

Texans' Meat Packed Summer

Meat Judging Camp

High school students from across Texas came to Tarleton State University to sharpen their skills and learn from our meat judging coaches and the 2025 meat judging team. At the end of the camp, students competed against each other in a friendly contest to test their knowledge.



Internships

Two students from the Meat Science Program completed immersive industry internships this summer. Reese Harpool (right) interned with Cargill as an Operations Management – Protein Intern in Nebraska City, Nebraska. Kara Tift (right) interned with the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association in Fort Worth, Texas.



Southwest Meat Association

Tarleton Meat Science students networked with industry professionals and attended sessions led by prominent leaders within the industry at the Southwest Meat Association Conference.

Highlights include:

- Shane Menz was awarded an SMA Foundation Scholarship
- Jorja Wilsey was SMA's student worker
- Dr. Samantha Barker presented a university update

We are very proud of our group for representing Tarleton State University!



Reciprocal Meat Conference (RMC)

The Tarleton State Meat Science group attended the 78th Reciprocal Meat Conference in Columbus, OH.

Some highlights include:

- For the first time in many years, eleven of our students competed in the Meat Science Quiz Bowl. The Purple Team (consisting of Reagan Staab, Garrett Ballard, Joshua Slay, and Analise Porras) made it to the top 8 bracket out of 35 teams.
- Shannon Anderson placed 9th in the Graduate Division in Processed Meats Judging
- Reagan Staab placed 3rd in the Undergraduate Division in Processed Meats Judging
- Reese Harpool began her term as an At-Large Director for the 2025-2026 AMSA Student Board of Directors. She will be the first Student Board of Directors to represent Tarleton State University in almost 20 years.

This incredible group learned a lot, made connections, and were excellent representatives of Tarleton State University. Thank you to everyone who bought t-shirts, made donations, and supported their trip to Ohio. Your support of our program is what builds futures.



Undergraduate Research

Undergraduate student, Audrey Potter, approached Dr. Barker in her meat science class about an honors contract and it turned into something much bigger. Potter conducted undergraduate research through the Tarleton State Undergraduate Experiential Learning Fund. She utilized trained flavor panels as part of a small, complementary study to one conducted by graduate students under Dr. Kimberly Wellmann and Dr. Edward Webb.



Meat Animal Evaluation Team

The 2025 Meat Animal Evaluation Team placed 5th in the Meats Division at the National Meat Animal Evaluation Contest hosted at Texas Tech University. This team competed over three days in market evaluation, breeding evaluation, and meat judging. This team was made up of members from the 2023, 2024, and 2025 Meat Judging Teams: Alexis Young, Kaley Lassmann, Kara Tiff, Macie McMillion, Reagan Staab, and Shane Menz. We are proud of their hard work and dedication. The team was coached by Shannon Anderson, and Kara Blackwell.



1st Annual Tarleton State University Meat Science BBQ Cookoff

This year our meat science department hosted the first annual BBQ Cookoff. We had four teams compete in three divisions: brisket, pork ribs, and chicken. Students were able to attend, compete, and network with other teams.

Results were announced at the COANR Alumni Dinner as students interacted with faculty, staff and alumni. Holy Smokes BBQ won the overall contest, as well as each division. Bee Hive BBQ, composed of Meat Science graduate students, were overall runner up.



To get involved in the Meat Science Department, contact Dr. Sam Barker or Mrs. Kara Blackwell at sbarker@tarleton.edu or kblackwell@tarleton.edu.