Brandi Sparling is a West Virginia University (WVU) PhD student majoring in Animal and Food Sciences conducting her studies at Western University of Health Sciences (WesternU). She is co-mentored by Dr. Robert L. Taylor Jr. (from WVU) and Dr. Yvonne Drechsler (WesternU) who have intersecting interests in the major histocompatibility complex and innate immune response. Brandi’s research focuses on MHC-I interacting molecules named immunoglobulin-like receptors, and the research plan is to examine their role in the early immune response during viral infection. Brandi received an MSc degree from the University of Guelph in Animal Biosciences in 2017 and brings with her graduate training from the University of Georgia in Poultry Science and Comparative Biomedical Science. Brandi has been a part of the PSA since 2014 and is motivated to contribute towards the field of poultry health and disease resistance.
Diamond V Endowed Undergraduate Poultry Science Scholarship

Abigail LeBlanc  
*Texas A&M University*

Howdy!

My Name is Abigail LeBlanc and I am a Poultry Science Major at Texas A&M University. I started learning about Agriculture over 15 years ago in youth programs and I have gained experience with 5 different livestock animals. I have learned about pharmaceutical care, nutrition, breeding techniques, butchering and processing at the end of each project. I am currently working two positions at the TAMU Poultry Science Center, one is through the Extension office as a Broiler Chick Sales Worker and the other is a Student Research Assistant. I am dedicated to learning new things and sharing my passion for agriculture. Agriculture is a huge part of my life and I want to continue learning and growing my knowledge and skills so that way I can help this industry to continue to grow.
Md. Shamim Aktar is a final-year undergraduate student of Animal Husbandry at Bangladesh Agricultural University. Since the beginning of his studies, he has had a keen interest in the poultry sciences, especially poultry nutrition and breeding. He has been a student member of PSA since 2019 and tries to keep up-to-date with the recent advances in poultry research. He is also the co-leader of an organization called Poultry Professionals Bangladesh, BAU, which raises awareness among the local public about the safety of poultry and poultry products and debunks poultry-related myths through videos and infographics. Shamim aims to build his career as a researcher and science communicator in the future.
I am an Brazilian undergraduate student of Veterinary Medicine at the Universidade Federal de Goiás (UFG) since 2017. Since then I’ve tried to engage in several extracurricular activities among different fields of study, such as: small and large animal clinics and surgery and diagnostic imaging. In 2019, I took the Poultry Production and Health course, became very interested in this field and decided what my next step would be. Thereafter, I managed to assist in several projects under the supervision of Dr. José Henrique Stringhini. This opportunity led me to my first scientific initiation project about the evaluation of productive performance of laying hens diets containing probiotics based on Bacillus amyloliquefaciens. Another study, regarding the use of functional fibers on the diet of laying hens motivated an scientific abstract with my participation as a co-author, and it was submitted to the Poultry Science Association 2021 Annual Meeting. One of the current Master’s dissertation projects includes my second scientific initiation project. It focuses on gene expression related to the wooden breast degeneration, in broiler chickens supplemented with guanidinoacetic acid. Currently, I am the coordinator of the Poultry Study Group of UFG, in which we frequently study more about animal production, discuss technical and scientific papers and relevant cases. We also promote events with renowned professionals in the poultry field. All of this inserts me more and more into the poultry routine.
Hi, I’m Mahailee! I am a recent graduate of Southeast Missouri State University with a Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness: Animal Science. I was born in Tacoma, Washington and moved to Missouri in 2009 and have been living in the Cape Girardeau area ever since. Some of my hobbies are staying fit, training my dog, traveling, and spending time outdoors. I am currently working as a temporary employee for Novus International at their research farm, Green Acres in Montgomery City, Missouri.
Growing up, the best parts of my childhood involved animal biology where my friends and I would share notes and facts that we found on the internet. Over the years, as my friends’ curiosity towards animals diffused into other interests, mine sustained. As I grew older, my fascination for animals encouraged me to apply for the animal health program from the University of Alberta which played a big role in introducing me to the agriculture industry through opportunities such as research barns, volunteering and school events. It is through these tangible experiences that have allowed me to cultivate my fascination with animals to a deeper level. Away from university, I’m also heavily involved in extracurriculars whether that be through volunteering with various humane societies, humanitarian work such as with the Edmonton Food Bank, or club involvement. Moving forward, I hope to pursue a veterinary medicine degree where I will be able to combine the exciting parts of agriculture, animal health and continual learning in a way that will appeal to my interests.
My name is Nicole and I am currently a third year Animal Science student at UC Davis. I am a first generation immigrant from Malaysia, where I spent most of my childhood. I am passionate about improving poultry welfare and sustainability, and I am currently pursuing an honors thesis with Dr. Makagon’s lab at UC Davis. We are examining the role of pullet housing experience on laying hens’ keel bone fracture risk, space use, spatial abilities and brain development. My future goals include attending veterinary school and continuing to improve animal welfare through research, education, and practice.
Dr. James H. and Shirley H. Endowed Memorial Scholarship

This scholarship is intended to support a rising junior from Texas A&M University and/or the University of Arkansas who has chosen Poultry Science as their field of study and has expressed an interest in graduate education for the M.S. and Ph.D.

Kasey Young
Texas A&M University
2021 Recipient

Renee Cude
University of Arkansas
2021 Recipient