

The Battalion's approach to science

New weekly section in paper

Science. It's a short word, easy to pronounce, fairly easy to spell, yet for some reason, millions of people shudder when they hear it mentioned.

They see science as complicated and difficult to understand. They believe it has no relevance to their daily lives. As a result, people avoid science whenever they can. It's easier for them to ignore than to try to understand. The Battalion has also been guilty of this in recent years. But, that's about to change.

MARK EVANS

Managing Editor

In this issue, The Battalion introduces its Frontiers section. A weekly feature appearing in Monday's newspaper that will focus on health and science — their issues, their advancements, their key players, and their relevance to everyday life.

We hope to make science interesting to read about and to present it in ways where everyone can understand what's going on. Instead of approaching topics from a technical aspect and giving readers more information than they need or want to know, we'll boil complex topics down, making them easier to digest.

For example, in an upcoming issue we'll examine DNA fingerprinting and why it's such a hot topic right now. We'll tell you why its use in the O.J. Simpson case is so hotly debated by the attorneys on both sides and what the issue means to future court cases that involve rape or murder.

In stories appearing in this section, we won't limit ourselves to telling you only the scientific aspect of a topic. The story would be incomplete. Scientific endeavors do not take place in a vacuum.

Researchers can no longer look down on the world from their ivory towers in academia. In today's world, economics and politics are playing an ever-growing role in fields of scientific research. Scientists are learning that to be successful they must confront political, social and economic issues. As part of our coverage, we will give readers a complete view of everything that goes into research.

The field of science is growing by leaps and bounds every year. Less than 50 years ago scientists deciphered the structure of DNA, which determines a person's genetic blueprints. Today, this information is being used to develop ways to treat diseases such as cystic fibrosis and muscular dystrophy.

In this section we'll focus not only on national scientific issues and research but also on the types of research going on here at A&M.

Texas A&M spends an estimated \$305 million annually on research. Currently, A&M scientists are studying topics that range from saving endangered sea turtles to growing more productive crops to testing the effectiveness of tuberculosis vaccines. In the coming months, we'll introduce you to these people and offer you a glimpse of the work they do.

We have no lofty goals for this section. We simply believe that science plays such an important role in modern society that The Battalion should join the ranks of other newspapers in keeping its readers abreast of the latest scientific advances. And, if we can make science interesting to read about and if readers put the section down knowing something they didn't before, then all the better.

Mark Evans has a journalism degree from Texas A&M and is currently completing a second undergraduate degree in biology.

A&M cloning cows for better burger

By Katherine Arnold
THE BATTALION

The College of Veterinary Medicine is attempting to create the genetic blueprint for cattle through a new genetic project designed to pinpoint desired genetic traits.

The National Cattle Genome Project is attempting to map the genetic code of cattle. Once scientists know where the genes are located, the genes may be altered to serve such functions as improve milk production or prevent disease.

Dr. James E. Womack, coordinator for the project and professor and associate head of the Department of Veterinary Medicine and Pathobiology, said the research could have major implications on the cattle industry.

"By creating a map of the entire genome of cattle, we hope to be able to locate important genes involved in milk production and meat quality," Womack said. "We have already discovered the location of certain genes, such as the genes for certain diseases and characteristic genes like the gene for horns."

The number of chromosomes and the location of genes in the chromosomes determines unique characteristics and distinguishes the difference between living organisms. The chromosomes are found in the nucleus of all cells. Cattle have 60 chromosomes, whereas humans have 46 chromosomes.

Researchers use a unit called a centiMorgan to judge the accuracy of their research. Womack said at this point in the study, the gene map is accurate to within 20 centiMorgans, or has an 80 percent accuracy.

Through this project, researchers hope to be able to cure genetic diseases.

"We want to be able to breed lines of cattle that are resistant to infectious diseases," Womack said.

The University is one of approximately 10 laboratories around the country participating in the research which is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture.

Much of the information garnered by the project is also used for comparative studies. The genome map for cattle can be compared to the map for humans and mice, Womack said.

"We have discovered that the breakage of chromosomes has been conservative throughout evolution," he said. "We can find many of the genes for specific traits or diseases in cattle and mice in approximately the same location on the chromosomes in humans. All the research complements each other."

Dr. Susan Hardin, director of the Gene Technologies Lab in the Department of Biology, said that genetic research such as the National Cattle Genome Project is beneficial to the scientific community.

"Some genetic research is done with the 'knowledge for knowledge's sake' goal in mind," Hardin said. "Researchers never know when they begin a project what the result will be and how it will impact the rest of the scientific community."

The College of Veterinary Medicine is conducting genetic research into other areas as well.

Dr. Duane C. Kraemer, associate dean for Research and Graduate Programs in the College of Veterinary Medicine, said studies are being conducted in genetics, reproduc-



Some children walk the family dog, but year-old Michael Mackey, of Olathe, Kan., walks his family's heifer at the Johnson County Fair.

tive systems, diseases, and comparative research between humans and animals. "We have a mission of improving knowledge base on animal and human health to promote education of students and the public regarding these matters," Kraemer said.



HEALTH TIPS

Pre-game reminders for A&M football fans this fall

Want to get the most out of the football game Saturday? You've got your 12th man towel, but is that all you need? Try these helpful hints to help keep the Twelfth Man healthy and safe:

- When dressing for the big game, keep in mind that wearing loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored and cotton or cotton-blend clothes allows air to circulate and body perspiration to evaporate. Comfortable, supportive shoes are a must if you plan to stand the length of the game with the Twelfth Man.

- Sunglasses with UV protection, sun screen and caps can all help protect you from the sun's damaging rays.

- Drink plenty of cool water both before and during the game. Drinking water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages will help replenish body fluids. You may lose two to three quarts of water a day. Drinking eight ounces of cool water every 15 minutes when perspiring heavily is sug-

gested. The athletic department permits water to be carried into the game in quart-size or smaller containers.

- Use caution with caffeinated drinks such as coffee, tea and cola and alcohol because they may act as a diuretic that removes water from your body, increasing urine production. You can't always rely on thirst to tell you when you need water.

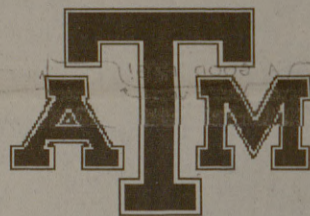
- Keep in mind that if you have alcohol on game day, alcohol increases the level of body dehydration, the heat will increase blood circulation, and you may become drunk more quickly. This can be particularly dangerous to your health and safety. Even if you consume alcohol the night before the game such as at yell practice or at parties, it can

add to dehydration on game day. Drinking or not, be aware of other football fans who may be drinking and driving.

- Another precaution is to check the temperature and the relative humidity. When the relative humidity gets to be around 75 percent, you may not sweat and your body may be unable to use the body heat you would normally lose through perspiration.

- If you begin to see dark spots or experience dizziness, nausea or chills, beware.

Drink some water, get into the shade, sit down for a while, or go to one of the first aid stations at Kyle Field. The main station is located at the north end of the stadium near the horseshoe and a station is located on each deck as well. If your body is not perspiring or producing sweat, it should be, seek medication at a first aid station immediately. Heat problems can be serious, including heat stroke, heat exhaustion and heat cramps. Symptoms to watch out for include muscle aches and elevated body temperature, extreme fatigue, clammy skin, dizziness or fainting, and elevated blood pressure. Drink water before you feel thirsty if you're not hot and perspiring. Food and beverages are allowed in Kyle Field. Eat a good breakfast and lunch before you go. Planning ahead meals will help you maintain healthy blood sugar levels and avoid feeling dizzy or fatigued. If you're tailgating with family, keep the food safe. Bacteria can grow very fast and spoil the food and your joyment of the game. Best food is cold before placing in the cooler. Use enough ice to keep the temperature below 40 degrees for storage of chilled



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TUE 9/6	WED. 9/7	THU 9/8	SUN 9/11
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- HOWDY! There is a **General Class Meeting** on **Wednesday, Sept. 7th** in **room 302 of Rudder Tower** at 8:30 p.m.
- Applications are available for **Class Council Treasurer** at the cubicle in the SPO (Student Programs Office) and in the Koldus Building
- Informational meeting for Class Treasurer will be held immediately after the G.C.M. on Wed.

Any questions call:
Gerry Brown, President at 847-1749

THE BATTALION

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