8-1-2012

UNH's Thompson School Launches Two-Year Vet Tech, Integrated Ag Programs

Beth Potier
UNH Media Relations

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UNH's Thompson School Launches Two-Year Vet Tech, Integrated Ag Programs

DURHAM, N.H. – Responding to student and marketplace demand, the Thompson School of Applied Science at the University of New Hampshire will launch two new associate degree programs in September 2012: integrated agriculture management and veterinary technology. Both programs will draw heavily on UNH’s agricultural facilities as well as on existing academic strengths in animal science and sustainable agriculture.

The integrated agriculture management program – modeled in part after the four-year sustainable agriculture and food systems major introduced at UNH in 2011 – combines sustainable agriculture, organic production, local foods, farmers’ markets, slow food, community supported agriculture, business, nutrition as well as soil, water and forest conservation.

“The desire for it came largely from students,” says Drew Conroy, professor of applied animal science and program creator. “They told us, why do we have to focus on one thing, when almost every New Hampshire farm is more diversified?”

Conroy adds that while many schools have begun offering sustainable agriculture programs, the Thompson School’s is unique in its flexibility. Students can choose from among existing Thompson School programs for a wide range of focus areas, including forestry, horticulture technology, or even culinary arts. This flexibility will also allow the program to grow.

The new program for veterinary technicians, who are described as the nurses of animal medicine, was created to help meet the growing demand in the field. Not only are pet ownership and the level of pet care increasing, says program coordinator and lecturer in applied animal science Sarah Proctor, DVM, the movement toward local and sustainable food is driving animal ownership. “There are going to be more people who have a goat in their backyards, or a cow or chickens,” she says.

The vet tech program will provide balanced instruction for a wide range of animals but will have a unique focus on large animal care, taking advantage of UNH’s two dairies and its equine facilities. “A lot of large-animal vets don’t have the staff that they need, and we have the resources to teach about large animals,” Proctor says.

Courses in the program, which is already filled for fall of 2012, will cover basic sciences, veterinary nursing, and veterinary practice management, with a strong focus on hands-on practical knowledge throughout the curriculum. In 2013, Proctor hopes to launch a healthy pet clinic for low-income pet owners run by second-year vet tech students. She’d also like to grow the program, which is currently capped at 18 students and is filled for fall of 2012. “We have to do very hands-on training, so staffing will be our biggest limitation,” she says.
For more information on the integrated agriculture management program, go to http://www.thompsonschool.unh.edu/hort/iamt. For information on the veterinary technology program, go to http://www.thompsonschool.unh.edu/aas/vet

The Thompson School of Applied Science, founded in to provide a broader opportunity to the citizens of the state to study the agricultural sciences in a two year timeframe, offers associate degree programs that focus on hands-on, applied learning. An academic unit of UNH’s College of Life Sciences and Agriculture (COLSA), the Thompson School offers nine associate in applied science degree programs: applied animal science, applied business management, civil technology, community leadership, culinary arts and nutrition, forest technology, and horticultural technology, integrated agriculture management and veterinary technology. For more information, go to http://www.thompsonschool.unh.edu/.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

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Reporters and editors: Drew Conroy, coordinator of the integrated agriculture management program, is available at 603-862-2625 or drew.conroy@unh.edu. Sarah Proctor, coordinator of the veterinary technology program, is available at 862-1014 or sel72@unh.edu.

Media Contact: Beth Potier | 603-862-1566 | UNH Media Relations | @unhnews

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