

# THE SFAAS “NEWSREEL”

## Number 19 / January & February 2023

I hope everyone is having a good start to the new year. On campus, classes have settled in, and the quiet chaos characteristic of SFAAS is again underway after the holiday break.

In this issue of *Newsreel* we recognize some students for their accomplishments, welcome a few new ones, catch up on the latest around the School, and sadly say goodbye to a longtime friend of SFAAS.

Please keep information coming, so we can let everyone know of things that are happening.

Joe Tomasso  
Professor & Director (and *Newsreel* editor!)



You can find past *Newsreels* at  
<https://agriculture.auburn.edu/research/faas/newsletters/>

## PARTRIDGE AWARD WINNER

**Paul Ramsey** was recently recognized as one of two winners of the David Partridge Memorial Award.

Paul is from Orlando and holds a BS from Florida State University. He is currently pursuing a MS in Shannon Brewer's lab.

After completing his degree, he hopes to continue doing research on native and sport fishes for a state or federal agency.







## PARTRIDGE AWARD WINNER

**Henry Hershey** was recently recognized as one of two winners of the David Partridge Memorial Award.

Henry was born in Belgium and grew up in New Jersey. He holds a BS from Case Western University and a MS from Auburn. He is currently pursuing a PhD in the labs of Dennis DeVries and Rusty Wright.

He is not sure what he wants to do when he finishes his PhD other than to be a “problem solver”.



## SWINGLE AWARD WINNER



**Colby Lee** was recently recognized as the winner of the Homer Scott Swingle Memorial Award at the BS level.

Colby is from Andalusia, Alabama and is a senior in our undergraduate program.

He hopes to become a fisheries biologist for a state agency, preferably in the south.





## SWINGLE AWARD WINNER

**Helen Montague** was recently recognized as the winner of the Homer Scott Swingle Memorial Award at the MS level.

Colby is from Johnson City, Tennessee and holds a BS from Birmingham-Southern College. She is currently conducting her thesis research in Ian Butts' lab.

Helen hopes to become a reintroduction biologist focusing on population restoration.





## **SWINGLE AWARD WINNER**

**Steven Ksepka** was recently recognized as the winner of the Homer Scott Swingle Memorial Award at the PhD level.

Steven is from Calais, Vermont. He holds a BS from the University of Vermont and a MS from Auburn. Steven is currently conducting his dissertation research in Ash Bullard's lab.

He hopes to have a career in aquatic animal health research.



## NEW PHD STUDENT

**Hannah Adkins** will soon join Jim Stoeckel's lab. She is from Prattville, Alabama and holds a BS in Organismal Biology from Auburn and a MS in Environmental & Biological Sciences from Troy University.

Hannah's dissertation work will be in the areas of Molluscan ecology and physiology.

Her career goal is to become a university faculty member.





## NEW PHD STUDENT

**Ziteng Song** will soon join the labs of Alan Wilson and Kevin Wang. She is sponsored by the Chinese Scholarship Council and holds a BS in Agricultural & Environmental Resources and a MS in Soil Science, both from Huazhong Agricultural University in Wuhan, China.

Ziteng's dissertation work will be in the areas of water pollution, mitigation, and treatment.



## NEW MS STUDENT



**Mason Williams** will soon join Andrea Tarnecki's lab. He is from Gardendale, Alabama and holds a BS in Biology & Marine Science from the University of South Alabama.

Mason's thesis work will address the effectiveness of genomic selection on resistance to disease and climate change in oysters.

His career goal is to become involved in the conservation and restoration of coastal ecosystems.





## NEW MS STUDENT

**Cristhian San Andres** will soon join Allen Davis' lab. He is from Manta, Ecuador and holds a BS in Aquacultural Engineering and a MBA in Agribusiness.

Cristhian's thesis work will be related to the development of better feeds and feeding technologies for marine shrimp.

After his MS, he hopes to earn a PhD and continue working in the area of aquaculture nutrition with the goal of improving sustainability of the industry.





## **NEW MS STUDENT**

**Shelby Walker** will soon join Luke Roy's lab. She is from Douglasville, Georgia and holds a BS in Marine Biology from Auburn.

Shelby's thesis topic will be the potential production and economics of largemouth bass cultured in split-pond systems

Her career goal is to develop new techniques to make the aquaculture process safer and more efficient



## BIG YEAR FOR GRANTS AND CONTRACTS



The SFAAS faculty continues to be successful in obtaining funding to support their research and extension programs.

FY 22	\$10.2 million
FY 21	\$ 7.0 million
FY 20	\$ 8.1 million
FY 19	\$ 7.2 million
FY 18	\$ 6.1 million

## BIG STEP



The journal article can be found here:  
[doi.org/10.1016/j.aquaculture.2022.738290](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aquaculture.2022.738290)

**Rex Dunham's** lab has disabled the myostatin gene in channel catfish using gene editing techniques.

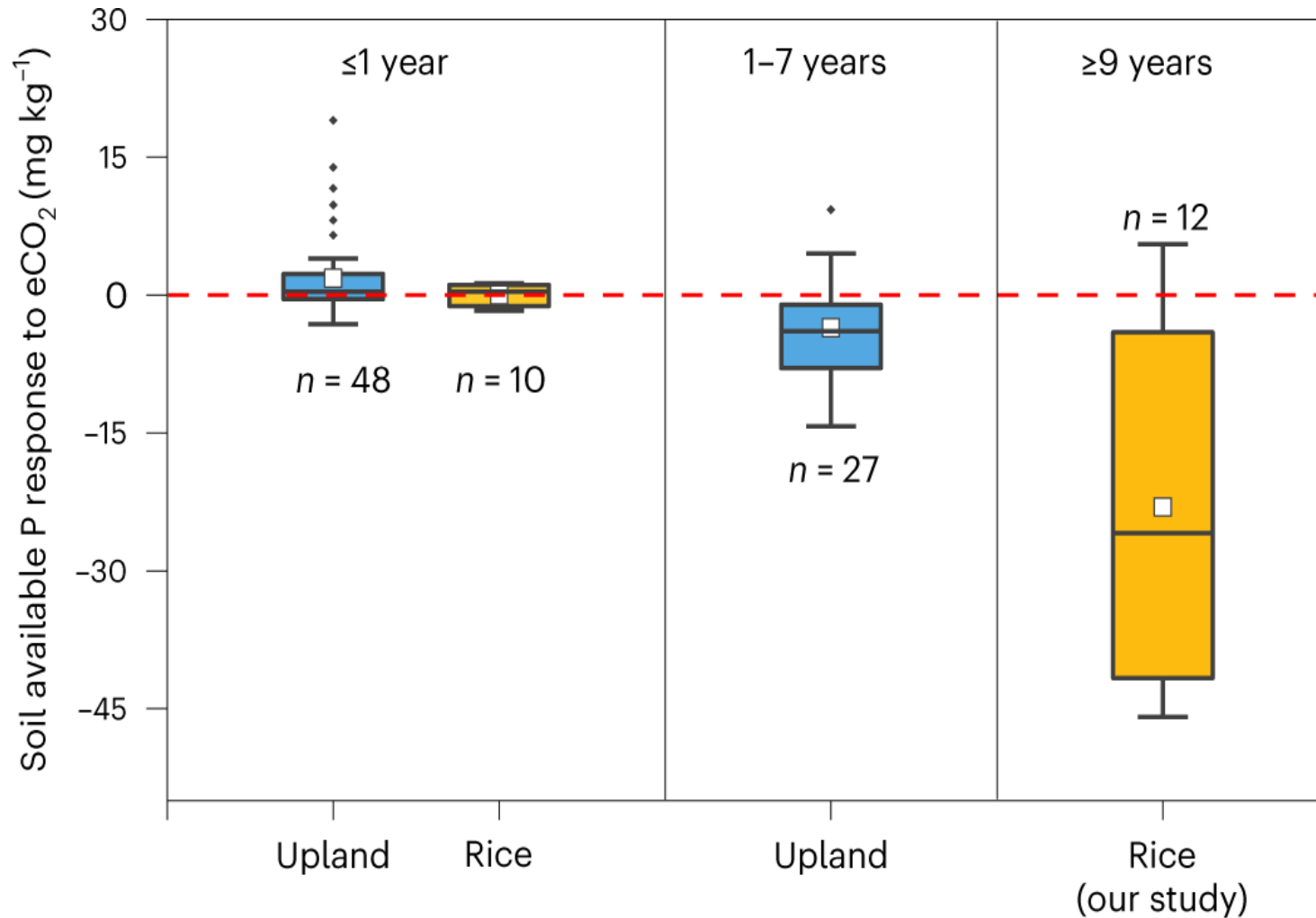
The gene-edited fish grow faster and have denser muscle fibers compared to normal channel catfish.

The US Food & Drug Administration recently granted the Dunham lab permission to conduct taste and texture tests on the fish.

This may be the first permission of this kind granted by the FDA.



## NOTABLE JOURNAL ARTICLE

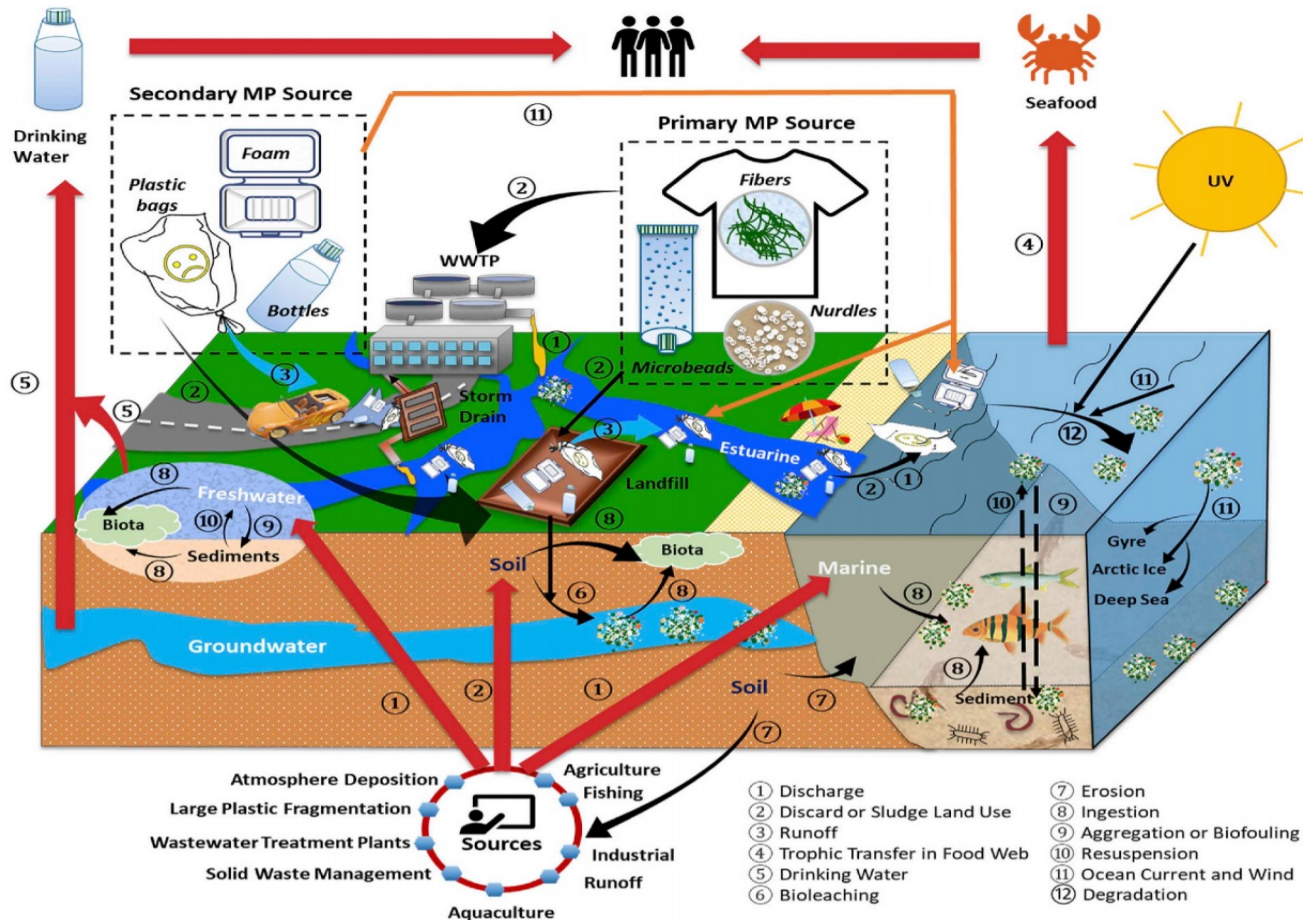


**Kevin Wang** is a coauthor of a paper recently published in *Nature Geoscience* in which the research group explored how elevated atmospheric carbon dioxide levels affect the dynamics of soil phosphorous in rice paddies, potentially leading to future phosphorous limitations.

The full paper can be found at:

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41561-022-01105-y>

# BIG INTERNAL GRANT



**Tham Hoang** is the leader of a group of nine Auburn investigators that has been awarded a **Mission Enhancement Fund (MEF)** grant of \$380,000. The purpose of the MEF is to help groups within the University move into new areas of inquiry.

The funding will be used to purchase a Raman Microscope / Spectrophotometer, upgrade a toxicant exposure system, and hire a research associate.

Co-Pis are David Blersch, Shiqiang Zou, Jessica Davis, Pricila Lotsch, Ann Ojeda, Alan Wilson, Kevin Wang, and Joe Tomasso



## CONFERENCE NEWS

The annual meeting of the **Alabama Chapter of the American Fisheries Society** was held January 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> at Gulf State Park in Gulf Shores.

SFAAS was well represented with 21 of the 31 presentations having coauthors from our School.

**Paul Ramsey** (Brewer lab) won the David Bayne scholarship and **Aya Hussain** (Stoeckel and Davis labs) won the best paper award.

The full program can be found here:

[https://alabama.fisheries.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2023/01/2022-23-Program\\_FINAL\\_2.pdf](https://alabama.fisheries.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2023/01/2022-23-Program_FINAL_2.pdf)





## PASSING

**Dr. Richard Guthrie**, dean *emeritus* of the College of Agriculture, died on January 23 after a brief illness.

Prior to his retirement in 2010, he served in several administrative positions, one being the associate dean for international agricultural programs. It was this position that brought him into close contact with many SFAAS faculty members.

His obituary may be found here: [Richard Guthrie Obituary \(2023\) - Auburn, AL - The Opelika-Auburn News \(legacy.com\)](#)