

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Middle Tennessee State University School of Agriculture

Highlights for the 2022–23 Academic Year

By Dr. Jessica Carter, Director

MTSU School of Agriculture faculty, staff, and students had a very productive year. The fall and spring semesters were very busy with several events, including Ag Club Day, Raider Roundup, Little International, National FFA Convention, Tennessee Academy of Science, Regional Dairy Challenge contest, Regional Soils judging contest, International Poultry Expo, horse judging contests, and several events for both the stock horse and equestrian teams!

In addition, our faculty, staff, and students held spring and fall plant sales in the greenhouse and weekly produce sales on campus from the Small Farming Unit, and the MTSU Creamery participated weekly in the Murfreesboro Saturday Market.

We are excited to begin this next academic year. Please check out our website and social media (School of Agriculture Facebook page) for

departmental updates throughout the year! Thank you for supporting our activities, and we hope that you will make plans to visit our campus soon!



Jacqueline Garrett, a student enrolled in PLSO 3600 – Horticulture in Our Lives, helps prepare for the spring plant sale.

History-making MTSU equestrian team wins first Western national championship!

Story by Randy Weiler: <https://mtsunews.com/equestrian-team-national-title-2023/>

For the first time in school history, the **MTSU** equestrian team took home the Western National Championship trophy at the 2023 Intercollegiate Horse Shows Association National Championship. Held in May at Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, five Blue Raider riders qualified as a Western team, and four riders qualified individually through placing top four at semi-finals earlier in the spring. In a down-to-the-wire finish, MTSU edged St. Andrews University and Midway College by one point after MTSU's **Jordan Martin** placed second in Team Open Horsemanship, the last team class of the day. "They came together and exhibited poise, consistency, and humble gratitude under an immense amount of pressure," said **Ariel Higgins**, head coach and director of the equestrian programs. "They were inspiring to watch. They cheered each other on, took fabulous care of the six horses we brought, and had fun every step of the way."

Junior Horse Science major **Sadio Barnes** of Miami said, "All of the long hours and early practices led up to this moment. I am so thankful to be coached by two incredible people, Ariel Higgins and [assistant coach] **Andrea Rego**." Notable achievements included a team beginner class national championship and team open class reserve national championship by Barnes and Martin, a junior Horse Science major from Murfreesboro. Martin received top honors in the Back on Track High Point Western Rider competition, with a field of 20 riders nationwide qualifying for this special event in their regions by competing successfully in both the open reining and horsemanship. Fifth overall in 2022, Martin placed second overall this year, making her the reserve national champion. In addition to qualifying riders, MTSU hauled six horses used in the May 2-7 national competition draw format.



Joined by Intercollegiate Horse Shows Association founder Bob Caccione, left, and with their individual awards and the IHS Western Team Champions trophy, MTSU equestrian team members include, from left, coach Ariel Higgins, Audrey Ferrie, Sadio Barnes, Mackenzie Latimer, Jordan Martin, Jessie Kauffman, and assistant coach Andrea Rego, holding Levi Rego, during closing ceremonies at the event at Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington. (Photo by EQ Media)

(Continued)

Team awards

- Martin was the Team Open Horsemanship reserve national champion and placed fourth in Team Open Reining.
- Barnes was the national champion in Team Beginner Western Horsemanship.
- **Jessie Kauffman**, a junior Nursing major from Woodbury, Tennessee, placed fourth in the Team Rookie Horsemanship.
- **Mackenzie Latimer**, a junior in Dietetics and Horse Science from Millbrook, New York, placed third in the Team Level 1 Horsemanship.
- **Audrey Ferrie**, a junior Business Administration major from Warren, Pennsylvania, placed fourth in the Team Level 2 Horsemanship and third in the Team Ranch Riding.

Individual class awards

- Martin, in addition to Back on Track Reserve Highpoint Western Rider, placed sixth in Individual Open Horsemanship.
- **Madison Westbrook**, a senior Nursing major from Murfreesboro, placed seventh in Individual Level 1 Horsemanship.
- **Louann Braunwalder**, a junior Horse Science and Fermentation Science major from Lascassas, Tennessee, placed third in Individual Level 1 Horsemanship.
- **Hannah Price**, a junior Horse Science major from Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, placed third in Individual Beginner Horsemanship.

To learn more about the MTSU equestrian team, which is part of the Horse Science program, email ariel.higgins@mtsu.edu.

Stock horse team earns reserve national championship

Story by Randy Weiler: <https://mtsunews.com/award-winning-stock-horse-team-2023/>

With virtually a new team of riders, the nationally renowned MTSU stock horse team had impressive showings—including reserve national champion—when they recently wrapped up their season. Trying to defend their national championship from 2022, six Blue Raider riders placed second overall (designated reserve national champion) and earned a number of top individual honors at the annual American Stock Horse Association competition in Sweetwater, Texas. Days earlier, the MTSU team clinched fifth place overall competing against more than 150 riders from more than 14 states at the Hughes Trailer National Intercollegiate Ranch and Stock Horse Association National Championship show in Amarillo, Texas. They competed in ranch trail, ranch riding, cow work, and reining categories.

“This is nearly an entirely new team I took this year,” said coach Andrea Rego. “Most of them have never competed in ranch events prior to coming to MTSU. I am so proud of each of their efforts to rise to the occasion and represent Tennessee so well.

“We could not do this 2,000-mile trip each year without our dedicated students, supportive parents,

and amazing sponsors. The future of this team is bright, and we can’t wait for next year.”

To learn more about the MTSU stock horse team, email Rego at andrea.rego@mtsu.edu.



From left, Middle Tennessee State University stock horse team members Kara Brown, Audrey Ferrie, JoBeth Scarlett, Cory Elks, Kenlee West, and Allyssa Kraker recently earned reserve national champion status and a fifth-place finish at national competitions in Sweetwater and Amarillo, Texas. (Photo by Cait Russell Photography)

Department Retirements and New Hires

Retirements

Two longtime employees of the Farm Laboratory have retired. **Danny Troup** served as the Crops Unit manager for 40 years before his retirement at the end of 2021. **Daniel Boyer** served as the Beef and Swine Unit for 30 years and retired in May 2022.

Both these gentlemen made great contributions to the Farm Laboratory and the School of Agriculture through mentoring of student workers, assisting with class laboratories at the farm, and assisting faculty members with research projects. Thank you, and happy retirement!



Alyssa Logan



Bryan Berry



Makayla Hickman



Megan Jones



Lindsay Rogerson

New Hires

Faculty: **Alyssa Logan** began her position as assistant professor in the MTSU Horse Science program in August 2022. Logan completed her B.S. in Animal Science at the University of Wisconsin–River Falls and her M.S. and Ph.D. in Animal Science at Michigan State University. Her graduate work focused on equine exercise physiology, with research priorities in bone and joint health of young horses, and management and exercise of performance horses. Logan couples this research interest with involvement in the equine industry as a professional in multiple associations and as a judge. She serves as the Horse Judging Team coach, as well as the program coordinator for the M.S. in Horse Science program. She looks forward to continuing to bring research and science into the classroom and involving students in all facets of the equine industry. Logan is a Michigan native and moved to Tennessee with her husband, their two dogs, and two horses, which reside at the Horse Science Center and have been involved in the program for the past year.

Farm Laboratory: The Farm Laboratory staffing has changed in the past year. Two employees moved into new positions: **Jason Tanner** is now serving as manager of the Beef and Swine Units, and **Jared Franklin** is the new manager for Dairy.

Bryan Berry was hired in October 2022 to manage the Crops Unit. He grew up on a beef cattle farm in Lynnville, TN. He graduated from MTSU in 2014, completing a major in Agribusiness and minor in Marketing. He was an active member of the Block and Bridle club while attending MTSU. Prior to his current position, Bryan served as the farm manager for Tenn Spring Farms and served as president of the Giles County Young Farmers and Ranchers Association and Giles County Cattlemen’s Association.

Makayla Hickman was hired in March 2023 to serve as the assistant manager for the Dairy. She grew up on a small dairy (Hickman Valley Farms) in Shelbyville, TN, where she helped raise and show registered Guernseys alongside her dad, uncle, and two younger cousins. Upon graduating from Community High, she chased her love of the dairy industry to the University of Wisconsin–River Falls, where she earned her degree in Dairy Science–Management Option. Her passion for educating people about the industry and her love of dairy cows brought her to MTSU Dairy.

School of Agriculture: **Megan Jones** was hired as the office coordinator in 2021. She has worked at MTSU for 12 years. If you have called or stopped by the Stark Building lately, there’s a good chance that she was there to greet you. She handles multiple tasks

with efficiency and keeps day-to-day operations for the department running smoothly. Jones works at Morning Glory Orchard on the weekends and enjoys spending time with her grandson and her golden-doodle, Teddy, in her spare time.

Lindsay Rogerson serves as the manager of the Fermentation Science Analytical Laboratory at MTSU and is excited to be part of the Fermentation Science program! While running the now three labs (analytical, teaching, and sensory), Rogerson enjoys engaging

with students through research, developmental events and activities, and mentorship.

Originally from Knoxville, she attended the University of Tennessee, where she earned her undergraduate and graduate degrees in Food Science in 2014 and 2016, respectively. In 2017, she obtained a specialized graduate certificate in Food Safety. Rogerson continues her professional education and recently completed a graduate certificate in Data Science from MTSU (2022).

Scholarships and Awards

2022–23 Outstanding Senior Awards

Robert A. Alexander Outstanding

Agribusiness Senior

Rachel Strobeck

Outstanding Animal Science Senior

Gabrielle Harder

Outstanding Fermentation Science Senior

Autumn Ferrell

Sam Paschal Award for Outstanding Horse Science Senior

Austin Aguilera

Theodore C. Bigger Outstanding Plant and Soil Science Senior

Zoey Ward

B.B. Gracy Jr. Outstanding Agriculture Senior

Abigail McConnell

Scholarship Awards

Congratulations to the following students on being awarded a departmental scholarship from the School of Agriculture

Adams Family

Louann Braunwalder, Samantha Lewis, Jordan Komers, Luke Alexander, Myia Trotter, Isabella Parrott, Matthew Moses, Melissa Hessey, and Catalina Valdivia

Agriculture Department

Cristine Bartolini



Rachel Strobeck



Zoey Ward



Gabrielle Harder



Austin Aguilera

Agriculture Endowment

Sterling Rogers, Jessica Whicker, Farrayn Arnold, Stephanie Velazquez-Hernandez, Jordan Jungen, Bianca Cain, and Nicholas Nash

Billie & Burton Towry Endowment

Zach Snoddy

Boxwood Farms

Anna Collins

Campbell Family Endowment

Kyla Pearson

Carolyn Gill Endowment

Monica Braunwalder

Catherine Ellington

Cali Mason

Farm Credit Mid-America

Madison McDonald

Dr. Harley W Fouch Endowment

Sarah Pfenning

Fowler and Ruth Nickle

Katherine Everett

Hayden Memorial Agribusiness

K.J. Mills

Heritage Farm

Harris Smith

Hugh Burrum

Brailey McFarlin, Joseph Fowler, Emily Sappington, and Hannah Hyer

Robert Alexander

Zoe Stone

Robert Kelly Jarrell Memorial

Sydnee Sommers

Tennessee Council of Cooperatives Scholarship

Anna Collins

Thomas Franklin Rowlett Jr. Memorial

Sydney Lively

Tennessee Farmers Cooperative

Regan Black, Cullie Anne Fraker, Kinley Hollingsworth, Kailee Scott, Luke Alexander, and Alexander Caywood

Terrapin Scholarship

Emily Beavers



Zach Snoddy received the Billie & Burton Towry scholarship, presented by Mrs. Linda Towry.

Theodore Bigger

Cheyenne McGlone

Dr. Robert Garrigus Endowment

Savannah Scott, Seth Dearden, Faith Cook, and Lexy Halbert

Joe Jack & Jerry Dement

Rachel Moss, Annie Whitefield, Hannah Harrell, Presley Noland, and Sarina Richards

Dr. Cliff Ricketts Endowment

to be determined

Tennessee Rehabilitation Corporation Scholarships

Gracey Bonner, Kyra Guess, Rebecca Leavy, and John Simpson

Horse Science Scholarships

J.W. Cross – Jordan Martin

Kitty Adams Endowment

Sadio Barnes, Laura Bryan

Mark Moskovitz

Jessica Whicker

Tennessee Horse Council

Hannah Price

Seve Scholarship

Colton Orr

Research Spotlight: MTSU using \$901K-plus USDA/NIFA grant to reach next-gen agriculture leaders

Story by Randy Weiler: <https://mtsunews.com/grant-targets-next-gen-ag-leaders/>

MTSU School of Agriculture faculty are part of a group collectively awarded \$18.1 million by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture to educate and develop tomorrow's agricultural leaders from all communities. MTSU faculty will receive nearly \$901,400 from the USDA's overall \$262.5 million earmarked for higher education institutions to foster the next generation of diverse agricultural professionals nationwide, with MTSU using the funds to develop educational programs and opportunities for high schools and middle schools in the Metro Nashville area and across the state. The grant will attract and engage college students at eligible institutions through research, work experiences, and study abroad experiential learning opportunities.

This project, which is being led by Tennessee State University researchers, will establish an inclusive group of universities from nearly every minority-serving institution category to build and sustain the future workforce in food, agriculture, natural resources, and human sciences. "MTSU's contribution to this project can be characterized by a commitment to ensuring equitable opportunities for racially and ethnically diverse students," said **Chaney Mosley**, MTSU School of Agriculture assistant professor and research grant project co-leader with **Kevin Ragland**.

"Many may not be aware of the vast career opportunities in the USDA and across other sectors of agriculture," Mosley added. "The collective impact of our work will be felt across the state of Tennessee

as we engage learners in problem solving and critical thinking through career exploration activities and work toward removing barriers to accessing postsecondary education." Assistant Professor **Samuel Haruna**, Associate Professor **Song Cui**, and Professor and School of Agriculture Director **Jessica Carter** are MTSU faculty members involved with the grant.



Middle Tennessee State University School of Agriculture and Tennessee STEM Education Center faculty are part of a group of universities from nearly every minority-serving institution category to build and sustain the future workforce in food, agriculture, natural resources, and human sciences. It is part of a five-year, \$901,398 grant MTSU received from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and National Institute of Food and Agriculture to educate and develop tomorrow's agricultural leaders from all communities.

Research Highlight: Area high schoolers dabble with drones, data science at MTSU Digital Agriculture camp

Story by Randy Weiler: <https://mtsunews.com/digital-agriculture-camp-2023/?fbclid=IwAR17p-glqiuRqyX-Mg-eQOGUxnG83HgLd5FsAH9KjJgTXP7PAAdAXX8jm5KQI>

Sixteen Midstate teenagers learned about drones, **data science**, and how it relates to solving real-world problems with precision agriculture during the second **MTSU Digital Agriculture Camp**. High school students such as **Miracle Brown** of Lebanon and **Wilson Israel** of

Brentwood are already involved with agriculture-related programs, pondering ag careers, and considering attending MTSU.

The nearly three-week camp, which ran from May 31 through June 16, saw them not only design, build, and

fly their own drones at the **MTSU Farm** in Lascassas, but also make decisions based on data they collected from the unmanned aircraft. The effort was led by **School of Agriculture** faculty members **Song Cui** and **Chaney Mosley**. **Aerospace Department** Associate Professor **Kevin Corns**, assisted by **Daryl Hickman** and **Cameron Barnes**, guided the ninth- through 11th-grade students through the building and flying of the drones.

“They spent time in the lab where they built these 3D-printed drones,” Corns said. “They get a chance to experience some of the ups and downs of building your own aircraft. We had to work through issues and problems just like the real world. We give them a chance to fly smaller drones. We put them on simulators. It all ties in to data science and precision agriculture.”

MTSU Math and Science Education doctoral student **Carly Altman** of Tifton, Georgia, assisted organizers. She said the campers were split into three groups to solve an agriculture-based problem “using the tools they learned from agriculture, aerospace, and data science to present and solve the problem from data they collected on plants and soils, and, thus, solving their issue.”



High school students attending the recent Middle Tennessee State University Digital Agriculture Camp at the MTSU Farm in Lascassas, Tenn., take turns flying small drones during the second week of the nearly three-week event where they also learned about precision agriculture and data science. (MTSU photo by J. Intintoli)

For more information about the MTSU Digital Agriculture Camp, contact Cui at 615-898-5833 or song.cui@mtsu.edu or Mosley at 615-898-8037 or chaney.mosley@mtsu.edu.

Additional Research Highlights

MTSU CBAS Research Day: Several School of Agriculture students presented research posters during CBAS Scholars Day on March 21, 2023. Congratulations to all our students and their mentors for their efforts in research!

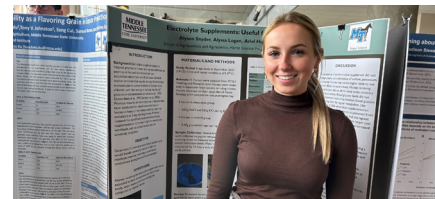
The following students presented research posters:

Horse Science: Janelle Klingamen, Lily Germano, Alyson Snyder, Fallon Marshall, and Hannah Price

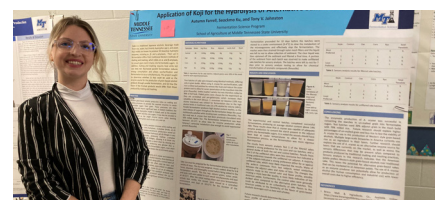
Animal Science: Sydney Scott

Fermentation Science: Anna Arnold, Shayla Sullivan, Summer Miller, Sydney Lively, Weston Williams, Harris Smith, Sterling Rogers, Braley Gentry, Joseph Sydlo, Doofan Eke, Selena Casey, and Yelyzaveta Zuy

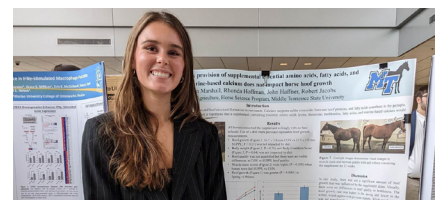
Plant and Soil Science: Ally Shew



Horse Science graduate student
Alyson Snyder



Fermentation Science student
Autumn Farrell



Horse Science major
Fallon Marshall

Tennessee Academy of Science

The Fermentation Science program was very well represented at the Tennessee Academy of Science annual meeting hosted by Tennessee State University on November 18, 2022. Several graduate and undergraduate students presented posters and oral presentations at the meeting. Here are their results:

Autumn Farrell: First place Agriculture Poster

Weston Williams: Second place Agriculture Poster

Elizabeth Zuy: Third place Agriculture Poster AND second place Agriculture Oral Presentation

Thanks to our faculty and staff for mentoring these students! Great job to all!



Equine Science Society Symposium

The biannual symposium of the Equine Science Society was held June 6–9, 2023, in Grapevine, Texas. This symposium provides an opportunity for equine science professionals and students to share research in areas such as exercise physiology, nutrition, reproduction, production and management, genetics, and reproduction. The Horse Science program at Middle Tennessee State University was well represented at this year's symposium. Three students gave oral presentations on research they completed at MTSU in student competitions:

Alyson Snyder – Exercise Science: Graduate Student Competition. "Effects of low-dose electrolyte supplementation to university horses in light to moderate exercise"

Jenelle Klingaman – Production and Management: Graduate Student Competition. "Comparison of physically conditioned and non-conditioned university horses after semester break" (awarded third place in the Production and Management section)

Fallon Marshall – Production and Management: Undergraduate Student Competition. "Twelve-week provision of supplemental essential amino acids, fatty acids, and marine-based calcium does not impact hoof growth"

Abstracts from these presentations are published in the conference proceedings in the Journal of

Equine Veterinary Science: www.sciencedirect.com/journal/journal-of-equine-veterinary-science/vol/124/suppl/C

Horse Science faculty from MTSU also contributed to the symposium. Alyssa Logan, along with her graduate advisor Brian Nielsen, co-led a discussion-based workshop on "Development of Multi-University Equine Graduate Courses." Rhonda Hoffman, treasurer of the Equine Science Society, presented the financial status and budget of the Equine Science Society during the symposium.



Students attending the Equine Science Society Symposium, left to right: Jenelle Klingaman, Fallon Marshall, Emily Jolley, and Alyson Snyder

Agricultural Education Conclave

The second Agricultural Education Conclave was hosted by the Collegiate FFA Chapter and its advisor, Chaney Mosley, on October 18, 2022. All senior teacher candidates received an Agricultural Education pin. We welcomed Ag Ed alumni and McEwen High School agriculture teacher Joe Greene, who served as the keynote speaker. Chaney Mosley provided updates on the Agricultural Education program.



MTSU School of Agriculture alumnus and current McEwen High School agriculture teacher Joe Greene served as the keynote speaker.



Senior Agriculture Education students included Lillian Steed, Alaina Messick, Bailey Lugo, Mia Kuhnle, and Emily Goolsby.

Elementary school students learn about life on a farm during Ag Education Spring Fling

Story by Randy Weiler: <https://mtsunews.com/ag-ed-spring-fling-2023/>

MTSU **School of Agriculture** agritourism classmates were on the receiving end of lots of smiles, questions, and more from nearly 900 schoolchildren attending the annual Agriculture Education Spring Fling in April 2023.

The agritourism students take the lead in putting together the spring fling—a series of activities in the main and a side arena that becomes a Barnyard Playground for the hundreds of youngsters attending from Middle Tennessee Christian, Thurman Francis, Kittrell, Eagleville, and Reeves Rogers. Class instructor Alanna Vaught receives community support that brings live animals including extremely popular baby chicks, a rabbit, dairy and beef cows, a miniature horse, a lamb, and a multiple world grand champion Tennessee walking horse, IB Smokin Joe, brought by 14-year-old twin brothers Tanner and Tucker Johnson from Stonewall Farm in Shelbyville.



Abigail Blythe, right, a senior MTSU Animal Science major, helps Carter Milton, left, 7, and Elizabeth Aldridge, 8, touch the baby chicks on display during the annual Ag Education Spring Fling. (MTSU photo by J. Intintoli)

“Our students and volunteers help change the lives of 870 children,” Vaught said. “We met the day before to talk about the event. I told them how gratifying it was going to be by the end of the day.”

Tractors, honey and beekeeping, the Little Acres section, and cold chocolate milk from the MTSU Creamery were other farm tour stops before they had lunch and headed back to their respective schools. The Rutherford County Farm Bureau, Rutherford County Farmers Co-Op, Hutchinson Farms, and MTSU Block and Bridle club provided



A record 870 youngsters attended the MTSU School of Agriculture Ag Education Spring Fling in the Tennessee Livestock Center. John Deere tractors, live animals, crafts, honey and beekeeping, and more kept the youngsters busy. (MTSU photo by J. Intintoli)

Collegiate FFA



Collegiate FFA enjoyed hosting the Tennessee FFA officers on their venture across the state for the Goodwill Tour. MTSU Collegiate FFA hosted a chili cook-off where MTSU clubs and FFA chapters competed and put their cooking skills to the test. We had a great turnout, hosting around 100 FFA members and advisors!



State FFA Convention – Thirteen Collegiate FFA members, along with Alanna Vaught and graduate student assistants Carly Altman and Rhiannon Overcast, attended the 95th Tennessee FFA Convention.

Collegiate FFA



MTSU Farm Laboratory hosted the Central Regional 4-H Dairy Judging Contest at the farm on July 12, 2023.

MTSU Block and Bridle Club

The MTSU Block and Bridle Club had a busy and successful year. Ten members and their advisor attended the National Block and Bridle Convention in New Orleans in conjunction with the Cattle Industry Convention. During the awards banquet, the club received second place chapter scrapbook and third place chapter activities. Erin Coleman was named Outstanding Senior, Joshua Wade was named second

place Outstanding Junior, and Savannah Scott was named second place Outstanding Sophomore. Advisor Jessica Carter was elected to serve as president of the National Block and Bridle organization for the next two years. Other activities included hosting the annual Preview Steer and Heifer show and Little International Livestock Show for our students and sponsoring the Dairy Challenge team.



Pictured L to R: Regan Black, Kailee Scott, Jessica Carter, Cali Mason, Savannah Scott, Kaitlyne Vogel, Jon Luther, Lexy Halbert, Kayleigh Hogan, Kacie Leonard, and Kylie Hunter.



Pictured L to R: Jessica Carter, Kailee Scott, Regan Black, Savannah Scott, Cali Mason, Meagan Sentell, Jon Luther, and Kylie Hunter.



Students showed MTSU dairy heifers during the annual Little International Livestock show.



Congratulations to our Block and Bridle members who competed at the Southern Region Dairy Challenge contest in North Carolina. Team members included Kacie Leonard, Savannah Scott, and Alana Messick. The team was coached by MTSU dairy manager Jared Franklin. Great job!!

MTSU Horse Judging Team

The horse judging team attended five national intercollegiate contests during the 2022–23 academic year. Top 10 highlights from contests include:

All-American Quarter Horse Congress: Kenna Smith – fifth in limited individual halter, 10th in limited individual overall

Spring Collegiate Horse Judging Contest: Regan Black – ninth in limited division reasons, ninth in limited division performance classes, sixth in limited division halter, ninth in limited division overall; Jessica Whicker – fourth in limited division reasons, fifth in limited division performance, 10th in limited

division overall; Grace Reitingger – third in limited division halter.

The team provided numerous educational opportunities to Tennessee youth and hosted the FFA State and 4-H Sentral Region judging contests at the Tennessee Miller Coliseum. During the summer, the team took advantage of attending and scribing at numerous horse shows to learn from carded judges in unique associations. The team is looking forward to increasing membership and attendance at contests in the 2023–24 academic year!



The team attended the National Reining Horse Association Derby over the summer to watch and practice scoring hundreds of reining runs. Left to right: Regan Black, Jessica Whicker, Lea Witton, Simone Allen.



Four individuals competed at the Spring Collegiate Judging Contest, hosted by the University of Arkansas. The team had numerous top 10 placings, including ninth and 10th overall individuals in the limited division. Left to right: Alyssa Logan (coach), Regan Black, Lea Witton, Grace Reitingger, Jessica Whicker.

MTSU Agriculture organizes daylong hybrid field day collaboration available to public

Middle Tennessee State University, in partnership with Tennessee Tech University, the University of Tennessee–Martin, and the University of Kentucky, hosted a Food Systems Hybrid Field Day in March 2023. Topics included crop production, food safety, fermented ag products, soil conservation, digital agriculture, agritourism, food sensory analysis, suicide prevention in agriculture, American ginseng, and soil fertility.

The effort was coordinated by Chaney Mosley, assistant professor in Agriculture Education in the



MTSU School of Agriculture Associate Professor Song Cui uses a DJI S-1000-plus drone and multispectral camera to monitor bioenergy crop production (switchgrass) at the MTSU Farm in Lascassas.

MTSU School of Agriculture and associate director in the Tennessee STEM Education Center. He led the “Suicide Prevention in Agriculture” session.

“I’ve not seen anything like this done, where it’s in-person or hybrid,” Mosley said. “Usually, it’s held for two or three hours at a farm. Having individual sessions that are 30 to 45 minutes long, you do not have to leave work or get out of the house to participate.”

Other participating MTSU faculty included Alanna Vaught (“Agritourism”), Seockmo Ku (“Fermentation, Agriculture, and Human Health”), Samuel Haruna (“Conservation Practices and Soil Health Parameters”), Song Cui (“Digital Agriculture”), Keely O’Brien (“Sensory Analysis of Food and Beverages”), and Ethan Swiggart (“American Ginseng: Farming the Forest”). MTSU alumna Kacey Troup with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture teamed with Vaught in the agritourism discussion.

MTSU Agriculture organizes daylong hybrid field day collaboration available to public

An MTSU School of Agriculture and MTSU Collegiate FFA annual event bringing 555 high school students to campus has expanded to include multiple University departments—and everyone’s noticing a trend of more young women attending the event with its underlying goal: recruiting future Blue Raiders. MTSU Ag faculty and students, along with several campus partners, recently conducted the fifth Raider Roundup, featuring 20-plus activities for students from east, middle, and west Tennessee during their field trips to the Tennessee Livestock Center and other facilities. The Sept. 21 event was sponsored by MT Engage, which enhances students’ academic involvement in part with service learning and other extra- and co-curricular activities, and hosted by the MTSU chapter of Collegiate FFA. Activities included demonstrations of veterinary science, dairy cattle and horse evaluations, land and meats evaluations, and floriculture. The latter group had to name 50 plants in 30-second intervals.

“What makes this experience different is that students are placed in smaller groups, and they have an opportunity to interact with MTSU faculty to learn about academic programs, and they also get interaction with multiple current MTSU students,” said Assistant Agriculture Professor Chaney Mosley, the event’s coordinator. Campus partners from MTSU’s Data Science program, Department of Mathematical Sciences, MTeach, and the School of Concrete and Construction Management also led workshops with the Ag School, and the Tennessee STEM Education



The MTSU School of Agriculture’s fifth annual Raider Roundup brought 555 high school students to campus Sept. 21 to help prepare them for state Future Farmers of America competitions. During a two-hour visit, MTSU faculty, staff and students helped teach their young guests about agriculture mechanics, agronomy, dairy judging, equine science, veterinary science, floriculture, farm business management, and livestock, meats, poultry, and soil evaluation. (MTSU photo by J. Intintoli)

during the event. From a drawing before the guests headed home, four received \$500 scholarships. Recipients included William Farris of Franklin County High School in Winchester, Mikayla Ramsey of McGavock High School in Nashville, D.J. Moore of Cannon County High School in Woodbury, and Emma Baxter of Riverdale High School in Murfreesboro. Numerous students also received plaques for winning or placing in contests held with each of the activities. Participating schools included McEwen, Culleoka, Green Hill, Livingston, Giles County, Lincoln County, Cascade, Mt. Juliet Christian, Lebanon, Sequatchie County, Greenbrier, and Jo Byrns high schools. Ruthersford County also was represented by Eagleville, Rockvale, Blackman, LaVergne, Oakland, Siegel, and Stewarts Creek high schools.



Students enjoy petting Eskie, an American Eskimo dog owned by Emma Penston, daughter of Casey Penston, right, of the Tennessee STEM Education Center at MTSU, as they complete an assignment on pet nutrition in the Stark Agriculture Center during the fifth annual MTSU School of Agriculture Raider Roundup.

