

STORIES

IN AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences



SPIRIT OF SERVICE

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STORIES

IN AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES

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College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

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SIGNING OFF FROM CENTRAL CAMPUS

It has been my pleasure and great honor to tell the stories of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences for the past 14 years. As I write this, I approach the end of this chapter of my time in the college. As you read this, I will be a few months into my new role at the Iowa State University Alumni Association as a senior director of communications and magazine editor.

In closing this chapter, I'd like to share a few stories about *STORIES* magazine itself – stories that illustrate the power and impact of this special publication.

- The feature on Craig Morris ('92 meat science) in 2012 helped reunite him with a favorite professor in time to share his appreciation before his treasured mentor F.C. Parrish passed away. Craig sent me a photo of him at F.C.'s bedside – both of them smiling. It's a connection I'll never forget.
- Bob Walton ('61 PhD animal science) tore an article about then Dean (now President) Wendy Wintersteen from the *Growing Leaders* issue in 2016 and carried it in his pocket as he visited campus to receive the Henry A. Wallace award. During the awards dinner he pulled out the article to show how he was inspired by her leadership to increase his financial investment in the college.
- Recent grad Rebecca (Lyons) Runyon ('18 agricultural studies, '19 MS agricultural education) shared that an issue of *STORIES* given to her by her uncle inspired her to become an Iowa Stater. Her entrepreneurial and innovative spirit flourished here. She now shares *STORIES* with other prospective students – the ripple effect continues.

Thank you for allowing the *STORIES* team to help you connect, engage and share with the college in meaningful ways like these. A special thank you to those of you who reached out to me following an issue and those who trusted us to share your story within these pages. The relationship we have nurtured between alumni and the college is valued and strong.

Thank you to my colleagues in CALS for being outstanding collaborators, talented communicators and treasured friends. I'd like to offer special thanks to communications specialist Whitney Baxter for stewarding this issue through press; to Haley Cook, former assistant director of alumni relations, who recently began a new adventure of her own as strategic outreach coordinator for President Wendy Wintersteen; and to Brian Meyer, associate director of strategic relations and communications, who hired me to bring *STORIES* to life.

I'll always be a #CALSproud alum. I look forward to continuing to tell the college's stories and keeping connected with you through my work in the ISU Alumni Association. I hope to see you at future college events like the CALS BBQ and ISU Alumni Association events like Cyclone Central Tailgates and the Cardinal and Gold Gala.

Sending warm wishes from central campus,

Melea Reicks Licht
mreicks@iastate.edu



LETTER FROM THE DEAN

Dear alumni and friends,

Greetings from your ISU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences! Since our last issue of *STORIES* magazine in 2020, so much has happened and we are thrilled to report to you that the Cyclone family is well and thriving and striving for ever greater impact as we fulfill our purposes.

For everyone everywhere it's been more than a year of living amid the COVID-19 pandemic and seeing the compelling nature of our collective responses to the disease. Now, as we return to some new-normal with COVID-19 hopefully in the rear-view mirror, we think of all that was lost and learned, and dedicate ourselves to always doing better.

The pandemic has challenged us to teach and learn differently, to redirect some of our research and sharpen its focus on problem-solving, and to double-down on our commitment to service. This issue of *STORIES* has "service" as its core theme – and that is on purpose, as we renew our determination to always make a positive difference and improve the landscapes and thought-scapes of our world. There is much to do.

This past year with the incredible generosity of so many, we surpassed the ISU Foundation's nine-year fundraising goal of \$1.5 billion, set back in 2012, with CALS donors contributing more than \$240 million to that effort. These funds - some to be spent in the near-term, some in endowments for the long-term - are the margin of excellence for us. At the same time, we've had a record year of gaining research support from a wide variety of sources, totaling nearly \$60 million! We also have seen new projects and facilities taking form: the opening of the Robert T. Hamilton Poultry Teaching and Research Facility, the groundbreaking for the turkey facility, the construction of the Kent Corporation Feed Mill and Grain Science Complex, the new apiary yielding the sweetest honey, the renewed ISU Creamery churning out the very best ice cream and cheese, ISU's new Student Innovation Center buzzing with activity, and so much more.

Among our terrific faculty and staff, it has also been a year of success and change. We have seen incredible people retire from the college and the hiring of a new generation of thinkers and doers to stand on their shoulders. Some of these changes you'll read about in these pages. Every such change could use a full page to celebrate the people here who make such a difference!

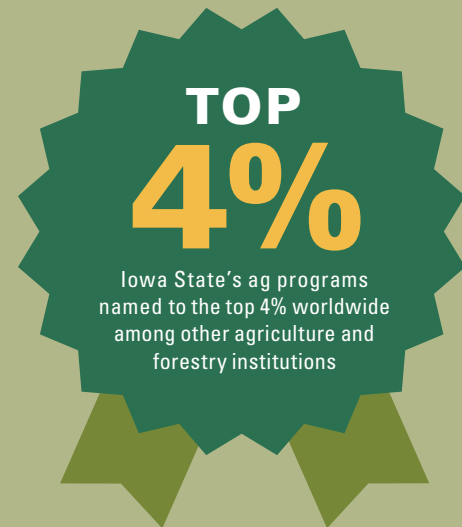
Our students, as always, are remarkable and come to us brimming with possibilities, and, as graduates, leave here brimming with even more. We are so proud of them. After all, the success of any college is best measured by the success of its alums. CALS alums do amazing things, as we dedicate ourselves to help them achieve via the CALS Advantage – to know their disciplines and inter-disciplines like no others, to always be innovative and entrepreneurial in spirit and actions, to advocate for what they believe and the purposes and intents of the college, and to lead at every level.

Thinking of you, wanting to hear from you, and wishing you all the best on behalf of the college.

Daniel J. Robison
Endowed Dean's Chair
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
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CALS RANKS HIGH WORLDWIDE

The 2021 QS World University Rankings of agricultural and forestry programs ranked Iowa State University in the top 4% worldwide - 14 out of 401 institutions in 2021. Iowa State's agricultural programs remain in the top 10 (No. 6) among 65 U.S. higher education institutions. The agricultural and biosystems engineering graduate program ranked second nationwide, according to *U.S. News & World Report*, and Iowa State ranked No. 11 for undergraduate entrepreneurship programs, according to *Princeton Review and Entrepreneur magazine*.



TRACKING EARL THE FOX (AND FAMILY)

Move over, white squirrel – there is a new celebrity on campus. Following several sightings of a red fox, dubbed Earl, who calls Iowa State's campus home, a group of undergraduate students in assistant teaching professor Mike Rentz's mammalogy class have been mapping out the home range of Earl (and potential family). So far, more than 180 sightings have been submitted to the class, showing the fox family frequents the north side of Central Campus/Pammel Woods and the area by Jack Trice Stadium. The fox also has been seen sleeping near Heady Hall, which resulted in naming the creature after Earl Heady.



2021 GRADS PACK THE JACK

The accomplishments of nearly 747 CALS students were celebrated May 7 and 8 during university commencement celebrations in Jack Trice Stadium (undergraduates) and Hilton Coliseum (graduate students). Visit stories.cals.iastate.edu for links to:

- Congratulatory messages from Daniel J. Robison, endowed dean's chair, and CALS faculty and staff
- Undergraduate address by Lexie O'Brien ('21 microbiology)
- Feature videos of spring 2021 CALS Council Senior Awardees



IOWA STATE VACCINATES

Several COVID-19 vaccination clinics were held on Iowa State's campus from Dec. 18, 2020, to May 24, 2021. This included several mass vaccination clinics that took place in State Gym's basketball courts, with the capacity to vaccinate up to 2,250 people per day. Iowa State employees quickly signed up to fill the 749 nonclinical shifts needed to run the clinics. In total, 12,279 doses were given and 6,794 patients were served at the on-campus clinics. Free COVID-19 vaccination clinics were again offered on campus for students, faculty and staff at the start of the fall 2021 semester. Shelley Taylor, director of CALS Study Abroad (left) and Heidi Ackerman ('13 agronomy, '16 MS soil science and agricultural and life sciences education) were among the many CALS volunteers supporting vaccination efforts.



NEW LEADERSHIP WITHIN CALS

On April 1, Steven Harris (left) took over leadership of the Department of Plant Pathology and Microbiology and the Department of Entomology. He was previously with the University of Manitoba, where he served as professor and head of the Department of Biological Sciences. Stephen J. Dinsmore was named chair of the Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management effective June 1. He served as interim chair of the department since 2019, when the former chair Sue Blodgett retired.

Ruth MacDonald (center) began as the new associate dean for personnel and finance for the college July 1. MacDonald previously served as professor and chair of the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition, a position she held since joining the university in 2004. Lorraine Lanningham-Foster, associate professor, is serving as the interim chair of the department.

Carolyn Lawrence-Dill (right) was named associate dean for research and discovery for the college, effective Aug. 16. She has been a faculty member at Iowa State since 2014 and previously served as professor in the Department of Genetics, Development and Cell Biology and the Department of Agronomy.



FEED MILL PROGRESS

Construction continues on the new Kent Corporation Feed Mill and Grain Science Complex at Iowa State University. Located on 10 acres of university-owned land southwest of the intersection of Highway 30 and State Avenue in Ames, the complex will include a feed mill tower, feed milling and mixing structures, grain storage bins, warehouse and an educational building with classrooms. The facility will enhance Iowa State teaching programs related to feed technology, grain science and animal nutrition. Find a link to a live feed of the construction progress at stories.cals.iastate.edu.



NEW TURKEY TEACHING AND RESEARCH FACILITY BREAKS GROUND

A groundbreaking was held April 8 for Iowa State University's new Turkey Teaching and Research Facility to be constructed north of the Robert T. Hamilton Poultry Teaching and Research Farm, located south of campus. Commitments of more than \$2 million in private donations led by Iowa turkey producers have been received to fund the facility. The facility will provide a living classroom for hands-on learning in modern production practices, flexible space and state-of-the-art equipment for research addressing current challenges facing the turkey industry.



INNOVATION ON DISPLAY

As part of the Innovation Exhibition on the ground level of the new Student Innovation Center on the west side of campus, each college gets to show off a few innovative activities happening among their departments and units. The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences' current display showcases selected work advancing One Health, "from the fate of one tiny butterfly, to the extensive impact made by a prairie placed among the modern landscape, the vitality of all organisms is interconnected." The exhibit and innovative, collaborative learning spaces on the fourth floor of the building are sponsored by Farm Credit Services of America. Visitors are welcome and the area is open to the public.





REAPING STUDENT SUCCESS IN AG ECONOMICS

Story by Melea Reicks Licht
Images contributed



Load by load, Pete and Dana Wenstrand bolstered their commitment to the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences by donating grain at their local Essex, Iowa, elevator.

As their investment grew so did their interest in providing a unique pathway for students to advance their education and career through an accelerated master's degree in agricultural economics.

"We often give gifts of grain," says Pete Wenstrand ('74 agricultural business). "Farming is our career and vocation, therefore, it's more rewarding to give gifts of grain, rather than writing a check. Plus, it's a nice tool for tax reasons.

We simply scan a QR code at grain delivery and select who we'd like to receive the gift – for us that includes our church, FarmHouse fraternity and Iowa State University."

Pete and his wife Dana, a College of Human Sciences grad, are members of the ISU Foundation Board of Governors and Forever True Campaign Committee for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. They decided to use their gifts to revive a master's program in agricultural economics. It's a program Pete says he would have loved to complete at Iowa State, but since it didn't exist in

accelerated form at the time, he pursued a similar program at Purdue University.

"It's really intense and serves students and their future employers well by building a solid skill set," says Dana. "We didn't really create something new, rather we found something on an old shelf and brought it back to life."

In August 2020, the revitalized master's degree in agricultural economics launched with a cohort of seven students. The program prepares graduates with advanced applied economics training in areas including risk analysis, commodity markets, agricultural finance and agricultural policy.

Students take coursework during the fall and spring and complete a dedicated research project during the summer. The summer research is conducted under the supervision of a professor and can match students with an industry, government or academic partner in their chosen field, combining classroom training in economics to address real-world challenges.

The Wenstrands furthered their commitment by supporting the faculty position that directs the program, and Hongli Feng was brought on board in January 2021. An assistant professor in the

Department of Economics, Feng will hold the Professorship for Excellence in Agricultural Economics. She teaches and conducts research on economic issues pertinent to the agricultural sector, the environment and the interface of the two.

Holly Cook ('20 economics, agricultural business, '21 MS agricultural economics) was a member of the inaugural cohort and credits the program for helping her land a position as an economist with the National Pork Producers Council in Washington, D.C. following graduation.

"The program perfectly complemented my undergraduate degree with more rigorous economics coursework and applied research experience," Cook says. "The skills I developed through this program have opened doors for career opportunities that would not have otherwise been possible."

That's just the type of lasting impact the Wenstrands were hoping for when they delivered each load of grain.

"We were blessed with the ability to work hard and build assets," Dana says. "As philanthropists, we are grateful to utilize these blessings and help serve the future of agriculture and Iowa State University." ■

CALS grad **Holly Cook** was a member of the inaugural cohort to complete the accelerated master's program in agricultural economics. She says thanks to the rigorous coursework she feels well prepared to begin her career as an agricultural economist.

Inset: Alumni **Pete and Dana Wenstrand** invested their gifts of grain in reviving an accelerated master's program in agricultural economics at Iowa State.

»» CONNECT. ENGAGE. SHARE.

Students interested in pursuing a master's of science in agricultural economics should reach out to Hongli Feng at hfeng@iastate.edu, and those interested in offering support to the program or its students can contact Alyssa Ehrich at aehrich@foundation.iastate.edu.



FOREVER TRUE

BUILDS STRONG FOUNDATION

Story by Melea Reicks Licht
Image contributed

Fueled by a group of dedicated and passionate alumni and friends, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences campaign committee celebrated the remarkable success of *Forever True, For Iowa State* earlier this year.

The historic \$1.542 billion fundraising campaign, the largest ever for an Iowa State comprehensive campaign, was launched in 2012 by the Iowa State University Foundation. The campaign set out to ensure access to an Iowa State education, advance expertise in key areas addressing global challenges and enhance the university's impact on the economy and quality of life in Iowa and around the world.

"We rely on committed volunteers and their unique strengths to help raise funds for the college," says Daniel J. Robison, holder of the endowed dean's chair in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. "This team works tirelessly advocating for the college, championing our cause and supporting our efforts with time, talent and treasure. We are immensely grateful for their support."

College alumni, friends and partners surpassed the original \$200 million goal, reaching a total of more than \$240,302 million. *Forever True, For Iowa State* is making transformative change through the creation of new facilities, improvement of existing

programs and the support of faculty, staff and students.

The investment will support six key areas:

- student and faculty enrichment
- global agriculture
- biosciences
- agricultural business and entrepreneurship
- sustainability
- new innovative facilities for animal agriculture teaching and research

"With careers in Iowa agriculture, we understand the importance of the land-grant mission of Iowa State. So, when we were asked, we were pleased to serve on the CALS Campaign Committee," say Rich and Nancy Degner. "Campaign goals have focused on enhancing and updating campus facilities and programs, which give students important experiences in their major and supports Iowa's agriculture industry. The Kent Corporation Feed Mill and Grain Science Complex is only one shining example of additional teaching, research and outreach opportunities made available through the CALS Campaign."

The CALS Campaign Committee inspired other donors to join the 95,758 Iowa State alumni and friends who participated in the university-wide campaign. Their efforts advanced a range of programs

with personal significance and global impact.

"Iowa State University has always and continues to have a big piece of our hearts," say Chuck and Chris Cornelius. "Our passion is the CALS Study Abroad program. We support faculty development and enhancement of study abroad programs. Our sons benefited greatly from study abroad, and we see our involvement as a way to give back to Iowa State."

Because of the generosity of thousands of donors and friends, the impact of the *Forever True* campaign will have a ripple effect over the next few decades: enabling thousands of students to become successful graduates with meaningful careers, moving forward innovative solutions to today's greatest challenges and bringing our Iowa State ingenuity and know-how to improve the lives of countless people around the world. ■

The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Campaign Committee met in April 2021 to celebrate the successful conclusion of the *Forever True, For Iowa State* giving campaign. From left: **Pete Wenstrand, Dana Wenstrand, Roger Underwood, Clare Frevert, Jim Frevert, Chuck Cornelius, Chris Cornelius, Nancy Degner, Rich Degner, Howard Hill and Dan Robison.** On screen: **Dana and Martha Robes, Gregg Behrens and Cy.**

Members of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences campaign committee:

- Daniel J. Robison, endowed dean's chair, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
- Gregg Behrens ('74 agricultural business)
- Lloyd Bettis ('70 agricultural journalism)*
- Chris ('83 agricultural journalism) and Chuck Cornelius ('83 agronomy)
- Nancy ('72 food science) and Rich Degner ('72 agricultural and life sciences education, '77 MS agricultural and life sciences education)
- Clare and Jim Frevert ('60 farm operation)
- Howard ('73 MS, '74 PhD veterinary microbiology and preventative medicine) and Nancy Hill ('74 MS education)
- Owen Newlin ('51 agronomy, '53 MS crop production)*
- Dana Robes ('67 dairy science)*
- Roger Underwood ('80 agricultural business)*
- Dana ('87 home economics education) and Pete Wenstrand ('74 agricultural business)

* Also serving on the university-wide Forever True campaign cabinet

IN MEMORIAM

Owen Newlin ('51 agronomy, '53 MS), retired senior vice president and director of Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc., died July 12, 2020. Newlin's list of honors and achievements serves as a record of his significant contributions to society, especially to the seed industry, higher education and the state of Iowa. He served as president of the Board of Regents, State of Iowa, and on the Board of the Directors for the ISU Foundation, including service as campaign chair. He received the Order of the Knoll Campanile Award and a number of college and university awards including the CALS Henry A. Wallace Award.

“Being there for someone in need is the most rewarding part of the job.”

RESPONDING WITH LEADERSHIP, SERVICE

Story and image by Deborah Gruca

Hunter Crawford was enthralled with listening to his police scanner on his family’s farm in Clarinda, Iowa. He’d received it when he was eight years old from a family friend who was a paramedic.

The senior in agricultural business was drawn to volunteer at Clarinda Regional Health Center at age 16. By 18, he’d earned his EMT certification by taking coursework and passing the exam given by the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians. That was the same year he was high school class president, FFA chapter president and head drum major of the marching band.

Fast forward to Crawford’s freshman year at Iowa State. He was soon deeply involved with classes and took on multiple responsibilities in student organizations. In addition to serving on CALS Student Council, being a CALS Ambassador, student member of the ISU Alumni Association board and an executive team member of his Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity, he worked 16 to 20 hours a week as an EMT at Mary Greeley Hospital in Ames. This robust schedule continued until his junior year.

Then COVID-19 hit in March 2020.

Iowa State closed its doors, as did his fraternity. Because of the

virus, Crawford was suddenly working 60 to 80 hours a week at the hospital, doing temperature screenings and working with the ambulance service for COVID patients. Mary Greeley implemented strict protocols and training and provided personal protective equipment.

Unfortunately, he contracted the virus in early June. Fortunately, he had no symptoms.

“For the first month or two, I was pretty worried. We transported some very sick patients,” says Crawford. “After my quarantine, I felt safer since I’d already gone through it and wasn’t too worried about getting it again or spreading it to anyone else.”

Crawford’s internship that summer with Corteva went ahead as planned. After a virtual orientation, he traveled extensively around Iowa with his crop protection team, running training events for farmers, growers and sales representatives.

By fall, Crawford was ready to get back to class. He was comfortable with the virtual format and found the flexibility of online

learning an advantage that allowed him to fit in more hours at the hospital.

He worked with his fraternity’s executive team to create and implement a COVID-19 mitigation strategy for the 95 members. In the house, testing requirements, quarantine and contact tracing procedures and temperature scans before lunch and dinner helped keep members healthy throughout the school year.

Crawford’s advisor, Christian Boessen, says, “Hunter has been a pleasure to work with as an advisee. A great student and leader, level headed, mature, and wise beyond his years.”

Crawford’s marathon of service and activities continues this fall. In addition to his existing commitments, he’s also studying for his paramedic license at Des Moines Area Community College. The 12-month course began in August, which means he’s a

full-time student at DMACC and Iowa State simultaneously.

After graduation, Crawford hopes to work for Corteva and is committed to continuing his service as a first responder.

“There’s a major demand for good medical providers within rural communities,” Crawford says. “I love living in rural Iowa and no matter where I go or what job I’m in, there’ll always be a need for volunteers and part-time paramedics and EMTs. Being there for someone in need is the most rewarding part of the job.”

Hunter Crawford had his EMT hours at Mary Greeley Hospital in Ames soar to 60-80 per week during the COVID-19 pandemic. The senior in agricultural business also serves on CALS Student Council, the executive team of Alpha Gamma Rho and as a CALS Ambassador.



SCIENTIFIC SPARK

STUDENT FOCUSES ON SOILS, HELPING FELLOW AFRICANS

Story by Whitney Baxter and Kathleen Delate
Images contributed



Growing up in Senegal, Africa, Malcolm St. Cyr witnessed first-hand how food supplies were limited in his country due to farmers' lack of access to equipment, supplies and transportation to markets.

While Senegal's soils are fertile and a wide variety of crops are grown, current climate challenges dictate the use of an agroecological perspective, based on organic amendments and rotating crops, to protect soils and conserve moisture. This focus on soils is what led St. Cyr, a junior in agronomy, to enroll at Iowa State University.

St. Cyr was introduced to Iowa State, in a round-about way, via a family friend, Naomi Budelier, who became close to his mom while she lived in Washington, D.C. Budelier had family who lived in Iowa, and when she passed, St. Cyr's mom

traveled to Iowa to meet Budelier's family, who shared with her the opportunities Iowa State had to offer.

When St. Cyr was considering colleges to attend in the United States, he ran into some issues at other institutions with them being able to quickly analyze his foreign transcripts and provide clear guidance about the application process. He was relieved to find Iowa State understood his situation and provided him the tools needed to make the transition to college successful.

Prior to his first semester at Iowa State, St. Cyr took part in Academic Program for Excellence (APEX), an eight-week academic summer program designed for multicultural first-year students. Through this program, he was able to get a head start on classes toward his degree and meet new students.

"The program helped me transition very smoothly to college," St. Cyr says.

It also helped connect him with faculty and staff at Iowa State, who today continue to play an integral role in the success he's found as a student.

"I've been lucky enough to meet a lot of awesome people at Iowa State who have helped me thrive," St. Cyr says.

To gain hands-on learning experience, he has been working in the soil health and soil-plant interactions lab of Marshall McDaniel, assistant professor in agronomy.

"Malcolm has been a great worker in the lab," McDaniel says. "He's always engaged in lab meeting discussions and asks fantastic questions. He has what I like to call the scientific 'spark,' or the curiosity not just to observe or learn something new, but to understand why."

This past summer St. Cyr started his own undergraduate research project on how prairie strips affect soil health and soybean productivity.

"My studies and the great experience I have had working with the McDaniel Laboratory have taught me how to quantify soil quality and how soils can be improved, and in that way improve the health of plants," St. Cyr says. "I have learned how important soil quality and the relationship with plants is to producing more and better results. Without understanding soil health, we will not be able to produce the large amount of food needed to feed the growing human population in Africa or the rest of the world."

In addition to working the lab, St. Cyr serves as a peer mentor for ACES (Agricultural Community Encourages Success), where he helps students make a smoother transition to college



life. He also is an active member of Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS), African Students Association, the African American Studies Society and serves as treasurer of the Maple Hall Council.

St. Cyr was selected as the first recipient of the Cynthia Cambardella Scholarship, named in honor of Cambardella, a former soil scientist at USDA-ARS and in the Department of Agronomy who died in September 2020.

Criteria for the scholarship includes selecting an undergraduate

agronomy student who has an interest in soil quality and organic farming. Kathleen Delate, professor of horticulture and agronomy, says St. Cyr was the scholarship committee's top choice for the award.

"Malcolm embodied the kind of student Cindy would champion – she was always assisting students with research ideas and career plans, especially underrepresented students in agriculture," says Delate, who serves as the Cambardella Scholarship chair. "We are so grateful to her colleagues across the U.S. for supporting this scholarship to perpetuate her legacy in soil health."

Following graduation, St. Cyr intends to pursue graduate studies, where he can dive deeper into

developing "culturally sensitive, sustainable solutions and better ways of farming."

"I may be able to offer solutions to some problems of most concern to me and the sub-Saharan region of Africa," St. Cyr says.

He looks forward to spending time in Senegal in the future, working on sustainable/organic projects – one of which just may turn out to be his Ph.D. dissertation. **N**

Malcolm St. Cyr is learning how soil quality impacts plant health. The junior in agronomy hopes to one day take what he has learned back to Senegal.



"He has what I like to call the scientific 'spark,' or the curiosity not just to observe or learn something new, but to understand why."

GAINING GLOBAL EXPERIENCE TO TACKLE HUNGER

Story by Ann Y. Robinson
Images contributed by Hannah Sperfslage, EARTH Program intern

From a young age, Stefany Naranjo knew she wanted to play an active part in the fight against hunger.

This past summer, she tackled that lofty goal through an internship in the U.S. Virgin Islands with Iowa State University's EARTH Program.

Naranjo is a senior in global resource systems and agricultural and life sciences education at Iowa State with an option in agriculture communications.

Her internship included creating and maintaining community gardens and helping churches feed the hungry. She was also involved in a long-term National Park Service project to restore shoreline plants impacted by hurricanes. Along with helping propagate mandrakes and other hardy native species that help shelter the island's human and wildlife inhabitants, she created lesson plans to teach island youth about the plants and their benefits.

She first became aware of serious problems with food insecurity when she was in high school in Belmond, Iowa. She started a community food drive, then she had the chance to attend the Iowa Youth Institute and later served as a group leader for the World Food Prize.

These experiences "laid the foundation for my career going forward," says Naranjo.

Ultimately, she sees herself working in underserved communities through urban agriculture, addressing issues such as food deserts.

Naranjo was recently selected to receive an Agricultural Communications Leadership Scholarship at Iowa State, which made it

possible to accept the internship on St. John's Island. The scholarship, established by Sorrell Brown, the first woman field agronomist hired by Iowa State University Extension, provides funding so students can "choose an internship based on the quality of the experience, not the size of the paycheck."

"This scholarship was created for outstanding, service-oriented students like Naranjo," says Howard Tyler, assistant dean for student services in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

"It has been a true joy to watch Stefany develop during her time at Iowa State," Tyler says. "She entered our college as a first-generation transfer student in fall 2019, and despite the pandemic, the shift to remote learning and family financial challenges, she has thrived and continued to excel academically. Stefany has overcome every obstacle

life has thrown at her, and is always an amazingly positive person."

Naranjo loved her time on the island and the chance to directly impact people's lives.

"Being there made me even more appreciative of how well things work in the United States and our easy access to basic necessities," she says. "I'm so grateful for the Sorrell Brown scholarship and other donors and ISU faculty and staff who support students in so many ways. I wouldn't be here without them." ❧

Stefany Naranjo's internship with the EARTH program in the U.S. Virgin Islands included working in community gardens to help feed the hungry and restoring shoreline plants in a national park impacted by hurricanes.

»» CONNECT. ENGAGE. SHARE.

Learn more about the EARTH Program in the U.S. Virgin Islands via links at stories.cals.iastate.edu and how to support students like Stefany Naranjo by connecting with Bobbi Smith, CALS senior director of development, at bsmith@foundation.iastate.edu.

NEUROSCIENTIST LEADS BIOLOGY, GENETICS

Story by Ann Y. Robinson
Image by Chris Gannon

Don Sakaguchi leads two programs at Iowa State that maintain a consistent enrollment of about 900 total undergraduates.

The Morrill Professor of genetics, development and cell biology, and widely respected neurobiologist, was named director of the biology and genetics undergraduate programs in 2020.

"Biology and genetics students pursue extremely diverse career paths including continuing their education via medical and veterinary schools," says Sakaguchi. The interdepartmental majors are jointly administered through the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Andy Zehr, director of marketing and new student programs for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, says the diverse career pathways reflect the entirety of the college's name.

"Recent grads have landed positions with Syngenta, the Virginia Aquarium, Johns Hopkins Medical School, the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, Mayo Clinic and Corteva Agriscience," Zehr says. "Students can pursue a career in a number of human health avenues

starting right here in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences."

An important goal of the programs is to provide career experiences through research and internships. Sakaguchi appreciates the impact such opportunities can have.

"When I was an undergraduate biology major, working in a lab where I studied crickets' sensory neurobiology really influenced my career path," he says.

As a graduate student, a love of the ocean was ignited when he worked at Stanford's Hopkins Marine Station researching a marine snail with a unique "brain."

He joined the faculty at Iowa State in 1991 after earning a bachelor's and doctorate at the State University of New York and doing post-doctoral work at the University of California, San Diego. His highly interdisciplinary research explores the potential of using adult stem cells to develop strategies for brain and tissue rescue and repair.

"Dr. Sakaguchi is an outstanding neurobiologist who has had considerable impact on his field," says Jeanne Serb, director of the Office of Biotechnology and associate professor in ecology, evolution and organismal biology.

"Don has very high standards, but he's kind and approachable. He leads by example as he works with students and faculty from multiple departments to further the study of life."

A member of Iowa State's new interdisciplinary Nanovaccine Institute, Sakaguchi teaches a range of courses from basic principles of biology to a seminar course exploring the frontiers of cellular engineering. He also shares his passion for marine environments in a study abroad course he helped create – Caribbean Marine Biology.

Sakaguchi has earned multiple honors for teaching and leadership and has served as faculty advisor for the Biological Sciences Club, the Ames Iowa Chapter of the Society for Neuroscience and Iowa State's Beta, Beta, Beta chapter (the national honor society for students in the biological sciences).

As Sakaguchi reflects on his different roles as a teacher and mentor he offers this advice to students: "It's important to be proactive and seek out opportunities. Be open to new experiences, including studying abroad. This is not just to succeed as a student, but also to make your time in college memorable and rewarding." ❧

Don Sakaguchi leads the genetics and biology undergraduate programs at Iowa State. Both provide professional experiences through research and internships equipping graduates for diverse career pathways – many in human health fields.

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To learn more about career pathways in genetics and biology via a degree in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences visit stories.cals.iastate.edu for links or contact Andy Zehr, director of marketing and new student programs, at azehr@iastate.edu or 515-294-9123.



“He made a tremendous difference in making the college a more welcoming and inclusive place... His impact will be part of the college forever.”

Story by Ann Y. Robinson
Images by Christopher Gannon

LEGACY OF A LEARNING LEADER

COLLETTI RETIRES AFTER TACKLING GRAND
CHALLENGES THROUGH TEAM SCIENCE

As Senior Associate Dean Joe Colletti retired this past summer, the caring educator and interdisciplinary team-builder reflected on a career in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences built by making the most of every opportunity.

INNOVATIVE TEACHER AND RESEARCHER

His career began as a pre-med major at the University of California-Riverside where he says he quickly learned he was more excited by how plants worked than how people worked. He switched colleges (to Humboldt State University) and majored in forestry. He went on to earn a master's and doctorate in forest economics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

He came to Iowa State for his first faculty job in the Department of Forestry in 1978. That early phase of his career brings fond memories, including helping re-imagine forestry camp – a six-week summer experience conducted at locations around the country.

“It was a great tradition,” Colletti says, “but forestry enrollments were declining. The camp requirement was an impediment for some, especially

students who needed to work to pay for college. We revamped the camp into a three-week experience integrated with five new fall courses. This maintained the benefits of comradery and experiential field learning and works better for many students.”

He's also proud to have served as advisor and co-advisor to the Forestry Club for 25 years. When he started, the group purchased Christmas trees from out-of-state for its big annual sale. He found a location where the club could grow and manage its own trees, turning the fundraiser into a richer entrepreneurial experience. He went on to receive the club's annual award for most beloved instructor many times over.

“Joe's commitment to the success of several generations of students has been incredible,” says Iowa State President Wendy Wintersteen ('88 PhD entomology), who has worked closely with Colletti throughout his career. “He cares deeply about students in and out of the classroom. He made a tremendous difference in making the college a more welcoming and inclusive place for all students. His impact will be part of the college forever.”

Colletti also made his mark as a researcher with a long list of scholarly publications in forestry education, agroforestry and natural resources. His most well-known contribution has been to originate concepts for riparian buffer systems with fellow faculty member Richard Schultz ('65 forestry, '68 MS and '70 PhD forest biology), a University Professor of natural resource ecology and management. In the early 1990s, they assembled an interdisciplinary team whose work with landowners along Bear Creek in Hamilton County, Iowa, sparked a national conservation initiative that continues today.



COLLABORATIVE ADMINISTRATOR

Early on, Colletti was assigned to lead a re-accreditation review process for the forestry major and to co-chair a committee tasked with shifting from a quarter to a semester system. Those were just a hint of the administrative tasks ahead, such as chairing the college and university curriculum committees.

In 2003, he was a member of the committee tasked with merging the forestry and animal ecology departments into a new Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management, and he served as its interim department chair. When someone else was selected chair, Colletti was disappointed.

“But another door opened,” he says, “and I stepped through.”

That door was an invitation to assist Wintersteen, who had taken an interim role as the college’s endowed dean’s chair and wanted to tap Colletti’s expertise, especially in budget forecasting. A year later, her position became official and Colletti was named senior associate dean, with responsibilities to oversee budgets, research and personnel for the college and the Iowa Agriculture and Home Economics Experiment Station.

His successes reflect many milestones in the life of the college, among them helping lead creation of an assistant dean for diversity position to coordinate and expand diversity, equity and inclusion programming for faculty, staff and students.

He also shepherded development of Iowa State’s BioCentury Research Farm, which is still the only bioeconomy research facility of its kind nationwide. Colletti, along with Distinguished Professor Robert Brown and five other Iowa State colleagues, facilitated the creation of Iowa

State’s Bioeconomy Institute and research focus on the bioeconomy.

“It’s been so impressive to see Joe’s ability to bring together and lift up faculty leaders to boldly collaborate on mission-critical issues. This has led to enormous research successes,” President Wintersteen says.

Indeed, he has done much of the heavy lifting for a number of multi-million-dollar, transdisciplinary research projects, including the \$20 million Sustainable Corn project, a new National Science Foundation Midwest Big Data Hub and the \$10 million Consortium for Cultivating Human and Naturally reGenerative Enterprises (C-CHANGE) project, a multidisciplinary partnership advancing new renewable-based agricultural value chains. He also helped assemble a group of staff known as the CARES (College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Research Excellence Support) team, whose mission is to provide pre-award support to faculty for their research.

LIFELONG LEARNER

Through it all, Colletti thinks of himself as a “learning leader,” for which he credits the influence of his father, a long-time teacher and school principal.

Following his retirement, which was effective June 30, he and his wife Sharon (who retired from the Center for Crops Utilization Research at Iowa State in 2017), look forward to spending time with children and grandchildren and learning more about their family ties in Italy.

Asked if he has a piece of parting advice for others, he thinks a moment, then grins, “Step through the door that opens.” ■



COLLETTI’S CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

1981 – Most Beloved Instructor of the Year Award, ISU Forestry Club (also received in 1988, 1991, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004)

1985 – Louis Thompson Advisor of the Year, ISU College of Agriculture

1998 – Outstanding Achievement in Teaching, ISU Foundation

1999 – National Restoration Demonstration Watershed Award to Bear Creek Watershed Project, Clean Water Action Plan, U.S Environmental Protection Agency

2000 – Visionary Award/Vision 2020, Education for Tomorrow

2002 – Team Award to the Agroecology Issue Team, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture

2002 – Outstanding Achievement in Teaching Award, ISU College of Agriculture

2004 – Dr. Kathleen MacKay Advisor Hall of Fame Award, ISU Student Activities Center

2006 – Named Senior Associate Dean, ISU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and Associate

Director, Iowa Agriculture and Home Economics Experiment Station

2009 – Opened ISU BioCentury Research Farm

2014 – Served on National Plant Germplasm Coordinating Committee of the Experiment Station Committee on Policy

2015 – Led Digital Agriculture Spoke in the National Science Foundation Midwest Big Data Hub

2017 – Served on the Science and Technology Committee of the Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy

2018-2019 – Served on North Central Regional Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors for two terms, chaired Multistate Research Committee

2017-2019 – Served as Interim Endowed Dean’s Chair, ISU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

2019 – Excellence in Leadership Award, Association of Public and Land Grant Universities, Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy

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In honor of Joe and Sharon Colletti’s distinguished service and contributions to the college, a fund has been established in their name to provide emergency support to students in need. Gifts can be made to the Joe and Sharon Colletti Cyclone Cares Fund by calling 515-294-7677 or visiting stories.cals.iastate.edu for an online giving link.

SHARING NATURE’S INSPIRING CLASSROOM

By Whitney Baxter
Image contributed

Sixteen miles down a gravel road, surrounded by state and federal lands, in a place where one can hike for five days and not see any roads lies the perfect location for students to gain hands-on learning in the areas of forestry, fisheries and wildlife. And it’s the quintessential spot for outdoors-loving faculty.

Jennifer Schieltz, assistant teaching professor, joined the faculty in Iowa State’s natural resource ecology and management department in March 2017. She was hired to be the camp director of the Rod and Connie French Conservation Education Camp, otherwise known as the Montana Camp, located approximately 50 miles west

of Missoula, Montana. Schieltz spends her fall and spring semesters teaching courses on Iowa State’s campus in Ames, Iowa, and her summers instructing students at the Montana Camp.

“It combines all the things I love to do – fieldwork and teach students,” Schieltz says of her director role. “I like that no two days are the same. It’s the perfect mix of being outdoors and still inspiring and interacting with students.”

The position proved to be a perfect career transition for Schieltz, who had been traveling to Kenya for several months each of the previous five years as part of earning her doctorate degree in ecology and evolutionary biology at Princeton University. While in Africa, she studied how cattle grazing impacted wildlife in the area.

Just as Schieltz did in Kenya, students in Montana Camp classes get to experience an ecosystem that is very different than the one found in Iowa. They learn to identify plants and animals, go on hikes to explore the wilderness, conduct research related to animal behavior and so much more.

Zoe Houseman (’21 animal ecology) took three classes at the camp during her time at Iowa State. She said she feels she learned more about wildlife and field ecology than she would have in a lecture course and it provided insight into what a research career would entail.

“This really shows you what working in the field is like so you can see if that is actually what you want to do for a living,” Houseman says. “For most of my friends, these classes got them even more excited about finding a research job.”

The camp is managed by the Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management, but any student at Iowa State can take

classes there. Schieltz says a new course in summer 2021 brought together art and science students. The “Science + Design: Interpretation of Natural Resources” course had students working together to create interpretive signs and other visual materials to be installed at trail heads and campgrounds to educate the public and communicate science.

Schieltz invites Iowa State alumni to get involved at the camp and consider contributing toward scholarships that allow students to take courses. ■

For **Jennifer Schieltz**, assistant teaching professor, serving as director of the Rod and Connie French Conservation Education Camp in Montana is the perfect blend of her passions. Schieltz, pictured far right, teaches on campus during the school year and in immersive experiences at the camp during the summer.

»» CONNECT. ENGAGE. SHARE.

The Montana Camp is situated on land donated to Iowa State University by Rod (’10 honorary) and Connie French in 2015. What used to be a hunting lodge and restaurant has been converted into a classroom, a dining hall and living quarters for students and instructors. The property also includes a laundry building and storage buildings. Learn more about the camp and find opportunities to support student scholarships via links at stories.cals.iastate.edu or by contacting Bobbi Smith, CALS senior director of development, at bsmith@foundation.iastate.edu.



"I began my adventure as a Cyclone during this unprecedented year in the midst of a global pandemic. Despite these circumstances, my first year in CALS was full of people who went above and beyond to make the year unforgettable. As a CALS Ambassador, I was able to share my experience with potential students so they felt welcomed and supported through the unique circumstances they might face."

— **Megan Decker**, sophomore in agriculture and society, vice president of ISU Student Government



"Serving as an agricultural business peer mentor gave me the opportunity to work closely with my peers in a mentor-mentee relationship, providing professional and personal advice that was pertinent to each student's situation. As mentors, we shared personal stories and knowledge from our years to enhance their college experiences. In return, our mentees helped us learn how to adapt our mentorship to best serve them in their own unique situations."

— **Julia Campbell**, senior in agricultural business, president of ISU Student Government

SERVICE IS CENTRAL TO THE CALS STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Story by Julia Campbell and Megan Decker
Images contributed

Whether it's addressing immense challenges in our global community such as food insecurity through service-learning in the ISU-Uganda program, or serving our fellow students pork-chops-on-a-stick on central campus as part of College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Week, service is engrained in the CALS student experience.

For students, faculty, staff and alumni in agriculture and life sciences, service is a tradition, not a buzzword. Our college is a place to develop and enhance our skill sets while furthering our understanding of the sciences, adoption of new technologies, appreciation of the fine arts and celebration of diversity. Each of us brings unique skills and talents to the environments in which we live, study and work. We each have a responsibility to further develop these talents to best serve those around us, and there is no better place to immerse ourselves in this growth than Iowa State University. Our world-class faculty, staff,

industry representatives and an incredible alumni network present students with opportunities to duly prepare themselves to meet their own needs and the needs of others.

There is strength in our reliance on one another as we seek to find solutions to the complex issues we face. It is important to recognize the close-knit community of doers, thinkers and innovators we belong to as members of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. We owe it to ourselves and to our global community to take advantage of the growth opportunities presented to us through the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, so we are best equipped to create a better world than the one we grew up in. To this end, we strive to embody these core values through our service as Student Body President and Vice President, and we encourage you to identify how you are drawn to serve and contribute your energy and passion to your communities. **N**

SHOP STUDENTS SERVING STUDENTS

Story and image by
Breanna Wetzler



In February 2011, a food pantry on campus, especially one run entirely by students, was a fresh idea. A group of transfer students who were passionate about food and helping their peers made the dream a reality. For current leaders of the Students Helping Our Peers (SHOP) food pantry on campus, ensuring fellow students have access to food remains priority number one.

"It is really important to us to continue the founding principle of anonymity so that we don't make our peers uncomfortable. College students sometimes have a hard time seeking help and we don't want any barriers, especially with our fellow students," says Belinda Heckman, senior in global resource systems and dietetics, who serves as president of SHOP.

First based in the Food Sciences Building, SHOP moved across campus to Beyer Hall in 2020. The new location offers more space, nearly three and a half times more, and easier accessibility for clients and volunteers.

"The new location is so much bigger. It's also close to a major CyRide stop and near student apartments," says Caroline Stokes, senior in microbiology and genetics and vice president of SHOP. "None of this would have been possible if not for our amazing partners on campus and in the community."

The location in Beyer was provided by Recreation Services. The new space has allowed students to expand food offerings to better serve their clients.

"It was really exciting to get refrigerators and a freezer to be able to offer nutritious things like fresh produce, dairy and meat to users of SHOP," Heckman says.

SHOP served an average of 35 students per week during spring 2021. Over the same period, a total of more than 6,800 pounds of food was provided by SHOP, far more than any other semester. Food is donated to SHOP by members of the campus community or purchased with monetary donations.

Student volunteers use knowledge from their classes

and interests in sustainability to establish and maintain food safety practices and counter food waste. They also gain valuable experience in managing and communicating with volunteers. Students recently created a series of videos to train volunteers to ensure the same positive experience for everyone.

Partners from across campus support SHOP. Faculty and staff fill in for students as needed, such as volunteering to staff during prep and finals weeks as well as during breaks. Student Health and Wellness provided connections and support, ISU Dining assisted in moving SHOP to Beyer and staff in the Department of Residence helped determine the new layout.

"Keeping students in leadership roles for the food pantry was really important as we began to support their efforts and help them grow to serve all students in need," says Lisa Nolting, dietitian with Student Health and Wellness. **N**

For 10 years, the student-organized effort Students Helping Our Peers (SHOP) food pantry has helped to ensure students' access to healthy food. **Caroline Stokes** (left), senior in microbiology and genetics, is vice president of SHOP, and **Belinda Heckman**, senior in global resource systems and dietetics, serves as president of the student organization.

»» CONNECT. ENGAGE. SHARE.

Student volunteers helped provide more than 6,800 pounds of food to their peers during spring 2021 in an effort to fight food insecurity on campus. To support the Students Helping Our Peers (SHOP) food pantry on campus visit stories.cals.iastate.edu for an online giving link or call 515-294-7677.

TIME IN THE SADDLE LEADS TO HEALING, LEARNING

Story by Michelle Hiscocks
and Melea Reicks Licht
Images by Blake Lanser

Hailey Gandrup leads Dilly, a patient Arabian gelding, around the arena. Jensen, a seven-year-old rider at One Heart Equestrian Therapy, looks down beaming. He's ready to ride.



One Heart, based just north of Ames, Iowa, offers equine-assisted therapeutic activities for children and adults with disabilities.

Gandrup, a junior in animal science, is a student in Animal Science 415, Equine Systems Management. The capstone course teaches students how to develop financial and production goals by featuring a variety of speakers from the equine industry. Students can gain hands-on experience and extra credit by volunteering for One Heart Equestrian Therapy, Inc.

"Working with participants at One Heart has given me a new perspective on a horse's purpose," says Carlie Wasmund, senior in animal science. "So many of us see them as an athlete or pet, whereas One Heart uses them as a tool for therapy."

Instructor Jill Paxton, assistant teaching professor in animal science, says this class helps provide a real-world experience to seniors preparing to transition into the workforce.

"The class invites 15 different guest speakers from a wide range of businesses, who volunteer to speak to our students about their life experiences. The students further

develop practical experience and character as they visit and volunteer at businesses and nonprofits, such as One Heart," says Paxton. "Some of the 415 students, who were also on the Iowa State Intercollegiate Horse Show Association (IHSA) western equestrian team, enjoyed their volunteer time at One Heart so much they recruited other members of the team to come out to One Heart and work with them."

GAINING CONFIDENCE, SKILLS

Kris Lager, founder of One Heart Equestrian Therapy, launched the nonprofit based on a dream and a need that she personally understood as the mother of a special needs child.

"One of the most inspiring things about One Heart is the support we've received from local community groups," Lager says. "We run almost entirely on donations and with volunteer workers. The Iowa State student volunteers bring a lot of energy to our programs and facility."

One Heart provides a wide variety of therapeutic riding services such as developmental riding classes for children and adults with physical or intellectual disabilities, driving

classes for those who cannot ride and horsemanship classes with mini horses for individuals unable to ride.

Lager says equestrian therapy has been shown to increase participants' mobility, confidence and self-esteem, which benefits other areas of their lives. One Heart is a member center of the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH) International and is currently home to eight horses and five miniature horses. One Heart celebrates their 20th anniversary this year.

Iowa State students learn unique techniques for handling therapeutic horses while providing essential support for One Heart. Students help lead horses and serve as side-walkers during therapy sessions to help participants follow directions. They also assist with facility care, clean tack and manage volunteer schedules. Many of the student volunteers are also members of the Iowa State Equestrian Club – Western Team. The club recently took on a special service project at One Heart to assess recently donated, potential therapy horses.

"Working with One Heart has provided us with a completely

different perspective for working with horses and has challenged us to change how we handle and train them," says Wasmund, who also serves as secretary of the ISU Equestrian Club. "The first night we worked with (horses) Dilly and Dude we realized we all had to adjust our usual riding style to a different type of riding for One Heart's therapy horses."

Lager says she has a great relationship with many Iowa State student groups such as Block and Bridle, the Horse Interest Group, Rodeo Club, Pre-vet Club and the equestrian teams, but she welcomes student involvement from any discipline.

BUILDING A BUSINESS

In addition to service learning opportunities, Equine Systems Management prepares students for running a successful business in the equine industry.

Paxton requires students to complete a 40-page business plan tailored to their specific interests.

"Animal Science 415 helped me define what would make my business unique," says Paige Gilster



('17 animal science), founder of Blu-Sky Stables. "Our instructor, Jill Paxton, allowed students to gain further knowledge in areas we were most interested in. The financial portion of the class helped me better understand business growth rate, cost analysis and how a solid business plan can make your larger goals come to life."

Having solid business knowledge and hands-on experience was something Gilster says helped her prove herself in the industry. The business model she developed while a student focuses on finding sub-par broodmares and making them first class through her selective breeding requirements.

Paxton says the goal of the course is to provide a well-rounded foundation for students through practical experience, a solid business plan and a service mentality.

"This course is unique in that it builds on the business side of the industry while much of their undergraduate experience in animal science provided hands-on opportunities with animals and research," Paxton says. "Each student is allowed to work individually or in a group to create a business plan of their choice that is detailed enough to submit to a lender or future partner. Every year, I hear from students who successfully used their business plans." ■

One Heart Equestrian Therapy rider **Harry** takes Astro, a registered American Quarter Horse, for a spin led by, left to right, **Stacey Roberts** ('04 animal science, '06 MS animal nutrition, '09 PhD nutritional sciences), **Anna Wolc**, affiliate assistant professor in animal science, and **Nathalie**, Harry's mom.

Inset: One Heart Equestrian Therapy rider **Jensen**, atop Dude, an Arabian gelding, is led by **Hailey Gandrup** (right) and **Heather Marz** (center) with the Iowa State Equestrian Team. Students can gain hands-on experience and extra credit by volunteering for One Heart Equestrian Therapy, Inc.

SERVICE-LEARNING

ON CAMPUS AND BEYOND

By Whitney Baxter
Images contributed

Finding ways to grow local fruits and vegetables sustainably.

Teaching children about agriculture, culinary science, natural resources and more. Learning to collect data to determine animal population numbers in certain locations. These are just a few examples of the many service-learning opportunities in which Iowa State University students take part at the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences' three satellite campuses. The activities allow students to take what they have learned in the classroom and apply it to real-world situations, all while helping others.

ISU EARTH PROGRAM, ISU-UGANDA PROGRAM

The ISU EARTH Program and ISU-Uganda Program are similar in that students travel to these locations to participate in summer or semester-long programs. Faculty members also take students to these destinations for

week-long trips during term breaks in the spring and fall semesters.

The ISU EARTH Program was established in 2010 in the U.S. Virgin Islands with the goal of offering Iowa State students service-learning opportunities, all while helping island residents improve their lives through sustainable agriculture practices. More than 75 students have taken part in the program since it began.

While on the island of St. John, Iowa State students assist with community engagement projects to increase their knowledge base and benefit the local area. These projects include establishing school and community gardens to supply fruits and vegetables for feeding programs; helping teachers create educational programs about agriculture, natural resources and environmental topics; and collecting food waste to compost and improve the soil structure.

"For our students to model the impact of agriculture and how it leads to better nutrition and health

is inspiring for members of the community that have limited experience with agriculture," says Shelley Taylor, director of CALS Global Programs.

In Uganda, students and faculty from Iowa State and Makerere University, Kampala, partner to create bi-national, educational, school garden programs in rural Kamuli district.

Since the program began in 2006, 147 Iowa State students have traveled to the country to team up with 168 Ugandan students to take part in service-learning opportunities. Those include developing school gardens that serve as both outdoor learning laboratories and contribute nutrition to lunches served at the schools, working with local youth to develop entrepreneurship projects as enterprises and assisting smallholder farmers with their crop and livestock farming.

"University students need to have a chance to learn about resource systems in other cultures and locations," says Gail Nonnecke, Morrill Professor and Global Professor in Global Resource Systems. "It's rewarding to see their personal growth and transformation as they contribute to development projects that can help to solve complex problems of our world."

FRENCH CONSERVATION EDUCATION CAMP

The Rod and Connie French Conservation Education Camp, also known as the Montana Camp, was established through a donation by Rod ('10 honorary degree) and

Connie French to Iowa State in 2015. Located in the Fish Creek valley approximately 50 miles west of Missoula, Montana, the facility is operated by the Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management as a space for students to gain hands-on field education in forestry, fisheries and wildlife.

All courses offered at the camp, in either the summer or fall, involve a service learning component, says Jennifer Schieltz, assistant teaching professor and director of the Montana Camp. These include assisting Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks with animal surveys to determine population numbers and monitoring and treating invasive weeds. The students also assist the United States Forest Service (USFS) with trail maintenance – clearing water bars, re-leveling trails and clearing brush – all while learning about summer job opportunities and careers in the forest service.

A new course offered this summer, Science + Design:

Interpretation of Natural Resources in Montana, had students design educational signs to be hung near the USFS campground.

"The students get the experience of working with a real client and producing a product for them (as they likely will in future jobs), while helping the Forest Service improve their visitor experience at the campground," Schieltz says.

SERVICE LEARNING THROUGH LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Students who enroll in Horticulture 481: Advanced Garden Composition take all they have learned thus far in other horticulture classes and combine it into two to three residential landscape design projects, gaining valuable hands-on experience along the way.

Lisa Nunamaker, associate teaching professor in horticulture, says students typically work with two or three Ames community members interested in improving their yards'

landscapes. Students conduct a site analysis of each client's yard, then put together preliminary and final designs to present.

During the fall 2020 semester, with COVID-19 precautions in place, Nunamaker instead had the class work with Jeff Iles, professor and chair of horticulture, to create a design for the Horticulture Hall courtyard on Iowa State's campus. Students in the fall 2021 class will do the same.

Nunamaker says through this service-learning project, students learn to use plants in an ecological way and how to see a design process through, from start to finish.

"We want them to walk away with the knowledge of how to work with a client, then incorporate the client's wishes into the final design, while also being innovative and ecologically sensitive to the site," she says.

Members of Iowa State's Landscape Club may take the fall semester's design one step further and install portions of it in the courtyard. This would be the first time a project from the class has been converted from a drawing on paper to reality.

"When students are able to work with real clients and a real site it gives them a new perspective," Nunamaker says. "Landscape design

has many pieces to manage, from research to planting design to construction details, then the final task of pulling it all together in a neat and orderly way so they can communicate it to the client. Working through a project like this allows them to become familiar with this entire process and starts to build their confidence." N

Students take what they have learned in the classroom and apply it to real-world situations during time spent at the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences' three satellite campuses.

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Learn more about the CALS satellite campuses at stories.cals.iastate.edu.

HELPING LOCAL BUSINESSES THRIVE

ISU EXTENSION AND OUTREACH
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT SPECIALISTS
SUPPORT IOWA ENTREPRENEURS

Story by Chris Kick
Images contributed



Tina and Amos Troester know the value of producing quality, premium beef. They've seen steady growth in their cattle company since they began selling to family and friends six years ago.

But when COVID-19 came in the spring of 2020, they saw demand spike in ways that were totally new.

For the Troesters, who own T-A Cattle Co. and T-A Family Premium Meats in Garnavillo, Iowa, COVID was both a challenge and an opportunity.

The opportunity was with the demand for local meats. Large-scale packing plants were closing due to illness, grocery stores were limiting how much customers could purchase and consumers turned to local farmers to meet their needs.

The challenge, especially for young farmers like the Troesters, was adapting to the rapid change in demand. They saw a significant increase in the amount of meat customers were willing to purchase, causing their business to nearly double in 2020 and continue to steadily grow into 2021.

They quickly needed more storage, better delivery equipment and a better understanding of their customers and their business model in general.

Toward the end of 2020, the Troesters reached out to Iowa State University Extension and Outreach for help. They had previously been working with a different partner, but were not making the progress they needed.

NEW DIRECTION

That all changed when they spoke to Brian Tapp, enterprise development program coordinator with ISU Extension and Outreach's Farm, Food and Enterprise Development program.

"When the Troesters first called me, they were looking for help with a feasibility study and a grant application," says Tapp. "As we continued to talk, we took on the role of analyzing and benchmarking their business plan to determine how they could increase sales and grow their business."

Under normal circumstances, it takes about 12-16 weeks for Tapp's team to complete a feasibility study. But because COVID brought a sense of urgency, the study was completed in about six weeks.

"Brian was a lifesaver," says Tina Troester. "He called back and said 'we can absolutely help you now.' He was very helpful with both the business plan and the feasibility study."

With Tapp's help, the Troesters were able to add a pole barn and a walk-in freezer capable of holding meat cuts of about 10 steers. They also added a new meat truck to help with frozen deliveries.

BROAD OUTREACH

The Troesters were among hundreds who turned to Tapp for help during COVID. Tapp and his team reached people across the state and beyond via 50 podcasts focused on business assistance, business recovery and reopening.

Known as the "Back to Business Iowa Podcasts," these featured segments were produced in partnership with Farm, Food and Enterprise Development and the Community and Economic Development programs of ISU Extension and Outreach, along with the Iowa Small Business Development Centers.

The podcasts helped restaurants, grocery stores and small business owners make key decisions in a time that was both stressful and urgent.



By offering financial insight and research, the group was able to help entrepreneurs understand their financial viability — not only during COVID, but also before and after.

"COVID definitely transitioned us to different levels of service than we had been providing and with the need for a much quicker turnaround," Tapp says.

RESILIENT, MARKET-READY

Andrew Schechinger, a junior at Iowa State University and an owner of FiberFactor Feeds, turned to Tapp in September of 2020, for help completing a feasibility study for his family's business, which makes pelleted livestock feed for cattle, horses, sheep and goats.

Formerly known as Iowa Agricultural Bio Fibers, the company lost its feed mill to a fire in April 2020 and is seeking \$6 million in financing to build a new plant and expand its product line.

"Brian and his team were great at learning about our industry and our business model, our product and our process," says Schechinger, who is majoring in entrepreneurship at Iowa State.

Coupled with the disruptions of the pandemic and an increase in corn prices, they were able to keep their costs down and provide an alternative source of animal nutrition for the livestock industry.


"Farm, Food and Enterprise Development did a fantastic job of going through hundreds of documents and compiling all of our research and development and

work into a feasibility study," Schechinger says. "They laid out the important points to show how we have been successful and can be successful in the future."

Troesters and others who Tapp has helped say their businesses are more resilient and market-ready than before.

Tina Troester said she's hopeful some of the relationships made with customers and business partners will continue long after the virus fades.

She met people she likely wouldn't have met otherwise, and customers got a taste for local foods and the farmer-to-consumer connection.

"People got to know farmers a little more and ask questions," Tina Troester says. "I am very optimistic and excited about our own customers and the number of people who have been drawn out to the countryside and to the farm. We hope the trend will continue well into the future." 

The Troester family of Garnavillo, Iowa, is among the hundreds of Iowans the ISU Extension and Outreach Food and Enterprise Development program helped with recovery and reopening during COVID and beyond.

Inset: ISU Extension and Outreach's Brian Tapp (left) and Duane Johnson team up via the Farm, Food and Enterprise Development and the Community and Economic Development programs to help Iowans build their businesses.

CALS ALUMNI, FACULTY HONORED BY COLLEGE, ISU ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences graduates and faculty have been honored by Iowa State University for service to the university and agricultural and life sciences industries during the annual Honors and Awards celebration.

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES AWARDS



Henry A. Wallace Award, **Deland Myers** ('81 MS food technology, '84 PhD), Professor Emeritus, College of Agriculture and Human Sciences, Prairie View A&M University



Outstanding Young Professional Award, **Kevin Ross** ('03 ag studies, '21 MBA), Farmer, Chair, National Corn Growers Association



George Washington Carver Distinguished Service Award, **Rachel Chikwamba** ('02 PhD genetics), Group Executive: Chemicals, Agriculture, Food and Health, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research



Floyd Andre Award, **Cornelius B. Conover** (left) ('69 animal science) and **Dwight K. Conover** ('74 ag business), Co-Founders, Northwest Financial Corporation

ISU Alumni Association Awards

Alumni Service Award, **Don Beitz**, Distinguished Professor, Iowa State University, Department of Animal Science

Outstanding Young Alumni Award, **Dustin Loy** ('05 animal science, '09 DVM veterinary medicine, '11 PhD veterinary microbiology), Associate Professor of Veterinary Microbiology, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

College of Veterinary Medicine Award

Stange Award for Meritorious Service, **Paul W. Snyder** ('80 animal science, '85 DVM), Manager and Senior Pathologist, Experimental Pathology Laboratories, Inc.

Thamodaran Presents Hertz Lecture

Dhamu Thamodaran ('83 PhD ag economics), retired executive vice president, chief strategy officer and chief commodity hedging officer for Smithfield Foods, virtually presented the 2021 Carl and Marjory Hertz Lecture on Emerging Issues in Agriculture on April 12. His presentation, "Emerging Issues in Global Markets and Trade" is available online at www.stories.cals.iastate.edu.

Bullard Earns Top Honors For Environmental Justice

Robert Bullard ('76 PhD sociology), distinguished professor of urban planning and environmental policy and former dean of the Barbara Jordan-Mickey Leland School of Public Policy at Texas Southern University, honored with the 2020 Champions of Earth Lifetime Achievement Award from the United Nations. The award is the UN's highest environmental honor. In 2021 he was appointed to the inaugural White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council.

Kardel Raises Presidential Turkeys Now Housed At Iowa State

Ron Kardel ('74 farm operation) farmer near Walcott, Iowa, and the immediate past chairman of the National Turkey Federation raised the 2020 official Thanksgiving Turkeys. The turkeys were pardoned at the White House, in November 2020, a continuation of a 73-year tradition. The turkeys, Corn and Cob, will live out the remainder of their lives at the Iowa State Department of Animal Science Teaching Farms.

Giving more youth the chance to learn about livestock and take animals to the fair is the goal behind a project started a decade ago in Monona County.

Known today as "The Breakfast Club," the project allows youth to keep pigs and broilers at Iowa State University's Western Research and Demonstration Farm near Castana, Iowa. The pigs are owned by the university, but youth get the full experience of taking care of them and showing them at the fair.

"Our program is very stringent, with high expectations for the youth," says Melissa Beermann, director for ISU Extension and Outreach in Monona County. "There is a schedule of what they must do every year and it includes signing up for chore rotations and attending educational events."

Youth sort and weigh pigs, feed and water animals, monitor animal welfare, practice showmanship skills and work as a team with employees of the research farm, county swine superintendents and extension. Participants are expected to exhibit up to three pigs at the Monona County Fair in July and follow herdsman guidelines, the 4-H Code of Ethics and participate in fundraising for the project.

The exhibitors pay \$30 each to take pigs, which goes toward the expenses incurred by the research farm. The broilers are paid for through donations – parents and the public can buy a broiler for \$20, and for each purchase, a second broiler is donated to a local food bank. Last year, 56 whole processed chickens were donated to the Onawa Food4U nonprofit.

"It's a pretty unique project," says Chris Beedle, who manages the research farm. "For those who have been in the farming industry, it's rewarding to see children and parents who are removed from agriculture, become reacquainted."


Organizers received a grant from ISU Extension and Outreach Agriculture and Natural Resources in 2020 aimed at improving diversity. Through a two-year, \$10,000 grant, a partnership was formed with Science Bound – Iowa State's pre-college through college program that empowers Iowa students of color to pursue degrees and careers in ASTEM (agriculture, science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and education.

Four Science Bound Scholars participated last summer and nine are participating this year.

Jocelyn Ramos, a junior at Denison High School and a Science Bound Scholar, says participating in the pig project last year helped her complete the required summer enrichment hours, while exposing her to something totally new.

"I was able to find my passion by showing pigs," she says. "I never would have imagined myself doing this, but it really opened my eyes to what's available."

Ramos lives in town and credits the pig project for introducing her to careers in agriculture and the possibility of studying agriculture at Iowa State. She was one of four Science Bound members who showed pigs in 2020 and was awarded "newcomer of the year" for her efforts.

Organizers expect a record number of hogs will be taken to the fair in this program, about 115 total, and about 60 broilers. 

Marlin Garcia-Sandoval (left) and **Blazen Beermann** gain hands-on experience about livestock care through the Breakfast Club project at Iowa State University's Western Research and Demonstration Farm near Castana, Iowa.

URBAN YOUTH GAIN LIVESTOCK EXPERIENCE AT ISU RESEARCH FARM

Story by Chris Kick
Image contributed

BUILDING A MEDIA POWER- HOUSE

Story by Haley Cook and Melea Reicks Licht
Images contributed



Throughout her notable career as a journalist and media executive, Betsy Freese, executive editor for *Successful Farming* and Meredith Agrimedia, has learned the only constant in her industry is change.



During her 37-year tenure with Meredith, Freese ('84 agricultural journalism) helped transform the *Successful Farming* brand from a beloved magazine to one of the top multimedia resources in the farming and ranching industries.

Freese also was the founding editor of *Living the Country Life*, growing the brand from a quarterly publication to a multi-faceted media presence including national radio, television and social media.

Adaptability became one of her hallmarks.

"Although my ISU degree focused on magazine journalism, I have also hosted a TV show and a radio program and managed a website," Freese says. "I always tell students to be flexible. Never lock yourself into one skill area or form of communication. You never know what technology is coming down the road. Be ready

for whatever challenge is thrown your way. If you are a good communicator, you can communicate in any form."

One constant throughout the past 27 years has been her role as publisher for the Pork Powerhouse rankings, an exclusive, annual report of the top pork producers in the U.S. and Canada. In 2017, she was honored as *Folio* magazine's Top Women in Media Industry Leadership awardee. In 2019, her work with the Pork Powerhouse rankings won her *Folio*'s top award for a single article.

"Betsy's legacy as a journalist will be etched among the pantheon of top ag journalists," says Dave Kums, the editorial content director for *Successful Farming* and fellow Iowa State alum. "Her career has been one of service: to our audience of farmers and ranchers; to the ag journalism industry; to Iowa State and aspiring journalists. Her dynamic and decorated career is a sterling example of the best that journalism represents."

Her professional achievements have netted her national accolades and the respect of her peers as evidenced by her earning the President's Award from both the American Agricultural Editors' Association and the North American Agricultural Journalists Association and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Agricultural Editors' Association.

In 2020, Freese was awarded the Iowa State University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Henry A. Wallace Award. The Wallace Award is presented in recognition of notable professional achievements, nationally or internationally, that bring distinction to the individual, college and university.

"The Henry A. Wallace Award is so meaningful to me because Henry Wallace was an agricultural journalist. He spent his life helping farmers by providing useful information, and that's something I've always tried to do as well," says Freese.

Freese's path to Iowa began in Maryland, where her family raised

pigs and ran a pick-your-own strawberry operation. Her interest in swine production led her to Iowa State where she met and married her husband, Robert ('83 animal science, '87 DVM).

While a student, Freese met animal science professor Max Rothschild, whose research on swine genetics revolutionized the U.S. pork industry. Rothschild is a retired Charles F. Curtiss Distinguished Professor.

"I wrote up an interview with Dr. Rothschild about swine genetics and sent it to *Successful Farming* my senior year. And as they say, 'that's all she wrote,'" says Freese.

That article, and an impressive portfolio from her time interning with the *Delmarva Farmer* newspaper in Easton, Maryland, earned her full-time employment with the publication.

"For the past 15 years, I have been a supervisor in our apprentice program, working with students at both Iowa State University and Drake University for nine months

during the school year," she says. "That has been especially fulfilling. I am proud to have helped these fine young men and women launch their careers in journalism."

"She is a role model for young agricultural journalists, apprentices and interns," Kums says. "She relishes coaching and mentoring young people, sharing her love of agriculture. But her stellar career and the award-winning work is truly inspiring."

Following her retirement this past summer, Freese continues to mentor future journalists and invests in her community through service on the Board of Trustees for the Des Moines Metro Opera. **S**

An agricultural communications pioneer, **Betsy Freese** was awarded the 2020 Iowa State University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Henry A. Wallace Award for her distinguished achievements as executive editor for Meredith Agrimedia and *Successful Farming*.



FOSTERING FUTURES IN STEM



Story by Haley Cook
Image contributed

Growing up in the Washington, D.C. area, Simone Soso's parents, a medical doctor and a speech pathologist, continually encouraged her interest in science and math. As an undergraduate at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Soso ('16 PhD environmental science) received funding from the NSF Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation program (LSAMP).

"I grew up in an environment where Black people excelled in STEM areas," Soso says. "My undergrad experience was the first time I met so many people who were first generation college students. In doing my research, I saw the need for programs like LSAMP and discovered I wanted to help others like me gain access to STEM fields."

As a program manager and research associate for the Quality Education for Minorities Network, Soso works with historically Black colleges and universities, historically Hispanic serving institutions and Tribal colleges and universities to provide education and resources for students and faculty in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

She earned her master's in animal health science from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (A&T), and was encouraged by fellow A&T alum, Derrick Coble ('13 PhD genetics), to continue her education at Iowa State.

"Derrick told me Iowa State was among the top, and would be an excellent choice for a PhD in an agricultural field," Soso says.

Her education and previous internship at the Smithsonian National Zoological Park led her to study with Jacek Koziel at Iowa State. Koziel, professor in agricultural and biosystems engineering, was researching how chemical and odor components of lion and tiger marking fluid play a role in animal behavior.


"Simone's superb research resulted in three publications in highly-ranked journals," Koziel says.

"She made the best of her multidisciplinary project at the nexus of animal science, chemistry and engineering. During her studies, she traveled to India and worked with world-renowned experts in mammalian pheromones. Her work is often cited by scientists working with animal scents, animal behavior and wildlife conservation."

At Iowa State SoSo served on the board of the Black Graduate Student Association, co-founded the Environmental Science Graduate Association and served as the STEM program coordinator for the College of Agriculture and Life Science's George Washington Carver Summer Research Internship program.

"Simone was phenomenal to work with – she has an energy, light and passion for helping young people understand the intersection between research, policy and career opportunities," says Theresa Cooper, assistant dean for diversity in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. "She also was an outstanding mentor to students in Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences. It's great to see her continuing her work in this area."

Soso encourages students to promote, build and nurture an inclusive community.

"Look beyond your comfort areas to attend trainings and meet people who are different than you," Soso says. "Iowa State has student organizations and resources for all areas of interest. Seek opportunities to connect with people – I guarantee there's a community and a place for you at Iowa State." 

Simone Soso strives to help minority students and faculty find success in STEM fields.



Story by Michelle Hiscocks
Image contributed

CONTINUING A CUSTOM PROCESSING TRADITION

Payson Kerns and Baili (Kerns) Maurer both grew up around their family's eastern Iowa business, Edgewood Locker. This local, custom meat locker and processor in Edgewood was founded by their grandparents in 1966. The brother and sister duo continues to operate the family business as third generation owners, a responsibility shared with two of their cousins.

This past year has emphasized the importance of local meat processors due to the supply challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. "The meat industry is crazy right now with huge demand and the local farm-to-table movement," Payson says.

"Our customers looked to us to continue to put meat in their freezers when everything else in the world was shutting down," Baili adds.

Neither Payson ('17 animal science) nor Baili ('12 culinary science) intended on coming back to work at the locker when they left for college. However, Baili knew she wanted to be involved in the agriculture or food industry, which made Iowa State a perfect fit.

While attending Iowa State, Baili realized how much she missed the environment of the meat business and got a job working at the Iowa

State University Meats Laboratory. She gained even more hands-on experience through her internship at Tyson Foods in their research and development area. After graduating in 2012 with a degree in culinary science and a minor in meat science, she worked for West Liberty Foods as both a food technologist and senior project leader.

"The people I met in the meat lab became valuable resources when I graduated and entered my career," Baili says.

Payson's college career started out a little differently than Baili's. He began at a local community college, but decided to head to Iowa State for more opportunities. Like his sister, Payson decided to work at the Meats Lab, assisting with harvesting, packaging, sanitation and more.

"I enjoyed getting to know Payson as his advisor and instructor," says Steven Lonergan, Morrill Professor in animal science. "He came to Iowa State with a good work ethic and an enthusiasm to learn about agriculture and especially the meat industry. His enthusiasm and hard work are a powerful combination. He is a friendly person and always has a smile (and perhaps a joke) for those around him."

Following Payson's graduation from Iowa State in 2017, he and Baili made the decision to buy into the family business in 2017. Their cousins Katie Anderson and Luke Kerns have also come on board to further strengthen the future of the family business.

EXPANSION ON THE HORIZON


The core business of Edgewood Locker is custom processing of beef, pork and venison. They also complete further processing of 90 different meat products for their wholesale and retail sector.

Their grandparents began the company with only one full-time and one part-time employee. Edgewood Locker now employs 55 people on a full-time basis and an additional 60 for part-time and seasonal help. "I know Payson and Baili will continue the strong tradition of quality and success at Edgewood Locker," Lonergan says.

Edgewood Locker recently held a groundbreaking ceremony for a 19,000 square foot addition to the facility. Once complete, the extra space will double the size of the current facility and enable the relocation of the sausage production and processing area. It also will

create more space for custom processing work, add more room for employees and modernize equipment and food safety processes.

The Kerns family is very committed to the success of the community where they live, work and raise their families. Baili is a member of the Experience Edgewood community marketing committee, Payson serves on the volunteer fire department and they all help grill for the concession stand at local athletic events. They also partner with the local school to give tours, educate students about the meat industry and help provide educational opportunities such as carcass shows and workshops for 4-H youth in Clayton and Delaware counties.

"Even with our expansion on the horizon, we remain loyal to the core business of custom processing that our grandparents started," Baili says. 

From left, **Payson Kerns, Miranda Kerns, Baili (Kerns) Maurer and Brad Maurer** continue to offer custom processing the Kerns family business, Edgewood Locker, has become known for since it was founded in 1966.

DEFINING MOMENTS

Story by Melea Reicks Licht
Images contributed

PUTTING POLICY TO WORK TO SUPPORT, ADVOCATE FOR DISABILITY COMMUNITY

Kody Olson ('18 global resource systems, agriculture and society), policy advisor for the Minnesota Council on Disability, has been working with the Minnesota State Emergency Operations Center throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. Active in student government during his time at Iowa State, it comes as no surprise that this recent grad jumped into policy work immediately after graduation.

Olson's efforts have made him a go-to person for the disability community in Minnesota.

"One night I got a call at 10:30 p.m. from a mother and daughter who had just lost power to their home and rely on powered machines for their health," Olson says. "Their lives were at risk, and so I worked with the City of Minneapolis to immediately get a power generator for that family."

Formerly the public policy director for the Minnesota Council on Disability, Olson (who is Deaf with a cochlear implant) provided policy advice and advocacy to the Minnesota governor, state legislature and state agencies on disability community issues.

"Kody has done incredible work to ensure our state works for all Minnesotans, including the disability community," says Governor Tim Walz. "Throughout the pandemic, he worked to make sure that Minnesotans with disabilities were represented and had the resources, including testing and vaccines, that they needed to stay safe."

Olson has stepped back from his director position in the Governor's Office to focus on furthering his education in earning a master's in public policy and public health at the University of Minnesota. He continues to support the Minnesota disability community as a disability policy advisor to the State Emergency Operations Center.

In addition to providing direct support to Minnesotans, he has played a vital role in developing legislation to support the unique needs of those with disabilities, such as a bill that would permit personal care assistants to provide transportation for COVID testing, treatment and vaccination.

Reflecting on his work, Olson spoke with Minnesota Public Radio earlier this year, explaining how people with disabilities often disproportionately suffer from the effects of the pandemic.

"We know that folks with intellectual and developmental disabilities have been disproportionately harmed by COVID-19. I would call it



an assault on the disability community," he says. "COVID-19 has disrupted the way that people have lived in their communities. It's disrupted how they receive their homecare services and independent living services. Transportation barriers have a huge impact on the community. Fortunately, we have a strong coalition of public and private, state and local partners working to provide transportation, and meet the needs of Minnesotans with disabilities throughout the state."

As a public health student, Olson also takes an active role in serving the health of Minnesotans by volunteering as a member of the University of Minnesota's Medical Reserve Corps (MRC).

"The MRC is composed of university faculty and students, and we respond to a variety of emergencies in our community and around the country," Olson says. "The program has been around for a while and has adapted to meet the emerging needs of the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, we have been supporting testing and vaccination clinics around the state. At the clinics, I assist with a number of non-medical tasks such as helping folks get registered for their appointment, on-site logistics, and monitoring patients after their shot."

The intersection of race and disability is an important consideration, says Olson, and he's committed to understanding and

focusing his work on the unique challenges faced by people of color with disabilities. Olson recently found himself among an uprising for social justice as a resident of St. Paul.

"Between supporting the state's emergency management response, getting calls from members of the disability community whose support services were impeded and feeling concern for my neighbors and community during the unrest, this year has been filled with defining moments for me both personally and for my community," Olson says.

As he considers the experiences of the past year, he looks forward with hope that better understanding will lead to systemic change.

"I'm elated to see a country care about really important social justice issues, and it's incredible to live in the place where that revolution started," he says. "I live in a historically Black community, and it's been amazing to see our neighbors come together to listen and learn from each other. As a white man I've done a lot of reflecting on my role in racism and how we can move forward together." ■

Kody Olson has stepped up in numerous ways to support the Minnesota disability community throughout COVID-19 and beyond as a disability policy advisor.



"I'm elated to see a country care about really important social justice issues, and it's incredible to live in the place where that revolution started..."

CALS STUDENT TEAMS LEAD NATIONALLY

The Iowa State Crops Team placed first overall in the four-year division of a contest hosted by the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture. Rachel Casey, senior in agronomy, placed third overall as an individual.

Two members of the Iowa State University Livestock Judging Team, Alison Buelthel ('21 animal science, international agriculture) and Maddie Fugate ('21 agricultural business), were named All-Americans at the National Collegiate Livestock Judging Contest in November 2020. The team also earned reserve champion honors at the Fall Upgrade Contest in October 2020. Austin Garner ('21 animal science) was named third high individual overall at the National Barrow Show.

The Professional Agricultural Student (PAS) Club brought home several top awards from national and state conferences:

National PAS Results

- Equine (first place team) – Ashley Lohmann, junior in animal science, first place individual; Shayla Seils, senior in agricultural and life sciences education, second place individual
- Crops (first place team) – Rosie Roberts, senior in agronomy, first place individual
- Overall Livestock (second place team) – Jenna Steffen, junior in agricultural and life sciences education, third place individual
- Ten club members participated in individual events, with three top finishers

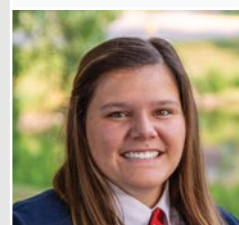
State PAS Results

- Equine (first place team) – Ashley Lohmann, first place individual
- Turf (first place team) – Rosie Roberts, first place individual
- Overall Livestock (first place team) – Jenna Steffen, first place individual
- Crops (third place team)
- Twelve club members participated in individual events, with seven named champions

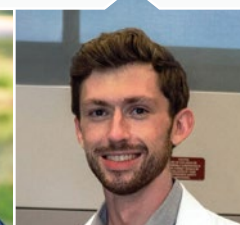


NATIONAL HONORS

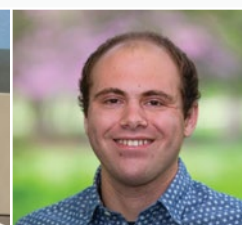
- **Jenna Steffen**, junior in agricultural and life sciences education, was named one of the new Professional Agricultural Student (PAS) National Vice Presidents.
- **Paiton McDonald**, junior in agricultural biochemistry, was named a 2021 Goldwater Scholar.
- **Jacob Boyd Johnson**, graduate student in toxicology, earned a Fulbright U.S. Student Program award.
- **Warren Rouse**, graduate student in biochemistry, biophysics and molecular biology, was selected to receive a Ruth L. Kirschstein Predoctoral individual National Research Service Award from the National Cancer Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health.
- **Shelby Westhoff**, sophomore in agricultural studies, was named one of the Land O'Lakes 2021 Emerging Leaders for Food and Security.
- **Nolan Monaghan**, junior in horticulture and global resource systems, was named a Udall Scholar.



Jenna Steffen



Jacob Boyd Johnson



Nolan Monaghan

BLOCK AND BRIDLE 100TH CONVENTION

Iowa State University's Block and Bridle Club organized and hosted the 100th National Block and Bridle Convention April 8-10, in Ames. The convention included tours of livestock operations, wineries and distilleries throughout Iowa, breakout sessions with speakers who discussed various agricultural topics and social activities. COVID-19 guidelines, such as social distancing and requiring face masks to be worn, were followed throughout the convention. A total of 129 students from 19 clubs/universities attended the event in-person. Students could also attend the event virtually – the first time this option was offered – though virtual attendance numbers were not tracked.

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