

Newsletter

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ANIMAL SCIENCE

Autumn 2008

Animal Bioethics -

A new module to consider the ethical implications of animal use

The use of animals as a source of food, in genetic modifications to study human disease, as workers such as guide dogs for the blind, or for companionship, brings with it a range of ethical problems. These issues will be covered from September 2008 in a new module called **Animal Bioethics**, and will be available to all third year students of **Animal Science**.



In addition to weighing up the ethical implications of animal use, it will consider how attitudes to animals have developed since the stone age, it will reflect on how ethical decisions may be made more rigorously, and it will also assess the potential consequences of poor ethical decision making.

Animal Science course manager, Michael Rose, said, "Some believe that society is becoming increasingly amoral. In other words, that people are no longer thinking seriously about ethical issues because they deem that the issues are

too complicated and besides, they know of no one else who is thinking about them. Others may argue that there are no absolute ethical standards and that everything is relative. Unfortunately, the probable consequence is that the agendas of the powerful (the wealthy, governments, corporations and the like) will then go unchallenged. The aim of this module is to train our students how to think their way though the tough ethical decisions concerning animals in order that they may make up their own minds."

Scholarship Success



Animal Science student, Maria Brown (pictured here with Bob Beavan of Dairy Crest), was awarded a South West England NFU / Dairy Crest scholarship worth £1000. Of particular interest to the judges was her final year dissertation that investigated the relationship between the concentration of urea in milk and the fertility of dairy cows. Maria is also a finalist in the Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers student of the year competition.

To add to her achievements, Maria was also a finalist in the Dr Richard Phillips award, for the best agriculture related student in Wales, though she eventually lost out to fellow Aberystwyth student Beth Harrison, who studies Agriculture with Animal Science. Beth's long standing ambition, which impressed the judges of the Richard Phillips competition greatly, is to bring agriculture to young people in order to foster a wider understanding of agricultural issues. Well done to both!

List of Courses

Animal Science
Animal Behaviour
Agriculture with Animal Science
Equine and Human Sports Science
Equine Science
Marine & Freshwater Biology
Zoology
Zoology & Microbiology

Interested?

Contact Fay Hollick: 01970 624471
Email: ffh@aber.ac.uk

Not koi about big fish

Hefin Jones, a second year Animal Science student, has won a bursary from the Welsh Livery Guild to study koi carp in Japan.



Hefin will be setting off to Japan in August of 2008 to investigate the effect of water hardness on koi growth and development as part of his final year dissertation. He will then return to the UK to continue his studies in Aberystwyth.

Koi carp are classified according to their size and colour and can potentially attract large prices for heavy fish. Both the size and

colour of the fish can be affected by the conditions in which they are grown. This dissertation is an extension of an interest that Hefin had before coming to University and he is greatly anticipating the opportunity of visiting their spiritual home.

Horses in Nappies

Several horses in nappies have been seen at the Llest Equine Research Centre while students Ellie Brunt and Stephanie Tinsley were carrying out their research in equine nutrition. They were investigating the effect of yeast and exercise on the behaviour and microbial flora of the horse's gut. The nappies were needed to collect all of the urine and faeces passed by the horses during the experimental period. The horses coped with this intrusion very well, though it remains to be seen if the nappies will catch on, even though it saves on the mucking out!



Support for Dissertations in Dairy Science

The University has won annual funding at approximately £1500 per year to support final year dissertations in dairy related projects from the Barham foundation.

Course manager, Dr Michael Rose, said "We are delighted with this award. All Animal Science undergraduate students have the opportunity to design, conduct, analyse and write up an experiment in their final year. This funding will extend the range of possibilities, allowing more complex and costly dissertations in dairy science to be undertaken."



Study in America

Animal Science student, Christopher Whitten is off to Purdue University, in Illinois, US, for his next semester of study. He will study a number of Animal Science modules while there, and the

Garlic to Stop Cows Burping



Scientists in IBERS tackling the impact burping cows and sheep have on global warming may have the answer – putting garlic in their food.

Experts claim that cows are responsible for about 3% of Britain's greenhouse gases. However, initial results from the start of this three year study show that feed containing garlic could cut the amount of gas produced by up to 50%.

Project leader, Professor Jamie Newbold said new types of feed from plant extracts and grass with a higher sugar content were being developed to help solve the problem. "Initial results show that extracts of garlic compound could reduce the amount of methane produced by the animals by 50%" he said. "Garlic directly attacks the bacteria in the gut that produce the methane". He added that tests were also being carried out to see if the garlic, apart from giving them bad breath, would taint the milk or meat.

Podcasting

Lecturer in Animal Science, Dr Basil Wolf, has been experimenting with podcasting – recording his lectures so that they can be played back at a later date on the University's 'Blackboard' online virtual learning environment. Blackboard already carries all PowerPoint slides that are shown in lectures, so students are now able to re-create his lectures in full, helping them to better understand the material.

Dr Wolf lectures in Animal Behaviour, Animal Genetics and Animal Production. His colleagues are watching the results of his experiment to see if this may profitably be done in all areas of the Animal Science course.



marks that he achieves will then count towards his degree here in Aberystwyth. A semester overseas, either in the US or Europe, is available to all Animal Science students.