

# DEMETER NEWS

• FOCUSING ON OUR COMMUNITY & THE UW-MADISON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL & LIFE SCIENCES •

## President's Message

by Sharon Brantmeier, president, Demeter

As a fan of Greek mythology, the story of spring is special to me. Demeter rejoiced and welcomed her daughter, Persephone, every six months from the underworld. Hades had abducted Persephone and since she ate pomegranate seeds in the underworld she was forced to live there. But Zeus negotiated, allowing Persephone to live with her mother half of the year. This is how the Greeks explained the changing seasons. When Persephone was with Demeter, crops grew and harvests were bountiful. When she was with Hades, Demeter became depressed and crops died in fall and winter. Visit <https://mythology.net/greek/greek-gods/demeter> to read more about this interesting story.



Just as Demeter celebrated Persephone's return this spring newsletter features many things to celebrate. Let's applaud how much we support CALS! Demeter's education chair, Kate VandenBosch, presented our board a proposal to give \$64,500 in scholarships, grants and internships for the 2026-27 academic year. This is the largest amount we've ever awarded. Thanks to all of you for your generous support. This newsletter focuses on last year's recipients. I'm excited to read their stories.

You can also celebrate by joining fellow Demeter members at our upcoming events such as the annual meeting on April 29 at the Blackhawk Country Club in Madison. George and Debbie Crave of Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese will talk about their award-winning cheese operation. Their cheese is fantastic and is available at Metcalfs and other Madison-area stores. Plan to attend Demeter's annual Garden Party on June 10 at Allen Centennial Garden. And mark your calendars for the Corn Roast on September 9.

Included in this newsletter is the 2026-27 membership/donation form. Please consider volunteering for a committee or board position. Please contact me or another board member if you're interested. The best part of volunteering is that it's a fun group and you can help decide on the future direction of our organization.

## Demeter Education Committee Report

by Kate VandenBosch, chair,  
Demeter Education Committee



Supporting student success is one of Demeter's most important functions. Our financial support funds many aspects of students' Wisconsin experience – scholarships, student organization activities and participation in research, internships and study abroad. Demeter members delight in hearing the personal stories of our awardees at our annual Corn Roast, particularly when they connect the dots between support received and their professional development. The articles in this newsletter capture the stories of recent Demeter-supported recipients.

At the 2025 Corn Roast, Demeter members heard from Associate Dean Jeri Barak who said that CALS had the largest incoming undergraduate class in many years. Doug Maxwell and I later met with staff in the CALS Academic Affairs office to learn about the college's priorities for student support. We learned there is increasing demand for scholarship dollars in part due to the growing enrollment, but also because CALS stu-

*continued on page 2*

*VandenBosch, continued from page 1*

dents report greater financial need than the UW student body at large based on rates of completing Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and PELL Grant applications. As a result, CALS places as a priority support for financial need.

Additional CALS priorities for student support include QuickStart (a program for entering students), study abroad and student-engagement activities, which include internships, research and student organizations. When we introduced these priorities to the Demeter Education Committee (DEC) at our November meeting, the committee recognized that CALS priorities dovetail nicely with Demeter's own goals. DEC members were largely unfamiliar with QuickStart and were eager to learn more.

QuickStart was developed to help incoming CALS undergraduates make a strong start. The program features an online, 1-credit, eight-week summer course that satisfies CALS's freshman seminar requirement. It emphasizes creating a plan for success with a personalized roadmap. QuickStart students may

take an additional 3-credit class in summer. They can also opt to move in early to residence halls, with special programming to help acquaint them with the campus, people and resources.

Past QuickStart participants say the program helped them to make friends, make plans and ease the transition – in short to make a big university feel like a close community where all can thrive. In each of the past two years, about 40 percent of participants received a scholarship. That's down from more than 50 percent five years ago, due to growing demand. There is definitely an unmet need for enough scholarship money for this popular program.

At our November 2025 meeting, the DEC drafted recommendations to allocate \$64,000 in the coming year. This surpasses last year's total of \$56,500 for the biggest annual allocation to date. Our plan to distribute \$44,500 for scholarships, \$10,500 for internships and \$9,000 for student-club support (see the accompany table for details) was approved by the Demeter board at its February 2026 meeting. The scholarship total includes \$3,500 for QuickStart support, a first for Demeter.

## Demeter announces 2025-2026 scholarship recipients

Several students have been awarded scholarships from seven Demeter funds established at the UW Foundation.



Sydney Stohr, a senior from McFarland, Wisconsin, is majoring in Horticulture. She's the recipient of the Carole Walsh Scholarship. Sydney will continue to tend to plants and encourages others to do the same just as Carole Walsh strove to improve the lives of others. Sydney served as an intern at Allen Centennial Garden in 2025 where she was responsible for maintaining the Erna and Fred Kunz French Gardens. She plans to eventually manage a plant nursery as well as own her own nursery business.



Demeter has issued two scholarships from the Carrie Aberle Scholarship fund. One of the recipients is Erin Smith, a sophomore from West Allis, Wisconsin, majoring in Animal & Veterinary Biosciences. The scholarship will enable Erin to focus on her studies to become a veterinarian. When she was a child she and her cousins would play veterinarian with beanie boos and tiny purses full of colored tape and tissues serving as bandages for "sick patients."



The second Carrie Aberle Scholarship recipient is Olivia Wagner, a senior from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She's majoring in Animal & Veterinary Biosciences (with a certificate in Environmental Studies). Olivia plans to attend veterinary school. From a family of Badgers, UW-Madison was her dream school. The scholarship will assist her with easing the financial burden. She also had the chance to study abroad in Australia for two weeks through Loop Abroad. She hopes to apply her degree to wildlife medicine and help in conservation efforts around the world.

*continued on page 4*

**Demeter Scholarships, Internships, and Club Grants for Academic Year 2026-27**

Approved by Demeter Education Committee November 14, 2025

Approved by the Demeter Board February 4, 2026

<b>Award</b>	<b>Fund Name</b>	<b>Number &amp; Amount</b>	<b>Total<sup>12</sup></b>
Demeter Association of Women in Agriculture Merit Scholarship <sup>2</sup>	Allen <sup>1</sup>	\$4,000 <sup>2</sup>	\$4,000
Demeter Babcock Merit Scholarship <sup>3</sup>	Allen <sup>1</sup>	1 @ \$2,000	\$2,000
Carrie Aberle Demeter Need Scholarship	Aberle	1 @ \$2,500	\$2,500
Demeter Need Scholarship	Demeter Fund @ UW Foundation	1 @ \$2,500	\$2,500
Demeter Sophomore Merit Scholarship	Allen <sup>1</sup>	1 @ \$2,000	\$2,000
Demeter Junior Merit Scholarship	Allen <sup>1</sup>	1 @ \$2,000	\$2,000
Demeter Senior Merit Scholarship	Allen <sup>1</sup>	2 @ \$2,000	\$4,000
Martha D. & Douglas P. Maxwell Demeter Research Award	Maxwell	2 @ \$3,000	\$6,000
Daisy Pound Demeter Merit Scholarship <sup>4</sup>	Pound <sup>4</sup>	1 @ \$2,000	\$2,000
H. L. & Jobelle Shands Demeter Scholarship <sup>5</sup>	Shands <sup>5</sup>	1 @ \$2,500	\$2,500
Carole Walsh Demeter Scholarship <sup>6</sup>	Walsh <sup>6</sup>	1 @ \$2,500	\$2,500
CALS Merit Study Abroad <sup>7</sup>	Allen <sup>1,7</sup>	\$7,000 <sup>7</sup>	\$7,000
CALS Study Abroad <sup>7</sup>	Demeter Checking <sup>7</sup>	\$2,000 <sup>7</sup>	\$2,000
Quick Start Scholarships <sup>8</sup>	Demeter Checking <sup>8</sup>	\$3,500 <sup>8</sup>	\$3,500
Internships at Arlington & West Madison Ag Research Stations <sup>9</sup>	Thomsen <sup>9</sup>	\$1,000	\$7,000
	Demeter Fund @ UW Foundation <sup>9</sup>	\$ 6,000	
Internship at Allen Centennial Garden <sup>10</sup>	Demeter Checking <sup>10</sup>	\$3,500	\$3,500
Grants to Student Clubs & Organizations <sup>11</sup>	Demeter Checking <sup>11</sup>	\$9,000 <sup>11</sup>	\$9,000

<sup>1</sup>Total of all awards from Allen Funds is \$21,000.

<sup>2</sup>Total of AWA Scholarships will be divided among two or more students by AWA Scholarship Committee.

<sup>3</sup>Babcock House selects recipients of several scholarship awards in amounts of \$500 to \$2,000. The Demeter AWA Merit Scholarship is one of these.

<sup>4</sup>We suggest awarding the Daisy Pound Merit Scholarship to a sophomore.

<sup>5</sup>We request awarding the H.L. and Jobelle Shands funds as an award for an underrepresented student for \$2,500.

*continued on page 4*

<sup>6</sup> The recipient of the Walsh award must be a student with career oriented toward horticulture, gardens, landscapes, or arboriculture.

<sup>7</sup> Study Abroad awards are distributed among students based on costs of students' international experiences.

<sup>8</sup> Quick Start scholarship awards will be distributed by CALS to approximately 7 to 10 students to support their participation in the 1 credit on-line summer course for entering students.

<sup>9</sup> We request that funds from the Elsa Thomsen Demeter fund and the Demeter Fund at the UW Foundation be pooled to support two internships, one each at Arlington ARS and West Madison ARS, for \$3,500 each.

<sup>10</sup> Following approval by the Demeter Board, a check for \$3,500 from the Demeter checking account will be deposited to the Demeter Education Fund at UW Foundation for the internship at Allen Centennial Garden.

<sup>11</sup> Awards to student clubs and organizations will be determined by the Education Committee based on applications from club leaders.

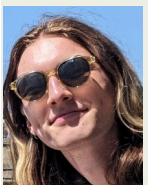
<sup>12</sup> Total of all awards is \$64,000: \$44,500 as scholarships, \$10,500 as internships; \$9,000 for student clubs.

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*Scholarship recipients continued from page 2*



Lucas Prange, a junior from Wisconsin Rapids, is majoring in Entomology. Recipient of the Maxwell Research Award, Lucas is grateful to receive the award as it is this kind of support that allows him to gain hands-on experience in research while pursuing higher education. He found his passion for agricultural research through combining a love of plants with natural curiosity. Lucas plans to pursue a Master's degree and work in agricultural extension.



Finn Haley, a junior from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is majoring in Biochemistry (with a certificate in Environmental Studies). Finn is grateful to receive the Daisy Pound Academic Merit Award. This scholarship relieves financial stress, leaving Finn more time and energy to focus on their studies. Biochemistry allows Finn to learn many disciplines as well as serve as a strong base for graduate school. Finn hopes to combine Biochemistry and Environmental Studies to pursue research or directly help nature and animals working with the World Wildlife Fund, the Environmental Protection Agency, or another organization to help the natural world.



Kennedy Shepard, a senior from Delavan, Wisconsin, is majoring in Community and Environmental Sociology (with certificates in Sustainability and Textile and Design). Kennedy is the recipient of the H.L. & Jobelle Shands and Elsa Thomsen Scholarship. Kennedy is interested in fashion as an art form, an expression of individuality, and as an industry. After graduating Kennedy intends to research fashion waste abroad, focusing on the consequences of textile waste in communities of the Global South and finding long-term solutions.

— by Tonia Peters

## Oscar N. & Ethel K. Allen Memorial Demeter Endowment awardees named



Lauren Breunig, a senior from Sauk City, Wisconsin, is majoring in Life Sciences Communication (with certificates in Business Management, Digital Studies and Entrepreneurship Food Systems). An AWA awardee, Lauren plans to pursue a career in agricultural marketing and sales, working directly with producers to help them reach their goals and improve profitability thus contributing to a stronger, more sustainable agricultural industry.



Brianna Meyer, a senior from Chilton, Wisconsin, is majoring in Dairy Science. An AWA awardee, she's grateful for the scholarship as it will enable her to make the most of her education. She was raised on a dairy farm and hopes to attend veterinary school where she'll focus on large-animal medicine. She has been accepted to the Food Animal Veterinary Medical Scholars program at UW-Madison, which ensures admission to the School of Veterinary Medicine upon completion of her undergraduate studies.



Alexandria McCourt, a senior from Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, is majoring in Entrepreneurship, Textiles and Fashion Design. An AWA awardee, she has been sewing since age 10 and found a passion for designing and creating clothing. Drawing on her interest in owning a business like her dad's dairy operation, she has pursued a certificate in entrepreneurship.



Josephine Ammons, a senior from Wellesley, Massachusetts, is majoring in Agricultural Business Management (with certificates in Consulting, Public Policy and Science Communication). An AWA awardee, she hopes to support farmers and those who work with farmers to improve communications with the government. She's interested in a variety of careers, including agricultural agencies, commodity trading or agricultural real estate management.



Aletta Bergman, a senior from Grantsburg, Wisconsin, is majoring in Wildlife Ecology (with a certificate in Freshwater & Marine Science). Aletta is the recipient of the Babcock Merit Scholarship. The scholarship will help Aletta cover college costs and focus on research and volunteer experiences which are important as a wildlife ecology major. Aletta plans to earn a doctorate in Ecology to study bird-species decline. Aletta plans on becoming a professor and research boreal-bird biology and the impacts of habitat degradation.



Sidney Edwards, a sophomore from Brooklyn, New York, is majoring in Wildlife Ecology with a certificate in Sustainability. The Outstanding Sophomore awardee chose to attend UW-Madison because of its agricultural and wildlife programs. Other family members are Badger alumni, and she has relatives who manage a Christmas tree farm near Green Bay, Wisconsin. Sidney plans to further her education focused on the natural world. She plans to become a bridge between humans and ecosystems as urbanization expands and human-wildlife interactions become increasingly unavoidable.

*continued on page 6*

*Allen Memorial Demeter Endowment continued from page 5*



Alexandra Wemer, a junior from Slinger, Wisconsin, is majoring in Animal & Veterinary Biosciences with a certificate in Science Communication. A recipient of the Outstanding Junior award, she's on the pre-veterinary track and would like to eventually become a doctor of veterinary medicine. She's interested in large-animal production.



Colson Tidikis, a junior from Mobile, Alabama, is majoring in Entomology. An Outstanding Junior awardee, Colson chose UW-Madison because it is ranked as the best college in the United States for entomology majors. Colson is fascinated by insects and plans to focus on research or wildlife conservation and education.



Aren Gonzales, a senior from Elkhorn, Wisconsin, is majoring in Environmental Studies. The Outstanding Senior awardee's academic interests focus on environmental toxicology, environmental processes, and the connections between ecosystem health and human wellbeing. Aren's goal is to become an environmental consultant to collect data, analyze findings and promote environmental quality. Aren plans to pursue a master's degree in Molecular and Environmental Toxicology to help protect land and health for future generations.



Elizabeth Anderson, a senior from Holmen, Wisconsin, is majoring in Nutritional Sciences and has been involved in the Biocore Curriculum. The Outstanding Senior awardee is interested in combining health and nutrition, along with being a medical professional. Her goal is to be able to provide medical-nutrition therapy while allowing patients to become aware of the benefits of strength training.

## Allen Memorial Demeter Study Abroad Scholarships awarded



Chloe Hansen, a Conservation Biology major from Oshkosh, Wisconsin, is the recipient of the Allen Memorial Demeter Study Abroad Scholarship. Her time studying Life Sciences Communication has prepared her academically and professionally for a study abroad experience in Australia. She plans to research marine biology and coastal communities. She believes a study abroad experience will elevate her curiosity and connect her to a new school and city, contributing to personal growth and academic skills. Her career goal is to become a science communicator or researcher.



Ian Beilfuss is a Cartography & Geographic Information Systems and Environmental Science major from Madison, Wisconsin. The award will allow Ian to pay for the Czechia study-abroad experience without taking on debt. The Czech University of Life Sciences provides a unique focus on agriculture and the environment. Ian is excited to take multiple ecology courses to further develop the ability to analyze and understand ecosystems. Ian's career goal is to work as a consultant to the Forest Service, working with state environmental agencies and local landowners to institute prescribed burns.

— by Tonia Peters

## Demeter supports three internships

Each year Demeter provides financial support toward internships at the Allen Centennial Garden, the Arlington Agricultural Research Station, and the West Madison Agricultural Research Station. These funds enable internship mentors to create hands-on research engagement for eligible students in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.



**Ava Jeffery** served as the Community and Educational Programs Apprentice at Allen Centennial Garden where she set out to make science fun and approachable. Her background in botany, environmental studies and science communication inspired her to weave hands-on learning into the garden’s creative workshops. She did this by enhancing the watercolor and flower-pounding activities. In the watercolor program, participants experimented with pH to discover new pigments. The addition of acids and bases turned a simple art project into a plant chemistry experiment.

Ava also developed “science inquiry” sheets for workshop tables and refined them with feedback from visitors.

“My internship has been about more than just blending science with art,” she said. “It has been about sparking curiosity in small, joyful ways – whether through a child’s excitement at mixing a new paint color or someone’s thoughtful question about leaf biology.”

She added, “I leave Allen Centennial Garden with new confidence in teaching, a deeper love for engaging people with plants, and the satisfaction of knowing that the work I contributed will continue to support learning and creativity for future visitors.”



**June McAniff** was a Demeter Intern at the West Madison Agricultural Research Station. The internship was centered around the Display Gardens, where June was responsible for six beds of various species of *Salvia*, with gorgeous heat-tolerant and brightly colored flowering plants. Her internship included surveying *Salvia* and a few other flowering annuals for resistance to insects and disease, weather tolerance, and general aesthetics. She also learned about related professions because the station houses research labs and hundreds of acres of forage crops, soybeans, alfalfa and corn.

June enjoyed connecting with the community when people donated crops such as lettuce, tomatoes, squash and beans to local food banks.

“I learned a ton of valuable knowledge that comes with experiencing things headfirst and hands-on,” she said. “This internship was a welcome confirmation that this field is what I want to pursue.”

*continued on page 8*

Interns continued from page 7



**Natalie Hensen** interned at the Swine Research and Teaching Center where she was introduced to the production cycle – from farrow to finish or for breeding stock. She’s double majoring in Agronomy and Animal and Veterinary Biosciences. During her internship she learned how to ultrasound and breed sows and gilts. She also participated in various day-to-day responsibilities such as pressure washing, disinfecting, moving pigs, feeding, doing daily checks, and processing new litters.

“I came to appreciate just how critical cleanliness and biosecurity are in swine management,” she said.

She also learned how to vaccinate pigs, assist in farrowing, observe surgeries, and assist with post-operative recovery.

Natalie supported several hands-on research projects with sheep and swine including spina bifida research, a Vitamin D project, and a pediatric heart surgery study. She also spent time at the Madison Beef Grazing and Nutrition Farms assisting with a calf-feeding project led by the immunology lab.

“I learned more than I ever imagined possible,” she said. “Every person I worked with was willing to share their knowledge, explain processes and invest in my learning. I’m extremely grateful to Demeter and to all the UW–Madison facilities and staff.”

— by Tom Breunig

## Demeter-supported CALS Clubs report activities

### American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE)

UW-Madison undergraduates attended the ASABE Annual International Meeting held July 13-17, 2025, in Toronto, Canada. Funding from the Demeter grant supported student participation by helping to cover lodging and travel expenses. The international meeting provided students an opportunity to engage with the latest research, technology and innovations in the agricultural and biological-engineering field. Students participated in technical sessions, presented posters and oral presentations, and networked with professionals, faculty and peers from other institutions.

The UW student chapter has been working toward increasing involvement in student competitions at this meeting and attending students were able to observe how other schools were involved. A highlight was the chance to share our experience hosting the 2024 Midwest Regional Rally at the student-leadership committee meeting. We discussed our planning and execution, and offered recommendations to the next host school to help them build and continue improving the event.



*UW-Madison students attended the ASABE Annual International Meeting.*

Students also explored graduate-school options, discovered potential career paths, and made connections with industry professionals. One of our attendees was selected to serve on the International Student Branch committee, providing our chapter a chance to contribute to broader student engagement efforts within ASABE.

Attending the international meeting was an incredibly enriching experience. We are grateful to Demeter for making this opportunity possible. The knowledge gained, connections made and leadership opportunities pursued will continue to benefit both us personally and our student chapter moving forward.



*Members of the Badger Crops Club Crops Team attend the Students of Agronomy, Soils and Environmental Sciences banquet.*

### **Badger Crops Club**

The Badger Crops Club Crops Team provides undergraduate students hands-on experience and professional development in agriculture. Nine undergraduates were able to travel to the Students of Agronomy, Soils and Environmental Sciences (SASES) conference and crop-judging competition in fall 2024. There, students applied their knowledge across multiple facets of agriculture to bring home multiple awards and accolades all while networking, collaborating with peers, and returning with new knowledge to share with the greater university community.

Our Crops Teams had a record finish at SASES, with both teams placing first and second. And two members placed within the top three individual scores. Members also attended an agriculture tour of West Texas and presented research posters from their undergraduate research work. Demeter funds were used for travel expenses, tour registrations and conference fees. The Badger Crops Team is immensely grateful to Demeter for its support because this experience

has given students the ability to work on their professional development skills, apply their agronomic knowledge, and learn more about agriculture operations outside of Wisconsin.

### **CALS Health and Research Society (CHARS)**

The Demeter grant funded two events in the 2024-2025 academic year. CHARS hosted a research event in fall 2024 where principal investigators from different research labs had open discussions with undergraduates about their journey as researchers and how to get involved in a lab. This event involved three principal investigators and about 15 undergraduates. The event provided the students an opportunity to gain understanding of the impact of research at UW-Madison. It also allowed them to build connections with current principal investigators to get the opportunity to be involved in their labs.

The second event was the spring 2025 research symposium where undergraduates presented their current research projects by poster and in formal presentations to friends, family and faculty. Funds were used for food, event programs and other materials. The symposium enabled students to hone their presentation skills in an academic and professional setting and to learn about various research projects conducted across campus. Students engaged in active discussion and questioning with guests and fellow researchers. This helped students gain confidence for their future science presentations.

### **National Agri-Marketing Association (NAMA)**

Support from Demeter made it possible for a team of 10 UW-Madison students to travel to the National Agri-Marketing Association (NAMA) Student Marketing Competition in spring 2025 in Kansas City. These funds helped cover travel expenses, hotel accommodations and registration fees. This enabled our team to compete on a national stage alongside top agri-marketing teams from across the country. To participate in the national competition, students must develop and present a full-

*continued on page 10*

NAMA continued from page 10

scale agri-marketing plan to a panel of industry judges. Our team competed in all three rounds of the competition, ultimately placing fourth out of 36 teams.

Participation in the competition had a significant impact on these students, providing hands-on experience in marketing strategy, branding, design, campaign development, presentation skills, problem-solving, market research and professional communication. Through this process, students gained a deeper understanding of how to take an agricultural product from concept to market while learning to collaborate as a team and respond to real-time feedback from industry professionals.

This experience not only strengthened each student's resume, it also gave them valuable insight into the careers and opportunities that exist at the intersection of agriculture, business, marketing and product innovation. The financial support from Demeter helped reduce the cost burden on our students, making it possible for every member of the marketing team to have the option to attend and fully engage in this career-shaping experience.



*Badger Tractor Team members pose with their tractor from left: Kaedyn Peterson-Rucker, Nate Sorensen, Devin Diggman, Jackson Barta, Garrison Korn and Brandon Boyd (kneeling)*



## Badger Quarter-Scale Tractor Team

The Badger Pulling Quarter-Scale Tractor Team builds a performance pulling tractor. The team members design, test and manufacture this tractor all themselves. The team competes against other schools from around North America. The competition consists of written reports, oral reports, judging design and performance events. Every year the team starts over with a new tractor and must adhere to new rule changes. Each team also must change at least 10 percent of their design. The Demeter grant helped the team purchase components that were needed to build the tractor. A cost analysis for the competition's report, which includes estimated costs for labor, shows the tractor costs about \$21,000 so the team relies heavily on sponsorships and grant funding. Six members attended the competition in Peoria, Illinois. Nine members were involved with the Tractor Team throughout the school year.

Badger Pulling placed sixth for the second consecutive year. Twenty-four teams competed in 2025. The UW team won the maneuverability-performance event, the safety award and the best appearance award. The engineering, testing and manufacturing skills that are learned help our members stand head and shoulders above some of their peers. These skills help bridge the gap between what is learned in the classroom and what is expected in the industry, focusing on teamwork and firsthand experience. In addition there are incredible networking opportunities and many of our members land internships through the connections they make while on the Tractor Team. Judges at the competition are industry representatives so getting acquainted with them comes in handy while job hunting.

## Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/ Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACHNAS)

We participated in the National Diversity in STEM (NDiSTEM) Conference in October 2024 in Phoenix, Arizona. The conference provided a valuable opportunity for students to engage in professional development, explore career opportunities and find community. The Demeter funds were essential for travel, accommodation and registration fees for the five students who attended. The students shared their research on a national stage. Three students were recognized with travel awards, further extending the reach of the Demeter funding.

The NDiSTEM conference featured workshops, network-



*Members of the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science attend the National STEM Conference.*

ing sessions and keynote presentations, all focused on diversity and inclusion within STEM. Our students participated in team-building sessions, networking events and leadership training. They also participated in a career fair, connecting with industry professionals and learning about internships, fellowships and post-graduate opportunities. The conference had a profound impact on our students. They gained skills in resume building, public speaking and networking. The more-junior students seized the opportunity to explore their next steps by connecting with academics and industry professionals.

We believe the knowledge, skills and connections gained at the NDiSTEM conference will have a lasting impact on our students' academic and professional futures. We deeply appreciate Demeter's continued support in providing funds for these transformative opportunities.

### **Student Chapter of the Wildlife Society**

The Demeter Grant funds were used to support our annual Wild Game Dinner. This event is used to educate the UW-Madison community about the importance of hunting in conservation and to raise money for our organization's events. The funds were used to book part of the cost of our room reservation for the event. About 100 people were in attendance, with it being primarily undergraduate students (90 percent), grad students and faculty (five percent), and community members (five percent). Through the club event, people were able to make connections with other wildlife students and department professionals. People also learned about the role of hunting in conservation. The funds raised support a wide variety of events put on by our club as well as activities attended.

— by Dave Thomas

## **Donations for general support of Demeter activities**

### **Donations to Student Support- Checking:**

Natasha and Peter Rayne  
Walter and Judy Stevenson

### **Donations in Memory of:**

Dwight and June Forsyth by David Forsyth

### **in Honor of:**

George Shook by Laura Hernandez

### **Donations to Sewing:**

Natasha and Peter Rayne



*Students busily prepare food for the annual Wild Game Dinner. Left photo: From left are Bryce Papp, Julia Madary, Sathvik Nallagatla, Carly Phalen and Kaj Jensen. Right photo: Setting up food are from left Nora Zaveri, Kaj Jensen and Bryce Papp.*

## Craves to speak at annual meeting

Demeter is excited to hear from our annual meeting guest speakers – Debra and George Crave, co-founders of Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese LLC. Their nationally recognized farmstead cheese company is based in Waterloo, Wisconsin. Together they have dedicated their careers to advancing Wisconsin agriculture, dairy innovation and agricultural leadership.

Debbie Crave served as founder and vice president of Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese from 2000 until her retirement in 2024, leading administration, marketing, sales and public relations. A graduate of the University of Wisconsin–Madison with a degree in Forestry and Horticulture, she was selected as Wisconsin’s 1981–82 Alice in Dairyland, launching a 15-year career with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). She later served as director of DATCP’s International Agri-Business Center, traveling on overseas trade missions to promote Wisconsin agriculture. Debbie also held leadership roles with the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board and has served on numerous agricultural and dairy boards, including the UW–Madison College of Agricultural & Life Sciences Board of Visitors.

George Crave served as founder and president of Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese until his retirement in 2024, overseeing plant management and cheese production. A licensed cheesemaker, he studied cheesemaking and affinage in Italy, France and Switzerland. He managed the dairy herd and milk quality for more than 20 years at Crave Brothers Dairy Farm before leading the development and construction of the farmstead cheese plant, which began production in 2002. A graduate of the UW–Madison Farm & Industry Short Course, George has served on the Council for Agricultural Research, Extension & Teaching and is a founding member of the Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin. He currently represents Wisconsin on the National Dairy Board.

Together with George’s brothers, the Crave family has been honored as World Dairy Expo Dairymen of the Year, Wisconsin Dairy Business Association Advocates of the Year, Wisconsin Family Business of the Year, and Wisconsin Master Agriculturists. In 2018, George was inducted into the *Guilde Internationale des Fromagers*, recognizing his contributions to the craft of cheesemaking.

### **LIFE EVENTS**

*Please send news of life events  
to*

*Jan.Martin539@gmail.com*

### **NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

*Please send news items to*

*groomslynn@gmail.com*

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*or on our website*

<https://demeterwi.org/>

### **CALENDAR**

#### **Webinar: “How Data Scientists & Lactation Biologists Develop a Method to Track Milk Production”**

Laura Hernandez, speaker  
4:30 p.m., March 18  
Zoom Program

#### **Sewing Workshop**

Blue Bar Quilts  
6333 Univ. Ave., Middleton  
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays, March-May, 2026

#### **Annual Meeting & Luncheon**

Beginning at 11:30 a.m., April 29  
Blackhawk Country Club

#### **Demeter Garden Party**

Beginning at 4 p.m., June 10  
Allen Centennial Garden, Madison

#### **Corn Roast Picnic**

Beginning at 5 p.m., Sept. 9  
Lakeview Park, Middleton