educators. Students then were responsible for developing a script, filming and editing, the cattle management video. Extension educators worked with students to ensure accuracy of information and the educational value of materials. Student-developed videos were filmed using Flip Cam video cameras and edited with the associated software. Videos were evaluated for value of content, accuracy of information, and quality of visual attributes by the course instructor, extension educators, and peers within the course. Upon completion of the assignment, students were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the video project. On a scale of 1 to 6 (1 = improved understanding or agree, 6 = detrimental to understanding or disagree), students favorably evaluated the educational value of this team video project. This project helped enhance teamwork (1.54 ± 0.78), knowledge of beef industry (1.62 ± 0.87), understand the difficulty of communicating beef management tasks (1.38 ± 0.51), and was valuable to the course (1.38 ± 0.65). Greatest limitations of the project included access to video cameras, inability to merge separate video and audio files, and having ample time for extension educators to review video clips before final video was developed. Copyright of the videos were provided to The Ohio State University by the students to allow extension educators the ability to use the movies they created in part or whole for extension education. Engaging students in video production on beef cattle management techniques can connect students with extension educators and enhance extension education resources.

**Key Words:** beef production, extension education, video

594 Why your school should host a Block and Bridle National Convention. M. W. Orth,* Michigan State University, East Lansing.

Good communication, leadership, and problem solving skills are qualities we desire to see mature in our students. In the classroom, mastering disciplinary content is the primary objective. However, extracurricular activities such as clubs can facilitate the development of soft skills. In animal science departments, Block and Bridle (at some schools Saddle and Sirloin) is the club that includes students with interests in several livestock species. Besides participating in many local activities, each year a school or group of schools will host a National Convention that is open to all clubs across the country. Getting schools to commit to the undertaking has been difficult in the past few years. Michigan State University hosted the National Convention in the fall of 2010 for the first time in its history. Hosting a convention requires a tremendous amount of energy over several months. They are expensive to fund and require a lot of coordination with a very diverse group of people. However, the benefits for the students are well worth the effort. Organizing a convention requires a wide range of activities to make it successful. Students at Michigan State had to develop written materials, such as a sponsorship brochure and convention program, organize bus tours all around the state, stock buses with food and drinks before 6 a.m., and resolve conflicts quickly to name a few. Two unexpected benefits were the greater involvement of members in the club throughout the entire year and the initiation of the Sparty Farm Fresh Tour, a one-day bus tour designed to expose new students to animal agriculture in Michigan. With employers putting a greater emphasis on soft skills in hiring decisions, animal science departments must encourage activities to develop those skills. Hosting a Block and Bridle National Convention is one extremely effective activity that will help prepare a large number of students for their future professions. Additionally, it will showcase agriculture in your state and provide a lot of lasting memories.

**Key Words:** soft skills, block and bridle, student development

595 Enhancing the student learning experience through an undergraduate research program. E. L. Karcher,* and N. L. Trotter, Department of Animal Science, Michigan State University, East Lansing.

Between fall 2009 and 2011, enrollment in the Department of Animal Science at Michigan State University (MSU) increased by 11.6%. This increase was accompanied by curricular change including a requirement for undergraduate students in Animal Science to participate in an experiential learning activity. Based on a perceived growing interest in undergraduate research, the Animal Science Undergraduate Research Student Association (ASURSA) was established in fall 2009. Three main learning outcomes were identified: 1) to engage students in annual group undergraduate research projects, 2) to increase general understanding and proficiency of the scientific method, and 3) to provide a forum for professional and social interaction. In spring and fall 2011, club members were identified to work with advisors to formulate a proposal and serve as project managers. Students submitted multiple grant applications and were successfully awarded $10,950 in funding.

**Key Words:** beef production, extension education, video