

Alabama Beef Cattle Conference 2024

Workshop Bios

Marketing and Financial Planning for Sustainability

Workshop Leaders:



Dr. Kelli Russell - Assistant Extension Professor

Dr. Kelli Russell is an Assistant Extension Professor of Rural Sociology in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology at Auburn University. She received her B.A. in history and political science from Wheaton College and an M.S. and Ph.D. from Mississippi State University in sociology with a concentration in rural sociology. Kelli's research interests center on the intersection of agriculture, people, organizations, and communities in relation to economic and social well-being. Currently, Kelli is

working on USDA grant-funded research projects regarding social and economic trends in agriculture and the rural workforce, and farmer decision making regarding farm management practices, farm stress, and farm resiliency.

Dr. Adam Radbinowitz - Associate Professor & Extension Specialist

Reproductive Success - Heifer Retention

Workshop Leader:



Dr. Jessica Rush - DVM

Dr. Jessica Rush received her DVM from Auburn University, College of Veterinary Medicine in 2010. Following graduation, Dr. Rush accepted a position in a rural mixed animal practice in Ashland, AL. After 5 years in private practice, she returned to Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine as a Theriogenology resident in 2015. Following completion of the residency program and achieving board certification by the American College of Theriogenology in 2018, Dr. Rush accepted a

position as Assistant Clinical Professor at Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine of Food Animal Medicine and Surgery. Dr. Rush's clinical interests include reproductive, medical, and surgical conditions of food animals.

Better Nutrition for Sustainability

Workshop Leaders:



Dr. Brandon Smith - Assistant Professor of Ruminant Nutrition in Forage Systems

Dr. Brandon Smith was born and raised in Slocomb, AL, on his family's small cow-calf operation. After his dedicated involvement in the FFA Organization, Smith enrolled Auburn University in 2007 to study animal sciences. Smith earned dual B.S. degrees in Animal Sciences (2012) and Agronomy and Soils (2012) from Auburn University. He went on to receive his M.S. (2014) in Animal Science with an emphasis in ruminant nutrition from the University of Arkansas and his Ph.D. (2017) in Agronomy with an emphasis in

forages from Texas A&M University. Following graduation, Smith began his academic career as an Assistant Professor at Tarleton State University in Stephenville, TX. Smith's appointment at Tarleton was primarily in teaching, though his research program began investigations into identification and characterization of novel feedstuffs for livestock production. Smith joined the faculty at Auburn University as an Assistant Professor of Ruminant Nutrition in Forage Systems in August 2021. His research focuses on the ruminal digestive physiology and kinetics of under southeastern forage systems. This effort is in support of sustainable grazing strategies for management of southeastern beef cattle production systems.



Dr. Leanne Dillard - Associate Professor/ Extension Specialist in Forage Systems

Dr. Leanne Dillard is an Associate Professor and Extension Specialist in the Department of Animal Sciences and the Department of Cop, Soil, and Environmental Sciences. Dr. Dillard's research interests include the use of biostimulants, such as plant-growth promoting rhizobacteria (PGPR), in forage systems to reduce reliance on synthetic N sources. She also focuses on integrated crop-livestock systems and the effects of grazing cattle

with cover crops on animal and crop performance. Her Extension program provides programs, workshops, and online resources for Alabama producers to promote economically and environmentally sustainable hay and pasture production. She has authored or co-authored 27 peer-reviewed journal articles and 3 Extension handbooks. She is also the coach of the Auburn University Forage Bowl Team.



Dr. Kim Mullenix - Professor and Department Head

Dr. Kim Mullenix is a Professor and Head of the Department of Animal Sciences at Auburn University. Kim began her academic career at Auburn University in 2004 as an undergraduate student in Animal Sciences. She completed her B.S. in Animal Sciences in 2008, and a M.S. in Ruminant Nutrition in 2010. Mullenix received her Ph.D. in Agronomy (Forage Management) with a minor in Agricultural Education and Communication in 2013 from the University of Florida. From 2014 to 2024, Mullenix served as a Beef

Systems Extension specialist. Her academic appointment is 75% Extension and 25% research. The focus of her research program is the development of systems management recommendations for cattle producers through the use of improved forage management and supplementation strategies. Dr. Mullenix has developed innovative curriculum, programming, and decision tools related to forage management for use by Extension agents and producers in Alabama and across the Southeast. She has authored or co-authored 45 peer-reviewed journal articles, over 150 Extension and popular press articles, delivered more than 200 in-state workshops on forage management and beef nutrition, and developed an online beef cattle educational short course and iBook for beginning farmers. Her research program is primarily focused on improved forage management strategies for beef cattle operations in the Southeast US during the cow-calf and backgrounding phases. She serves as a board member for the American Forage and Grassland Council and is the Past-President for the American Society of Animal Science Southern Section. She is an active member of the Alabama Association of Agricultural Agents and Specialists, the Alabama Beef Cattle Improvement Association, the Alabama Cattlemen's Association and the Alabama Farmers Federation.

2:30 - 4pm: Workshop Options

Herd Health

Workshop Leader:



Dr. Misty Edmondson - DVM

Dr. Edmondson is a native of Elmore County, Alabama where she grew up on a commercial cattle farm. She received a BS in microbiology from Auburn University in 1997 and DVM from Auburn University in 2001. She worked in a mixed animal practice in rural Alabama for 2 years before returning to Auburn University to complete a residency in food animal theriogenology. Dr. Edmondson completed her residency and MS in biomedical sciences from Auburn University in 2006 and became a Diplomate

of the American College of Theriogenologists in 2005. She joined the faculty at Auburn University's College of Veterinary Medicine in 2006 and was promoted to professor in 2018. Dr. Edmondson taught in numerous courses (including theriogenology, reproductive anatomy, urogenital surgery, production medicine, and others) for veterinary students as well as clinical rotations in food animal medicine and surgery and advanced rotations in advanced beef production and advanced small ruminant medicine and surgery. She was also involved

in theriogenology resident training through clinical instruction and graduate lectures and laboratories. In September 2018, Dr. Edmondson left Auburn University to join the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries as an Associate State Veterinarian. Dr. Edmondson has been a member of the American Veterinary Medical Association, American Association of Bovine Practitioners, American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners, American Veterinary Medical Association, Alabama Veterinary Medical Association, American College of Theriogenologists, Academy of Veterinary Consultants, the United States Animal Health Association, the Alabama Farmer's Federation, and the Alabama Cattlemen's Association. She has served on the board of directors for the Society for Theriogenology and the International Council for Veterinary Assessment and is on the abstract committee for the Society for Theriogenology. In addition, Dr. Edmondson has served as the chair of beef cattle continuing education for the American Veterinary Medical Association and currently serves as the chair of the beef continuing education program for the North American Veterinary Conference's Veterinary Meeting and Exposition (VMX). Dr. Edmondson has been married to her husband, Jason, a beef nutrition specialist, for eighteen years. They have two children, Wyatt and Laken, and have a farm where they raise Angus and SimAngus cattle, horses, and a few chickens.

Local Processed Beef Options and Opportunities

Workshop Leader:

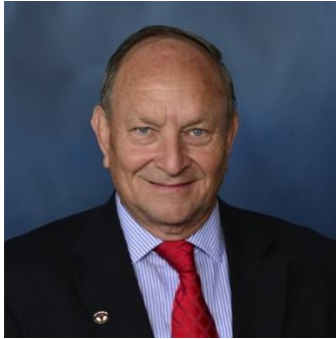


Dr. Aerial Belk, Assistant Professor

Dr. Aerial Belk is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Animal Sciences focusing on meat science and food safety microbiology. Dr. Belk's specific research interests include the microbiome of the built environment of food processing facilities and its relationship with pathogen persistence, the meat spoilage microbiome, and how antemortem stress can impact the animal microbiome and pathogen shedding. She teaches courses in meat science and muscle biology for undergraduate and graduate students as well as coordinating the meat science quiz bowl and (future!) meat judging competitive teams. In addition to advising several exemplary graduate students, she is also the faculty advisor for the Block & Bridle and Collegiate Horseman's clubs. She is also an active member of several professional organizations, including the American Meat Science Association, Women in the Meat Industry Network (WMIN) and the American Society of Microbiology.

Advocacy Opportunities to Influence Sustainability

Workshop Leaders:



Dr. Donald Mulvaney, Associate Professor

A product of a diversified family farm upbringing, immersed in FFA and 4-H experiences, Dr. Mulvaney pursued his passion for animal agriculture at the University of Illinois where he competed on livestock, meats judging and evaluation teams. After a stint of teaching high school ag education, he accepted a role to teach meat science and coach meats & meat animal evaluation teams at MSU where his passion for research in growth and muscle biology was ignited. Dr. Mulvaney's research interests have historically related to regulatory biology of muscle and meat through fetal programming but also focused on factors to enhance student development, teaching, leadership process and analytics around communication strategies which can help graduates address ag industry issues. In addition to research areas of biology, he developed several courses in leadership and communication leading to his development of the minor in leadership studies within the College of Agriculture, a revised Ag Communications degree curriculum and launch of a campus-wide leadership minor (LEAD). His scholarly works include \$7+ million in grants and approximately 250 refereed journal articles, non-refereed articles, abstracts at national/international meetings, and invited presentations combined. He has served as a former Associate Director for the Biggio Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning where he facilitated New Faculty Scholars, Future Faculty mentoring, classroom assessments and other professional faculty development programming. He has been actively involved in distance education programs in the college, campus and national level as co-PI of USDA grants to develop distance education consortia which ultimately became Ag*IDEA. He has developed or taught over 33 unique courses at AU. He has been recognized as a USDA National Educator Award nominee, a two-time recipient of the Dean's Teaching Award and the SGA Outstanding Faculty Award. He has advised numerous student organizations to include the college's SGA group (Council of all College clubs), Ag Ambassadors, Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow (ACT), Collegiate Young Farmers, Block and Bridle Club and advisees in Ag Communication, Animal Sciences and Interdisciplinary Leadership studies. In his leadership role within the COA Dean's Office, as Coordinator of Leadership and Student Development, he directed the CoA Leadership programming which included coordination of the minor in Leadership Studies, teaching leadership courses, workshops and training programs. He is an ESCOP/ACOP Lead program (now LEAD 21) participant and a multiple program certified leadership trainer, he is a program speaker, workshop facilitator, leadership and men ministry consultant and holds professional memberships in teaching and leadership associations. A servant leader throughout his career, he was elected and has served in the highest faculty leadership and shared governance roles as both Secretary and Chair of the AU Senate. He has been highly involved in Outreach programming, starting and coordinating the Young Cattlemen Leadership Program (YCLP), Ag Leadership Education Academy (ALEA), Youth in Praxis (YIPS), Beef Ambassador, B-ELITE plus the annual Beef Cattle Conference, various youth leadership and other related programs which enabled recognition with one of AU's highest recognitions for Excellence in Faculty Outreach.

Chandler Mulvaney - Director of Beef Advocacy, National Cattlemen's Beef Association

Chandler Mulvaney is the Director of Beef Advocacy at the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA). He plays a key role in promoting and defending the beef industry by leading communication strategies that amplify positive messaging about beef production, sustainability, and the value of cattle ranching in the U.S. His role includes managing outreach efforts, fostering relationships between beef producers and the public, and coordinating initiatives aimed at educating consumers about the environmental and health aspects of beef. Before taking on his position at NCBA, Mulvaney has experience in public speaking, agricultural policy, and beef advocacy. His work helps bridge the gap between producers and consumers, aiming to enhance public understanding of sustainable beef production practices.