The College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES) is proud to announce that Erica Thieman has been selected to join the Agricultural Education Program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, effective August 16, 2013. As Assistant Professor of Agricultural Education, Thieman’s focus will include teaching courses in the Agricultural Science Education (ASE) concentration and conducting research related to the training of agricultural educators and teaching in the agriculture classroom.

Thieman brings experience from both the secondary and post-secondary agriculture classrooms. After working as a high school agriculture educator for five years in both rural and urban communities, she has spent the last four years of her professional career pursuing her Ph.D. at the University of Missouri. Her other work experiences include serving as a Community Educator for Rolla Technical Institute where she taught courses in Agricultural Mechanics and Horticulture, in addition to her background working on the family farm with Thieman’s Polled Shorthorns, a nationally recognized livestock operation in the beef industry. She will earn her Doctor of Philosophy degree this May in Agricultural Education from the University of Missouri. She has also earned her Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Missouri-Columbia, and her Master of Science degree from the University of Missouri in 2012.

In addition to teaching Agricultural Education courses at the University of Missouri, Thieman also has experience with writing and obtaining grants. She has served as a Field Experience Coordinator and Student Teacher Supervisor for undergraduate students.

“I am excited to be joining the Illinois Ag Ed Family and College of ACES and to call Illinois my new home!” Thieman says, “I am really looking forward to getting settled in on campus so that I can meet the future teachers that are undergraduates and begin working with the in-service teachers who are working on their Master’s degree. I am also very anxious to get out and meet the agriscience teachers across the state, along with their students.”

Thieman’s research interests include studies on the resiliency of agricultural educators as it relates to stress levels, comparative analyses of stress-related experiences as they apply to male and female educators, and the role of mentors for novice educators. She earned the Distinguished Manuscript award at the 2012 North Central Research Conference for the American Association of Agricultural Education.
Agricultural Education students have earned several awards and accomplishments during the last few months. Some of those honors include:

**Jacob Meisner Wins AFB Discussion Meet**

Jacob Meisner, former Southwestern FFA member from Piasa, IL, was named the winner of the American Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers Collegiate Discussion Meet. This competition was held at the American Farm Bureau Federation’s Joint National Leadership and Young Farmers & Ranchers Conference in Phoenix, Ariz. in February. Meisner’s FFA Advisor is Mr. Tim Reed.

The Discussion Meet is designed to replicate a committee meeting where discussion and active participation are expected from each collegiate participant. Participants are judged on their ability to exchange ideas and information on the topic and find answers or solutions.

Meisner qualified for the national competition upon winning the Illinois Collegiate Discussion Meet at the Illinois Fall PAS Conference. As the national winner, Meisner received $2,500 scholarship from competitive event sponsor CHS Foundation. Forty-eight competitors from 33 states competed in this year’s AFBF Collegiate Discussion Meet.

The AFBF YF&R program includes men and women between the ages of 18 and 35. The program provides leadership training and networking opportunities for younger Farm Bureau members.

Portions of this article were obtained from the American Farm Bureau Federation press release.

**Clayton Carley Elected State PAS President**

Clayton Carley, former Cisna Park FFA member, was elected as the 2013-2014 Illinois Post-secondary (PAS) President during the Spring Conference in February. Carley’s FFA advisors were Ron Lynch and Jeff Clifton.

Carley will serve as an officer with future Ag Ed Illini student, Brianna Harmon. His PAS Advisor is Mindy Bunselmeyer, a UIUC Ag Ed Alum.

Kiersten Kasey, a junior in Ag Ed, placed 3rd during the State Conference in the area of Agricultural Education.

**Danielle Brown Wins Phipps Scholarship**

Danielle Brown, a junior in Ag Ed, has been named the recipient of the 2013 Lloyd Phipps Scholarship. The Lloyd Phipps Scholarship honors an Ag Ed student based on their professional goals, overall character, and involvement in high school and collegiate activities. Brown is the Sigma Alpha Professional Agricultural Sorority President and the Agricultural Education Executive for the UIUC Collegiate Farm Bureau. She has also previously served as the Vice President of Recruitment for the Ag Ed Club and is actively involved in Collegiate FFA, Ag Ed Club, and various other volunteer opportunities around campus. She also assists with numerous FFA activities, including CDE judging and Leadership Training Schools.
**Ag Ed Remembers Lloyd Phipps**

The Agricultural Education community lost one of its most valuable and influential members on February 11, 2013. Lloyd Phipps was a pioneer in Agricultural Education at the national level for most of his life. He was a professor at the University of Illinois from 1945 to 1977. Agriculture Education and University of Illinois were of monumental importance in his life.

Dr. Phipps was principal advisor for 32 doctoral students, author of 19 textbooks and consultant in Sierra Leone and South Korea. He also founded and ran the Champaign County Farm Bureau Grain Marketing Club for many years.

*Portions of this article were obtained from the News-Gazette publication, Champaign, Illinois.*

**Krapf Conducts Workshop at National Ag Ed Summit**

Brandy Krapf, Teaching Associate for the UIUC Agricultural Education Program, attended the National Agricultural Education Summit in Indianapolis, IN in January. Krapf, along with several other Illinois agricultural educators and affiliates, worked with individuals from across the nation to determine possible strategies to recruit and retain teacher for school-based agriculture education. The programming of the two-day meeting was designed to provide participants with current recognized trends and facts about the nationwide teacher shortage, promising practices used to recruit and retain teachers, planning materials and guidance in developing a plan to ensure change is made in recruitment and retention.

During the meeting, Krapf conducted a workshop with Mindy Bunselmeyer to approximately 130 attendees to share various recruitment and retention practices currently used in Illinois. Some of the shared ideas included the Elite Conference, the agriculturaleducation.org website, and the AGED 499 class offered by the University of Illinois for first year ag teachers and ag teachers who are in their 2nd-5th year of the profession.

Krapf is also a member of the National Teach Ag Advisory Board. The board’s purpose is to provide direction and suggestions on Teach Ag related resources, initiatives, and trends across the United States.

**Cooper Participates in Study Abroad Experience**

Shelby Cooper, a freshman Ag Ed student in the Agricultural Science Education (ASE) concentration, participated in a College of ACES Study Abroad experience during winter break. Cooper visited Batey Libertad, Dominican Republic as part of the ‘Discovering Systems of the Caribbean’ program. She received funding through the Arlys Conrad Scholarship. Cooper is from Downs, IL and is a former Tri-Valley FFA member. Her advisors were Mr. Josh Rund and Mrs. Kristin Myers.
National Study on Ag Students’ Leadership Skills

Dr. David Rosch, Assistant Professor in Agricultural Education at the University of Illinois, recently completed a study creating a national profile of Agricultural college students’ leadership skills based on experiential learning compared to their non-Agricultural peers, published in the latest issue of the Journal of Agricultural Education. His study found that students majoring in an agricultural field are just as involved in high school leadership organizations as their peers, and are more involved in college organizations. However, their gains in leadership capacity were not as great, and the gap was largest in the area of “socio-cultural connections,” where students feel they can connect with and discuss matters of importance with others they feel are different from them. These findings suggest a growth opportunity for advisors of organizations such as FFA and CFFA, 4-H, and others in challenging students in developing their interpersonal skills and practice connecting with others who are different from them.

Harfst Participates in National Teach Ag Program

Liz Harfst, a junior in the University of Illinois Agricultural Education Program, participated in a National Teach Ag Campaign program during the week of March 18-22 in Washington D.C. Harfst, along with six other agricultural education undergraduate students from across the nation, practiced their teaching skills by presenting a lesson to 7th grade students at Stuart-Hobson Middle School in downtown Washington D.C. Harfst said, “I loved teaching the lesson! I also enjoyed networking with my peers who would also be entering the agricultural education field.”

This is the second year for the National Teach Ag Campaign program, which pairs agricultural education students with seasoned agriculture teachers as mentors. The teams of current and future teachers design lessons, talk about the challenges of teaching, and deliver their agriculture-based lessons to middle school students.

University of Illinois alum, Mr. Parker Bane, served as a mentor teacher. “Working with the future teachers allows me to see teaching through a whole new lens,” said Bane, agriculture teacher at Pontiac High School, IL. “It is very rewarding to watch these future agriculture teachers plan, prepare and present the lessons they have worked so hard on.”

Portions of this article were adapted from the National Teach Ag Campaign news release by Ellen Thompson.