

# NEWSLETTER

Fall 2024

*Pistol and Pete joined us to help welcome back students at the Animal Science Welcome back BBQ*



## FALL SEMESTER RECAP

Our faculty, staff, and students have been hard at it this semester, working tirelessly to expand our knowledge, meet new people, create meaningful connections, and represent the Department of Animal Science. Through collaborative research, hands-on learning, and professional engagement, we continue to push the boundaries of what we know and contribute to the Animal Science community. Whether it's through innovative projects, outreach programs, or networking opportunities, our team is proud to be part of such a dynamic and impactful environment. We look forward to what the rest of the year brings and the continued growth of our department.

*Our students had the opportunity to hear from some amazing guest speakers and learn about different career opportunities in the industry!*



## OUR DEPARTMENT IN THE COMMUNITY

This semester, our students and faculty proudly represented the Department of Animal Science at several exciting events, including the STEM Carnival, the Homecoming Open House, and the Farm Credit Services Tailgate. At each event, we showcased engaging, hands-on activities that allowed visitors to interact with our department in a fun and educational way. From demonstrating innovative research to offering hands-on learning experiences, we made sure our guests walked away with a deeper understanding of animal science and the work we're passionate about. It was an incredible opportunity to connect with the community and share the exciting things happening in our department!



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# ANSC CLUBS

The Department of Animal Science is home to several student clubs, including Wyoming Collegiate Cattle Association (WCCA), the Food Science Club, and Collegiate Lamb Growers, all of which offer students unique opportunities to engage with various aspects of the animal science industry. This past semester, these clubs have been highly active in the community, expanding their knowledge and gaining valuable hands-on experience. Through volunteer work, industry partnerships, and educational events, they've been able to connect theory with practice, all while making a meaningful impact. We're proud of their dedication and the ways they continue to grow and contribute to the field!



# JUDGING TEAMS

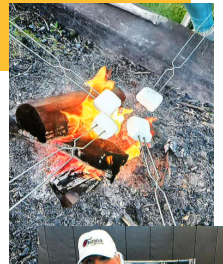
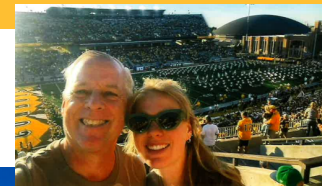
Our 2024 Judging Teams have officially wrapped up their incredibly successful seasons! The hard work, dedication, and commitment put into competing on these teams truly paid off. Each team displayed remarkable skill and teamwork, representing the Department of Animal Science with pride. Pictured are the 2024 Livestock, Meat, and Wool Judging Teams, who excelled in their respective competitions. We couldn't be more proud of their achievements this year, and we look forward to the continued success of our talented students!



# Department Fun

This past semester, our department hosted a Fall Bingo event that brought faculty, staff, and graduate students together for a semester of fun. Participants enjoyed being active outdoors, baking delicious treats, and attending various UW-hosted events. It was a great way to foster connection and camaraderie.

In addition to that, we had a blast decorating for the holidays, with a student-decorated tree that added a personal touch to our festive spirit. It was a wonderful way to celebrate the season and give students a little cheer as they grind during these last couple weeks of the semester!





# GRAD STUDENTS' SPOTLIGHT

“ Growing up in Texas and moving 900 miles to Laramie, Wyoming for graduate school has taught me a lot. One of the biggest lessons I've learned is that you often don't know what you're capable of until you push yourself to try. Traveling across the country seeing the meat judging students improve every contest and being in the lab doing things I didn't know existed gave me perspective on vastly different things. It's easy to doubt your abilities, but you'll never truly know what you can do unless you give it a shot. I've also discovered that friends can be found anywhere—you just have to be open to meeting them. So, don't let fear or nerves keep you from exploring new possibilities. You never know what's out there until you step out of your comfort zone and experience it. Go Pokes!

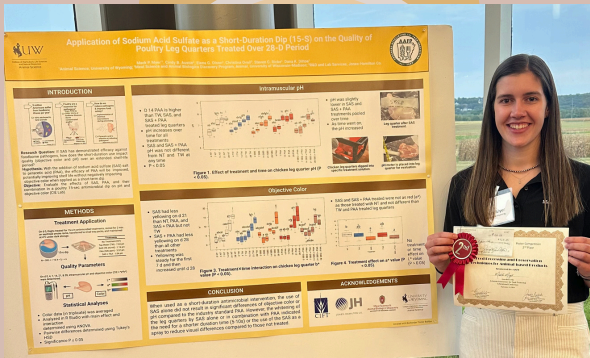
- Jake W. Gillespie ”



*New People!*

Alexander Lab: Martin Akandawen, Courtney Blake  
Pru Lab: Chameera Keerthirathne, Abigail Flesvig  
Bisha Lab: Takim Sarker  
Lake/Rosasco Lab: Blake Fabrizius

## DITTOE LAB HIGHLIGHT



*Over the last week of September, the Dittoe Lab attended a conference for the Arkansas Association for Food Protection in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Here, Dr. Dana Dittoe and Mack Myer listened to industry speakers discuss advances in food safety and new technologies as well as engage with other universities. Additionally, Mack competed in the graduate poster competition and won second place in her division.*



## Scholarship News!



- Olivia Ohm and Nikhil Srivastava received ANSC Dr. Stephen Ford Scholarship Award.
- Led by Olivia Ohm, ASGSA will now offer a \$150 scholarship per member annually, helping graduate students offset costs for conferences and professional development.

# TÊTE-À-TÊTE with ANSC grads

**"Grad School is just a Stepping Stone. Not the End!"**

**What challenges have you faced as a woman in STEM?**

Olivia: The biggest challenge I have faced as a woman in STEM is not being nearly as confident in myself as my peers. I constantly doubt myself and scrutinize my work and work ethic... much more than perhaps my counterparts do.

**What's your vision for an ideal, equitable workplace in STEM?**

Olivia: My ideal workplace is one where diversity is truly embraced, and everyone is supported equally. It's not about where someone is from or their background—it's about whether they are a good candidate who can contribute meaningfully and ethically to science. I think a diverse department creates an environment where ideas can flow freely and where people can learn from each other's different perspectives. It's important that everyone has the support and resources they need to do good work.

**What advice would you give to women in STEM considering graduate school?**

Olivia: -Burnout from undergrad doesn't mean grad school isn't for you. Grad school is different. It's less about exams and more about exploring things that really interest you.

-Build connections. Reach out to professors, mentors, anyone who can help guide you. A lot of people are excited to talk about their work, and you might find a great mentor by simply reaching out.

-Choose strong letter of recommendation writers. When you ask for recommendation letters, make sure the people writing them know you well. They should be able to speak to your strengths in different areas—academically, professionally, and outside of school. A personal letter is far more impactful than a generic one.

-Focus on skills. When you look at grad school programs, think about the skills you'll gain, not just the research topic. Skills like RNA sequencing, microscopy, or data analysis are going to be useful no matter where your career takes you.



**Olivia Ohm, MS Candidate, Block Lab**

**How do you maintain a healthy work-life balance in grad school?**

Olivia: Honestly, it took me a while to figure out, but I've learned to set boundaries. I make sure I don't work on Sundays unless I absolutely have to, and I try to finish work by 5 PM on weekdays. That's helped me avoid burning out. I remind myself that grad school is just one part of my life, not the whole thing. If I focus on staying healthy, that will help me in the long run. Everyone is different, but I think you need to find what works for you and stick with it, without worrying about what others might think.

**Any final thoughts for aspiring grad students?**

Olivia: Grad school is a stepping stone. It's not the end goal. It's a time to learn, to grow, and to develop skills that will serve you throughout your career. Take care of yourself along the way, and don't hesitate to ask for help when you need it. You can do it!

## *Editors of the issue*



**Hailey Rasmussen**



**Nikhil Srivastava**