

# MTSU School of Agribusiness & Agriscience

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Stories and Pictures by ABAS Faculty, Staff and Students

## ABAS Highlights for 2015

Dr. Jessica Carter, Interim Director  
MTSU School of Agribusiness and Agriscience (ABAS)

### Highlights:

- Dr. Warren Gill stepped down at Director of the School of Agribusiness & Agriscience in July in order to spend more time working on research and teaching. Dr. Jessica Carter is serving as the Interim Director.

- We are pleased with the Master Classroom upgrade in SAG 206 and our building has seen recent im-



provements including fresh paint and other improvements.

- The first scholarship was awarded from the Carolyn Gill Family Endowment this year. This presentation was given at the 2015 Spring Awards banquet to a deserving student.

- Scholarship endowments continue to grow in the School of Agribusiness & Agriscience; we awarded nearly \$50,000 to students for the 2015-16 academic year.

- Our International Program has continued to grow, with classes being taught in Argentina, Canada, Ireland and others bring planned. Dr. Tony Johnston has

led students to Canada, Honduras and Argentina. Dr. Holly Spooner led a group of students to Ireland and also throughout Europe for an AQHA training clinic this past summer.

- New hires include Mr. Nick Waynick, a former High School Vocational Agriculture instructor from Cheatham County. Nick is leading our 2+2 efforts with Columbia State Community College in Lewisburg, TN.

- Dr. Ricketts will be retiring after 41 years of service at MTSU at the end of 2015. However, he will continue to teach part time in 2016. We hope to have a new person hired for his position for the Fall 2016 semester. Thank you Dr. Ricketts for your outstanding accomplishments in the School of ABAS. You have made a tremendous impact on our program and our alumni.

- Dr. Dave Whitaker retired in at the end of 2014 but continues to serve our students by working part-time. Some of his activities include helping coach the horse judging team, hosting horse judging contests & events, and development efforts for continual improvement of the Horse Science program.

- Assistant Dairy Herdsman Ralph Smith is retiring at the end of 2015 after 12 years of service with the Farm Laboratory. Thank you Ralph!



Poinsettias for sale by the Plant & Soil Science Club.

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## Dr. Gill Steps out of Director's Role & intro Classroom, Research

While wanting to transition quietly from the MTSU School of Agribusiness and Agriscience director's role to faculty member, Warren Gill still had to face the music and the accolades.

Campus wide and beyond, dozens of people attended a celebration this week honoring Gill's eight years leading the department as it grew from 300 to nearly 500 undergraduate and graduate students. Gill, 64, is stepping down, moving to the classroom as full professor with tenure and wanting to continue stem cell and "modern genomic research to benefit humans and animals" with Vanderbilt University's James West, Gill said.

"I'm doing it under protest, but already looking forward to it," Gill said before the department's chocolate cake and MTSU chocolate milk event for him Thursday. His last official day as director was Friday. "My time here has been wonderful," he said. "It's had its challenges. When I first got here (fall 2007), we were in a financial bind. There was some talk of selling our new farm, but a lot of alumni, students and friends of the university were asking to keep that. "Not only did President (Sidney) McPhee keep the farm, he gave us \$4.4 million to develop the farm into an outstanding education and research facility." The MTSU Farm and Dairy officially are called the Experiential Learning and Research Center on Guy James Road in Lascassas, Tennessee.

"It gave the community, students and alumni a feeling of ownership not only for the farm, but the whole program," Gill said. At a faculty retreat Gill scheduled his first fall at MTSU, the question came up as to "what would we like to be known for," he recalled. Their agreed-upon response: "Hands-on, but scholastically rigorous." "Not many people knew about our program," said Gill, who came to MTSU after working for the University of Tennessee Extension. "We have an excellent program and great teachers." Interim Director Jessica Carter, his successor beginning Aug. 1, shared how Gill "brought a lot of enthusiasm to the program. Through his networking, he was able to accomplish a lot of things. ... He always has a smile on his face. That helps with department morale. The students notice his positive attitude as well." Ron Cooper (Class of 1964)

has known Gill, a native of Petersburg, Tennessee, in Lincoln County, since joining the MTSU Ag Alumni Board five or six years ago. "He has done a super job," Cooper said. "I'm very impressed with him. He's student-oriented. He's been a bright light since he's been here." A graduate of the University of Tennessee-Knoxville for his bachelor's and master's in animal science and animal nutrition, respectively, and the University of Kentucky (doctorate in animal nutrition), Gill said he plans to teach freshman orientation, beef production and "ag in our lives" for upper-classmen. Tennessee agriculture Commissioner Julius Johnson was among those attending.

In the spring, College of Basic and Applied Sciences Dean Bud Fischer recognized Gill, aerospace chair Ron Ferrara and Department of Military Science professor Joel Miller. All were stepping down from their leadership positions.



MTSU's Warren Gill, left, stepped down as director in the School of Agribusiness and Agriscience on July 31, 2015 and received congratulations from alumnus and graduate student Eric Limbird. Students, faculty and alumni attended a celebration in Dr. Gill's honor in the Stark Agribusiness and Agriscience Center's conference room. (MTSU photo by Randy Weiler)

## They did it! MTSU student relishes role in ‘Southern Fried Fuel’ trip.

March 12, 2015 by [Randy Weiler](#)

**SEATTLE, Wash.** — Ben Black could have spent spring break relaxing in Panama City Beach, Florida. Instead, the Middle Tennessee State University senior criminal justice major chose to spend it bonding with five older men driving 1,850 miles halfway across the country on waste chicken fat and used cooking oil from university dining facilities. In what he calls the trip of a lifetime, Black, 21, said driving across the country was an awesome experience and it included driving a 100-mile portion after midnight March 9. The “Southern Fried Fuel” expedition ended successfully March 10 when MTSU researcher Cliff Ricketts and his five-member team completed the 1,850-mile final leg that finished in Seattle. Ricketts’ research and objective was to show the fuels would be an alternative in the event foreign oil becomes scarce. “The experience has been amazing,” said Black, who lives in Lascassas, Tennessee, will graduate in May and is already admitted to Belmont Law School in Nashville. “It has really shown me that running a vehicle on animal fat is possible. I was a little skeptical at first, but now I know that it can be done. “Don’t get me wrong. It has been a lot of hard work — long nights, breakdowns and setbacks, but it has been worth it to show people that this is a viable fuel and way of powering a vehicle,” he added. With another alternative fuel achievement secured, MTSU professor Cliff Ricketts appreciates Black’s willingness to participate. “I always like helping students discover their own country and the world,” he said. “There is more to college than books and studying. And Ben contributed to our success.”

It marks another career milestone for Ricketts, 66, who is in his 38th year as a member of the School of Agribusiness and Agriscience faculty. “I feel relieved,” he said. “I feel content and happy because we achieved our goal, and satisfied we achieved our goal. Our backup plans were in place and they helped us achieve our goals.” Backup plans included buying a second vehicle, a 1991 Dodge Ram diesel, in case the primary vehicle, a 1981 Volkswagen Rabbit diesel, went out of commission, and buying parts to repair the Rabbit if needed. The VW Rabbit experienced a mechanical issue March 9 and necessitated the need to use the Dodge Ram for the remainder of the trip. Black, who is earning a minor in general agriculture, admits he knew little about operation of the Rabbit, but he helped

when opportunities presented themselves. “I’m still able to help with some mechanical things, handling tools, find parts at parts stores and I’ve been assigned to do all the navigating and ‘googling’ things while on the trip,” he said. “I think my contribution has been in helping the group stay on course and doing various other jobs.” Joining Ricketts and Black on the trip were Terry Young of Woodbury, Tennessee; Mike Sims of Jackson, Michigan; and Ricketts’ son, Paul, who is from Versailles, Kentucky. The expedition began Nov. 8, 2014, in Key West, Florida. It ended Nov. 11 near Kansas City, Missouri, when a transmission issue halted the trip. It resumed March 8 in Grain Valley, Missouri.

— Randy Weiler ([randy.weiler@mtsu.edu](mailto:randy.weiler@mtsu.edu))



Dr. Cliff Ricketts stands next to the 1981 Volkswagen Rabbit diesel pickup truck he drove from Key West, FL, to Seattle, WA.



MTSU professor Cliff Ricketts checks his rear-view mirror while driving on I-90 March 10. In the “Southern Fried Fuel” trip using waste chicken fat and used cooking oil from MTSU dining facilities.

## Undergraduate Research

The following ABAS Students successfully defended an Honor's Thesis project and will graduate with distinction from the Honor's College: **Emily Grosskreutz, Lee Rumble, and Seneca Ewing.**



ABAS student Emily Grosskreutz pictured with her Honor's thesis committee (L to R): Dr. Drew Seig, Emily, Dr. Jessica Carter, and Dr. Donald Snead.

### **Other Student Research News:**

Michelle Shelly, an undergraduate research assistant directed by Dr. Song Cui presented her research paper titled "Germination, growth, and plant nutritive values

of three perennial grasses affected by different nitrogen sources" and won the second place in the College of Basic and Applied Science Scholar's Day.



Caitlin Chase was awarded the URECA grant, which allows students to gain experience conducting undergraduate research in the field of their choice. Mentored by Dr. Downs, Chase conducted a study determining the rumen degradation rate of honey locust seed pods using MTSU's fistulated Holstein steer. Honey locust seed pods are frequently fed to the giraffes at the Nashville Zoo, and are commonly eaten by wild ruminants such as deer. Previously, little research had been conducted on this topic.

## Faculty Research—Dr. Song Cui

Dr. Song Cui, a sustainable agronomist in ABAS, has been awarded two USDA grants of approximately \$400,000 studying both the unmanned aerial system application in precision agriculture and agricultural water-use efficiency issues in Tennessee. Both projects integrate teaching, research, and outreach among multiple agricultural colleges and universities in Tennessee, including the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, the University of Tennessee at Martin, Tennessee Technological University, and the University of Memphis.

Dr. Song Cui has presented a research poster titled "Modeling evapotranspiration of ecosystem respiration of an old world bluestem pasture using probabilistic neural network" at the 2015 American Forage and Grassland Council Annual Conference at St. Louis, MO.

Dr. Song Cui has been invited to participate in a panelist

at the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Space and Missile Symposium-GEOINT: AV's and GEOINT Presentation by GEO Huntsville's Education Working Group talking about UAV application in agriculture at Huntsville, Ala.



Dr. Song Cui is demonstrating the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles in Agriculture and other agronomy projects that he currently has underway.

## 2015-16 ABAS Scholarship Award Recipients

We awarded 35 scholarships totaling nearly **\$48,000**.

Adams Family .....Allison Higgins  
 Adams Family .....Renee Maynard  
 Agriculture Endowment.....Katie Fletcher  
 Agriculture Endowment.....Patrick McKenzie  
 Agriculture Endowment.....Seneca Ewing  
 Agriculture Endowment.....Emily Ann Smith  
 Agriculture Endowment.....Allison Oliver  
 Billie & Burton Towry.....Charish Sams  
 Boxwood Farms.....Lee Rumble  
 Carolyn Gill Endowment.....Ryan Pankey  
 Catherine Ellington.....Emily Snyder  
 Dairy Science Club.....Clarissa Westbrook  
 Dr. Robert Garrigus Endowment.....Alyssa Summar  
 Dr. Jerry Williams Endowment.....Katlyn Currie  
 Fowler and Ruth Nickle.....Ashley Nash  
 Hayden Memorial.....Todd Pirtle  
 Heritage Farm.....Victoria Stottlemeyer  
 Hugh Burrum.....Jordan Greeson  
 Hugh Burrum.....Madeline McDonald  
 Paul Cantrell Agribusiness.....Sarabeth Robertson  
 Robert Alexander.....Abbigail Barlow  
 Robert Jarrell Memorial.....Heath Belk  
 TN Council of Coops .....Cassidy Long  
 TN Farmers Coop.....Keith Youngblood  
 TN Farmers Coop.....Leah Piper  
 TN Farmers Coop.....Kara Lane  
 TN Farmers Coop.....Daniel Stewart  
 Theodore Bigger.....Andrew Thomas  
 Thomas F. Rowlett Jr. Memorial.....Brendan Fenton  
 Towry Endowment.....Cherish Sams

### Scholarships awarded at the Horse Science Banquet:

J.W. Cross Scholarship.....Delaney Rostad  
 Kitty Adams Scholarship.....Wes Plunkett  
 Mark Moskovitz.....Julia Rhyne  
 Tennessee Horse Council.....Ashley Foster

### Incoming Freshman Scholarship Awards:

TN Farmers Coop.....Jordin Hockaday  
 Farm Credit Services.....Jacob Neely  
 Joe Jack & Jerry Dement Scholarship.....Jessica Hickson  
 TN Rehabilitation Corporation.....Sophia Antol  
 TN Rehabilitation Corporation.....Nolan Jolley  
 TN Rehabilitation Corporation.....Brandon Roy  
 TN Rehabilitation Corporation.....Andrew Pryor

### Senior Honor Students:

Joseph Burk	Michaela Jones	Sarah Robertson
Caitlin Chase	Michael Klug	Anna Robinette
Haley Cobb	Jeffrey Mathes	
Emily Grosskreutz	Ashleigh Nash	

## Outstanding Senior Awards

**Robert A. Alexander Outstanding  
 Agribusiness Senior Award**  
 Sara Robertson

**Outstanding Animal Science Senior Award**  
 Sara Anderson

**Sam Paschal Award for  
 Outstanding Horse Science Senior**  
 Jessica Moore

**Theodore C. Bigger Outstanding Plant  
 and Soil Science Senior Award**  
 Michael Klug

**B.B. Gracy, Jr. Outstanding  
 Agriculture Senior Award**  
 Haley Cobb

## ABAS Scholarship Applications Online

Scholarships in the School of Agribusiness & Agriscience are available to students majoring in some phase of Agriculture. Scholarships are awarded on the basis of specific requirements of the donor, academic performance (grade point average), financial need, and student involvement in extracurricular activities. Upper-classman applications **DUE March 1** and Freshman applications **DUE April 1**, annually.

Go to [www.mtsu.edu/abas](http://www.mtsu.edu/abas)



## MTSU Farm Laboratory, Update by Matthew Wade

The Farm Laboratories continues working to improve as the experiential learning arm of the School of Agribusiness & Agriscience.

Some of the most exciting news comes from our Milk Processing Plant. We are very diligently working on the bid for a bottler, or in Industry terms – Filler to begin a new era as we prepare to offer our award winning milk in gallon and pint bottles to the public, and most directly to our campus community. We hope that this will come as good news to all those who for years have asked if they could purchase some of our chocolate milk to take home. Well, that time is just around the corner! We will keep you posted as the time draws near. And, if you would like to be a part of this great venture, we have set up a Foundation account for your tax deductible contribution. Please call Debbie in our front office for more information, 615-898-2523.



Photo Credit: Ardee Chua

We have been able to add some new genetics to our Swine operation through the purchase of two Chester White boars. They are currently working in the herd, and we look forward to farrowing season and the great possibilities these new genetic crosses will bring.

This past spring, we added Craigmere New Market 816Z, an Angus bull, to our herd sire line up. So far he has been at work in our commercial herd. We look forward to a great spring calf crop from him.

Our Crops Unit has very busy with the fall harvest; soybeans and corn are in with wheat coming along to take their place. Some new fields of alfalfa have been added to our forages. We are set to begin our normal winter equipment servicing, because truly spring is just around the corner on the farm.

Our Dairy Unit continues to be a point of interest on any tour calendar. Last year we toured over 1800 visitors through our Dairy and Experiential Learning and Research Center. So far this year we have had over 400 visitors share memorable experiences touring our farm. We have had some challenges with our Dairy this past year, and we are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel for many of them. Thanks to the advice and hard work of the staff, veterinarians, industry and alumni for your continued support.

The Horticulture/Gardens have had another busy year. Faculty and students were able to continue setting up another hoop house. We were able to partner with Concrete Industry Management on a research project which left the garden area with a new compost bin.

Although our Apiary is a part of the Horticulture/Garden Unit, I will mention it here because it has been a very interesting year for this area. We had a very successful Beginner Beekeeping class this past spring with 15 participants. Each person left the class with their own working hives. It has been such a popular class that we will be offering it again the spring. We took a bit of a hit in our hives this year and were unable to produce any honey for sale. But, we are coming back! We have received funds from our Dean along with a small grant which we will use to bolster our current hives by adding as many as 30 hives over the next two years! Hopefully, we will have our very popular honey available again by next summer (2016).

We have had another busy year working with students, faculty and visitors to our farms. There have been many research projects, student studies and classes working on the farm labs. We have been fortunate to be able to work with many other departments on campus on projects as well. I continue to be amazed and humbled by the great support of the community to these Farm Laboratories, so with that I would say stop by for a visit, and see what we are doing for your future!

Check our newest Farm Laboratory Booklet at: [http://www.mtsu.edu/abas/farm\\_labs.php](http://www.mtsu.edu/abas/farm_labs.php)

## Block & Bridle Club



The MTSU Block & Bridle Club had a busy year. Four members participated in the Academic Quadrathlon competition that was hosted by the University of Georgia during the American Society of Animal Science Southern Section meetings held February 1-3, 2015 in Atlanta, Georgia. The students participated in four contests as part of the quadrathlon: written exam, laboratory practicum, quiz bowl and oral presentation. Four members also attended the 95th National Block & Bridle Convention that was hosted by Texas Tech University on October 23-25, 2014 in Lubbock, Texas. Plans are underway for our annual Preview Steer & Heifer Show on February 20, 2016 and MTSU Goat Day Camp in June 2016. Please check the website for updates and events: <http://mtweb.mtsu.edu/bandb>.



Students preparing for the lab practicum in the meats lab at the University of Georgia: (L to R) Emily Grosskreutz, Ariel Herrin, Eryn Rogers, and Sara Anderson.



B&B students packed meals during the National Convention for "Kids against Hunger campaign". Students included (L to R) Kearsten Ham, Trent Faganhttps, Katlyn Currie, and Ashleigh Nash.

### A Note from the Ag Alumni President, Beth Barber Jones

What a great time to be a Blue Raider especially an agriculture affiliated Blue Raider. This past year our agriculture alumni have been representing our University in such diverse manner. From winning national awards for local community awareness to high technologically driven precision farming, our Ag alumni are making a difference in our every so growing global community.

I am excited to announce that in the spring 2016 we will be inducting the inaugural class of the MTSU Hall of Fame. This process will be done mostly in an electronic format due to postage cost. So please try to make sure we have up to date email addresses to insure the success of the nomination process. Also, watch the social media outlets for information as well.



Each one of us has a story to tell the world. Our own agriculture story that can spread the goodness of our industry and how we provide food and fiber to the global community. Being transparent and open minded in discussing our way of life demonstrates pride in our industry. It is also just as important to tell the story of Middle Tennessee State University and the agriculture opportunities that it provides. We are so fortunate to have hands on labs in multiple areas of concentration with faculty and staff that are experts in their field.

## Center of Equine Recovery for Veterans program (CERV)

The Center of Equine Recovery for Veterans (CERV) program began in 2013 as a partnership between the Veterans Recovery Center (VRC) in Murfreesboro and MTSU Horse Science. It all started when MTSU student, Miller Henard volunteered at the VRC as part of her internship. When Brian McSpadden, a recreational therapist at the VRC, learned that Miller rode on the Equestrian Team and was getting her minor in Horse science, he inquired about the possibility of allowing veterans to interact with horses. As a recreational therapist, McSpadden assisted veterans to achieve their goals in overcoming barriers and reengaging in life, and he recognized the benefit horses could bring. Yet McSpadden could not have dreamed his desire would lead to an ongoing collaboration between horse science and the VRC. What began as a conversation in 2013 has grown into a program that is offered for veterans during fall and spring semesters. CERV offers VRC veterans a chance to learn to ride and benefit from interacting with horses while MTSU students gain valuable experience in helping facilitate the sessions—all at minimal cost to both parties.

CERV is run as part of the coursework for both ABAS 4540 and ABAS 4545, courses specific to education for Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT). It is composed of a series of ten two hour sessions in which veterans are educated on horse behavior and horsemanship skills. As veterans are educated on horse behavior and horsemanship skills, they experience benefit that goes deeper. This is because interactions with horses can help improve communication skills because horses are incredibly sensitive animals, communicating primarily by body language.



When a person interacts with a horse, the horse ‘reads’ the person’s body language and then mirrors what it sees. Thus, the horse becomes an instant bio-feedback mechanism, enabling veterans to process their own emotional and physiological state. In this veterans develop

social skills they can then utilize in engaging with other people. Not only do veterans benefit through greater social interaction, but they also experience new levels of hope, trust, self-esteem, and relaxation. For MTSU students, they gain hands on education, and experience the benefit of helping others. This extends to students in ABAS 4040, Equine event and facility management as well. In this class students plan and run a one day ‘fun’ horse show with all proceeds to benefit the CERV program. Several students who were initially introduced to CERV in ABAS 4040 then went on to enroll in EAAT courses in order to stay involved with CERV. Though CERV is still relatively new, the program has been presented at several national conferences, and has been featured on local news and radio shows. As the program grows, the hope is to begin research on the specific benefit of EAAT for veterans. Sarah English, who is a Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH Intl.) Advanced certified therapeutic riding instructor, and the newest horse science instructor, oversees the CERV program. For more information about CERV contact: Sarah.English@mtsu.edu.





## Study Abroad

The MTSU School of Agriscience and Agribusiness (ABAS) continues to offer study abroad courses. Dr. Tony Johnston, agribusiness professor, and his students have made annual trips to Canada, Honduras and Argentina to study Wine Appreciation and International Agriculture. Our students greatly benefit from being taken outside the US to learn about the world-wide nature of agriculture, and based on comments from students who have been able to participate thus far, we can confidently state that these opportunities are life-changing events. ABAS Study Abroad helps us produce the best educated and most competent graduates possible to meet the global challenges we face in Agriculture today. Dr. Johnston is currently traveling in Argentina with a group of ABAS students who are enrolled in “International Agriculture” during the winter break.



Students working with the unmanned aerial vehicle on the Argentina Study Abroad trip.

Horse science professor, Dr. Holly Spooner, and MTSU students embarked on an 18-day journey to explore the Irish Horse Industry. The group had the opportunity to attend race meets, visit top farms and training facilities, attend the International Balmoral Horse Show, train at a jockey school, and ride across the famous Castle Leslie. Students raved about the amazing experience and how it opened their eyes to the international breadth of the industry. Several students are currently lining up internships to return to this beautiful country. Plans are underway for a second trip to Ireland during the Summer 2016 term. Mrs. Sarah English will be teaching the course, “Equine Industry” and leading the study abroad trip.



Dr. Holly Spooner and MTSU students who attended the Equine Industry Study Abroad trip in Ireland.

## Agritourism Course



Spring 2015 Agritourism Class in front of SAG.

The young students came to MTSU from all parts of Rutherford County: La Vergne, Rockvale, Lascassas, Smyrna and Murfreesboro. Nearly 900 youngsters in all, from pre-kindergarten through second-graders, attended. They came for the second MTSU Agricultural Education Spring Fling April 14 in the Tennessee Livestock Center on Greenland Drive. Led by professor Alanna Vaught, her nearly 30-member agritourism class prepared for a project that is both fun and educational for the visiting students, most of who have grown up in the city and are not familiar with farming and agriculture. “It went very well,” said Vaught, whose crew of volunteers — MTSU students, family friends and School of Agribusiness and Agriscience colleagues — helped make it run smoothly.

Eliza McQuaid, 7, a second-grader at Walter Hill School, liked the animals. “My favorite was the horse,” she said, “because it had big eyes and it was cute.” Two of McQuaid’s takeaways from the event were that “animals give us food” and that “if we didn’t have any food, we would die.” Audrey Breneman, 7, a first-grader at Thurman Francis Arts Academy in Smyrna, liked that she and the other children could play in the Barnyard Playground. There they found two straw mazes and other activities. As for farming, Breneman learned that “some fruits grow on trees and some vegetables grow in the ground.” She found the Little Acres area was fun because they could “pick some fruits and vegetables.” Other schools bringing children to the event included La Vergne Lake Elementary; Cedar Grove Elementary in Smyrna; Rockvale Elementary; Lascassas Elementary; and Black-

man Elementary, Homer Pittard Campus School, McFadden School of Excellence and Middle Tennessee Christian School in Murfreesboro.

All of the teachers and schools left with educational materials

- crayons, coloring book, pencils and more.
- Randy Weiler ([Randy.Weiler@mtsu.edu](mailto:Randy.Weiler@mtsu.edu))



MTSU sophomore biology major Tori Broiles hands out harvesting baskets to Rutherford County school children.



MTSU junior animal science major Christy Limbaugh tells the Rutherford County students about nutrition during the second Agricultural Education Spring Fling April 14 in the Tennessee Livestock Center. (MTSU photos by J. Intintoli)



The Fall 2015 Agritourism Class hosted “Breakfast with Santa” on Dec. 5.

Congratulations  
*Anne Brzezicki*



2015 CHA Instructor of the Year

Congratulations to Anne Brzezicki, MTSU Horse Science Professor and Coach of the Equestrian team for being awarded the Certified Horsemanship Association Instructor of the Year Award!



MTSU School of ABAS was well represented at the National FFA Convention in Louisville, KY. Thanks to Dr. Holly Spooner and Andrea Rego (Horse Science graduate student) for promoting our programs at this event!



Clint Palmer is pictured here with some industrial hemp plants that were grown at MTSU as part of a research project.



Members of Sigma Alpha attended the National Convention including Renee Maynard, Madison Duke, Mia Higgins, and Brooke Corbin.



MTSU VP of University Advancement and former State Representative John Hood was on hand to greet guests at the Farm Laboratory Open House in September, 2015.



Photo credit: Ardee Chua

## Make a Gift

Agribusiness/Agriscience – [mtsu.edu/supportag](http://mtsu.edu/supportag)

If you would like to contribute please check out this link. You can donate to one of several different funds or to the general fund for the School of Agribusiness & Agriscience. Thank you for your support!



If you need our assistance or want to send us a note, please contact Dr. Jessica Carter at [jessica.carter@mtsu.edu](mailto:jessica.carter@mtsu.edu) or 615-898-2169.

The Horse Science Center publishes an annual newsletter, too. Check out the news and information about our Horse Science Program at: <http://www.mtsu.edu/programs/horse-science/>

Be sure to check out our Webpage:

<http://www.mtsu.edu/abas/>

Find us on Facebook and Twitter, too!

<https://www.facebook.com/mtsuabas>

<https://twitter.com/MTSUAg>



### **ABAS Faculty**

Dr. Jessica Gentry Carter, Interim Director & Professor of Animal Science

Dr. Warren Gill, Professor of Animal Science

Dr. Warren Anderson, Professor of Soil Science

Mrs. Anne Brzezicki, Instructor, Horsemanship and Equitation

Dr. Song Cui, Assistant Professor of Plant Science

Dr. Kevin Downs, Associate Professor of Animal Science

Mrs. Sarah English, Instructor of Equine Therapy

Dr. Justin Gardner, Associate Professor of Agribusiness

Dr. John Haffner, Veterinarian, Equine Health

Dr. Rhonda Hoffman, Professor of Animal Science (Equine)

Dr. Tony Johnston, Professor of Agribusiness

Dr. Holly Spooner, Clinical Specialist in Equine Health

Dr. Alanna Vaught, Assistant Professor of Agribusiness & Ag. Education

Dr. Nate Phillips, Associate Professor of Horticulture

Mr. Nick Waynick, Instructor of Agribusiness, 2+2 Program Director

Dr. Cliff Ricketts, Professor of Agricultural Education

### **ABAS Advisor**

Mrs. Taylor Moss

### **ABAS Staff**

Mr. Matthew Wade, Director, Farm Laboratories

Mr. Daniel Boyer, Beef & Swine Unit Manager

Mr. Jeremy Carlton, Assistant Horse Barn Manager

Mrs. Renee Dunn, Horse Science Secretary

Mrs. Jessica Schultz, Horse Science Center Barn Manager

Mr. Ralph Smith, Dairy Assistant

Mrs. Debbie Strobel, Executive Aide, School of ABAS

Mr. Jason Tanner, Dairy Manager

Mr. Danny Troup, Crops Unit Manager