

AGRI LEADER

TEXAS A&M COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES

Volume 15 • Issue 1 • Fall 2016

Explore
LONG ACRES RANCH



ON AIR



LAND
of the ELEPHANTS



AGGIES FOR Fresh

From communications to accounting and agricultural science, the fresh produce industry has many rewarding career opportunities for talented, confident and unique people like you. Connect with our team at aggiesforfresh.com or on social media — we'd love to talk!

Are you looking for a purposeful career?

Aggies for Fresh is a campaign created to recruit students from Texas A&M University to the industry that grows, ships, markets and sells fresh fruits and vegetables around the world on a daily basis. Industry champion Dan'l Mackey Almy '94 and her husband Andrew Almy '94 founded Aggies for Fresh in 2014 to inspire fellow Aggies to pursue a career in the fresh produce industry, and it's been growing ever since. "I believe Texas A&M has a wealth of premier talent that our industry needs to feed the world. We strive to position fresh produce at A&M as a purposeful and valuable career option," says Dan'l.

So, how are we helping you?

Aggies for Fresh is a huge supporter of student organizations in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences like the Howdy Farm, COALS Council, AggiesMove and the Sigma Alpha sorority, and we're proud to sponsor graduate student research in fresh produce. This year, we also started an experiential scholarship program that brought six Aggie students to a fresh produce industry event, where they received hands-on experience and networked with industry leaders. Here's what they had to say about Aggies for Fresh:

Testimonials from your fellow students:

"Attending the Viva Fresh Expo and learning about the dynamic framework of the fresh produce industry was one of the most beneficial experiences of my undergraduate career. As a junior nutritional science major with aspirations of becoming a registered dietitian, this opportunity helped show me the vast amount of potential for future employment and need for collaboration with fresh produce professionals."

—Jackie Parker '16

"The Viva Fresh Expo is an experience I will never forget. The Viva Fresh Expo was a fabulous opportunity for students, like myself, who are graduating soon and have very little direction they want to take after college. Little direction in the sense of which industry they would like to fall into. I can say after learning more about the fresh produce industry, I am in love with it. I love that the work is different every day, there are passionate people striving to work towards the greater good and I love that this industry is making a difference in peoples' lives. I have a love for this industry and I hope to find myself working for it in the near future."

— Sarah Bockholt '16

"One of the remarkable people who have helped me make progress in reaching my professional goals is Dan'l Almy. I met Dan'l at a talk she gave at Texas A&M about the fresh produce industry. I was greatly impressed by her knowledge and enthusiasm. Thanks to her, I learned about the opportunity to attend the Viva Fresh Expo in San Antonio through Aggies for Fresh."

—Alonso Villaran '16

"Attending Viva Fresh was a fantastic opportunity and taught me so much about the fresh produce industry. Throughout the conference I saw the level of community that was represented. It doesn't take long to see that people working in fresh produce really love their work and are excited about it! This industry is full of supportive people working to make their communities happier and healthier."

—Katy Crocker '16

"I couldn't be more thankful for this opportunity. I urge other Aggie students to get in contact with Aggies for Fresh and take advantage of unique opportunities such as the Expo. We greatly appreciate the opportunities that they provided us to learn and grow as young professionals at the Viva Fresh Produce Expo."

—Alonso Villaran '16



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PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF AMANDA STROYVA



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These creatively crafted beverages will knock your boots off. Local craft sodas made with the simple pleasures of life in mind, Boots Beverages will soon become your newest cooler necessity.

ON THE COVER

A couple of friends enjoy some ice-cold boots. A mural is graffitied on the wall behind them. Each illustration tells a story of its own. Explore all Long Acres Ranch has to offer, hold on tight as we take a closer look at the Land of the Elephants, travel back 100 years to when Bevo was both branded and barbecued, and peruse a number of other features. Photograph by Michael Catarineau. Illustration by Remington May.



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THESE Boots WERE MADE FOR Drinkin'



BY: ALLY HANCOCK

Sunrays glow over College Station as the Boots Beverages team loads down their event trailer. Ice-cold sodas sink into coolers and the team – Kim Rank '09 and Jacob Kristen '05 – heads over to Kyle Field to show off their newest, savory flavors at Fightin' Texas Aggie game day.

Boots Beverages is a line of craft sodas created by Boots Kristen in 1945. At the time, Kristen Distributing was a small bottling company in Bellville, Texas. After taking over the bottling company from his father, Boots wanted to make a personal contribution to the family business. However, due to the high cost of glass bottling, Boots Beverages' first go was limited to the 40s and early 60s. In 2008, Boots' son, Mark Kristen, reintroduced the brand and began marketing the natural flavored craft sodas from Bryan, Texas.

This authentic brand's wholesome heritage led to the creation of their 10 unique flavors. Each flavor is inspired by life's simple pleasures and tells imaginative, engaging tales. All of the flavors have their own identifying label, featuring a Kristen family member who worked at the bottling company, along with a little bit of history.

"I picked dewberries when I was five and sold them on the side of the road," Mark Kristen said. "You'll see my story on the side of the dewberry bottle."

The Kristen family has a reputation for their charity and community focus. This is what sets Boots Beverages apart from the rest. The most important thing, Rank said, is building relationships and being like the good ol' boys. From the small team, to the thousands of customers they have gained over the years, Boots Beverages is a family.

Being local and wholesome is important to the Boots team. Their new line of fountain drinks hails from Austin, Texas. With the recent product line expansion of Kristen Distributing Company, they have high hopes of soon bottling in Bryan, Texas. Boots Beverages is also a member of Go Texan, which promotes and supports the business savvy and plainspoken grit of Texas agriculture.

The distribution of Boots Beverages has successfully grown over the past years. According to Rank's research, there has been an increased interest in creative flavors lately, as well as a demand for premium, high-quality ingredients. Boots Beverages fits right into these requests. Their sodas are made with pure cane sugar and natural flavors.

"Our family is blessed to recreate one of the simple pleasures enjoyed in the 1940s and 50s," Mark said.

There are so many ways to enjoy these beverages, not just straight out of the bottle. The Boots team is constantly looking for new ways for everyone to get their Boots Beverages.

Today, Mark's oldest son, Jacob, runs the fountain drink segment of Kristen Distributing. Boots launched their fountain drinks in the Bryan-College Station market in the spring of 2016. Brazos Valley Bombers fans can exclusively enjoy Boots Fountain Drinks at the games. These drinks are an easy, on the go way to get your craft soda fix.

Left: Ice-cold Boots and stylish sunglasses are the only things needed when hanging out with friends. Below: Each unique flavor offers a story as well as a sweet treat. Right: A Boots in the hand is worth two in the cooler. Photos by Michael Catarineau.



Left: The Boots truck is used for parades, sampling and community events. Above: Kim Rank, Mark Kristen, Jacob Kristen. Photographs courtesy of Boots Beverages.

"Our family is blessed to recreate one of the simple pleasures enjoyed in the 1940s and 50s. It is our hope that our friends enjoy this taste of art and be amused with the stories on each label."

-Mark Kristen

The team's most recent partnership has been with Rebecca Creek Whiskey. By using Boots Beverages Lucky Ginger Brew in their Moscow Mule, Rebecca Creek has made a true Texas Mule.

To continue the spirit of the Lone Star State, grab a Caramel Cola Boots Beverages and pour it over Blue Bell ice cream for a Brazos Valley style root beer float. Any of their other flavors can also be paired with ice cream for a sweet treat.

On hot summer days, the Boots Beverages team can be found at various events around town serving frozen Bootsies, or slushies. This drink is a hit

with the kids and fun for the adults, too.

"Bringing the simple pleasures from so many years ago back to today's hectic lifestyle is our greatest accomplishment," Rank said. "There's nothing better than when my daughter says she would rather have a Boots Beverage than any other soda."

The sun dips below the horizon as the 12th Man files out of Kyle Field. The coolers are empty and the ice has melted, but the spirit of the Boots team is still burning. Bringing the pleasure of creatively crafted soda is always a good day at the office for the team. Now it is time to get someone else their new Boots. 🍷



ALLY HANCOCK '16

Ally is from Bellville, Texas. She enjoys good coffee, good wine and spending time with her sweet blue heeler, Sutter.

Here.

REMEMBERING THOSE WHO LEFT AN IMPACT ON C.O.A.L.S.

Josie Coverdale, Ph.D., passed away on Feb. 13, 2016, at age 38. Coverdale leaves behind a legacy in not only Aggieland, but also in countries around the world.

A Krum native, Coverdale graduated from Texas A&M in 1998 before moving onto Iowa State University, where she earned a master's degree in equine science and a doctorate in calf nutrition. Coverdale returned to Texas A&M in 2006 as an associate professor, enabling her to share her immense passion and knowledge with students.

Coverdale served as sponsor of the Parson's Mounted Calvary, allowing her to touch the lives of students outside the classroom. The cavalry honored Coverdale with their rendition of the military's 21-gun salute, firing the historic cannon three times during her memorial service.

She was an equine nutritionist who was willing to help wherever she could, including the Texas A&M Equestrian team.

"I observed her involvement in a number of horse activities, and was always impressed with the passion and dedication she put forth in everything she did," Equestrian Coach Tana McKay said.

Coverdale also played an integral role in the Equine Initiative Program, which allowed her to travel internationally and speak at educational conferences or seminars, where she was very highly regarded.

Family, friends, students and colleagues across the world have mourned the loss of Coverdale. She will be forever missed and remembered. Here.



Josie Coverdale, Ph.D.



Trina Gregory

Trina Gregory served as the undergraduate adviser for the department of biochemistry and biophysics for seven years. She was awarded the 2013 President's Academic Advising Award, which recognizes individuals who demonstrate exceptional academic advising and service to students.

"We've been lucky to have very good advisers — and she was fantastic," Gregory Reinhart, Ph.D. said, professor and head of the BICH department.

As well as being an adviser, Gregory was on the executive board for the University of Counselors and Advisers organization, ran several committees and hosted campus events to encourage the involvement of new advisers.

"She was the one who started the new adviser brown bag lunches," Donna Witt, senior academic adviser of the department of animal science, said. "She pushed new advisers to get involved and that's wonderful."

Gregory was not just an academic adviser or colleague for the students and faculty, but a selfless friend and mentor.

Gregory was an active member of her church choir, a Beyoncé fan and a lover of the show Scandal, said Amber Salvato, adviser in the department of animal science.

"She was a champion for her students and the first to sing their praises. It will take a while to fill her shoes, if we ever do," Salvato said.

A GoFundMe page was created to raise money for a memorial space to be built on campus honoring Gregory's legacy and her contributions to the university. All extra funds will be invested into starting a scholarship in her memory. She will be forever missed and remembered. Here.



William Faulkner, Ph.D.

William Brock Faulkner '04 was released to the presence of Jesus on Feb. 17, 2016, at the age of 34, after fighting a two-year battle with leukemia.

Born in Bryan to Bill and Martha Faulkner, Brock married Brittney Schlatre May 22, 2004 in Baton Rouge, LA. He earned his bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees from Texas A&M in agricultural engineering. He was a proud member of the Fightin' Texas Aggie Band — A-Battery.

His career in teaching culminated in serving as assistant professor at Texas A&M; he advised the Secretary of Agriculture on the USDA Agricultural Air Quality Task Force, to which he was just re-appointed; and he consulted for cattle ranchers in Colorado. His greatest professional joy, though, was working with students. He leaves a legacy of

young men and women who were deeply impacted by his teaching and mentorship.

Brock served as an elder with Community Church of Bryan-College Station. His personal investment in his church community was wholehearted, even in his most difficult seasons. Above all his professional and ranching achievements, Brock's deepest love was and is for Jesus, his wife, children, family, friends and the people of Community Church.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Faulkner Fund through Community Church were accepted. These are to be used in support Brock's children, other families going through cancer treatment and to plant trees on the family ranch in Brock's honor. He will be forever missed and remembered. Here. 🍀

SPOTLIGHT

BY: EMILY FOREMAN

Two months after Deborah Hall '14 graduated, her goals and aspirations of becoming a novelist were under attack. Naysayers in her life were urging Hall to settle down and get a "real" job, but she wanted to follow her dreams unapologetically.

"It was mostly just work and writing, but it was as if a fire lit inside me," Hall said. "I had to tell this story because I had so many questions in my own life for which I was unable to get the answers."

Hall used experiences from her time at Texas A&M as inspiration for her novel, *Zella: Curses and Conquerors*. Though she did not take any creative writing courses, Hall's professors in agricultural communications and journalism inspired her to have a passion for storytelling.

"I just want to know the story, whether it's a journalist finding a news story or a director doing a movie, it's all about the art of storytelling," Hall said. "I really connected with that in agricultural communications."

Success is defined in a variety of ways and Hall said this meant pursuing the goals she set for her life. Even through a time of negativity, something positive may be gained. Hall is thankful that her novel is inspiring others who are going through similar situations.

"They are feeling the same way I felt when it was done," Hall said. "I don't have to believe the naysayers, I don't have to settle for what the world can give me."

Hall is now a full-time author, spending her time doing what she truly loves. To learn more about her novel or upcoming books visit deborahhallauthor.com. 🍀



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF DEBORAH HALL

TEXAS AGGIE CATTLEWOMEN

The Texas Aggie CattleWomen meet on the 1st Monday of every month to educate the student body and general public on the beef industry.

For more information email texasaggiecattlewomen@gmail.com.

TEXAS AGGIE CATTLEWOMEN
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COLLARED

BY: LUKE LAMB

As the setting sun paints the Texas hill country with strokes of vibrant orange and red. To most, this view shows the scenic beauty of the Edwards Plateau, but for Brick this sunset has an entirely different meaning.

The Edwards Plateau is home to the largest population of goats and sheep in the state of Texas, accounting for 18 percent of the total population in the United States. With herds this size covering such a large region of the state there is no question that there is profit to gain. However, like with all financial investments, they must be protected. This is where Brick and the pack come into play.

Brick is a 3-year-old Great Pyrenees livestock guard dog with quite an interesting life. His sole purpose is to protect a herd of lamb and sheep by deterring carnivorous predators such as foxes and coyotes.

PIONEERED

To date, very little research has been done on livestock guard dogs. It is clear the dogs are tasked with keeping their herds safe, and great success has been found using these dogs as a tool of safety for thousands of years. But how do they do it?

John Tomecek, Ph.D., assistant professor and Extension Wildlife Specialist with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in San Angelo, designed a study to provide data on a subject few have ever dissected.

“The goal of the study is to provide data on how these dogs do their job, and in return how the predators respond,” Tomecek said.

He will be conducting the study with the help of Texas A&M University master’s student Nick Broman ’18 and doctoral student Justin French ’19. They will be conducting one of the first studies done on livestock guard dogs backed with empirical data.

The researchers will be collecting this data by using GPS collars. These collars are a new form of technology that records the proximity of other collars within a range of 200 to 300 meters. By placing the GPS collars on the dogs, sheep and coyotes once they are caught, the researchers will be able to track the movements of these animals.

Additionally, the researchers are taking steps to develop their knowledge of the land to better understand the animals on the ranch.

“Their natural instincts kick in immediately, and they see the herd as if they’re protecting their own pack.” - John Tomecek

“We are also installing a camera grid and looking to expand the scientific methodology of the use of cameras for detection of all species on the ranch,” Broman said.

FERAL

A driving force behind the study – and the reason there is so little literature pertaining to guard dogs – is their behavior is similar to that of a wild animal. From the time the dogs are born, they are put into a small pen with another species of animal such as goats or sheep, bonding the dog to this species. The dogs spend eight months to a year with this animal with relatively little human contact before being transitioned to a ranch.

“The idea is that when they enter the field, they’ll transition into the herd on the ranch, as long as it’s the same type of species they were initially bonded with,” French said.

The reason this transition occurs seamlessly is due to the genetics of the Pyrenees dog breed. People have used these dogs to guard and protect because of their size and aggression.

“Their natural instincts kick in immediately, and they see the herd as if they’re protecting their own pack,” Tomecek said.

From this point forward, the dogs live on their own within the herd. The single caretaker, who provides the dogs food and medical care, is their only human interaction.

SAFEGUARD

This research ranch near Menard, Texas was given to the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center in San Angelo by an Aggie who passed away. It suffered from a high amount of coyote activity, and this was one reason the ranch was handed down to Texas A&M for sheep and goat research purposes.

“Menard, and other towns in the Western Edwards plateau is where all the sheep country in Texas still is, that’s reason to maintain the coyote pressure,” French said.

Prior to the study’s beginning in January of 2016, the ranch operated by using the historical and vastly popular form of predator control – trapping.

“In the past, a majority of the land owners in an area were involved in livestock production, so most of them were able to help in keeping coyote population under control,” Tomecek said.

Today, less people are ranching, which means less coyote trapping. Trapping has also come under fire from people who view it as brutal and cruel. This traditional method just does not work like it once did, so more people have turned to using guard dogs.

Data collected from the collar shows that coyotes active on the ranch avoid the pastures where the herds roam, and coyotes shift their activity away from the herd when it’s moved to a different pasture. There has not been an animal killed on the ranch by a predator since Brick and the pack reached the grounds, and sheep and goat production has grown three times since the previous year.

“When you see numbers like that, you realize it’s working. For us to recommend this tool to agricultural producers, however, we have to know how it works.” Tomecek said.

MISSION

With this study being one of the first in its field, there are many things yet to be learned about guard dogs and their interactions with predators. However, this study is more than simply providing information to readers.

“We’re trying to help landowners, ranchers and producers of all scales,” French said. “By evaluating the effectiveness of this tool, we want ranchers and landowners to know if guard dogs would be a necessary investment for them.”

As the study continues and more research is gained, they hope the final product will be able to answer this question for landowners.

As the setting sun dips below the horizon, darkness rolls over the trees. Brick’s ears perk as a coyote’s cry in the night fills the brisk autumn air. Many are ready for their nightly sitcom or a late supper, but for Brick and the pack, their work has yet to begin. 🍷



LUKE LAMB '16

Luke is from Red Oak, Texas. He is an avid college football fan who enjoys naps and a good cheeseburger with fries.



Top: Brick leads the heard to the caretaker for their regular visit. Above: Brick receives a new collar from researchers, Nick Broman and Justin French. Photographs courtesy of John Tomecek.

A CRUDE AWAKENING

AROUND AND AROUND AND AROUND IT GOES; WHERE IT STOPS, NOBODY KNOWS.

BY: MICHAEL CATARINEAU

The fluctuation of oil prices is a never-ending cycle. In recent years, the United States has upped its oil production significantly, weakening the country's dependence on foreign oil.

ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK

Thanks to hydraulic fracturing, production levels in the U.S. are the highest they've been in almost three decades. Oil once imported into the U.S. at a higher price must be discounted to compete in other economic markets. In the last two years, the price of a barrel of oil has dropped more than 70 percent and

reached its lowest price since 2004. The oil industry has not seen a dip like this since the 1990s.

Priscilla G. McLeroy, P.E., professor of engineering practice and director of undergraduate advising in the Harold Vance Department of Petroleum Engineering at Texas A&M University says the drop in oil prices could be a positive for the petroleum engineering industry – especially for PETE.

“When the business cycle of the oil industry reaches a down like this spring's, technology and engineering really come through,” McLeroy said. “This is when our research hits the ground running.”

“Unconventional shale was harder to get to, but we figured it out and it was a game-changer for the world market.”

—Priscilla G. McLeroy

*Night falls on Odessa, Texas, and drilling rigs are stacked as they wait for maintenance and future jobs.
Photograph by Michael Catarineau.*



Above: Each rig represents about 150 direct and indirect jobs from surveying, transportation and construction to local business and infrastructure. Photograph by Michael Catarineau.

McLeroy said the U.S. is leading the world in unconventional play, producing more than they import for the first time in decades.

“Unconventional shale was harder to get to, but we figured it out and it was a game-changer for the world market,” McLeroy said.

Since the drop in prices, one does not have to be an economist to understand the results of significantly smaller profits. Rigs are being shut down left and right, investments in exploration and production are being dropped, companies are filing for bankruptcy and nearly a quarter of a million oil workers are now unemployed.

Kianne Rowinsky '17, is an agricultural leadership and development major whose family owns and operates B&R Specialty in Pleasanton, Texas. For the last 12 years, B&R Specialty has sold supplies to other oilfield companies.

Rowinsky referenced the juxtaposition of rigs popping up left and right during her sophomore year of high school in 2011, to spring of 2015 when her family's business slowed down significantly. As a first generation Aggie, Rowinsky began applying for every scholarship she could and working on campus as a student worker to help ease the financial burden on her family.

“It's nothing that we haven't been through before,” Rowinsky said. “But the last six to seven months have been worse than the last two years.”

ROCKY PAST, SMOOTH FUTURE

Despite how rocky the oil industry has been, high school students in the Eagle Ford Shale area of Texas – a group of the 20 most actively drilled counties near San Antonio – will be able to enroll in an oil and gas course as soon as fall 2017.

“To be successful over the long run, any industry needs a dependable source of entry-level trained employees,” said Kirk Edney, Ph.D.

Edney, assistant professor of continuing education in agricultural science at Texas A&M, broke it down even further. He explained that since oil, gas and mineral extraction are the number one drivers of the Texas economy – just ask Houston or Dallas – several independent school districts are considering offering these courses. Classes Oil and Gas Production I and II could capture and hold students' interest, encouraging school retention and providing an outlet for high-school graduates.

“Oil and gas is regionally significant,” Edney said. “A need exists for a basic level of training.”

Traditionally, Edney added, oil and gas companies have had to contend with a fluctuating pool of available employees. Most of the readily available

laborers have a marginal understanding of the realities of the industry, which creates a need for a lot of on-the-job training.

A. Daniel Hill, Ph.D., professor and head of PETE, explained that a drop in oil prices has a mixed effect on our economy.

“For many parts of the economy, such as manufacturing and the chemical industry, energy is a cost, so lower energy prices are beneficial,” Hill said. “However, the oil and gas production industry – a huge part of the U.S. economy – is hurt by the lower prices.”

Hill believes that the decline in U.S. production will cause prices to go back up before too long. He said the greatest effect the drop in oil prices has had is a weakened job market for students seeking summer internships in the industry.

Some students are not affected by lack of internships, especially when those students are directly employed by the oil industry.

“To be successful over the long run, any industry needs a dependable source of entry-level trained employees.”

-Kirk Edney, '75

WHAT GOES DOWN, MUST COME UP

Ben Ford '13, an animal science major, is a skilled heavy equipment operator working in Pecos, Texas. For two years, Ford has worked pipeline construction in West Texas. “When oil prices dropped, so did our per diem,” Ford said.

With lower prices and a slimmer workforce, the cost of living had to be lowered in order to attract business to smaller West Texas towns that were once booming because of the rapidly growing oil industry.

Ford plans to work in the field long enough to pay off student loans and build up his savings. Even though he has seen business pick back up, he advises any student looking for a job in the oilfield to always have a backup plan.

“Working 12-to 18-hour shifts isn't easy,” Ford said, “and you never know what the next week will bring.”

Those involved in the oil industry know the market consists of a vicious cycle of ups and downs, but they also know they are not the only ones affected by the shift in prices. Even those far removed from the industry felt the crude effects of the past slump. While no one is sure where the cycle will stop, it is certain to come back around.



MICHAEL CATARINEAU '16

Michael is from the Bayou City and is always busy. He loves Chick-Fil-A and his black cat, Bagheera.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL CATARINEAU

Name: Todd Huebner '90, '91

Degree: Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Education, Master of Agriculture in Agricultural Development

Profession: Senior Sales Representative at Merial Animal Pharmaceuticals



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF DEANNE HUEBNER



Q: If you could go back and change or do anything differently, would you?

A: I wish I had been more involved in the university as a whole; I was really only just involved in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. I wish I had been more involved in university organizations. The networking and relationships you make in those organizations are for a lifetime. I think I would have wanted to get more of an Aggie experience as a whole, be more submerged in the Aggie spirit.

Q: What advice would you give students about to graduate or that are recent graduates?

A: Practice your selling skills. Practice your interpersonal skills. You have to promote yourself everyday whether it is at your job or applying for a job. Don't be shy – shyness will get you nowhere. You don't have to make yourself stand out in a crowd but you should be willing to start the conversation.

Q: Do you have any advice for students getting a degree from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences but not planning on going into an agricultural field?

A: Well, with the exception of specific science degrees like animal science or reproductive sciences, the other degrees like agricultural economics, business, education or communications can be taken anywhere. They are just starting points or jumping off points. It really comes down to this: having your degree shows that you have the fortitude to stick it out. The degree is not always what drives it, but you can apply your degree to just about anything.

MERIAL

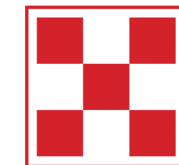
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GOOD FOOD GONE BAD

BY: ASHLEY SEIDENBERGER



Leftover pizza or last week's tailgate food is all part of the broke college student lifestyle. As long as we get full everything is okay, right? Not really. There are some important factors about daily kitchen life that are often overlooked.

MY ROOMMATE LEFT A CARTON OF EGGS IN THE FRIDGE OVER WINTER BREAK, BUT I'M REALLY HUNGRY. ARE THEY STILL GOOD?

Eggs will last three to five weeks in refrigerator. A good rule is if the egg floats in water, it is bad.

I LOVE BREAKFAST TACOS IN THE MORNING, BUT I AM ALWAYS RUSHING OUT OF THE HOUSE IN THE MORNING AND FORGET TO CHECK IF MY TORTILLAS ARE MOLDY. HOW DO I KEEP FLOUR PRODUCTS FROM GETTING GROSS SO FAST?

To keep bread or other flour/yeast products fresh longer, store them in a cool dark place such as a kitchen cabinet or pantry. Be sure to seal the bread product in a closed package. Heat, humidity and light are bad for bread and speed up the growth of mold.

LEFT OVER PIZZA IS PART OF THE COLLEGE LIFESTYLE. IF THOSE BEFORE ME HAVE NOT DIED, NEITHER WILL I. LONG LIVE LEFTOVER PIZZA?

Refrigerate leftover pizza within two hours of cooking or purchasing. Cover pizza with foil or plastic wrap when refrigerating. To freeze leftover pizza, wrap tightly with aluminum foil or plastic freezer wrap or place in heavy-duty freezer bags.

I DON'T HAVE TO REFRIGERATE MY JUICE OR SWEET TEA RIGHT? ITS BASICALLY WATER, AND I NEVER REFRIGERATE THAT.

You should always refrigerate juices and teas after opening to be on the safe side. Most brands recommend it and have the suggestion on the bottle.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL CATARINEAU

I LIKE MY STEAK TO STILL BE MOOING WHEN I EAT IT, SO I ONLY COOK IT FOR LIKE 2 MINUTES, THAT'S OK RIGHT?

Ground beef, veal, pork and lamb are not okay rare. The process of grinding introduces potentially harmful bacteria into the meat. Ground meat needs to reach 160 F internally—which is at least a doneness of medium. Fresh steak, roast and chops are okay medium-rare if cooked properly. The meat needs to reach 145 F internally and stand for three or more minutes before cutting or consuming. But overall, there is no way to guarantee the safety of rare meat.



“He then — instead of cleaning it up, left it on the floor, walls and ceiling — climbed into bed covered in ravioli sauce and got under the covers.” - Alex Clukey '18

I'VE HAD ICE CREAM IN THE FREEZER ALMOST ALL SEMESTER AND I JUST GOT DUMPED AND I REALLY WANT IT, IS IT STILL SAFE TO EAT?

Ice cream is safe to eat if it is unopened in the freezer up to three months after the purchase date. If opened and put back in freezer, it is best to throw the remaining ice cream out after two months.

I PULLED THIS CATFISH OUT OF THE POND NEARLY A MONTH AGO, AND IT'S STARTING TO SMELL KIND OF FUNNY, BUT I THINK I CAN STILL EAT IT, YEAH?

Fresh fish should be eaten as soon as possible after being purchased and always kept on ice or in the refrigerator. You should not keep fish in the refrigerator longer than two days. If your fish smells weird, fishy, has an

ammonia-like odor, or if the color of the meat is dull, the fish may be old and should be discarded.

WOOD CUTTING BOARDS ARE SO PRETTY AND I WANT MY HOUSE TO LOOK LIKE WILLIAMS-SONOMA... HOW DO I TAKE CARE OF IT BECAUSE IT WAS SUPER EXPENSIVE AND I CAN'T AFFORD ANOTHER?

After using a cutting board for raw meat, seafood or poultry, thoroughly clean the board with hot soapy water and disinfect with a sanitizing solution such as bleach. Following this, be sure to rinse it well with water.

Eventually, you will have to throw your cutting board out after it has worn down excessively or has hard-to-clean indentations. Even with thorough washing, harmful bacteria can still live in these indentations.

HELP ME, I'M POOR. HOW LONG DO LEFT OVERS LAST?

Leftovers can be kept for three to four days in the refrigerator. Be sure to eat them within that time. After that, the risk of food poisoning increases.

I WANT TO MAKE BURGERS WITH FRIENDS BUT THEY KEEP BAILING ON ME, I CAN STILL MAKE BURGERS IN A WEEK OR SO, RIGHT?

According to the USDA, only keep hamburger meat in the refrigerator for two days. Bacteria multiply rapidly in temperatures between 40 and 140 F. To keep bacterial levels low, store ground beef at 40 F or below and use within two days, or freeze. To destroy harmful bacteria, cook ground beef to a safe minimum internal temperature of 160 F.

GIRLS NIGHT EQUALS MOVIES AND RAW COOKIE DOUGH, PLEASE TELL ME I WON'T DIE.

Raw cookie dough contains raw eggs, therefore increasing your chance of getting salmonella or E. Coli. Follow package warnings and cook it before eating to be safe.





Roommates Tell All

JAC CLARK '18

"Probably left his bacon and fried egg pan soaking for about two weeks. It grew some serious bacterial colonies. A different roomie left his rice cooker uncleaned for a month and it grew mold that looked like cotton candy."

EMILY ALLEN '16

"One girl I lived with left her hair brush on the counter face down. With hair laying on our counter top... She has thick black hair and it was everywhere, I almost barfed."

DARBI DOWELL '18

"We carved a pumpkin for Halloween, my roomie left it on the counter top until it started growing black hair inside. We finally put it out for trash and the trash people wouldn't pick it up. It decomposed into mush."

ALEX CLUKEY '18

"Basically my roommate blew up Chef Boyardee ravioli in our dorm using the microwave, spraying ravioli sauce all over the room. He then – instead of cleaning it up, left it on the floor, walls and ceiling – climbed into bed covered in ravioli sauce and got under the covers. I thought that was it until he reached down into a 2-week-old pizza box on his desk that I assumed was empty. He pulled out a slice of pizza and ate it under the covers of his bed."

EMMALI PANKONEN '17

"Egg shells will grow mold if left on the counter for months. Advice – do not put dirty dishes that get left in the sink for months in a garbage bag and set aside, that will only end in a roommate screaming match."

WES GILL '16

"One time my roommate came home drunk, got chinese food out of the fridge, spread it all over the counter then ate it off the counter."

LOGAN LYDA '18

"In the Corps dorms, we do not have refrigerators. My roommate brought home chicken fried stake, ate half, then stored the other half in his desk drawer for two weeks. He surprisingly did not die when he ate it."



ASHLEY SEIDENBERGER '17

Ashley was born and raised in San Antonio. She is a member of Delta Zeta, an avid equestrian and an intern at the Texas A&M Center for Food Safety. Favorite pasttime: smelling all of the candles at World Market.


PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL CATARINEAU




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SPOTLIGHT

BY: MICHAEL CATARINEAU

Clayton Gardner '17 is a senior agricultural leadership and development major from Fort Worth, Texas. Gardner grew up with a primary interest in athletics, but that changed while he was a sophomore in college. At that time, Gardner realized he had a natural talent for songwriting.

Gardner took a break from classes to focus on his music. He released two albums – which reached the Top 20 – and quickly became a Texas Country favorite. He has opened for greats like Cody Johnson, Aaron Watson and Casey Donahew. Though Gardner did not always want to play country, he found inspiration from country legends such as Keith Whitley, Garth Brooks and George Strait.

When Gardner decided to re-enroll in Texas A&M University, he chose agricultural leadership and development as his major.

"Leadership interests me because it's an everyday practice in business," he said. "It's a necessary quality to be successful."

Gardner has played for large crowds at Hurricane Harry's and the Texas Birthday Bash Festival in Navasota. His favorite song to perform live is "Table for Two," which graced the Texas Music Chart Top 100 Songs of 2014. He feels it has all of the values a true country song should have.

Gardner's advice for his fellow Aggies is to finish their degrees so they can chase their dreams after graduation.

"That way, you have a solid foundation in knowledge to add to your ability of chasing your dream," he said. "Always follow your dreams. Don't give up, and don't be afraid of failure. It's not about whether or not you'll fail – it's how quickly you get back up after you fail."

Gardner's music can be found on iTunes, Spotify and Soundcloud. He often plays acoustic shows at The Tap as well. His most recent album, "Under the Lights," was released in 2015 and the single "Buy You A Drink" reached Top 10 of the Texas Country charts.



PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL CATARINEAU

RETURN TO THE WILD

The homestead at Long Acres Ranch sits less than a quarter mile from the Brazos River. The house is shaded by large oak trees and deer often graze in the surrounding pastures. Photograph by Remington May.

BY: EVA VIGH

On the outskirts of Houston, a deer grazes in a well-manicured lawn. The neighborhood is newly developed, and like the rest of the urban area, still expanding.

Suddenly, the noise of a school bus startles the deer. It turns sharply and retreats behind the shelter of trees, not into a new lawn, but a field of native prairie grass, cottonwood trees and scattered ponds.

Here, there is no clash between suburbia and nature. Except for this pocket of wilderness, the land surrounding the outskirts of Houston is mostly urban development. But, the animals move fluidly between both worlds, following their instinctive hunting and grazing paths.

Question. How, in the midst of settled suburban sprawl, does a piece of land so artfully coexist? How can a deer disappear seamlessly into a natural haven, a land so rough, raw and almost primordial?

The answer lies in the land itself. From the ground up, it has been transformed — no, retransformed — to natural countryside. Besides the “Welcome to Long Acres Ranch” sign on the fence, one might assume, at first glance, it has been untouched by humans.

Managed by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Long Acres Ranch is a 750-acre nature-related educational and recreational facility offering a variety of day and extended activities to promote ecotourism for individuals and groups. The center, located in Richmond, Texas, is still developing and available for public tours through reservation.

“The idea is to have the first ever research and demonstration center for sustainable tourism, wildlife and outdoor recreation,” said Miles Phillips, director of the facility. “Our goal is to look at how to develop the highest quality visitor experiences and ways to generate revenue for your community.”

Built on land from the Stephen F. Austin land grant, the ranch was originally a cattle pasture when Jane Long claimed it in 1839. It was bought and sold, changed hands here and there, but it remained a cattle pasture for over a hundred years until several years ago, when a nonprofit organization helped sponsor the conversion from pasture to what is today known as the Long Acres Ranch.

Jim Kidda, program manager and lone full-time staff member, is charged with the difficult task of recapturing the land’s natural composition.

NATURAL COMPOSITION

But even in its developmental stages, the ranch holds a promise of fulfillment. For the adventurous, outdoor-loving Aggie, the ranch is just a breezy 90-minute trip away.

Visitors will be able to kayak along the beautiful Brazos River, hike the wooded trails, pitch a tent in designated camp areas and observe the birds and wildlife. Think of it as a cross between a campground and a Texas nature preserve, with the faint ambiance of a ranch.

Which may be why, standing in the middle of the rolling fields, it’s easy to forget civilization is just a stone’s throw away.

Visitors must drive about half a mile on a gravel road to reach the ranch, making it a hidden refuge from the surrounding suburbs. On one end, Williams Way Boulevard spans the length of the facility; on the other, the Brazos River forms a horseshoe that wraps around the rest of the ranch north of the road and provides a half mile of sandy beach for kayak launching.

HOME ON THE RANCH

The Brazos River, the longest river in Texas, begins in the high plains of Western Texas near the Llano Estacado canyons. With all the diverse features of a trans-state waterway, it runs across the West Texas Plains, rolls through the Brazos Valley and finally pours into the Gulf of Mexico. Its three-mile stretch at Long Acres Ranch is perfect for a kayaking and canoeing program, which will include on-site workshops and events that take place in various locations along the river.

The ranch has also established itself as a premier wildlife photography site. Specially designed units for photographers blend in with the surrounding nature through the use of camouflage prints, neutral colors and natural materials. The units have ground-level vision, so photographers can place their cameras close to wildlife without being noticed.

Along with the public photography sites, the facility has six motion-sensitive cameras situated in wildlife-dense areas, Kidda said. These cameras serve a dual purpose: one, unnoticed by foraging animals, they can take detailed, authentic photos of wildlife in their natural habitat; and two, they help monitor wildlife at the ranch — specifically, feral hogs.

FERAL ATTRACTION

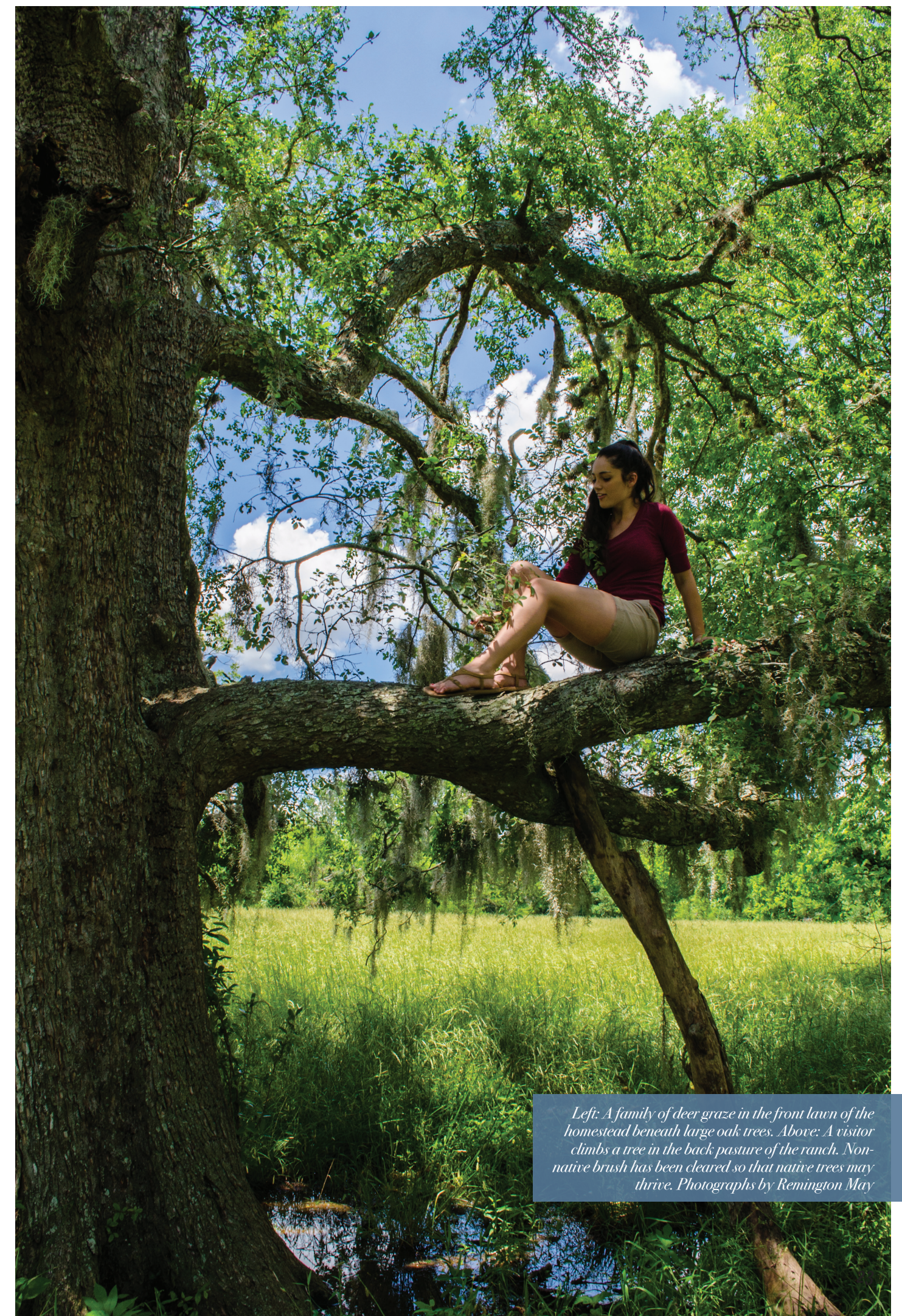
Notorious for uprooting land and ravaging the landscape, wild hogs are unwelcome visitors at any

ranch or farm. But, with the technology and management strategies at Long Acres Ranch, the hogs are kept mostly at bay.

Two cameras are inside feral hog traps and are used to show Kidda when to close the trap gates. The cameras send photos to his cellphone when they detect movement, which is programmed to be able to open and shut the gates from a remote area.

The secret to trapping the hogs lies in the feeders: a sticky sweet mix of corn and molasses, stationed inside each of the traps. The sweet molasses smell attracts hogs, which tend to come out at night. For Kidda, an occasional midnight alarm means somewhere out on the dark ranch a camera has sensed stirring.

Here is the catch: Other critters are sometimes drawn to the traps, as well. “Unfortunately, raccoons have more fun with the feeders than the hogs,” Kidda said, laughing.



Left: A family of deer graze in the front lawn of the homestead beneath large oak trees. Above: A visitor climbs a tree in the back pasture of the ranch. Non-native brush has been cleared so that native trees may thrive. Photographs by Remington May



Left: Professional kayak guides lead an adventurous trek down the Brazos River. Bottom left: Young buck attentively watching for predators in the clearing. Photographs courtesy of Jim Kidida.

Bottom right: A peacock roams the back lawn of the homestead. Photograph by Michael Catarineau.

Hogs are a relatively rare sight at the ranch. Most often, animals such as deer, armadillos and red tail hawks that are frequently spotted. Visitors may even catch a glimpse of the elusive male bobcat that Kidida said is periodically seen prowling the land.

CHANGING LANDSCAPE

Native animals are returning slowly to the ranch, but their survival depends on the land itself. To encourage wildlife repopulation, the ranch management strives to rebuild the original native species and return it to natural land. In a world where man dominates nature, Long Acres Ranch is where scissors beat rock.

Bit by bit, the land is receding, growing, changing; it is a beautiful transformation, a reverse metamorphosis. But, it is war.

Out in the field, Kidida points out the native grasses and plants beginning to grow. Bit by bit, the land is receding, growing, changing; it is a beautiful transformation, a reverse metamorphosis.

But, it is war. Here, man must fight tooth and nail for nature, and Kidida battles invasive species, like the Chinaberry tree, from growing willy-nilly over the fields. It took him and a team of scouts an entire afternoon to chop down 45 of the trees, a memory that still makes him grudgingly chuckle.

Good news – work on the ranch is not reserved for only ranch management. The restoration work on prairies and native plants offers a unique learning opportunity for students and faculty interested in wildlife management and ecology, Phillips said.

“There are opportunities for student internships and employment; faculty and graduate research projects and class projects,” Phillips said. “We can offer students a wide range of programs, from range management to English creative writing.”

A two-bedroom, furnished cabin for summer interns is situated near the entrance to the ranch. A fence separates the backyard, which includes a grill and picnic table, from the acres of surrounding grass. Best of all, interns can enjoy the scenic beauty and wildlife from the comfort of their own yard.

“Usually in the evenings, red tail hawks come and sit on the power lines,” Kidida said. “Miles once counted 103 deer out in the grass.”

Glamorous? No, but for a couple of college kids, it is the perfect balance of rustic and comfort.

In fact, all of Long Acres Ranch is a balancing act – the art of compromise; the act of creating and destroying; the eternal hunt between prey and predator. The surrounding suburbs press inward, but this land, the land of by-gone cattle and rock and dust, still stands. 🍷

Native animals are returning slowly to the ranch, but their survival depends on the land itself. In a world where man dominates nature, Long Acres Ranch is where scissors beat rock.



EVA VIGH '17

Eva spent the first three years of her life in Saudi Arabia. She played rugby and ran cross country at Texas A&M and can speak Hungarian.



A + M. "Branding Bunch" 2/10/17

Branding Bevo

The group of Aggies known as the "Branding Bunch" pose for a photo before heading to tu. Left to right, O. K. Johnson, Jim Crow, H. Roth, Captain track '16; C. F. Braunig, Ed Johnson, M. Mitchell, football '15-16, Captain track '17. Photograph courtesy of Cushing Library, TAMU.

— BY: REMINGTON MAY —

A branding iron sizzles. Smoke dissipates and a group of Aggies clear the area. A rivalry is heightened – Bevo I is born.

Today, we know the school on the other side of the Brazos calls their mascot Bevo and the credit is ours. The University of Texas is now looking to unveil Bevo XV, whose luck will be much greater than that of Bevo I.

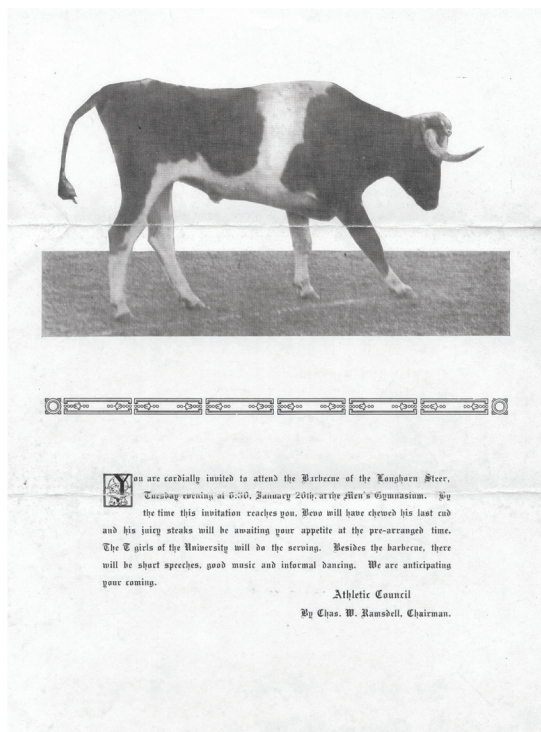
Nearly 100 years ago a group of Aggies traveled to Austin, where their devious prank took place. According to the Austin American Statesman, the pranksters included O. K. Johnson, Ed Johnson and Jim Crow of Waco, Hans Roth of Houston, Merlin Mitchell of Gainesville and C. F. Braunig. The group of students snuck into Bevo's stable early Sunday morning of Feb 12, 1917. UT History Central notes there was a struggle. However, the Aggies were able to brand the longhorn "13-0." The brand referenced the score of a shutout football game played between Texas A&M University and t.u. one-year prior. With a now branded mascot, it would not soon be forgotten how the Farmers defeated the Longhorns in 1916.

According to the Daily Texas, the legend continues as t.u. students altered the numbers by rebranding the animal. The "13" was changed into a "B", lines were added to fix the dash into an "E", a "V" was added and the zero was left alone to represent an "O." Giving their mascot the name "Bevo."

A few months later, the U.S. entered into World War I. Both the prank and Bevo lost importance until a few years later when the war was over. According to the Daily Texas, the longhorn was costing fifty cents a day and was too aggressive to roam the campus. t.u. decided to fatten up their beloved Bevo and send him to slaughter. Bevo was barbecued and became the main course for the school's 1920 football banquet. The invitation read "By the time this invitation reaches you, Bevo will have chewed his last cud and his juicy steaks will be awaiting your appetite at the pre-arranged time." According to the Daily Texan, the Aggies were invited and served the side of beef which they had branded three years earlier.



Above: University of Texas' mascot, Bevo I, after being branded "13-0." Left: The group of Aggie boys heat up the branding iron. Photographs courtesy of Cushing Library, TAMU.



Right: The formal invitation to the BBQ in which Bevo I was served as the main dish. Photograph courtesy of Cushing Library, TAMU.



REMINGTON MAY '17

Remington is from Stephenville, Texas. He is a marketing chair for his men's organization, Gents of Texas A&M, enjoys being outdoors and traveling with his friends and family.

FOOD

GOOD BULL

RECIPE COURTESY OF GENE BRANDENBERGER

THE RUB

- 2 TBSP. OLIVE OIL
- 2 TBSP. SALT
- 1 TBSP. GROUND BLACK PEPPER
- 8 TSP. BROWN SUGAR
- 1 TSP. PAPRIKA
- 1 TSP. CHILI PEPPER
- 1 TSP. ONION POWDER
- 1 TSP. DRIED OREGANO
- 1 TSP. GROUND CUMIN
- ½ TSP. GARLIC
- ¼ TSP. CAYENNE PEPPER
- 1 TSP. ADOLPH'S TENDERIZER
- 2 ONIONS - CHOPPED

SMOKE IT

RUB THE BRISKET WITH OLIVE OIL, THEN MIX DRY INGREDIENTS TO PREPARE RUB. APPLY RUB TO BOTH SIDES. RUB IT IN GOOD!

PUT THE MEAT IN THE REFRIGERATOR FOR 10 TO 12 HOURS, THEN, PLACE THE BRISKET IN YOUR SMOKER FOR 4 TO 6 HOURS AT SLIGHTLY LESS THAN 200 F. I PREFER TO USE FRUIT WOOD.

REMOVE MEAT FROM THE SMOKER AND PUT IT IN A BAKING BAG WITH 8 TO 10 ICE CUBES. SLICE ONIONS AND PLACE ON TOP OF MEAT.

COOK IN THE OVEN AT 200 F FOR 8 TO 10 HOURS, OR UNTIL MEAT IS TENDER.

NOW THAT'S SOME GOOD BULL!

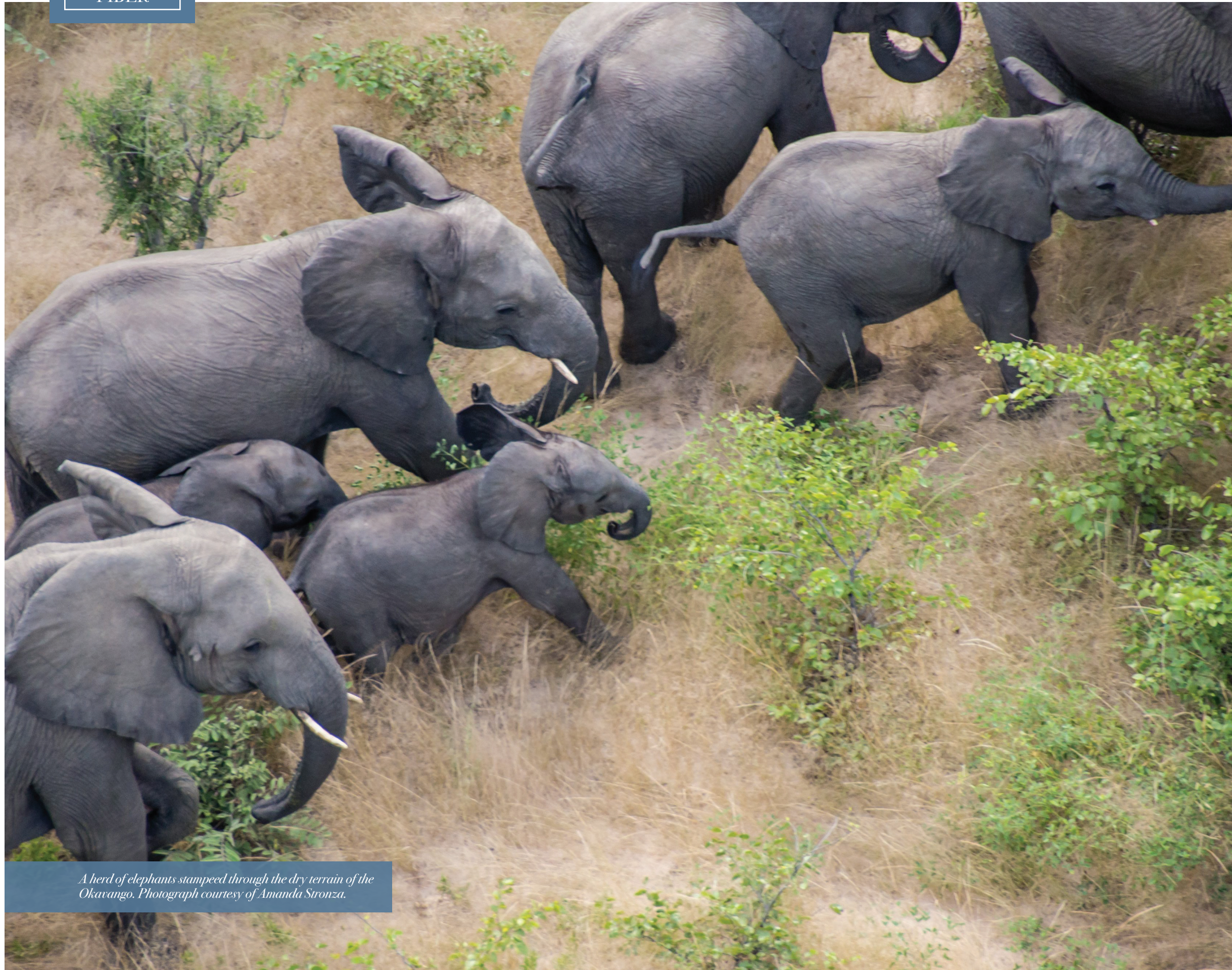
PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL CATARINEAU

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photo by Tanner Garza



A herd of elephants stampeded through the dry terrain of the Okavango. Photograph courtesy of Amanda Stronza.

LAND OF THE ELEPHANTS

BY: KARA SLAUGHTER

In the floodplains of northern Botswana, there is a conflict that occurs each and every day of the year. A fight for space. A fight for food. A fight for control. A colossal sized battle between the people and the elephants.

OF MAMMOTH CONCERN

The largest population of elephants – close to 200,000 – roams freely through the waterways, forests and grasslands of northern Botswana. In an area called the Okavango Delta Panhandle, there is a turf war between approximately 15,000 elephants and 15,000 villagers. The main point of conflict in this region of Botswana is tied to competition for space, the availability of water and access to resources.

Throughout the months of April to June, pools of water to the north in the woodlands dry up and the elephants make a migration south to the permanent waters of the Okavango Delta. As they migrate south, the elephants encounter the fields and people living in the area. This is also the peak harvest times for the villagers. Despite the pools of water drying up, the elephants still need resources from the northern region. During these dry months they will make multiple trips, sometimes daily, between the northern area of the Okavango Panhandle and the southern area.

As the elephants make the migration, they have to pass through fields and settlements. In one day, a herd of elephants can destroy an entire field of crops and imperil the livelihoods of the village people. The people in these areas use whatever methods they can, making lots of noise and burning fires, to scare the elephants away from their homes. When the elephants near a village or settlement, they pack closely together and barrel through to ensure their safety in a dangerous area.

ECOEXIST

Anna Songhurst, Ph.D., a conservation biologist, Graham McCulloch, Ph.D., a conservation ecologist, and Amanda Stronza, Ph.D., an anthropologist, saw the conflict happening and wanted to develop a solution: The Ecoexist Project. Stronza's research prior to teaming up with Songhurst and McCulloch focused on community-based conservation and sustainable development in the Amazon. Stronza met Songhurst and McCulloch in Botswana in 2011. The Ecoexist Project stems from the foundation of Songhurst's doctoral studies on this topic in the area since 2008, McCulloch's 20 years of experience working with conservation projects in Botswana and Stronza's leadership in creating the Applied Biodiversity Science NSF-IGERT Program at Texas A&M University. The three of them came together to answer one question: how do you address human and elephant conflict with the big picture in mind?

The Ecoexist team consists of the three project directors – Stronza, Songhurst and McCulloch – who lead the effort. The team also includes, three field coordinators, six support staff, 13 community officers and seven



Olebogeng Solomon, Boineelo Kayenda, and their children, from the Village of Ngarange, walk the road at dusk, carrying bundles of fuel wood. People are always on the watch for elephants crossing the same road. Photograph courtesy of Amanda Stronza.

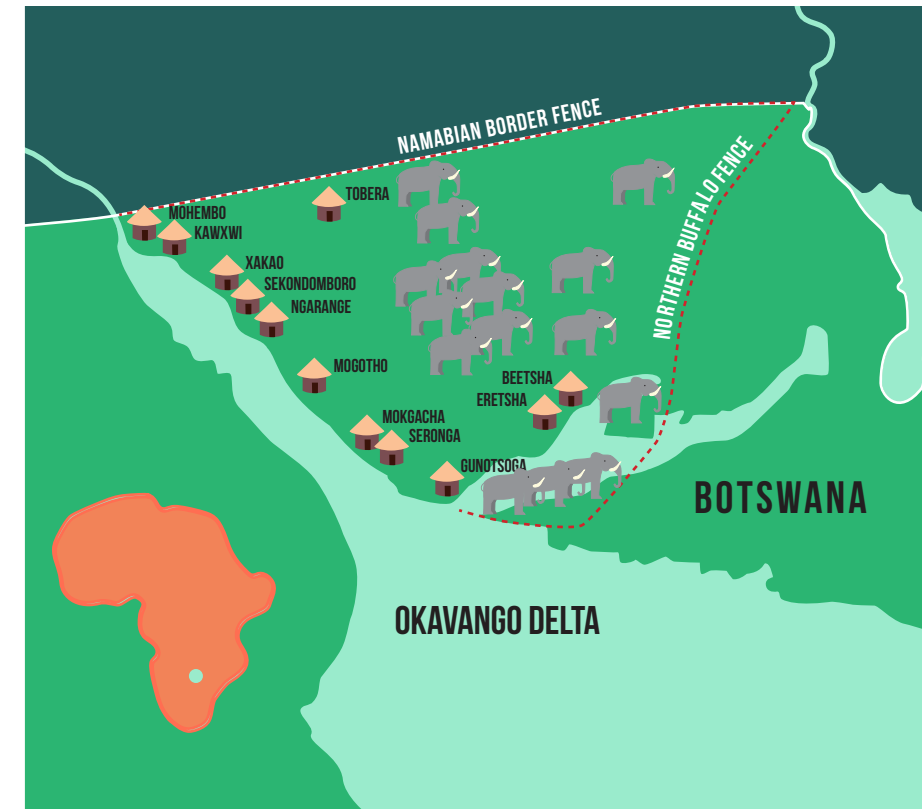


ILLUSTRATION BY REMINGTON MAY

BOTSWANA

The largest population of elephants in the world, nearly 200,000, roam freely across the lands of Botswana.

The land that is shared between humans and elephants forms a shape similar to that of a triangle. The triangle is inverted and the base is the shared border between Namibia and Botswana. The countries are separated by a double electrified veterinary fence. The right side of the land is Botswana's Northern Buffalo Fence – keeping livestock and wildlife from coming in contact. On the left side of the land is the Okavango River. This part of the panhandle is where the Okavango River comes through Botswana before spreading through the alluvial fan of the Okavango Delta.

In the area of northern Botswana, 15,000 elephants compete for space, food and resources with 15,000 people. The area they are living in is just over 8,000 square kilometers – roughly the size of Yellowstone National Park.

graduate students attending Texas A&M or Oxford University. These students are from Botswana, Chile, the Netherlands and the United States. This project is funded by a grant from The Howard G. Buffett Foundation. Their dedicated teamwork supports the lives of the people sharing space with elephants, while also ensuring the safety of both.

There are five major goals of The Ecoexist Project.

The first is to follow the herds. Tracking their movement helps researchers understand how many are in the herd, where they are going and their preferred routes of travel. Knowing this will allow the researchers to better control the intersection of humans and elephants.

“We have identified 13 important corridors that have been incorporated into land use planning models by the government land boards, in order to protect them from conversion to agricultural land and ultimately reduce future conflict,” Songhurst said.

There are 109 main pathways that elephants use in the panhandle, however, these 13 see the most traffic. By working with the government and having these 13 corridors incorporated into land use planning models, officials can avoid allocating new fields and other developments in high elephant traffic areas.

Songhurst and the Ecoexist team have collared 28 elephants – 18 males and 10 females – across the Okavango Panhandle. Data from the collars is allowing the team to grasp a better understanding of the elephants' seasonal movements, behaviors and habitats. This data has shown that the elephants prefer areas away from people and are not intentionally moving through villages.

The second aspect is to plan for shared space. A major part of this is knowing the main areas of travel for elephants and avoiding new development along those pathways. It is important to figure out how to make the land available for both the humans and elephants. The team gathers social, biological and ecological information to create a better understanding of the big picture. This information will help the Ecoexist team build opportunities

for shared space and reduce the conflict.

The people are angry, frustrated and stressed, and the elephants are just as afraid – this causes a dangerous situation. Zoning the area will help separate the settlements and fields from the elephant pathways. The Ecoexist team has set out to alleviate the root of the conflict in order to make coexistence possible.

“You can't understand the mindset of the people until you can understand what it is like living in their situation,” McCulloch said.

The third and fourth parts of the project go together, protecting the fields and harvesting the crops earlier. The team is implementing a combination of different mitigation techniques to help prevent elephants from entering farmers' fields, such as solar powered electric fences, noise producing structures and solar lights. Although there are techniques to help avoid crop raiding, it is equally

important to figure out how to develop sustainable, productive and resilient farming strategies.

“Most of the people in the Panhandle rely on crops to sustain their families,” McCulloch said. “They wait for the rains and hope for the best.”

McCulloch and the Ecoexist team work closely with the farmers to explore the best farming and harvesting techniques in an area. Both McCulloch and local farmers are working together to find ways to make their tactics more intensive, improve the soil quality by adding manure and mulch and implement crop rotation. He is working with the villagers toward conservation agriculture, which is a technique where farmers can produce more crops in smaller plots that are easier to protect using mitigation techniques. Conservation agriculture also means they do not have to clear more land in elephant habitats in search of better soils. This will ultimately help improve the food security of the farmers and their vulnerability of crop loss to elephants.

The remaining component of the project is to build an elephant economy. The team is working on elephant-friendly and elephant-themed commerce for the Okavango Panhandle. They are striving to bring positive

“We have taken the paradigm of reducing human-elephant conflict and turned it on its head to aim for coexistence.”

- Amanda Stronza

Botswana, Land of the Elephants, is home to more than 200,000 of these majestic beasts. These animals roam freely through the waterways, forests and grasslands of northern Botswana.

economic benefits to the area and hopefully spark tourism diversification.

“The biggest challenge has been to change the perception of elephants in the villages,” McCulloch said. “We’ve built up an amazing trust with the villagers and it has allowed us to work better with the community.”

The Ecoexist team strives to have the villagers benefit from living so close to the large numbers of elephants. They are developing small-scale community based tourism that will showcase local cultural traditions, elephant-themed products and talents of the villagers. With this final step of the project, Ecoexist works to develop a place where people and elephants benefit each other.

Many conservation projects focus on species preservation. Development projects tend to focus on improving the livelihoods of people. Ecoexist is unique in striving to do both and enable coexistence between wild elephant populations and people, making the floodplains of northern Botswana hospitable for both.

“We have taken the paradigm of reducing human-elephant conflict and turned it on its head to aim for coexistence,” Stronza said.

HOLISTIC SOLUTION

Ecoexist has taken a new holistic approach to human-wildlife conflict. They have combined mitigation strategies that meet the immediate needs of the farmers suffering from the conflict with a research program and practical interventions. These involve various government sectors in finding solutions to the underlying causes of human-elephant conflict. While their work has been seeing great strides of progress, they are still facing many challenges.

“Unlike elephants that are in safari areas, where they are relatively comfortable around people, elephants in the Panhandle are afraid of the people,” Stronza said. “They tightly pack together and run fast when they move through the villages.”

For more information on Ecoexist, visit <http://www.ecoexistproject.org/>.

When an elephant or family of elephants come into a field, they can trample or ruin crops in an instant. Crop raiding is a huge issue for the villagers because it destroys their livelihood. However, through Songhurst’s studies, she has learned that the elephants try to stick to their natural pathways. Songhurst encourages farmers to plant

their fields farther away from the pathways, where they will be less likely to have their crops raided. With that being said, there are a few male elephants that seek out crops, such as maize, to eat. Fortunately, most elephants are opportunistic and raid the fields only if they have to pass through them on their way to water or other resources.

Songhurst and the team have worked with the farmers to start growing chili peppers to create “Chili Bombs.” A chili bomb is made by drying and crushing the peppers and mixing them with elephant dung. Then, it is dried out and lit using a coal from the fire so that it smokes. When the elephants get a whiff of the potent smell, they tend to avoid the area.

“The farmers are already very vulnerable,” McCulloch said. “And then you add elephants on top of that.”

Finding solutions to human-elephant conflict also requires working very closely with the people of the panhandle, as well as the government and other stakeholders. The Ecoexist Team emphasizes the importance of close working relationships with community members, building trust and wide-scale participation by all stakeholders in the implementation and success of their project.

ADDRESSING THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

Ecoexist has approached human and elephant conflict with a holistic approach. Their goal is to work on policy within the government to find long-term solutions to the conflict. They will use the social, economic and ecological data from research and practical interventions to fully understand the causes of the human-elephant conflict and identify the consequences it brings. Then, they connect the political, social, economic and ecological aspects together to create a holistic approach to solving human-elephant conflict.

“Botswana is a shining ray of hope,” Stronza said. “In a world of pain and conflict where there is little hope.”



KARA SLAUGHTER '16

Kara was born and raised in Aggieldand. She enjoys reading a good book while sipping on a hot cup of tea.



The sun sets over a herd of elephants drinking from the Okavango Delta. Photograph Courtesy of Amanda Stronza



Students in Fusion have access to real world equipment.
 Photograph by Michael Catarineau.

BY: SARAH BOCKHOLT

It's Tuesday night, we're broadcasting live from Texas A&M University where we are bringing you the hottest divergent rock jams and craziest stories to keep your night pumped. Tune in to Fusion FM 95.1 HD 2, College Station's one and only divergent rock station.

Fusion FM was created to bridge the gap between industry and academia and finds its home in the Agriculture and Life Sciences Complex at Texas A&M. Future broadcasters are introduced to the software used by industry experts and learn how to keep a radio station running.

Currently, students in the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications at Texas A&M have the opportunity to pursue their passions in the radio industry. While not everyone desires to be on-air, there are ways for students to work behind the scenes of the radio station.

Although this radio station finds its home in the AGLS complex, there are opportunities for all students regardless of major. Students are able to earn academic or internship credit as well as gain real-world experience with their involvement in Fusion FM.

BEHIND THE MIC

"Fusion FM is a radio station on campus that has an academia and industry relationship," said Shannon Burkhart '16, Fusion FM music director. "It's for students who want real world experience in radio before actually going out into the real world."

This program offers students the ability to gain experience in digital

media research, graphic design, audio and video production, promotions, sales and advertising in radio and broadcast journalism. Being involved with a radio station may also open the eyes of students who have never considered the industry before.

"I have always wanted to do sports broadcasting," Burkhart said. "So for me, I have been able to learn more about the programs we use and it has opened my eyes to other opportunities that I didn't even know I wanted to pursue."

"We talk about the kind of things we think our listeners will want to tell their friends — any funny stories, weird news or anything we find online is fair game for the show."
 - Ellie Harpole '16

Someone has to be in charge of scheduling the on-air personalities and making sure the advertisements are sold and ready to play on-air. The music also has to be programmed to entertain listeners. While some students may never be heard on the radio, they are working diligently behind the scenes to keep the radio station running.

"I would recommend it to anyone," Burkhart said. "Even if they don't want to do radio, because you can apply what you learn here to any industry."

Students gain a thorough understanding of the radio broadcasting industry while working for Fusion FM. They also learn valuable skills that can be applied to their first job after graduation. When students are able to apply what they learn in a completely immersive environment like this, it speaks volumes to employers. They exit the course with concrete examples of how they have managed their time and interpersonal relationships. Students also have the opportunity to get feedback from industry professionals.

TALKING HEADS

ACCJ 366, Radio Broadcasting, is a requirement for any student who would like to be on-air. Opportunities on-air include play-by-plays, news segments or co-shows. Students in ACCJ 466, Advanced Radio Broadcasting, currently fill the spaces in-between the divergent rock that is heard on Fusion FM.

Agricultural communications and journalism students Kaylan Millis '16 and Ellie Harpole '16 host the Kellie Co-Show.

"The Kellie Co-show is a 'fusion' of the names Kaylan and Ellie," Millis said. "The show started because having an on-air show is part of the radio II class and Fusion did not have a two-person show yet."

Students can create their own talk show and personalities with completion of Radio Broadcasting. In the beginning, few people created their own shows and did play-by-plays, but now there are 20 personalities who have segments on-air.

"Kaylan pitched the idea to me," Harpole said. "And it sounded like a great experience so we went ahead and got the ok to do it."

Millis and Harpole host the Kellie-Co Show every Tuesday at 12 p.m. for their Tippy Tuesday segment, which includes a bar tip and a life hack to entertain their listeners for two hours.

"Coming up with content is probably the hardest part," Harpole said. "We talk about the kind of things we think our listeners will want to tell their friends — any funny stories, weird news or anything we find online is fair game for the show."

Students learn about industry programs, such as vCreative PPO, Music Master Scheduling, WideOrbit Automation and PromoSuite Next. In Advanced Radio Broadcasting, the students study these programs more in depth. With this experience, students are given a chance to master the programs and gain a deeper understanding of the broadcast industry.

THE SHOW MUST GO ON

While creating content to fill time slots on the radio station, getting

people to actually listen is vital. Promotional work takes a ton of manpower, therefore they are always looking for outgoing individuals to help out.

Charissa Bryce '17 is co-director for Fusion promotions. Bryce co-directs the promotion team with Sabrina Casas '17, both agricultural communications and journalism majors.

"I email a lot of people and I make a lot of phone calls," Bryce said. "To see if we can come to their event to promote it on air."

The promotions team is comprised of three other girls and they are constantly getting help from other departments within Fusion FM. While this is a lot of work, promotions keep the radio station going.

"Flexibility would be the greatest skill set to have," Bryce said. "Plans can fall through, people do not always show up, so making do with what you have is key."

Skills such as flexibility, time management and professionalism can be obtained with this experience, while earning school credit. These skills can add to students' résumés and help them stand out amongst peers.

FINAL PRODUCTION

Maybe being on-air is not everyone's calling, and that is okay. Fusion FM takes a small village to succeed and requires eager students to fulfill the duties of running a radio station.

Overall, there is something for everyone. Students of all majors are welcome to help operate the radio station. They can establish a new, on-air personality or master the behind-the-scenes efforts of the music coming from the little, black box in our cars.



SARAH BOCKHOLT '16

Sarah is a lover of less than perfect dogs, comfy socks and is from Katy, Texas.

Over the Years

SPRING 1989:

- Club team began

1989:

- First trip to Nationals at St. Lawrence in Ontario

1999:

- Became an NCAA sport

2001-02:

- Won our first VENC National Championship

- Won our first IHSA Western National Championship

2007:

- Recruiting began

2008:

- Went to head to head match-up format

2011-12:

- NCEA National Champions, NCEA Western National Champions

2012:

- Moved from Big 12 to the SEC

- Ground broke on Hildebrand Equine Complex



Left: Recent members of the equestrian team. Photograph courtesy of Canon Creek Photography.
Above: The original equestrian team from 1989 poses after first nationals competition. Photograph courtesy of Beth Bass.

My dream growing up was to become a member of the Fightin' Texas Aggie Women's Equestrian Team. Little did I know, this dream would become reality and this team would become my life.

— BY: SARAH KATE GRIDER —

My dream growing up was to become a member of the Fightin' Texas Aggie Women's Equestrian Team. Little did I know, this dream would become a reality and this team would become my life.

The Texas A&M Equestrian team began in 1989 at Freeman Arena with six horses, 150 club members and two coaches. The team as well as the coaches, Beth Bass and Karen Kipp, did not know they were the beginning of one of the most prestigious varsity equestrian teams in the United States.

Their first practice was in the spring of 1989. Each team member practiced 10 to 20 minutes a week. Despite the lack of practice time in their first year, the western team made it to the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association's national competition, setting the standard for years to come.

"It was amazing to watch the team transform," Bass said. "The Intercollegiate Horse Show Association opened many doors for me."

In 1999, Title IV presented the opportunity for women's equestrian to become part of the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

The emerging sport quickly gained popularity from young women in the horse show world. In 2007, Head Coach Tana McKay began traveling to major horse shows and recruiting girls for the team. Recruiting had not been previously utilized, but it brought a new element to the team.

"It was a smooth transition," McKay said. "We added something new each year instead of all at once."

I always wanted to come to Texas A&M University and be an Aggie like my parents. After I discovered attending Texas A&M and riding for the equestrian team was an opportunity, it became my goal. The team hosted its first equestrian camp in 2012, and McKay offered me a spot on the team one week after I attended. All of the hours I had spent practicing and competing at horse shows had finally paid off.

Today, the team is made up of 50 members and 60 horses. We each practice five hours a week and spend even more time caring for our four-legged teammates. Some people may call me crazy for hopping on a 1,000-pound animal, but it is what I love – it is my passion. The feeling I experience after a great ride, when I can hear each of my teammates cheering for me, is one that cannot be explained.

Since 1989, Texas A&M Equestrian has presented many opportunities for past and present members. Scholarships, traveling and championships are just a few of the many things this team has to offer, but the memories and friendships formed are what I will never forget. 🍷



SARAH KATE GRIDER '16

Sarah Kate is from Quitman, Texas. She enjoys fishing with her dad, Walter.

Name: Jessie Hill Weisinger '01
Degree: Animal Science
Profession: Assistant Coach of Texas A&M University Women's Equestrian Team



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY CANON CREEK PHOTOGRAPHY



Q: What has been the best part of coming back and coaching the team you previously rode for?

A: Being back in this setting, the school I love and the team I helped bring to life. The girls also keep it interesting. There is never a dull moment and every day brings something new. Plus, this beautiful facility that I get to work in every day makes it pretty easy to get up and come to work.

Q: What has been your proudest moment as a coach?

A: I have a lot of them, but one that really sticks out was the first round of the SEC Championships in 2015, when we knocked off the number one team.

Q: As an animal science major, who was your favorite professor? What is a memory you have of them that you will never forget?

A: Dr. Gary Potter, he was a no nonsense guy, but also a teddy bear. We used to say it was like he had a Ph.D. in what seemed like everything. One day, we were at Freeman Arena for horse judging practice and I gave a great set of reasons. He got up and hugged me. It shocked everyone there, including me. 🍷



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EAT IT, DAMMIT!



Ingredients

1 bottle Stubbs Steak Marinade
2 tablespoons chopped garlic
Salt and pepper

Directions

Salt and pepper both sides of the steak. Place in large plastic bag or Tupperware. Pour marinade over steaks and add chopped garlic. Let steak marinate in refrigerator for as long as you want before grilling.

RECIPE COURTESY OF LARSON MCQUARY

BY: LARSON MCQUARY

Tailgating season in College Station is one of the most anticipated times of the year. Walking through the maze of tents surrounding Kyle Field, hearing the familiar sounds of cold beer cans cracking open, or burgers sizzling on a grill, mixed with the enticing smell of brisket roasting in a pit. There is always someone at a tailgate who has their 'thing,' a recipe everyone loves. In preparation for the Fall 2016 tailgating season, students, faculty, and staff members in every department of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences shared their beloved tailgating recipes, their 'thing,' so that fellow Aggies might enjoy them at their own tailgates.

MONKEY BREAD

Ingredients

- 2 cans premade biscuits
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans or walnuts

Directions

Cut one can of biscuits into quarter pieces and roll in granulated sugar. Place evenly in greased Bundt pan. Melt butter with brown sugar until bubbling and well combined. Add nuts. Spread 1/2 butter mix over first layer of biscuit pieces. Add second can of biscuit pieces and remaining butter mixture. Bake at 400 F for 20-30 minutes until pieces are golden brown. Cool for 5-to-10 minutes and enjoy while the Aggies BTHO their morning opponent.

RECIPE COURTESY OF DAVID BALTESPERGER, Ph.D., SOIL & CROPS SCIENCE

Ingredients

- 1 can black-eyed peas
- 1 can black beans
- 1 can shoepeg corn
- 4-5 Roma tomatoes
- 2-3 avocados
- 4 green onions
- 1/2 bunch cilantro
- 1-2 limes
- 1 jalapeño (optional)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/2 cup zesty Italian dressing

Directions

Drain and rinse beans and corn, then add to large bowl. Dice tomatoes and add to bowl with cilantro. Finely slice green onions and add. Dice avocado and add lime juice to prevent browning, then add to mixture. Add Italian dressing then season to taste with salt and pepper. Chill in refrigerator until cold and flavors have marinated. Serve with tortilla chips and enjoy the refreshing dip as you wipe off sweat with a rally towel during a hot, September tailgate.

RECIPE COURTESY OF CHARLENE BOGGUS, AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP, EDUCATION, AND COMMUNICATION

COWBOY CAVIAR

Ingredients

- 1 block cream cheese
- 2 cups mayonnaise
- 1 14-ounce can artichoke hearts, drained and chopped
- 2 green onions, thinly sliced
- 1 cup mozzarella
- Dash of hot sauce
- Dash of Worcestershire sauce
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 F. In large mixing bowl, beat cream cheese until smooth. Add mayonnaise and beat until creamy. Add remaining ingredients and stir together. Transfer to baking dish of choice and bake for 30-40 minutes until golden brown and bubbling. Serve with crackers, tortilla chips or vegetables. This is the perfect appetizer for a snot-kicking victory by Texas A&M.

RECIPE COURTESY OF CHARLENE BOGGUS, AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP, EDUCATION, AND COMMUNICATION

THREE CHEESE HOT ARTICHOKE DIP

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 pounds ground meat of choice (venison, elk, moose, beef, antelope)
- 1 12-ounce can or bottle beer (straight from your tailgate cooler)
- 1 onion, chopped
- 6 tablespoons garlic, minced
- 1 jalapeño, finely chopped
- 1 can fire-roasted tomatoes
- 1 can kidney beans
- 2 chipotle peppers in adobo sauce, chopped

- 1 tablespoon adobo sauce
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 5 tablespoons chili powder
- 4 tablespoons cumin
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- Salt and pepper to taste

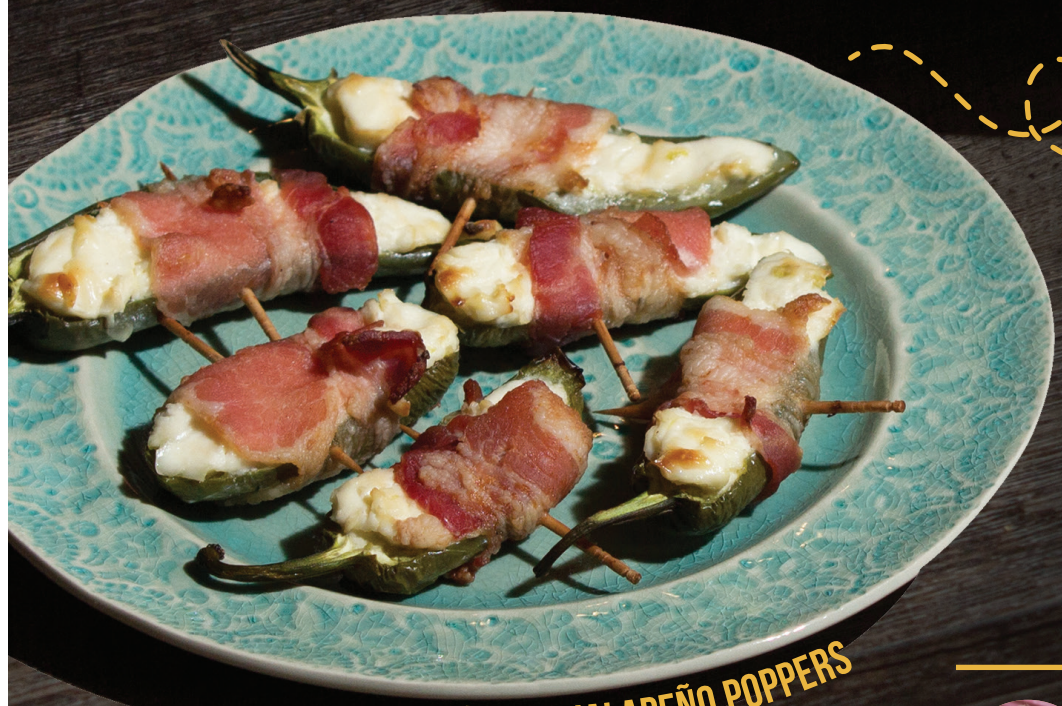
Directions

Use large cast-iron skillet or pot with lid. Brown meat in cooking oil. Add 1/2 can of beer and cook on low for 30 minutes to 1 hour, stirring occasionally. Chop onion, jalapeño, and chipotle. Sauté in juices from meat mix until onion is opaque. Add to meat. Pour in tomatoes and beans then add remaining ingredients. Stir together and cook over low heat for 1-2 hours. The flavors will be stronger if cooked longer. Stir occasionally then serve with cornbread, Fritos or toppings of your choice.

RECIPE COURTESY OF LARSON MCQUARY



WILD GAME CHILI



BACON JALAPEÑO POPPERS

Ingredients

- 20 jalapeños
- 2 blocks of cream cheese, softened
- 1 pound bacon, sliced into thirds
- Toothpicks

Directions

Preheat oven to 375 F. Cut jalapeños in half, length-wise. Remove seeds and white membrane. Fill with cream cheese and wrap with one slice of bacon. Secure with a toothpick. Bake jalapeños on a pan with a rack for 20-25 minutes. Have cold beer on hand in case of any unexpected spiciness (from poppers or fellow tailgaters).

RECIPE COURTESY OF REE DRUMMOND, THE PIONEER WOMAN COOKS: RECIPES FROM AN ACCIDENTAL COUNTRY GIRL



LARSON MCQUARY '16
Larson is from Plano, Texas and loves queso, a nice glass of wine and enjoying the outdoors.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL CATARINEAU

Name: Alison Prince '04, '08
Degree: Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Leadership and Development, Master of Education in Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications
Profession: United Way of the Brazos Valley President and CEO



PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL CATARINEAU

Q: How did you get to where you are today?
A: I was working in the interior design field when Hurricane Katrina and Rita hit New Orleans and Houston. As I was driving around the Metroplex trying to sell custom closets, I realized people were sitting on their rooftops unsure if they were going to make it out alive. I felt this big draw that I should be doing something more, so I came back to Texas A&M University. I knew I wanted to work in non-profits and find a way to volunteer for a living. I had flexibility with my graduate degree, so I was able to use classes towards both my graduate degree and the Bush School's nonprofit management certification. All of this started to fit together perfectly for what I wanted to do. Then, two months before I graduated, a position opened up at United Way and I took it. After five years and two CEO transitions, I applied for CEO and was chosen. I think my degrees offered me a broad education, taught me the human touch and prepared me for where I am today.

Q: Where do you think you found your passion for volunteer work?
A: I was involved in Alpha Phi Omega, a co-ed service fraternity at Texas A&M. I was involved from the first semester I transferred to Texas A&M to my senior year when I was president. I lived and breathed APO. It taught me a lot about serving the community and world around you. It completely took me out of my shell.

Q: Is there a piece of advice you would give a college student in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences?
A: I would say connect the dots for the employer. Which is more than saying "Hey, I have this degree and I'm interested in this." Actually make the connection – tell them how a degree that might not necessarily fit, can fit. Find something tangible, like a skill set, and translate that across.



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Woven into the pages of this magazine is the story of agriculture. Maybe it is not the obvious one or the most popular tale, but it is our industry's story. My earnest hope is that this issue shines a light on the diversity within agriculture. The industry can be broken down into three main categories – food, fuel and fiber – and though we took a different approach to these topics, we tried to keep our roots in mind. Whether it is the ever vigilant livestock guard dogs in “Collared,” gaining insight into just what inspires our equestrian team members in “Then and Now” or traveling to the distant land of Botswana in “Land of the Elephants” – agriculture is on every page.

My journey in agriculture began with Oreo and Cookie. In this instance, I am not referring to milk's best friend, but the two pigs that were my first county fair project. When my dad first mentioned raising pigs, I was horrified at the thought of waking up to feed the stinky, messy animals. Yet, the minute I walked into the breeder's barn and saw the little guys, I knew my dad was right. These piglets quickly nuzzled their way into my heart and like any responsible eight-year-old, I spent days coming up with the perfect names for them. Over the course of that summer, Oreo and Cookie taught me a lot about life – everything from being accountable to frolicking in the mud. Even though my boots were always dirty and my cheeks occasionally tear-stained, I would not trade those moments for anything in the world.

Fast forward to 2016 – those two little piglets had a lasting effect on my life. Oreo and Cookie sent me down a path to my major, my university and my passion. It is my hope that this magazine will remind you of our roots in agriculture and encourage you along your journey.

I know that wherever you turn in this issue, my staff's devotion to making this the best AgriLeader yet will show in each blot of ink. On behalf of the Fall 2016 AgriLeader staff, I hope this issue resonates with you and inspires you to find the agriculture in your story.

- Emily Foreman

Emily Foreman

AGRILEADER

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MEET THE STAFF



Front: Sarah Bockholt, Debra D'esposito, Ashley Seidenberger, Emily Foreman, Tracy Rutherford, Ph.D., Stephanie Covarrubias, Ally Hancock, Rachel Kaplan, Sarah Kate Grider, Larson McQuary. Back: Eva Vigh, Emmali Pankonien, Jacob Langhamer, Remington May, Luke Lamb, Michael Catarineau, Andi Vetter, Madison Gramling, Kara Slaughter.



Michael Catarineau, Debra D'esposito, Remington May.



Sarah Bockholt, Kara Slaughter, Ally Hancock.



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