

UConn

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE,
HEALTH AND NATURAL
RESOURCES

ANIMAL SCIENCE

WINTER STUDENT NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2023

A Message from the Department Head

Happy New Year!

Welcome to the spring 2023 semester and congratulations to all of our December graduates and to those students who made the Dean's list in the fall of 2022.

It is great to be nearly completely in-person again after working around COVID for almost three years. Recently, however, there appears to be an uptick in positive cases. Please be very vigilant in protecting yourselves so we can be fully healthy and energetic.

The department is expecting exciting personnel changes. We will soon be interviewing candidates for three faculty positions in reproductive physiology, nutrition, and dairy extension. This is unprecedented in our department's history. I ask everyone's help in these important endeavors by attending seminars and interview meetings if asked. The new faculty members should hear from you directly on how you view the department, where you believe we should be headed in the future, and how we can fulfill our tripartite mission of teaching, research, and extension. As you may be aware, a total of five faculty members have retired or left the department since last spring. Our remaining faculty and staff members have taken on additional duties in service, teaching, and especially advising. While three new faculty members will join us in the fall of 2023, they need time to gain experience in their new roles in a new environment. Therefore, the unprecedented challenge of understaffing will continue for quite some time. I ask for your patience while we go through transitions, mentoring new colleagues and refilling the additional vacancies. I also ask you to join me in thanking our faculty and staff whose dedication, loyalty and hard work is keeping the department afloat. We extend our thanks to Dr. Curtis Schondelmeyer, Mr. William Davenport, Dr. Sheila Andrew, Dr. Sau-mei Leung, Dr. Amy Safran, Dr. Rich Mancini and graduate student Atul Walunj who continue to help the Department in teaching courses left behind by the retired/departed faculty members. We are equally grateful to all those who volunteered to give guest lectures in their courses. This spring Dr. Alison Kaufman, who has taught extensively in colleges and universities in Connecticut and California, will co-teach AS1602/SAAS202, behavior and training of domestic animals with Dr. Jenifer Nadeau.

Please join me in welcoming her to the department.

As usual, I want to remind those who plan to graduate this May or August to please apply for graduation and submit plans of study within the first four weeks of the semester through the Student Admin system. Check with your advisor to make sure you are all set for graduation.

We are looking forward to a great spring semester!

Stay safe.



Dr. Cindy Tian, Interim Department Head



Dr. Xiuchun "Cindy" Tian. (Peter Morenus/UConn Photo)

Department News

UConn Creamery Update

The UConn Creamery has resumed ice cream production following a brief hiatus due to required building maintenance which halted ice cream production from October through December.

We are excited to have our Creamery back in operation and ask for your patience as the staff works diligently to create and stock all of your favorite flavors on the Dairy Bar menu.

Stay up to date on your favorites by following the UConn Dairy Bar on all their social media pages (@UConnDairyBar).



UConn Creamery Staff (Left to Right): Chris Lewis, Ben Honer, and Bill Sciturro. (Contributed Photo/UConn Animal Science)

UConn Dairy Herd Scores Big

The UConn dairy herd has again received the 2022 Progressive Genetics Herd Award! This award is given in recognition of the achievement of high standards of breeding of Registered Holstein Cattle through the adoption and use of official breed programs of production testing and herd classification. This includes cooperative participation with other breeders of Holstein cattle in programs with breed improvement and promotion.

In addition, the dairy herd were awarded the Agri-Mark Quality Performance award in recognition of their high quality milk production.

Congratulations to all our homegrown UConn dairy ladies and their dedicated caretakers on their recent success!



Dairy Cattle on Horsebarn Hill. (Sean Flynn/UConn Photo)

My Forever Horse

We were recently contacted by Sondra Slesinki, and avid supporter of our equine program, with updates on her UConn Morgan. Here's what she had to say about the UConn Morgan horses she has shared her life with, past and present:

"In 1984, I purchased my first horse, UC Adventurer, born in 1981 (UC Ringmaster x UC Senmara). I had him for his entire life: he crossed over the rainbow bridge peacefully at age 36. A very hardy, versatile horse, and a great family pet. Since I lost my other Morgan last summer, I've been looking for another Morgan, and looked at the UConn website every day. I was so ecstatic when Lisa Streff contacted me to say that I was 3rd in line to look at UC Gossip Girl (b. 2016, Call to Order x SMP Main Topic). It was meant to be, and on May 14th we took delivery of our new forever horse. She and my other horse (a Haflinger cross) got along fabulously right from the beginning. She is much loved by the entire family, and she will be my new pleasure/trail/Western dressage partner."

Many thanks to Sondra for her support and for sharing her story with us!

Check out more UConn Morgan stories on the [Morgan History webpage](#).



UC Adventurer. (Contributed Photo/UConn Animal Science)



UC Gossip Girl. (Contributed Photo/UConn Animal Science)

UConn Gives is Coming Soon!

Thousands of reasons to give. One stronger university.

Huskies everywhere know that UConn is committed to providing an exceptional education to our students. During this year's UConn Gives, a 36-hour giving initiative, you can celebrate this commitment to excellence through giving.

The University of Connecticut will hold the annual UConn Gives Campaign on Wednesday, March 8th through Thursday, March 9th, 2023 and our department is excited to support two important causes this year.

The first cause that we will support this year is our reproductive physiology teaching and research program in memory of Dr. Robert Milvae. Dr. "Bob" was a well-loved member of our department who's teaching made an incredible impact on many of our students.

The second cause that we will support through UConn Gives is to remodel and upgrade our meat lab facility in the Ratcliffe Hicks Building. Under the expertise of our newest faculty member, Dr. Chaoyu Zhai, we envision a facility that provides space with modern technology to teach students and perform cutting edge research related to meat science.

We welcome your support for these two causes during UConn Gives this year!



Dr. Richard Mancini Instructing Students in the Meat Lab.
(Contributed Photo/UConn Animal Science)



Dr. Robert "Bob" Milvae Assisting a Student with a Surgery.
(Contributed Photo/UConn Animal Science)

Donors Make The Difference

Help Grow the UConn Herd!

While we raise our own award-winning cattle and equine herds, the UConn Department of Animal Science accepts select donations to contribute to the diversity of those herds.

The equine program at the University of Connecticut Department of Animal Science relies largely on the generous donations of horses from alumni, community members, and equine industry professionals. Many horses come to our program because they are ready to step down from their showing careers or because they are looking for a new job. Whatever the circumstances, we are happy to discuss your horse's future in our program. Care of donated horses is a top priority for the UConn equine program as they are our greatest teaching asset.

We are currently looking for sound and healthy beginner safe horses with experience in western, dressage, or hunt seat, intermediate to advanced hunter jumper type, as well as playing polo horses. To be considered horses must be 15 years old or younger and currently/recently in regular work.

If you have a horse that fits this description and you are interested in donating them, please contact Lisa Streff, UConn Horse Unit Manager, at 860-486-2034 or lisa.streff@uconn.edu.



ANSC Undergraduate Colette Arslanian Crossing Horsebarn Hill Road with a Horse. (Sean Flynn/UConn Photo)

UConn Block & Bridle's 93rd Annual Little "I"

"Keep Calm and Hold On"

On October 22nd, the 93rd Annual Little "I" Livestock Show showcased all of the time and effort put forth by over 150 students enrolled in the Introduction to Animal Science course working with their animals (beef and dairy cattle, sheep, pigs, horses and chickens) over a 7-week training period. Many Animal Science faculty, staff, graduate students and undergraduate students assisted during the training period and on show day. Family and friends enjoyed watching the friendly competition on the unseasonably warm, sunny day! Thanks to all who patiently helped, fed, cleaned, taught, judged and participated in this annual event; this could not have happened without all of you!



Members of the 2022-2023 UConn Block & Bridle Club.
(Contributed Photo/UConn Animal Science)



ANSC Undergraduate Erica Battle and Graduate Student Nicole Tillquist During the Beef Cattle Judging. (Contributed Photo/UConn Animal Science)

Undergraduate Student News

► **Lyla Audrick '24** was featured alongside Madeline Kizer (BUS) and Efua Koomson (CLAS) in a UConn Today article back in September for their work behind the UConn Swap Shop, a new university start-up that educates students about and counteracts fast fashion.

[Learn more about their initiative](#)

► **Ryan Duncan '23** traveled to the National Future Farmers of America (FFA) Association meeting in Indianapolis with other members of Sigma Alpha to receive their American FFA Degrees!

The highest degree achievable in the National FFA Organization, the American FFA Degree "shows an FFA member's dedication to his or her chapter and state FFA association. It demonstrates the effort FFA members apply toward their supervised agricultural experience and the outstanding leadership abilities and community involvement they exhibited through their FFA career".

► **Abigail Wilber '23 and Matthew Syrotiak '25** traveled to Madison, Wisconsin in October for the 100th National 4-H Dairy Judging Contest as members of the UConn 4-H Dairy Judging Team.

The team placed 11th out of 20 teams, the highest UConn

4-H has placed in the national contest since 1999. Abigail was also named an All American Dairy Judge, having placed within the top 25 of all participants.

Congratulations!

► **Jasmine Morris '23** presented her IDEA Grant Project at the Fall Frontiers Research Exhibition in October. Her project, "Promoting Positive Mental-Wellbeing Among Adolescent Girls of Color Using an Animal Care Framework," focuses on her work in cooperation with the Horizons at Ethel Walker School in Simsbury, CT.



ANSC Undergraduate Jasmine Morris Posing in Front of her Research Display. (Contributed Photo/UConn Animal Science)



Left to Right: Bill Davenport, Grace Balogh, Becca Syme, Abigail Wilber and Matthew Syrotiak. (Contributed Photo/UConn Animal Science)

Graduate Student News

➤ **Ragini Reddyvari (PhD, Amalaradjou)** was awarded the 2022 Northeast SARE Graduate Student Research Grant from Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education for her project focused on developing natural antimicrobials to improve egg safety.

[Read more about her project here](#)

► **Saurav Ranjitkar (PhD, Tian)** was recognized with the Peter Farin Trainee Travel Scholarship from the International Embryo Technology Society (IETS).

► **Jodie Allen (PhD, Upadhyay)** was the recipient of the Connecticut Board of Trustees Eastern States Exposition Graduate Student Scholarship for the year 2022-2023.

► **Brindhalakshmi Balasubramanian (PhD, Upadhyay), Trushen Shah (PhD, Upadhyay), Jodie Allen (PhD, Upadhyay), and Kimberly Rankin (MS, Upadhyay)** co-authored a manuscript titled "Eugenol nanoemulsion inactivates *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Salmonella* spp., and *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 on cantaloupes without affecting rind color," which was published in *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems, Agro-Food Safety*.

[Read the full article here](#)

► **Mia Kawaida (PhD, Reed)** presented her work titled "Deconditioning and reconditioning, but not astaxanthin, alter mitochondrial respiration in equine skeletal muscle," at the American College of Sports Medicine's Integrative Physiology of Exercise Conference in Baltimore, MD.

► **Trushen Shah (PhD, Upadhyay)** and **Brindhalakshmi Balasubramanian (PhD, Upadhyay)** placed 2nd and 3rd at the Z. John Ordal Food Microbiology Division Graduate Student Oral Competition at the Institute of Food Technologist Annual Conference in Chicago.

► **Mairui Gao (PhD, Amalaradjou)** was awarded the 2022 Nutmeg IFT Graduate Scholarship.

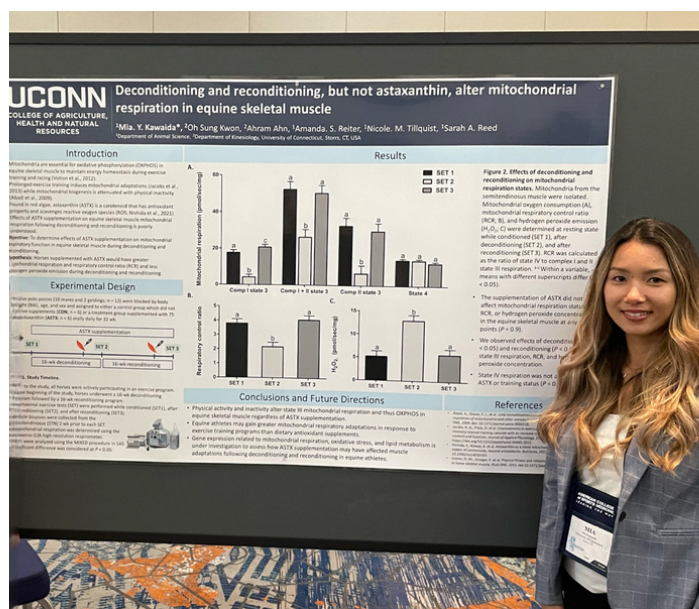
► **Ragini Reddyvari (PhD, Amalaradjou)** was named a 2023 ASM Young Ambassador.

► **Brindhalakshmi Balasubramanian (PhD, Upadhyay)** presented her research at the 2023 Vegetable & Small Fruit Growers' Conference & Trade Show.

► **Nicole Tillquist (PhD, Govoni)** presented her research data at the 2022 Perinatal Biology Symposium in Aspen CO. Nicole was an invited trainee speaker for this meeting and received a travel award as well.



ANSC Graduate Student Ragini Reddyvari Conducting Research.
(Contributed Photo/UConn Animal Science)



ANSC Graduate Student Mia Kawaida Standing Alongside her Research Presentation in Baltimore, MD. (Contributed Photo/UConn Animal Science)

Faculty

News

► **Dr. Dennis D'Amico's** work surrounding the use of protective bacterial cultures to prevent illness from food-borne pathogens was picked up by several news outlets across the country, including UConn Today, PHYSSorg, Trend Radar and more.

[Read the full journal here](#)

He was also reached out to by Boy Genius Report regarding a nation-wide recall on beef jerky due to positive test results of *Listeria monocytogenes*.

[Read the full article here](#)



► **Dr. Joe Emenheiser and Dr. Amy Safran** published the results of CT Sheep Producers Survey, which was conducted from October 2021 to February 2022 in order to gain insight into the status and health of the Connecticut sheep industry and to identify areas of profitability in the state.

[See the full results from the survey here](#)



► **Dr. Abhinav Upadhyay** was awarded a \$243,000 grant through USDA-NIFA-AFRI-A1332 program for his work regarding the development of phytochemical based dietary strategies to reduce listeriosis risks in humans. As a Co-PI, Dr. Upadhyay was also awarded a \$95,698 USDA-NIFA equipment grant to acquire an oxygen transmission rate tester for food science and food packaging applications.



► **Dr. Tian's** research on cultivated meat was featured in both the OVP's annual report and Tech Commercialization's annual report.

[Read the full report here](#)



► **Dr. Amalaradjou** was issued a patent by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office for her work regarding methods for enhancing poultry growth and performance.

Dr. Amalaradjou was also

featured in the January edition of Food Protection Trends.

[Read the full feature here](#)



► **Dr. Sarah Reed** shared her insight into how to keep animals healthy and happy in an interview with UConn Today.

[Read the full article here](#)

She was also invited to speak at the 2022 Women in STEM Frontiers in Research Expo.

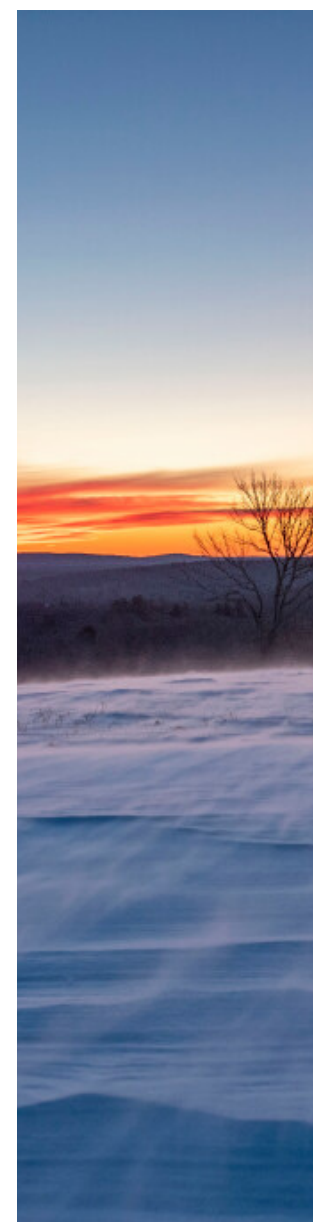


► **Dr. Jenifer Nadeau** spoke at the Litchfield Hills Driving Club concerning how to prepare a horse for winter in Plymouth, CT. She also served as one of the Horse Bowl Superintendents at the Eastern National 4-H Horse Roundup in Louisville, KY.



► **Dr. Dennis D'Amico** published several journal articles throughout the semester related to food production.

[See all the articles here](#)



Alumni

News

► **Patricia "Pat" Jepson ('78)** was recognized in UConn Today for her commitment to promoting excellence and diversity in UConn's agricultural education programs.



► **Amy Chesmer ('94)** was appointed to the CT USDA Farm Agency State Committee in October by United States Secretary of Agriculture Thomas Vilsack.

► **Aubrey Sancho ('20)** started her own business, Click With Your Canine, which offers a variety of dog training services. In addition, Aubrey joined the CT Humane Society as a Behavior Coordinator.

► **Bill Davenport ('85, '87)** was the recipient of the My Connecticut Grown for CT Kids Grant from the CT Department of Agriculture. The grant provides for tower gardens in all 13 third grade classrooms in the Naugatuck school district, along with funding for all-day field trips for each third grade classroom in the spring to Freund's farm for real farm experience.

► **Michelle Forella ('13)** was named as a Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association Emerging leader

for her work related to reducing stigma surrounding mental health and connecting veterinarians with mental health services. As a CVMA Emerging Leader, Michelle will represent the CVMA at the AVMA Veterinary Leadership Conference this month and the New England Veterinary Conference in September.

► **Liz Underwood ('16)** was featured in an article on UConn Today about her passion for helping animals and her current work as a part of one of the largest private practices in the Southern United States.



► **Kristen Zwally ('21)** was awarded a foundation scholarship from the Southwest Meat Association as she pursues her master's of animal science at Texas A&M University. Following graduation, she plans to continue her education with a doctorate in animal science.

► **Daniel Munch (CAHNR '18)** credited his experiences with UConn 4-H as a part of his success as an economist with the American Farm Bureau Federation in Washington, D.C. in a UConn Today article in November.

► **Julia Bedos ('17)** graduated from the University of Glasgow Veterinary School in July 2022. Post graduation, Julia moved to Scotland and now works as a Small Animal General Practitioner at a local vet office.

► **Rick Naczi ('81)** was named a 2022 recipient of the Richard E. Lyng Award for his contributions and distinguished service to dairy promotion. The award is named for former U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Richard E. Lyng, who played a critical role in implementing policies that led to the establishment of NDB more than 35 years ago. The Lyng Award honors leaders who have made a significant contribution to dairy promotion that benefits the entire industry.



► **Sarena Stogden ('18)** achieved certification as a Laboratory Animal Technologist through the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science. Sarena currently conducts drug safety research at Pfizer in Connecticut.

► **Shauneen O'Neil ('19)** started a new role as a Vet Tech with UrgentVet Pet Clinic in Raleigh, NC.

► **Julia Bedos ('17)** graduated from the University of Glasgow Veterinary School in July 2022. Post graduation, Julia moved to Scotland and now works as a Small Animal General Practitioner at a local vet office.

► **Samantha Doyle ('19)** has joined Southeastern Guide Dogs as a Coordinator of Public Service. Doyle's role involves establishing partnerships with outside organizations that train dogs. Her most recent partnership with State Farm Arson Dog Program, which focuses on training dogs to learn to detect accelerants after a fire has been put out to determine if a crime has occurred.



► **Holly Lange ('75)** retired from the Department of Plant Pathology at Cornell University. In retirement, Holly's passion for animal science has blossomed. She, along with her husband, own a new farm of 80 acres with vegetables, laying hens, pigs, and a flock of sheep.

Give a Gift...

ANSC Students, Faculty and Staff Welcome Your Support!

Many donors choose to honor a loved one or friend with a gift to support UConn in their name. Perhaps the gift is in memory of someone who loved UConn's animals, from an alumnus who attended the Department of Animal Science, or in honor of an inspirational professor.

If you would like to donate to the Department of Animal Science, you can do so one of three ways:

1. Donate online by clicking [here](#) and choose "College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources" under Choose Category, "Animal Science Department" under Choose Subcategory. Then select your desired fund under the Choose Fund dropdown and click the yellow Add Gift +. Then click "Next Step" on the right-hand side.
2. Donate by mail using the form [here](#). Under the "Designation of Your Gift" section, indicate desired fund from list of funds found online by following step 1.
3. Donate via phone by calling (800) 269-9965 or (860) 486-5000.

For more information, contact Michelle Lewis by email at mlewis@uconn.edu, via phone at (860) 486-1088 or by mail: University of Connecticut, Department of Animal Science, Attn: Michelle Lewis, 17 Manter Road, Unit 4040, Storrs, CT 06269-4040. The Foundation is a tax-exempt, non-profit corporation dedicated to UConn. Donors to the Foundation have the right to request in writing that their identity be anonymous.



Sarah Reed of the Department of Animal Science Poses with a UConn Yearling.
(Jason Sheldon/UConn Photo)

“I’m so thankful that breeding programs like the one at UConn still exist, and I wish to help continue their efforts.”

- Sondra Slesinski, Recent Donor

Compliance Corner

REMINDER:

Faculty, Staff, Graduate and Undergraduate Students:

If you will be working with animals this semester it is more than likely that you will require Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) training or re-training. It is required for personnel listed on protocols, independent study students, riding teams, and student barn employees.

Initial IACUC training (#1 below) If you have never received IACUC you must complete the "Working with IACUC" module online through the CITI program. Please follow this link:

<https://ovpr.uconn.edu/services/rics/animal/iacuc/iacuc-training/>

Retraining is required annually for most and every 3 years for PI's.

There are two options for renewal:

1. Complete a course through the CITI program

<https://ovpr.uconn.edu/services/rics/animal/iacuc/iacuc-training/>

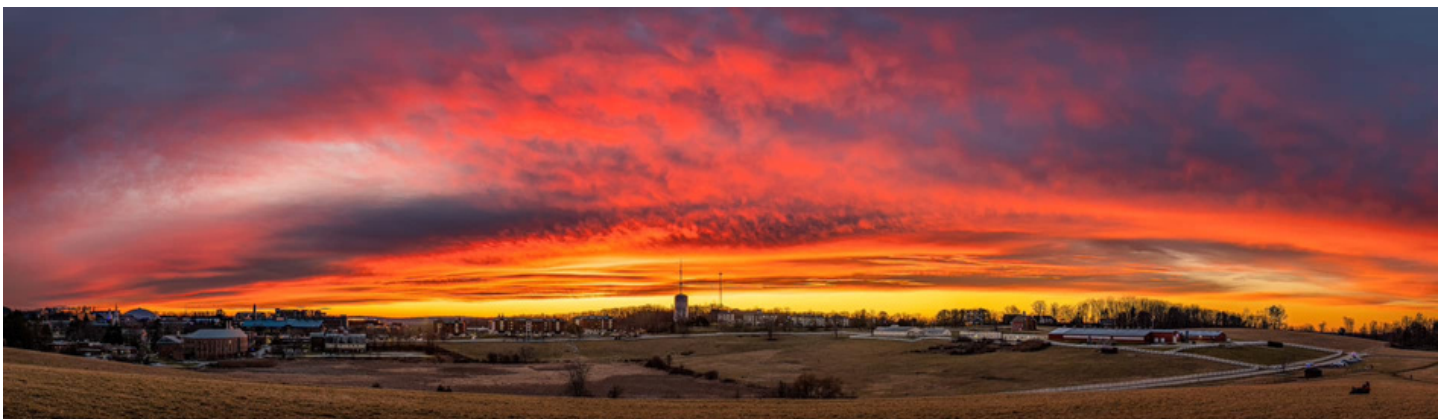
2. Complete the Biological Safety Considerations: Farm Animal Research and Production course on Husky SMS available through the link below:

<https://uconn.bioraft.com/> click on training and course directory to find the specific course.

If you are interested in working at the barn units or in an Animal Science lab, be sure to check out the [Compliance Corner](#) page.



Dr. Curtis Schondelmeyer Instructing Students on Proper Lab Techniques
(Jason Sheldon/UConn Photo)



Panoramic View of the Department of Animal Science from Horsebarn Hill (Milton Levin/Levin Aerial Works, LLC)

