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Cal Poly Grad Wins Award for Animal Genetic Research

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- A recent Animal Science grad has been awarded a fellowship for his research on quail genetics, completed while he was a student at Cal Poly.

Cal Poly's Garret Guenther was awarded the John Clark Student Fellowship for presentation of his work, "Development of methods for the production of transgenic quail expressing an E. coli phytase gene." Guenther displayed his work in a poster session at the Fifth Transgenic Animal Research Conference in August. His advisors on the project were professors Dan Peterson and Elizabeth Koutsos of the Cal Poly Animal Science Department.

The fellowship is awarded based on a student's involvement and presentation of research in the field of genetic engineering in animals. Guenther was the only undergraduate student in the competition; all other entries were from graduate students.

In making the award, the head of the committee responsible for selecting the fellowship recipient commented that he was impressed with the caliber of Guenther's work, and even more impressed that the entry was from an undergraduate student.

"It's interesting to note that the John Clark Student Fellowship was initially intended to honor a graduate student, but in its very first award honored one of Cal Poly's undergraduate students," noted Cal Poly Animal Science Department Head Andy Thulin. "This underscores the world-class nature of Cal Poly's Animal Science program."

Guenther graduated in June and is now a graduate student at UC Irvine. The transgenic animal research conference and competition were organized by the UC Davis biotechnology program. The conference is an internationally recognized meeting of leaders in the field of genetically engineered animals and was attended by academic and industry researchers from all over the globe, as well as government regulators from the United States, Canada, and Australia.

About the John Clark Student Fellowship
The John Clark Student Fellowship was created in memoriam of John Clark (1951-2004), former director of the Roslin Institute in Edinburgh, England, and a pioneer in applying molecular biotechnology to agriculturally important animal species. The Roslin Institute is a world center for animal biotechnology. The institute launched the annual fellowship in 2005 to honor one student for their accomplishments in the field.

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