

# RAM SCHOLARS AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION LEAD LARIMER COUNTY

## About RAM Scholars

The RAM Scholars program is a cross disciplinary program designed to create agricultural skills training opportunities for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Students from the Agricultural Education program, Department of Human Development and Family Services, and the Department of Occupational Therapy spend the summer with the RAM Scholars in order to develop their own skills as future teachers and care providers, while also learning agricultural skills throughout the different spaces of the CSU ARDEC facility.

The RAM Scholars program runs through the academic year and culminates with a summer internship. The summer internship piece of RAM Scholars takes place over the course of 8 weeks with priorities such as industry relevant skills, employment acquisition skills, and employability skills.

The intention of the Agricultural Education Lead internship is to provide the program with assistance in coordinating the internship experience for the RAM Scholars, provide support for the Agricultural Education undergraduate students, and assist in the development and delivery of content as needed in the classroom.

RAM Scholars collecting data at ARDEC South



## INTERNSHIP GOALS

- Increase confidence with scaffolding and delivering content to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Collaborate with ARDEC and CoBank staff to coordinate the RAM Scholars' internship experience.
- Provide support for the Agricultural Education undergraduate students via feedback and regular check-ins.

## Future Impacts

The importance of programming for the RAM Scholars is two fold. First, adults with IDD lack sufficient employment opportunities, with an employment rate of 18%, making proper vocational training critical in increasing employment rates. Second, preservice teachers do not receive extensive training with regards to working with students with IDD This opportunity allows them to gain skills and confidence in working with all future students.

## Our 2023 Summer

### Industry Relevant Skills

Throughout the summer internship program, RAM Scholars had the opportunity to develop practical skills in three main pathways- animal science, agronomy/ horticulture sciences, and power structure and technical systems.

- Landscape Maintenance
  - Weed Trimmer
  - Lawn Mower
  - Leaf Blower
- Facility Maintenance
  - Proper set up and take down of events
  - Cleaning banquet spaces and agricultural buildings
- Pen Rider
  - Visual Animal Checks
  - Mucking
- Data Collection
  - Visual Observation
  - Properly Measuring
  - Recording Data

### Employment Skills

RAM Scholars also worked on employment skills that are vital for success in the workforce. Scholars exhibited workplace safety through proper use of PPE, awareness of their surroundings, and additional structures for higher risk activities. Along with workplace safety, Scholars worked to develop interpersonal skills with their peers and intrapersonal skills that will allow them to excel in the workplace.

- Teamwork
- Perseverance
- Job Acquisition
- Time Management
- Conflict Resolution
- Self Advocacy
- Written and Verbal Communication
- Proper Use of PPE
- Self Regulation
- Flexibility



## Multidimensional Learning

Along with the opportunity for the RAM Scholars, this program allows for learning opportunities for everyone involved. Not only do CSU students learn skills for their perspective careers, they also have the opportunity to be immersed in an agricultural education experience for eight weeks.

- Agricultural Education Students
  - Working with diverse populations
  - Exposure to best practices
  - Exposure to common Special Education policy
- Occupational Therapy Students
  - Exposure to agricultural work environments
  - Practice modifications for adults with IDD
  - Field Experience hours toward OT program requirements
- Human Development and Family Services
  - Exposure to agricultural work environments
  - Practice of supporting industry professionals
  - Practice advocacy for adults with IDD



## RAM Scholars in the Future

- Direct Pathway to Employment
  - Industry partnerships leading to employment following their experience in the RAM Scholars program
- Increased Opportunities at CSU Experiment Stations
  - Replicated programming throughout the state that increases skill development opportunities for adults with IDD