

Agricultural and Life Sciences Building

Speakers are:

Dr. Jay Akridge - Glenn W. Sample Dean of the College of Agriculture

Dr. Alan Mathew - Professor and Head of Animal Sciences

Barry Delks - Animal Sciences Coordinator of Career Services

Dr. Scott Radcliffe - Associate Professor of Animal Sciences, Swine Nutritionist

David Hardin - Indiana Pork Producer

Dr. Jolena Waddell - Assistant Professor of Animal Sciences, Meat Scientist

A New Building

Akridge: The Animal Sciences department is one of the largest departments in our college. We have over 600 undergraduates in that program, about 60 grad students, 35 faculty members. So, from our standpoint, it's certainly a large department; it serves a very, very important industry in this state. This new Agricultural and Life Sciences building is intended to be a replacement for that wing of Lilly that so many of our alumni know well, where the Animal Sciences department has been housed for many years.

Mathew: Currently our faculty are housed in three separate buildings, and that challenges us when it comes to interacting, bringing new ideas into different programs, across programs, to provide multi-disciplinary research to very complex problems. The ability to walk to the next office when an idea comes about, to cross somebody, to meet somebody in the hallway that you otherwise would not have, at a very critical time when ideas are being generated. And in fact our students as well, are not receiving the full benefit of the faculty because they're primarily in one building and two-thirds of our faculty are in another building.

Delks: I think the good news is that we're literally busting at the seams. I really see that this future building could really be an asset. And, when you've got a department this big, with this many students, and the kids are literally lined up down the hallway with their legs sticking out in the hallway with no place to go, I think that's a shame. And I'd really like to see a facility, a place, a location, for the students to come together; where they can study, get on the computer, get help for classes, and be encouraged. And I see all that helping retention.

Radcliffe: I think one of the big trends that we see in research now, and for the foreseeable future, is instead of individual researchers trying to do everything, there's really a big push for these multi-disciplinary teams where you're bringing in a group of researchers, which bring in a lot more expertise than if it's one lab trying to tackle the problem. And, a new building for us would really help facilitate pulling those teams together because it would get us in a central location.

Hardin: The Purdue's Animal Sciences department has always focused on is a lot of the great dollars and cents research that helps a producer's bottom line. We've seen cutting edge work with new feed additives at Purdue and ways to improve the feed-to-gain ratio on our animals. Then there's a lot of things that are kind of intangible, or may not, at first glance, be seen how they apply to the bottom line as far as improving the environmental stewardship that pork producers have, and also working with food safety and new product development on kind of the back end of the animals that we produce.

Delks: I don't know if you've seen our laboratories, but they need help. And so I think an important part of the research end, both for faculty and graduate students, would be, with that new building, they're going to have new facilities that are state-of-the-art, that the faculty can be proud of, that can do cutting edge research and bring in top-notch graduate students to work in their labs.

Akridge: Long-term, Purdue has got a real focus on the life sciences and that's been articulated in the campus master plan, and the side of campus that so many know as the Ag campus is changing. It's going to be serving the broader life sciences longterm, and of course life sciences is certainly a fundamental part of our College of Agriculture.

Indiana Impact

Mathew: The animal industries in Indiana are a very significant economic driver for the state. It's about a \$6 billion industry altogether. Animal livestock, in fact, comprise about \$1.2 billion of inventory for the state.

Akridge: Fundamentally, livestock production is important to this state, and I think this facility has a particular role in that whole investment strategy for the life sciences more broadly. Again, part of it's support for animal agriculture. And again, the science that underlies that, the preparation of students to enter the industries, but a part of it's the human health piece, as well. Again, animals as model systems is a fundamental part of medical research, and many of our researchers involved in animal sciences, their work spans both food animal production and human health. And so, as we look forward in the state and think about, again, investments that are going to help support this broad area of life sciences, this facility fits very, very nicely into that investment strategy.

Hardin: There are enough pigs produced in the state of Indiana to feed 25 million people here at home and abroad. Last year, the US exported about 1 out of every 4 or 5 animals produced. So, the research that we would be doing in the new facilities here, don't just have an impact here at home, but also have impact abroad as that's dollars that flow back to Indiana.

Waddell: Here in the state of Indiana, we have over 300 meat processors. Many of them are small to mid-size. And it's really a growing industry, where in other states it seems to be declining. So, we really do see a large desire for outcoming graduates that have meat cutting experience and meat science experience. But, I just can't train as many as the demand is for, due to our facilities.

Akridge: Animal agriculture is important to the state of Indiana, and this investment is clearly an investment in animal agriculture, whether we're talking about supporting research in animal agriculture, whether we're talking about helping prepare students for careers in that area, whether we're talking about extension and outreach that serves the state directly. There are clearly other dimensions of the project, but I think that may be the most fundamental message that we could put out there.