New Agriculture Degree Adds Faculty to Blanding Campus | Eastern

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Jim Keyes Adds Lifetime of Experience to New Program

Utah State University Eastern Blanding welcomes Jim Keyes as an instructor for its recently introduced Agriculture Science degree. Adding his expertise to the program Keyes will be teaching animal science, agricultural communication, and equine production in Blanding.

This is not Keyes’ first involvement with Utah State University, he comes to USU Eastern with an impressive background from a lifetime of involvement in agriculture, both academically and professionally. Prior to taking this position Keyes worked with USU’s Extension office for 30 years, and served as a district department head. In addition to teaching he will continue to serve part time as the USU Extension Beef Specialist and Beef Quality Assurance Director for the state.

Agriculture and animal science have always been a passion for Keyes, who earned both a bachelor and master's degree in animal science from USU. After graduating from USU Keyes also conducted post-graduate studies in agricultural economics with the University of Arizona, and continues to loan his expertise to various university agriculture programs. He recently worked with the University of Idaho to conduct a week-long seminar on low stress cattle handling.

Beyond beef and cattle operations Keyes has also been involved with horses his entire life, and brings his experience in equine production to the position. He will introduce basics of equine management, nutrition, breeding, care, and training into the program. In all of his animal science classes Keyes hopes to add a spark to the interest students may already have in different areas of agriculture.

“I want to help the students in our agriculture program to learn about what they love, and hopefully help them understand that learning is a lifelong process, and that life is a learning process.” noted Keyes. “College is just the beginning to set you down a path, it’s the beginning of a process.”

He believes understanding the importance of lifelong learning is a key aspect for creating leaders, both in industry and within communities. Another aspect of agriculture Keyes aims to convey to his students is the many different jobs and careers available in the agriculture industry.

“There are so many more jobs in agriculture than people imagine. There are opportunities for people who want to labor and be hands on, and opportunities for people who don’t want to be so hands on in communication and research, and more.”

Keyes spent time in the four corners region as a young man when he served an LDS mission on the Navajo Reservation. His love for the region and its people inspired him to make it his home after finishing his degrees at USU in Logan. He worked closely with USU as an interpreter for the Navajo Sheep Project, where he gained an understanding of the agricultural needs among the Navajo people. He has also maintains a small cattle operation with his family in San Juan County, raising registered Red Angus cattle, to sustain a personal connection with the industry. He is a regular contributor to Utah Cattlemen’s Magazine, Progressive Cattleman, and other industry publications.

Outside of the classroom Keyes is also working to start a rodeo program at the USU Eastern Blanding campus. The National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association recently approved the formation of the team, and the Blanding team will compete against schools in Utah and Idaho in the Rocky Mountain Region of the NIRA.

The new Agriculture Science Degree offered in Blanding will also include courses in plant science and other subjects to round out the course offerings to students. For more information about the program please visit usueastern.edu/blanding or call 1-800-395-2969.
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