

# Minutes of the Annual Business Meeting

Southern Section, American Society of Animal Science

Monday, April 7, 2025

Sheraton Arlington Hotel, Arlington, Texas

The 2025 Southern Section - American Society of Animal Science Business Meeting was called to order at 5:15 PM Central Daylight Time on Monday, April 7, 2025 at the Sheraton Arlington Hotel in Arlington, TX, by President Joao Vendramini (University of Florida). There were 55 members and three staff in attendance. Vendramini asked for an approval of the stated agenda; Daniel Pool moved for approval, and Brian Rude seconded the motion. The motion to approve the agenda was passed by a unanimous vote.

Vendramini recognized the meeting sponsors and thanked them for their continued support of the Southern Section. The Platinum Level sponsor was Eastern Oregon Agricultural Research Center. The Gold Level sponsor was Elanco. High Profile sponsors included Alliance for Grassland Renewal and ASAS Foundation. The Silver Level sponsor was Ritchie. Bronze Level sponsors included Mississippi State University's Department of Animal and Dairy Sciences, Tarleton State University's Department of Animal Science and Veterinary Technology, Texas A&M University's Department of Animal Science, and Zinpro. Partner Level sponsors included Auburn University, California State University - Chico, Colorado State University, Friona Industries, Montana State University, New Mexico State University, North Dakota State University, North Dakota State University's Animal Sciences Graduate Student Organization, Oklahoma State University, Oregon State University, University of Florida's Department of Animal Sciences, University of Wyoming's Department of Animal Science, University of Arkansas's Department of Animal Science, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), University of Georgia, North Carolina State University, and Glenn and Donna Duff.

Vendramini then recognized Past Presidents of the Southern Section as well as the national organization. He also recognized staff of the American Society of Animal Science and thanked them for their support of the Southern Section and success of the 2025 Annual Meeting.

Dr. Kristen Johnson (Washington State University), President of the American Society of Animal Science, provided the President's Update from the National ASAS Board. Johnson highlighted initiatives from the 2024-2025 Presidential Plan, specifically Strategic Directive 6: Develop appropriate, effective, and transparent communication strategies for ASAS members, stakeholders, decision makers, educators, and consumers. To that end, Johnson announced that she held a listening session with American Society of Animal Science CEO Jim Sartin on Monday, April 7, 2025, during the Annual Meeting. Other points discussed included addressing the journal model, a slight decline in membership, writing and outreach opportunities, and success of the ASAS Foundation.

Vendramini then gave the President's Update for the Southern Section. He highlighted continued growth in industry participation and collaboration. He also noted the synergy of the 2025 Annual Meeting that was held jointly with Western Section. He did acknowledge that this joint meeting brought about changes such as the format of the graduate student competitions.

Of note, the Extension Symposium was incorporated into the Annual Meeting this year rather than its independent format that had previously been used.

Dallas Soffa and Nicole Valliere-Kopetzky, Southern Section Graduate Directors (Texas A&M University and Virginia Tech, respectively), provided the Graduate Students' Update for the Southern Section. The Graduate Directors hosted the annual Student Lunch and Learn, titled "Navigating Career Pathways After Graduate School." Speakers included David Lalman, Kimberly Vonnahme, Renae Schroeder, and Andrew Weaver. They also announced that the incoming Graduate Director would be Nicholas Kertz, University of Florida.

Vitor Mercadante (Virginia Tech), Secretary/Treasurer of the Southern Section, presented minutes from the 2024 Annual Business Meeting. Brandi Karisch moved to approve the minutes, and Caleb Lemley seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved. Mercadante then presented the financial report. Prior to expenditures for the 2025 Annual Meeting, the section had a balance of \$33,000. The section is taking measures, in coordination with the national staff, to build a reserve balance equal to 50% of annual meeting costs.

Mercadante then presented the Program Update for the 2025 Annual Meeting. There were 394 total registrants representing 20 companies and 56 universities. The top two universities in registration were Texas A&M University and Texas Tech University. There were 219 presentations at the meeting, including 57 3MT presentations (16 undergraduate, 27 master's, and 14 doctoral).

Brian Rude (Mississippi State University), Southern Section Academic Quadrathlon Chair, provided a report on this year's contest. The competition was hosted by Tarleton State University, represented by Zully Contreras-Correa and Cheyenne Runyan. Committee members included Rude, Whitney Crossland (Texas Tech University), Cathy Williams (Louisiana State University), and Deb Aaron (University of Kentucky). Twelve teams competed in 2025, including Berry College, Eastern Kentucky University, North Carolina State University, Tarleton State University, Texas A&M University, Texas State University, Texas Tech University, Tuskegee University, University of Georgia, University of Tennessee - Knoxville, Virginia Tech, and West Texas A&M University. Of those teams, Texas State University was competing for the first time in their history, and West Texas A&M University for the second time. In the lab practicum (administered by Contreras-Correa and Runyan), the top placing team was Texas A&M University. In the written exam (administered by Williams and Contreras-Correa), the top placing team was Tarleton State University. In the oral presentation (administered by Crossland), the top placing team was Texas A&M University. In the quiz bowl (administered by Carrie Pickworth [North Carolina State University]), the top placing team was North Carolina State University. Overall, the placings were as follows: West Texas A&M University in 3<sup>rd</sup>, Texas Tech University in 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Texas A&M University in 1<sup>st</sup>. Rude also mentioned that the committee was soliciting questions for a re-write of the section's written exam.

Christy Bratcher (Mississippi State University), Southern Section Representative to the national Board of Directors, presented the Necrology Report. Individuals recognized included:

- Bryan "Butch" Hugh Johnson, Texas A&M University, 5/7/2024
- Lincoln Lee Southern, Louisiana State University, 5/27/2024
- Don Thompson, Louisiana State University, 7/29/2024

- James "Pete" Patterson, North Carolina State University, 8/27/2024
- Louie J. Boyd, University of Georgia, 12/5/2024
- Odis Wayne "O.W." Robison, North Carolina State University, 12/16/2024
- Scott B. Carr, Virginia Tech, 1/2/2025
- Donald C. Lay, Jr., USDA-ARS, 2/10/2025
- Robert "Bob" Bellows, USDA-ARS, 3/2/2025
- William "Bill" Brown, Texas Tech University, 3/9/2025
- George V. Davis, University of Arkansas, 3/27/2025

Tom Welsh (Texas A&M University) stated that Milton Thomas should be added to the report. Karisch stated that Don Franke should be added to the report.

Ashley Edwards (Louisiana State University), Extension Committee Chair, presented the Extension Report. Committee members included Edwards, Katie Mason (Chair-Elect; University of Tennessee - Knoxville), Johnny Rogers (Secretary; North Carolina State University), and Katie VanValin (Secretary-Elect; University of Kentucky). There were 14 abstracts submitted to the Extension section for the 2025 Annual Meeting. There were also five speakers at the Extension Symposium integrated into the Annual Meeting this year. That Symposium will become a biennial event at the Southern Section Annual Meeting.

There was no old business presented for discussion.

Vendramini recognized and thanked the outgoing board members for their service to the section. These included:

- Kim Mullenix, Past President (Auburn University)
- Christy Bratcher, Southern Section Director on the national Board of Directors
- Dallas Soffa, Graduate Director

The continuing board members were then recognized. These included:

- Joao Vendramini, Past President
- Nicole Burdick-Sanchez, President (USDA-ARS)
- Vitor Mercadante, President-Elect
- Brandon Smith, Secretary/Treasurer and Program Chair (Auburn University)
- Nicole Valliere-Kopetzky, Graduate Director

Vandramini symbolically passed the gavel to Burdick-Sanchez (not in attendance). Following the transfer of the gavel, new board members were introduced. These included:

- Caleb Lemley, Secretary/Treasurer-Elect (Mississippi State University)
- Flint Harrelson, Secretary/Treasurer-Elect (Morehead State University)
- Daniel Poole, Southern Section Director on the national Board of Directors (North Carolina State University)
- Nicholas Kertz, Graduate Director

There was no new business presented for discussion.

Smith unveiled the location for the 2026 Southern Section Annual Meeting. The meeting will be held at the Embassy Suites Northwest Arkansas in Rogers, AR. Meeting dates will be January 24 - 27, 2026.

Vendramini called for a motion to adjourn the business meeting. A motion was presented by John Arthington and seconded by Christy Bratcher. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

W. Brandon Smith  
Secretary/Treasurer, Southern Section, American Society of Animal Science  
Assistant Professor, Department of Animal Science, Auburn University