

WIU Livestock Judging Team Named “Champion Senior College Judging Team”

September 2017

The Western Illinois University Livestock Judging Team was recently named the Champion Senior College Judging Team at the National Barrow Show in Austin, MN.

The WIU team placed first in team reasons and was the high team overall. Individually, Will Taylor (Flora, IN) was first in reasons and Jared Lamle (Columbia City, IN) was third in reasons. Overall, Cory Webster (Chrisman, IL) was fifth and Lamle was sixth.

Also on the winning team is Olivia Claire (Watseka, IL), Mikaela Fringer (Madera, CA), Nick Bangert (Bluegrass, IA), Will Blankers (London Mills, IL) and Courtney Scherer (Decatur, IN). The team is coached by Associate Professor of Agriculture Mark Hoge and Hayden Wilder, a former team member who is pursuing his MBA at WIU.

The WIU Junior Livestock Judging Team also took two truckloads (six pigs in each load) of University-raised hogs to compete in the Truckload Contest at the Barrow Show. The Crossbred Load was named champion in the Crossbred Truckload class. The Yorkshire Load won second place in the Purebred Truckload class. The WIU team's juniors also took two Yorkshire Gilts and one Spotted Boar to show and sell as Breeding Stock in the NBS Show and Sale.

Hoge said the annual event is the first team activity juniors take part in, and it helps to prepare them for their transition to becoming members of the senior judging team next year.



WIU Weed Science Team Captures Regional Awards

September 2017



Four Western Illinois University School of Agriculture students recently won two awards at the North Central Weed Science Society (NCWSS) competition near Ames, IA. The students were members of WIU's Weed Science Team, advised by WIU Associate Professor of Agriculture Mark Bernards.

The competition was held at Iowa State University July 27. The WIU team placed third in the Undergraduate Student Contest and received an award for team sprayer calibration. WIU sent two teams to the competition. Team one, which captured the awards, includes Luke Merritt, a senior agriculture major from Payson, IL; Tyler Wilson, a senior agriculture major from Murrayville, IL; Nathan Hilleson, a senior agriculture major from Lee, IL and Zach Brewer, a junior major from Monmouth, IL. Team two includes Alex Pembroke, a senior agriculture major from Greenfield, IL; Ethan Johnson, a senior agriculture major from Gilson, IL and Allyson Rumber, a junior agriculture major from Canton, IL.

WIU Aggies

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

2017-2018 EDITION



School of Ag Develops WIU Aggies Alumni Group

August 2017

In an effort to reconnect with its alumni, the Western Illinois University School of Agriculture has developed the WIU Aggies, an organization for its graduates, as well as for friends of the school.

The organization is run by a 14-member advisory council, which will host alumni events throughout the year and raise money for the continued growth of the WIU School of Agriculture.

Supporter levels for the WIU Aggies are \$25 for a single alumnus; \$35 for WIU alumni couples and \$50 for friends of the school.

To become a WIU Aggies supporter, visit bit.ly/WIUAggies. For more information about the organization, contact Jana Knupp at JM-Knupp@wiu.edu.

We are very excited about the potential with the WIU Aggies group," Knupp says. "We know we have the best alumni base on campus and that they are very passionate about seeing the program continue to grow. Not only are we hosting several social events for Leathernecks to reconnect with their classmates, the WIU Aggies group gives us a grassroots effort way to affect the School of Agriculture.

We want to be able to see the projects that are important to our alums come to fruition through the efforts of this group."



WIU Ag Students Win PAS Awards

November 2017

A group of six Western Illinois University School of Agriculture students competed in the Illinois Fall Postsecondary Agricultural Student Organizations (PAS) Fall Conference at Lincoln Land Community College Nov. 3. All six Western students received either a first or second place in their competitions.

WIU students who competed include:

Mariana Roberts, a senior agriculture major from Liberty, IL, finished first in the Agricultural Education Employment interview.

"I placed first over 13 other universities and junior colleges," said Roberts. "I spent several hours preparing materials for this event, including a resume, cover letter and a program handbook. It was a great experience to get me prepared for a real-life interview and I can't wait for nationals in March."

Adam Wright, a junior agriculture major from Carthage, IL, finished first in the Ag Business Sales Employment interview.

Kylee Johnston, a senior agriculture major from Carthage, IL, finished first in the Landscape/Nursery Employment interview.

"I was excited to compete again for WIU at the IL Fall PAS Conference," said Johnston.



"I had an awesome time at the state PAS conference in Springfield, IL," said Wright. "I am excited for the national conference in Louisville, KY, this spring and hope to perform well and represent Western in a great way."

"We had to come up with a job description and then go through the interview process. I am excited to compete at nationals in the spring at Louisville, KY, and hope to do well."

Ryan Farmer, a junior agriculture major from Monmouth, IL, and Tanner Stratton, a junior agriculture major from Quincy, IL, finished second in the Crop Specialist team event.

"I just want to say that this was a fun event that was a great way to prove what I have learned during my college career," said Stratton. "I am looking forward to the competitions at the spring conference."

Cori Sargent, a senior agriculture major from Cameron, IL, finished second in the Livestock Production Employment interview.

"I participated in livestock production employment interview," said Sargent. "This is when you prepare a resume and cover letter and competed against students from other schools in Illinois."

All first place winners qualified to compete at the national PAS conference in Louisville, KY, in March. Based on the results of other state competitions, some or all of the second place finishers may also advance to the national competition.

WIU Alumnus Aids in Hurricane Irma Recovery Effort

October 2017

As hundreds of thousands of Floridians fled the approaching wrath of Hurricane Irma last month, a Western Illinois University (WIU) alumnus was racing to the state to help with the aftermath.



Brian Sprinkle, of Industry, IL, is a 2012 graduate of WIU's agriculture program, where he concentrated on urban forestry. He has been a utility vegetation management consultant with CN Utility Consulting (CNUC) since 2015, managing short term projects around the U.S. Sprinkle is a member of CNUC's Emergency Response Team and responds to natural disasters across the United States to assist utility companies with their restoration process.

Sprinkle arrived in Fort Lauderdale, FL, Sept. 8, three days before Irma touched down, and he rode out the storm in a hotel room.

"I was outside the hotel on the opposite side of the wind, watching trees bending and power lines arcing, when a part of an air conditioning unit fell off a roof and hit a car nearby," said Sprinkle. "That's when I decided it was time to go back inside. I have experienced heavy Midwest winds in a short storm, but never imagined the hurricane's wind sustaining the same level for seven hours."

The longest portion of Sprinkle's three days in the hotel was spent without power, making accommodations uncomfortable. Sprinkle shared the hardships that many Floridians were experiencing themselves, with temperatures in the 90s and air-conditioning units at a standstill.

After the storm passed, Sprinkle and the CNUC team helped orchestrate the task of removing downed trees and other vegetation from power lines. "These storms cause trees to interfere with the utility infrastructure, resulting in power outages," said Sprinkle. "We manage the vegetation around the utility infrastructure, which includes clearing the lines before the linemen and engineers arrived. This expedited the rebuilding process and allows them to restore power quicker."

Sprinkle spent a total of two weeks in Florida. The restoration process started with Sprinkle helping manage nearly 250 people from various companies around the country, and those resources quickly grew to 500.

"I attribute everything I have today to WIU," Sprinkle said. "My education provided me with the foundation that has been vital to my success."



Sprinkle later traveled to Bonita Springs, FL, where his team increased to about 1,000 people. During Sprinkle's tenure with CNUC, he has responded to other natural disasters, such as Hurricane Matthew and wildfires in California.

He said his time at WIU helped him develop the skills needed to face the various projects he manages in his career.

WIU-QC to Offer Ag Classes via Moline Foundation Grant

December 2017

High school students in the Quad Cities area will have an opportunity to take free courses in agriculture at Western Illinois University-Quad Cities, thanks to a recent gift from The Moline Foundation.

The \$100,000 gift will support a multi-year pilot program for area high school students to dual enroll in classes focused on agriculture science, business, technology and communication, according to Andy Baker, director of the WIU School of Agriculture.

"With Quad Cities-area high schools primarily serving an urban population, there is a lack of awareness among students on the variety and abundance of job options and corresponding educational pathways to an agriculture-related career," Baker noted.

"We appreciate The Moline Foundation's continued support of Western Illinois University. The Foundation recognizes the needs of the region and that Western has outstanding academic programs and the potential to meet those needs," said WIU President Jack Thomas. "I would also like to express our gratitude to Andy Baker and the WIU School of Agriculture for being a part of this pilot program."

The Foundation's gift will be used for courses tentatively scheduled for the Fall 2018 semester. Further details regarding course scheduling and specific curriculum will be announced at a later date.

"With our previous initiatives with workforce development, The Moline Foundation could

see a need for agricultural-based classes for high school students," said Joy Boruff, president/CEO of The Moline Foundation.

"We are pleased to partner with Western Illinois University to assist in funding dual enrollment agriculture classes for Quad City area high school students. Agriculture is the number one industry in Illinois in terms of economic impact, contributing more than \$8.85 billion to Illinois' economy annually. Clearly, there is an opportunity to educate our future workforce about the growth and availability of jobs and careers in this sector."

The Moline Foundation encourages philanthropy and channels resources to meet the needs of the Quad Cities and the surrounding area.

School of Ag Students Kick Off Food Bank

October 2017

A campus survey about food availability for Western Illinois University students has resulted in the development of a food bank by students from the WIU School of Agriculture.

The survey, created and disseminated by Assistant Professor of Dietetics, Fashion Merchandising and Hospitality Emily Shupe, showed 48 percent of answering students have gone hungry in the past 30 days.

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The results sparked WIU ag students to conduct a food drive during the University's Homecoming celebration in late September, in conjunction with the Homecoming

Committee and Homecoming participants. Items were collected during the cardboard boat regatta, the variety show and spirit games, which brought in more than 1,100 pounds of food to kick off the food bank.

"Our group decided to do the food drive because we felt like, after seeing the survey, that we should join together to help each other out so we can succeed in our future careers," said WIU junior agriculture major Kylee Johnston, of Carthage, IL.

WIU Ag Students Win National Competition for 3rd Year in a Row

December 2017

For the third year in a row, a group of 60 Western Illinois University agriculture students have won the College Aggies Online (CAO) competition and \$2,500 in scholarship funding for the University's Agriculture Club.

The club was also awarded two \$250 prizes for creating the best event for each competition challenge, for a food drive, held during Homecoming, and the Undeniably Dairy Challenge, and a CAO Completion Emblem, which demonstrates its commitment to advocating for agriculture.

In addition to the club honors, WIU agriculture students Keely Egelhoff, a senior from Medora, IL, and junior Lindsey O'Hara, of Claypool, IN, received individual CAO Completion Emblems.

"I really enjoyed doing the individual competition," said Egelhoff. "It taught me a lot about social media and how to communicate with other people. I also hope more students will participate next year to help spread the word about agriculture."

O'Hara said the intention of WIU's participation in the competition is to create a forum for education and transparent information for consumers.

"This has been our goal for many years," she said.

"I love that WIU is at the forefront of this by participating in College Aggies Online. Obviously, our three-year win confirms the excellent work of students that is taking place to bridge the gap between consumers and producers within agriculture."

The WIU club is made up of students in the Communicating Agricultural Issues class at Western, taught by School of Agriculture Instructor Jana Knupp.

"I was very proud of the students this semester," said Knupp. "While they are each very competitive individuals, who wanted to win the contest, above all they were very interested in having these conversations with their peers and educating them about agriculture."



I feel this contest is an eye-opening experience to how many opportunities there are to help someone understand how their food is raised. I look forward to seeing how these students continue to share their story in the future."

WIU School of Agriculture Director Andrew Baker said the three-year string of wins in this competition is a "true reflection of who we are and what we do on a weekly basis." "It also reflects our commitment to integrate more intra-curricular activities into our course work for the advancement of our students," said Baker.



Over the last three years, more than 200 WIU students have participated in this competitive event, which provides the real-life application of communicating agricultural topics with the general public.

Wyffels Hybrids Donates Research Equipment

December 2017



Wyffels Hybrids recently donated some of its retired and fully-operational research equipment to Western Illinois University, including a combine with a three-row corn head and a four-row planter. The donation also included spare parts for the equipment. An identical donation was given to another Illinois university.

"We know both colleges have prestigious academic programs that involve plot work, so we felt our equipment would be a good fit," said Blake Wyffels, customer relations manager for Wyffels Hybrids.

WIU School of Agriculture Director Andy Baker said the new equipment will help the school streamline its planting and harvesting operations next year. "The newer technology embedded in the combine and planter will be able to speed up our operations in the spring and the fall with hopes in reducing our costs, as well," he said. "We certainly appreciate being on Wyffels' short list and hope we can continue our positive relationship with them well into the future."

According to Wyffels, the company supports a number of universities across its footprint as part of a commitment to give back to the community. "We feel the success of all public university research is important to corn growers, and a rich part of Wyffels Hybrids' roots as a company," said Wyffels.

WIU Ag Students Place High in National Commodity Trading Competition

March 2018

A team of Western Illinois University School of Agriculture students has finished 18th in the CME Group Trading Challenge, a four-week electronic trading competition that involves 240 higher education institutions from 35 countries. Nearly 600 teams competed in the 2018 event.

The WIU team was made up of Caleb Dowell, a senior agriculture major from Stronghurst, IL, Keely Egelhoff, a senior agriculture major from Medora, IL, Nathaniel Kerr, a senior agriculture major from Warsaw, IL, and Corey Norton, a senior agriculture major from Mason City, IL.

The team, advised by WIU Assoc. Agriculture Business Professor Jason Franken, placed among the top 53 teams in the preliminary round, held Feb. 20-March 1. The placement earned the team an invitation to the final round of competition, March 5-16, where they placed 18th.

The CME Challenge simulated trading contracts in commodity futures markets using CQG trading software. The WIU team is now invited to the CME Group in Chicago April 13 for an educational experience and chance to interact with industry leaders.



18	Western Illinois University
19	Arizona State University
20	Wake Forest University
21	Nanyang Technological University
22	University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley
23	Singapore Management University
24	International University of Japan
25	Cornell University

WIU 48th Ag Mech Farm Expo

February 2018



The 2018 Agriculture Mechanization (Ag Mech) Club at Western Illinois University will host its 48th annual Farm Expo Saturday-Sunday, Feb. 10-11 at Western Hall.

The expo is open free to the public from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday. Free parking is available in Q-Lot, adjacent to Western Hall.

This year's event currently has 285 vendors registered, but students from the club are continuing to try to increase that number.

The event is believed to be the largest student-run agriculture show in the United States. Ag Mech Club President Keely Egelhoff, a senior agriculture major from Medora, IL, said the Ag Mech Club is made up of 20-30 student members, including 15 who have leadership positions with the show's organization.

WIU Vice President of Expo Operations, Amber Hoener, a junior pre-nursing major from Sutter, IL, said working with the show provides students with the opportunity to develop a variety of skills.

"It has taught me how to better manage time and work with people, as well as how to make light of a difficult situation," she said. "Planning is definitely a full-time job."

Instead of the usual opening ceremony or a guest speaker, Egelhoff said this year's event will instead highlight research by WIU School of Agriculture students and faculty. The displays will be located across from the information booth on the main floor of Western Hall.

Also new this year is a Kids Corner on the second floor, where children and their parents can play games.

This year's event will again include "Tot-Rod Pedal Pulls," beginning at noon Sunday, as well as displays of farm tractors and machinery, ag sales and service companies, ag management companies, emerging ag technology, livestock supplies, crop supplies, conservation, ag structures and new cars and trucks. The second floor of the show will feature a farm toy show and crafts and there will be a raffle of door prizes and two sets of bag games, made by club members, will be offered for sale.

Ag Mech Club Advisor Assistant Professor Dan Atherton said money raised through the show helps provide supplies and equipment for shop work the club completes, as well as scholarships for agriculture students and seed money for next year's show.

Pestle Retirement Reception

January 2018

Donna Pestle will retire from the University at the end of January.

"After 34.5 years of service to WIU and 29.5 years to the School of Agriculture, Donna Pestle has decided to finally find some time for herself," said WIU School of Agriculture Chair Andy Baker. "Over the 29.5 years, she has worked with five different administrators, co-advised the Ag Council student organization and Sigma Alpha Sorority and assisted with the annual Ag Expo and Bull Test Sale."

"Donna has guided, mentored, and assisted thousands of agriculture students over her tenure as office manager. Even though she is retiring, I will always consider her a friend and colleague that dedicated numerous hours outside her normal working day to the activities and students of this department. She will be missed dearly, but will always be remembered for her dedication to our students."

Pestle said memories she has of the School of Agriculture will always remain with her.

"It is so hard to believe that I have worked at WIU for nearly 35 years and I am going to begin a new chapter in my life," she said. "I have been blessed to work with so many amazing faculty, staff and students. I am very proud, and will continue to be, a Leatherneck and a WIU Aggie."

WIU Alumnus Honored in National Ag Commodity Competition March 2019



A Western Illinois University alumnus and one of his farmer clients have been honored by the Fertilizer Institute as one of Five National 4R Advocate Teams during the 2018 Commodity Classic in Anaheim, Ca.

Kyle Lake, a 2006 WIU agriculture alumnus, is a sales agronomist for CHS Carrollton, a Greene County location for the nation's largest farmer cooperative. Lake is helping client farmers Maria Cox, and her father, Ethan to implement 4R Nutrient Stewardship practices. This involves "right source, right rate, right time and right placement" of nutrients as well as conservation practices such as cover crops.

"It has been a great learning experience trying new practices that help maintain the soil health and benefit the environment," said Lake.

Lake began working with the Cox family in 2012, but the family has been a client of CHS Carrollton for more than 30 years. Lake is combining his knowledge of agronomy and precision agriculture technology to make the farm's field operations as efficient and profitable as possible.

"Maria realizes that in order to sustain a profitable farm, you must sustain the land you use," said Lake. "As young farmers, the 4R Nutrient Stewardship Principles will have a

huge impact on how we feed the world."

Lake and his younger brother, Scott, a 2010 WIU agriculture alumnus also employed by CHS-Carrollton, recently spoke to students in a nutrient management class taught by WIU School of Agriculture Associate Professor Joel Gruver.

"We talked about different 4R practices that we are utilizing in agriculture in order to keep nutrients from leaving fields and ending up in our streams and rivers," said Lake. "The 4R Principles are about putting the right rate of fertilizer on for the crop that we are planning on growing. We are using yield data that we gather to make prescriptions to feed the crop. Using GPS we can put that fertilizer in right place in the field in order to keep from over applying in certain areas and under applying in others. We are also putting nutrients on at different times throughout the year in order to spoon feed the crop, thus making sure the nutrients are there when the crop needs it."

WIU School of Agriculture Hosts Fourth Legacy Sale May 2018

The Western Illinois University School of Agriculture recently hosted its fourth annual Legacy Sale online with Willoughby Livestock Sales.

The sale was directed by WIU senior agriculture major Olivia Claire, of Watseka, IL. Claire said there were 122 lots, donated by various businesses, alumni and supporters of the School of Agriculture.

"Donations came in from near and far," said Claire. "On Tuesday, April 17, the sale ended around 10:30 p.m. and there were around 100 buyers. The sale brought in a record \$48,225 for the agriculture department."

Claire added that funds raised are used to help the animal science curriculum at Western. Over the past four years, the sale has brought in more than \$168,000.

WIU School of Ag Adopts Class of Macomb Second Graders

April 2019

A group of Macomb second graders visited the Western Illinois University livestock center and greenhouses Tuesday as part of the Macomb School District's Adopt-A-Classroom program.

The 19 students from Anna Mercer's Lincoln School class came to campus for a day of activities, which included learning about plants and growing food, having hands-on experience with livestock and farm machinery and taking a hayrack ride to visit other parts of the School of Agriculture program.

Throughout the year, students from WIU's School of Agriculture visited Mercer's classroom to work with the children on agriculture-related projects. WIU Agriculture Instructor Jana Knupp said throughout the school year, WIU students have worked with the second graders on projects such as planting seeds, food production and livestock lessons.

While the students were in the livestock center, WIU agriculture students helped them brush calves, pet and

shear sheep, climb on tractors and learn about baby pigs.

WIU senior agriculture science major Will Taylor, of Flora, IN, said the hands-on interaction with students and teaching youth about agriculture brings a new perspective to his education.

"It adds value and a passion for agriculture advocacy," he said. "It's fun to interact with the kids and see their passion for animals and agriculture grow."

WIU senior Mikaela Fringer, an animal science major from Madera, CA, said she enjoys gathering experience teaching younger children.

"Teaching the younger generation is a stepping stone to teaching at a higher level someday," she said.

The event was sponsored by the WIU School of Agriculture, the Hoof and Horn Club, the Collegiate Farm Bureau chapter and WIU's Ag-Vocators organization.

"The WIU School of Agriculture enjoys the opportunity to connect with the community and educate them about agriculture," said Knupp.



"It adds value and a passion for agriculture advocacy. It's fun to interact with the kids and see their passion for animals and agriculture grow."

WIU School of Ag Part of Beef Grant that Creates Internships April 2018

The Western Illinois University School of Agriculture is a partner in a recently-awarded grant to create internships in the area of beef nutrition. The grant is a partnership between Western and the University of Illinois, Southern Illinois University and Illinois State University.

The program sets up the Illinois Beef Experiential Learning and Industry Exposure Fellowship (I-BELIEF), a 10-week beef cattle nutrition internship from May 28-Aug. 3 at either the

Dixon Springs Agricultural Center in Simpson, IL; the Orr Research and Demonstration Center in Baylis, IL; and the University of Illinois in Urbana.

The WIU portion of the program is headed by WIU Assistant Professor of Agriculture Keela Trennepohl, who will work with School of Agriculture students after their internship to perform a statistical analysis and prepare them to present their research at the 2019 Midwestern Animal Science Meeting.

"This is great preparation for graduate school or an industry affiliated career," said Trennepohl. "At the end of the day, students will gain experience in conducting an experiment, analyzing data, presenting their data, and work on critical thinking and problem solving skills."

Through the internship, students are paid an hourly wage and housing is provided. One WIU student will be chosen to participate.

Seven WIU Agriculture Students Place in National Competition April 2018

Over spring break week, the Western Illinois University School of Agriculture had seven students compete in events as part of the National Postsecondary Agricultural Student (PAS) Organization in Louisville, KY. The conference included more than 600 students in career planning and preparation events from 62 chapters in 18 states. The students had to receive first place in their event at the Illinois state event to qualify for the Kentucky event. Student teams had to win first or second place in the state event to qualify.

During the conference, Sarah Nelson, a sophomore agriculture major from Carthage, IL, was elected the national PAS vice president. WIU students placing in the competitions include:

- **Employment Interview - Landscaping and Nursery** – First place, Kylee Johnston, a senior agriculture major from Memphis, MO
- **Employment Interview - Agriculture Education** – First place, Mariana Roberts, a senior agriculture major from Liberty, IL
- **Agricultural Education CPA (present an agricultural lesson)** – Second place, Mariana Roberts
- **Employment Interview - Agribusiness Sales** – Third place, Adam Wright, a junior agriculture major from Carthage, IL

- **Employment Interview - Livestock Production** – 10th place, Cori Sargent, a senior agriculture major from Cameron, IL
- **Crops Specialist (Team event with two individuals):**
 - **Fifth place Overall Team** - Western Illinois University
 - **Eighth place overall individual** – Tanner Stratton, a junior agriculture major from Quincy, IL
 - **16th place individual** – Ryan Farmer, a junior agriculture major from Monmouth, IL

School of Agriculture Partnership Enhances High School, Community College Ag Classes May 2018

May 2018

The Western Illinois University School of Agriculture has partnered with the Illinois Corn Marketing Board to develop a program that benefits high school agriculture classes across Illinois.

Forty high school and community college agriculture teachers will receive a Soil Health Bucket as part of the program. The five-gallon bucket contains supplies for evaluating soil functions and a comprehensive curriculum for engaging students in employing the interacting impact of soil type and soil management. Topics covered in the curriculum include water filtering and storage, nutrient provision and cycling and conversion of crop residues into soil organic matter.

Funding for the pilot project was provided by the Illinois Corn Marketing Board.

"The Illinois Corn Marketing Board is excited about this partnership with Western Illinois University and the opportunity to help facilitate an educational pilot initiative focused on the value of healthy and productive soils," said Travis Deppe, nutrient loss reduction manager of the Illinois Corn Marketing Board. "Ultimately, we hope this collaborative effort will lead to an improved understanding of soil health and how ag professionals, farmers and gardeners can achieve it."

In June, Associate Professor of Agriculture Joel Gruver will present information about the program at the Soil Health Workshop at the 2018 Illinois Association of Vocational Agriculture Teachers Conference in Decatur, IL. He said the long-term goal of the project is to provide every secondary and post-secondary agriculture program in Illinois with a bucket and to foster a science-informed and youth-led dialogue within agricultural communities across Illinois about the benefits of soil health enhancing practices.

School of Agriculture Director Andy Baker said this is the school's third collaborative project with the Illinois Corn Marketing Board in the last three years.

"We look forward to many more collaborative efforts in the future," said Baker. "We have created a hashtag for this project, #soilmatters, so teachers can share their educational experiences utilizing these educational materials with their students. We greatly appreciate the Illinois Corn Marketing Board supporting initiatives that promote soil health, which is the backbone in production agriculture."



#soilmatters

Two WIU School of Ag Alumni Teaching Together in Northwestern Illinois

July 2018

A pair of Western Illinois University alumni, who had parallel academic and athletic careers in the 1980s, have been implementing what they learned at Western through their jobs as high school agriculture teachers at West Carroll High School in Savanna, IL.

Dan Hartman, a 1986 graduate, and Don Mathey, a 1984 graduate, both received degrees in agriculture education. Hartman was part of WIU's wrestling team, and Mathey was a member of the WIU baseball team. For the past 13 years, both have been agriculture teachers and both credit WIU for providing them with the tools they need to teach a new generation about agriculture.

"Things have changed a great deal in the classroom since I attended WIU in 1986," said Hartman. "I feel the foundation in education I received at WIU allowed me to mature as a teacher and use the inservices that I gain to keep up-to-date."

Mathey said he still uses the agriculture mechanics curriculum he learned at Western, particularly the sections on electricity and surveying. "WIU is a great school," he said. "I had great instructors. I loved the campus size and instructor/student ratio; and I still use what I learned there in my career today."

The two men learned about their WIU connection when Hartman was teaching at Mt. Carroll High School and Mathey at Thomson High School, and the two districts merged. When the merged district joined Section Two FFA in northwestern Illinois, Hartman and Mathey met fellow WIU alumnus



Rick Pettit, a 1984 agriculture education graduate, who also teaches high school agriculture in the region. At Mt. Carroll, Hartman and Mathey split the high school students, with Hartman teaching juniors and seniors and Mathey teaching freshmen and sophomores. Mathey said the pair shares responsibilities for the school's FFA chapter.

"Don and I work well together; he's allowed me to kind of be the lead teacher in the past 10 years or so, and our roles are reversing now since I am retiring after next year," said Hartman. "We were selected as outstanding teachers at the high school the past two years consecutively. We do have a great working relationship and we do socialize outside of school."

Each summer, the two take part in the Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa (RAGBRAI), and will continue the tradition later this month. Both also coach athletics in their school district, Hartman coaching junior high wrestling and Mathey teaching varsity girls' softball. Hartman and Mathey said they have both stayed connected to WIU since their graduation. Hartman said he returned to campus for last summer's implosion of Higgins Hall, and Mathey said he enjoys the WIU alumni magazine and staying in touch with WIU School of Agriculture Director Andy Baker.

"I always enjoy picking up my alumni button from the WIU booth at national FFA convention, or visiting them with them at state FFA convention or at the state Ag teachers convention," said Hartman. "I also see Dr. Baker throughout the year."

He added that WIU taught him how to deal with differing personalities. "I am grateful to WIU for my education and my career," he said.

Two WIU Ag Alumni Honored for Excellence in Agricultural Education

May 2018

Two alumni of Western Illinois University's School of Agriculture have been honored by the Illinois Association of Vocational Agriculture Teachers (IAVAT) and the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE).

Riley Hintzsche, a 2014 agriculture education graduate, from Streator High School, was awarded the NAAE Teachers Turn the Key Award, and Bryan Schullian, a 2010 agriculture education teacher, from Southeastern High School, was awarded the NAAE Outstanding Early Career Award.

Hintzsche said the Teachers Turn the Key Award is open to agriculture teachers who are in their second, third or fourth year of teaching. To be considered, he had to submit an overview of his program and other professional accomplishments, as well as his curriculum.

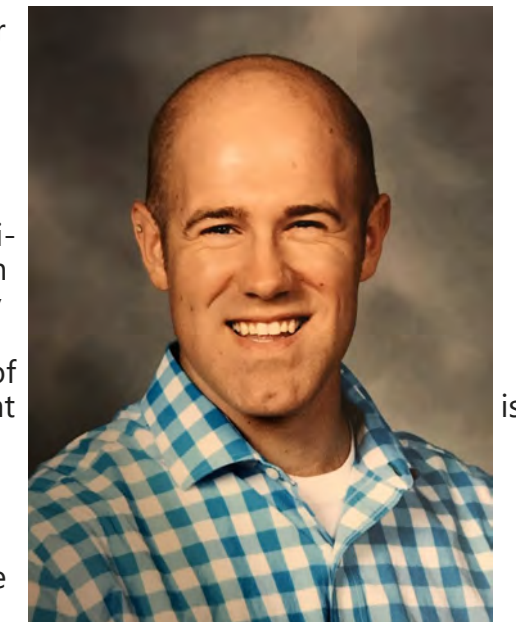
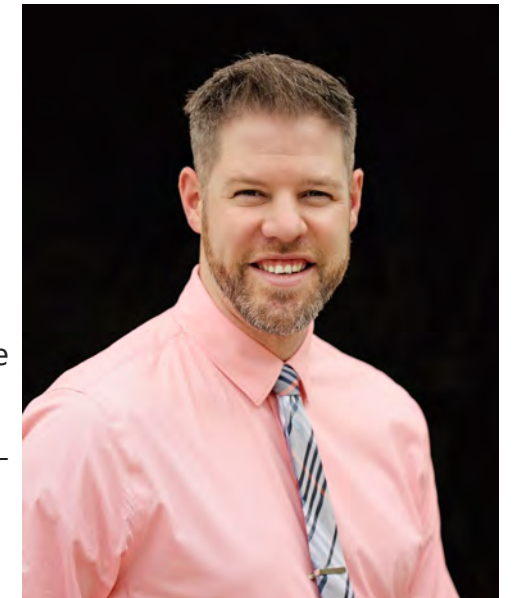
The award showcases five agriculture teachers, during Teacher Appreciation Week in May. It also included a visit to his classroom from the National Teach Ag Campaign.

"The goal of the visit from the National Teach Ag Campaign is to showcase the critical role of agricultural teachers and agricultural education programs play in our schools and communities," Hintzsche said. "Victoria Hamilton, a representative from the National Teach Ag Campaign spent a day with me and my students highlighting the many components of our ag program. The National Teach Ag Campaign will use many forms of social media to take pictures, interview our students, post what going on within the classroom, conduct Facebook Live interviews and so much more."

NAAE's Outstanding Early Career Award is sponsored by John Deere as a special project of the National FFA Foundation. The award honors NAAE members who are in their third-seventh year of teaching. The award was designed to encourage young teachers to remain in the profession and encourage and recognize participation in professional activities.

"Western Illinois University has played a vital role in my career as an agriculture educator," said Schullian. "Many courses offered key curriculum that I now use in my classroom each year. Dr. Baker provided outside opportunities that allowed us to meet other educators and learn from their experiences, and we were encouraged to be involved in our professional organizations. WIU also provided a great placement for my student teaching and that got me started on the right track to be where I am today."

For more information about the awards, visit naae.org/resources/awards/index.cfm.



OPEN HOUSE

WIU SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE

OCTOBER

5

9 A.M.-2 P.M.

Do you know someone who will make a great Leatherneck? If so, we'd love to meet them. This event is open to everyone and registration includes a free lunch. Tour the farm, visit with faculty and students, and learn what it means to be a Leatherneck!

WIU Livestock Center

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BBO COMPETITION

HOSTED BY THE WIU SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE AND UNIVERSITY UNION BOARD

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2018

10AM-2:30PM  WIU Q-LOT

RIB AND BRISKET TASTING TICKETS

1 for \$3 or 2 for \$5

 \$10 T-Shirts
 \$10 Football Tickets

Family packages available
To purchase tickets or register a team
wiu.edu/cbt/agriculture/football

 **ENTERTAINMENT**
Rock'n Papas, face painting, agricultural activities, games, and much more!

