



## A WORD FROM THE FRONT OFFICE

As you read through this edition of our newsletter, you will see some very good news for the department as well as items about faculty, students, and alumni. Since we have moved our newsletter to the spring/summer period, I am reminded of the recent graduation exercises that came off as usual, "It never rains on Cornell Graduation." Our celebration for graduating seniors in Animal Science was held in the Livestock Pavilion. More than 700 family and graduates were in attendance for the distribution of diplomas this year. Since the past newsletter, here are numbers for graduates of Animal Science:

- January 2010 - 31
- May 2010 - 102
- January 2011 - 18
- May 2011 - 110

The most recent national rankings of Graduate Programs were announced in September 2010. The Cornell University Department of Animal Science graduate program is among the top 10 in the nation, according to an extensive study released by the National Research Council. Based on surveys of faculty from 61 peer institutions, the department's graduate program received rankings between 2 and

13 on 20 key variables. It received particularly high scores for the quality and productivity of its faculty, based on their awards and the frequency of their publications and citations. Its students were also recognized for their scholarship, with GRE scores that were among the top in the nation.

According to the data collected from peer surveys (S-rankings), 12 CALS programs placed among the top 20, and 7 among the top 10:

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Animal Science, Applied Economics and Management, Biometry, Communication, Entomology and Food Science (joined Plant Breeding). Cornell's Department of Animal Science ranked behind only two other institutions: University of Wisconsin at Madison and University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Depending on your office or lab location when you were located in Morrison Hall, some of the areas have received a major "facelift!" All the lab animal rooms on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor along with areas on the ground floor (main hallway including previous Animal Breeding areas) and meats section have been renovated for labs and offices for Food Science personnel until a new Stocking Hall is opened (2012). These facilities will return to Animal Science at that time providing much needed upgraded space, especially for laboratory research.

Last November, we were pleased to

welcome our newest faculty member, Dr. Vimal Selvaraj. Read more about him on page 2.

Although faculty numbers in the department have declined over the past 4 years due to retirements, Cornell University has launched a faculty renewal initiative to be more proactive in replacing the large number of expected retirements in the next 10 years (800-1000 of current 1800 faculty). Our next position now open for search is in Dairy Cattle Biology and Management. Soon thereafter we expect to be able to open a new professorship endowed through the generosity of Robert and Anne Everett (see inside story). We are so very appreciative of this gift!!

To all of you, enjoy the summer and let us hear from you.

Sincerely,

WR Butler  
Professor and Chair

## *PROMOTIONS, AWARDS, AND HONORS*

**Dr. Peter Van Soest**, Professor Emeritus, will be awarded The National Dairy Shrine Pioneer Award at the in recognition of his outstanding leadership and significant contributions to the dairy industry over his long career. Former recipients of this award include Robert Foote (1922-2008), C.R. Henderson (1911-1989), Edwin Harrison (1899-1973), and Frank B. Morrison (1887-1958). The National Dairy Shrine was established in 1949 by a group of dairy industry leaders interested in preserving the country's dairy heritage, inspiring future dairy leaders by providing scholarships and promoting the importance of the dairy industry. Each year, the organization honors living or deceased "pioneers" of the dairy industry. Nominated by members of National Dairy Shrine and selected by an anonymous committee, the Pioneer Award recipients are honored at the National Dairy Shrine banquet at World Dairy Expo in October 2011. Then, their portraits are permanently displayed at the National Dairy Shrine Visitors' Center in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin.

**Dr. Van Soest** has also been awarded the first Alltech Excellence in Ruminant Nutrition Award for his groundwork in modern rumen nutrition through his detergent system for fiber analysis. This comprehensive system of feed analysis has been implemented worldwide, transforming the nutritional management of ruminants. The award was presented with a video acceptance speech on May 23, 2011.

**Kristin Gill & Rick Watters, PhD '11**, graduate students, were recognized as Outstanding Teaching Assistants for 2010-2011 by CALS at a recognition luncheon on May 11, 2011.

**Matthew Bull '11, Samuel Fessenden '11, Corey Kayhart '11 and Jason McNamara '11**, with coach Michael Van Amburgh won the highest award of Platinum in the 10th annual Dairy Challenge on April 2, 2011. Each of the undergraduates was presented with a \$200 scholarship award.

**Dr. Dale E. Bauman** received the "Pioneers in Nutrition" Award at the 26th Southwest Nutrition Conference held February 24 - 25, 2011 in Tempe, AZ. The award was in recognition of Bauman's contribution to understanding metabolic regulation in domestic animals. The citation read "These contributions have had far reaching impacts on animal agriculture and have altered our understanding of nutrient utilization in production animals. In particular, they have been foundational to our development and application of new technologies for animal agriculture as well as understanding the basis for continued genetic selection for increased production."

**Dr. Vimal Selvaraj**, Assistant Professor, has been awarded the Lonza 4D Nucleofector Grant Award in January 2011 for "Determination of factors for reprogramming astrocytes to neurons." His research interest is to understand the mechanisms involved in reprogramming of somatic cells into stem cells or into cells of other lineages (transdifferentiation or lineage conversion) and explore their potential for therapeutic applications. The Nucleofector™ Technology has been proven to give superior transfection efficiencies in primary astrocytes and is the method of choice for one of his projects aiming to determine regulatory genes that can induce the efficient transdifferentiation of astrocytes into neurons. The new 4D-Nucleofector™ System allows for higher sample throughput to screen different targets (or combinations of them) by overexpression or knockdown.

**Larry Chase**, Professor, was awarded the "In-House Extension Service Award" from the New York State Association of County Agricultural Agents on December 6, 2010.

**Dave Galton**, Professor, received the Outstanding Faculty Award from the CALS Alumni Association, in a ceremony on November 5, 2010.

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## PROMOTIONS, AWARDS, AND HONORS (CONTINUED)

**PRO-DAIRY** recently received the Award for Outstanding Accomplishments in Extension/Outreach for 2010. These awards recognize a broad range of accomplishments contributing to the realization of the CALS vision: "To be the preeminent college for research, teaching and extension of agriculture and life sciences, developing leaders to address the global challenges of the 21st century." Staff were honored in a ceremony in November.

**Laurie A. Winkelman, PhD, '11** and **Emiliano Raffrenato, PhD '11** are this year's recipients of the Maynard Award which were presented on October 20, 2010 at the Cornell Nutrition Conference.

**Anne O'Donnell-Megaro, PhD, '10**, Recent PhD graduate, accepted a position as a Congressional Science Fellow in Washington in October 2010. See the official announcement.

The **Animal Science Graduate Field** has been included in the top 10 range of rankings in a comprehensive national study of research doctorate programs sponsored by the National Research Council (NRC), published September 28, 2010.

**Mike Van Amburgh**, Associate Professor, received the *Dairy Nutrition Research Award* at the recent ADSA meeting in Denver, Colorado on July 15, 2010. The award is sponsored by the American Feed Industry Association. The award recognized Mike for his outstanding research contributions to the dairy industry in the areas of growth and development of dairy replacement animals, ruminant nitrogen use, and modeling feed chemistry and components present in dairy rations using the Cornell Net Carbohydrate and Proteins System, or CNCPS. Mike also received the *Teaching Award in Dairy Production* at the ADSA Meeting in Denver, Colorado. This award is sponsored by Land O'Lakes, Purina Feed LLC and recognizes outstanding ability demonstrated by an undergraduate teacher of dairy science in a university program.

At the same meeting, **Katie Schoenberg '10**, graduate student, won 2nd place in Student Poster Presentation, Production Division for PhD students & **Melanie Soberon**, graduate student, won 3rd place in the Graduate Student Paper Contest (Northeast Section of ADSA/ ASAS) for her presentation on the "Digestive fate of free ferulic acid in lactating dairy cows".

**Breanna Fulper '11, Brett Feldpausch '10, Chad Wall '11 and Shane Reynolds '10**, coached by **Mike Van Amburgh** took home 1 of 4 first place platinum awards from the 9th annual Dairy Challenge on April 14, 2010 Each team member received a \$200 scholarship.

## NEW HIRE

**Dr. Vimal Selvaraj** joined the faculty January 1, 2010 as Assistant Professor of Integrative Animal Physiology. Dr. Selvaraj comes to us from the University of California – Davis where he was a Postdoctoral Associate. His primary research interests include uncovering the molecular mechanisms regulating nuclear reprogramming and cell fate and animal biotechnology applications for improvement of food production. Dr. Selvaraj will contribute to teaching Animal Science 1100, Domestic Animal Biology.

## FACULTY RETIREMENTS

**R. David Smith**, Associate Professor of Animal Science, retired on December 31, 2010 with more than 30 years of service to the Department of Animal Science and CALS Administration.

**GRADUATE DEGREES CONFERRED****2010**

**Mila C. Kundu** (MS) – “Characterization of Two Factors with Opposing Regulatory Actions on Follicle Development in the Hen Ovary: Kit Ligand and Anti-Mullerian Hormone”

**Megan W. Hofherr** (MS) – “The effect of abomasal infusion of histidine and proline on milk composition and mammary amino acid utilization in high producing lactating dairy cows”

**Shuai Li** (MS) - “Functional Characterization of Sel1l and Rfx6 in Pancreatic Development”

**Anne M. O’Donnell-Megaro** (PhD) – “Milk fatty acids: Retail milk fat composition and efforts to naturally enhance bioactive fatty acids in milk for the benefit of human health”

**Erin B. Recktenwald** (PhD) – “Urea-N recycling and its utilization by ruminal microbial populations in lactating dairy cattle”

**2011**

**Meghan Filbert** (MS) - "Aflatoxin Contamination in Haitian and Kenyan Peanut Butter"

**Rebecca M. Harman**(MS) - “Reduced signaling through the Hedgehog pathway in the uterine stroma causes deferred implantation and embryonic loss”

**Alejandra Latorre Soto** (PhD) “Epidemiology of *Listeria monocytogenes* on a New York State Dairy Farm”

**Emiliano Raffrenato** (PhD) - “Physical, chemical and kinetic factors associated with fiber digestibility in ruminants and models describing these relationships”

**Katie M. Schoenberg** (PhD) - “Effects of modified insulin resistance on glucose and fatty acid metabolism during late gestation in dairy cattle”

**Lindsey Trevino** (PhD) - “Development and progression of ovarian cancer: Insights from the hen model of the disease”

**Rick Watters** (PhD) - “Milking methodologies, milk fractions and oxytocin profiles in Holstein cows milked three times daily.”

**Jeremy D. Weaver** (PhD) - “Protein engineering and functional genomics approaches to alleviate P and N pollution as a result of animal agriculture”

**Laurie A. Winkelman** (PhD) - “The effects of two forms of slow-release insulin on lactating dairy cow metabolism and milk component production.”

**Jessye Wojtusik** (MS) - “The regulation of anti-Mullerian hormone in the hen”

**DEATHS**

**Robert W. Everett Sr.**, Professor Emeritus of Dairy Cattle Genetics (PhD '66) passed away at home on March 25, 2011. Dr. Everett’s first academic appointment was at Cornell University in 1966. He became a professor in 1982, publishing over 275 scholarly articles, mostly related to the genetics of dairy cattle. Most recently he endowed the **Robert and Anne Everett Professorship of Dairy Cattle Genetics** (see enclosed article on page 6).

**Robert J. Young**, Professor Emeritus of Animal Nutrition (PhD '53) passed away April 19, 2010. Dr. Young was appointed Associate Professor of Animal Nutrition in the Department of Poultry Husbandry at Cornell in 1960. In 1965 Bob was appointed Full Professor of Animal Nutrition and Head of the Department of Poultry Science and the Cornell University Duck Research Laboratory at Eastport, Long Island. He served in this capacity until 1976 when he was asked to assume the chairmanship of the Department of Animal Science, a position which he held until his retirement in 1983.

## NEWS FROM ALUMNI AND FORMER FACULTY

**Lorne J. Fisher '66** writes... "I graduated from Cornell in 1966 with a PhD in animal Science. I worked as a Research Scientist with Research Branch Agriculture Canada from 1965-97, the first 10 years in Ottawa and from 1974-97 at the Pacific Agriculture and Food Research Centre at Agassig B.C. In 1965 I married Mary Graves, a secretary in Cornell's Department of Poultry Science and we have four daughters and three granddaughters. We still live in the Agassig area of B.C. and I am presently the Mayor of the District of Kent, population of 5000. Our email address is [lomar218@tilus.net](mailto:lomar218@tilus.net). My email address at the office is [lfisher@district.kent.bc.ca](mailto:lfisher@district.kent.bc.ca). I enjoy getting the alumni update and we still exchange Christmas cards with Jane and Murray Elliot."



**Paul Noland '51** writes... "I graduated with a PhD in 1951 and retired as Head of the Animal and Poultry Science Department at the University of Arkansas in 1994. In October of 2009 I received the Vasco Nunez e Balboa decoration from President Mario Martinelli of Panama. This is the highest award that the Country of Panama can make to an individual. This award was for over 50 years of various types of activities I have had in Panamanian Agriculture and with their students who attended the University of Arkansas."

**Anita Oberbauer, PhD '85** was appointed Chair of the Department of Animal Science at the University of California at Davis, effective January 1, 2010.

**Eugene Sander, MS '59**, was appointed by the Arizona Board of Regents on June 18, 2011 as interim president of The University of Arizona. Sander has been vice provost and dean of the University of Arizona University of Arizona College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

**Diane Wray-Cahen, PhD '91** writes "After many years away from agriculture, most recently in the Influenza and Emerging Diseases Division of HHS, I joined USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service in Washington DC in June 2010. I'm the Agricultural Science Advisor for Animal Biotechnology in the New Technologies and Production Methods Division of the Office of Scientific and Technical Affairs. It is great to be back in Animal Science."

## ALUMNI UPDATE

Please send us information that we can use in future issues of Graduate Alumni News. You may email your information to Donna Wakeman at [dlb8@cornell.edu](mailto:dlb8@cornell.edu) or mail to:

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## NEWSLETTER GOES GREEN!

In an effort to cut costs and expedite delivery, we are now sending as many newsletters as we can electronically. If you have email, please provide us with your email address so that we may send your newsletter electronically.



Email and address corrections can be emailed to Donna Wakeman at [dlb8@cornell.edu](mailto:dlb8@cornell.edu).

## ENDOWED FACULTY POSITION ESTABLISHED

*Editor's Note: This article appeared in the February 24, 2011 issue of the Chronicle Online, written by Sheri Hall, a freelance writer from Ithaca. The original article can be found at [www.news.cornell.edu/stories/Feb11/EverettGift.html](http://www.news.cornell.edu/stories/Feb11/EverettGift.html)*

Emeritus Professor Robert Everett and his wife Anne have committed \$2 million to endow the Robert and Anne Everett Professorship in Dairy Cattle Genetics, the first endowed position in the Department of Animal Science.

Everett, an emeritus professor of animal science in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, dedicated his career to dairy cattle genetics. He came to Cornell in 1966 as a postdoctoral fellow, and in 1968, was hired as an assistant professor to work in research and extension in dairy cattle genetics.

For more than four decades, Everett made advances in the approaches and principles of dairy cattle breeding that improved the efficiency of milk production, ensuring greater profitability for dairy farm families and more affordable dairy products for consumers.

"As an emeritus member of the faculty, Bob has an invaluable perspective on the importance of endowment funds that support faculty excellence," said Kathryn Boor, the Ronald P. Lynch Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. "In making this wonderful gift, Bob and Anne are helping to ensure the continued intellectual vitality and positive impact of our faculty. We thank them very much for their strategic partnership and generous support."

In making the gift, Everett wanted to support continued advances in dairy cattle genetics, his wife Anne said. "My husband always valued the innovation that occurred at Cornell University, and he was so proud to be part of this special institution," she said. "Endowing a professorship was truly a dream we had for many years. Fulfilling this dream brought Bob great happiness."

One of Everett's notable achievements was creating a valuable management tool for dairy farmers, called the Test Day Model, to use data to document their operations, evaluate management practices and make genetic improvements in their livestock that would improve their farm's performance and profitability.

"Bob was highly regarded and respected as a faculty colleague, collaborator and friend," said W. Ron Butler, professor and chair of the Department of Animal Science. "His research emphasized manipulation and analysis of large data sets from the industry related to dairy bull genetics and management factors affecting improved milk yields."

Everett also taught classes in animal breeding, international agriculture and dairy cattle selection, as well as mentored graduate students and served as an academic adviser to undergraduate students.

Raised on a dairy farm in New Jersey, Everett attended the National Agricultural College, now known as Delaware Valley College in Doylestown, Pa. He received master's and doctorate degrees from Michigan State University. He retired from Cornell in 2008.



Photo Provided

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