

Have You HERD?

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**ANIMAL
SCIENCES**



**UF/IFAS DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SCIENCES
NEWSLETTER VOL.2 | SPRING 2021**

HAVE YOU HERD?

Spring 2021

UF/IFAS Department of Animal Sciences

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Animal Sciences Lecturer Amie Imler teaches the animal sciences introductory lab to both in-person and virtual students. See page 6.

Dear alumni, friends and supporters,

This semester has been one of change and growth yet again for the Department of Animal Sciences at the University of Florida. Our faculty have had to continue to offer courses in a hyflex format meaning teaching students both in person and in a virtual environment. Events we thought might be able to be held in person, were once again moved to a virtual or hyflex format with high hopes of change in the coming months. The continual shifting of events and regulations have continued to teach our faculty, staff and students to be flexible and patient. In that vein, we have seen major successes from their resilience and drive.

This Spring has been one of celebration for our department. Our faculty published 147 articles in 2020. This number represents the amount of research we have been able to share with the animal agriculture industry in the last few months and the progress we have been able to make despite of the challenges we have faced in the last year. Faculty and students have been recognized for their outstanding achievements at the department, college and university levels. We were able to host our scholarship recognition ceremony in a hyflex format so friends of the department and our students could all attend comfortably. Our students graduating this Spring were afforded the opportunity to graduate in person. The College of Agricultural and Life Sciences also offered a make up graduation ceremony for those who missed out on this milestone last year.

Again because of the dedication and hard work of our faculty, staff and students, events traditionally hosted in person were held in an online forum this semester. Those events included the annual Sale in the Swamp, the 70th Annual Beef Cattle Short Course, the 2nd Annual Brahman Bull Sale and the 32nd Ruminant Nutrition Symposium. Our department was able to host a preview day for the Sale in the Swamp wherein faculty, staff and students were able to interact with friends of the department in a safe environment. Each event experienced success and we are looking forward to, moving them back to an in-person format again next year.

We hope you will enjoy this second issue of “Have you Herd?”, a newsletter that will be produced three times a year, featuring the wonderful things happening in our department – from student life to research findings and everything in between. We hope you will reach out if you have ideas or feature stories you would like to see in the future.

Lastly, we could not do what we do here in the department without our alumni, friends and stakeholders who generously support our efforts in so many ways. Whether you are giving through financial support, your time to speak to our students or providing jobs and internships, we cannot say thank you enough. If you are interested in giving, please visit <https://give.ifas.ufl.edu/animal-sciences-giving/> to learn about various giving opportunities or reach out to me directly.

Sincerely,

John Arthington
Professor and Chair



John Arthington
PROFESSOR & CHAIR

GENE LOLLIS

Laurent O'Gene Lollis "Gene" is a 1993 graduate of the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Department of Animal Sciences (UF/IFAS ANS). He has served as the Ranch Manager of Archbold Biological Station's Buck Island Ranch (BIR) since 1996 and is the current Florida Cattlemen's Association President.

Lollis manages the day-to-day operations of the 10,500-acre ranch with a herd of about 3,000 head of cattle. The operation is a balance of a working cattle operation and a research site with multiple projects running simultaneously.

Lollis is an overall advocate for the Florida cattle industry as his involvement spans from serving as FCA's President to being the acting CEO and Chairman of the Board of Florida Cattle Ranchers, Inc., an organization focused on producing local beef products in a transparent forum. He also serves as a member of Florida Heritage Beef, the Florida Farm Bureau Federation, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, the United States Animal Health Association and sits on the Commissioner of Agriculture's Animal Institute Technical Council. Lollis said he had a lot of favorite memories from his time at UF, but one stood out more than the others.

"Just getting to know a lot of different folks from across the state," said Lollis. "Contacts and getting to know people really stand out."

Lollis started his college career at Santa Fe College in Gainesville, Florida all the while working for the UF/IFAS ANS Meats Processing Center and Beef Unit. From there, he transferred to ANS and specialized in beef production. He had some advice for the recent graduates of the department.

"It's pretty dog gone simple, you gotta get up, you gotta show up, you gotta participate, and never give up no matter where life leads you," said Lollis. "It's going to throw stuff at you, and it may be a whole host of things."

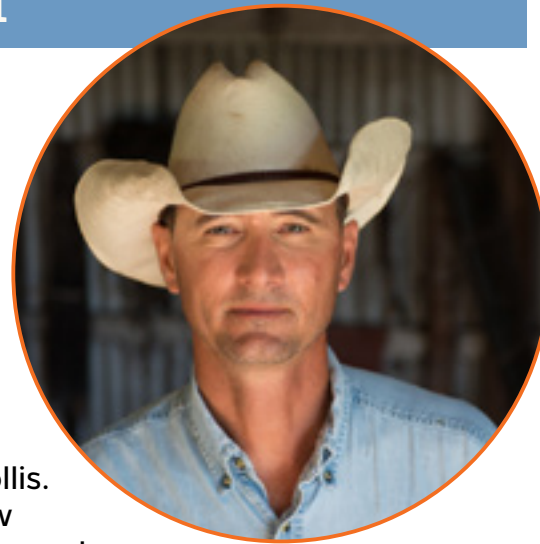
Pouring into the next generation of agriculturalists is another way Lollis spends his time. Nearly every year, Gene and BIR host at least one student intern hoping to learn more about the Florida cattle industry or working in research and conservation. Students interested in the cattle industry are housed at the ranch and gain exposure to every facet of the industry.

"What I ask every intern is to have yourself a set of goals," said Lollis. "Three to five goals that you want to achieve while you're here. You're going to come in, you're going to work with us, but the goals are the things you do above and beyond. You make it what you want it."

According to Lollis, agriculture is about perseverance and it is a field that brings gratitude over time, not overnight. Success looks different depending on the individual. He said success is not about how much money you make, but about helping others.

"Number one, it's about believing in God, family and at the end of the day," said Lollis. "If you can say you put forth 100% of your ability to accomplish your day, you're a success."

Find more information about UF/IFAS Animal Sciences on our website. Stay in touch with us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. To read more pieces like this one visit <http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/animalsciencesdept/>.



VIRTUAL CONTEST LEADS TO INDUSTRY COLLABORATION

While 2020 looked different for the meat science program at UF, the limitations of the year also led to a creative twist on an intercollegiate contest and a new industry-oriented class.

The American Meat Science Association (AMSA) Reciprocal Meat Conference was virtual in 2020, which meant the organization had to rethink how the annual Iron Chef contest could be delivered. AMSA decided with the growing popularity of meal kits during quarantine, the Iron Chef competition would have students create meal kit boxes. Participating UF students, under the instruction of Kylie Philipps, a graduate student in ANS, worked throughout the fall to create a unique meal kit that could be shipped back to the judges for evaluation.

ASMA connected the students with food scientists at Tyson Foods, Inc. to serve as mentors. The scientists worked with Philipps and the team throughout the product development process. The UF Iron Chef team narrowed down their meal idea to a Bibimbap, a traditional Korean dish, using Brahman hump meat as their protein. In January, the students shipped their meal kit to Tyson for evaluation, and their hard work paid off. The UF team won the Iron Chef competition for their creativity, clear execution and quality of their product.

Philipps began thinking about ways to further incorporate product development instruction into course content. The recent retirement of the meats processing instructor posed both a problem and a solution for her idea. She reached out to one of the Tyson food scientists who mentored the team through the contest, Bo Hutto, about the possibility of developing a Processed Products Evaluation course.

"I didn't expect Tyson to want to be involved with that, I just reached out to Bo to see if he thought the way I designed the course would be relevant to the industry," Philipps said. "But he said Tyson would be really interested to be a part of this, and they ended up providing mentorship through the



course as well as product for the students to work with."

The food scientists from Tyson gave lectures on Tuesdays and on Thursdays the students worked with the donated product in a coordinated lab. According to Philipps, Tyson sent roughly 100lbs of beef trim to make hotdogs, close to 50lbs of chicken and all of the breading and batter to make chicken tenders, 40lbs of beef inside rounds to make roast beef, and 30-45lbs of boneless hams to smoke and inject and tumble.

"If you're a food scientist, you don't just create whatever you want in a vacuum," Philipps said. "You have a client who has a request. The scenario we gave the class was that they had to develop a convenience food with high protein that was specifically marketed towards health-conscious millennials."

The students created a chorizo egg bite, chorizo flavored snack stick, and a restructured ham product. They had to make their product twice. The first attempt allowed students to test their process. The final product from the second attempt was shipped to Tyson for official review by food scientists. Philipps hopes if this course is offered in the future, the instructor will continue to engage directly with the industry to create a meaningful, hands-on experience for the students.



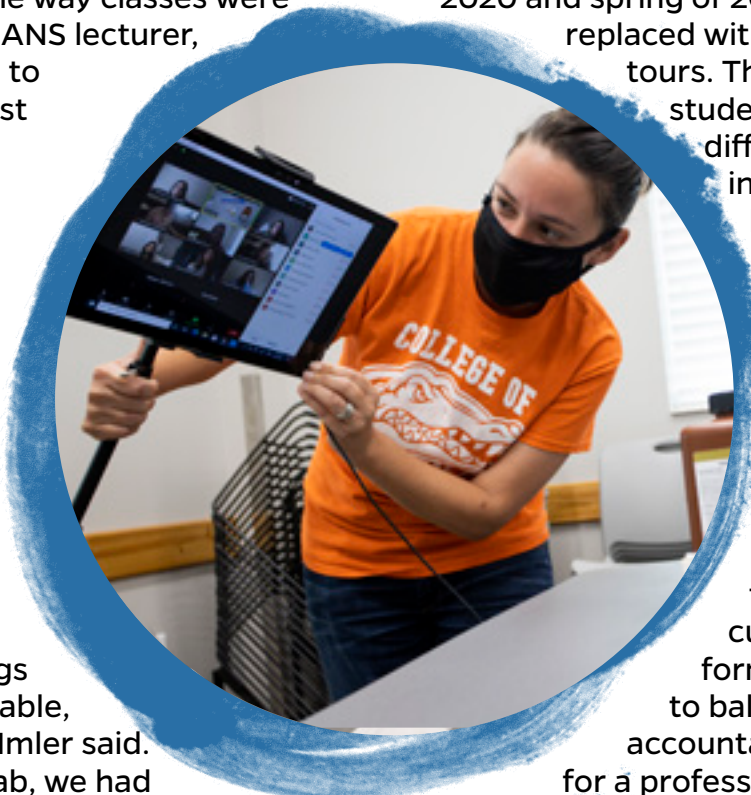
Reflecting on a Year of Teaching Challenges

When UF told students to return home on March 16, 2020, faculty across campus were thrown into virtual teaching. Every educator put in their best effort to be successful last spring not knowing that virtual teaching would persist another four semesters. This change required a complete overhaul of the way classes were delivered. Amie Imler, an ANS lecturer, transitioned four courses to an online format. The most challenging of these was taking on the delivery of what should have been a hands-on, interactive experience for the class ANS3006L- Intro to Animal Science Lab, which she teaches with Kyle Mendes.

“Taking hands-on labs and still trying to make them engaging online, we had to find ways to allow students to do things at home that were affordable, and accessible to them,” Imler said. “For our dairy products lab, we had students make butter or ice cream at home if they had that ability, we also had students candle and grade eggs at home.”

Traditionally, the lab class transports students to ANS teaching units so they can see different types of animal operations such as a dairy, horse training facility, beef cattle chute, meat processing center and swine barns. As many students remained at home through the fall of 2020 and spring of 2021, these lab trips were replaced with 360° virtual walking tours. The tours allowed virtual students to “explore” the different teaching units and interact with recorded lecture videos and pop-ups included in the tour. “You had to think of different ways to do everything, and you had to provide a lot of grace to students who needed it,” Imler said. “I think that was as challenging, if not more challenging, than trying to move curriculum into a virtual format because you’re trying to balance holding the students accountable so they’re well-trained for a professional setting, but at the same time trying to recognize that we’re all just trying to figure things out.”

In the fall of 2020 UF began to allow some modified in-person classes again, and ANS was



able to have several classes approved, due to the importance of the hands-on experience to the course curriculum. “Kyle and I were advocates for them, especially in terms of offering in-person experiences when many departments and faculty couldn’t,” Imler said. “Those that do show up in-person really are grateful and are looking for that social experience.”

With the help of student teaching assistants, Imler was able to incorporate her labs into the in the HyFlex model where virtual students attended class alongside a small in-person group. All students participated in the virtual tours and watched recorded videos as pre-lab work. Then they met for the lab session where the discussion was live streamed to the virtual students. The virtual students were able to interact through the Zoom chat feature. Imler found that this pre-lab preparation resulted in students coming to lab

with more background knowledge and asking more meaningful questions than those in her pre-COVID labs.

Imler said a few positive outcomes from this experience have been the necessary innovation in her teaching strategy. It pushed her to try ideas she felt she did not have time to implement before COVID. The pandemic drove her to come up with entirely new ways of delivering her class.

“Virtual labs are not the same experience, but it is certainly much better than what it could have been, and it’s now created material that is going to continue to benefit our future students as well as other learners, and even make the lab experience when we are back to fully in-person so much better,” Imler said.

The videos and tours developed for Imler’s courses have been shared with extension agents and agricultural teachers. They have also helped supplement classes for students who are taking ANS courses at UF Research and Education Centers. Additionally, the tours of the units have been repurposed for the general public to learn more about the animal industry and how the ANS department uses these facilities to fulfill the land grant mission.



ANS Ambassadors are chosen to be student representatives of the Department to promote goodwill within and for the Department, University of Florida and animal agriculture. To connect with the our students, book a tour or learn more about their perspective please contact us at if-svc-ansambassador@mail.ufl.edu.



Predicting Personality with Equine Genetics

Though in many ways the value of a modern horse can be attributed to their physical performance, the horse's athletic ability may still be less significant to a buyer than the horse's personality, or temperament.

While performance and soundness are still important, Samantha Brooks, Associate Professor of Equine Physiology in the UF/IFAS Department of Animal Sciences, asserts that horse owners will often keep a horse around long past his performance days only because he had a dependable personality that made him useful in diverse situations. Whereas a talented horse's value can decline if his temperament makes him difficult to handle or train.

"For the horse, it's easy to argue that temperament is the most valuable economic trait," Brooks said. "We work in very close proximity to our horses, potentially putting ourselves in danger should a horse prove to have an unsuitable temperament."

The Brooks' Equine Genetics Lab partners with Carissa Wickens, Assistant Professor and Extension Equine Specialist in the UF/IFAS Department of Animal Sciences to study the relationship between equine genetics and temperament. Their research utilizes the herd of horses managed by the animal

sciences department, and involves students in undergraduate horse handling courses, to better understand how much of a horse's temperament is due to their genes, and what parts are the result of environment and training.

The Brooks' Lab is currently working on a project that assesses a part of horse temperament called a "spook" response, or how a horse reacts to something they don't understand or that surprises them. This reaction is usually a startled jump sideways or a quick change of direction. In the wild, spooking allows a horse to flee predators and escape environmental threats. Around humans, this response can sometimes be dangerous.

In the study, each horse is prepared for the experiment by learning to be comfortable in a training pen and to walk on their own towards a bucket of feed. Students are critical at this stage, as they help each horse learn these tasks during their class-time training sessions. On test day, the horse is surprised with a colorful umbrella right next to their bucket of feed, eliciting a "spook". The horse's responses are recorded as behavioral data in videos, and physiological data like heart rate from wireless monitors.

After testing the horses at 6 months and 2 years of age, there is enough detail to compare the

response scores to around 500,000 genetic markers across the genome of each horse. These markers help Brooks' team measure how much of the test response can be attributed to genetics, and eventually, once a large enough sample size is collected, will enable them to map the precise locations in the genome containing the genes that modulate this unique aspect of temperament. In preliminary analyses, Ph.D. student Barclay Powell, has highlighted a strong genetic component to the initial fear reflex, or "spook" response. Yet what that horse chooses to do in the moments directly following the spook, is largely the result of training.

"Sure, any horse person who's been around any length of time can show you the literal scars they've acquired as a result of less than ideal horse temperaments," Brooks said. "Bites, kicks, broken bones... it's all there. I've got my share. As a scientist, you can't ask for a harder trait to measure; the industry does it by time and experience, which is very expensive and imprecise! In our research, I hope to tackle this challenge, providing faster and more accurate measures of what a horse might be best suited to do."

Brooks believes that the results from this research will improve our understanding of startle and fear circuitry in the brain, a process important for handling stress and mental illness in both animals and humans. Additionally, she plans to produce diagnostic tests for heritable

components of behavior in the horse that can be used in the selecting and breeding horses for a variety of tasks. Ultimately, improving the suitability of our horses will benefit the future success and safety of the horse industry.

Brooks has worked with Assistant Professors in the UF/IFAS Department of Animal Sciences; Carissa Wickens, and Emily Miller-Cushion; Andreas Keil, Professor of Psychology and Kim Sibille, Associate Professor in the UF Institute on Aging, over the course of this project. Doctoral student, Barclay Powell, has also been heavily involved as well as many undergraduate researchers, graduate students in the Brooks and Wickens labs, and all the students from the Weanling Handling and Horse Psychology and Training classes over the last 7 years.

For more on Samantha Brooks, Ph.D., visit her faculty profile. To learn more about the Brooks Equine Genetics Lab visit their website or find them on Facebook, Find more information about UF Animal Sciences on our website. Stay in touch with us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Photo Captions

1. Dr. Samantha Brooks, Associate Professor of Equine Physiology
2. Photo credit to UF/IFAS Communications Photography Department
3. Young horse "spooks" at a colorful umbrella in a round pen at the UF/IFAS Horse Teaching Unit.

Congratulations

2021 IFAS Superior Accomplishment Awards



Allyson Trimble
Undergraduate Advisor



Brad Dicks
Lead Farm Supervisor



Justin Callaham
Lecturer

Graduate Student Highlights



Kylie Philipps
UF Graduate School Graduate
Student Teaching Award
Jack L. Fry Graduate Student
Teaching Award



Achilles Vieira
Best Dissertation in
Agricultural Systems and
Overall Best Dissertation

Faculty Highlight



Antonio Faciola
Assistant Professor
2020 - 2021 University of Florida &
College of Agricultural and Life Sciences
Undergraduate Faculty Advisor/Mentor of the Year

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

70th Annual Beef Cattle Short Course

The 70th Annual Beef Cattle Short Course was held as a scaled-down virtual event on May 4 - 6, 2021. Each evening the program consisted of two speakers and focused on efficiency and its importance in the beef industry. To view the recordings visit: <http://bit.ly/FLBCSC>

Speakers included:

Randy Blach, CattleFax
Dr. Frank Mitloehner, UC Davis
Dr. Nicholas DiLorenzo, UF/IFAS

Dr. Gordy Carstens, Texas A&M University
Dr. Milton Thomas, Colorado State University
Dr. Larry Kuehn, USDA MARC

2nd Annual UF Brahman Bull Sale

The sale was conducted online by Cattle in Motion running from May 4 - 7, 2021. Bulls from this sale were born in the 2018/2019 calf crop. Students in the Seedstock Management and Marketing course collected all the data and learned about the principles of Seedstock production including selection, feeding and marketing. Fifteen bulls were offered for sale represented a very select group. All of the proceeds from this sale support the Beef Teaching Unit and the UF Brahman Project. For more information, visit: <https://bit.ly/UFBrahman>

32nd Florida Ruminant Nutrition Symposium

The 32nd Annual Florida Ruminant Nutrition Symposium was held as a virtual event from May 12 - 14, 2021. The Symposium is recognized as one of the premier conferences for gathering the latest information about advances in nutrition of dairy and beef cattle. Each year a wide variety of topics focusing primarily on areas pertaining to nutrition of ruminant animals are presented. Participants had the opportunity to hear timely topics and novel ideas that impact how dairy and beef cattle are fed and managed. To learn more visit: <http://bit.ly/FLRNS2021>

Sale in the Swamp

The 2021 Sale in the Swamp was a great success. Thanks to all who bid and took the time to view the horses at the sale preview or through a visit to an afternoon class session. These horses are a culmination of a number of classes from Breeding and Foaling Management through Weanling Handling and on to Horse Psychology and Training and Horse Enterprise Management. A heartfelt appreciation to our stallion sponsors and industry advisors. We are grateful to the investment you make in the future of the horse industry. For more information about the Sale in the Swamp, visit: <http://bit.ly/UFSaleintheSwamp>

Livestock Judging Team

- Team members include: Aubrey Frederick, Chloe Bunyak, Kendal Gill, Morgan Rasnik, Sydney Switzer, Gabby Hernandez and Coach: Kyle Mendes
- 3rd High Team Overall Contest
- 3rd High Team Sheep Market Evaluation
- 3rd High Team Swine Market Evaluation
- 4th High Team Beef Market Evaluation
- 4th High Team Overall Market Evaluation
- 3rd High Team Sheep Breeding Evaluation
- 3rd High Team Swine Breeding Evaluation
- 5th High Team Beef Breeding Evaluation
- 3rd High Team Overall Breeding Evaluation
- 4th High Team Sheep Judging
- 5th High Team Swine Judging
- 5th High Team Beef Judging
- 5th High Team Oral Reasons
- 5th High Team Overall Livestock Judging
- 3rd High Team Overall Sheep
- 3rd High Team Overall Swine
- 5th High Team Overall Beef

Meat Judging Team

- Team members include: Gina Tran, Sierra Nunez, Stephanie Shimer, Cole Hersom, Gabby Allen, Elizabeth Chmielweski and Coach: Kylie Philipps
- Virtual South Plains Contest: 5th Place Overall Team
- Virtual American Royal Contest: 4th Place Overall Team
- Virtual High Plains Contest: 4th Place Overall Team
- **Cole Hersom** received special recognition as the team's *Rachel Hamilton Memorial Award* winner.

Horse Judging Team

- Team members include: Jenna Mason, Taylor Hoerle, Lily York, Micah Green, Andrew Seth Harrison and Coach: Alyssa Ohmstede
- 7th in Halter
- 7th in Performance
- 8th in Reasons
- 8th High Team Overall Contest

Livestock & Meat Evaluation

- Team members include: Gabby Allen, Jacob Lehman, Jarrett Douglas, Joshua Jantz, Holly Pliska and Coach: Chad Carr
- 3rd Team Meat Judging



Awards & Accomplishments

- ANS Assistant Professor **Antonio Faciola** was awarded the 2020-2021 University of Florida Undergraduate Faculty Advisor/Mentor of the Year award.
- ANS Assistant Professor **Antonio Faciola** was also awarded the 2020-2021 CALS Undergraduate Faculty Advisor/Mentor of the Year award.
- ANS Assistant Professor **Tracy Scheffler** was awarded the American Meat Science Association Early Career Achievement Award.
- ANS Professor **Peter J. Hansen** was named a Distinguished Fellow of the Society for the Study of Reproduction.
- ANS Professor **Geoffrey E. Dahl** was named an American Association for the Advancement of Science Fellow.
- ANS Professor **Geoffrey E. Dahl** was awarded the American Dairy Science Association (ADSA) Award of Honor.
- ANS Assistant Professor **Mario Binelli** was named 2020 ANS Mentor of the Year
- ANS Professor **Corwin Nelson** was awarded the ADSA Cargill Animal Nutrition Young Scientist Award.
- UF ranked #5 in the U.S. News & World Report's Best Global Universities for Plant and **Animal Science**.
- ANS graduate student, **Bethany Dado-Senn** was named 2020 ANS PhD Student of the Year.

- ANS graduate student, **Kaitlin Gingerich** was named 2020 ANS Master's Student of the Year.
- Two ANS seniors, **Hannah Child** and **Emily Stump** were recognized as CALS Top 10 Seniors.
- ANS graduate student, **Eliab Estrada-Cortes** was awarded the ADSA Alltech Inc. Graduate Student Paper Publication Award.
- ANS graduate student, **Achilles Vieira-Neto** was awarded the ADSA National Milk Producers Federation Richard M. Hoyt Award.

SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US

We enjoy hearing updates from our alumni!

- Do you have internship or job opportunities for animal sciences students?
- Are you interested in speaking in an undergrad class about your career?
- Would you like to be featured in a **Have you HERD** Alumni Spotlight?

Visit our website to learn how to be involved with the UF/IFAS Department of Animal Sciences!

CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA @UF_ANSCI



Are you passionate about **DAIRY** PRODUCTION?

COMING SOON!

Florida International Dairy Academy

The Florida International Dairy Academy (FIDA) is an online extension education program tailored to advance the knowledge of global dairy herd management and production. FIDA courses taught by our exceptional faculty, in the UF/IFAS Department of Animal Sciences, are developed to take you to the forefront of practical and scientific knowledge in dairy production.

Our program will prepare you for a technology-driven career applied to progressive dairy farms. Students will have access to the latest scientific and technological developments pertaining to all phases of dairy production, including courses in:

- Nutrition
- Reproduction
- Genetics
- Health
- Economics
- Lactation
- Behavior and Welfare
- Forages
- Milk quality
- Facilities

UF IFAS Extension



FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL DAIRY ACADEMY
DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SCIENCES

Learn more at: <https://animal.ufl.edu/FIDA>



FEED THE FUTURE
The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

A new call for research proposals has been launched by the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Livestock Systems. This Request for Applications (RFA) intends to award grants to teams to conduct research in our five target countries of Burkina Faso, Niger, Rwanda, Ethiopia, and Nepal. The first major deadline for applicants is to submit a Concept Note by **July 6, 2021**.

The RFA guidelines are outlined on our website at <https://livestocklab.ifas.ufl.edu/rfa/>. To proceed, potential applicants should closely follow the guidance in the RFA guidelines document titled LSIL RFA 2021 (English) (also available in French). If questions remain, potential applicants may submit them to livestock-lab@ufl.edu no later than **June 15, 2021**.

The answers to all correctly submitted questions will be posted on our website. A key requirement is partnership, as individuals are not eligible to apply. The applying team must include representatives from a target country and a Western country. This partnership model is evident in our previously funded projects for our six target countries in Phase I (2015-2020). In comparison, Phase II (2020-2025) is focused five countries and updated priorities, as explained in the RFA guideline document.

Congratulations Spring 2021 Graduates!



HAVE YOU
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**ANIMAL
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GIVING

Your generous donation to the UF/IFAS Animal Sciences Department will provide support for our students, faculty and staff.

To support ANS, our scholarships and more, visit give.ifas.ufl.edu/animal-sciences-giving/.

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