



Animal & Comparative Biomedical Sciences

ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

Research



Dr. V.K. Viswanathan
Accepted to Prestigious
Fulbright Specialist
Roster

- Page 5

Teaching



The University of
Arizona Meat Judging
Team is celebrating
an outstanding Spring
2026 season an
invitation to compete
as the sole American
team in the Australian
Intercollegiate Meat
Judging Association
National Contest.

- Page 6

Extension



A new 2-day format
gave attendees of
the 2026 Informed
Arizona Equestrian
Horse Symposium
more opportunities
for hands-on
demonstrations and
real-world application.

- Page 7

Feature

ACBS Faculty and Staff Honored with University and College Awards

The School of Animal and Comparative Biomedical Sciences (ACBS) is proud to celebrate five faculty and staff members whose outstanding contributions to teaching, mentorship, research, student success, and public service have been recognized through prestigious University of Arizona and College of Agriculture, Life and Environmental Sciences (CALES) awards.

Together, these honorees exemplify ACBS's commitment to excellence in teaching, research, and extension. Their work impacts students, colleagues, industry partners, communities, and stakeholders throughout Arizona and beyond.

Emma Grigg – Bart Cardon Early Career Faculty Teaching Award

Emma Grigg, Assistant Professor of Practice, has been selected to receive the Bart Cardon Early Career Faculty Teaching Award, which recognizes outstanding teaching, student engagement, and innovation in the classroom.

Since joining the University of Arizona, Grigg has distinguished herself through a student-centered approach that combines evidence-based teaching practices with real-world applications in animal behavior and welfare. Her courses emphasize active learning, critical thinking, and hands-on experiences that help students connect classroom concepts to professional practice.

In her redesigned ACBS 311 course, students complete scaffolded “mini-research projects” in which they develop and investigate their own animal behavior research questions. She also incorporates creative assessments such as infographics, stories, games, and videos that allow students to communicate scientific concepts in meaningful ways.

A strong advocate for inclusive and accessible education, Grigg designs her courses using Universal Design for Learning principles and supports students through mentorship, career advising, and undergraduate research opportunities. She has mentored more than 15 undergraduate researchers, many of whom have gone on to present at conferences or contribute to publications. Her innovative teaching and commitment to student success make her a deserving recipient of this award.

Liliana Salvador – Transformative Mentorship in Undergraduate Research & Creative Activity Award

Liliana Salvador, Assistant Professor, has been selected to receive the 2026 Transformative Mentorship in Undergraduate Research & Creative Activity Award. This university-wide award recognizes mentors whose guidance has a profound impact on undergraduate students through research and scholarly engagement.

(Awards continued on 3)



From the Director



April 3rd marked three years since I joined ACBS. That doesn't seem possible; however, when I think about all that I've learned since arriving, the amazing activities that I've been able to be a part of, and all that the ACBS team has accomplished across just the past year, there is more than enough to make three years seem like a short amount of time.

While there are many things that I believe that we should be proud of, a few key things stand out to me for the 25-26 academic year. Among these is the official grand opening of the Food Product and Safety Lab (FPSL), which was held in November 2025. The State funded (\$10M) renovation and expansion of this facility was completed and the facility began operation earlier in 2025, but we brought students/staff/faculty and stakeholders together in November to officially celebrate the facility and those that helped to get us to this point. We were fortunate to be joined by Arizona State Senator Tim Dunn as well as family and friends of Andy Groseta; Andy was a major advocate for funding for the FPSL, and we were honored to unveil a memorial plaque commemorating his contributions.

We were also able to relaunch our Livestock Judging Team this academic year. Inactive since before I arrived, we were fortunate to be able to hire John Lockhart to 'kick start' the team and provide this valuable leadership opportunity for our students. Similarly, our Meats Judging Team, led by coach Megan Sorenson and advised by Dr. Duane Wulf, have also had another successful year; this is only the 2nd year that the team has existed, and they continue to perform admirably at competitions held across the United States.

Finally, I must stress how impressed I continue to be with the resilience and commitment of our faculty and staff. Despite changes and uncertainty in the funding landscape, our tenure track researchers and their teams continue to conduct impactful research in countless areas. Our extension faculty continue to provide programs that impact Arizonans and the country; this is readily seen with our ongoing efforts to address the movement of the New World Screwworm towards the US border. Finally, our professors of practice continue to provide exceptional and innovative Instruction to our students across all of our programs.

The U of A Land Grant Mission (Instruction/Research/Extension) runs deeply through everything that we do and, even when faced with challenges and uncertainty, delivering on this mission remains central to our purpose. Thanks for all that you (faculty/staff/students/stakeholders) do to support that mission. We couldn't do it without you!

D. Scott Merrell

Director and Professor
School of Animal and Comparative Biomedical Sciences
The University of Arizona

dscottmerrell@arizona.edu



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Finding Tomorrow's Solutions, Together.

Gifts of any size help to propel ACBS closer to its goals and have an immediate and lasting impact on our programs and students. Gifts may be made online at the University of Arizona Foundation website, or contact us to discuss more personalized options.

LEARN MORE AT ACBS.ARIZONA.EDU

Faculty Promotions

On behalf of everyone in the School of Animal and Comparative Biomedical Sciences, we would like to extend congratulations to the faculty who received promotions and/or tenure or continuing status, effective July 1, 2026, or with the beginning of the next academic year. This is a professional milestone and represents many years of hard work and dedication. Join us in congratulating them on this notable achievement.

Promotion to Professor of Practice

- Katherine Broneck
- Margarethe Cooper



Margarethe Cooper



Kathy Broneck

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Page 1 - Dr. Emma Grigg - Sherri Rieck
Page 3 - Debbie Reed - University of Arizona Staff Council
Page 4 - All photos - UA RTIP
Page 5 - Grandin - Margie Sanchez-Vega
Page 6 - Meat Judging - Megan Sorenson; MacKenzie - Facebook
Page 7 - All photos - Betsy Greene
Page 8 - All photos - Jerry Lopez
Page 9 - All photos - Tech Launch Arizona
Page 10 - All photos - Arun K. Dhar

The award celebrates mentors who inspire students to cultivate curiosity, pursue new knowledge, and apply research to real-world challenges. Salvador creates opportunities for students to engage in hands-on research while developing the skills and confidence needed for future academic and professional success.



Through her mentorship, Salvador helps students see themselves as contributors to the scientific community while fostering an environment that encourages exploration, discovery, and growth. The award recognizes her lasting influence on undergraduate researchers and her commitment to developing the next generation of scientists and scholars.

Hung Mai – CALES Outstanding Staff in Research Award

Hung Mai, Research Scientist, has been selected to receive the 2026 CALES Outstanding Staff in Research Award. This honor recognizes a staff member who has made significant contributions to the research mission of the College of Agriculture, Life and Environmental Sciences.



Mai serves as a research scientist in the Aquaculture Pathology Laboratory, where his work focuses on shrimp health, disease diagnostics, immunology, and aquaculture biosecurity. Through his research, he addresses critical challenges facing the global aquaculture industry and contributes to improving animal health and sustainable food production.

His work on emerging shrimp diseases, pathogen detection methods, disease resistance, and biosecurity practices has advanced scientific understanding and supported aquaculture systems around the world. Mai's technical expertise, collaborative spirit, and dedication to research excellence have made him an invaluable contributor to ACBS research programs.

Christina Garcia – Shirley O'Brien CALES Community Award: Legacy Community Champion

Christina Garcia, Assistant Director of ACBS Academic Advising and Animal Science Academic Advisor, has been recognized with the Shirley O'Brien CALES Community Award: Legacy Community Champion. The award honors individuals whose sustained leadership strengthens the college community through inclusive excellence, mutual respect, professional growth, and a sense of belonging.



Garcia has played a transformative role in recruiting and retaining students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds. Through data-informed decision-making, innovative retention strategies, and expanded recruitment pathways, she has helped create opportunities for success across ACBS and CALES.

Her impact extends beyond advising. Garcia has developed practices that have influenced not only ACBS but also the

broader university community. Known for her collaborative leadership style, she creates environments where students and colleagues feel valued, supported, and empowered.

The award presentation recognized Garcia for shaping "people, possibilities, and purpose" across the college through her leadership, service, and commitment to community. Her work embodies the spirit of a true Legacy Community Champion.

Debbie Reed – University of Arizona Staff Award for Excellence

Debbie Reed, Program Coordinator Senior, has been recognized with the 2026 University of Arizona Staff Award for Excellence, one of the university's highest honors for staff members whose work has a significant and lasting impact on the institution and its mission.



For nearly two decades, Reed has provided exceptional leadership, coordination, and support for Cooperative Extension programs, ACBS communications and outreach, and the Food Safety Consortium. She is widely recognized for her professionalism, organizational expertise, and unwavering commitment to excellence.

Among her many contributions, Reed has played a key role in tribal outreach programs supported by the Native American Agriculture Fund, coordinated educational initiatives serving Native communities, and helped organize training and preparedness efforts for the Arizona Livestock Incident Response Team (ALIRT). She has also contributed to statewide preparedness efforts related to the New World Screwworm threat through the development of surveillance kits, educational materials, and stakeholder outreach programs.

Colleagues consistently describe Reed as a trusted partner, problem solver, and consummate professional whose contributions often extend far beyond her formal responsibilities. Her innovative approach has strengthened statewide outreach efforts and helped transform the Food Safety Consortium's annual conference into a successful hybrid event serving participants both in person and online.

Through her dedication, creativity, and service-oriented leadership, Reed has made a lasting impact on ACBS, Cooperative Extension, and the communities they serve.

Celebrating Excellence Across ACBS

The accomplishments of these five award recipients reflect the breadth of excellence found throughout ACBS. Whether advancing student learning, mentoring future researchers, conducting impactful research, fostering inclusive communities, or supporting outreach and extension across Arizona, each honoree has made meaningful contributions to the school's mission.

That's a Wrap! Looking Back on the University of Arizona's 2025 Global Symposium on Racing

The 2025 Global Symposium on Racing hosted by the University of Arizona's Race Track Industry Program (RTIP) came to a successful conclusion after three days of panels and workshops. The event, held from December 8–10, 2025, connected over 650 industry professionals from around the globe who engaged in discussion of pressing issues and opportunities in the horse racing industry.



University of Arizona Provost, Patricia Prelock, provided Tuesday's opening remarks.

In a new, expanded format, Monday offered a deep and varied mix of panels and workshops including topics on artificial intelligence, track maintenance, tote protocols, investigations, insurance, racing history, and ongoing equine biomechanics research at the University of Arizona. Vicky Leonard of the Kick Collective led a special media training workshop focusing on strategies to effectively respond to the tough questions faced by racing stakeholders. Racing Secretaries, Directors of Racing, Horsemen, and Regulators came together for the 5th Annual Racing Secretary Summit covering racing office topics including how the racing office could utilize artificial intelligence (AI) in creative ways and heard from Horse Racing Nation about their AI generated morning lines. Other Summit topics included improving communication between racing offices, post time coordination, and establishing consistent minimum weights to protect jockey mental health and welfare. Monday also included two workshops which provided attendees with continuing education credits through the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority.

Provost Patricia Prelock provided Tuesday's opening remarks and introduced Frank Taylor of Taylor Made Sales Agency and Stable Recovery. Frank delivered an inspirational keynote address about perseverance, hard work, and the healing power of the horse. His address was followed by panels diving into key industry topics examining how states are reinventing racing's business model, the impact of computer assisted wagering in the betting marketplace, and a deeper look into the most recent major race track construction prospects.



Nathan Klein receives the RTIP Distinguished Student Award from RTIP faculty member, Elizabeth Rogers.

Tuesday's luncheon included the presentation of RTIP and industry awards. Awards included the Big Sport of Turfdom, awarded to social media influencer and Thoroughbred owner Griffin Johnson, and the Clay Puett Award, presented to MyRacehorse for their work in bringing the excitement of horse ownership to a wider audience. The John K. Goodman Alumni Award went to Joe Longo recognizing his success and contributions to the

industry. The RTIP Distinguished Student Award went to Nathan Klein, a senior aspiring towards a track announcing career upon graduation.

Tuesday afternoon sessions brought to the stage four legendary hall of fame jockeys, Steve Cauthen, Ramon Dominguez, Laffit Pincay Jr, and Mike Smith for a conversation about their careers and reminiscing about past races and great rivalries. This transitioned into a more serious conversation as the next panel focused on the mental well-being of jockeys, who face great danger and immense pressure, and what changes the industry can make to better support them. The final panel of the day brought to the stage multiple individuals connected with the recent Netflix series *Race for the Crown* to discuss new strategies for engaging audiences and bring fresh faces to the sport of horse racing.



Hall of fame jockeys, Steve Cauthen, Ramon Dominguez, Laffit Pincay Jr, and Mike Smith discuss their careers and reminisce about past races in a speaker panel

The final day of the symposium began with a panel reflecting on the success stories in racing from the past year followed by a legislative and HISA update and a Q&A with Tom Rooney of the National Thoroughbred Racing Association (NTRA) and Lisa Lazarus of Horseracing Integrity & Safety Authority (HISA). One of the liveliest panels of the day came from horse owner and industry activist Mike Repole as he joined via Zoom to provide his unfiltered perspective on horse racing's future. Other panels included a conversation about the changing wagering marketplace and the impact of prediction markets, a discussion on the latest technologies to time races, a look into new and developing strategies to boost U.S. Thoroughbred Breeding, and a conversation about the impact of influencers in horse racing which included Big Sport of Turfdom winner Griffin Johnson. To close out the symposium, attendees heard from international panelists about global collaboration efforts to bring the best racing has to offer onto the world stage. Panelists dove into how they attract top racing talent and appeal to a wide fanbase, generating excitement and great on-track experiences.

Looking ahead, the 2026 Global Symposium on Racing is already generating anticipation. Scheduled to take place at Loews Ventana Canyon from December 7–9, the event promises to build on the success of this year's symposium. Hotel and registration details for the 2026 symposium will be available at www.racingsymposium.com in June.

Dr. V.K. Viswanathan Accepted to Prestigious Fulbright Specialist Roster

Congratulations to Dr. V.K. Viswanathan on his acceptance to the Fulbright Specialist Roster, a prestigious international program sponsored by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and administered by World Learning.

Following a competitive review process, Dr. Viswanathan was recommended by the Fulbright Peer Review Panel and selected for placement on the Fulbright Specialist Roster for a three-year term from August 15, 2025, through August 15, 2028. His acceptance recognizes his expertise and accomplishments in his field and places him among a distinguished group of professionals eligible to participate in Fulbright Specialist projects around the world.

As a member of the roster, Dr. Viswanathan may be matched with projects proposed by host institutions in more than 150 countries. These short-term international collaborations provide opportunities for specialists to share their knowledge, build institutional partnerships, and contribute to educational and professional development initiatives across the globe.

Reflecting on the achievement, Dr. Viswanathan shared his excitement about the opportunity and expressed gratitude to colleagues who supported his application process. In a

message announcing the news, he noted that the next step will be identifying a project that aligns with his interests and expertise.

The Fulbright Program is one of the U.S. government’s flagship international educational exchange programs, promoting mutual understanding through academic and professional collaboration. Acceptance to the Fulbright Specialist Roster is a significant professional honor and reflects Dr. Viswanathan’s commitment to advancing research, education, and global engagement.

We congratulate Dr. Viswanathan on this outstanding accomplishment and look forward to seeing the international partnerships and opportunities that emerge from his participation in the Fulbright Specialist Program.

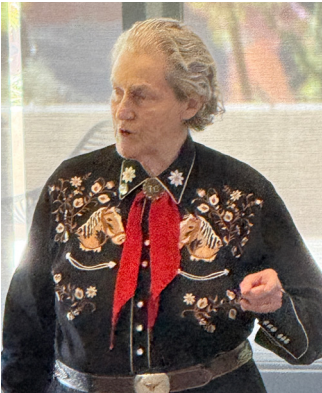


Learning from a Pioneer: Dr. Temple Grandin Visits Arizona

I recently had the privilege of attending a public seminar featuring Dr. Temple Grandin hosted by the University of Arizona’s Eller College of Management - Center for Management Innovations in Healthcare in partnership with the College of Veterinary Medicine. The event brought together students, faculty, professionals, and community members to hear from one of the world’s most influential voices in animal science, autism advocacy, and neurodiversity.

Dr. Grandin shared insights into the different ways people think and process information, emphasizing that visual thinkers, pattern thinkers, and verbal thinkers each contribute unique

strengths to society. She discussed how these thinking styles often influence career choices and problem-solving approaches, encouraging attendees to recognize and value diverse ways of learning and understanding the world. Drawing from her own experiences as a person with autism, Dr. Grandin reflected on how her distinctive way of thinking helped shape her groundbreaking contributions to animal welfare and livestock management. She showcased several of her inventions and explained how many cattle-handling systems used on farms throughout the United States today are based on designs she developed. Her work has transformed livestock welfare practices worldwide and has helped foster greater understanding of neurodiversity and innovation.



Following the presentation, Dr. Grandin engaged the audience in an energetic question-and-answer session before joining attendees at a reception, where she graciously met with members of the public and continued conversations sparked during the seminar. The opportunity to interact with her in a more personal setting was especially meaningful for many who have been inspired by her work.

For me, the event held special significance. I had the honor of meeting Dr. Grandin 15 years ago while I was a Ph.D. student at Louisiana State University. Seeing her again after all these years was truly joyous. Her passion, authenticity, and commitment to advancing both animal welfare and understanding of neurodiversity remain as inspiring today as ever.

- Margie Sanchez-Vega, Assistant Professor of Practice
Animal and Food Sciences - ACBS

University of Arizona Meat Judging Team Earns International Invitation Following Strong Spring Season

The University of Arizona Meat Judging Team is celebrating an outstanding Spring 2026 season, highlighted by strong performances at national competitions, recognition from industry leaders, and an exciting invitation to represent both the University and the United States on the international stage.

This year, the team was selected as the sole American team invited to compete in the Australian Intercollegiate Meat Judging Association National Contest in Wagga Wagga, Australia, June 30–July 5. Each year, the prestigious contest invites only one team from the United States, making this a remarkable honor for the University of Arizona and the nine undergraduate students who make up the team.



The international experience will provide students with a unique opportunity to explore the meat science industry in another country, gain new technical knowledge, and build professional relationships that can benefit them throughout their careers. As representatives of both the University of Arizona and the United States, the team will

showcase the strength of Arizona's animal and meat science programs on a global stage.

The invitation comes on the heels of a highly successful competitive season. At the Southwestern Meat Judging Contest, the team placed 5th in Beef Judging, 4th in Lamb Judging, 5th in Pork Judging, and 4th in Total Placing, with standout performances from Hailey Harmon, Alex Ambler, and Melina Leonard.

The team continued its success at the South Plains Meat Judging Contest, earning 3rd in Beef Judging and 5th in Pork Judging, while Anika Gates, Kami Corba, and Hailey Harmon received individual honors.

The team's momentum carried into the 2026 National Western Meat Judging Contest, hosted by JBS and the American Meat Science Association (AMSA), where Arizona earned an impressive 5th-place team finish. Individual highlights included Anika Gates placing 5th overall, Melina Leonard placing 8th overall, and Hailey Harmon earning top-10 finishes in multiple categories.



Alumni Spotlight: Student Research Earns Journal Publication

Recent ACBS graduate and Honors College student Ella MacKenzie (Class of 2025) has achieved an important milestone with the publication of her honors thesis research in the journal *Human-Animal Interactions*. Mentored by Assistant Professor of Practice Emma Grigg, MacKenzie's study, "When pets help—and when they don't: A pilot study on perceived stress and pet ownership in U.S. college students," explored the relationship between pet ownership and stress among college students. The paper was published in January 2026 and represents the culmination of MacKenzie's undergraduate research experience. Now a first-year student in the University of Arizona College of Veterinary Medicine, MacKenzie continues her academic journey while building on the research foundation developed during her time in ACBS.



MacKenzie, E and Grigg E. When pets help—and when they don't: A pilot study on perceived stress and pet ownership in US college students. *Human-Animal Interactions*. 14:1. Jan 2026. <https://doi.org/10.1079/hai.2026.0002>.



Additional team members contributing to the successful season included Erin Anderson and Sarah Stark. The team is coached by Megan Sorenson and Dr. Duane Wulf.

Adding to the team's achievements, the University of Arizona Meat Judging Team was awarded a 2026 AMSA Judging Jump Start Grant in October 2025. The program received \$4,000 to support the 2026 spring competitive season, recognizing the team's commitment to student development and excellence in meat science education. The funding helps offset travel expenses, training materials, equipment, and coaching resources, further strengthening opportunities for student success. In addition, a generous University of Arizona alumni donor has pledged an annual gift of \$15,000 to support team travel and participation costs, providing valuable resources that will help expand opportunities for current and future team members.

For more information about the team or the Meat Judging Team's trip to Australia, please contact Megan Sorenson at meganvsorenson@arizona.edu.

Congratulations to the University of Arizona Meat Judging Team on an exceptional season and best wishes as they prepare to represent Arizona and the nation in Australia this summer!

2026 Informed Arizona Equestrian Horse Symposium

The 10th Annual Informed Arizona Equestrian Horse Symposium was changed to a 2-day format for 2026, with Day 1 at Al-Marrah Equine Center, and Day 2 at Circle D Ranch a few miles down the road. The move to a two-day format and the addition of a private facility in 2026 created more opportunities for hands-on demonstrations and real-world application. Based on evaluation responses, attendees consistently found the presentations useful, easy to understand, and relevant to horse care, with many reporting meaningful knowledge gains, especially in newer or more technical topics. New approaches, like live-streaming demonstrations for better visibility, were especially popular and added to the overall experience.

FFA Horse Judging

Two hundred Horse Judges descended upon Al-Marrah Equine Center on February 20, 2026 for the State FFA Horse Judging Competition. Student Chairs Campbell Nearn, Allie Koss, and Mattie Richards were ready on the competitor wrangling side, while Dr. Haley Collins and members of the horse classes, Collegiate Horse Association, and U of A Equestrian Team organized the horse handling/riding portion of the event.



FFA students judge the Halter class.



L to R: Event Chair: Dr. Betsy Greene, Student Chairs: Campbell Nearn, Mattie Richards, and Allie Koss.

Photos clockwise from right:

- Live streaming to the projection screen with a microphone gave everyone a close up on Leander's hoof trimming lesson
- Dr. Griffin Krause with hands on wound care and leg wrapping demo.
- 80+ attendees got an up-close and personal view of Dr. Angelo Telatin working with horses.
- Annabelle Nieman ends the day with a new experience, riding her jumper brideless!
- Dr. Betsy Greene helping attendees take horses' vital signs.



Awards and Recognitions

Congratulations to Dr. Betsy Greene for her recognition by the Arizona Agriculture Extension Association in the following areas:

Communications Awards:

- 2026 Regional Winner – Fact sheet
- 2026 Regional Winner – Learning module

Search for Excellence

- 2026 State Winner – Livestock Production

Extension Poster

- 2026 Regional Winner – Extension Poster



Measuring Success

Dr. Greene has been working with Dr. Rebecca Splan from Delaware Valley University and Kentucky Equine Management Internship (KEMI) to record and examine 25 years of non-identifying data from college students from all states and over 20 countries to examine what factors influence success in their college experience and future career directions.



Hours of data entry by Drs. Greene and Splan at KEMI, located at the Kentucky Horse Park.

When Opportunity Knocks

Dr. Greene took advantage of having state and national experts in Tucson for the Horse Symposium by scheduling an extension tribal rancher workshop on the Tohono O'odham nation near Sells, AZ on January 26th. Funded by the Native American Agriculture Foundation grant, ranchers learned about horse management, farrier work, hoof health and diseases, and updates on New World Screwworm risks.



Tribal Extension Agent Leander Thomas teaches hoof care, trimming, and shoeing essentials for attendees.



L to R.: Drs. Greene and Telatin and SWIAA President Andy Antone worked to make this NAAF funded workshop successful.



Veterinarian Dr. Madelyn Ramirez takes radiographs for her presentation on hoof structure and disease.

Arizona 4-H STEM Ambassadors and Chief Science Officers Attend Ignite by 4-H in Washington, D.C.

4-H STEM Ambassadors and Chief Science Officers (CSOs) from across Arizona traveled to Washington, D.C., to participate in Ignite by 4-H, a national summit designed to inspire the next generation of leaders through hands-on learning, career exploration, and meaningful connections.

Ignite focuses on preparing youth to be “Beyond Ready”, equipped with the skills, confidence, and experiences needed to thrive in future careers and make a difference in their communities.



Representing Arizona were five 4-H STEM Ambassadors and Chief Science Officers: Elise Peters and Pablo Granado from Pinal County; Francisco Ruiz and Isaac Avila from Santa Cruz County; and Lilly Meister from Gila County.

The youth were supported by county 4-H staff and volunteers, including Esther Turner, Associate Agent; Kyle Treadway, STEM Volunteer; and Jennie Treadway, Program Coordinator, from Pinal County; Norma E. Ruiz, Assistant in Extension, Santa Cruz County; and Haley Chappell, Assistant Agent, Cochise County.

Participants visited NASA facilities, where they learned directly from scientists and professionals through a series of interactive mini-sessions. Highlights included a close-up look at clean rooms, testing equipment, and the Roman Space Telescope, offering a rare glimpse into cutting-edge space exploration.

Youth also visited Capitol Hill, where they had the opportunity to meet with Senator Mark Kelly and Representatives Eli Crane and Juan Ciscomani. What followed was more than an hour of genuine and engaging conversation centered on youth voice in government and the important role young people play in shaping the future of the country.



These meetings with members of Congress were made possible through the efforts of Karla Nuñez from the University of Arizona's Office of Federal Relations and Government and Community Relations.

One of the standout moments of the conference was a workshop led by Pinal County's own Elise Peters (at podium, right) alongside her adult advisor, Jennie Treadway. Together, they presented a Water Filtration STEM Workshop to more than 70 youth from across the country. Participants worked in teams to design and build DIY water filters, applying real-world problem-solving skills while learning about environmental science and related career pathways.



Beyond tours and workshops, youth attended keynote sessions focused on leadership, communication, and Beyond Ready skills. They also participated in the Lead to Change Gallery Walk, where they connected with peers from across the country to share ideas and initiatives aimed at creating positive change in their home communities.

Ignite by 4-H was more than just a conference—it was a transformative experience that left a lasting impact. Arizona's STEM Ambassadors and Chief Science Officers returned home inspired, empowered, and ready to lead. Through hands-on learning, national connections, conversations with elected officials, and real-world exploration, they truly embodied what it means to be Beyond Ready.

- Norma E. Ruiz, Haley Chappell, Gerardo U. Lopez
Federal Relations Government and Community Relations,
The University of Arizona

New Addition to the Business Office Team



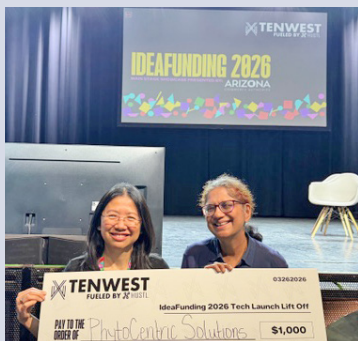
We are pleased to welcome Robin Stratton as the new Business Manager for ACBS. Robin brings nearly 30 years of experience as an administrative professional. Since joining the University of Arizona in May 2025, she has served as a Research Program Administrator for Steward Observatory before transitioning to CALES.

Robin's wealth of experience and strong background in administration and organizational management make her a valuable addition to our team. We are delighted to welcome her to ACBS and look forward to the many contributions she will make in her new role.

PhytoCentric Solutions Earns TLA LiftOff Award at TENWEST

PhytoCentric Solutions, LLC, a startup co-founded by Dr. Bibiana Law and Dr. Sadhana Ravishankar, received the Tech Launch Arizona (TLA) LiftOff Award at the 2026 IdeaFunding competition, held during the TENWEST Conference in Tucson, Arizona, on March 26, 2026.

The competition featured more than 75 startup companies from across Arizona and beyond, all vying for funding and recognition. Representing PhytoCentric Solutions, Dr. Law delivered a compelling pitch that successfully advanced through three rounds of competition, ultimately placing the company among the Top 10 technology startups selected to present before the final judging panel.



PhytoCentric Solutions, LLC co-founders, Dr. Bibiana Law (left) and Dr. Sadhana Ravishankar, receive a LiftOff Award at TENWEST.

Her outstanding presentation earned praise from the judges, funding through the competition, and the prestigious TLA-sponsored LiftOff Award, which recognizes promising University of Arizona-affiliated startups

with strong potential for future growth and commercialization.

IdeaFunding is Arizona's premier startup pitch competition, bringing together entrepreneurs, innovators, investors, and community leaders to showcase emerging technologies and business ventures. Advancing to the Top 10 from a field of more than 75 competitors is a significant achievement and reflects the strength of PhytoCentric Solutions' innovation and vision.

This exciting milestone highlights the entrepreneurial efforts of Dr. Law and Dr. Ravishankar as they continue to translate research into real-world solutions. Congratulations to the PhytoCentric Solutions team on this well-deserved recognition. We look forward to following their continued success and growth in the years ahead.



Dr. Bibiana Law delivers PhytoCentric Solutions pitch during the 2026 IdeaFunding competition.

Ravishankar Lab Activities

Students Earn Prestigious Research Awards and Scholarships

Several students in Dr. Sadhana Ravishankar's laboratory have been recognized for their academic excellence and research achievements. **Nguyen Dang** received the Margaret Bilson Scholarship Award from the University of Arizona College of Medicine for Fall 2025. Graduate students **Richard Park**, **Kirat Bains**, and **Ally Simpson** were awarded Graduate and Professional Student Council Research and Project Grants (GPSC-REAP), with Park receiving funding during the Fall 2025 cycle and Bains and Simpson earning awards in Spring 2026. Undergraduate researcher **Roman Orozco** also received a GPSC-REAP award during the Spring 2026 funding cycle. These competitive awards provide support for student research projects and highlight the outstanding scholarship and research contributions of students in the Ravishankar laboratory.

Industry, Community, and Educational Outreach

The Ravishankar Laboratory continued to strengthen its connections with industry, agriculture, and the broader community through a variety of outreach and engagement activities during 2025 and 2026.

In October 2025, the team participated in Tech Launch Arizona's I-Squared Expo and Awards event, showcasing its "Shelf-life Extension using Antimicrobials Technology," which was recognized as one of the University of Arizona's Top 10 technologies. The laboratory also demonstrated its antimicrobial application technologies at the 2025 AgTech Conference hosted by the University of Arizona Yuma Center of Excellence for Desert Agriculture, highlighting innovative approaches to improving food safety and agricultural sustainability in arid regions.

The laboratory actively pursued industry partnerships throughout the year. Dr. Sadhana Ravishankar and Dr. Roger Law met with representatives from numerous food and produce companies to discuss food safety challenges, testing services, and potential research collaborations. The team also hosted industry representatives and investors for laboratory tours, showcasing ongoing food safety research and exploring future collaborative opportunities.

In November 2025, Dr. Ravishankar and her team visited the Wellton-Mohawk Irrigation District and toured regenerative farming operations in southwestern Arizona to discuss research partnerships and emerging agricultural needs.

The laboratory's commitment to education and community engagement was also evident through participation in the Southern Arizona Regional Science and Engineering Foundation (SARSEF) Science Fair, where Dr. Ravishankar and her team served as judges for food safety and microbiology awards recognizing outstanding student research. In February 2026, Dr. Ravishankar was interviewed for a student-focused feature article on *Listeria monocytogenes*, helping educate University of Arizona students about food safety issues.

Most recently, Dr. Ravishankar and graduate students Nguyen Dang and Ally Simpson attended the TENWEST Local Multiplier Workshop and related events, where they discussed opportunities to apply the laboratory's food safety research and testing services to support local communities and food startups.

Together, these activities reflect the Ravishankar Laboratory's commitment to advancing food safety through research, innovation, education, and collaboration with industry and community partners.

Celebrating the Career and Retirement of Dr. Michael Riggs

The University of Arizona School of Animal and Comparative Biomedical Sciences celebrated the remarkable career and retirement of Dr. Michael Riggs at a Farewell Celebration on January 22nd.

After decades of service in research, teaching, and mentorship, Dr. Riggs leaves a lasting legacy at the University of Arizona and within the broader scientific community. A professor in ACBS and Pathology, Dr. Riggs built an internationally recognized research program focused on cryptosporidiosis, an infectious disease affecting both humans and livestock.

Throughout his career, Dr. Riggs' work advanced understanding of the immune response to *Cryptosporidium* and contributed to the development of vaccines, immunotherapeutics, diagnostic approaches, and new drug discovery efforts. His research program earned sustained support from organizations including the National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Department of Agriculture,

private industry, and philanthropic foundations. His discoveries also resulted in numerous patents, licensing agreements, scholarly publications, and broad scientific impact.

Beyond research accomplishments, Dr. Riggs has been a dedicated educator and mentor whose influence extends across generations of students, trainees, and colleagues. His commitment to excellence in teaching was recognized through multiple faculty awards and his long standing service to the university's academic and research mission.

Please join us in thanking Dr. Riggs for his years of service and wishing him all the best in retirement.



2025 Food Safety Conference Brings Together Experts from Around the Globe

The University of Arizona Food Safety Consortium hosted its annual 2025 Food Safety Conference virtually on October 29, bringing together researchers, regulatory professionals, extension specialists, and students to discuss current and emerging food safety challenges. The conference featured presentations on topics including avian influenza response, foodborne parasites, sanitation validation for small food processors, Arizona's Cottage Food Program, and food safety in regenerative agriculture. Speakers represented organizations such as the Arizona Department of Agriculture, Arizona Department of Health Services, North Carolina State University, the University of Foggia in Italy, and the University of Arizona. The event continues the Food Safety Consortium's mission of fostering collaboration among academia, industry, and government agencies to address critical food safety issues and promote innovative solutions.

Aquaculture Pathology Lab Updates

Conference Session Chair

Dr. Arun K. Dhar chaired a session during the Aquaculture America, World Aquaculture Society Meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada, February 16-19, 2026. Five Aquaculture Pathology Laboratory researchers, including graduate student, Marian Guerrero Padilla, presented papers at the conference.

Invited Talks

Dr. Dhar was invited to give a plenary talk on "Current and Emerging Diseases in Farmed Shrimp" in the International Congress on Invertebrate Pathology and Microbial Control & 57th Annual Meeting of the Society for Invertebrate Pathology in Puerto Varas, Chile, August 3 to 7, 2025. Dr. Dhar also chaired a session on "Host-Pathogen Interactions: Impact on Disease and Host Population Dynamics" in the conference.

Dr. Arun K. Dhar was invited to give a Lead Speaker talk in the Diseases in Asian Aquaculture 12 (DAA 12) Conference in Chennai, India, September 23-27, 2025. The four-day symposium, attended by 436 participants from 21 countries, addressed current global scenarios and future needs in aquaculture from around the world.



Aquaculture Pathology Laboratory graduate student, Marian Guerrero Padilla, presenting her MS Thesis work in the Aquaculture America Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, on February 18, 2026.



Dr. Hung N. Mai giving a talk in the Diseases in Asian Aquaculture 12 (DAA 12) Conference in Chennai, India, September 23-27, 2025.



Dr. Arun K. Dhar with conference organizing committee members, Dr. Patricia Stock, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR (left) and Dr. Patricia Navarro, INIA Carillanca, Chile.



Aquaculture Pathology Laboratory members with colleagues from Mexico at the Aquaculture America, World Aquaculture Society Meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana, March 06-10, 2025.

Front row: Dr. Carlos Pantoja Morales, Dr. Cecilia Guadalupe Luna Badillo (ITSON, Obregon, Mexico), Dr. Hung N. Mai, Dr. Arun K. Dhar, Marian Guerrero Padilla, Dr. José Cuauhtemoc Ibarra Gamez (ITSO, Obregon, Mexico). Back row: John Foscue and Dr. Roberto Cruz-Flores (CICESE, Ensenada, Mexico).

Grants

Title: Building Capacity for Tribal Ranchers and Producers to Battle Against New World Screwworms

Funding Agency: Western Integrated Pest Management Center (USDA)

PI: Lucy Li

Co-PI: Betsy Greene

Funding Amount: \$40,000

Patents

Dev Kumar G, **Law B**, **Ravishankar S** and **Zhu L**. 2025. US Patent #12239134. "Plant Antimicrobial Compositions Including An Emulsifier And/Or Ozone And Methods Of Use". <https://patents.justia.com/patent/12239134>

Aranguren Caro LF, **Dhar A** and **Cruz Flores R**. 2025. US Patent #US 12,480,167 B2, 2025. "Shrimp Disease Detection Assays and Uses Thereof".

Publications

Caicedo Martínez JA, Vásquez Machado GM, Rivera Palomino CE, Calderón Parra CP, Castro Vargas JN and **Dhar AK**. 2026. Integration of Histopathology and Molecular Diagnostics in Shrimp Health Surveillance: A Case Study from Colombia. *Journal of Aquatic Animal Health*, In Press.

Cruz-Flores R, **Mai HN** and **Dhar AK**. 2026. Advances in Shrimp Infectious Disease Research: The Role of Next-Generation Sequencing. In: *Bioinformatics Tools for Predictive Ecology and Fisheries*, B. K. Das, V. Kumar and S. Roy (Editors), Springer Nature, Pages 469-485.

Cruz-Flores R, Cáceres-Martínez J and **Dhar AK**. 2026. Laser Microdissection and Near Single-Cell Whole Genome Amplification. In: "Whole Genome Amplification: Methods in Molecular Biology Protocol", Yafeng Ma (Editor), Springer Nature, In Press.

Dinh-Hung N, **Mai HN**, **Matthew M**, **Wright H** and **Dhar AK**. 2025. Isolation, characterization, and pathogenicity of a *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* strain causing translucent post-larvae disease in *Penaeus vannamei* outside China. *PLoS One* 20(9): e0331862, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0331862>

Foscue III J R, **Schofield PJ**, **Andrade TP** and **Dhar AK**. 2026. Examining the susceptibility of Pacific blue shrimp (*Penaeus stylirostris*) to *Enterocytozoon hepatopenaei* (EHP) and horizontal transmission of EHP between *Penaeus stylirostris* and Pacific white shrimp (*Penaeus vannamei*). *Disease of Aquatic Organisms*. In Press.

Jeena K, Makesh M, Bedekar, Megha K, Shyam KU, **Dhar AK** and Rajendran KV. 2025. Disease Diagnosis in Aquaculture. In: *Aquatic Animal Health Management*, Rajendran Kooloth Valappil, Iddya Karunasagar, Indrani Karunasagar (Editors), Springer Nature, Pages 593-626.

Jumani RS, Thomas B, Lakshman J, Ostermeier C, Nuber N, Blusch JH, Braud-Perez S, Wetty D, Nouaime L, Dederichs J, Etse J, Grubestic S, Lakshminarayana SB, Watson LC, Blais J, Thompson Z, Jaber TZ, Jones MR, **Schaefer DA**, **Riggs MW**, Huston CD, Diagana TT, Manjunatha UH. 2025. Development of a current Good Manufacturing Practice-compliant Process for Producing *Cryptosporidium parvum* oocysts for Clinical Use. *Journal of Infectious Disease*. 2026 Feb 18;jiag107. doi: 10.1093/infdis/jiag107

Mai HN, **Dinh-Hung N** and **Dhar AK**. 2026. Development and validation of TaqMan-based real-time PCR assays for Translucent Post larvae Disease (TPD) detection in *Penaeus vannamei*. *Journal of Microbiological Methods*, 243 (2026) 107439.

Mai HN, **Dinh-Hung N**, **Pantoja C**, **Maiya M**, **Wright H** and **Dhar AK**. 2025. Genomic characterization of *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* causing translucent post-larvae disease (TPD). *Microbial Genomics* 2025;11:001570; DOI 10.1099/mgen.0.001570

Mazón-Suástegui J, López Carvallo A, Garcia-Bernal M, **Cruz Flores R**, **Dhar AK**, Peña-Navarro N, Sánchez-Ortiz AC, López-Torres M. 2025. Practices for shrimp disease detection, control, management, and genetics improvement. IN: *Strategies for Sustainable Shrimp Aquaculture*, LUIS RAFAEL MARTÍNEZ-CÓRDOVA and MARCEL MARTÍNEZ-PORCHAS, Academic Press, Pages 71-123.

Nava MG, Vaid M, **Schaefer DA**, **Betzer D**, **Riggs MW**, Alam T, Aldridge B, Vinayak S. 2026. Evaluation of a genetically attenuated *Cryptosporidium parvum* strain in the calf clinical model of cryptosporidiosis. *Journal of Infectious Disease*. In press.

Park R, **Rowlands D**, **Zhu L**, **Obergh V**, **Porchas M**, Brierley P, **Crosby K**, **Friedman M**, **Turini T**, **Patil B**, **Cooper K** and **Ravishankar S**. 2026. Prevalence of Foodborne Pathogens and Indicator Microorganisms on Arizona and California Grown Commercial Cantaloupe Melons and in Environmental Samples. *Food Microbiology*. 137, 105023.

Riggs MW and **Schaefer DA**. 2026. Calf Clinical Model of Cryptosporidiosis for Efficacy Evaluation of Therapeutics. *Methods in Molecular Biology*. 2026;2978:219-244. doi: 10.1007/978-1-0716-4824-7_15. [PubMed PMID: 41144210](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/41144210/).

Presentations and Invited Lectures

Ampofo I, **Mai HN**, Grevers D, Luna M, **Wright H**, **Dhar AK** and Fragomeni BO. Genomic Insights into AHPND Resistance in *Litopenaeus vannamei*: Heritability, Prediction Accuracy, and Candidate Loci. *Aquaculture Europe*. September 22-25, 2025. Valencia, Spain.

Andrade TPD, **Mai HN**, **Cruz Flores R** and **Dhar AK**. Um novo método diagnóstico para o IMNV, capaz de detectar clinicamente variantes de isolados asiáticos e latino-americanos em ambientes laboratoriais. XXI FENACAM 2025. 21st National Fair of Shrimp. November 11-15, 2025. Natal, Brazil.

Cruz-Flores R, **Dhar AP**, **Andrade TPD**, **Dhar AK** and Cabanillas-Bernal O. Uncovering the hidden prevalence of *Penaeus vannamei* solinivirus in public transcriptomic resources. Shrimp Health & Disease Session. *Aquaculture America 2026 Conference*. World Aquaculture Society. February 16-19, 2026. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Dhar AK. Diseases Impacting Shrimp Aquaculture in Latin America, Their Diagnosis and Management. ACUACAM 2026 Conference, Instituto Tecnológico de Sonora (ITSON). Ciudad Obregón, Sonora, Mexico.

Dhar AK. Enfermedades virales emergentes en camarón y estrategias para su control. XII Simposio Internacional de Sanidad e Inocuidad Acuicola. CICESE. September 25-26, 2025. Ensenada, Mexico.

Dhar AK. Enfermedades virales emergentes en camarón y estrategias para su control. XII Simposio Internacional de Sanidad e Inocuidad Acuicola CICESE. September 25-26, 2025. Ensenada, Mexico.

Dhar AK. Combining histopathology and molecular diagnosis in shrimp disease surveillance. NCKU. August 15, 2025. Taiwan.

Dhar AK. Reverse genetics approaches in developing oral vaccines and therapeutics in fish and shrimp. Lead Speaker Talk, Diseases in Asian Aquaculture 12 (DAA 12). September 23-27, 2025. Chennai, India.

(Pubs continued on 12)

Dhar AK. Current and Emerging Diseases in Farmed Shrimp. Plenary talk, International Congress on Invertebrate Pathology and Microbial Control & 57th Annual Meeting of the Society for Invertebrate Pathology. August 3-7, 2025. Puerto Varas, Chile.

Dhar, AK. Diagnosis & Management of Major Diseases in Shrimp. Department of Zoology and Fisheries and Aquaculture, University of Yangon. July 29, 2025. Yangon, Myanmar.

Dhar AK, Nipales J, Plantig MEL, Pantoja-Morales CR and Mai HN. Identifying infectious pathogenic entities associated with reduced growth in farmed shrimp from Latin America. Abstract ID SH 227, Diseases in Asian Aquaculture. September 23-27, 2025. Chennai, India.

Dhar AK, Nipales J, Ma EP, Pantoja-Morales CR and Mai HN. Identifying infectious pathogenic entities associated with reduced growth in farmed shrimp from Latin America. Diseases in Asian Aquaculture. September 23-27, 2025. Chennai, India.

Dhar AK, Nipales J, Ma EP, Pantoja-Morales C and Mai HN. Association of NHP and DHPV with reduced growth in farmed shrimp from Latin America. Annual Meeting of the Society of Invertebrate Pathology. August 03-07, 2025. Puerto Varas, Chile.

Dhar AK, Schaefer D, Matthews M, Schofield P and Mai H. Engineering a shrimp viral vector for the delivery of therapeutic rna to control white spot disease in shrimp *Penaeus vannamei*. Shrimp Health & Disease Session. Aquaculture America 2026 Conference. World Aquaculture Society. February 16-19, 2026. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Foscue J, Schofield P, Pantoja C, Dinh-Hung N, and Dhar AK. Developing an in vivo white feces syndrome (wfs) challenge model in *Penaeus vannamei*. Shrimp Health & Disease Session. Aquaculture America 2026 Conference. World Aquaculture Society. February 16-19, 2026. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Fragomeni BO, Ampofo I, Mai HN, Grevers D, Luna M, Wright H and Dhar AK. Improving in Pacific White Shrimp (*Litopenaeus vannamei*) Resistance to Acute Hepatopancreatic Necrosis Disease using Genomic Selection and Genome-Wide Association Studies. Plant & Animal Genome Conference 2026 (PAG 33). January 9-14, 2026. San Diego, CA.

Greene EA. Equine Herpes Virus and New World Screwworm - Informative Updates. Virtual. Feb 27, 2026.

Greene EA. Vital signs and body condition scoring in horses. Tohono O'odham Tribal Horse Workshop. Jan 26, 2026. North Komelik, AZ.

Greene EA and Li L. Vaccination Protocols and New World Screwworm Resources. San Carlos Apache Cattlemen's Workshop. Globe, AZ. March 25, 2026.

Greene EA. Horse Care Basics - Horse Vital Signs. Informed Arizona Equestrian Horse Symposium. Jan 26, 2026. Tucson, AZ.

Greene EA and Brownlee C. Active Equine Disease Outbreaks in AZ – What to know to keep your horse safe Informed Arizona Equestrian Horse Symposium. Jan 26, 2026. Tucson, AZ.

Law B. Natural Antimicrobials, Shelf-life Without Chemicals. Oral Presentation at the IdeaFunding 2026 TENWEST Conference. March 26, 2026. Tucson, AZ.

Law B and Ravishankar S. Food Testing Services – University of Arizona. Oral presentation to the Arizona Department of Health Services Cottage Foods Program Professionals. July 21, 2025. Tucson, AZ.

Law B and Ravishankar S. Food Testing Services – University of Arizona. Oral presentation at the Arizona County Directors of Environmental Health Services Association Conference. July 23, 2025. Tucson, AZ.

Law B and Ravishankar S. PhytoCentric Solutions- Nature's Answer, Every Extra Day Counts. Oral presentation given at the Round Table session at the Tech Launch Arizona for Commercialization Partners and TLA staff. September 15, 2025. Tucson, AZ.

Luo Y, Ng C, Lyon S, Pagsuyoin S, Schofield P, Dhar AK, and Luo Y. Acoustic characterization of *Litopenaeus vannamei* feeding activity in response to white spot syndrome challenge. Shrimp Health & Disease Session. Aquaculture America 2026 Conference. World Aquaculture Society. February 16-19, 2026. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Mai H, Nguyen DH, Pantoja C, Matthews M, Wright H, and Dhar A. Genomic Characterization of *Vibrio Parahaemolyticus* Strain (Ag1) Causing Translucent Post-Larvae Disease (Tpd). *Penaeus vannamei*. Shrimp Health & Disease Session. Aquaculture America 2026 Conference. World Aquaculture Society. February 16-19, 2026. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Mai HN, Nguyen DH, Pantoja-Morales CR, Matthews M, Wright H and Dhar AK. Genomic characterization of *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* causing translucent post-larvae disease (TPD) in *Penaeus vannamei*. Abstract ID SH211, Diseases in Asian Aquaculture 12. September 23-27, 2025. Chennai, India.

Mai HN, Nguyen DH and Dhar AK. Comparison of TaqMan-based real-time PCR assays for diagnosis of Translucent Post-larvae Disease (TPD) in *Penaeus vannamei*. Abstract ID DT452, Diseases in Asian Aquaculture 12. September 23-27, 2025. Chennai, India.

Marthaler D, Nipales J, Koliopolous M, Mai H, Hyunh T, Plantig E and Dhar AK. Evaluating a streamlined total nucleic acid extraction workflow for shrimp pathogen detection using the indimag 2 and prefilled cartridge. Shrimp Health & Disease Session. Aquaculture America 2026 Conference. World Aquaculture Society. February 16-19, 2026. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Ng C, Lyon S, Pagsuyoin S, Schofield PJ, Dhar AK, and Luo Y. Networked Multimodal Sensor Framework for Shrimp Health and Behavior Analysis. MobiCom 2025. ACM. November 04-08, 2025. New York, NY.

Nguyen DH, Mai H and Dhar AK. Development and Comparative Evaluation of *Taqman* Real-Time Pcr Assays For Detecting *Enterocytozoon hepatopenaei* (EHP) in Shrimp. Shrimp Health & Disease Session. Aquaculture America 2026 Conference. World Aquaculture Society. February 16-19, 2026. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Nipales J, Koliopolous M, Plantig ME, Hyunh T, Mai HN, Marthaler D and Dhar AK. Comparative evaluation and validation of platforms in isolating total nucleic acid (TNA) vs. isolating DNA and RNA separately for shrimp pathogen detection in a diagnostic laboratory setting. American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD). October 30 – November 5, 2025. Aurora (Denver), Colorado

Pantoja C and Dhar AK. Case study: posterior midgut caecum necrosis and sepsis in specific pathogen free *Penaeus vannamei*. Shrimp Health & Disease Session. Aquaculture America 2026 Conference. World Aquaculture Society. February 16-19, 2026. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Park R. Perspectives on Produce Safety: Pathogen Prevalence on Melons and Microbiota Shifts in Washed and Unwashed Romaine Lettuce. Seminar presentation at the ACBS Fall Seminar Series. September 22, 2025. Tucson, AZ.

Rajendran KV, Sreedharan K, Karunasagar I, Karunasagar I, and Dhar AK. 2025. White Spot Syndrome Virus (WSSV). In: Aquatic Animal Health Management, Rajendran Kooloth Valappil, Iddya Karunasagar, Indrani Karunasagar (Editors), Springer Nature, Pages 293- 406.

Ravishankar S. Detection and Control Measures for Mycotoxins in Fermented Foods. Oral presentation at the symposium titled “The Invisible Threat of Mycotoxins in the Fermentation Industry: A Food Safety Challenge of the 21st Century” at the Annual International Association for Food Protection Conference. July 29, 2025. Cleveland, Ohio.

Ravishankar S. Climate Resilient High Quality Tomato Varieties for Sustainable Production- Food Safety Work. Oral Presentation at the Virtual USDA-SCRI Tomatoes Project Industry Advisory Committee Meeting. March 6, 2026.

Poster Presentations

Bains K, Zhu L and Ravishankar S. Evaluating the efficacy of consistent use of grapeseed extract in preventing biofilms formed by *Salmonella enterica* and leafy green native microbiota on different food contact surfaces. Poster presentation at the Annual Meeting of the International Association for Food Protection. July 28, 2025. Cleveland, OH.

Cambuston A, Zhu L, Law B and Ravishankar S. Evaluation of Fogging Technology for Controlling *Salmonella enterica* Newport on Roma Tomatoes and Extending the Shelf-Life of Berries Using Edible Films. Poster presentation at the 2025 University of Arizona GDP Research Showcase. December 11, 2025. Tucson, AZ.

Dang N, Fast C, Sharma Y, Law B, Shrestha S and Ravishankar S. Comparative Analysis of Inoculation and Recovery Techniques for Better of *Listeria monocytogenes* from Ready-to-Eat Meats. Poster presentation at the Annual Meeting of the International Association for Food Protection. July 29, 2025. Cleveland, OH. AND Poster presentation at the 2025 University of Arizona GDP Research Showcase. December 11, 2025. Tucson, AZ.

Dang N, Park R and Ravishankar S. Assessment of the Attachment Strength of *Salmonella enterica* on the Surfaces of Various Types of Commercial Tomatoes. Poster presentation at the 2026 School of Animal & Comparative Biomedical Sciences Poster Session. March 23, 2026. Tucson, AZ.

Shaikh H, Zhu L and Ravishankar S. A comparison of the microbial quality of organic and conventional strawberries. Poster presentation at the Annual Meeting of the International Association for Food Protection (IAFP). July 27-30, 2025. Cleveland, Ohio.

Local and National Coverage

Oberstein, Z. UA's shrimp lab keeps the world's seafood healthy Tucson Spotlight. Apr 3, 2026. <https://www.tucsonspotlight.org/uas-shrimp-lab-keeps-the-worlds-seafood-healthy/>

Tech Launch Arizona. Phytocentric Solutions Startup web video. Interviews with Dr. Ravishankar and team on plant-based antimicrobials. <https://vimeo.com/scadmedia/review/1117917921/e0a2a8111b>

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ACBS Newsletter

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The University of Arizona
School of Animal and Comparative
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PO Box 210090
Tucson, Arizona 85721-0090

acbs@arizona.edu

Editor-in-Chief: Debbie Reed
dlreed@arizona.edu

Copy Editor: Erin Schauer
eschauer@arizona.edu

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Stories in this print edition have been edited for length.

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We respectfully acknowledge the University of Arizona is on the land and territories of Indigenous peoples. Today, Arizona is home to 22 federally recognized tribes, with Tucson being home to the O'odham and the Yaqui. Committed to diversity and inclusion, the University strives to build sustainable relationships with sovereign Native Nations and Indigenous communities through education offerings, partnerships, and community service.

The University of Arizona is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free of discrimination. The University prohibits discrimination, including harassment and retaliation, based on a protected classification, including race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin (including shared ancestry and ethnic characteristics), age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or genetic information.