

# AG NEWSLETTER

Truman State University Agricultural Science Department

December 2015

## Fall 2015

The fall semester has been filled with excitement in the ag department. We welcomed a new team member to the department and established two new organizations— Animal Agriculture Club and Truman Cattlemen’s Association. Students have been traveling all over for conferences and competitions such as the World Food Prize in Des Moines, Iowa, and the AQHA World Show Judging contest in Oklahoma City. New opportunities are blooming everywhere in the ag department!



Students attend AQHA World Show Judging contest.

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*“Agriculture is our wisest pursuit because it will in the end contribute most to real wealth, good morals, and happiness.”*

*- Thomas Jefferson*

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Truman State University Farm

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# New Faculty Members Join Department

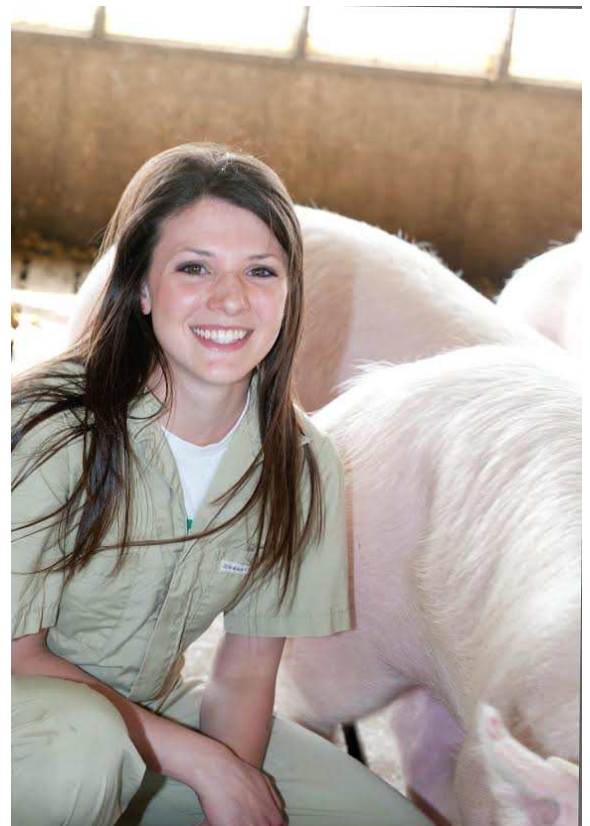


## Dr. Franta Majš

Franta Majš joined the department of Ag Science before fall 2015, and is teaching Soil Science, Environmental Science, and Horticulture. He grew up on a small family farm in Czechoslovakia during times when people used to divide their lives between jobs in coal mines and steelworks, and farming. His free-range childhood in the rainy Beskids Mountains culminated with mandatory military service. After discharge, he enrolled at Mendel University in Brno, where he graduated with B.S. and M.S. degrees in Soil Science and Agroecology, respectively. Youthful curiosity brought him to the United States on a Minnesota Agriculture Student Trainee Program. After gaining hands-on experience in animal (swine) and row crop farming in Eastern North Dakota and Southeastern Minnesota, he graduated with M.S. in Soil Science from the University of Minnesota and a Ph.D. in Environmental Chemistry from the University of Georgia. He has previously taught at Queens University of Charlotte and University of Alaska Fairbanks. Outside of work, he lives and breathes soccer and enjoys swimming, flat water kayaking, hiking, camping, reading fiction and nonfiction, baking bread, dark chocolate, and beer of (nearly) all styles.

## Dr. Jessica Colpoys

Jessie Colpoys will join the faculty in January 2016. Dr. Colpoys grew up on a swine, beef cattle, and row-crop farm in Boone, Iowa. She attended Iowa State University for her Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Science with minors in Biology and Entrepreneurial Studies. She continued at Iowa State University for her PhD in Animal Physiology with an emphasis in Animal Behavior. Dr. Colpoys' PhD research focused on swine behavior, welfare, and physiology in relation to management practices. She is excited to begin research on pigs as well as other livestock and companion animal species at Truman. This spring Dr. Colpoys will be teaching Anatomy and Physiology, Animal Health, and the beef section of Livestock Management. When she isn't teaching or researching Dr. Colpoys enjoys skiing, kayaking, and spending time with her husband, Ken, and her Doberman Pinscher, Sturges.



# TruAgvocates

This semester Dr. Seipel taught a new course called Communicating about Agriculture. Throughout the class, students led in-depth discussions on different issues in agriculture. Students also helped run the [Truman Ag](#) Facebook page learning different social media strategies. To apply some of the knowledge they learned from the course, the class started a blog called [TruAgvocates](#). Selected blog posts can be found at the end of the newsletter. To check out the full blog click [here](#)!



*Dr. Glenn and Vicky Wehner were recently honored at a retirement reception.*

## Best wishes to Dr. Wehner

Dr. Glenn Wehner retired from the Truman State University Agricultural Science Department in December, after 33 years of teaching animal science. Dr. Wehner and his wife, Vicky Wehner, enjoyed a retirement reception on December 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Student Union Building Alumni Room. Thank you Dr. Wehner for all of your time and dedication to the TSU Agriculture Department. You will truly be missed!



**Communicating about Ag Class**



# New Ag Practicum Ventures Launched

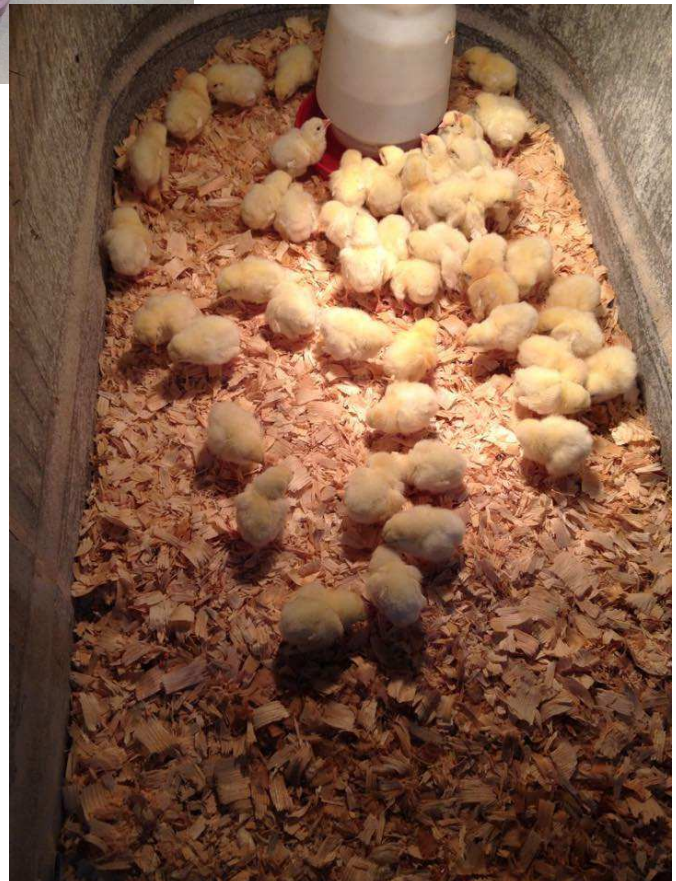
## Soy Bright Candle Company



“It just makes scents!”

Soy Bright Candle Company will be making and selling eco-friendly soy candles. For the holiday's they are offering 5 different scents— Christmas tree, candy cane, gingerbread, sugar cookie, and apple cinnamon. Candles are \$7 each or 3 candles for \$20.

TruBrood will be producing broiler chickens which take 56 days to reach full maturity. Facing some initial difficulties, their first order of 50 chicks was quickly trimmed down to 29 chickens. TruBrood has processed the first flock of chickens and is planning for next semester's flock.



**TruBrood**

The cover crops group is doing research to decide if cover crops are plausible to implement on each of the group members' family farm. The group has already planted cover crops in fields in Iowa, Shelbina, and the University Farm. They took initial soil samples and will look for improvements in the soil from the cover crops.

## Cover Crops

## TRU Ewes

We produce for ewe!

TRU Ewes have 8 ewes and 3 lambs as of now which they will feed out and sell directly to consumers.



The Hobbit Hut is an experiment for the group that they hope to learn from. They will be testing out cobs, Earthbags, and living roofs in hopes that in the future Truman can provide sustainable student housing in the future.

## Hobbit Hut

NEMO Cheese Co. will be producing aged cheddar and fresh mozzarella cheese to sell directly to consumers. After a test-trial, the group is ready to produce and sell cheese next semester. They plan to have a wine and cheese tasting event to market their fine cheeses.



## NEMO Cheese Co.

## Lifeboats vs. Ships

When I signed up to work in education for the summer, I didn't realize I had signed up to walk from Thailand to Tibet in 100 degree heat.

I'm Shannon, and I'm a senior agriculture science student at Truman.

Last summer I lived on the Heifer Ranch, an education center and working farm in Perryville, AR. I'd never been to AR before, but I took a chance and drove 10 hours from Indiana into the heart of the Ouachita Mountains. You may have heard of **Heifer International**, a non-profit development organization noted for their distribution of livestock and their philosophy of **passing on the gift**. Their project participants don't receive a charity handout, but instead become donors themselves, participating in training and passing on their animal's first female offspring to another family.

In AR, I worked as an Education Facilitator along with a team of about 12 other education staff. I wasn't working with livestock in developing countries, but explaining Heifer's work and techniques to American youth and adults through a variety of activities. **By simulating the conditions of a rural developing country, we hoped to get youth out of their comfort zone and thinking about hunger, poverty, agriculture, and Heifer's work a little differently.**



**Enter the Global Village.** Seven different countries are represented as home sites, secluded from the rest of the ranch. They range from upper-middle class Guatemala with mattresses, windows & outside running water to the barren refugee camp (modeled after UNHCR constructions). Here's the North Thailand Hills home site:



Many groups spent a night in the Global Village and were sorted into various "families". Their fate was determined by lottery number and a variety of 'life cards' presenting situations like pregnancies, injuries, and blindness. Families could choose to obtain "medical care" for those situations, but they didn't know beforehand what they would need to give up in order to pay. Resources were distributed by level of privilege, and the number of students in each family was inverse to its wealth. Middle-class Guatemala receives only a few residents, while the slums & refugee camp had the most. Chaperones could choose to be a senile elder or 2-year-old, but they couldn't make decisions or help with tasks. Otherwise, rules were minimal.

Sometimes it felt like we were fighting an uphill battle to get middle & high schoolers to take the experience seriously. This is not Survivor. This is not the Hunger Games. This is someone's everyday reality.

When the experience worked, major life lessons turned up. One "Zambian" adult stole firewood from another camp without consulting his family first, and his group was upset. Going forward, no one trusted the Zambian family or was willing to trade with them in the Village. **Could it be that the actions of one representative skewed the perception and treatment of the whole group?** *Surely this never happens in reality!*



One of the most telling questions was "Did anyone try to conceal how many resources their group had?" Yes, came the reluctant answer. One group didn't mention their knife and another made a point to hide firewood when others visited. There were only 20 participants, yet they were hiding supplies from their friends!

Groups that came a day early spent a morning with team-building activities and puzzles before their night in the Village. I was told Heifer uses similar activities in their international projects. What? Aren't there more important things to worry about when you're trying to end hunger than getting neighbors to cooperate and communicate? But over the summer those two turned out to be more important than I had supposed!

You see, **there's a huge difference between hunger relief and development work.** Relief consists of meeting short-term needs now and is incredibly valuable in disasters, famines, and refugee camps. Groups like the Red Cross, World Food Programme, and USAID are relief organizations. Development work, on the other hand, is a long-term commitment to building a better community and stable food supply. It can't be done alone—it requires changing mindsets to work together towards a common goal, understanding that results might not be immediate. **Instead of providing emergency lifeboats in the storm, it's about building a better ship in the first place.**

As for Arkansas and the Heifer Ranch, I can't imagine every participant took everything they learned & experienced to heart, but they all left different than they arrived and were more empowered about ending world hunger. That's the power of experiential learning, and one of the biggest reasons I want to work in agriculture education.

Debriefing the Global Village, everyone shared "aha moments". While talking with students about Heifer's projects was rewarding, my 'aha moment' for the summer was that **the most important component of international development is developing people.** And that makes the world a much smaller place!

Shannon Smith  
Agricultural Science '16



## To the Man in the Combine

One of the most popular blog posts that I have seen trending across social media, shared by my agricultural sorority sisters and even one of my professor, is Kate Lambert's, '[To the Woman Riding in My Husband's Combine](#)', posted on her Uptown Girl blog. Lambert's post struck an interest in the hearts of all of those women involved in agriculture. This post inspired me to share about my personal experience working in the industry, how to reach out to others in a similar position to me and how the industry is changing for the future.

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To the Man in the Combine,

Ten years ago, I doubt you would recognize me as an agricultural advocate. Ten years ago, you would have seen me staring at my opponents across a volleyball net, cheering and staying loyal to my basketball teammates, rinsing my chorine hair after morning swim practice before heading to class, and being ready in my spot for the relay while participating in track and field. Ten years ago you would have seen me in a sparkly outfit, perfecting my moves, providing the best show for the audience in my varsity Show Choir with the hopes of winning grand champion. But today, I am a proud advocate for agriculture and am among a growing generation of females in the field.



Somewhere deep inside of me that passion for agriculture has always churned. Now at Truman State University, I have learned that my passion for agriculture comes from my love of animals, my desire to give back to those who have given so much before me, and the joy to convey the truths about agriculture by standing up and supporting the farmers.

Agriculture has traditionally been a male-dominated field in the United States, now women are ever more passionate to join the field and advocate about the truths of the industry. Women are popping up all over the map in agriculture, as seen in the statistic that [47% of Iowa's 30.7 million farms acres are owned by women](#), in the leadership of Ellen Kullman, who recently retired from the CEO position at DuPont, and in the [46,000 female farmers in Missouri](#).



In the Midwest, colleges have found that recently more women have sparked an interest for the field of agriculture. Even though women haven't populated every sector of agriculture, I've noticed that the industry is starting to incorporate new faces within the workplace. Agricultural corporations are starting to recruit more females within internships, rotational development programs, and full time positions.



This summer I was gratified to be offered the Livestock Marketing Internship with Case IH, where I had an opportunity to work with all the tractors under 240 horsepower including the Farmall, Maxxum, Puma, and Optum lines and hay equipment. In the work place, especially in marketing, I noticed that there weren't many female staff members involved in marketing (including high-horse power, livestock, combines, sprayers and tillers). Even though marketing was male-dominated for full time positions, females represented half of the interns within the department. Within Case IH, there was a positive response to females entering the agriculture workplace through internships and opportunities. Females in the agriculture industry are more willing than ever to learn about the job at hand. While it's true that most of the clients that females will be working with are male, this does not necessarily represent a gender bias. In some cases, like the National Hay and Forage Expo, I was the only female representing Case IH where I presented during all the demos of the equipment.



Ten years ago, you would not have believed that I would have known all the differences between your Case IH Farmall 140A and your John Deere 6140D or your Kubota MX135GX. You would not have pictured me in front of a set of product specialists and sales managers teaching them the differences in Case IH's lines of products and creating sales training material. But, I have become very knowledgeable about agriculture and the world around us, proving that I can survive in this industry.

Someday, I will be that person that steps onto your field as your sales representative. I will be that person riding in your combine, making sure that you are 100% satisfied with a certain product. Currently, I am advocating for agriculture and specifically the improvement of gender equality within the industry so that you, the man (or woman) in the combine, can keep producing food and serving our nation and world.

Sincerely,

Alexandria Avila  
*The Future of Agriculture*

## An Aggie's Perspective on D.C.

There was a special buzz in the American Farm Bureau Federation ([AFBF](#)) office in Washington, D.C. as I walked in the doors at 7:30 AM sharp (nearly an hour before I normally arrive). The office was animated by excited chatter and fueled by copious amounts of coffee. Why? A very special visitor coming into the office later that morning. I hurried over to my computer to print out an extra copy of the testimony. I feared World War III might break out causing me to lose my original copy (You never know, right?). With my briefcase full of supplies in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other, I left to find the other intern, Spencer. Together, we waited patiently in the conference room for our esteemed guest to arrive. Spencer and I admired the room surrounding us- a library full of books from wall to wall, and floor to ceiling all about agriculture. We felt like a million dollars seated in giant leather chairs around a large oak table. This conference room was appropriately named the Lincoln Room and it always seemed like the second most powerful room in the office, only to be topped by President Bob Stallman's office of course.

Tick. The clock struck 8 AM sharp, it was finally time for one of our very own, Iowa Farm Bureau President Craig Hill, to begin his briefing session on the issue of mandatory Country of Origin Labeling ([COOL](#)). Later that day he would testify at a hearing in front of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. (A hearing is a time for all members of a Congressional Committee to become informed on a certain issue by asking experts on the issue to give informed explanations or testimonies on the issue.) Prior to the hearing, two of the best AFBF lobbyist gave him a rundown of the issues surrounding COOL as well as possible questions that would be asked at the hearing.



This past summer I had the opportunity of a lifetime- an internship in our nation's Capital. I was fortunate enough to receive an internship with American Farm Bureau Federation, the largest general agriculture organization, as their public policy (legislative) intern. The lessons I learned throughout that summer and internship are invaluable and will be some of my most cherished memories.

I first became passionate about agriculture on my family's hog farm in western Illinois where I was exposed to agriculture at a very young age. I decided to further explore my passion by pursuing a degree in agriculture at [Truman State University](#). It didn't take long for me to recognize one of the largest problems facing the upcoming generation of young agriculturalists. Once I was away at school the problem became more apparent as I met people from all different backgrounds. Where I saw this problem popping up the most was during conversations in the dining halls.

There was a disconnect between consumers and farmers about how their food was produced and grown. This disconnect was resulting in burdensome regulations on farmers coming from Capitol Hill. All of this because of a simple question: Where does my food come from? This is no easy question to answer, but I knew I at least needed to try. Where better to start than in Washington, D.C.?



This wasn't Mr. Hill's first rodeo and I could tell. He seemed confident and excited to be testifying. He knew his arguments like the back of his hand. After an hour of discussing COOL it was time to make the trek to the Capitol. Mr. Hill was accompanied out by the head of the public policy department and the international trade lobbyist. We interns trailed behind- soaking up all the knowledge we could.

Farm Bureau supports COOL, but only if it abides by World Trade Organization (WTO) standards. This means that American farmers would be able to freely trade their products without retaliatory tariffs. Unfortunately, the latest WTO ruling decided that the US COOL policy is not up to par leaving room for Canada and Mexico to impose retaliatory sanctions. The products affected by the sanctions would range from cattle to hogs, cheese to apples, pasta to bread, wine to sugars and so on. These increased tariffs would hurt farmers and producers across the country as shown by the diverse list of goods threatened. Consumers could also feel the impact of these tariffs through higher food prices at the grocery store. If the US continues with the current COOL legislation, the US would be at risk for experiencing nearly [\\$2.4 billion](#) loss in trade from Canada and [\\$713 million](#) loss in trade from Mexico.

These numbers are drastic and can easily be avoided if COOL is repealed and redrafted. This is why Craig Hill's testimony is so important - not just in the Farm Bureau office, but across the country on farms everywhere. Not to mention, my friends around the Truman dining hall tables could confidently answer lingering questions about their meals' origins while not bearing increased food prices.

During the two-hour hearing, Hill recited his testimony perfectly and answered all questions without hesitation. The hearing was deemed a success. Most committee members seemed to come to a consensus that COOL needed to be repealed.

Miranda Biddle  
Agricultural Business '16