy December day in Manhattan, Wolter knew this was where she needed to be.

She says, "When I reflected back on my visit here, I felt like K-State was the place that wanted me the most. I knew that I would be valued as more than just another student, which was worth quite a bit to me."

It was on that day when a simple introduction was the beginning of so much more. The connections formed during those initial visits often evolve into some of the most meaningful relationships at K-State, from friendships with fellow students to mentorships with professors who genuinely care.

"Almost everyone I met that day has become one of my closest friends or mentors,

not just because they're ASI Mentors, but because of the people they are — both professors and students," Wolter says.

ROLLING OUT THE PURPLE CARPET

A week prior to a visit, the ASI department sends each student a pre-visit survey. This survey gathers information regarding their interests in academics and extracurriculars, previous campus visits, dual credit or AP classes, and any specific needs or preferences for their time within the ASI department.

One of the most unique and special aspects of the ASI Mentor Program is its ability to provide crucial support to students who are considering K-State or exploring their options. Mentors play a key role in helping these prospective students envision what life at K-State could be like.

Perhaps one of the greatest values of Wolters first visit to K-State's campus was the opportunity to connect with a peer of similar interests. Lauren Thompson, a fourth-year ASI student and an ASI Mentor from Wisconsin, was assigned to Wolter's visit.

A VISIT

She says, "We connected instantly during her visit, bonding over shared interests and her K-State goals. That day sparked a friendship that has grown into one I know will last forever."

As an out-of-state student herself, Thompson understood how important it is to make every prospective student feel welcomed and comfortable on campus.

Thompson says, "My parents were nervous to send me here, and so to sit across the table from parents and students and say, 'If this is where your kid wants to be, we'll do everything in our power to make that possible and help them be successful,' that's something that really sets K-State apart from other schools."

Wolter adds, "Whenever we talked with people about making the decision, there was always a question of 'Why choose K-State over another school?' Well, they rolled out the purple carpet for me, and Lauren was definitely one of the people who made it feel that way for us."

A LASTING IMPACT

ASI Mentors play an important role during prospective student visits by building lasting

connections and sharing their experiences. Through these interactions, they provide insight into the department's strong sense of community and the opportunities available at K-State.

"I definitely had the most student interaction at K-State compared to the other schools I visited." Wolter adds, "It felt like I was wanted so much more at K-State because of the students on my visit."

Thompson has had the unique opportunity to be on numerous visits and tours, making an impact in each student's decision to attend K-State.

"I think it's unique to get to know each student who visits. It helps build connections and shows how diverse and strong K-State animal science is," Thompson says.

When it came to making that decision to join the K-State family, it was those purple carpet experiences, surrounded by current students and future peers of Wolter, that helped her envision her place in Weber Hall.

"The biggest moment for me was standing right outside the meat judging trophy case, talking to my future peers and listening to their strong vision of what I could be here at K-State." She adds, "It was in that special moment that I witnessed their passion and had the chance to engage in a meaningful and honest conversation with those who were once in my position and are now making their mark at K-State."

With her experience as a prospective student, getting to be an ASI Mentor has since been a goal of Wolter's. One she was able to accomplish at the end of her first year.

"As somebody that was so unfamiliar with K-State and found a community and a family so fast within the department, I wanted to be a part of telling that story to others," Thompson says.

Being an ASI Mentor provides many opportunities for growth not only academically, but personally too.

"My gratitude has grown immensely at K-State. Walking through campus, passing the trophy case, or simply seeing open doors and friendly faces, I am reminded daily of the privilege of being part of this vibrant community." Thompson adds, "It's a blessing to feel so at home, even 900 miles from home, and to share that sense of belonging with others."

Finding your place at any school can be challenging. When considering your role on campus, it's important to recognize that everyone has the opportunity to be a mentor.

Thompson says, "Own your story and understand that it has value. Know that where you came from or how you grew up, whether you bled purple or knew nothing about K-State before you got here, those are all things that are important in stories that we need to share." She adds, "Value everything that makes you." **K**



Lauren Thompson, left, and Lauren Wolter met during Wolter's K-State visit.

ASI MENTORS

By offering a unique peer-to-peer experience that goes beyond brochures and campus tours, ASI Mentors make meaningful connections and firsthand insights that enable future Wildcats to feel confident and excited about their decision to join the K-State family.

The ASI Mentors are a dedicated group of undergraduate students who volunteer their time and talents to connect with prospective students, their families, and industry and university stakeholders. These students assist with department visits, unit tours, ASI events, and industry gatherings, where they play a vital role in engaging with future students.



BUILDING *for the future*

Construction continues of Bilbrey Family Event Center and Global Center for Grain and Food Innovation.



Global Center for Grain and Food Innovation



Bilbrey Family Event Center



Bottoming Out Celebration

The Agriculture Innovation Initiative is the single largest building project in the history of Kansas State University. The \$210 million project includes new facilities, renovations of current buildings, improvements in the technology and equipment necessary for interdisciplinary, cutting-edge research and continuing to enhance the college's exceptional student experience.

The initiative includes the new Bilbrey Family Event Center north of the main campus in the Animal Sciences Gateway Campus near the Stanley Stout Center. It will include a state-of-the-art arena and space for K-State ASI teaching and extension events.

Dr. Dave Nichols, ASI professor emeritus and Ag Innovation construction consultant, says, "Construction is proceeding well, even with the weather delays and challenges, we still expect the facility to open in the fall of 2025."

On Wednesday, Nov. 20, the department and college hosted a Bilbrey Family Event Center Beam Signing. This construction milestone was observed by allowing students, faculty, staff and friends of the department to make their mark and sign a beam that is now in the new facility. Currently, the ribbon cutting for the event is scheduled for late September 2025.

Renovations to Weber and Call Hall are also included in the Ag Innovation Initiative. "These upgrades will allow students to have hands-on learning on the main campus through the new learning pavilion," says Dr. Mike Day, K-State ASI department head. "This upgrade is critical for the unique learning experiences through classes like Livestock and Meat Evaluation and ASI 105, 106 and 107 labs. The pavilion will have adjacent animal holding facilities and direct access to the updated Meat Lab to integrate live-to-meat evaluation."

The new upgrades will improve Weber Hall accessibility and provide updates to research and teaching labs in Weber and Call Halls. "It will be exciting for our faculty to teach, discover and provide outreach education from modern, state-of-the-art facilities," Day adds.

The initiative will fully modernize the Dairy Processing Plant in Call Hall to meet the needs of the industry, students and researchers. Along with the plant, Call Hall Dairy Bar will relocate to the main entrance of the new Global Center for Grain and Food Innovation, increasing its visibility and featuring all food products produced by the College of Agriculture.

"Students will continue to have access to comfortable studying and integration spaces like the relocated Jack Riley Student Center," Day explains. "Upgrades will also include updated classroom spaces to modernize learning spaces, such as Weber 123 or the Miles McKee Auditorium."

Construction for the Global Center for Grain and Food Innovation, which will connect Weber and Call Halls, is currently underway. A "bottoming out" event on October 31, 2024, celebrated the lowest point in the construction process, including the demolition of Weber Arena, and will continue with progress as it goes up at the site.

The Global Center for Grain and Food Innovation is estimated to open in the fall of 2026. As of early 2025, the Meat Lab is scheduled to close in May for modernization and planned to reopen in October. The current Dairy Processing Plant will shut down the summer of 2025 and scheduled to reopen the summer 2026.

To learn more about the Ag Innovation Initiative, to keep up to date on the construction and to see how you can support the project, visit k-state.edu/ag-innovation. **K**



HOME OF THE CHAMPIONS

K-State ASI students win Meat Animal Evaluation, Meat and Livestock national championships in 2024.

The Kansas State University Livestock Judging Team won National Champion honors at the 2024 North American International Livestock Exposition Judging Contest in Louisville, Kentucky. Winning the bronze bull wraps up a historic year with K-State teams winning national honors in Meat Animal Evaluation in April and Meat Judging in early November.

“This championship caps off a tremendous year for our students who participate in livestock and meat judging,” says Dr. Mike Day, K-State ASI department head. “Starting in April, the K-State team, which includes students that participate in livestock and/or meat judging, were champions of the all-encompassing and capstone Meat Animal Evaluation Contest. In early November, the K-State Meat Judging Team was crowned as national champion. The excellence displayed by the livestock team rounds out this trifecta. The ongoing commitment of the ASI department to applied learning opportunities for our students is emphasized by our recent successes in the judging area.”

The livestock team victory marks the 16th national championship for K-State’s livestock judging program. With a dominant performance in 2024, K-State won swine, sheep and goats, and reasons and was second in cattle. All five member of the marking team placed in the top 15 with Jacob Klautdt, Beulah, North Dakota, winning high individual overall. Earning Livestock Academic All-Americans were Quinna Molden, Middletown, Virginia; Kylie Schakel, Atlanta, Indiana; and Bailey Lavender, Branford, Florida.

Individually four students placed in the top 10 overall in Meat Judging. Placing in the top 10 were Reece Geer, Clay Center, Kansas, third; Hailey Wurtz, Seneca, Kansas, fourth; Madison Bruna, Barnes, Kansas, fifth; and Hayden Lott, Minneapolis, Kansas, 10th. In addition, four students placed in the top 10 of the alternates contest, including Jordan Sylvester, Wamego, Kansas, first; Emma Balisky, Alberta, Canada, second; August Hulse, Culver, Kansas, third; and Riley Youngers, Wylie, Texas, sixth. Earning Meat Judging Academic All-Americans in 2024 were Reece Geer, 1st Team; Hailey Wurtz, 2nd Team; and Hayden Lott, 2nd Team.

The Meat Animal Evaluation team had six members place in the top 10 overall. Kyla Mennen, Logansport, Indiana, was first; Cole Murphy, Houstonia, Missouri, second; Sadie Marchiano, Fort Scott, Kansas, third; Bailey Lavender, fourth, and Sam Stickley, St Paris, Ohio, fifth.

The livestock team is coached by Dr. Payton Dahmer and graduate students Brody Nemecek and Jentry Squires. The meat judging team is coached by Dr. Travis O’Quinn and graduate student Steph Witherler. The meat animal evaluation team is coached by Dahmer, O’Quinn and Chris Mullinix. **K**



LIVESTOCK JUDGING



MEAT JUDGING



MEAT ANIMAL EVALUATION

FACES *of family*

The K-State ASI Family & Friends Reunion, hosted Saturday, October 5, at the Stanley Stout Center, brought together alumni, students, and supporters for an evening of connection and celebration. It was a chance to share memories and make new ones with the people who make the K-State family special.





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KELLY & MARCIE LECHTENBERG & FAMILY

Drs. Kelly and Marcie Lechtenberg are proud supporters of K-State's missions. The family's passion for K-State began when Kelly entered veterinary school in 1983 while Marcie was teaching at Riley County High School. Marcie earned her Master's while Kelly completed his DVM degree in the College of Veterinary Medicine and PhD program in the College of Agriculture. After several years as a genetic cancer risk counselor, Marcie came back to school and completed her doctorate in 2014. She continued with K-State, where she served as Clinical Director in the Couple and Family Therapy Program in the College of Health and Human Sciences until her retirement in 2023. Marcie maintains a private counseling practice in Manhattan.

Kelly's educational background was critical to founding companies in Nebraska, Kansas and Iowa that provide research services focused on the development and regulatory approval of safe, efficacious products for food-producing animals. Kelly sold the three research companies to Argenta Global in 2023, but continues to serve as the MVS President and leads the research teams.

Although they grew up in Nebraska, the Lechtenberg daughters and their husbands are all K-Staters. Dr. Jana Biery is a guidance counselor in the Manhattan High School system. Her husband, Drew, is the owner of The Barn Baseball Academy and a Special Education teacher at Junction City High School. Drs. Brooke and Charley Cull both serve the Argenta organization. Brooke is the MVS Executive Vice President, while Charley has been appointed as Argenta's global head of pharmaceutical development services and also leads all US clinical operations. Youngest daughter, Dr. Paige Andersen, manages the TimberCreek Veterinary Hospital on the east side of Manhattan. Paige's husband, Max, owns Andersen Farrier Service as a Journeyman Farrier and cattle rancher. The Lechtenberg family holds 18 K-State degrees. More will likely follow, as five grandsons (Jackson, Carter, Cannon, Mason and Brooks) and two granddaughters (Madeline and Emily) can all be seen wearing a lot of purple.

The Lechtenbergs are members of the KSU Foundation Board of Trustees and Kelly served for nine years as a member of the KSU Foundation Board of Directors. Kelly is also a LMIC Royal Board member. The Lechtenberg family are founding and continuous supporters of the Family & Friends Reunion to honor the K-State experience, which can help foster lifelong relationships through the power of mentorship, education and friendship that makes all of us part of the K-State family. The Lechtenberg family was recognized as the 2020 Don L. Good Impact Award winner for their dedication to K-State and animal agriculture.



GOLD SPONSORS

DAN & BETH BIRD

Dan and Beth Bird are no strangers to Kansas State University, and their legacy of philanthropic support, leadership and service in so many different colleges and programs is impressive. Dan received his degree in animal husbandry from K-State in 1962. Beth earned her degree in business administration from K-State in 1961.

The couple resides in Manhattan, Kansas. Dan is a part owner in Pratt Feeders, Ashland Feeders, Buffalo Feeders and Ford County Feeders. Beth is enjoying retirement.

Dan is a past member of the Alumni Association Board of Directors. Both are lifetime members of the Alumni Association and members of the Beach Museum Board of Visitors, of which Beth is past chair. They are members of the Manhattan Catbackers. Beth served on the board for Hale Library, and both Dan and Beth served on the College of Agriculture's Innovation and Inspiration Campaign steering committee. They are also supporters of K-State Athletics, the K-State Gardens and McCain Auditorium building projects, and the K-State ASI Family & Friends Reunion.

Since Dan's first gift of \$10 in 1964, Dan and Beth have established five named funds and scholarships in the colleges of Agriculture and Business Administration, and across K-State. In 2018 the couple was awarded the K-State Medal of Excellence, which recognizes those who have advanced K-State through exceptional service, leadership and philanthropic contributions.

The couple has two children and two grandchildren.



RICHARD PORTER

Richard Porter owns and operates a grazing and backgrounding operation located approximately 60 miles southeast of Manhattan, Kansas. He receives around 8,000 head of three-weight, high-risk calves annually and grows them out to eight-weights. For most of the year, the cattle are on native grass supplemented with distiller's grains. By mid-winter, the calves are in a drylot receiving corn silage.

Known for being an independent thinker, Rich has two degrees from Kansas State University — Chemical Engineering and Master of Agribusiness (MAB). He also holds a law degree. Rich has participated in numerous cattle research trials with the Animal Sciences and Industry (ASI) department and is a proud member of the Livestock Meat Industry Council (LMIC) Board of Directors.

Richard follows in the footsteps of his late father, Walter Porter, who was involved with LMIC from its founding, and also worked closely with the KSU College of Agriculture.

A staunch supporter of the K-State ASI department, Rich generously served as the lead donor for the Stanley Stout Center. He donates to many other ASI projects.

Rich has three children and five grandchildren.



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Rawhide Portable Corral was established in 2002 in Abilene, Kansas, by owner/inventor John McDonald, and alongside his wife, Mary, they continue to run the business together. Both were K-State ASI students.



Rawhide was the first hydraulic corral on the market and along with John's flexible pinning system, they revolutionized the portable corral market. In 2024 they introduced a patent pending Portable Windbreak using similar innovation as the portable corrals. These products are designed to make work easier and more efficient on the farm, ranch or livestock production business.

For more information, visit RawhidePortableCorral.com.

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Thank you to this outstanding group of students who helped with the production of this publication. The class was sponsored by the LMIC Board. Pictured (l to r) are: Sydney Stolee; Kaitlyn Carlson, social media editor; Abi Lillard, photo editor; Lindsey Lehman; Emerson Tarr; Emma Balisky; Claire Norris; Kelly Gaffney; Olivia Gerloff; Margot Stewart; Lauren Gatz, managing editor; and Mackenzie Malson.



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