A Focus on the Future

While serving in the dean's position in an interim capacity over the past several months, I have come to appreciate more than ever the deep roots and breadth of impact of the ABS College in South Dakota and beyond. Students, faculty/staff, alumni, and other stakeholders of the College remain justly proud of past accomplishments and are passionate about the future.

As we make tough decisions to weather the current economic downturn, it is critical that we also make investments that will help ensure a prosperous and sustainable long-term future. With this principle in mind, the ABS College aims to provide its students and other clientele with a balanced combination of teaching, Extension, and research programs that address immediate needs and help prepare for future success.

Enrollments at SDSU and in the ABS College are at all-time highs, despite reduced numbers of high school graduates in the region. Some students are attracted to SDSU by academic programs to prepare for careers in traditional disciplines such as production agriculture, natural resource management, and pre-professional training, while others are interested in opportunities in emerging fields such as biotechnology or entrepreneurial studies.

Extension educational programs range from assisting farmers and ranchers with management decisions, to helping communities build leadership capacity for future success through the Horizons program. Similarly, research activities in the College range from projects designed to provide solutions to immediate needs of agriculture and natural resource management, to experiments aimed at yielding new discoveries and methods to provide safe and sustainable food, fuel, and fiber for a growing future global population.

We are happy to share a few examples of accomplishments and future plans in this issue of *South Dakota Thriving*.

Dean Don Marshall
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ON THE COVER
2009 College National Finals Rodeo barrel racing champion Rachel Tiedeman. See more about the SDSU rodeo team on page 8.
Photo by Eric Landwehr
"There’s much discussion about keeping people in small towns, and economic solutions can help that effort by finding new approaches to agriculture." Pat Garrity, South Dakota State Coordinator, Buy Fresh Buy Local

Over the last few years, more and more people are purchasing sun-kissed vegetables and fruit from farmers markets. More specialty growers are selling at these small, mostly outdoor markets, and more people are doing their shopping outdoors among the crowds.

The South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service plays a key role in developing farmers markets in South Dakota. Specialists and educators provide solutions to obstacles, as well as help growers provide—and shoppers find—safe, tasty alternatives to produce grown thousands of miles away and then shipped into the state.

South Dakota Cooperative Extension Horticulture Specialist Rhoda Burrows says that shoppers at farmers markets are looking for more than just flavor-filled tomatoes and assortments of peppers not available in most local supermarkets. "I seem to get more calls from city and regional economic development groups who see farmers markets as a way to support their local economies," Burrows says. "The number of customers is increasing, but so too are the number of growers. We've gone from seven to nearly thirty markets in South Dakota, though some are still in planning stages."

Often, Burrows says, a specialty grower might start selling at a single market and then expand as their produce becomes more popular. As they begin to understand the market system, and realize what people want, they can increase their reach, she says. "Our role is to give them the tools they need to expand as they see fit."

More towns are joining the farmers market move; in 2008, Mobridge, Arlington, and Estelline announced plans to establish their own spots for vegetable and specialty food sales; in 2009, so did the communities of Clear Lake, Spearfish, Clark, and Howard.

In Huron, where there is a thriving farmers market, the fever for such a market grew from a void, Burrows says. "We held a workshop for vendors and managers in 2006, and that spring, they started one in Huron," she says. "It's done well, growing each year."

Linda Burg, South Dakota Cooperative Extension family and consumer sciences educator from Huron, helped the Huron market get started. "We had about five or six local growers who were meeting together, and they needed a place to sell," Burg says. "Our first sale was in June 2006, and we had nearly sixty people show up to buy."

Before that summer ended, more than 200 people would come out to the Huron market, and more than a dozen vendors were offering their garden-grown vegetables and fruit.

"Our second summer was even busier, and we had to add a Tuesday evening market," says Burg. "In terms of meeting needs, it was a big success, and we started to see more shoppers coming in from around the region."
From east to west and north to south, farmers markets are booming in South Dakota. The South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service has helped grow the number of current and potential farmers markets from seven to nearly thirty in a few short years. The Extension Service offers assistance to produce growers, foodstuff producers, communities, economic development groups, and consumers.

While a majority of the towns in South Dakota featuring farmers markets are in the east, existing markets in Black Hills communities and other western South Dakota areas continue to grow.

Ricky Abrahamson, an Extension horticulture educator based in Rapid City, says the farmers market in the state’s largest West River city is well attended.

"The one here in Rapid City is going strong. It’s held Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, and I’ve been caught in the mini-traffic jams that happen when it’s going on," Abrahamson says. "I think it’s so popular because people want to buy food they know has been grown locally, that is fresh, and is of higher quality than what they can get at a grocery store."

Abrahamson says he feels this change in consumer desire benefits communities, in that folks with smaller acreages can sell some of their produce at the market and make some additional income. Even a backyard garden can produce some profit for a determined grower.

Burrows says markets have long since stopped being the place to get just radishes and heirloom tomatoes. Many vendors at markets offer grass-fed beef, locally raised bison and lamb, and other meats.

Pat Garrity sees the role that Extension takes with farmers markets. As the state coordinator for South Dakota’s Buy Fresh Buy Local chapter, he has interacted with sellers and buyers in Yankton, Vermillion, and other towns and cities across South Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Iowa.

"Marketing expertise and business skills, those are two key areas where Extension is helping improve farmers markets, and helping more specialty producers get their wares sold," says Garrity, who started selling in farmers markets in the early 1980s.

Because nutrition and value are influencing more consumers, Garrity sees the role of Extension specialists and educators growing in the near-term. "They are disseminating the information on healthy whole foods, and how local foods can be better for you than processed ones shipped across the continent," he says. "It’s not just consumer science Extension work, either. The entire Service gives consumers information that influences their shopping habits."

With more work in rural development and collaboration with small towns, South Dakota Cooperative Extension employees can have an impact on rural areas, according to Garrity. "There’s much discussion about keeping people in small towns, and economic solutions can help that effort by finding new approaches to agriculture," he says. "As the focus on health and nutrition increases, so too do opportunities for educating both sides, those who may grow, and those who may buy. That’s where Extension can bridge the gap and fill in those spaces."

As the demand for garden-grown food increases, Burrows says Extension’s role will as well. "We are seeing a wide range of markets start—from the simple to the sophisticated—so we know we can help with training, structure, and expertise," she says. "They are popping up all over the place, so we look forward to helping them as they do."
People make the South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service (CES) an effective organization. In May 2008, when Latif Lighari stepped to the helm of the South Dakota CES as its new director, he did so with a smile.

A year and a half later, after restructuring the Extension mission to meet many challenges, including a $200,000 budget cut due to a weak economy, Lighari is still smiling. "I'm still very excited, and the challenges we face will only make the South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service stronger and more effective," he says. "I have been very pleased with the responses, not just from our staff, but also from the people of the state. People see the value of our programs and the critical role Extension plays in South Dakota."

In reorganizing CES in the face of budget cuts, Lighari developed close relationships with South Dakotans, commodity groups, and other stakeholders. He learned that Extension's partners across the state, including the South Dakota Legislature, want to help make the case for the work CES provides.

Organizing programs to make them more efficient, along with offering distance delivery of and 24-hour access to Extension's information, top the list of new Extension missions Lighari seeks to implement.

"My mission is to enhance the relationships that exist, in order to address needs and to provide educational services to all sides of the equation," says Lighari. "We have the minds, the research, and the expertise to solve many problems, and we know now how much support we have from our partners. They have made the case for us, and they have shown that they want our programs and services."

Lighari took the reins of the South Dakota CES when commodity prices were at record highs, and those prices were matched by high input and fuel costs. However, commodity prices soon fell and the state's budget was reduced. Though Lighari was presented with drastic changes to the bottom line for CES, he stayed focused and did not sound an alarm.

"I knew cuts were happening around the country, but this was not the first time I faced a budget challenge. From my twenty-plus years in Extension, I knew that people support the programs we provide,"
Lighari says, “In some ways, this process has helped me to get a better idea of just how dedicated, professional, and hard-working the people of South Dakota’s CES program truly are.”

Part of the reason Lighari has remained assured is experience. Lighari, who previously served as associate director and associate administrator at the Tennessee State University Cooperative Extension Program in Nashville, leads with an inclusive style that impresses those with whom he interacts.

“In the meetings we have held, Dr. Lighari asked specific questions, and he listened to the responses from South Dakotans, state lawmakers, and members of Extension,” says Don Marshall, acting dean of the College of Agriculture and Biological Sciences at SDSU. “That sort of engaging personality, that willingness to listen, it will help ensure that we make good decisions on how Extension will best serve South Dakota.”

Lighari’s inclusive approach did not start in South Dakota. Clyde Chesney, the administrator of the Tennessee State University Cooperative Extension Program, described Lighari as his right hand and says that Lighari’s many roles were critical to Tennessee’s Extension success. “He could take the lead on anything, but he was very approachable,” Chesney says. “Dr. Lighari would develop solutions to problems, but he did so with an innovative, people-first approach.”

SDSU Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Laurie Nichols says that, in her work with Lighari, she has noticed his personal style and effectiveness. “From stakeholders on campus to the legislative committees, Latif has done a terrific job with the process, bringing a thoughtful, careful perspective,” Nichols says. “He approaches issues with the individuals involved, hearing their opinions and getting their input.”

Lighari’s peers, the leaders of SDSU’s College of Agriculture and Biological Sciences, say his calm demeanor when others worry has been a key to successfully facing challenges. “While Dr. Lighari has great passion for Extension, he has the unique ability to remain on an even keel and make good, responsible decisions without letting emotions cloud his judgment,” Marshall says. “Facing challenges has not stopped him from remaining open, cordial, and professional.”

Lighari says there is a universal nature of Extension: regardless of the state, service and support are preeminent. “Extension time, he’s conscientious, and that speaks loudly of his ability,” she says. “He truly cares, and it’s a delight to work with that sort of person. He is talented both as an administrator and as a communicator.”

In the past, Lighari worked with Extension educators and specialists who people have characteristics that are similar nationwide; they are missionary-like, if you ask me,” he says. “They are helping people help themselves, and they have a dedication that is 24/7. My role is to harness that enthusiasm, to guide it toward the best results.”

Nichols says Lighari’s experienced leadership is apparent. “He knows good processes and how to work through issues, but at the same

“We have the minds, the research, and the expertise to solve many problems, and we know how much support we have from our partners.” Latif Lighari, Director, South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service

created an education program for single parents in urban areas. Even in the face of reorganization and challenging budgets, his successful experience, where Extension improved the lives of the working poor, has Lighari convinced that, in time, his plans for increasing the role of Extension on the American Indian reservations of South Dakota will succeed.

“There are programs we’re just beginning to implement that will help develop the communities across the entire state, including on the reservation,” says Lighari. “I know with the challenges we’ve faced—regardless of what happens—we will face them together to make it through difficult times. That is what I have seen and heard from the people in Extension. They pull together to provide the people of the state what they know they need.”
Look east off of South Dakota Highway 45 as you drive south of Miller and the scenery looks like any part of Hand County. But drive up to the 1,100-acre cow-calf operation, step onto the grounds, and look more closely. When you take a close look at the SDSU Cow Camp Experiment Station, the unique nature of the facility is apparent.

A discerning glimpse of the herd of hybrid Chi-Angus and Chi-Maine cattle shows the true nature of the place. Roger Gerdes, the landowner who headed the operation before it became part of the SDSU system, bred his herd not only for quality meat, but also for temperament. The cows and bulls look strong, healthy, and calm.

Wander further afield at this newest acquisition of the South Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station and, again, the superior nature of the facility shows itself.

Pastures of native prairie grass abound, and where the creek has cut through the land, ponds have formed in some places, but in others the effects of erosion will serve as textbooks for future range science and soils students of South Dakota State University.

Roger and Marcia Gerdes donated their property because they wanted it to provide lessons to students and producers across the state. Extension Range Livestock Production Specialist Eric Mousel, the manager of the facility, says SDSU Cow Camp fits nearly perfectly into the SDSU system of experiment stations.

"It's an excellent complementary component to our purebred herd in Brookings County, and to the largely commercial herds at Cottonwood and Antelope Research Stations," says Mousel. "The facility is in great shape, and we realize no one wants this to work more than Roger (Gerdes) does. He'll be proud of the work we do here, and glad he made this choice."

John Kirby, director of the South Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station, says the addition of the Hand County facility fits a right-place, right-time perspective. "It's neither too small nor too big," says Kirby. "Our goal has always been to complete very specific kinds of research in places where it's applicable, and this adds another that will cover the gamut of terrain in South Dakota.

"The facility will ultimately provide resources for a number of departments, and it will serve research, Extension, and academic needs," says Kirby. "We have an extremely high-quality herd, excellent existing facilities, and the learning starts now, in terms of how
we'll use it and enhance what's there,” he says. “Roger Gerdes put his life into this cow-calf operation, and it gives us a unit that is truly unique.”

Extension Beef Reproduction Specialist George Perry, in conjunction with Mousel, was the first SDSU scientist to begin work at the new research station. Perry praises the facility for several reasons; among them is the unique nature of the cattle-breeding program.

“One project we’re working on looks at uterine pH levels at the time of artificial insemination, and how that affects fertility,” Perry says. “The really nice thing about the herd at this facility is that they have used fall breeding, and it allows us to gather more information year-round.”

Bob Thaler, Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources program leader and Animal and Range Sciences faculty member, says the facility adds resources to a part of the state that needs them. “It’s a resource that helps the whole college, and it features grasses, terrain, and water sources more comparable to eastern South Dakota,” Thaler says. “So the work we do there will pertain more to producers in the area and in the eastern part of the state.”

Animal and Range Sciences Professor Kelly Bruns says that, from a teaching standpoint, the new facility should help his students. “They will see research as it is conducted, firsthand, and that cuts the disconnect,” he says. “The (SDSU) Cow Camp (Research Station) bridges the gap between the classroom and reality.”

The addition of the station in a place where eastern farming meets western ranching entices Sandy Smart, associate professor of range science, as well. “The fact is, we didn’t have a research station with a grazing component in eastern South Dakota, so that is helpful,” he says. “Other states, like North Dakota, have long-term grazing studies in place at facilities like this one, and in time, we hope to marry that idea to the ongoing livestock research that takes place there.”

SDSU’s Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences will also conduct research at the station. David Willis, distinguished professor of fisheries sciences and head of the SDSU Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences, says the opportunities the site provides intrigue his department.

“When a site such as the (SDSU Cow Camp Experiment Station) is available, we can consider that site for use in our various statewide studies of birds, mammals, or fish,” he says. “The choice of site selection, of course, depends on the type of habitat required and the objectives of the study.”

Perry says the camp’s value as an Extension site is noteworthy. “We’ve done hands-on animal work in the past, but only West River, so the potential to have a site on this side of the state to do more of that work, it’s great,” he says. “The location is perfect for many of the Extension demonstrations we’d like to have with producers in the east.”
The sixty South Dakota State University students who comprise the SDSU rodeo team bring that next-ride attitude to the arenas where they compete, even when they are on the biggest stage in the sport.

"I had my five minutes of fame, then the last bull rider left the chute, he did well, and he won the title," says SDSU junior animal sciences major Andrew Coughlin, who took the reserve champion honor in bull riding at the College National Finals Rodeo in Casper, Wyoming, recently. "Nationals was fun—it was exciting. But it's past. The next weekend I was riding different bulls. It was great to get so close, second overall in the whole country. But the next rodeo comes up fast—you move on."

Coughlin, a De Smet native, might seem businesslike, downplaying his success at a major event, but he was not the only SDSU Jackrabbit modestly earning time in a national spotlight.

SDSU senior nursing student and barrel racer Rachel Tiedeman went to Nationals, and during two days of competition against the nation's finest racers, she came into the final run of the event sitting in third place.

"I was in position to win after my short run, but I went early in the group. There were so many racers following me," says Tiedeman, a Rio, Wisconsin, native. "But there were so many more racers to come, and the woman who could beat me, she was riding last."

When her opponent knocked the second barrel, it was over: Tiedeman won. Naturally, Coughlin and other SDSU Rodeo teammates were standing next to her when the celebration began.
"SDSU and the state of South Dakota have strong rodeo roots. The individuals, small businesses, and families that support our program allow the tradition to continue." Brandon Thiesse, SDSU Foundation development director for the College of Agriculture and Biological Sciences

Coughlin says he was thrilled Tiedeman won.

"We were both so nervous when I did my last ride. She was probably more nervous than me, but she was right there, supporting me," says Coughlin. "So I was right next to her when we were waiting to see her results. Then the other rider knocked that barrel, and it was fantastic."

One event, one national champion, and one reserve champion is only the beginning of the SDSU Rodeo story. A quick look at the facts about this national-champion hip-producing team shows they tend to be almost too modest.

First off, there is no other sport that pits the individual against two obstacles—the clock and the stock—like rodeo. Barrel racers like Tiedeman are a great example, but all riders at SDSU develop nearly supernatural connections with their horses. To beat a field of the top forty riders in the U.S., they have to nurture that bond, sometimes over many years.

SDSU Rodeo athletes achieve success, and make those human-horse links, but they do so with little scholarship support. As head coach Skovy explains, the cost of being on the team—$255 for membership in the National Collegiate Rodeo Association—is just one of many costs.

Horse-boarding fees and tack are neither free nor provided. Plus, the allotted scholarship amount for the entire team is less than tuition for two full-time students.

Tiedeman, Coughlin, and the rest of the team are dedicated to winning. But after an event, there's always another rodeo, more practice, and another hours-long road trip to consider. But first they finish their homework.

Rodeo team members complete all the labs, tests, and meetings required of the rest of the SDSU student body. Tiedeman says it's never easy to stay on top of everything.

"It's really hard. You have to take care of your school­ing, and that's always been my No. 1 deal. We miss Thursday and Friday classes often, and nursing is a lot of work; you can't get behind. My professors help me to keep up," she says. "Then we have our horses—you can't just throw them like a basketball into a closet and go do something else. It's like having a kid in some senses, and it gets to be a struggle sometimes, but we make it work."

These extra challenges don't slow the rodeo team in the classroom. The SDSU rodeo team's graduation rate is nearly 97 percent. SDSU Rodeo achieves in the arena, but all the while the team maintains a GPA of nearly 3.0. Last year's women's...
The SDSU rodeo team held a 3.47 GPA, and they kept those good grades while adding to SDSU's trophy case.

"I stress that college comes first—it's only four years, and you can do a lifetime of rodeo," says Skovly, who started rodeo at a young age, like many on the team. "Again, it comes back to focus. A team member's college career is only a short part of their rodeo career, so they have to be students first. They know that."

The list of team accomplishments—and challenges—does not stop at grades and titles. From 1999 to the present, the SDSU rodeo team has doubled in size, and its student-athletes commit to both the saddle and the classroom without a dedicated practice facility on campus. And, since 2004, the team has declined financial support from the U.S. Smokeless Tobacco Company, whose funding had helped students in the past.

Terry McCutcheon served as the SDSU Rodeo head coach for ten years, stepping down just recently. He says the primary reason SDSU refused the tobacco money was to teach youth that cowboys and chewing are not one and the same. "We wanted to start changing that stereotype of the cowboy with a huge dip in his or her mouth," he says. "We made partnerships with tobacco-free groups in South Dakota to help offset the costs of scholarship, travel, and other fees."

SDSU Rodeo also created other avenues to support the team. Brandon Thiesse, SDSU Foundation development director for the College of Agriculture and Biological Sciences, heads up the efforts of SDSU's Steers for State program. The group's cattle sales have offset the financial shortfall the No Thanks, Tobacco choice the University made in 2004.
“Alumni and friends support SDSU Rodeo through Steers for State, a program where they donate animals or money,” Thiesse says. “We finish-feed the donated cattle at our facilities, and then sell them.”

Thiesse says the financial support allows the student-athletes to compete in the sport they love. “SDSU and the state of South Dakota have strong rodeo roots,” he says. “The individuals, small businesses, and families that support our program allow the tradition to continue.”

Skovly knows that the bull and bronco riders, barrel racers, team and calf ropers, steer wrestlers, and bull fighters at SDSU have other demands to face. For one, they often must find local facilities to board horses. (Skovly kept twenty-two horses for seven team members over several years before becoming head coach.) In addition, the team must secure practice times at outside arenas.

“It’s tough to explain it all to people, the trailers, the trucks, the gas, the time, the livestock needs, the dedication and focus needs, but we have sixty-plus on this team, and they understand what it takes,” Skovly says. “Talent alone will not make you a champion. We have leaders and we have focus; we have to, or we’ll slide backwards. It’s not just a bull ride or barrel run. It’s grades, tests, school, everything. You have to have the whole package.”

As one of the largest clubs on the SDSU campus—a campus in the state with the largest group of participants in amateur rodeo in the country—education, excellence, and strong teamwork skills epitomize SDSU Rodeo. With a majority of both the men’s and women’s teams returning in 2010, the seasons to come should hold the potential for more championship hardware for SDSU Rodeo. All involved have set their goals and will be ready for the next test, the next ride, and the next championship run.

Andrew Coughlin prepares for a practice ride at his family’s home in De Smet.
Behind The Scenes

in SDSU’s Anatomy Lab

It’s no secret that South Dakota State University is the destination for students seeking careers in fields like agronomy, animal science, and plant ecology. But more students who aim to be doctors, physical therapists, dentists, and other medical professionals are realizing their paths may run through Brookings.

More specifically, the journey will wind its way through Agricultural Hall’s anatomy lab, where pre-professional students engage in a unique preparatory program. SDSU’s anatomy lab gives true hands-on training to students, using a wealth of anatomical models.

But the laboratory also uses human cadavers, which is an approach that very few universities employ with undergraduate students. Outside of SDSU, in most cases, students do not work with cadavers until they enter medical or dental schools.

According to one of the key faculty members who brought the use of cadavers into the program in 2000, this hands-on, old-school approach reflects the ag-school nature of the University.

“Memorizing information is not knowing it,” says Scott Pedersen, an SDSU biology professor who took over direction of the anatomy lab in 1999. “Plastic models are a good start, but only a basic one. Until you have done it with a real human body, you really don’t know anatomy.”

Pedersen and the other faculty who comprise the program fully embrace the approach. “Clinically, it’s crucial to get this experience, and we have students put on the gloves and get dirty,” he says. “Today, fewer schools use this time-tested method, opting instead to use electronic means that just do not reflect real experience with a human body. But we end up with better-prepared students, ones who can lead in professional programs after leaving SDSU.”

While the anatomy lab and its resources are critical to the program, so too are other facets, including a dedicated group of advisers and a coordinator who works to assist every student preparing for veterinary or medical science professional training.

Greg Heiberger is that coordinator, and he serves as adviser for the pre-health professional students at SDSU. He says the construction of the new Avera Health and Science Center would assist the program.

“It’ll give us a location and a focal point for faculty and healthcare practitioners,” says Heiberger. “In the fall of 2008, we added a health professionals orientation course; that course helps students who need that advice and guidance.”

The orientation course, along with other biology classes, helps SDSU students as they prepare for entrance exams for medical and other professional schools. “Our classes are lab-intensive, and there is no ‘step-around’ option for the degree,” says Heiberger. “We continue to add elements to the program, and it is a strong preparation path for pre-professionals at SDSU.”

Another aspect that makes the program strong is the development of undergraduate leaders, like Amanda Deschamp, of Hermosa. Deschamp, a junior who served as an undergraduate teaching assistant after excelling in the anatomy course, plans to attend medical school. “When I was in the class, I had two excellent interns, and both were super-excited about the program,” says Deschamp. “That got me
Left: Undergraduate teaching assistant Amanda Deschamp, SDSU graduate and Brookings dentist Dr. Anne Harris, anatomy lab coordinator Andy Ellis, and anatomy lab director and SDSU biology professor Scott Pederson in the SDSU anatomy lab.

exited, and they encouraged me to look into the program."

SDSU instructor and anatomy lab coordinator Andy Ellis says opportunities for students like Deschamp are readily available. "We take the cream of the crop from our anatomy classes and then challenge them to step into leadership roles with the next classes coming in," says Ellis. "We have anatomy interns that serve on both teaching teams and dissection teams, and those who thrive in that environment are recruited to serve as undergraduate teaching assistants."

Mike Hildreth, SDSU professor of biology and an adviser for the program, says the successes of SDSU's Colleges of Nursing and Pharmacy led to the improvements. "Our health services programs were so good it created a need for better anatomy training, and we've done that," he says. "The reality is this lab helps serve the community—we want our undergraduates to be ready for professional schools."

The improvements in the ABS Biology Department are bringing human health training at SDSU up to the level of the pre-professional veterinary science program. David Zeman, head of the SDSU Department of Veterinary Science, says the presence of the South Dakota Animal Disease Research and Diagnostic Laboratory on campus, along with an advising corps of practicing DVMs, makes SDSU the first choice for students seeking careers in veterinary science.

"Our students have ample opportunities to work in their field and expand their experiences," says Zeman. "We're in the middle of it—our lab is one of twenty-eight in the nation, and all our advisers are practicing veterinarians, so they can guide and coach students as they go forward."
You have to be at the table to get your livelihood recognized and help make the decisions.” Donna Sharp, SDSU Class of 1971

In 1971, Donna Sharp earned her animal science degree from South Dakota State University. But she had no idea just how deeply into the world of animal science and agriculture she would plunge.

She married her husband, Gary, shortly after graduation, and the couple dove into farming in 1973.

“We fed cattle, raised grains, you name it,” she says. “I’ve done my share of milking over the years, and plenty of field work.”

While Gary and Donna Sharp started farming on his parents’ operation near Bath, they now operate a family farm corporation that includes a dairy, a replacement heifer operation, and a backgrounding feedlot. They also work 1,700 acres of corn, alfalfa, soybeans, and wheat.

Their operation is successful enough to provide for the whole Sharp family, which includes two sons and a daughter, each of whom has joined the family business over the years. Their grandchildren are the fifth generation to live on the same plot, a farm her husband’s grandfather originally operated.

Beyond the farm, Sharp has earned a reputation as an advocate for both the beef and the dairy industries, an advocacy that she says started small.

“It started almost as soon as we started farming, and it was, for me anyway, a way to get involved, to help out,” she says. “All of my family has been locally involved in church, volunteer organizations, and this just seemed to fit.”

Sharp has led efforts with a number of agencies, boards, and councils, including the National Dairy Board, the National Cattlemen’s Beef Promotion and Research Board, the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, the South Dakota Beef Industry Council, the United Dairy Industry Association, the U.S. Dairy Export Council, the National Dairy Council, the Midwest Dairy Association, the American Dairy Association, the Northern Area Dairy
Promoters, and the Associated Milk Producers Inc. In 2005, she was named World Dairy Expo Dairy Woman of the Year, and the following year SDSU named her one of two Eminent Homemakers in South Dakota.

"My education and experiences at SDSU certainly helped me to take those roles," she says. "You have to be at the table to get your livelihood recognized and help make the decisions."

Her journey to SDSU started with a love of animals, like many SDSU students, but it was a push from her parents that moved her from a farm near Mina, a town west of Aberdeen, to Brookings, after her graduation from high school in 1967.

"I was one of those kids who had to be called in for supper because I was out with my horses," says Sharp, reflecting on her childhood. "My mom was a 4-H leader, and I showed hogs, beef, horses. SDSU was my choice, but my mom and dad, they wanted me to go."

Sharp's years at SDSU were unique. She enjoyed a multifaceted college career, dabbling in work-study stints at the South Dakota Animal Disease Research and Diagnostic Laboratory, taking part in seeding projects, and even donning the costume of SDSU mascot "Jack" during a wrestling match.

Her well-rounded college career was a key to successes later in life. With that preparation, she was able to balance the busy realms of children and grandchildren, a dairy operation, and many promotional events in which she took part.

Duane Harms, president of Harms Oil Company in Brookings, knows Donna Sharp's skills with multiple commitments well. He has known Donna and Gary Sharp for twenty-five years as friends and customers.

Harms says listening skills and leadership make Donna Sharp a rarity. "The most striking thing is how she balances her life. She's committed to family, just as she is to the dairy operation," says Harms. "But she extends it to the state and national promotion work, and does civic work as well. She has a great gift to balance all fronts."

Donna Sharp's flair for perseverance also is noteworthy, Harms adds. "The dairy industry has not always been kind to producers, and in tough years she still gave of her time," he says. "Issues are always confronting agriculture, and she is not blind to that. She always has consideration for both sides."

Most days find Sharp either working the books for the family corporation, serving on boards in South Dakota, out on the grounds or in the fields of the operation, or, in many cases, on the road to a national meeting or event. Her SDSU experience was a strong example to her children; all three are graduates of SDSU.

"I travel a bit, and that's the running joke around our family farm, 'Mom's gone again,' but I just could not do it without the whole family, especially without Gary," she says. "But it takes all of us, and all our dedication, to make success, both here in Bath, and around the state."
EXTENSION ENTOMOLOGIST TILMON HONORED
Kelley Tilmon, SDSU Plant Science assistant professor and Extension soybean entomologist, was among those honored with an Excellence in Multi­state Research Award from State Agricultural Experiment Stations. Tilmon and twenty-seven of her fellow researchers received the award for their work on developing and implementing economically and ecologically sustainable management programs for soybean insect pests.

WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES STUDENT RECEIVES AWARDS
Melissa R. Wuellner, a wildlife and fisheries sciences graduate research assistant, received two honors from the American Fisheries Society. Wuellner received the Distinguished Service Award and a J. Frances Allen Scholarship. The Distinguished Service Award is presented to individuals for outstanding contributions of time and energy to special projects or activities with the society. The Allen Scholarship is given to the person judged to be the outstanding female doctoral fisheries student.

SDSU SOIL JUDGING TEAM PLACES AT NATIONALS
The South Dakota State University soil judging team placed eleventh at the National Collegiate Soil Judging contest at Springfield, Mo. Individually, SDSU team member Brad Heyne, senior, Hosmer, placed fourth, and Matt Hansen, freshman, Vale, placed thirtieth. Other team members include Jared Knips, senior, Lakefield, Minnesota; Daniel Clay, senior, Brookings; Darin Kopplin, senior, Tulare; and Nick Hibma, senior, Harris, Iowa. The team was coached by assistant coach and Plant Science graduate research assistant Carrie Werkmeister-Karki, and by head coach Doug Malo, Plant Science distinguished professor.

MOE FAMILY NAMED SDSU 2009 FAMILY OF THE YEAR
SDSU selected the Dennis L. and Hazel J. Moe family as the SDSU 2009 Family of the Year. Dennis Moe, who died in 1998, had a thirty-six-year career at SDSU, including twenty-six years as the head of Ag Engineering. Hazel Moe taught English part-time at SDSU in the 1960s and 1970s.

The Moes have supported SDSU athletics, the South Dakota Art Museum, McCrory Gardens, and the Wellness Center. In addition, the family has a continuing tradition of support in the form of the Dennis L. and Hazel J. Moe Scholarship for Agricultural Engineering, in addition to contributing to the Greater State Fund, the Jackrabbit Guarantee, and many other scholarships and gifts.
In the graduate student contest, Janevski placed first overall, first in yogurt, milk, cheddar cheese, and butter and second in ice cream. For placing first overall, the SDSU team won the Shirley Seas Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship is in memory of Shirley Seas, who coached the SDSU team for twenty-one years. Baer also received the Aurelia and George Weigold Coach of the Year Award.

SDSU SCIENTIST TO COLLABORATE WITH NOBEL PRIZE WINNER

SDSU scientist Alan Young will work with Nobel Prize winner Luc Montagnier on research that may help the global fight against AIDS. Young, an associate professor in both the Department of Biology and Microbiology and the Department of Veterinary Science, has developed cell culture methods for prion diseases such as scrapie and chronic wasting disease. The hope is that Young's cell culture methods can be extended to other chronic diseases. Montagnier won his Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 2008 for his role in discovering the HIV virus.

SDSU MEAT JUDGING TEAM TAKES FIRST PLACE IN NATIONAL COMPETITION

The South Dakota State University meat judging team took first place overall at the Cargill Meat Solutions High Plains Contest in Plainview, Texas. The win was a first for SDSU team at the competition. SDSU's team placed first in reasons, pork judging, and total beef.

The meat judging team includes Emily Evans, Pipestone, Minnesota; Amanda Stade, Jackson, Minnesota; Drew Edleman, Willow Lake; Tyler Grussing, Chamberlain; Matt Altman, Lismore, Minnesota; and Ashley Roelfs, Sanborn, Iowa.

In the individual competition, Edleman placed third-high overall, and Evans finished sixth. Stade was the ninth-place-overall individual scorer, and Grussing placed fifteenth.

In the alternates contest, Altman took eighth place, and Roelfs finished twenty-first.

NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS PRESENTED TO TWELVE SDSU DAIRY SCIENCE STUDENTS

Twelve SDSU Department of Dairy Science students have been named recipients of 2009-10 National Dairy Science and Research Board scholarships. Pictured below, back row from left: Rachel Becker, Eden Valley, Minnesota; Samantha Erickson, Postville, Iowa; Abigail Wirt, Lewiston, Minnesota; Heather Jons, Bonesteel; Nicole Stevens, Pipestone, Minnesota; and Kathryn Norling, Beresford. Front row, from left: Melissa Lax, Sleepy Eye, Minnesota; Brittany Morse, Minneota, Minnesota; Ana Schweer, Watertown; Rachel Patrick, Eatonton, Georgia.; April Johnson, Heron Lake, Minnesota; and Michelle Vander Linden, Edgerton, Minnesota.

Sarah Wells is the team's coach. The assistant coach is Matt Grussing, and Keith Underwood, Extension Meats Specialist, serves as the team's advisor.

ABS FACULTY RECOGNIZED

Carol Johnston, a professor in the Department of Biology and Microbiology, received a 2009 National Wetlands Award. The award was given for her on-the-ground conservation efforts and her long dedication to protecting natural resources.

James Doolittle, a professor of soil chemistry at SDSU and the director of the North Central Regional Sun Grant Center at SDSU, was voted Division A-10 Chair-Elect of the American Society of Agronomy.

Brent Turnipseed, an SDSU plant science professor and the manager of the Seed Testing Laboratory, received the 2009 Anna Lute Award from Front Range Seed Analysts, a Colorado-based group. Turnipseed received the award for his efforts in the field of seed analysis.

SDSU Veterinary Science Professor Christopher Chase was named Veterinarian of the Year by the South Dakota Veterinary Medical Association (SDVMA). Chase received the award for his dedication to the veterinary profession and to SDVMA. Chase has been at SDSU since 1992 and has sought better methods for preventing viral infections in animals by understanding why the animals initially become infected.
2009 EMINENT FARMERS AND HOMEMAKERS

South Dakota State University named farmers from Lake and Haakon counties as South Dakota's Eminent Farmers for 2009, and named homemakers from Brookings and Lake counties as the 2009 Eminent Homemakers.

SDSU chose Ronald Alverson, of Wentworth, and Larry Gabriel, of Quinn, as Eminent Farmers, and honored Rae Jean Gee, of Brookings, and Mildred Millie Gross, of Madison, as Eminent Homemakers.

SDSU began the Eminent Farmer and Homemakers Program in 1927 to express appreciation to rural leaders and innovators who have made differences in their communities. The program is a joint effort of the College of Agriculture and Biological Sciences, the College of Education and Human Sciences, and the South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service.

Ronald Alverson has helped shape South Dakota's corn industry. He is a founder and was president of the South Dakota Corn Growers Association, is a founder of the South Dakota Corn Check-Off Program, and is a founder and president of Dakota Ethanol LLC, South Dakota's first producer-owned ethanol production cooperative. In addition, he farms approximately 2,500 acres with his son Keith and his brother Larry, and he is a member of the SDSU Foundation Council of Trustees.

Alverson graduated from SDSU with a bachelor's degree in agronomy. Alverson and his wife, Sue, have two children, and each member of the family holds a degree from SDSU. In 2003, Alverson and his family were selected as the Sioux Empire Farm Family of the Year.

Larry Gabriel served as the state's secretary of agriculture from 2000–2007. As secretary, he served as an advocate for agricultural research and Cooperative Extension. Gabriel's public service includes terms as Haakon County commissioner, legislator, house majority leader, cabinet secretary, and community volunteer.

As an active advocate of dairy industry in South Dakota, Gabriel worked with SDSU and the Midwest Dairy Institute to encourage the robust expansion of dairy processing. He guided an increase in dairy cattle numbers, and he helped reverse a seventy-year decline in the state's dairy industry.

Gabriel graduated from SDSU with bachelor's degree in agricultural economics. He and his wife, Charlotte, have two children. Gabriel received the SDSU Distinguished Alumni award in 2004.

Rae Jean Gee, of Brookings, gives her time, talent, and leadership skills to the communities in which she has lived, especially Brookings. Over the past thirty-five years, she has taken on many leadership roles in organizations such as Northview Lads and Lassies 4-H club, Brookings Homemakers Club, National Iris Society, and McCrory Gardens.

Gee volunteered to chair the SDSU Festival of Champions, an event honoring academic and athletic accomplishments of more than 200 student-athletes, their parents, and supporters of the Jacks.

Gee graduated with a degree in home economics from the University of Minnesota. She worked for one year at the SDSU Poultry Department and from 1966–2000 at the USDA North Central Agricultural Research Laboratory. Gee and her husband, Dan, have three daughters. Each has earned their bachelor's degree from SDSU.

Mildred Millie Gross, of Madison, has been a leader in the Lake County area for several years, where she has contributed greatly to the Lake County 4-H program by organizing exhibits and serving as a judge in the arts and crafts, clothing, and food divisions. She has never failed to support the youth 4-H'ers at the State Fair.

Along with her husband, Gross has made numerous trips to Brookings to support SDSU athletics, the SDSU Foundation, and alumni events. She also serves her community by delivering Meals on Wheels, teaching Sunday school, and serving meals at The Gathering.

Gross graduated from SDSU in 1955 with a degree in home economics, and then served as a teacher in Lennox and Chester. She and her husband, John, have three children. John Gross was recognized as an Eminent Farmer last year.
INVENTORYING THE BEES OF THE BLACK HILLS

South Dakota State University researchers will inventory native species of bees in the Black Hills region starting in late 2009.

Professor Paul Johnson, an entomologist in SDSU's Department of Plant Science, said biologists know that at least 100 species of bees are found in the region. But there's a possibility that perhaps eighty or more other species could be found there.

"Our knowledge base right now is so poor that we know there are more species out there than have been formally reported," Johnson says. "Very simply, we want to find out what species are there currently, what habitats they occur in, and in the case of those that are regular flower visitors and are pollinators on a regular basis, then to ascertain which flowering plants they visit or which ones they seem to prefer at different times of the year—the focus being on which species are out there."

Knowing what species of bees are there and what plants they are visiting will help biologists better understand the entire Black Hills ecosystem. Johnson says at least 75 to 80 percent of the flowering plants in the Black Hills are dependent on bees or some other species of insect for pollination, or the transfer of pollen from the male flower parts to the female flower parts.

For most meadow and prairie plants, including many trees and shrubs, he adds, bees are the most important pollinators. Bees are also recognized as valuable indicators of ecological health because of the niche they fill in servicing the plants in a region.

"You can use the diversity of the bees in an area as a relatively easy-to-sample proxy for the condition, the overall quality, of those habitats," Johnson says. "If certain bees disappear, it's an indication that something is wrong. Bumblebees, for example, are very sensitive to parasites and diseases. Native bees are particularly sensitive to pesticide use, including herbicides."

RESEARCH

EXPLORING A STAPLE FOOD OF THE PLAINS INDIAN

A South Dakota State University botanist's lifelong fascination with native plants is helping him unearth new knowledge about a staple food of the Plains Indian tribes—the prairie turnip, or Pediomelum esculentum.

Along the way he's doing the groundwork to help gardeners grow this native legume for themselves as a table crop. Professor Neil Reese in SDSU's Department of Biology and Microbiology and his students published an article in the journal Native Plants in 2008 that summarizes the key facts about the plant's history and nutrition, along with detailed information about how to grow the crop.

"We believe demand for this crop will increase as people become familiar with it," says Reese. "Potential consumers include those who are interested in maintaining and perpetuating American Indian traditions, native plant enthusiasts, and those interested in eating foods native to our region."

Reese teaches a course in ethnobotany and first learned about prairie turnips from Joseph Flying-Bye, a Lakota elder on the Standing Rock Reservation, and Dorothy Gill, a Dakota elder on the Lake Traverse Reservation. Gill taught him how Plains Indian peoples harvested, stored, and prepared the prairie turnip. The plant keeps indefinitely when dried and can be rehydrated by simmering for several hours.

Prairie turnips had medicinal uses in some tribes. The Northern Cheyenne used them to treat burns and diarrhea, Reese says. The Blackfeet used them in treating sore throat, gastroenteritis, bowel problems, and colic. In the diet, prairie turnip not only provided protein and fiber, but was also a rich source of iron, zinc, magnesium, and potassium.
ETHANOL COPRODUCT SHOWS PROMISE IN AQUACULTURE DIETS

Ocean fisheries could benefit from research at South Dakota State University that will use new, high-protein coproducts from ethanol production to partially replace fish meal in aquaculture diets.

Professor Michael Brown in SDSU's Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences says the studies are part of SDSU's ongoing exploration of using plant protein in fish feeds. Brown's upcoming studies include diets containing high-protein dried distillers grains with solubles, or DDGS, produced by some corn ethanol plants. He'll include that 42-percent-protein product as one component in the diets of rainbow trout and yellow perch.

To sustain production, fish farmers need to include enough protein in the diets of fish they raise for human consumption, Brown says. Traditionally, the largest share of that protein has come from fish meal derived from ocean species such as menhaden, anchovies, herring, and sardine.

"That's one of the key problems right now—the marine fisheries where we derive most of our fish meals that go into commercial fish feeds have been depleted. Some have been over-harvested, and some are on the border of collapse. Similar to any commodity with low supply and high demand, fish meal prices continue to increase, driving fish production costs higher. For these reasons we need to develop alternatives," Brown says.

Brown, who also includes soybean meal and other soy products in experimental fish diets, says aquaculture feeds could provide a new market for farmers' corn and soybeans.

"Plant proteins from sources such as soybeans and dried distillers grains are readily available. We can replace a certain amount of that fish meal with these plant-based proteins and achieve successful grow-out. That's the bottom line," Brown says.

CONTRIBUTIONS

College of Agriculture & Biological Sciences DEAN'S CLUB
January 1, 2008—September 30, 2009

Dean's club membership consists of alumni and friends who have contributed $500 or more annually to the College of Agricultural and Biological Sciences. Dean's Club members are recognized as devoted friends of the College who make a significant impact on the College's future. Members will be listed in the SDSU Honor Roll and College newsletters. They also receive invitations to special College and University functions, updates from the College dean, and an SDSU Dean's Club car decal.

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Need help identifying a plant?
Want to know what trees and shrubs will thrive in South Dakota’s climate?
Wondering how to establish a new lawn?

If you are starting to make plans for summer landscaping projects, SDSU can help. Your county Extension office has a wide variety of resources to help you make plans and consider options. Reference books and publications specifically designed for South Dakota’s climate are also available from South Dakota State University.

For publications on how to get started on your summer landscaping project, e-mail us at sdsu.bulletinroom@sdstate.edu.