

»» NEWSLETTER ««

WKU AGRICULTURE ALUMNI



**STUDY ABROAD TRIP TO
AFRICA!
PG. 8**

**VEGETABLE AND ORNAMENTAL
PRODUCTION
PG. 15**

**EQUINE NEWS
PG. 27**

**THE HILLTOPER CREAMERY
PG. 30**

GREETINGS FROM THE CHAIR



Dear Alumni,

First, let me say it is very humbling to be chosen to serve as Agriculture & Food Science Chair. I often think of the role that this Department played in my development professionally and personally. My experiences on the Hill, as a student, provided me with opportunities that I couldn't imagine as a young man. The faculty encouraged me and gave me confidence to take advantage of the opportunities available to me. WKU Agriculture played a major role in my career, my family, and the person I am today. Now, my son is here on the Hill! Not only do I want him to have the same experience, or even a better one, but I want this for all our students. No pressure....right?

I do want to take this moment to thank Dr. DeGraves on behalf of the Department for his service over the years as a faculty member, but particularly serving as chair. We are on better footing now than in times past. Agriculture is not only valued but celebrated on this campus. This is attributed to the hard work of many staff, faculty, and alumni, however, Dr. DeGraves was instrumental in this achievement. We wish him the best in his retirement.

I encourage you to review this newsletter. It is an exciting time. Share the newsletter with others. Finally, I want to ask for your help. There are many ways you can support us. It doesn't matter what level you're able to commit. There are many ways you can help if you can only make a small commitment or if you wish to do something more substantial. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Thank you for all that you have done for our Department. I hope you and your families are well. I look forward to seeing you at Homecoming.

Go Tops!

Paul B. Woosley
Agriculture & Food Science Chair

2022-2023 OUTSTANDING STUDENTS



ABIGAIL MATTINGLY



CHASSITY WARNER



JACOB SHILTS



SHAYLA LILE



HALEY HARPER



MORGAN MUDD



HANNAH DOYEL



**RAFAEL TEODORO DA
SILVA SOUTO BORGES**



KELLY JO ENGLAND



ELLIOTT POPE



ARIEL CAMM

- Abigail Mattingly (Outstanding Agribusiness Student) Springfield, KY
- Chassity Warner (Outstanding Agricultural Education Student) Springfield, KY
- Jacob Shilts (Outstanding Agronomy-Plant Science Student) Webster, KY
- Shayla Lile (Outstanding Agronomy-Soil Science Student) Castalian Springs, TN
- Kelly Jo England (Outstanding Animal Science Student) Madisonville, KY
- Haley Harper (Outstanding Floriculture Student) Scottsville, KY
- Morgan Mudd (Outstanding Horticulture Student) Clarkson, KY
- Hannah Doyel (Outstanding Horse Science Student) Rockfield, KY
- Rafael Teodoro da Silva Souto Borges (Outstanding International Student) Jacarei, Brazil
- Elliott Pope (Outstanding Turfgrass Management Student) Lugoff, SC
- Ariel Camm (Outstanding Senior) Ramsey, IN

NEW FACULTY/STAFF

Navdeep Singh



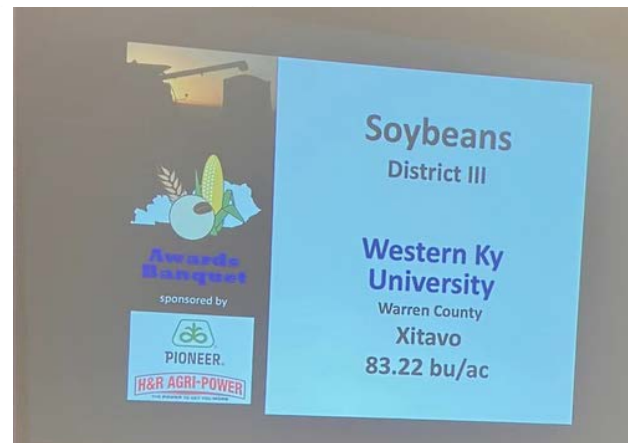
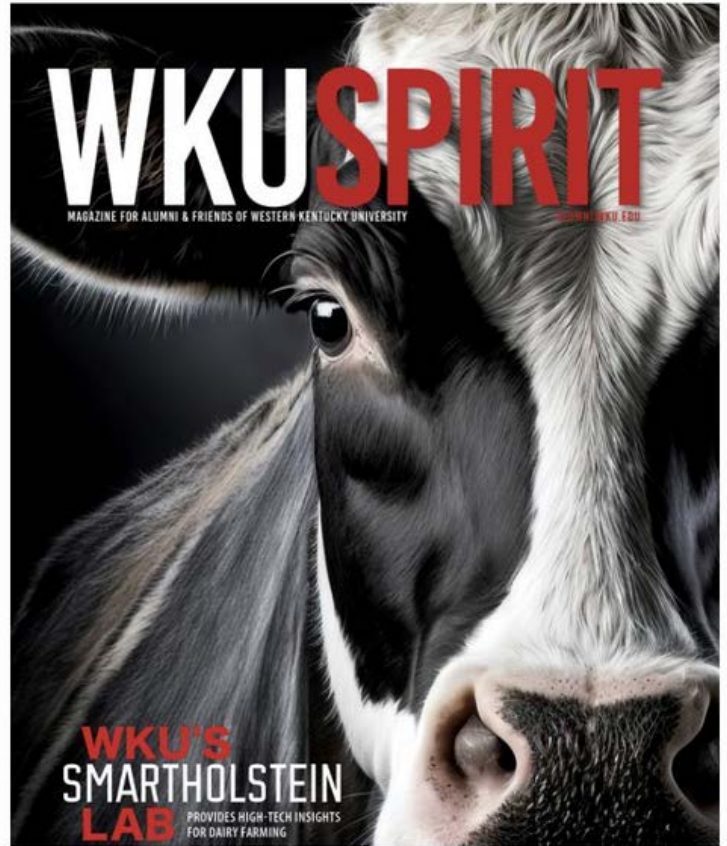
Navdeep was born and raised in a small town in Punjab state of India. His journey of discovery began at the Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) in Ludhiana, India, where he pursued his Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture. His passion for the earth's hidden secrets led him to continue his academic pursuit with a M.S. degree in Soil Science from the same institution. Armed with field experiments and simulations, he explored how different farming practices influenced the delicate balance of moisture in the soil. After earning his M.S. degree, Navdeep decided to further enrich his knowledge by becoming a research fellow at PAU and studied the effects of various agricultural management practices on crop yields and the nitrogen balance in rice-wheat cropping systems of the Indian Punjab. In 2017, Navdeep moved to the United States to pursue his Ph.D. in Soil Physics at South Dakota State University, Brookings, South Dakota where he investigated the long- and short-term impacts of integrated crop-livestock systems and other sustainable agricultural practices on soil organic carbon, physical and hydraulic properties, and greenhouse gas emissions. As Navdeep's academic journey unfolded, he found himself in the picturesque town of Mount Vernon, Washington, where he joined the Washington State University with a new mission: to uncover the indirect contribution of soil organic carbon to plant-available water by examining its role in resisting and recovering from soil compaction. In 2023, he reached a new milestone in his academic adventure. Western Kentucky University beckoned him to join as an Assistant Professor of Sustainable Agriculture in the Department of Agriculture and Food Science. Here, he would impart his wealth of knowledge and inspire future generations of agricultural innovators. Beyond the world of academia, Navdeep has a passion for exploration. When he's not in work mode, he's on wanderlust patrol, exploring the world. Navdeep cherishes his epic journey from the lush green fields of Punjab to the vibrant American soil.

Shelby Felder

Shelby graduated from Washington State University in fall 2017 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Science – Management. At Washington State University she was employed at their dairy and was a member of the cooperative student dairy herd. Working for both of these herds gave her the opportunity to see how herds were run on the same farm but managed differently. After graduation and a brief time spent employed at a local feed store, she accepted a job with the University of Kentucky as the assistant manager of their dairy herd in 2019. When the dairy shut down, she relocated to Oregon where she accepted a herdsman position on a diversified farm – milking cows, running cow/calf beef pairs, and custom raising dairy heifers. These wide range of experiences made her an excellent candidate to serve as Dairy Herd Manager with WKU's SmartHolstein Laboratory. We are glad to have her on board!



AWESOME THINGS HAPPENING ON THE HILL!



Top Left - Debbie Gabbard receives University Part-time Staff Award
Mid-left- Creste Jean and Lindsay Meeks receive the Christopher Ware Staff Excellence Award. Paul Woosley received the Ogden College Faculty Service Award.

Upper-right - WKU SmartHolstein Lab makes cover of WKU's Spirit Alumni Magazine

Directly above - Marie England and Paul Woosley receive award for high soybean yield.

Bottom-left - First foal born at AREC in many years, during equine reproduction class.

OLD FACES IN NEW PLACES!



Upon the retirement of Fred DeGraves, Dr. Paul Woosley was selected to serve as department chair starting in July. He is an Edmonson County native and WKU Agriculture Alumnus. He has served on the faculty for 21 years and most recently served the department as AREC Director. In August, Dr. Dan Strunk accepted the AREC Director position. He is a native of east Tennessee where he received his B.S. and M.S. at the University of Tennessee. He later received his Ph. D. from the University of Arkansas. Prior to coming to WKU in 2018, he was employed by the University of Tennessee.



BLAST
FROM
THE PAST!

It was great seeing these former faculty members this year. Cletus Mitchel has been on all seven continents and will be turning 100 this year! Dr. Byron Sleugh still works for Dow and lives in Indianapolis and Dr. David Stiles still has a few milk cows in KY but lives in Austin, TX.



We would like to thank Dr. Fred DeGraves for his time here at WKU. A Michigan native, Dr. DeGraves developed a love for animal agriculture early from his experiences of being raised on a family farm. He attended Michigan State University and upon obtaining his DVM, he began practicing veterinary medicine in Wisconsin. Feeling the urge to teach, he pursued a Ph.D. from North Carolina State University and later joined the faculty at the University of Auburn. Before coming to WKU, he served on the faculty at Ohio State University. His arrival enhanced the learning experiences for the animal science students. He meticulously worked with Pre-Vet students on their vet school applications and prepared them for the interview process. Later, he served the department as Chair and was instrumental in the establishment of the SmartHolstein Laboratory. Many of our alumni owe a great deal of their success to Dr. DeGraves' efforts. We thank him for his service to the University and wish him all the best in his retirement.



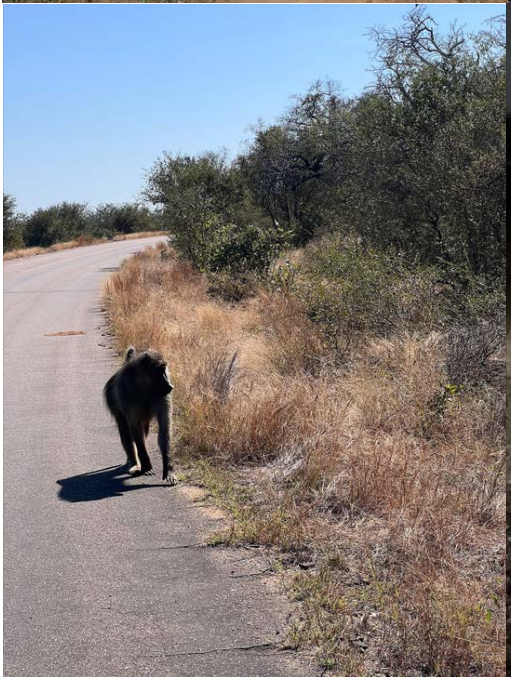
Congratulations to Cris Scudder. Mr. Scudder retired from the department at Christmas last year. He came to WKU from ECU. While in the department he taught a wide variety of courses ranging from farm safety and irrigation to farm power and hydraulics. He often lent his expertise to help out at AREC. He also served the department as an EMT at events and organized many safety trainings at AREC. He was one of the most adored instructors in the department by students, a testament to his student centric attitude. Though retired from WKU, he is staying busy helping his son with his construction company.

STUDY ABROAD TRIP TO AFRICA!

This is a skills-based course for students in relevant careers, including veterinary medicine, ecology and wildlife biology. The goals are to learn and apply:

- Basic field safety when working with wildlife
- Principles and practices of wildlife capture
- Principles and practices of wildlife immobilization
- Principles and practices of wildlife handling
- Principles and practices of temporary housing of wildlife
- Principles and practices of wildlife translocation
- Theory and practice of wildlife conservation in South Africa and the United States





REMEMBERING DR. ROBERT SCHNEIDER

Dr. Schneider was a faculty member from 1976-1995 where he taught mostly agriculture mechanics courses. Ask any student from that time about Dr. Schneider and they will most likely describe him in front of the classroom utilizing both of his arms and fists as pistons, illustrating the 4 stages of a 4-stroke engine: 1. Intake 2. Compression 3. Power 4. Exhaust. You learned to be efficient in agriculture mechanics. Students would do numerous calculations to be able to match the right farm equipment to the size of the farming operation; no more horsepower than needed, and no less. Dr. Schneider practiced what he taught. Many would describe him as a frugal individual. He was always bringing his lunch and clipping coupons. However, Dr. Schneider was a giving person. He and his wife, Virginia, did not need much to be happy. They enjoyed saving and investing properly to be able to help others. After his retirement, Dr. Schneider gave over a half million dollars to the University. These funds will help students attend college for many years to come. Education was something that both he and Virginia valued. It is our hope that future students receiving an education due to his generosity will also share his view.



ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

KATELYNN LINET



My name is Katelynn Linet. I was born and raised in Louisville, KY. I am a sophomore majoring in Agriculture with concentrations in Animal Science and Pre-Veterinary Medicine. Since childhood, I have always loved being around animals. While at WKU, the coursework and hands-on experience at the farm have allowed me to learn about the animals I hope to care for in the future. I want to thank the WKU Agriculture Alumni Chapter for supporting me in the pursuit of my professional goals. I look forward to continuing my education at WKU and in veterinary school.

WE MISS YOU PETE!



We remember Pete Dotson, an instructor at WKU's Agriculture Department for 32 years. Pete taught agriculture mechanics courses and helped keep the compost facility running after Dr. Schneider's retirement. Additionally, he started the turfgrass management program in the early 1990s. He was a valued and respected member of the AG Faculty, which named him Alumnus of the year in 2006 and honored him further by naming Dotson Drive, a street on WKU's farm. Pete was a charter member of the AGR Fraternity. Pete was also a fixture in the community where he served in many leadership roles, including director of Warren Rural Electric Cooperative, Warren County Farm Bureau Board, Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission and the Warren County Conservation District, providing insight in areas of agriculture and development. Pete also attended the National Farm Machinery Show faithfully and helped man the WKU booth even in his retirement. He will be dearly missed.

AGRICULTURE ALUMNI AWARD WINNERS



Congratulations to last year's Department of Agriculture & Food Science award winners:

Friend of the Year—Dean David Brown
Alumni of the Year—Tim Hughes
Departmental Spirit Award—Cris Scudder

Join us for Homecoming this year to honor this year's winners!

GREENHOUSE PRODUCTION COURSE



AGRONOMY CLUB PLANTING NATIVE SPECIES

ENJOYING THE NEW STUDENT LOUNGE



WELCOME BACK



EQUESTRIAN TEAM WINNERS



STUDENTS WORKING AT AREC



AG BUSINESS STUDENTS COMPETE AT SAAS IN OKLAHOMA CITY



PRE-VET STUDENTS SOUTH AFRICA



MEAT SCIENCE COURSE



ANIMAL SCIENCE LAB



FLORAL DESIGN STUDENTS COMPETING IN CHICAGO



FIRST DAY OF CLASS



FIELD CROPS



CAREER FAIR



AG LIVING LEARNING COMMUNITY

2023 RECIPROCAL MEAT CONFERENCE

Dr. Silva participated in the 2023 Reciprocal Meat Conference (RMC), which is the annual meeting held by the American Meat Science Association (AMSA), between June 25-28 in St. Paul, Minnesota. Although Dr. Silva has been an AMSA member for a couple of years, this was his first time attending in-person. Throughout the event, he expanded his network in the meat industry, forging potential collaborations between the WKU Meat Science Lab and other institutions.



CROPS NEWS!

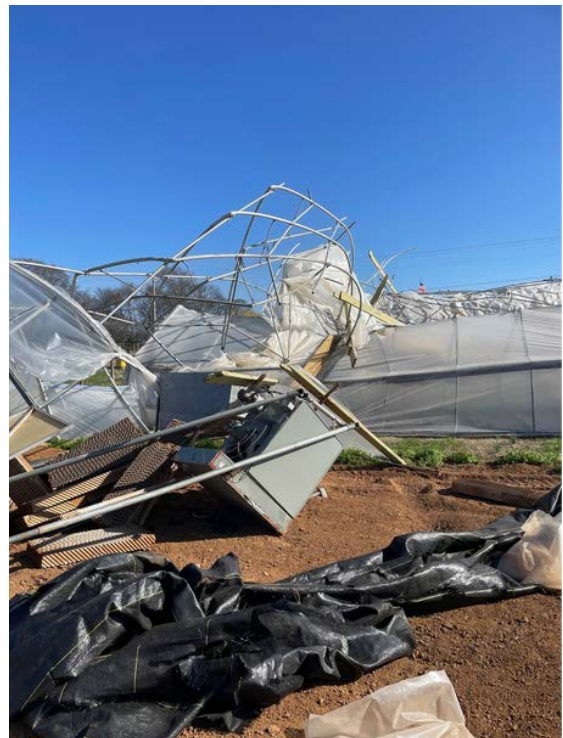
- First place in the 2022 Kentucky Soybean production contest for District 3. With a yield of 83.22 bu/ac
- Successful field days with industry partners, BASF, Corteva/Pioneer, NK, Bayer/Asgrow/Dekalb
- New planter for 2023 planting season, which was displayed at National Farm Machinery Show
- Welcomed new industry partners for 2023 Crop year, Growmark and Becks
- 2022 Public Trial Soybeans results 1st Pioneer P48A14E, 2nd Asgrow AG48XF3, 3rd BASF Xitavo XO4132E
- 2022 Public Trail Corn results 1st Dekalb DKC67-94, 2nd Channel 214-78, 3rd Pioneer P1718AM
- AREC aquired new round bale hay roller.
- Santa Visited the farm, so we put him to work!



VEGETABLE AND ORNAMENTAL PRODUCTION

Vegetable Production:

The resilience of the horticulture unit was put to the test this year; due to the severe weather southern Kentucky experienced this past spring, 75% of the vegetable production high-tunnel structures were severely damaged or lost. Although this was an initial setback, production was compensated for by increasing field production of vegetables. Field production for vegetables was the highest it has ever been in the horticulture unit, spanning an entire acre. Student workers mapped out the field production areas to maximize production and were able to utilize the plasticulture with drip tape irrigation method during the annual planting. This was a great experience for the students to be able to adapt to unforeseen challenges that they could potentially experience again in the horticulture industry. There were multiple varieties of vegetables grown this year including: carrots, lettuce, radishes, mustard greens, collard greens, swiss chard, kale, broccoli, cauliflower, kohlrabi, cabbage, potatoes, whole onions, green onions, tomatoes, peppers, squash, zucchini, eggplants, okra, tomatillos, and various herbs.



Farm to Campus:

The Farm to Campus program has made significant progress as far as farm product inclusion in campus' student cafeteria at Fresh Food Company, as well as many special events. Produce, Cheese, and Meat from WKU's farm as well as other local producers, such as Hampton Meats have been incorporated in many meals on campus. Students involved in vegetable production were heavily involved in the planning, planting, harvesting, and delivery of produce to campus. If you happen to be at Fresh Food Company, be sure to look for the labels indicating ingredients that were sourced from WKU's 'Farm to Campus' Program.

Recent and upcoming events that WKU Farm's produce, beef, and cheese will be showcased at:

- September 5th - KY Proud Pizza Day at Fresh Food Company (Monthly Event-Later Dates TBD)
- September 14th - Hilltopper Hub Smash Burger Bowls Event
- October TBD - Red Zone WKU Farm Sourced Beef and Cheese
- November 8th - Fresh Food Smash Burger Bowls Event



Community Outreach:

The 'Farm to Campus' program hosted various tours this year strengthening WKU's Farms relationship with our community. The Edmonson County Horticulture Club visited the horticulture unit where they toured the vegetable production area and the greenhouse facilities. The students were able to see different production methods dependent upon the structure that they're produced in. The group also learned and practiced propagation methods with common houseplants supplied by the farm and got to take home their examples. The Kentucky Deaf/Blind Project was another notable tour that took place this past year. Members of this organization were able to gain hands-on experience in the vegetable production area by being exposed to harvesting, washing, and packing different vegetables to take back with them. The group ultimately made various meals with the vegetables and reaped the full benefits of the harvest. As well as WKU affiliated markets such as the 'Hilltopper Farm Market' several other events and markets utilized produce from the 'Farm to Campus' program. We hope to further strengthen our community outreach efforts by offering more hands-on educational tours and programs such as the Community Supported Agriculture program in the near future.

Vegetables produced over the summer were utilized at:

- The Hilltopper Creamery & Farm Market
- Novo Dolce 'Farm to Table' Dinner
- Linen Apron Catering Company
- Community Farmer's Market
- Delafield Co-Op



Ornamental Production:

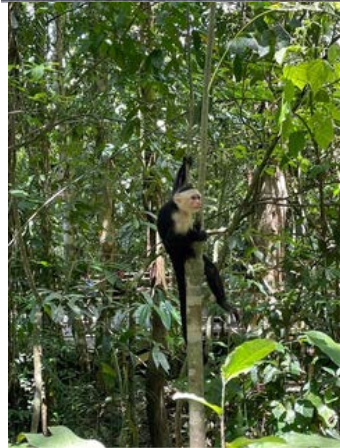
Along with student involvement in vegetable production, students were also able to participate in floriculture production for campus. The Horticulture Unit at AREC consists of three greenhouses, two of these greenhouses are utilized for floriculture production for campus. This will be the 3rd consecutive season in which WKU's farm has grown all the annuals required for WKU's two large seasonal annual installments throughout campus' grounds. The students were able to participate in production from the beginning plug stage to the finished product and then assist with the delivery process to campus. This is a great opportunity for students to be able to extend their hard work onto campus grounds for the community, fellow peers, and faculty and staff to experience. Over 10,000 potted annuals were grown with students for campus this past year.

The third greenhouse is utilized for horticulture classes and labs such as 'Greenhouse Crop Production' and 'Greenhouse Maintenance and Operation.' This past spring semester the 'Greenhouse Crop Production' course held their annual spring greenhouse sale. The students were able to see the process of growing through to the finished product, designing mixed baskets, and then witness the sale of their product. Consistently grown plants produced in the greenhouse facilities are: Pansies, Salvia, Snapdragons, Geraniums, Petunias, Verbena, Begonias, Lantana, Calibrachoa, Marigolds and Bacopa.



COSTA RICA!





This study abroad trip did not disappoint. Dr. Stone's students visited national parks with volcanoes, dense jungles, and beautiful beaches. They also learned about coffee, chocolate, and citrus production in addition to observing the wide range of abundant plant life.



ANY DAY. ANY SEMESTER.



The department participated in Topper Fest at the start of the semesters on South Lawn. Students were able to pet calves, goats, and a horse as well as sample cheese. It was a great opportunity to advocate for agriculture.



Students from all ages, backgrounds, and locations utilize AREC for educational purposes. WKU Alumni Warren Beeler and Terry Burks hosted a livestock judging clinic that brought in hundreds of students from several states. Additionally, other courses outside of agriculture are utilizing AREC as a resource. This past year we hosted students from Health and Nutrition, Hospitality and Hotel Management, Journalism and English.

AGRONOMY NEWS

Outstanding Student Awards

Congratulations to the 2023 winners of the Outstanding Agronomy Soil Science and Plant Science Students. This year's winners were Shayla Lile, a Senior from Castalian Springs, TN and Jacob Shilts, a Senior from Webster, KY. Jacob served as the most recent President of the Agronomy Club and is a past Agriculture Ambassador. Shayla was a member of the WKU Soil Judging Team and placed 5th in the Southern Regional Soil Judging Contest in the fall.

Agronomy Club News

The WKU Agronomy Club had a busy and productive 2022 – 2023 academic year, participating in several activities. Club Officers were President Jacob Shilts, a Senior from Webster, KY; Vice-President Elliott Pope, a Senior from Kershaw, SC; and Secretary/Treasurer Destinee Williams, a Senior from Hendersonville, TN. Club activities included a native wildflower planting (co-sponsored by the Horticulture Club) at the AREC, and a Senior Send-Off cookout held at the Challenge Course Pavilion in late April. The Club also hosted guest speaker Morgan Mairs, a 2016 WKU Agriculture graduate who now is employed by the Warren County Conservation District.



Agronomy Club members: Front Row – Grace Mika, Julianna Brough, Destinee Williams and David Kearns. Back Row – Jacob Lewis, Elliott Pope, Jim Parris, and Jacob Shilts.

Research

Research of industrial hemp has continued for the eighth year in a row with the focus being on varietal and plant growth regulator effects on cannabinoid production in flowering hemp. Two plant growth regulators are being tested to see if plants can be forced to increase branching, flowering, and yield. Initial observations are positive for plant growth regulators effects. Unfortunately, no plant growth regulators are currently labeled for commercial hemp production. Agronomy faculty are also continuing an experiment examining long-term effects (>15 years) of poultry litter and tillage vs. no-till effects on soil used for corn/soybean production.

WKU Soil Judging Team News

Pictured at left below is the 2022 WKU Soil Judging Team who were Kayln Ward, Charlee Webster, Laney Newton, Shayla Lile, Lauren Payne, and Andrew Haycraft. Shayla Lile placed 3rd individual and Laney Newton placed 6th individual. Overall the team placed 5th in the southern regional contest held in Clemson, SC. Our 5th place effort in the regional contest qualified us to participate in the 2023 National Soil Judging Contest in Woodward, OK. Team members in the right-hand picture were Kalyn Ward, Nate Woodall, Shayla Lile and Emily Sturgill. We graduated several students between the two teams: Kalyn Ward, Charlee Webster, Laney Newton, Shayla Lile, Lauren Payne, and Andrew Haycraft. Congratulations to both teams and their respective graduates.



WKU AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SCIENCE RESEARCH

Co composting of dairy manure with bio-char can reduce the residual effects of manure herbicide on vegetable seedlings grown on compost.

The intermediate results from a research project conducted by WKU-Agriculture and USDA -ARS scientists Drs. A.Netthisinge, P. Woosley, W. Strunk, G. Agga, and K. Sistani with graduate student researcher Steven Parris at AREC shows that residual effects of aminopyralid herbicide in dairy manure on subsequently grown vegetable plants can be reduced by composting with 4% (w/w) biochar. These findings are supported by chemical analysis of compost and greenhouse bioassay tests. The results will be presented at ASA-CSSA-SSSA International Annual Meeting, St. Louis, MO. Oct 29 - Nov 3. 2023.



AGRICULTURE EDUCATION MAKES IT'S MARK IN ITALY!



On June 9, 2023 seventeen undergraduates, graduates, and agriculture teachers from across multiple states embarked on a 12 day tour of Italy on the AGED Go! experience. The group was led by Dr. Kingery and the trip involved the group traveling from Milan to Sorrento. The Taste of Italy Tour was all about connecting agriculture products from the farm to the table. Some notable stops along the tour were Bologna, Sienna, Florence, Rome, Pompeii, Sorrento, and Capri. The group got first-hand knowledge on the production of parmesan, prosciutto, balsamic vinegar, truffles and various forms of fruit and meats used in the markets in the city center. The participants enjoyed two cooking classes along the tour as well as sampling various wines from the Tuscany region. The group also had the opportunity to visit some extraordinary landmarks like the Colosseum, Pantheon, Trevi fountain, St. Peters Basilica, and the Sistine Chapel.

WKU AGRICULTURE EDUCATION

What a great year to be a Hilltopper in Agricultural Education! The Agricultural Education program continues to make strides in developing some of the best agricultural teachers to meet the needs of today's modern schools. We have had another great year in the Department of Agriculture & Food Science. Graduates, Hailey Risen, Macie White, and Chassity Warner have all taken teaching positions in Kentucky. Summer Riley, Katie Hickerson, and Tristann Burks were interns at the Kentucky FFA Leadership and Training Center. The students hosted the second TEACH AG DAY on campus to enlighten students on what it takes to be an agricultural teacher in Kentucky. Our graduates continue to be in high demand and are easily finding their place in public schools in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Indiana.

The AES scholarship Fund is still open for donations. The money raised in this fund will be given to AgEd students. It cannot be awarded until we meet the \$10,000 minimum. All donations are accepted.

If you know of any student that would like to be an Agricultural Teacher, please forward their information to Dr. Kingery so he may invite them to campus for a visit.

For further correspondence please contact Dr. Kingery at thomas.kingery@wku.edu or 270-745-3152.



EQUINE NEWS



- The WKU Equestrian Team took the High Point Team title at Murray State in the Fall and had several High Point Rider and Reserve High Point Rider awards throughout the year.
- The team took four western riders and three hunt seat riders to IHSA Regionals. Western: Miranda McClusky, Laurel Vaught, Anna Porter, and Brooke Sullivan. Hunt seat: Jana Hebenstiel, Brooke Sullivan, and Kennedy Staley.
- Brooke Sullivan qualified for IHSA Semi-Finals in Reining and Open Horsemanship and went on to the IHSA National competition at the Kentucky Horse Park, finishing 8th in the Reining. It was WKU's first time at nationals in 8 years.
- Kennedy Staley finished 9th at IHSA Hunt Seat Zones, hosted by the Savannah College of Art and Design.



- WKU hosted their first regular season IHSA show in October, providing our riding facilities and twenty university horses, while also competing against our regional colleges.
- The WKU Stock Seat Team grew with additional horses and riders, honing skills in reining, cowhorse, trail, and ranch pleasure. They were also able to work some of the WKU Beef cattle, helping sort for vaccination.
- The program acquired four new donation horses: Trigger, an open level NRHA reining horse, Dude, who will be used in both hunt seat and western riding, Onyx, a future hunter prospect to be used in Horse Training class, and Raisin, a national level western pleasure horse.
- The program hosted our third annual Summer Stampede Open Horse Show this summer. This annual show will soon be managed by the Equine Events Management class.
- Equine Reproduction class welcomed Moose, our first foal born on the farm since 2010. Later in the Spring semester, students were able to learn palpation and artificial insemination, successfully breeding one mare for a 2024 foal.



- Basic Equitation has become a popular offering, filling each semester and potentially prompting another section.
- Two students had the opportunity to intern in Scottsdale, AZ with a top 20 NRHA earner, Crystal McNutt. They learned the innerworkings of a professional training and show operation while improving their horsemanship over the summer.
- Thank you to our local and regional equine professions and friends for your continued support of our program. You provide us with horses, dentals, volunteerism at our events, and guest lecturers to further enrich our program.

THE HILLTOPPER CREAMERY

The Hilltopper Creamery was established to demonstrate that the small family dairy farm is not a relic of the past. Producers do not require a large herd to be successful in the dairy industry because they can thrive by creating and selling value-added products such as cheese, yogurt, ice cream etc. The facility puts this concept into practice by producing artisan cheese from our own 50-60 head milking operation. Our award-winning cheeses are handmade by students guided by a skilled fromagère in the art of traditional small batch artisan caseiculture. With once-a-week production, the creamery can produce up to 600 lbs. of cheese a month and have additional raw milk to sell or process into other dairy products in the future.



Value-added products, direct consumer sales, and Agri-tourism are increasing percentages of farm profits. This unit allots students the opportunity to fully experience this field of Agriculture, by gaining hands-on learning experiences in safety testing, dairy production, food packaging, marketing, special event planning, event management, community workshops, educational tours, conferences, customer service, direct sales, and online sales.



We hosted the Dairy Product Association of Kentucky (DPAK) 2023 Conference and welcomed more than 50 dairy farmers and processors from across the state. Covered topics included plant records, HTST & Vat Pasteurization with the KY Milk Safety Branch, Grant opportunities for on-farm producers, HCCP and GMP with Bluegrass Ingredients, CIP with Hydrite, Cryovac Packaging with Shuckman's, and a very special tasting/judging session with Dr. Charles White!

The Creamery also presented at the Southeast Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives (SDBII) 4th Annual Value-Added Dairy Conference on "How to Re-brand a Creamery" and highlighted our recently completed rebranding project. This year we unveiled a sophisticated new brand identity designed by Sarah Walkup. Sarah, a Visual Arts Junior, spearheaded the project with newly designed logos, brand colors, signage, product labels, and a wide variety of other marketing materials.



For the second year in a row, Hilltopper Creamery submitted entries in the Kentucky State Fair dairy competition. We are proud to announce our history of excellence continues into 2023 where we earned a Blue Ribbon in every class entered and brought home our first Flavored High Moisture Gold Medal! 3 of our 4 entries are new recipes developed over the last year. 2023's winning varieties are Mild Cheddar (Blue), Taco Cheddar (Blue), Garlic Herb Cheddar (Blue), and Jalapeno Pepper Jack (Gold).



Our cheeses can also be found at the WKU Farm Market and with our community partners Grow BG Booms & Blossoms, Providence Coffee House & Marketplace, Delafield Co-Op, Hampton's Premium Meats, SoKY Crop Shop, Embassy Suites, TRU by Hilton, and Mission Catering. Contact us at 270-745-4361 or hilltopper.creamery@wku.edu to join our community partners, schedule your Guided Tour & Tasting Event, or inquire about cheese. Keep an eye on our social media accounts for the latest information about upcoming events and exciting new ventures.

Facebook @HilltopperCreameryFarmMarket

Instagram @hilltoppercreamery

REGISTER FOR HOMECOMING BRUNCH NOV. 11TH 9-11AM, L.D. BROWN AG EXPO HERE!



GUEST SPEAKER: BRIAN LACEFIELD, WKU AGRICULTURE ALUMNI AND DIRECTOR OF KY OFFICE OF AGRICULTURE POLICY



<https://alumni.wku.edu/s/808/index.aspx?sid=808&gid=1&pgid=6437&cid=10994&ecid=10994&crd=0&calpgid=13&calcid=664>

REGISTER USING ABOVE QR CODE OR WEB ADDRESS TO THE LEFT