SDSU to Provide Opportunities for Industry Advancement

SDSU is constructing a state-of-the-art cow-calf research and education unit.

*Story & photo by **Andrea Paulson,** South Dakota State University*

South Dakota State University (SDSU) in Brookings, S.D., is home to a herd of registered-Angus and SimAngus cattle at a unit currently located within the university's main campus. Plans are under way to move the SDSU Cow-Calf Research and Education Unit to a new site with state-of-the-art facilities and research capabilities.

This new unit will better meet the needs of the university, cattle producers and the beef industry as a whole, says Joe Cassady, head of SDSU's Department of Animal Science. The new location and buildings will enhance the ability of faculty and staff to provide an outstanding curriculum for students and the infrastructure necessary to capitalize on research and outreach opportunities available to the university.

The current cow-calf unit has played an integral role in exposing students to and furthering their understanding of beef production practices, Cassady notes, explaining that animal science students at SDSU become familiar with the daily operation of the cow-calf unit both through classes and employment. Students enrolled in the seedstock merchandising class each spring are entrusted with the responsibility to plan and execute the annual bull sale and to market the progeny raised at the unit.

Events such as Little International, the South Dakota State FFA convention and Livestock Judging Camp utilize the animals raised on campus to compose classes for the livestock judging contests. Little International provides a unique opportunity for beginner and experienced exhibitors alike to halter-break and exhibit animals in the beef fitting and showmanship contests.

The new Cow-Calf Research and Education Facility will enhance these student activities and increase the possibilities of Extension programming, says Cassady. It will expand collaboration with other departments, universities, agencies and industry partners. Researchers will be able to conduct nutritional management studies with advanced equipment that will allow the application of dietary treatments to individual animals. This equipment will also make it possible to record the feed intake of individual animals.

The new facility and the work conducted at the cow-calf unit will allow SDSU to provide an even greater positive impact on beef cattle production operations, especially in areas such as nutrient utilization and feed efficiency, says Cassady. In addition to nutrition research, it will provide opportunities for studying animal behavior, animal husbandry, animal well-being and reproduction.

A classroom and adequate space for cattle-handling demonstrations will provide additional flexibility to host events at the site. This will create opportunities for university personnel, producers and industry stakeholders to learn about advancements within the beef industry.

"A new, state-of-the-art cow-calf unit is essential to serve the land-grant mission at SDSU," says Cody Wright, an SDSU alumni and animal science professor. "This facility will provide students with an unmatched opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills relative to beef production systems and provide scientists with the resources necessary to address emerging issues faced by the beef industry."

Producers can look to SDSU for innovative and groundbreaking research in the beef industry.

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Editor's Note: *Andrea Paulson is a senior at SDSU studying animal science and agricultural communications.*