

## Students Hear from National Agricultural Systems Expert

On November 1, the Center for Grassland Studies hosted a gathering of students from the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture and Southeast Community College who joined our Grazing Livestock Systems students for pizza



ABOVE: Agricultural expert Paul Genho visits with GLS and other students about the future of agriculture in a global market before giving a formal public lecture on the topic.

LEFT: NCTA Assistant Professor Doug Smith (left) and Dean Ron Rosati look on as students go through the pizza line before meeting with Paul Genho.

and a meeting with Dr. Paul Genho, Visiting Professor at the University of Florida and an independent agricultural consultant. Genho has held many positions in companies and served on national scientific, agricultural and academic boards, including managing Deseret Ranches of Florida for 17 years before moving to King Ranch in Texas where he was Vice President and General Manager for seven years. Fifty years of experience makes a person worth listening to, and that's just what the students did. How have things changed? What will the future of agriculture, and in particular, the beef industry, look like? What types of careers are/will be available to students currently in college? What will consumers want? After visiting with the students on such

subjects, Genho gave a formal public lecture titled, "The Future of U.S. Agriculture in a Global Market," which the students also attended.

The link to the video of Genho's talk on global agriculture as well as to his Leu Distinguished Lecture given the day before titled, "Fifty Years: Looking Back, Looking Forward," can be found on the GLS website, [gls.unl.edu](http://gls.unl.edu).



## Scholarships Help GLS Students...

...continued from page 2

management, grazing livestock strategies and many more. Quizzes and tests over the material we were learning were also part of the week's activities. As a group we went on a couple of field trips to look at different types of rangeland. My overall experience of this is that it was a ton of information given to me at once, but it was worth every second of it! I would love to have the opportunity to return to it in future years to learn new information, meet more people, and build on the knowledge I have gained thus far. I want to thank everyone that presented and supported me in the course.

In addition to funds that covered the majority of the Short Course registration, I also received another scholarship to attend the 2016 Nebraska Grazing Conference in Kearney. This conference was a two-day event with 14 speakers. I heard presentations about lifestyles within the ranching business, different

techniques for grazing, and some of the economic decisions that go along with a big grazing operation. This was a very interesting conference that, like the Short Course, I hope to attend again in the future."

– Alexa Johnson,

Grazing Livestock Systems Student Ambassador

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For more information or to receive GLS materials, please contact:

**Center for Grassland Studies**

University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
203 Keim Hall  
P.O. Box 830953  
Lincoln, NE 68583-0953

p: 402-472-4101  
f: 402-472-4104  
e: [grassland@unl.edu](mailto:grassland@unl.edu)  
w: [gls.unl.edu](http://gls.unl.edu)



## Prospective UNL Students Learn about Majors at College Open House



GLS student ambassador Alexa Johnson and faculty member Jay Parsons (in white shirts) tell people who stopped by our booth about the GLS major at the college open house Nov. 5.

On November 5 more than 100 high school students from several states came to East Campus for the annual Experience the Power of Red open house to learn about the many academic programs offered by UNL's College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. After browsing the various booths, students heard from Dean Steve Waller, and then proceeded to three successive sessions that provided details of the majors in which they were interested, such as Grazing Livestock Systems.

If you want to come to campus to learn about one or more CASNR major, you don't need to wait until next fall's open house. Just call the UNL's Campus Visits Office (1-800-742-8800 or 402-472-2023) or schedule online at admissions.unl.edu/visit. We'd love to see you!

## Student Profiles

**Devin Heusinkvelt** grew up on what he calls a "hobby farm" near Norris, NE, a town south of Lincoln. It had some cattle and crops, and Devin quickly realized that he preferred the cattle side of the small operation. Throughout high school he participated in many state and national judging contests through FFA, including those involving land, beef and dairy cattle, and horses. He won the state dairy contest, and placed 10th in that category nationally. He was also 30th in the

national land judging contest.

Having been exposed to (and liking) the UNL East Campus through his FFA activities, Devin chose to enter UNL as an Animal Science major. Originally he thought he would like a career involving cattle breeding and genetics. After his sophomore year, he interned at Plum Thicket

## Event Scholarships Help GLS Students Take Advantage of Educational Opportunities

There are three grazing-related events for which GLS students can apply for scholarships to supplement their classroom education: Nebraska Grazing Conference, held each August in Kearney (nebraskagrazingconference.unl.edu); Nebraska Range Short Course, a week-long session in June offered in even-numbered years at Chadron State College (agronomy.unl.edu/nebraska-range-short-course-2016); Nebraska Ranch Practicum, eight dates June through January in North Platte and Whitman (nebraskaranchpracticum). GLS student Alexa Johnson applied for and received event scholarships to the first two events in 2016. Below are her comments regarding her experiences. GLS students should watch for the announcement in January soliciting applications for GLS academic and event scholarships.

*"In late June I traveled to Chadron State College to attend the Nebraska Range Short Course. While there I had the opportunity to meet with about 30 other participants and more than 15 instructors. Throughout the week we studied 50 plants and their characteristics. Subjects I learned about included geology and hydrology, plant physiology and growth, prescribed burning, wildlife*

*continued on page 4...*



**Devin Heusinkvelt**

Farms in western Nebraska. That made him think he might like being a professional ranch manager. The following summer he again worked at Plum Thicket Farms, and the owners helped him find simultaneous part-time employment with a Select Sires sales representative in Gordon, NE. While he appreciated

that experience, it helped him realize he preferred ranch management to the breeding business. After visiting with a friend and high school classmate, Cory Peterson, who was finishing his time at UNL as a dual Animal Science and Grazing Livestock Systems student, Devin decided that would also be a good fit for him, and added GLS.

Devin conveyed to his GLS faculty advisor, Walter Schacht, how much he liked working with land and cattle. Dr. Schacht suggested he do his official GLS internship with the federal agency of Natural Resources Conservation Service, which landed him in the NRCS office in North Platte as a range conservation intern this past summer. He learned that 640 hours of internship is one of the requirements to be eligible for full-time employment with NRCS as a range conservationist, so when he was offered part-time employment in the state NRCS office in Lincoln during this fall semester, he took it. He is finishing his last few required courses while he fulfills the 640 hours and plans to graduate in December.

The aspect of his NRCS employment that Devin enjoys most is working with producers to map out ranch resources and develop grazing plans in connection with federal cost-share programs. This also helped prepare him for his favorite UNL course that he is currently taking: Livestock Management on Range and Pasture, which is the capstone course for the GLS and other majors. The course uses actual case ranches to teach management concepts ranchers use "in the real world." It begins with a week-long stay at the 4-H camp in Halsey the week before school starts, and involves visiting a ranch where

the students use the knowledge they have acquired in past courses and during the initial classroom instruction phase at Halsey. At the ranch they survey the land, complete a resource inventory, and conduct a detailed interview with the ranch owner. Back on the UNL campus, the students use computer programs and other tools to develop their "term paper" for the course: the Ranch Plan. Each student designs his/her plan, addressing such areas as grazing capacity, grazing system, winter feeding program, and economic analysis of the proposed plan. Devin has the advantage of his NRCS experience to add to his past UNL courses as he progresses through this course. He is just one more example of how important it is to acquire knowledge inside and outside of the classroom!

Not all students in the Grazing Livestock Systems major grew up on a farm or ranch. **Riley Hahn's** school didn't even have an FFA chapter. However, when she visited her grandparents' farm, she would always go out and watch the cattle! Granddad also took her for tractor rides and showed her his crop fields. She remembers that he would even eat the soybeans right out of the field once they were ready to harvest. Some of her favorite memories are out at their farm, and she believes that is where her interest in agriculture (and especially cattle) started.

The Loomis, NE native also worked on a farm during her high school years, riding a horse through

the fields to check pastures. At one time she thought she would like to be a large-animal vet. She entered the Equine Management & Equine Science program at Ellsworth Community College in Iowa. While there, she visited a friend at UNL one Saturday that fall and surprisingly (to her) fell in love with Lincoln and the campus. She followed that up with an official college visit and was hooked. When a fellow student mentioned she was majoring in both Animal Science and Grazing Livestock Systems, Riley thought that would make her more "marketable" upon graduation, so she decided to do the same.

This past summer Riley worked at the USDA Meat Animal Research Center. She monitored pastures and gained more experience working with cattle and grazing systems.

When she is ready to conduct her official GLS internship in 2018, she wants it to be on a ranch where she will have more exposure to the day-to-day workings of the ranching life. She also wants to learn about the financial side of cattle operations.

Back here on campus Riley is a student worker in the Ruminant Nutrition Lab and is the social chair

of the Sigma Alpha Professional Agricultural Sorority.

Ideally, Riley would like to have her own grazing operation where she could ride out on her horse to check her cattle on her pastures. However, she would settle for being involved in cattle production in some way – procurement, genetics, financial analysis, professional ranch manager. As long as she can earn a living working with cattle and/or horses, she'll be happy.



**Riley Hahn**