Animal science focuses on the science, art and business of the production of beef cattle, dairy cattle, horses, poultry, sheep, goats, swine and pet/companion animals. An animal scientist is concerned with the application of the principles of the biological, physical and social sciences to the problems associated with domestic animal production and management.

Animal science is also concerned with food production. The food industry is one of the largest and most important industries in the United States. Food scientists are concerned with the processing, safety, quality control and marketing of food.

Undergraduate students may elect to pursue a Bachelor of Science degree in the department by majoring in either animal science or food science. Internship programs providing one to six months of off-campus work experience are available in all animal science options and are part of the curriculum for food science. Participation in undergraduate organizations (Animal Science Leadership Alliance, Block and Bridle, Dairy Science, Horsemen’s Association, Food Science Club, Meat Science Association, Oklahoma Collegiate Cattlemen, Pre-Vet Club), judging teams (dairy cattle, horses, livestock, meat, or meat animal evaluation) and academic programs (honors, undergraduate research scholars, and academic quadrathlon) improves social, communication, leadership and academic skills and abilities.

Animal Science

Undergraduate students may elect study emphasis programs in the areas of Animal Biotechnology, Business, Livestock Merchandising, Pre-Veterinary Animal Science, Production, and Ranch Operations, or a double major with Agricultural Communications or with Agricultural Education. In addition, students have the opportunity to concentrate their studies on one or more animal species.

Students interested in veterinary medicine may complete the pre-veterinary medicine requirements at the same time they are working toward a BS degree in Animal Science. In addition, pre-vet students gain valuable insight into the care and management of animals throughout the Animal Science curriculum.

Undergraduate students follow a similar curriculum during the first two years which includes basic courses in the physical, biological and social sciences, and a series of introductory courses in agriculture and business. Upper-class students take a basic core of advanced Animal Science courses, including genetics, reproductive physiology and nutrition. As seniors, students complete a series of advanced Animal Science courses designed to apply knowledge obtained in previous courses to livestock systems. Every opportunity is taken in teaching to utilize the excellent herds and flocks owned or operated by the department.

Students completing an Animal Science degree have a wide choice of challenging careers, including ownership or management of farms, ranches or feedlots; employment with state and federal agencies concerned with inspection, grading or regulation; banking and financial activities, sales and service positions with companies involved with feeds, pharmaceuticals or other animal products; biotechnology; opportunities in Agricultural Extension or teaching; and work in the processing, distributing and merchandising of dairy, poultry and meat products.

Minor in Animal Science

The minor is designed to give students the core courses in Animal Science to supplement their chosen major. Animal Science coursework required for the minor will provide students with the knowledge to be competitive and succeed in the animal agriculture industry. The requirements include ANSI 1124 Introduction to the Animal Sciences and 18 additional hours of core Animal Science courses that the student can select to personalize their programs. The basic core of advanced Animal Science courses includes: genetics, reproductive physiology and nutrition. Students can then complete a series of advanced Animal Science courses designed to apply knowledge obtained in previous courses to animal systems.

Food Science

Food science is an applied field. A food scientist is someone who applies the basic sciences: biology, physics, chemistry and mathematics to further their understanding of the factors that affect food quality, safety and nutrition. Food science is applied to the selection, preservation, processing, packaging, distribution and use of safe, nutritious and wholesome foods. There are four study emphasis programs in the food science major: Science, Industry, Meat Science and Food Safety.

The Science emphasis provides a well-rounded background in chemistry, physics, mathematics and biology as well as Food Science. Students who elect this option usually have a primary interest in science and will be prepared to enter graduate education programs in Food Science.

This Science emphasis is also an excellent choice for students interested in professional schools such as medical school, dental school, pharmacy, physical therapy and veterinary medicine. Students who elect not to pursue a graduate degree or a professional degree are prepared to work in any facet of the food industry, especially those jobs focused on research, product development and food analysis.

The Industry emphasis provides a basic understanding of the chemical and physical processes of food processing. Students pursuing this option are prepared to enter food plant management, quality assurance, quality control, product development and sales.

The Meat Science emphasis provides a background knowledge and understanding in live animal production, slaughter and fabrication, and meat processing; along with a basic understanding of chemical and physical processes of meat production. Students pursuing this option are prepared to enter the meat industry working in quality assurance, slaughter/fabrication, meat processing, product development and sales.

The Food Safety emphasis provides knowledge and experience in food safety issues and practices affecting all sectors of the food industry from production agriculture to wholesale and retail distribution channels. Students pursuing this option are prepared to enter the food industry with expertise in food safety programs, auditing and quality assurance.

Minor in Food Science

The minor includes the core courses in Food Science. Requirements include FDSC 1133 Fundamentals of Food Science and 18 additional hours of core Food Science courses that the student can select to personalize their programs. The basic core of Food Science courses includes: food chemistry, food microbiology, quality control and food analysis, as well as meat science courses for students interested in the
meat industry or dairy and dairy products courses for students interested in the dairy industry. Students can complete their program with advanced courses in these areas.