

M I D D L E T E N N E S S E E



School of Agribusiness and Agriscience

(615) 898-2523 ♦ www.mtsu.edu/abas



Look at what
is inside:

- Dairy Grand Opening
- MTSU AG Around the World
- Student Farmers Market

2011-2012

MTSU Ag Centennial Year was a Major Success!



Warren Gill, Director

MTSU School of Agribusiness and Agriscience (ABAS)

With an official enrollment of 535 majors, the School of Agribusiness and Agriscience (ABAS) hit an all-time record in the fall of 2011. This represented an increase of almost 14 percent over 2010. This is particularly impressive in light of the relatively slower growth in overall enrollment at MTSU.

Ten of the 535 students were the first Master of Science in Horse Science (M.S.H.S.) class. This is a great start and we are very proud of the quality of these students. This is a great addition for our signature horse science program.

The grand opening of the Dairy was a major highlight of the year. Approximately 500 alumni, students and friends attended. This was the culmination of a \$4.4 million dollar building program at the new MTSU Experiential Learning and Research Center. The centerpiece is the \$2.7 million dollar dairy.

Other highlights:

- Faculty generated over a half million dollars in grants.
- The student gardens and nursery are developing nicely, along with the student farmer's market.
- Agricultural Education's dual credit program continued to expand, and looks for more growth now that the state legislature has funded a program for transfer of credits between Universities.
- The Horse Judging Team won two major contests. The Equitation Team also had a very successful year, as did the Dairy Products Evaluation Team.
- Raiderfest, where high school ag students visit the Stark Agriculture and attend a MTSU football game, was held in conjunction with Homecoming with almost 200 students, as well as alumni participating.
- We had our best-yet Ag Career / Internship Day with nineteen employers looking for both interns and new hires. A highlight this year was an "Aggie Etiquette Dinner" sponsored by Farm Credit Services.
- Almost \$50,000 in ag scholarships were awarded. This was thanks to many generous sponsors and was also partly due to the growth of the Garrigus, Dement and the new Dr. Jerry Williams scholarship endowments.

A Message from the Student Agriculture Government Association President

In the 2011/2012 academic year, many changes took place for the Ag Council, including a name change and incorporating bylaws. These changes, through trial and error, proved to be for the benefit of the agriculture community at MTSU. The new, professional name which is now recognized officially by MTSU has given the officers of the School of Agribusiness and Agriscience (ABAS) a better look and has encompassed what we are about: a student government association for agriculture.

After becoming president for **Student Agriculture Government Association (SAGA)**, I soon learned that not only did the organization need a makeover and some changes, but I had to change some things about myself as well. Small things like getting over my personal preferences helped me to see that this organization was not about myself and my making a grand difference; it was about helping and promoting agriculture and farming, not only in the ag department at MTSU.

SAGA provides a strong leadership ABAS as a whole; the officers and students made that possible. As a former uninvolved student, it will never hurt you to become active in the student agriculture organizations that are made available. Success is not only about making the grades and getting a degree - it's about the degree to which you have changed in the process, and involvement is step one.

Best of Luck!

Alyse-Beth Avery

SAGA President, 2011-2012



The 2011-2012 ABAS newsmagazine was designed by **Gabriella Starr**. Gaby is a senior **ag education** major who transferred to MTSU her junior year and immediately became an active and involved student.

Raiderfest 2011

The fifth annual **Raiderfest** was the best yet. The event, hosted by the MTSU School of Agribusiness and Agriscience (ABAS) and organized by the **Student Agriculture Government Association (SAGA)**, welcomed 195 high school agriculture students, teachers and chaperones from across the state.

The event was extra-special this year because it was held along with **MTSU Homecoming**, so students were treated to **100th Anniversary festivities**. This included getting to meet and greet many ag alumni who were on hand for the celebration.

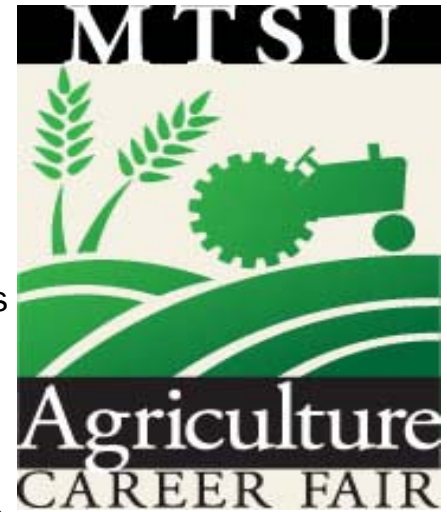
Raiderfest gave prospective agriculture students the opportunity to visit the MTSU campus, learn about the MTSU agriculture program, and tour some of the farm laboratories. As usual, the MTSU chocolate milk was a highlight.

It also gave the high school students the opportunity to meet and greet MTSU ABAS faculty and interact with students representing ag-related clubs and organizations.

Most of all, the students who joined in Raiderfest had fun. ABAS students organized numerous events and treated the students and other guests to hamburgers, hot dogs and all the trimmings, and capped the day with a very exciting football game versus the University of Memphis.



2012 Ag Career and Internship Fair Was the Best Yet!



Eighteen employers were kept busy recruiting students for ag business, plant science and animal science positions, as well as for internships and graduate school opportunities, at the 4th annual **MTSU Agriculture Career and Internship Fair** in March.

The career fair lasted only 4 1/2 hours and was busy the entire time. Students, dressed and groomed for the occasion, kept the exhibitors occupied with a constant barrage of questions and a shower of fresh resumes. Holding the event at the **Tennessee Livestock Center** was a great improvement in 2012.

An ag career fair workshop and etiquette dinner, “**Etiquette for Aggies,**” was held the evening before the career fair. Sponsored by **Farm Credit Services of Mid-America (FCS)**, about forty students were first coached on how to prepare for the career fair by **Lewis Gray** from the **MTSU Career Counseling Center**, **Heather Sutherland** from **FCS** and **Dr. Warren Gill**, **Director of the School of Agribusiness and Agriscience**.

Then the real work began when the students learned about dining etiquette while being served a delightful meal at The Tennessee Livestock Center.

The Ag Career Fair was sponsored by the **Student Agriculture Government Association (SAGA)**, the **School of Agribusiness and Agriscience** and the **MTSU Career Development Center**.

Employers who attended:

- Farm Credit Services of Mid-America
- Heritage Farms Dairy/Kroger
- Landscape Services, Inc. (LSI)
- MTSU College of Basic and Applied Sciences
- Peace Corps
- Peaceful Pastures, LLC
- Rutherford County PAWS
- Tennessee Beef Council
- Tennessee Department of Agriculture
- Tennessee Farmers Cooperative
- Tennessee State University
- Tractor Supply
- TriGreen Equipment
- TYSON FOODS, INC.
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- USDA APHIS
- USDA NRCS
- The University of Tennessee

MTSU Agriculture

Over 100 students, faculty, parents and friends attended the **2012 Ag Banquet** held at the community center in the Lane Agri-Park. All agreed this year's event was a success.

The event opened with a reception honoring **Dr. Jerry Williams**. In 2011, an endowment was set up to honor this retired faculty member.

A major highlight of the event was the awarding of nearly **\$30,000** in scholarships to **27 deserving students**.

Sponsors for the event were Tennessee Farmer's Co-op, Bart Krisle (President of Tennessee Farmer's Co-op), Farm Credit Services of Mid-America, Rutherford Farmer's Co-op, Rutherford Farm Bureau and the Tennessee Farm Bureau.





The Scholarships Recipients were:



Adams Family--Katlyn Currie and T. Dalton Pate

Ag Endowment--Emily Kopko, Tristan Malan, Megan Pohl and Erica Robinson

Alpha Gamma Rho--Tyler Hobson

Boxwood Farms--Eric Limbird

Catherine Ellington--Sarah Davidson

Dairy Science Club--Carrie Major

Fowler and Ruth Nickle--Kaylee Leydens

Hayden Memorial--Jessica Wilson

Heritage Farm--Carrie Major

Hugh Burrum--Lauren Jones, Kendall Martin and Sheryl Slusser

Mark Moskovitz--Ellen Goertzen

Robert Alexander--Tiara Rainer

Robert Jarrell Memorial--Zach Hopkins

TN Council of Coops--Alyse Avery

Meet our Farm Labs Staff



Tim Redd

Director, Farm Labs



Daniel Boyer

Manager, Beef and Swine Units



Ralph Smith

Assistant, Dairy Farm Lab



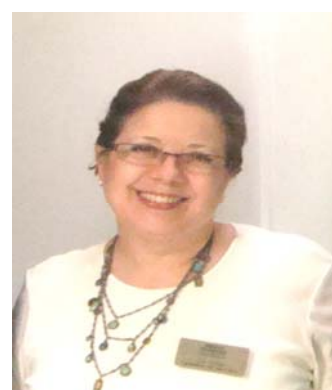
Jason Tanner

Manager, Dairy Farm Lab



Danny Troup

Manager, Crops Unit



Liz Troup

Manager, Milk Processing
Plant

MTSU Student Farmers Market

The MTSU School of Agribusiness and Agriscience (ABAS) has a history of providing students with quality experiential learning opportunities. The MTSU garden project is an extension of our overall teaching philosophy which places an emphasis on hands-on learning. Students in the **ABAS 3660 Vegetable Gardening**



classes plan, prepare, and plant a garden during the spring semester.

Hundreds of vegetable transplants are produced by the students in the MTSU Horticulture Center greenhouses, and the students applied what was learned in class in order to properly select a site, prepare the soil, install drip irrigation, calculate fertilizer rates, and properly plant and maintain a garden. ABAS students maintain and continue planting in the garden over the summer.



The produce is marketed to the MTSU campus community at the Student Farmers Market, Fridays from 12:00 to 3:00 p.m. (May-August), in room 106 of the horticulture center (HC 106). Both cash and local checks are accepted for purchases. Funds generated by the University's market go to support the operations of the MTSU Farm Laboratories .

USDA Names Winners of 2012 Agricultural Outlook Forum

Student Diversity Program



Monica Adamson, MTSU Animal Science major, was named by United States Agriculture Secretary, Tom Vilsack, as one of 24 university students selected to attend the USDA's 2012 Agricultural Outlook Forum in Washington, D.C. This year's forum was titled, "**Moving Agriculture Forward**," and is USDA's largest annual event.

"USDA's Outlook Forum celebrated USDA's 150th anniversary, giving these students the opportunity to hear former Secretaries of Agriculture describe their vision for the future of agriculture," said Vilsack. "USDA welcomes the next generation to participate in the Forum so they might see opportunities to excel to even greater heights in their careers."

The 24 university juniors and seniors majoring in agricultural-related studies were selected based on their essays, "**Agriculture as a Career**," and recommendations from their deans. To view several of the winning essays, please visit: http://www.usda.gov/oce/forum/diversity/diversity_program.htm.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

School of Agribusiness and Agriscience



hands-on, experiential
learning opportunities
paired with strong agri-
industry partnerships.

www.mtsu.edu/abas

**MIDDLE
TENNESSEE**
STATE UNIVERSITY

MTSU is an AA/EEO employer.

Agriculture as a Career

by Monica Adamson

As a child growing up on a farm in the summers, I never realized the importance of what I was doing for society. I always thought of it as just fun! I didn't know that the wheat we harvested or the cows we took to market were going to feed somebody one day. As I got older, the summers became more about my city friends and less about the farm. I then joined the military which took me to a whole new dimension of life. I was a medic, so my role was helping people. What I was doing was important, and I was good at it, but I felt something was missing in my life. I went to my aunt and uncles' dairy farm on leave and it was then I realized what was missing. I wanted to have a farm and give back to society what I had been missing all these years, agriculture.

Now I am finally starting to live my dream of owning a farm one day. You ask why a career in agriculture and I say "why not"? I did not understand the importance of agriculture until I started working at the Middle Tennessee State University Dairy. I hear stories continuously about how most people have no idea what agriculture truly means. I heard somebody say one day "with all the technology in this world they should be able to produce milk at a lower price." In the United States, we spend less than ten percent of our income on food. We have grocery store shelves packed with healthy, nutritious food. Research continually expands our agricultural knowledge. Then I realize I never knew what was truly going on in agriculture until I started following my dream.

I want to be able to educate people on the importance of agriculture, and the best way to do that is to become better educated myself. There is a saying that goes like this, "when the student is ready the teacher will appear." I have found many teachers throughout my studies in animal science and one that has helped me realize that agriculture is where I want to be. One day I want to be able to tell somebody how we use technology and explain it to them. I want to take that student under my wing who strayed from their dreams as a farmer because somebody told them that there is no money it and tell them yes there is. It is important that we make money, but it is passion for agriculture that makes each day a wonderful and exciting challenge. You are becoming a part of helping feed the world because you came up with a way to produce more with less.

I not only work hard to be the best agriculture student that I can be, but also go to Extension seminars and events so I can learn about every part of agriculture. The Agricultural Outlook Forum will become an important stepping stone in my career path that will help me better understand our future in agriculture.

MTSU AG Around the World



International Agriculture: Argentina

A group of 10 students and 2 faculty members departed Murfreesboro December 26, 2011, and traveled to **Mendoza, Argentina**, for a course in International Agriculture. The group was led by **Dr. Tony Johnston**, who was assisted by visiting scholar (and newly minted Ph.D.), **Dr. Wendy Francesconi**.

The course, **International Agriculture (ABAS 4190)**, was taught entirely on site in the Mendoza area and consisted of visits to numerous agricultural venues involved in the production, processing and international distribution of food products. Over the 18 days the class stayed in Mendoza, more than 25 companies within a 1.5 hour drive radius of the city were visited. Plans are being made to take another class to Mendoza in 2012.



ABAS 2500 Visits Niagara-on-the-Lake College



Dr. Tony Johnston took a group of students enrolled in his **Wine Appreciation class (ABAS 2500)** to the wine growing region of **Ontario, Canada**, in both the fall 2011 and spring 2012 semesters. The course is now a designated **EXL course** with an embedded study abroad component. Each semester students are invited to join Dr. Johnston on a 4-5 day trip to the Niagara-on-the-Lake area to explore the wines made in this cool climate region.

Field Day Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Agriculture at MTSU and the Grand Opening of the New MTSU Dairy Was a Major Success

We have incredible students who show up at the dairy barn at 4:00 AM each morning to milk our cows. Our students then pasteurize and homogenize the milk and deliver it to campus cafeterias. Students have been milking on the Blackman area farm since the 1960s. Last fall the students (and cows) were happy to be in a beautiful new facility on the new dairy farm east of campus off Guy James Road.

With almost 500 Alumni, students and friends in attendance, the ribbon was cut at the new dairy on September 15, 2011, officially opening the new **MTSU Experiential Learning and Research Center**. Since agriculture has been a part of MTSU since its beginning in 1911, it was fitting that the dairy opening was a part of **MTSU's Centennial Celebration**.



The dairy is a \$2.7 million dollar project which is part of an overall \$4.4 million dollar farm improvement program designed not only to provide excellent hands-on opportunities for students to learn about plant and animal production, but also to prepare students for Tennessee's large food processing industry. The new dairy is a state-of-the-art facility and the animals are provided many conveniences not available on the previous site.



John Hood, former State Representative and now MTSU Director of Community Relations, was the Master of Ceremonies. **Tim Redd**, Director of the Farm Laboratories, opened by dedicating the day to **Dr. Harley Fouch**. Dr. Fouch was Director of the MTSU School of Agribusiness and Agriscience for 27 years. It was his foresight and early planning that laid the groundwork for the development of the new farm laboratory.

MTSU President **Sidney McPhee** delivered the keynote address. He pointed out that MTSU is the only university in the State of Tennessee where students milk cows and process the milk for the serving across campus. He also pointed out that and this facility is consistent with MTSU’s mission and vision to provide a supportive learning environment; the finest faculty and the finest facilities; and a student experience that is as

personal and unique as our diverse campus population.

The **Tennessee Department of Agriculture** has been a major partner in developing MTSU’s new Farm Laboratory. Tennessee's commissioner of agriculture, **Julius Johnson**, praised the new facility and recognized the important roles of the legislators who were present in supporting higher education. Those present included **Senators Jim Tracy** and **Bill Ketron** and **State Representatives Pat Marsh** and **Joe Carr**.



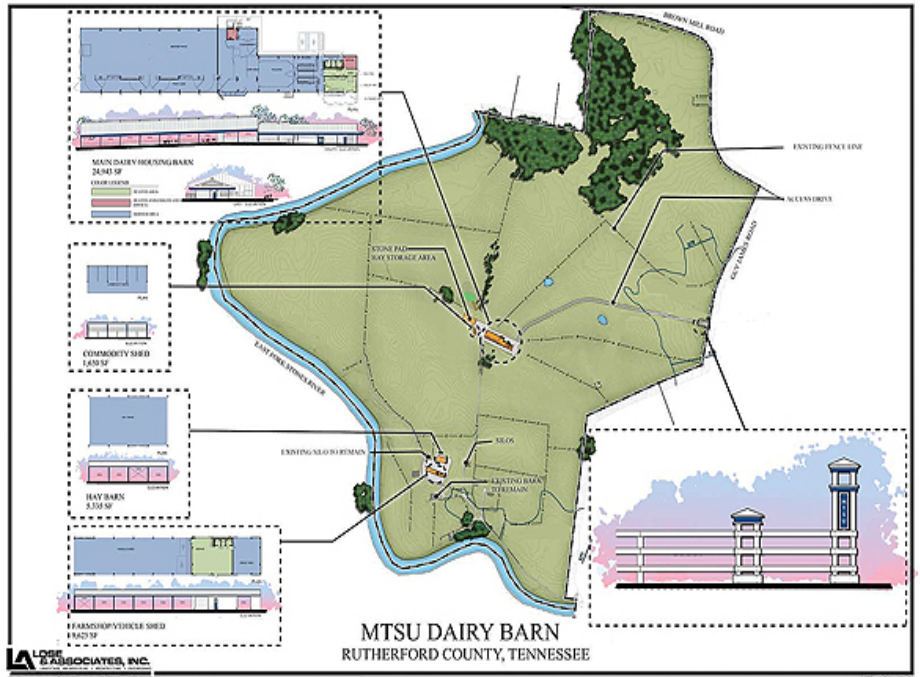
Thank you to the following sponsors:

- Cargill Nutrena
- CPC Commodities
- Crop Production Services
- DairyCheq, Inc.
- Farm Credit Services
- Helton, Inc.
- Hooper Supply
- Merck
- Rutherford County Farm Bureau
- Rutherford Farmers Coop
- Tennessee Farmers Co-op
- TriGreen Equipment



MTSU Dairy Facts

- It is an eight parallel milking parlor (milk 16 at once) with rapid exit gates.
- The parlor features individual cow ID and cow activity measurements, along with real time milk weights and milk quality measurements.
- The milking system includes an in-line heat exchange to pre-cool the milk to 58 degrees before the milk enters the 2000 gal bulk tank. The bulk tank further cools the milk to 38 degrees.



- The milking parlor is flushed with two 750 gal flush tanks that utilize the spent water from the heat exchanger which makes more efficient use of water in the parlor. This water is then used to irrigate crops raised to feed the dairy cows.
- A cow hospital and working facility is included.
- The cows are housed in a pack barn system which enhances cow comfort. The bedding from the pack barn is recycled as compost material and used on our garden unit as soil fertilizer.

- The dairy also includes a 6 bay feed commodity barn to provide the opportunity to formulate rations for the dairy herd. We are currently milking 80 cows.
- This is an excellent “grass to glass” experiential teaching laboratory.



Student Agriculture Government Association Officers 2011-2012



Alyse Avery
President



Lindon (Boomer) Harris
Vice President



Abby Burger
Vice President of
Community Engagement



Justice Courtney
Secretary



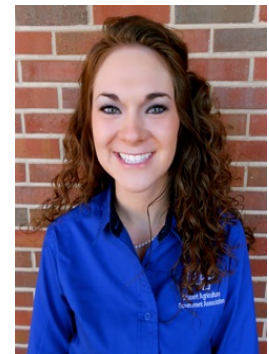
Erica Robinson
Treasurer



Jenny Newell
Senior Class Representative



Megan Pohl
Junior Class Representative



Lindsay Baker
Sophomore Class Representative

Ricketts and Team Achieve Coast-To-Coast Goal

by Randy Weiler

Reprinted with permission from www.mtsunews.com, March 19, 2012

MTSU Agribusiness Professor **Cliff Ricketts** is confident that his experience growing up on a dairy farm is at the core of the University's recent achievement in alternative-fuels research: a 2,582-mile trek from coast to coast.

"On a dairy farm, you have to milk the cows twice a day without fail, no matter what, and no excuses," said Ricketts, 63. "If there are problems, you have to figure it out and get it done, and it's the same thing we've done at MTSU—get it done no matter what, and no excuses."

Ricketts put his theory to work in the days leading up to his research team's planned departure from Tybee Island, Ga., on March 4. Badly needed parts did not arrive in time to let his small crew of students and volunteers make some final preparations.

But, leading by example, Ricketts dipped his toes in the Atlantic Ocean on schedule, resorted to "backup plans two and three," and left with three vehicles, instead of just one, to make the trip.



MTSU Professor Cliff Ricketts walks into the Pacific Ocean on March 8 to end a spring-break cross-country journey the same way he and his alternative-fuels research team started it at the Atlantic Ocean on March 4. (MTSU photo by David Bro)

The first two, a 2005 Toyota Prius and a 1994 Toyota Tercel converted to run on solar power and water-derived hydrogen, completed the first 900 miles of the trek. A 2007 Toyota Prius completed the last 1,682 miles on battery power and ethanol.

Even when a wheel bearing on a chase truck went out early on, the group transitioned to their remaining van and continued on, averaging around 60 mph over the course of the journey that finished in Long Beach, Calif., the afternoon of March 8.

The effort, spread across the three research vehicles, used solar power through energy credits supplied by solar panels arrayed on the roof of the university, which put power back in the grid of the Tennessee Valley Authority. That allowed the team to simply charge the 2007 Prius's two large banks of batteries overnight, using a standard residential electrical

outlet.

Ricketts said he used the university's regular water supply from the Murfreesboro Water Department as the starting point for the alternative fuel. After electrolysis and filtering, the hydrogen provided power to the vehicle's stock internal-combustion engine.

Dr. Cliff Ricketts, right, MTSU agribusiness professor, laughs with Dr. Warren Gill, chair of the School of Agribusiness and Agriscience after Ricketts returned to campus March 12 from a 2,582-mile coast-to-coast trip across America in alternative fuel vehicles. (MTSU photo by Andy Heidt)



The original plan was to use tanks pulled by a trailer to recharge the hydrogen-fueled Prius. When those parts did not arrive, Ricketts and his team decided to use three cars instead of just one.

In addition to the solar electric batteries and the hydrogen plant, the Prius also was outfitted to use an ethanol/gas mix, which accounted for about 90 total miles of the trip's progress or about 2.15 gallons of fuel, according to Ricketts.

The group had estimated a total use of 10 gallons of gas, but road conditions allowed for much lower consumption. Technically, the ethanol/gas mix is not considered back-up power but is used when road conditions, like steep hills or heavy winds, would quickly deplete the batteries and hydrogen gas.

Ricketts said he hopes that the 50 or so students in MTSU's agribusiness program and the half-dozen students that help out with alternative-fuel research each semester will pick up a concept that he calls fundamental to achieving any goal: never give up.

Ricketts was the only one to put his toes in the Atlantic before the trip began. The entire crew, students and volunteers, joined him in the shallow waters at the Pacific Ocean's edge in Long Beach at the journey's end.

Get more facts about the trip at mtsunews.com/ricketts-coast-to-coast-facts. – David Bro and Randy Weiler

Students Process All Milk Served on MTSU Campus

For decades, MTSU students have participated in dairy production in the milk processing plant located on the first floor of the **Stark Agriculture Building**. In fact, the **MTSU Milk Processing Plant** is the only university educational facility left in the state. We pasteurize and homogenize the milk from the **Dairy Lab** for use in the dining facilities and campus day care. The workforce for the milk processing plant is completely comprised of students under the guidance of manager, **Liz Troup**.



We provide skim milk, 2% reduced fat, cream, and a delicious whole milk, chocolate milk that we like to call a healthy energy and body repair drink. Milk has quick energy from the natural lactose (milk sugar), and long-term energy from the natural butterfat (cream). It has natural calcium for repairing bones, and natural protein for repairing muscle.

Classes such as **Milk Processing and Marketing** and **Dairy Production** utilize the milk processing plant for student hands-on application during actual processing. Other class application involves lab exploration into making butter, cheese and bacteriological sampling.

Randolph and Associates, a food and dairy consultant firm out of Birmingham, Alabama, utilizes the plant as a demonstration model during their High Temperature Short Time Pasteurization and Sanitation workshops. These workshops expose MTSU to the dairy industry from across the nation.

Fun Facts

- Milk pasteurization, which began in the late 1800s, is partly responsible for curbing the tuberculosis epidemic of that time.
- All cows are female. Male cattle are called bulls.
- Milk is unique because no other beverage in the world contains as many natural nutrients.



Gill Named Central Region “Friend of 4-H”

Dr. Warren Gill, Director of the School of Agribusiness and Agriscience at Middle Tennessee State University, was named the 2012 “Friend of 4-H” in recognition of his “Outstanding Service and Support.” This was awarded during the 65th Annual 4-H Congress Central Region Delegates Breakfast.

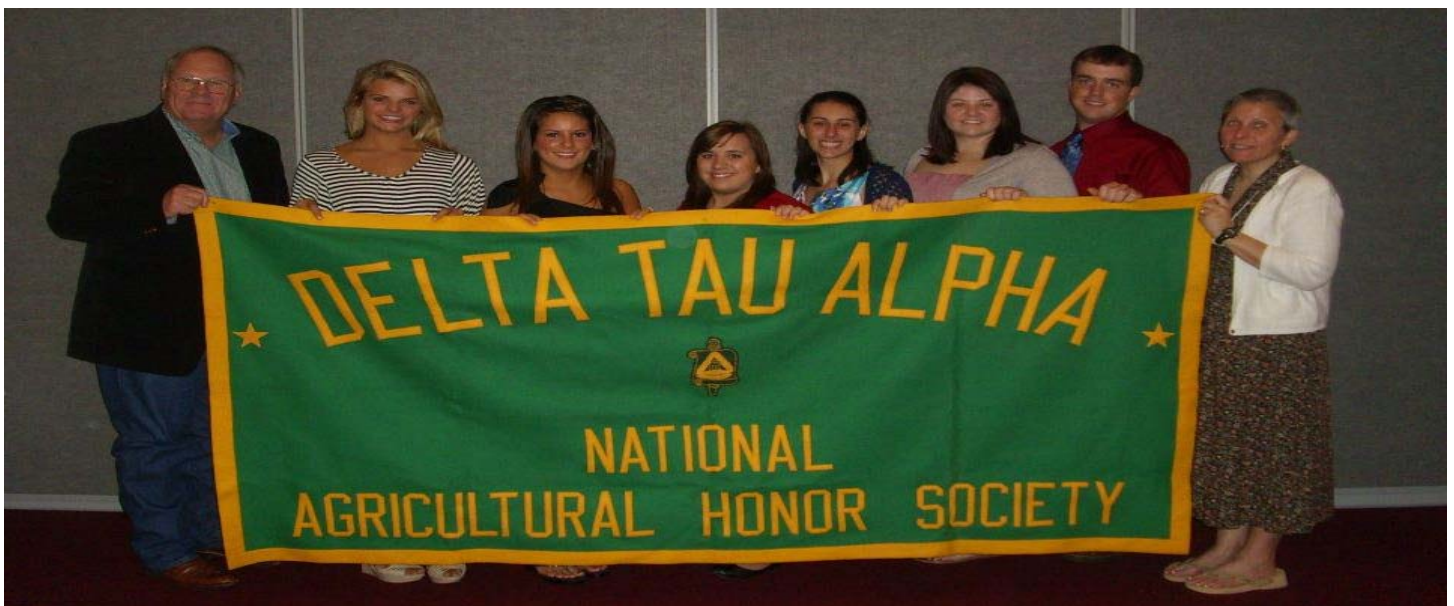
In presenting the award, Martin Koon, Central Region Youth Programs Director, mentioned that Gill had worked for UT-Extension for 23 years, but the recognition

was more for his volunteer efforts in the past five years since he retired from UT. He said, “Dr. Gill has helped with Beef and Sheep EX-PO, the 4-H Swine Show and 4-H Horse Championships, as well as numerous judging contests and other events.”



DTA, Ag Honor Society, Has Two National Officers

The MTSU chapter of Delta Tau Alpha, the agricultural honor society, attended the national convention that was held April 5-7, 2012, in Warrensburg, Missouri, at the University of Central Missouri. At the convention, two of our members were elected as national officers: Justice Courtney (National Secretary) and Gabriella Starr (National Parliamentarian).



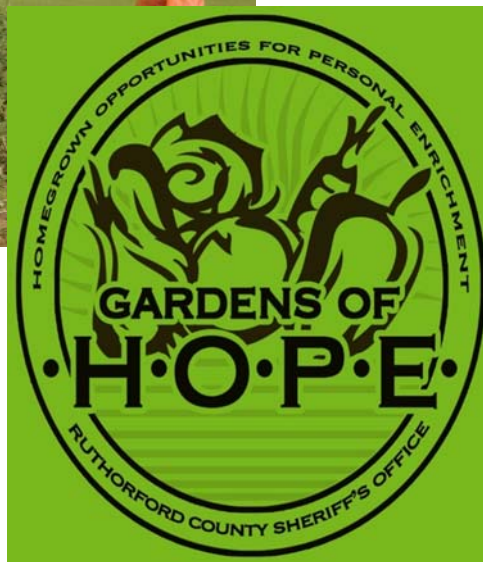
Garden of Hope Gets Boost from MTSU Student Volunteer

MTSU Ag student **Kimberly Foster** and College of Basic and Applied Sciences' **Dean Tom Cheatham** took a trip during the Spring Semester of 2011 to Bradley County to see how a garden could turn lives of juvenile delinquents around. When they returned, Kimberly did more research, signed up for a summer internship with Dr. Warren Gill, and then approached **Rutherford County Sheriff Robert Arnold** with an idea to start a program in Murfreesboro.



Sheriff Arnold has his own idea: use inmates from the Rutherford County Jail to start the garden. Evidently, it was a good idea, because the garden was not only started, but is now in its second year, and the inmates are making it work. Many people were involved, including **John Hood, Gloria Bonner, Rosemary Wade Owens** and **Nate Phillips** from MTSU, **Janie Becker** from UT Extension, **Arthal Mintor** from the Sheriff's Department, and **Brenda Benz-Elliott**, a community volunteer.

So far, this program has been recognized by being featured by **Channel 4, WSMV News**, and by a front page article in the Daily News Journal. **Senator Bill Ketron** has enthusiastically endorsed it, hoping that the idea spreads to other locations.



"Like the weeds in the garden, we weed out the bad things in life."

former inmate

David Keith

"We are investing in the future of these young men;" ... "The real fruit we are producing is in the lives of these men."

*Rutherford County Mayor
Ernest Burgess*



Student Success at ASHS conference in Hawaii



Students and faculty from the **Plant and Soil Science Club** participated in the **American Society for Horticultural Science (ASHS)** annual meeting in Hawaii at the beginning of Fall 2011.

Undergraduate student **Eric Limbird** was honored with the **ASHS Scholars Award**, the highest honor given to undergraduate students in the society. He had a full page write-up in the conference program, was recognized at the opening ceremony, and awarded \$1,500. Eric also presented his URECA funded research on *Rhododendron calendulaceum* propagation at the meeting.

The MTSU horticulture team consisting of **Eric Limbird, Katlin O'Connor, Marshall Hamilton, and CeCe Hernandez** took 3rd place overall in the Horticultural Identification and Commodities Judging Competition. The team placed 2nd in Woody Plant Identification, Vegetable Commodities, and Fruit and Nut Commodities.

Students also participated in collegiate activities with students from other schools, and were able to visit botanical gardens and macadamia nut orchards. **Dr. Nate Phillips** presented work co-authored by Justin Stefanski (UTK extension) and **Lauren Jones (student)** on allelopathy in landscape trees. He was also elected as the Collegiate Activities Committee Chairperson for 2013-2015.

MTSU Block & Bridle Chapter Hosts 92nd National Block and Bridle Convention



The **MTSU Block & Bridle Chapter** served as the host for the **92nd National Block & Bridle Convention** that was held January 31–February 3, 2012, at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Murfreesboro. A total of 338 students attended, representing 35 universities from across the United States.

Trent Loos, a well-known advocate for animal agriculture, was the keynote speaker. Mr. Loos, a 6th generation farmer from Nebraska, has a daily radio show called “Loos Tales” that is aimed at bridging rural and urban America. Highlights of the convention included attending the Cattle Industry Convention at Opryland Convention Center, an awards banquet, and industry tours that included the new MTSU dairy farm.

Thirty MTSU students, along with MTSU faculty members **Jessica Carter, Rhonda Hoffman** and **Kevin Downs**, assisted in securing over \$25,000 in sponsorships to help fund the convention and served as hosts for the event.

Equitation Team Shines at Intercollegiate Horse Show Association (ISHA) Nationals in Raleigh



Anne Brzezicki, MTSU Eq Coach, reports that the MTSU Equitation Team had an excellent show at the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association Finals in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Anne said: “I cannot tell you how proud I am of our staff, our alums, our students and our horses. Whether they came to show or to help, they represented MTSU and Horse Science professionally, competently, efficiently, willingly, cheerfully, and well. They worked early till way past tired, and asked always what else they could do. Whether it was for the show, our own riders, our horses, other horses we were helping take care of, show personnel or any other thing, they were on top of it and I am proud to be associated with every one of them. EVERY one of them!”

MTSU took 5 riders for 6 classes, and here’s how they placed:

Emily Kopko - Reserve National Champion Intermediate Horsemanship

Cayce Turner - Reserve National Champion Novice Horsemanship

Lydia Whitlow Darnell - Reserve National Championship, Alumni Horsemanship

Alina Carter - 5th Open Reining and 7th Open Horsemanship

Marianne England - 3rd Alumni Horsemanship

Each rider had career bests; they earned every placing and were excellent on every horse they rode. **Alumnus Faye Lynn Coffee** assists Anne in coaching the team. Anne says Faye Lynn “had them very well prepared for every pattern and every eventuality and they HANDLED IT.”

Jessica Schultz is another Alum, and graduate student in the M.S. Horse Science program, who works hard to make the team a success. Anne said, “Jess rode a lot of horses besides ours to help the show, and she’s good at keeping an eye on the kids out in the warm-up pen while I am running in a lot of other directions. The kids had them turned out great, and Jess had them perfectly prepared.”



Anne also praised the horses: “Our horses were ones that the riders in the show all wanted to draw. Harley went in EVERY LEVEL of the Horsemanship and his riders won many classes. Any time all weekend that there was a re-test the judges put that person on Harley. I cannot even tell how many rides he made. Jay R was a star and did every level except Open, and he could have done that. We brought Brother and Scooter to work in Alumni Reining but they both worked so well that Brother ended up going twice in the NRHA class,



and they both went twice in the High Point Rider Reining. And then Scooter did the Beginner and Intermediate Horsemanship as well. Shadow was very respectable, and showed well for riders that were soft with him; a couple times he got riders that were too aggressive for him. Samson did all right but got a little nervous and needs another year of miles under his belt before he can handle the nerves of riders at a National Championship.

Anne’s also thanked **Dave Whitaker, Director of MTSU Horse Science Center**, for cleaning and shaping the hats the team members wore. She said, “The hats Dave always shapes for us helped us present a more professional appearance in the arena.”



Living off the Farms

Dr. Nate Phillips conducted a month long experiment to try to subsist solely on food produced on our **MTSU Farms**. His diet consisted of various vegetables and fruits, pork, corn meal, milk, and honey. By the end of July, he had dropped some weight and noticed that he is more sensitive to taste now that he hasn’t been bombarding his tongue with all the artificial flavors, high fructose corn syrup, and salty snacks. He has also come to appreciate all the hard work of students, staff, and faculty that are involved in the MTSU farm labs.



Internationalization of Agribusiness and Agriscience Honduras

Dr. Tony Johnston and two ABAS students Cris Smith and John David Proctor joined faculty and students from three other departments for an 18-day course taught on site in central Honduras. Each faculty member taught a separate course, and all students were invited to attend all lectures and



events. During the visit, the students learned about international agriculture, the concrete industry, dramatic performance, and political science. In addition, the group performed extensive service work including assisting in the development of an ecological park and refurbishing an orphanage. After 18 days of cold showers and beans served at every meal, it's safe to say that everyone was ready to return to the comforts of home. Without a doubt, however, students and faculty alike returned with a new appreciation of the realities of life in a third world country and at least one source of the foods we take for granted here in the U.S.

MTSU Dairy Products Evaluation Team “Creams” Competition

The MTSU Dairy Products Evaluation Team competed in the National Dairy Products Evaluation Contest held in Chicago, on Nov 5, 2011. The team placed second in the nation, with 3 of the team members placing in the top ten.

The team consisted of **Andy Pack**, **Lauren Pack**, **Sarah Hoover (third high individual)**, **Carrie Major (sixth high individual)** and **Sarah Davenport (tenth high individual)**. Sarah Davenport was second place in the nation in cottage cheese judging. The team also placed first in cottage cheese, second in cheddar cheese as well as third in milk and yogurt.

This student-centered activity is a significant event in the lives of the students who participate and often leads to careers in the dairy industry. Eleven universities from across the nation competed in the event which was sponsored by Kraft Foods Inc.

This event allows the students to network with the major food processing and business industries to establish internships and future employment opportunities. The students gain a valuable insight into the business side of the food industry.



Gardner Receives USDA Grant; Student Internship Opportunity for Three Majors

Dr. Justin Gardner, Assistant Professor of Agribusiness, received an \$85,000 grant from the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service to promote the Rutherford County Farmer's Market among low income persons in Rutherford County. This grant is a partnership between MTSU and the University of Tennessee Ex-

tension.

As part of this initiative, called **Grow Healthy Rutherford**, point-of-sale equipment will allow the farmer's market to not only accept debit and credit cards, but also accept electronic payment from SNAP participants. Approximately 14% of Rutherford County residents participate in SNAP, formerly known as food stamps.

Three agribusiness majors, **Alvin Jensen, Gabriella Starr, and Daniel Messick**, will participate in the grant through their enrollment in summer internships, where they will work at the bi-weekly Farmers Market, processing transactions and collecting user data.



MTSU Ag Students Rise and Shine on WSMV Morning Show

A group of MTSU students, faculty and staff met with **WSMV's Anne McCloy** at 4 am on Monday, March 26, 2012, at the new dairy on the grounds of the **MTSU Experimental Learning and Research Center** to find out what students are learning about “where food comes from.”

Ag Students **Boomer Harris** and **Carrie Major** explained how the new MTSU Dairy was integral to hands-on learning about animal husbandry and is also a critical component in learning about dairy processing and food safety.



Dr. Warren Gill, Director of the School of Agribusiness and Agriscience, told how the new dairy emphasized cow comfort resulting in higher production and improved cow health.

Mr. Edwin Holcombe told about the **MTSU beekeeping program** and **Melissa Fields** (student) discussed the **student gardens/nursery** and **Student Farmer's Market**. She noted that students learn valuable lessons about growing and marketing produce locally, which will lead to interesting opportunities when they graduate.

Alumnus Pettus Read (“Tennessee Home & Farm” magazine) and **Tiffany Howard**, both with Tennessee Farm Bureau, have been instrumental in informing Channel 4 about potential rural segments to help educate viewers about where their food comes from before it reaches their plates.



MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

School of Agribusiness and Agriscience



- 900 acres are farmed by MTSU students.
- Plant science students grow nursery plants and vegetables for the farmer's market they operate.



- Students at MTSU milk the cows in our dairy then process the milk for campus consumption.
- As a result, our students are already experienced in the dairy processing industry upon graduation.

MTSU's School of Agribusiness and Agriscience features hands-on, experiential learning opportunities paired with strong agri-industry partnerships.



- Our Horse Science program has nationally ranked Horse Judging/Equestrian teams
- Students in new Master of Science in Horse Science program choose from one of three interdisciplinary concentrations: Equine Physiology, Industry Management, or Equine Education.

Programs of Study:

Agribusiness

Plant & Soil Science

Animal Science

Animal Science (Horse Science Concentration)

Animal Science (Pre-Vet)

Agricultural Education Certification

**MIDDLE
TENNESSEE**
STATE UNIVERSITY.
www.mtsu.edu/abas