



Department of Animal Sciences

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Dr. David Caldwell, Chair of Search Committee
Department of Poultry Science
Kleberg Center, Room 101B
Texas A&M University
College Station, TX 77843-2472

April 1, 2016

Dear Dr. Caldwell and Search Committee,

After considerable thought and consultation, I am excited to submit my credentials for the position of Professor and Head of the Department of Animal Science at Texas A&M University (TAMU). This letter of application provides a little about my background, qualifications, approaches, experiences, and past performance. I have been a student and/or faculty member at five major institutions and have 20 years of experience as a Department Head. Much of the success in my career is due to the education and mindset that I received while a graduate student at TAMU. I can think of no better way to pay back an institution than by leading the very program that propelled my success!

Background Information. I spent my formative years growing up in rural Ithaca, New York, where my father was a professor of Animal Science at Cornell University. My father's career opened the door to my education in the states and abroad. During sabbatical leaves our family was fortunate to travel throughout Europe while living in Denmark and South America while living in Colombia. When we weren't travelling, I was an active 4-H member with large projects in sheep, swine, and beef cattle. Through these endeavors, I was able to fully pay for my undergraduate education at Cornell. However, I would not have been successful at Cornell if it wasn't for my father's drive to educate me on the ways of the world and the hardworking mindset for academic rigors.

During my undergraduate studies I discovered a love for nutrition and beef cattle. This strong interest led me from upstate New York to TAMU for my graduate career. I quickly learned of the diverse and outstanding expertise at TAMU through my committee members who were from four colleges and five departments. During this time, I also served as a Teaching Assistant for Dr. Howard Hesby and gained a passion for education. Under his guidance I experienced effective methods of teaching in and out of the classroom. After completing an M.S. and Ph.D. in Nutrition, my first academic position was at North Carolina State University (NCSU). At NCSU I

held a teaching and research position while progressing through the ranks to Full Professor. During the progression I held, initially, a heavy teaching appointment, which quickly transformed to more research and involvement in international programs. I led USAID and USDA research and training projects both domestically and in Southeast Asia, South America, and North Africa. My research activities were multidisciplinary and included a large number of domestic and international graduate students. It was this global ideal of scientific inquiry that solidified my love for teaching, research, and training.

I was then recruited to be the Chair of the Department of Animal Science and Food Technology at Texas Tech University. I assumed those duties in January of 1996. The move afforded many opportunities for my family as my wife, Janice, was raised in the Panhandle of Texas. The move was right for all of us: me professionally; her to get closer to home; and for our children to have more interaction with their grandfather and the family ranch. The ranch has played an integral part of our lives. Ever since Janice's father passed in 2007, we and the kids have operated the cow/calf ranch. Our kids are the fifth generation to operate the ranch, originally established in 1892, as the first land owners. Janice's life and mine have been defined by livestock and I am proud that our children are following in our footsteps.

All three of our children have degrees in Animal Science and each one of them is using their degrees in the animal and food industries. Ansen, our oldest, is a graduate of Animal Science at Texas A&M University, completed a M.S. and Ph.D. and now works in Food Safety. Our daughter, Kendra, and her husband live and help manage the 290,100-acre Bell Ranch in New Mexico. Our youngest son, Nathan, completed an M.S. and now works in Food Safety. We couldn't be happier for their success as I know they are the future leaders of this great industry.

There are many ways to touch upon leadership during my career. Perhaps the best way to illustrate this is to summarize my experiences and approaches in the role of Chair of the Department of Animal and Food Sciences at Texas Tech University and my current role as the Head of the Department of Animal Sciences at Colorado State University. I will approach each leadership position separately as each department had both strengths and challenges for me.

Experience as an Administrator at Texas Tech University. When I arrived at Texas Tech University there were three major areas that demanded attention: improving image; improving facilities; and growing the number of faculty and students in the department. The image of the program needed improvement on campus, across the state, and nationally. The facilities were condemned and outdated with the limited number of faculty located at five different locations on campus. The faculty and student numbers needed to grow with expectations that research dollar generation, teaching effectiveness, and service commitments would expand to a new level.

The first approach to improving the departmental image was to have a presence at all animal and food events and activities across the state. Engagement on campus was critical to promote the department at the Dean and President level. Alumni and friends were invited to events on campus and more interaction with previous donors was initiated.

A common vision was built among the faculty, staff, and students for our new building and facility needs. Great experience was gained in working with upper administration, Board of

Regents, alumni, commodity and industry support groups, and the Texas Legislature in order to obtain approval for the \$17 million building that was completed in Fall of 2004. The completion of this building stands as a testament to the successful development of a common vision followed by careful navigation through the university and state government systems.

It should be noted that Texas Tech University is not a land grant school. Federal funds for support were unavailable and state support was limited. Working through the college and university, we put together proposals for direct federal funding. What initially started out as a request for "Societal Issues in Animal Production" morphed into the "International Center for Food Industry Excellence," which was funded in 2005. This was our first federal line and opened a plethora of new funding opportunities. To continue to have a presence and an ear in Washington D.C. we developed a College Congressional Internship program for our top students. By having students in DC, we had access to the Hill and soon other programs and partnerships surfaced. An active presence in Washington, D.C. was and still is helpful in garnering funds that are applicable to programs.

The department effectively used strategic planning to significantly increase the growth in number of students, faculty, research support, gifts, endowments, and outreach. Something magical occurs when you develop common goals, write them down, and then hold each other accountable. During my tenure as chair, the department successfully improved its image and path, built a new building, and obtained a new equestrian facility. We also planned for and experienced continued growth in the number of undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff, amount of grant dollars received, and greatly increased endowment balances.

My 15-year role as Department Chair at Texas Tech University ended in January 2011 with the decision by the Dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources to change leadership style. However, quickly thereafter, I was recruited to Colorado State University where I accepted the position of Head of the Department of Animal Sciences.

Role as Head of Animal Sciences at Colorado State University. Colorado State University has a strong agricultural program that is anchored by its largest department, Animal Sciences. Upon arrival it was apparent that support from alumni, friends, and industry had eroded with time due to previous leadership at the President's level that de-emphasized agriculture. Immediately I learned that a strong agricultural presence in the state and industry was desperately needed. With this in mind, I spent the first year visiting industry and commodity groups and alumni and friends across the state to re-energize old supporters and acquire new supporters.

New events were developed and implemented to re-engage alumni, friends, and students. A "Fall Gathering" was initiated and Steward programs were launched for student leaders. Formal celebrations of successes were established including the new tradition of hanging national championship banners to recognize competitive teams. Through all this, excitement was created in the department allowing for growth and successes to rapidly occur.

As with Texas Tech University, the department's building is the soul and CSU needed a new central hub for success. The Animal Sciences building, built in the 1950's, was in dire need of renovation or replacement. Quickly, President Tony Frank and the Board of Governors

provided \$7.5M of seed money to start the renovations. Phase I was the complete renovation of the existing building. Every interior wall was removed and a modern redesigned facility took shape. Private funds were raised for about 20% of the costs of the 45,000 square foot renovation. Phase II is a new addition of 42,000 square feet that adds a full meat laboratory, large classrooms and a comprehensive Global Food Innovation Center. Private fundraising is currently under way with approximately two thirds of the funds in place.

Phase I transformed the image of Animal Sciences and created new interest in students attending Colorado State University. Along with a new image, we established newly administered scholarship programs and heightened recruitment efforts and the enrollment is at an all-time high (895 primary and secondary majors). Enrollment increased 25% in four years and the department is now the fourth largest department on campus. In addition, half of the students come from out-of-state and pay over \$27,000 per year in tuition. With our increased enrollment and high percentage of out-of-state students the Department of Animal Sciences is the largest generator of tuition funds in the university.

As we increase numbers there has been an ongoing emphasis on increasing the minority (non-Caucasian decent) proportion of our student body. A part-time recruiter/ mentor for minority students was created and cultural and sensitivity training for faculty and staff was undertaken. In Fall of 2011 students of non-Caucasian decent comprised 9.5% of the Animal Sciences' student population (compared to 7.7% for the college and 12.5% for the University) and in Fall of 2015 students of non-Caucasian decent comprised 15.0% of the Animal Sciences' student population (compared to 12.7% for the College and 16.8% for the University). A combination of specialized recruitment with mentoring once students arrive on campus has helped significantly increase the diversity (using ethnicity as the measure of diversity) of students in Animal Sciences. Lastly, with increasing student recruitment we have also increased the area in which we recruit. Our department has students from 46 states and seven countries. The departments presence has begun to span far and wide to bring in the best students both domestically and internationally.

Prior to my arrival at CSU, budget cuts in 2005 through 2009 reduced faculty and staff size. This had dramatic effects on research productivity. Faculty were needed in teaching and thereby time for research was limited. The morale of the faculty was compromised due to being short staffed. During the last five years the department has been allocated five new positions and two more are in the process of being hired, taking the total of tenure or tenured track positions from 21.5 in 2011 to 28.5 in 2016. Faculty are now able to do their assigned job and researchers are able to get back to research because their temporary teaching assignments will be relieved by the new hires.

Fundraising is a critical part of the long term successes at a university. I take pride in developing relationships that allow for successful fundraising. The reengagement of our alumni and industry has helped improve fundraising for the capital projects and endowment growth to support scholarships, chairs, and programs. Even in low-return times, the departmental endowment and spendable cash has doubled in the last five years from \$7.5M to over \$15M. A new endowed chair was added and scholarship endowments are at new highs. Great institutions have very high endowment balances that ease temporary economic downturns of the state or nation and allow for endowed programs to continue in perpetuity.

Why Texas A&M University? Texas A&M University had a large impact on my success. The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the department of Animal Science are among the largest in the world with wide reaching global impact. Unlike the programs I have been associated with thus far, the administrative structure is well defined with a large leadership and support team. The successes going forward will only be limited by our imagination and I am ready for this impactful challenge. My wife reminds me often that a Texas zip code is most appealing!

Summary. As a faculty member for 13 years and as a department Head at two institutions for 20 years, I have developed the skills necessary to be an effective Department Head of Animal Science at Texas A&M University. My background, exposure to different academic and cultural environments, and my experience in leading a diverse faculty with expertise from agricultural production to food safety and biotechnology has given me experiences and skills necessary to be the leader you are looking for.

I look forward to interacting with you and your committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin R. Pond', written in a cursive style.

Kevin R. Pond
Professor and Head

Attachments: Philosophy, References and CV

Administrative Philosophy and Goals for the Department of Animal Science
Kevin R. Pond

Philosophy and Goals: Prior to developing a vision and goals, an inventory must be taken to know where you are before charting where you are going. A clear understanding of the department's organizational structure, culture, strengths, and challenges can be developed by spending significant time with the faculty, staff, and students. Direct input from the leadership team of the department and centers, cooperating departments and colleges, and with strategic off-campus partners is very important. With such broad-based input, the faculty, staff, and students of the department can then develop a clear vision and set of goals that can meet future academic & industry needs. Specific goals and strategies should be developed for academic, research and extension programs for on and off campus needs.

Faculty Mentoring: A department is only as good as its people. Identifying the correct faculty to recruit, while at the same time keeping and motivating the young and seasoned faculty is critical for success. Mentoring programs and close relationships between faculty members and the department head/leadership are critical to ensure the success of not only the faculty as individuals, but the climate of the department as a whole. A major job of the department head and senior faculty is to provide needed resources, guidance and direction for faculty to be successful.

Ability to Foster Academic, Research and Extension Programs Across Multiple Disciplines: The thought that an individual department in agriculture and life sciences can be a one stop service center is outdated. The interactions and complexities of problems in agriculture require multidisciplinary approaches with expertise in multiple areas. A working partnership with personal interactions within a variety of departments and colleges is critical. Current structure and requirements from granting agencies require such inter- and multi-disciplinary working groups/teams. Most of this cooperation is driven by individual faculty members, but platforms such as joint seminar series, cross-listed team taught courses, and broad-based extension programs can potentially have high returns as groups are proactive rather than reactive to industry needs and societal concerns.

Advance the Goal of Diversity: All types of minds and backgrounds are desirable to have on the team as we address problems and develop solutions. Recruitment of students, faculty, and staff allow for the opportunity of attracting diverse individuals. Role models need to be present and a strong commitment from leadership needs to be evident. To be successful, mentoring of these individuals is critical for integration and inclusion in the department.

How to be an Effective Advocate for the Department: The Head needs to be a visionary who views the world from a broad perspective and can effectively articulate the vision and goals of the department. The head must be approachable and highly visible in the academic community, with state and federal officials, with industry groups, and with the alumni and friends. As an advocate, departmental goals must be incorporated into the plan and budget of the college and university. Great things are possible for the department, college, and university with broad-based-support from the current Aggie network and future cultivated supporters.