

DECEMBER 2024

# CAAS MPH NEWSLETTER

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College of Agriculture & Applied Sciences  
UtahStateUniversity

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE ADVS DEPARTMENT HEAD

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The holiday season is a time for family, friends, and festivities, and for many of us, that includes our beloved pets. Animals are part of our families, and we want them to share in the joy. However, the holidays bring unique challenges and potential hazards for our furry friends. With busy schedules, guests unfamiliar with household rules, and decorations galore, it's essential to be vigilant to ensure everyone - two-legged and four-legged - has a safe and happy holiday.

Below are some common seasonal hazards to watch out for, along with tips to keep your furry family members safe.

## **Holiday Decorations**

- Ensure your holiday tree is securely anchored, especially if you have a cat that loves climbing or a dog with a powerful wagging tail. A toppled tree can cause injury or damage.
- Keep breakable or edible-looking ornaments out of reach. A round glass ornament might look like a toy to your dog, and ingestion can lead to choking or internal injuries.
- Tinsel and ribbons can be particularly tempting for cats, but if ingested, they can cause life-threatening blockages in the intestines.
- Supervise pets around open flames and candles and avoid leaving wires or cords where they might chew.

## **Holiday Foods**

- Chocolate is toxic to dogs, and xylitol, a sweetener found in many sugar-free treats, is extremely dangerous.
- Ingesting raw dough can be life-threatening, as it can expand in the stomach, causing severe bloating or even a stomach rupture.
- Fatty foods, bones, and certain ingredients like onions, garlic, and raisins can be harmful. Make sure the turkey carcass or ham bone goes in the trash out of reach of Fido.
- Ensure glasses of wine or cocktails are out of reach – pets metabolize alcohol differently and can become very ill from even small amounts.
- Be cautious with discarded wrappers, skewers, or food packaging that might be enticing to pets but could cause choking or digestive blockages.

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE ADVS DEPARTMENT HEAD, CONTINUED

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## **Seasonal Chemicals and Zoonotic Risks**

- Antifreeze is a common winter hazard that is highly toxic to pets and has a sweet taste that can attract them. Ensure spills are cleaned up and containers are securely stored.
- Increased use of rodent control products during the winter can lead to accidental poisonings. Use pet-safe methods whenever possible.
- With more people (and pets) gathering, risks of zoonotic diseases, such as leptospirosis or salmonella, can increase. Pets can carry and spread these diseases, so practice good hygiene when handling pets and their food or waste.

## **Stress and Routines**

- The holidays can be overwhelming for pets with changes to their routine, unfamiliar guests, and new stimuli. Create a quiet space where they can retreat and ensure they have access to fresh water, familiar toys, and a comfortable place to rest.

This season, let's embrace the joy of the holidays with an eye toward the safety and well-being of our animal companions. By staying mindful of potential hazards and planning accordingly, we can ensure a happy and healthy holiday season for all members of our family - furry and human alike.

I offer you my best wishes to all members of your family for a peaceful holiday and joyous new year!

Abby



**Dr. Abby Benninghoff, Ph.D.**

**Animal, Dairy, and Veterinary Sciences Department Head**

**Professor for the Animal, Dairy, and Veterinary Sciences Department and School of Veterinary Medicine**

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# STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD

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Hi! My name is Chandler and I am currently serving as the chair of the Student Advisory Board (SAB). The SAB represents all students in the graduate program and provides a platform for students to voice any concerns they may have. It also serves as a way to provide constructive feedback and collaboration between students and faculty members.

This year, the SAB has focused on meeting student needs and finding ways to make navigating the graduate program easier. We developed a needs assessment survey to identify strengths and weaknesses of the program, as well as ways in which we can improve the program for future students.

The SAB is also dedicated to supporting students in career development and growth. We want to prepare students for their careers after leaving the program and to build professional skills. Currently, the SAB is in the process of developing a podcast that will collaborate with public health professionals to learn more about different career paths in the public health world.

The Student Advisory Board is a great way to share your thoughts and insights on the program. Current students that would like to become involved in continuing the growth of the MPH program can visit the SAB module on the MPH Canvas page for information on how to join!



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# ONE HEALTH SYMPOSIUM HIGHLIGHT

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## Utah Annual One Health Symposium November 6th 2024

The 10th annual Utah One Health Symposium was held at the Viridian Event Center in South Jordan from 8 am to 4:30 pm on Wednesday November 6th. The theme of the symposium this year was “One Health Storytelling: Tales from Science Communicators”.

There was a thread of presentations about tularemia interspersed with other interesting communication topics. Dr. Jane Kelly started the morning off with “A Tale of Tularemia, Chapter 1” about a cluster of cases of tularemia in beavers in the spring of this year from a diagnostic perspective.

Dr. Ginger Stout from the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources followed describing the outbreak from a wildlife perspective. We also heard about tick surveys that were done to check for the possibility of tick transfer of the pathogen. In addition, we heard about tularemia in a pregnant woman and baby (unrelated to the beavers). Both mother and child were treated successfully.



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# ONE HEALTH SYMPOSIUM HIGHLIGHT CONTINUED

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A very interesting presentation was about a new climate exhibition at the Natural History Museum of Utah and a presentation that gave us all food for thought thinking about how we design our presentations was given by Dr. Rob Davies, a physics professor at USU. The title of his talk was "Novel Approaches to Compelling Presentations".

A very enjoyable activity in the afternoon was about how to communicate with young audiences about science: "Gather round! It's STEM Storytime". The speakers had us dancing and singing and coloring. Finally, we had some short lightning presentations about important topics such as rabies.



We had a raffle at the end, lots of good food and time to network with colleagues. Over 140 people attended the conference: people working in public health, physicians, veterinarians, animal control officers, and educators. A good day of learning was had by all.

-Dr. Jane Kelly DVM, MS, MPH, DACVPM, DACVM

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# UTAH CHAPTER OF THE SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION AWARD RECIPIENTS

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Our program is lucky to have Savannah Daines, MPH, DIPH, as our Master of Public Health Program Assistant and Graduate Program Coordinator. She makes our program run smoothly while preparing graduates to start successful careers in the public health field. In addition to her work with the program, Savannah is also the Executive Director for the International Health and Early Learning Programs (iHelp) Foundation and one of the Directors for Athletics United. Savannah's incredible list of achievements is made even more remarkable when noticing the short amount of time it has taken her to reach these impressive achievements.



At the annual Utah Society of Public Health Education (USOPHE) conference on November 7th, Savannah was recognized for her work and presented with the Rookie of the Year Award, which is given annually to a new public health professional in recognition of their contribution to health education during their first years of public health work.

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# UTAH CHAPTER OF THE SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION AWARD RECIPIENTS

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Kimberlee Creech, one of our MPH Public Health Nutrition students, received the Shelly Fuller Health Education Scholarship at the Utah Society of Public Health Education (USOPHE) Conference! This award recognizes outstanding public health students who are USOPHE members, demonstrate leadership, engage in community service, are active in student organizations, and excel academically.



Kimberlee, a Registered Dietitian who joined our program in spring 2024, brings both expertise and passion to her many roles. She works at a hospital, manages her own nutrition consulting business, and holds an assistantship where she teaches an undergraduate medical terminology course, serves as a teaching assistant for a community nutrition course, and oversees our program's social media. Kimberlee is also a dedicated member of our Student Advisory Board.

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# ORGANIZATIONAL HIGHLIGHT: UTAH PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

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## **About the Utah Public Health Association (UPHA)**

Founded in 1916, the Utah Public Health Association is Utah's largest public health organization and an affiliate of the American Public Health Association. UPHA is a leader in public health advocacy, improving public health practice, and providing professional development opportunities for its members and the broader public health community. Our diverse membership includes health educators, doctors, nurses, public health professionals, community leaders, and citizens, all committed to improving the health of Utahns.

## **Our Mission**

UPHA empowers public health professionals, educates the community, and advocates for effective public health policies to address Utah's public health challenges.

## **Student Membership Benefits**

As a student member, you'll gain access to unique professional development opportunities, mentorship programs, discounted conference registrations, and networking events. Membership connects you with public health professionals statewide, giving you valuable opportunities to grow your knowledge, skills, and career prospects. The USU MPH program provides their students with membership during their studies! You can access membership here:

<https://app.joinit.com/o/utah-public-health-association>

## **Annual Public Health Conference**

Mark your calendars for the UPHA Annual Conference in April! This premier event brings together public health professionals, students, and community leaders from across the state to share ideas, learn about the latest public health advancements, and network with peers. Don't miss this opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions and professional growth.



**Utah  
Public Health  
Association**

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# DECEMBER GRADUATE HIGHLIGHT

## AMANDA MORRISON

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Amanda Morrison completes the Masters of Public Health Nutrition program this month! During the program, her favorite courses included Social Determinants of Health, Hunger Issues and Solutions, and Counseling and Motivational Interviewing for Health Professionals. She loved all of her professors but found mentors especially in Dr. Mateja Savoie-Roskos and Professor Casey Coombs.

### **Tell us about your APE**

I updated the senior congregate meal guide for the MAG Meals on Wheels program of Summit, Utah and Wasatch counties. I also created documents that could be used as references to seek for funding with the same organization.

### **What are your post-graduation plans?**

I'm currently seeking a part-time position, ideally focused on promoting food security and health equity, and also focusing on my children.

### **Anything else you'd like to share?**

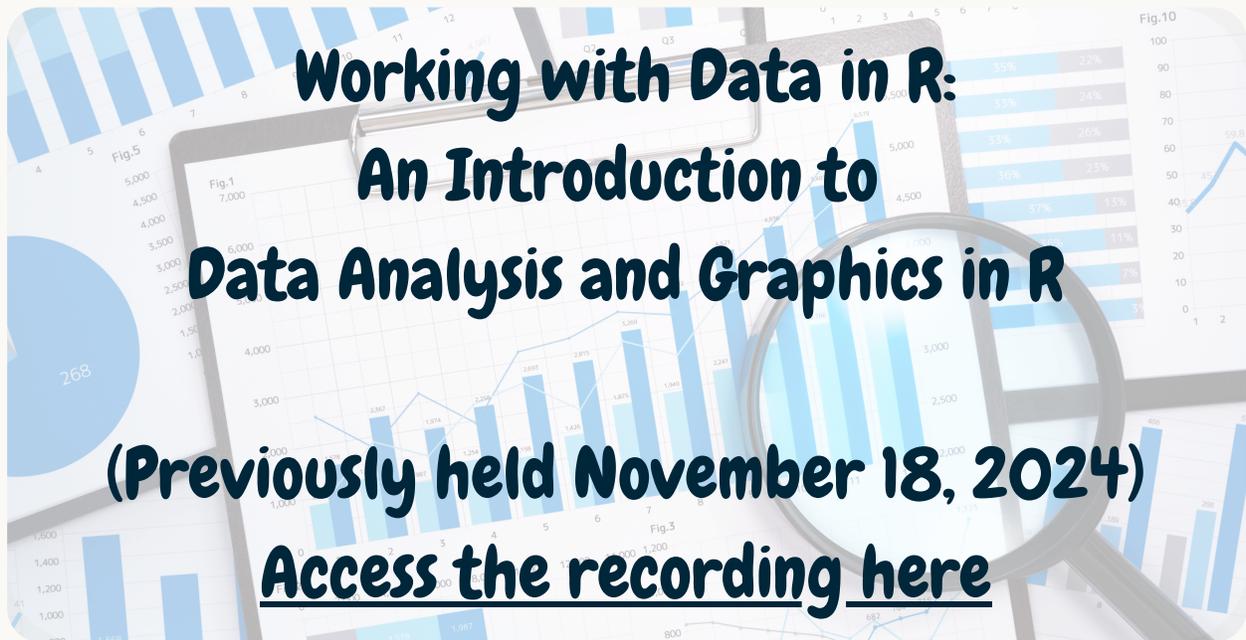
I just want to thank all of the students and faculty who have helped me to see different perspectives, to research wisely, and to think more critically.



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# UPCOMING EVENTS

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**Working with Data in R:  
An Introduction to  
Data Analysis and Graphics in R**  
**(Previously held November 18, 2024)**  
**[Access the recording here](#)**



**Mediterranean Study Abroad**  
**May 19-28, 2025**  
**Applications due January 15th!**

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## **UPCOMING EVENTS CONTINUED**

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### **Utah Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Annual Conference**

**March 27-28, 2025**

**Viridian Event Center, West Jordan, UT**



### **Utah Public Health Association Conference**

**April 2-3, 2025**

**Weber State University, Ogden UT**



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## FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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Be the first to hear about everything public health related by following our social media accounts!

This is a great way to stay up to date on program changes, accreditation updates, public health events, job openings, project/internship opportunities, and more!



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