



Meat scientist John Gonzalez supervises Sydney Baltimore as she uses the centrifuge, which spins to accelerate sample separation.

Training Tomorrow's Scientists

Six enthusiastic students arrived in Manhattan in early June to participate in the eighth annual K-State Research and Extension Multicultural Summer Research Fellowship. During the eight-week program, the students worked with K-State scientists, made research presentations, and learned about Kansas.

Lauriel Stewart and Aisha Ellis, Georgia; Donunique Fine, California; Sydney Baltimore, North Carolina; and Aja West, Illinois, are students at Tuskegee University. Isis Lopez came from the University of Puerto Rico. Each student chose a topic of interest and was paired with one or more K-State researchers.

Sydney Baltimore worked with meat scientist John Gonzalez. The objective of her study was to examine the effect of growth-promoting technologies and

days of postmortem aging of beef steak tenderness. K-State has a grant from the National Cattlemen's Beef Association to continue the research.

Isis Lopez was paired with plant pathologist Anna Whitfield, who is featured on the cover. Lopez studied barley yellow dwarf species that affect Kansas wheat. Her research will be used in future experiments to help prevent wheat from being infected by aphids carrying the virus.

Donunique Fine worked with agronomists Ganga Hettiarachchi and Gary Pierzynski to study if polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) in soil can be absorbed through the skin. She compared contaminated soil to control soil with low PAH levels.

Aja West's project evaluated the best medium to transport field samples of

Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) to the lab for analysis. The project tied into a \$25 million, multi-state grant that food scientist Randy Phebus oversees in K-State's Biosecurity Research Institute.

Under the direction of food scientist Fadi Aramouni, Lauriel Stewart partnered with RevHoney Corporation to develop several sports drinks that use honey as the primary sweetener and are under 100 calories per serving. She shared samples of the apple drink during her presentation.

Aisha Ellis worked with Tom Shanower and Scott McVey from the USDA Center for Grain and Animal Health Research located in Manhattan. Her research looked at preventing or maintaining three livestock viruses — the Rift Valley fever virus, the bluetongue virus in sheep, and the epizootic hemorrhagic disease in white-tailed deer.

In addition to their research, the students toured the Underground Salt Museum in Hutchinson, ate bison burgers at the Konza Prairie Biological Station, and visited other local sites.

A total of 30 students have participated in the program from the following institutions: Prairie View A&M University (4), Fort Valley State University (3), Tuskegee University (11), Purdue University, Alabama A&M University, Tennessee State University, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, North Carolina State University, Southern University, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, North Carolina A&T University, Lincoln University, University of Texas at San Antonio, University of Puerto Rico, and Alcorn State University in Mississippi.

So far, five of the students have opted to pursue master's degrees at K-State. Four have completed their degrees, and one is working on a master's degree in grain science with Susan Sun.

The program is funded through K-State Research and Extension and the College of Agriculture. Zelia Wiley, assistant dean for diversity programs, serves as coordinator.

For more information, go to www.ag.k-state.edu/diversity-programs.