

# MTSU School of Agriculture

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## Highlights for 2019-20 Academic Year

By Dr. Jessica Carter, Director

- A major in **Horse Science** is now offered for students instead of a concentration in animal science.
- A minor in **Poultry Science** is now offered beginning in the Fall 2019 semester.
- Building upgrades— **Stark Agriculture Building** was renovated during the summer for a new heating & cooling unit and sprinkler system. Ag faculty are happy to be back in their offices and ready for the fall semester!
- Please follow us on Facebook (**MTSU School of Agriculture**) and Twitter **@MTSUAg** and check our website for current events!
- COVID-19 pandemic certainly changed our spring 2020 semester, but we are proud of our spring and summer graduates!! Our faculty and staff worked hard to convert to online teaching for the 2nd half of the spring semester.
- For the Fall 2020 semester, we are offering a variety of course types including conventional (for our hands-on

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learning courses and labs), web-assisted (which is a split of live and zoom course meetings), remote, and traditional online courses.

• Fall 2020 enrollment is looking great—we currently have 498 students registered for the fall semester **(+8.5% increase!)**.

• **Upcoming events—please check our department website for updates throughout the year:**

◆ Aug. 24—Classes begin for fall 2020 semester

◆ Virtual Raider Roundup Career Development and Exploration event for high school FFA students; Date TBD, check our website for updates.

◆ Many of our traditional events have been cancelled or moved to an online format for the fall semester due to COVID-19 pandemic.

## MTSU Creamery milk sells out at Main Street Murfreesboro Saturday Market

(story by Randy Weiler, MTSU News)

In its first venture at the Main Street Murfreesboro Saturday Market at the Historic Rutherford County Courthouse, the MTSU Creamery completely sold out of milk. Alumnus Jonathan Harmon of Murfreesboro may know why: “This is my favorite. ... There’s nothing like it on the planet,” the National Alumni Association board member said. The Creamery will participate all summer at the market, which will operate from 8 a.m. to noon every Saturday through **Sept. 26, 2020**, joining about 50 vendors altogether selling fruits and vegetables, flowers, meat, bread and jams, jellies and honey and more. Gracie Hobbs of Murfreesboro, an MTSU alumna who graduated in December 2019 with an animal science degree, carried two half-gallons and three pints of chocolate milk. “I get it for my friends,” said Hobbs, who added she gives it “a 10 out of 10” on the top-rated scale. A steady stream of customers lined up at the southeast corner of the square on Church Street most of the morning. Matthew Wade, MTSU Farm Laboratories director, reported the Creamery sold out at around 11:00 am. School of Agriculture Director Jessica Carter and College of Basic and Applied Sciences Dean Bud Fischer stopped by to lend a hand at the Creamery table. Fisher calls it “the best chocolate milk in the country.”



A number of Main Street Murfreesboro Saturday Market customers line up to purchase milk from the MTSU Creamery Saturday, June 6. (MTSU photo by Andy Heidt)

## School of Agriculture Alumni News

Dr. Aaron Shew received MTSU Outstanding Young Alumni award during Homecoming week in October. Dr. Shew, a Murfreesboro native, is now working at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro and serving as an assistant professor and the REL Wilson Chair of Agricultural Economics. He has spent more than a decade working in international development and agribusiness. Congratulations Dr. Shew!!

Congratulations to **Dr. Dave Whitaker**, re-tired director of Horse Science, who was awarded **MTSU Professor Emeritus** status during a ceremony on campus at the start of the fall semester! Well deserved!



Pictured L to R: Dr. Aaron Shew, and other recipients of Distinguished Alumni awards as well as university president, Dr. Sidney McPhee.



## Agriculture Faculty News

Congratulations to the following MTSU School of Agriculture faculty members for receiving awards from the College of Basic & Applied Science for the 2019-20 academic year!!!

**Dr. Kevin Downs—Teaching Excellence Award**

**Dr. Song Cui—Faculty Service Award**

Congratulations to the following faculty members who were recognized during the annual MTSU fall faculty meeting in August for outstanding achievements!

**Dr. Holly Spooner— Public Service award**

**Dr. Song Cui — Special Projects Award**

**Dr. Nate Phillips — promoted to Professor!**

School of Agriculture Faculty/Staff/Graduate Students and retired professors enjoyed a holiday potluck lunch in December at The Gathering in Milton.

Pictured above (L to R, front row: Alanna Vaught, Hayden Snow, Rhonda Hoffman, Andrea Rego, Jessica Carter. Middle: Holly Spooner, Iris Gao, Debbie Strobel, Jeannie Paul, Sarah Doran-Mathis, Maegan Hollis. Back row: Ariel Higgins, Renee Dunn, Keely O'Brien, Samuel Haruna, Jessica Schriver, Jared Franklin, Warren Gill, and Cliff Ricketts).

## Our students are busy with Research Experiences & Honor's Thesis Projects

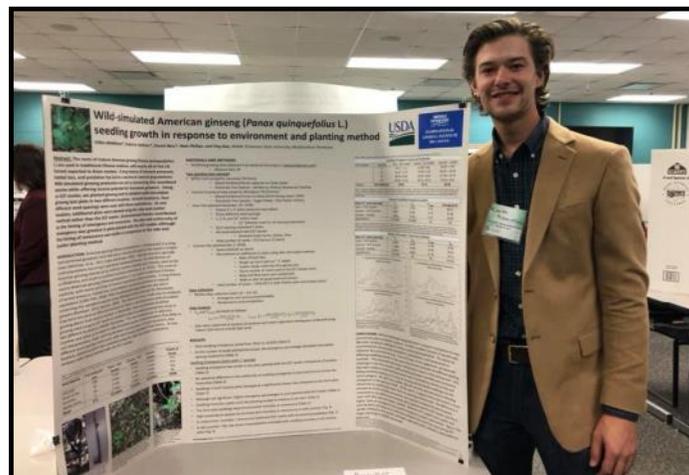
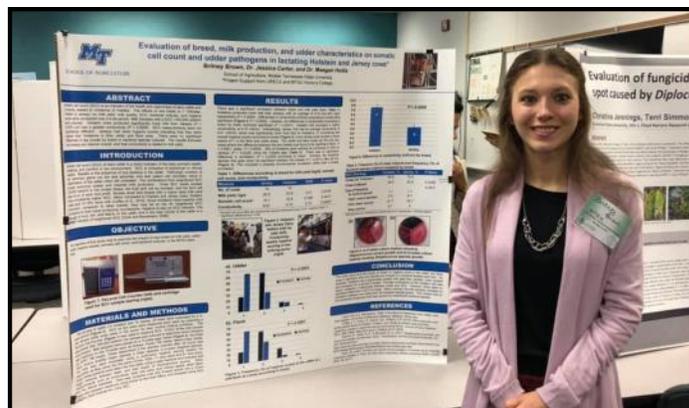
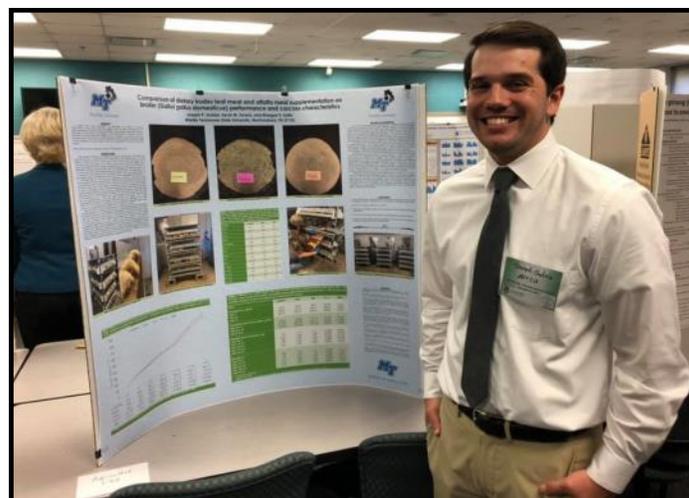
## Tennessee Academy of Science

Undergraduate Research Experiences and Creative Activity committee (URECA) provides funding opportunities for many undergraduate students to participate in research projects. 22 Agriculture majors recently completed research projects. Here are a list of the students and their mentors.

Congratulations to the following students who presented undergraduate research posters at the 2019 Tennessee Academy of Science: Joseph Gulizia, Britney Brown, and Killen Middleton (pictured on right page). Joseph placed first in the undergraduate division!

| Student                 | Mentor                          |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| John Adkins             | Dr. Kevin Downs                 |
| Joseph Gulizia          | Dr. Kevin Downs                 |
| Britney Brown           | Dr. J. Carter/Dr. Maegan Hollis |
| Sammy Mould             | Dr. Jessica Carter              |
| Emily Richards          | Dr. Jessica Carter              |
| Dillon Arnold           | Dr. Maegan Hollis               |
| Kayley Stallings        | Dr. Keely O'Brien               |
| Jake Maisano            | Dr. Keely O'Brien               |
| Cameron Stacy           | Dr. Keely O'Brien               |
| Ross Thomas             | Dr. Tony Johnston               |
| Rebekah Riley           | Dr. Tony Johnston               |
| Zack Lay                | Dr. Tony Johnston               |
| Robert Conner           | Dr. Samuel Haruna               |
| Chris Hall              | Dr. Samuel Haruna               |
| Brendan Mitchell-Fostyk | Dr. Samuel Haruna               |
| Fred Marino             | Dr. Seockmo Ku                  |
| Jordan Beville          | Dr. Seockmo Ku                  |
| Killen Middleton        | Dr. Nate Phillips               |
| Elizabeth Clippard      | Dr. Nate Phillips/Dr. Iris Gao  |
| Gina Bishara            | Dr. Iris Gao                    |
| Emily Oppman            | Dr. Iris Gao                    |
| Aleana Boudle           | Dr. John Haffner                |

In addition to all of the undergraduate researchers, School of Ag faculty worked with 6 M.S. students, 3 Ph.D. students, 2 post doctoral researchers, and 3 international visiting scholars. Our faculty and students had an extremely productive year publishing 46 manuscripts in several different discipline specific journals. This has to be the best year ever for research publications. Congratulations to our hard-working faculty, staff, and students for a successful year!



## 2020-21 Agriculture Scholarship Award Recipients

Adams Family Endowment..... Jessica Benson  
 Adams Family Endowment.....Sammy Mould  
 Adams Family Endowment.....Mia Kuhnle  
 Agriculture Endowment..... Rhiannon Speckman  
 Agriculture Endowment.....Andrew Fuhrmann  
 Agriculture Endowment.....Maggie Wampler  
 Agriculture Endowment.....Ashton Bazzell  
 Agriculture Endowment.....Hailey Claybrooks  
 Agriculture Endowment.....Sarah Kozuszek  
 Agriculture Endowment.....Lillie Smith  
 Boxwood Farm..... Erin Coleman  
 Campbell Family Endowment.....Haley Brazel  
 Carolyn Gill Endowment.....Charity Chandler  
 Farm Credit Mid America.....Hailei Gibson  
 Dr. Harley W. Foutch Endowment.....Neil Slone  
 Dr. Jerry Williams Endowment.....Zach Martin  
 Dr. Robert Garrigus Endowment.....Bridget Robertson  
 Dr. Robert Garrigus Endowment.....Abigail McConnell  
 Farm Credit Mid-America.....Calli Gregory  
 Fowler and Ruth Nickle.....Caroline Haynes  
 Hayden Memorial.....Bailey Smith  
 Heritage Farm.....Emily Peterson  
 Hugh Burrum.....Rhiannon Overcast  
 Hugh Burrum.....Michelle Salazar  
 Robert Alexander.....Kayln Rouse  
 Robert Jarrell Memorial.....Jessica Hickerson  
 TN Council of Coops.....Taylor Bell  
 TN Farmers Coop.....Alaina Staggs  
 TN Farmers Coop.....Lindsey Parsley  
 TN Farmers Coop.....Jacob Tipton  
 TN Farmers Coop.....Jake Duke  
 Theodore Bigger.....Mark McMahon  
 Nat. Council of Farmer Coop. Found..... Journee Davis

### Incoming Freshman Scholarship Awards:

TN Farmers Coop..... Luke Elrod  
 Adams Family Endowment.....Devon Yates  
 Adams Family Endowment.....Luke Alexander  
 Joe Jack & Jerry Dement Endowment...Annie Whitefield  
 Rehabilitation Corp. of TN.....Savannah Scott  
 Rehabilitation Corp. of TN.....Sydney Brady  
 Rehabilitation Corp. of TN.....Cody Cox  
 Rehabilitation Corp. of TN.....Cayla Fisher  
 Agriculture Endowment.....Tabitha Gill  
 Agriculture Dept. Schol.....Myia Trotter



Pictured L to R: Madison Armstrong, Shelby Oldham, and John Adkins.

## Outstanding Senior Awards

- Robert A. Alexander Outstanding Agribusiness Senior Award**  
Mackenzie Keaton
- Outstanding Animal Science Senior Award**  
Shelby Oldham
- Sam Paschal Award for Outstanding Horse Science Senior**  
Madison Armstrong
- Theodore C. Bigger Outstanding Plant and Soil Science Senior Award**  
Daniel Wright
- B.B. Gracy, Jr. Outstanding Agriculture Senior Award**  
John Adkins
- Outstanding Horse Science Senior**  
Mary Catherine Wade

### Scholarships awarded at the Horse Science Banquet:

J.W. Cross Scholarship.....Taylor Meek  
 Kitty Adams Scholarship.....Jordan Dillenbeck  
 Mark Moskovitz.....Cory Elks  
 Tennessee Horse Council.....Kelsi Griffin  
 Seve Scholarship.....Vaughn Coblentz

### Senior Honor Students (GPA 3.8 or higher):

|                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| John Adkins       | Jessica Hickerson |
| Madison Armstrong | Hunter Holden     |
| Kathryn Baugh     | Alaina Kresovic   |
| Loran Frady       | Shelby Oldham     |
| Carissa Gashaw    | Daniel Wright     |

**We awarded 55 scholarships totaling more than \$60,000.**

## Equestrian team wins the region in both hunter seat and western disciplines

*Modified by Andrea Rego from Randy Weiler, MTSU News*

The MTSU equestrian team enjoyed an outstanding year, winning the region and qualifying nine individuals for postseason competition in hunter-seat (forward seat riding style in flat and over fences) and western competition. Both the hunter-seat and western teams qualified to advance to postseason competition referred to as zones and semifinals.

Western riders who advanced to compete semifinals at Blackhawk College in Galva, Illinois, included: Wade in Team Open Horsemanship, Team and Individual Reining.—Wingate in Individual Level 2 Horsemanship.—Gilleland in Individual Level 1 Horsemanship.—Meek in Team Level 2 Horsemanship & Individual Level 1 Horsemanship.—Sophomore Nikki Dyer of Memphis, Tennessee, in Individual Beginner Horsemanship.—Freshman JoBeth Scarlett of New Market, Tennessee, in Team Level 1 Horsemanship.—Freshman Austin Aguilera of Mt. Juliet, Tennessee, in Team Beginner Horsemanship.—Carlisle in Team Rookie Horsemanship.—Graduate student Lucas Brock of Franklin, Tennessee, in Alumni Horsemanship.—Graduate student Kailey Vande Kamp of Gallatin, Tennessee, in Alumni Horsemanship.

Along with the success of the western team, the hunt seat team qualified for Zones competition to take place at Savannah College off Art and Design in Georgia on March 28-29. Advancing hunter seat riders included:

- Freshman Lucy Reich of Mountain Brook, Alabama, in Team Open Fences and Flat, Individual Open Fences and Flat, and the Cacchione Cup Qualifying Class.—
- Freshman Alyssa Kraker of Kennesaw, Georgia, in Team Intermediate Fences and Flat.—
- Scarlett in Team Limit Fences and Flat.—
- Aguilera in Team Introductory Flat.—
- McKenzee Petree in Team Novice Flat.

“As a coach, we dream of being able to work with the talented, driven and committed students in post-season competition. I want to thank them for making an unforgettable season,” coach Ariel Higgins said.



MTSU senior MC Wade of Germantown, Tenn., is an extremely accomplished senior rider with multiple national titles. Wade qualified or was selected to compete in postseason events, which were canceled by organizers because of the coronavirus pandemic. (Submitted photo by Mark King)



Competing for the MTSU equestrian team in an earlier contest, freshman Lucy Reich of Mountain Brook, Ala., qualified in three categories for the Zones event at Savannah College of Art and Design in Georgia in late March. (Submitted photo by Dawn Nieman)

## Outstanding MTSU Equestrian season cut short by Coronavirus

Story by Randy Weiler, MTSU News

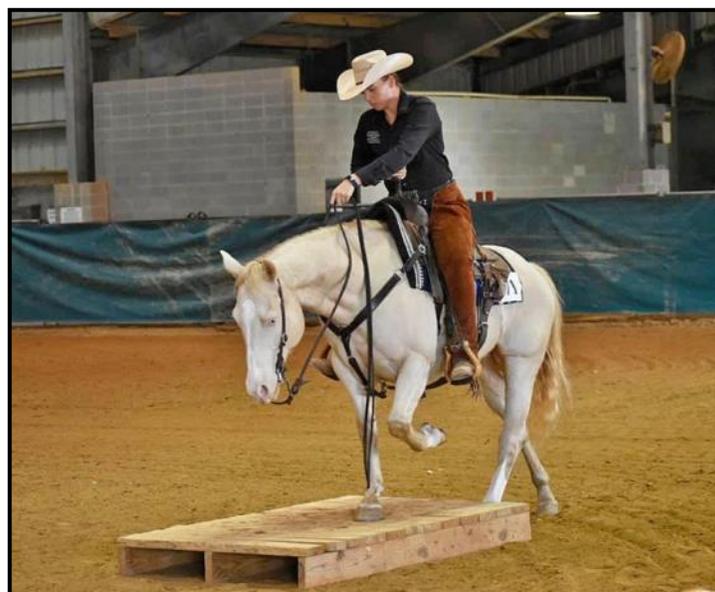
In the midst of a great year, the Middle Tennessee State University equestrian team had its spring season derailed by the coronavirus pandemic — leaving coaches and returning riders optimistic about potential prospects for 2020-21 if events resume as scheduled. Various teams' and individuals' scheduled trips to competitions were canceled by event organizers as the country embraced public health guidelines regarding social distancing and states across the country employed stay-at-home orders throughout the spring.

The MTSU equestrian team has a rich history of success. Riders come from Tennessee, the South and other parts of the country. Here's a look at how the Stock Horse team fared: Seniors Patricia Wingate of Woodbury, Tennessee, and Kylie Small of Dallas, Georgia, sophomores Taylor Meek of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and Hunter Huddleston of Franklin, Tennessee, and freshman Kiersten Carlisle of Dallas, Ga., were chosen to represent MTSU at the first-ever National Ranch and Stock Horse Alliance Collegiate National Show in Lubbock, Texas, in late March. Event organizers called off the event.

The team also planned to defend its national championship at the canceled American Stock Horse Association Collegiate National show April 18-20 in Sweetwater, Texas. Wingate, Small, fellow senior MC Wade of Germantown, Tennessee, junior Lindsay Gilleland of Powder Springs, Georgia, and sophomores Huddleston and McKenzie Pe-tree of Knoxville, Tennessee, had been chosen to represent MTSU. "I am so proud of each and every one of these students," stock horse coach Andrea Rego said. "They worked hard all semester, gearing up to defend our national title and represent MTSU successfully. We plan to carry our competitive spirit and preparation into the fall semester."



MTSU stock horse team members planned to defend their national title in late April in Sweetwater, Texas, and five members were going to compete at the first-ever National Ranch and Stock Horse Alliance Collegiate National Show (NRSHA) in Lubbock, Texas, in March, but both events were canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic. (Photo by Norfleet Photography)



Junior Lindsay Gilleland of Powder Springs, Ga., competed for the MTSU equestrian and stock horse teams that qualified for national competitions, which were canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic. (Submitted photo by Andrea Rego)



## Horse Science Graduate Students present at the American Youth Horse Council Symposium

By Andrea Rego

MTSU Horse Science graduate students Courtney Smith, Kailey Vande Kamp, and Kaylee Layton presented workshops on Rider Exercises and Public Speaking at the 2020 American Youth Horse Council Symposium March 7-8th at the University of Florida in Gainesville, FL. Layton and Vande Kamp presented on oral reason tactics in Horse Judging competition. Smith presented on fitness beyond the ride.

Accomplished youth traveled from all over the nation to attend this educational event. They received rave reviews from 40+ participants. Together MTSU and UT will host the 2021 Symposium. This will be an excellent opportunity for those that connect youth and horses on Feb 25-28, 2021.



Representing the Horse Science program at AYHC in Gainesville, FL. (Above left to right) Dr. Holly Spooner, M.S. students Courtney Smith, Kaylee Layton, and Kailey Vande Kamp traveled to Gainesville, FL.

## Horse Judging Team clenches a Limited Division Championship at AQHA Congress

The MTSU Horse Judging team traveled to the All-American Quarter Horse Congress in October. Sophomore Mckenzee Petree was Champion in Performance and Overall in the Limited Division and Sophomore Nikki Dyer was 7th overall. MTSU has clenched the Limited Division championship twice now in the past three years— as Kailey Vande Kamp won the title in 2017.

Every year Ohio hosts thousands of competitors across the nation for one of the most prestigious events in the AQHA. Horse Judging competitors from top equine science programs travel to judge high quality exhibitors in Columbus, Ohio.

Horse judging competitors evaluated the following classes: trail, hunter hack, western pleasure, horsemanship, hunter under saddle, hunt seat equitation, ranch riding, reining, and 3-4 halter classes. Students were evaluated on their proficiency in scoring and delivery of oral reasons.



Competing for the MTSU Judging Team: Cory Elk, Mckenzee Petree, and Nikki Dyer. The team is coached by Dr. Holly Spooner and Graduate Student Kailey Vande Kamp.

## MTSU HORSES, STAFF, AND STUDENTS SUCCEED AT INTERNATIONAL GRAND CHAMPIONSHIP

By Andrea Rego and Jeremy Carlton & excerpts from WHOA website

Pleasure Walking horses have always played an important role in the life of the International Walking Horse Show. The International is proud to have been instrumental in the development of the Pleasure Horse Division for 41 years now and the popularity it enjoys today. Exhibitors from throughout the nation recognize the International as the leading Championship Show for the Pleasure Tennessee Walking Horse. MTSU is a proud producer of many champion walking horses. Currently the MTSU Horse Science Program has four stallions: Seve, Rowdy Rev, The



Jeremy Carlton and Ashley Foster at 2019 International.



Jeremy Carlton and Seve's Lady Raider (Model mare and In-Hand Champion) at 2019 International.

Royal Raider, and Hey-Dare. These stallions are actively

used in the Reproduction class taught by Dr. Haffner.

Select MTSU students receive the opportunity to show each year at the International in August. For most students, it is their first time showing a Tennessee Walking Horse. Under the guidance of Barn Manager Jeremy Carlton and Asst. Barn Manager, Kim White, students earned top placings with MTSU filies at the 2019 and 2020 International Grand Championship. At the 2019 International, MTSU's Seve's Lady Raider was the Model mare, In-Hand mare, and Reserve In-Hand Grand Champion with handler Jeremy Carlton. MTSU's Royal Cup took a top 5 placing in Novice yearlings and WHOA Jamboree yearlings with students Madison Armstrong and Ashley Foster, respectively.

At the 2020 International Show Jeremy Carlton led two MTSU horses to a champion status. MTSU's Royal Raider earned the Stallions In-Hand Champion. MTSU's Royal Sonata earned Reserve In-Hand mare champion. Horse Science students Taylor Meek and Kaylee Hayes achieved top placings in amateur and novice yearling classes. Hayes showed MTSU's Little Miss Rowdy to a 2nd place in Novice yearlings and a 4th place in amateur yearlings class. Meek led MTSU's Sweet and Rowdy to an 8th place in amateur yearlings and a 5th place in novice yearlings.



(left) Kaylee Hayes showing Little Miss Rowdy (2nd place Novice yearling) at 2020 International Grand Championship.

## MTSU, Motlow, Columbia State use \$300K USDA grant to steer students to agriculture, fermentation science

(story by Randy Weiler, MTSU News; edited by Jessica Carter)



Fermentation Science

Attracting future students to agriculture and MTSU's Fermentation Science program — that's the objective of a new U.S. Department of Agriculture grant collaboration between the university and Columbia State and Motlow State community colleges. It's a three-year, \$300,000 grant proposed by MTSU's Tony Johnston, who is partnering with Columbia State's Karen Kendall-Fite and Motlow's Nathan Fisher, along with faculty from all three schools. The grant is designed to increase awareness of agriculture and introduce fermentation concepts into lower division undergraduate math and science classes at Columbia State and Motlow, and drive fermentation science as a career option. "Students in general aren't aware of what fermentation science is, much less that it's actually agricultural," said Johnston, professor and director of the MTSU Fermentation Science program. "The grant seeks to get more students interested in agriculture as a career."



MTSU Fermentation Science Director Tony Johnston, left, oversees as former student and 2019 graduate Kayley Stallings works with ingredients and chemicals in the lab at university partner Hop Springs in Murfreesboro in this 2019 file photo. (MTSU file photo by J. Intintoli)

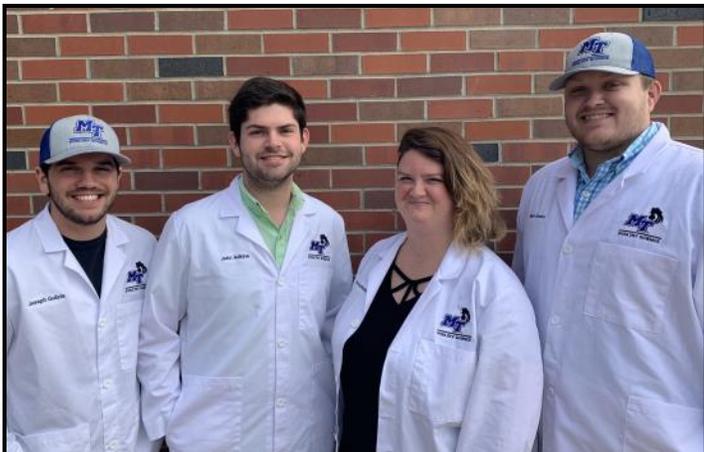
Columbia State President Janet Smith said the grant "will give our students exciting opportunities in fermentation science that would not otherwise be available to them without this funding. The grant will also allow us to continue to build upon our excellent partnership with MTSU." A Columbia State associate professor in biology, Kendall-Fite said "career growth for our students and economic growth in our community are at the heart of our mission as a community college and this grant provides opportunity to achieve both."

"Motlow is excited to partner with MTSU on this USDA grant project focused on fermentation science," said Tammy O'Dell, director of grants. "This work involves the implementation of fermentation-specific information into the curriculum of organic chemistry, microbiology and mathematics courses to train students to understand the science and practice of fermentation better." The value of the grant extends beyond the expansion of enrollment in the MTSU's program, Johnston said. "Agriculture is an applied STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) field, but it is not traditionally viewed this way," he said. "The grant provides an opportunity to connect the dots between STEM courses and agriculture and raise awareness of and increase the potential for a student to become interested in the applied STEM career that is fermentation science."

Motlow and Columbia State STEM faculty will be trained in problem-based learning methods to work with their students, and the impact of their students' awareness of fermentation science as a STEM concentration and career will be tracked. Johnston said part of the grant will go toward classroom equipment — smartphones and scientific equipment — for Motlow and Columbia State students to learn about chemistry, biology and math through applications of fermentation in their freshmen- and sophomore-level courses.

## First Ever MTSU Poultry Judging Team

For the first time in school history, a poultry judging team competed at the national contest hosted by the University of Arkansas. Team members pictured below include (l to r): John Adkins, Joseph Gulizia, Nick Greene, and Cecilia Broadwater. The team is coached by Dr. Kevin Downs.



## MTSU students participate in the 2020 U.S. POULTRY College Student Career Program



Each year USPOULTRY sponsors a three day College Student Career Program in conjunction with the International Production and Processing Expo in Atlanta, GA. This is an opportunity for college students from around the country to interview for internships and full-time positions with all the major poultry compa-

nies in the U.S. MTSU students participating this year included (pictured L to R) Cameron Harmon (currently employed with Tyson Foods), Samantha Giffin (currently employed with Tyson Foods), John Adkins (currently in a graduate program in poultry science at Auburn University), and Cecilia Broadwater (graduating in 2021 with a minor in Poultry Science). Dr. Kevin Downs in the School of Agriculture has served as advisor for this program for several years.



## FFA Goodwill Tour Reception

In February, during National FFA Week, we hosted over 150 FFA members from Middle Tennessee for a reception with the State FFA Officers and recognized high school seniors who were admitted to attend



School of Ag Alum Mrs. Hope Etheridge attended FFA Goodwill tour with her students from Smyrna High School.

## Animal Science Academic Quadrathlon Team



L to R: Sarah Kozuszek, Madison Armstrong, Jessica Hickerson, and John Adkins.

In January, four animal science students competed as a team at the 2020 Southern Section Animal Science Academic Quadrathlon competition in Rome, Georgia. The MTSU team consisted of John Adkins, Madison Armstrong, Jessie Hickerson, and Sarah Kozuszek. The Quadrathlon is a four-part competition in the animal sciences where undergraduate students from universities across the South work together as teams in a lab practical, written exam, oral presentation, and quiz bowl. This year's competition was held on the campus of Berry College. The MTSU team competed well finishing 8<sup>th</sup> overall out of 15 teams. The team also placed 2nd in the written exam category and 3rd in the oral presentation category. The team was coached by Dr. Jessica Carter.



## Dairy Challenge Team



Pictured from L to R: Madison Caudill, Dillon Arnold, and Ashley Buchanan.

The Dairy Challenge team participated in the Southern Regional Contest in November in Campbellsville, KY and had planned to compete at the National Dairy Challenge until it was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Team members included Madison Caudill, Dillon Arnold, and Ashley Buchanan. The team was coached by Dr. Maegan Hollis, Jared Franklin, and Jessica Schriver. Students practiced at the Major Dairy (pictured below) with MTSU Ag Alumni Seth Major.



## Raider Roundup

For the second year in a row, MTSU Collegiate FFA hosted Raider Roundup - Agriculture College and Career Exploration Event. Participation nearly doubled, with 523 middle and high school agriculture students from East, Middle, and West Tennessee attending. This event is designed to expose secondary students to postsecondary opportunities in agriculture and represents a collaborative effort that involves every faculty member and student organization in the MTSU School of Agriculture. Participating students choose to participate in workshops and career development activities associated with majors, minors, and certifications offered at MTSU while their teachers take them on a self-guided tour across campus.



## Alpha Tau Alpha Shows Up and Shows Out

Alpha Tau Alpha (ATA) is the National Agriculture Education Honor Society, providing professional development, networking, and competitive opportunities for undergraduate students interested in agricultural education. In October 2019, MTSU became a chartered member and participated in the National ATA Conclave, during which our agricultural education competitive teams experienced



much success. Rhiannon Overcast and Bridget Robertson were named State Champions and National Champions in the Team Journalistic Essay Competition. The Agriculture Debate team, with members Allison Parker, Lindsey Parsley, Rhiannon Overcast, and Caroline Haynes, was named State Champions and National runner-up. The Parliamentary Procedure team, with members Neil Slone, Jeremiah Lynch, Jacob Tipton, Caroline Haynes, and Allison Parker, was named State Champions and National runner-up; Neil Sloan was also named State champion and 3rd high individual in the written parliamentary procedure exam. The Quiz Bowl team with members Hunter Holden, Mack Holden, Erin Burns, and Rhiannon Overcast was named State Champions. MTSU Alpha Tau Alpha was also named State Winner and National runner-up in the Program of Excellence Contest and MTSU was awarded the Nolan award with a platinum rating, which is the highest rating a university can receive.

### Dr. Temple Grandin Delivers Distinguished Lecture

The MTSU Collegiate FFA Chapter along with MTSU's School of Agriculture, Department of Elementary and Special Education, MTeach Program, and Distinguished Lecture Committee sponsored a visit from Dr. Temple Grandin. Nearly 900 people reserved tickets to meet and hear Dr. Grandin, a professor of animal science at Colorado State University, author, livestock industry consultant and autism spokeswoman. Grandin was diagnosed with autism at a young age and used a slide deck in her lecture that addressed working with animals, the importance of career and technical education, and the value of different minds.



State Winner in the Overall Collegiate FFA Chapter competition.



Congratulations to Collegiate FFA for receiving the top award for Ag Student Organizations during the 2019-20 AY. This award is named in honor/memory of Dr. Harley Fouch, who served as the school director for many years. Keep up the great work!!



### Collegiate FFA Takes Home Top Honor

The MTSU Collegiate FFA experienced success during the 2020 Tennessee FFA Alumni Association Convention. Lindsey Parsley was named State Champion in the Agricultural Education interview competition. Rhiannon Overcast was named State Champion in the Prepared Public Speaking competition. The Chapter Scrapbook (designed by Caroline Haynes) was the State Champion. Hunter Holden, Mac Holden, Rhiannon Overcast, and Neil Slone were named State Champions in the Quiz Bowl competition. Colby Chapman won the Tennessee Association of Agricultural Educators (TAAE) Teach Ag t-shirt design competition. The chapter was also named

### International Students from Norway

The MTSU School of Agriculture was pleased to host 3 international exchange students from Norway during the spring semester, Nikolai Mortensen, Vilde Kampesveen & Torunn Tronnes. Sadly they had to return home early due to the Coronavirus pandemic.



## MTSU Student Wins State Young Farmers and Rancher Collegiate Discussion Meet

Allison Parker Farley, December 2019 MTSU Agriculture graduate, was named the State Young Farmers and Rancher Collegiate Discussion Meet champion at the annual Summer Conference in July of 2019.



Farm Bureau President Jeff Aiken presents award to Allison Parker.

Competitors are evaluated on an exchange of ideas and information on a pre-determined topic. Participants build basic discussion skills, develop a keen understanding of important agricultural issues and explore how groups can pool knowledge to reach consensus and solve problems.

## Tennessee Farm Bureau Interns

Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation offers summer internships annually MTSU students are frequently selected for this program. Senior Lindsey Parsley is pictured on the left. Interested students should check out this opportunity.



## Back on Track Project Supports Homeless Populations

An MTSU School of Agriculture mechanics class project that began last fall and ended earlier this year benefited Murfreesboro's Greenhouse Ministries and, in turn, homeless people. The class, which was led by Dr. Chaney Mosley, repaired and donated four bicycles to the local nonprofit to assist homeless people with transportation to help land them jobs.

The students gained invaluable life lessons — how to apply for grants, repair bicycles, complete a service-learning project, show kindness to those in need and more. "Transportation is a huge issue in Murfreesboro," said Mike Dugan, Greenhouse Ministries director of counseling, who accepted the bicycles from the students. We are able to make a difference (in people's lives). For the MTSU students, it shows they can make a difference in someone being employed or not employed." It all began when the Collegiate FFA received a grant to complete a service-learning project. The ag mechanics class secured donations of non-working bicycles. "We purchased replacement parts and students learned how to perform bicycle maintenance to get the bikes back in working order," Mosley said. After making the repairs, the students wrote a suite of lesson plans aligned with agriscience standards that focused on speed, distance and time, types of energy, and types of machines, in the context of bicycles, Mosley said. The students then created a grant program where an application was made available to high school agricultural programs in Tennessee, to request a copy of the lesson plans as well as a bicycle repair starter kit where they could duplicate the program. Collegiate FFA and Ag mechanics class has shipped at least 30 kits and sets of lesson plans to mini-grant recipients in Tennessee.



Hunter Holden, left, Blake Warmack, Madison Caudill, Abbey Taylor, Brendon Puckett, Taylor Bell, Lindsey Parsley, Sara Beth Martin and Jessie Hickerson stand with the bicycles they repaired and donated to Murfreesboro's Greenhouse Ministries earlier this year. The bikes will help homeless people have transportation for jobs. (Story and photo by MTSU's Randy Weiler)



## Vintage-looking signs point to MTSU Creamery's ongoing growth



The signs are popping up all around Murfreesboro and Rutherford County, and even a few spots beyond. You can find the signs at Hattie Jane's Creamery, City Café, Percy's General Merchandise and Lascassas Feed in Lascassas,

Tennessee, and other business locations in Rutherford, Cannon and Wilson counties where MTSU dairy products are sold. The MTSU Creamery has nearly doubled production at its small processing plant on campus and continues to market its milk utilizing a throwback from the past — tin signs.

The 11-by-17-inch, old-fashioned-looking signs' message — “We Proudly Sell MTSU Milk” — are a vehicle “to increase visibility of our product,” said Matthew Wade, director of the MTSU Experiential Learning and Research Center in Lascassas. “It’s a throwback and a fun sign,” Wade said. “It takes us back to when milk was in old glass bottles and that vintage era. ... Ours is a locally-sourced product and these signs display that.”

The signs have been out for more than one month and, like the first 1,000 pints bottled, have become somewhat of a collector's item. “We wanted to get them to the vendors and some sponsors first,” Wade said. Wade and Dr. Jessica Carter, director of the School of Agriculture, used part of a statewide grant from the Dairy Alliance through the Tennessee Dairy Producers Association to purchase 200 signs to not only promote the MTSU Creamery but also the Tennessee Milk Program.

“The Dairy Alliance and Tennessee Dairy Producers Association provided the grant to help promote Tennessee Dairy Producers ([www.drinktnmilk.com](http://www.drinktnmilk.com)). The Tennessee Milk logo on bottles means the milk is “certified 100 percent that it's produced in Tennessee, helping a Tennessee dairy farmer directly,” Wade said. Additional grant funds were used to place billboards in Nashville for 30 days and for an advertorial in “Edible Nashville” magazine. The MTSU Creamery, which is managed by Steve Dixon and includes student workers in the entire process, will be featured in an upcoming issue of Tennessee Ag Insider with several other creameries talking about small-scale processing.



MTSU junior agriculture major Brendon Puckett delivered MTSU Creamery milk to Percy's General Merchandise in Lascassas, Tenn., on stop earlier this fall. Percy's is one of 15 businesses in three counties carrying MTSU milk prod-



An 11 x 17-inch tin sign in Hattie Jane's Creamery in downtown Murfreesboro helps promote the MTSU Creamery and MTSU milk, which is a Tennessee Milk 100 percent locally produced product. (MTSU photo by J. Intintoli)

## MTSU helps ginseng experts map future strategies for plant research and Production, by Randy Weiler

**Middle Tennessee State University** continues helping stakeholders statewide navigate the exciting possibilities regarding **ginseng** that grows in the wild — and with a growth period shortened in a university laboratory — across Tennessee. A group of ginseng experts and enthusiasts met at MTSU recently to exchange ideas, evaluate current trends and plan for the future during a two-day symposium focused on research surrounding the wild root and its medicinal and supplemental value. **Iris Gao**, director of the MTSU-based International Ginseng Institute and associate professor in the School of Agriculture, leads the university's ginseng research efforts, which could “produce data and knowledge that can assist citizens of Tennessee, especially those persons in the distressed counties of our state, by advancing the unique characteristics of this plant,” said MTSU's **David Butler**, vice provost for research. Butler, also dean of the College of Graduate Studies, oversaw the second day of events as leaders in the ginseng field gathered for the Symposium on the Science, Traditions and Economics of Tennessee Ginseng in the Student Union President's Conference Room. **Paul Martin Jr.**, an MTSU alumnus and retired private investor now involved with the Tennessee ginseng export trade, MTSU's Honors College and university President **Sidney A. McPhee's** international outreach initiative, represented the developing domestic industries at the session. “There's some easy things that can produce big results,” Martin said afterward. “With a very little bit of capital investment, the state can open a domestic market for industry, which will raise the income level of Tennessee's most distressed counties.”

“So, my takeaway (from the meeting) is that the trajectory of market and the conservation of the plant can be easily changed with just a different approach than the traditional export market,” he added. McPhee told the group the International Ginseng Institute “is a crown jewel and a model of success in our efforts to create collaborations that bring benefits not only to the university but to our surrounding community.” He said the study and trade of the ginseng plant holds “great humanitarian benefits, both in revitalizing international trade and in the quest for finding cures and treatments for the diseases and conditions that afflict mankind.”

“Our International Ginseng Institute and those responsible for its success, namely Dr. Gao and Paul Martin, represent a shining example of how MTSU has earned a reputation for excellence in research and discovery, in creating trade and bolstering the economy, in being on the vanguard of innovation that benefits many and in building bridges that position us as a leader on the global stage,” McPhee said.





Our student and faculty are actively recruiting at various agriculture events throughout the year. If you know of a student who's interested in MTSU Ag please contact the department at 615-898-2523 to schedule a campus visit and tour of our farm laboratories and/or horse science center. We offer scholarships to incoming freshman (application found on our website and due by April 1). We would love to show you around!



### **Make a Gift**

School of Agriculture – [mtsu.edu/supportag](https://www.mtsu.edu/supportag)  
If you would like to contribute please check out this link. You can donate to one of several different funds or to the general fund for the School of Agriculture. Thank you for your support!

### **Contact MTSU School of Agriculture:**

Dr. Jessica Carter ([jessica.carter@mtsu.edu](mailto:jessica.carter@mtsu.edu), 615-898-2169). **Do you know a high school student who may be interested in attending MTSU? If so please feel free to contact me to set up a campus visit or farm tour. Ag Alumni are some of our best recruiters!!**

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Dr. Jessica Carter, Director & Professor of Animal Science  
Dr. Song Cui, Associate Professor of Plant & Soil Science  
Dr. Kevin Downs, Associate Professor of Animal Science  
Dr. Iris Gao, Associate Professor of Plant & Soil Science  
Dr. Justin Gardner, Associate Professor of Agribusiness  
Dr. John Haffner, Veterinarian, Horse Science  
Dr. Samuel Haruna, Assistant Professor of Soil Science  
Ms. Ariel Herrin, Director of Equestrian Program  
Dr. Rhonda Hoffman, Professor of Horse Science  
Dr. Maegan Hollis, Assistant Professor of Animal Science  
Dr. Tony Johnston, Professor of Fermentation Science  
Dr. Kishor Luitel, Assistant Professor of Agribusiness  
Dr. Seockmo Ku, Assist. Prof. of Fermentation Science  
Dr. Chaney Mosley, Assist. Prof. of Agricultural Education  
Dr. Keely O'Brien, Assistant Prof. of Fermentation Science  
Dr. Nate Phillips, Professor of Horticulture  
Ms. Andrea Rego, Instructor of Horse Science  
Dr. Holly Spooner, Clinical Specialist in Equine Health  
Dr. Alanna Vaught, Instructor of Agricultural Education

### **Agriculture Advisor**

Mrs. Jessica Lance

### **Agriculture Staff**

Mr. Matthew Wade, Director, MTSU Farm Laboratories  
Mr. Daniel Boyer, Beef & Swine Unit Manager  
Mr. Jeremy Carlton, Horse Barn Manager  
Mr. Steve Dixon, MTSU Creamery Manager  
Mrs. Renee Dunn, Horse Science Secretary  
Mr. Jared Franklin, Assistant Dairy Manager  
Mrs. Debbie Strobel, Executive Aide, School of Ag  
Mr. Jason Tanner, Dairy Manager  
Mr. Danny Troup, Crops Unit Manager  
Ms. Kim White, Assistant Horse Barn Manager