

# Alumni: 2019 Newsletter

Greetings Agriculture Alumni & Friends,

The Department of Agriculture & Food Science wishes all of our Alumni & Friends a year of good health and accomplishment! In the face of serious budgetary constraints, the Department continues to thrive and we have been able to continue with capital improvements that Dr. Paul Woosley will describe in more detail later. We are grateful for the assistance received from a number of selfless individuals that have had a huge impact on how we do business. First, I wish to thank and congratulate the recipient of our 2019 Alumnus of the Year Award, Brian Lacefield. Brian is a two-time alum of WKU and has been instrumental in furthering agriculture within the Commonwealth and the region by serving as State Executive Director for USDA's Farm Service Agency. Chris Milam was awarded the WKU Agriculture Spirit Award. Chris is also a WKU alum and has provided invaluable guidance to the Department as Chair of our Advisory Board. In addition, he has played an instrumental role in funding our highly regarded ASSET program through the generous support of Champion Petfoods. This support allowed us to invest in an absolutely incredible group of high school students this summer. More on the ASSET Conference can be found later in this newsletter. Thank you, WKU alum Dr. Jack Britt, for your incredible generosity in establishing an endowment to enhance the educational experience of our students. This endowment will directly support experiential learning opportunities for our Agriculture & Food Science students! A special thanks to two-time WKU alum Terry Burks for advising our Block & Bridle Club and spending countless hours with students to orchestrate LNA this past spring semester. This was a very special time for a very special group of students. Finally, I would like to provide heartfelt recognition to WKU alum Jim Koostra. Jim has donated countless hours of expertise, time, materials, and energy in caring for the dental health care of our equine herd and educating our students. Words can't adequately describe the gratitude that we have for Jim's selfless contribution to the Department over so many years.

Drs. Phillip Gunter and Dan Strunk are now in-residence and have hit the ground running. Both are providing much needed expertise, Phillip in ruminant nutrition and Dan in Plant Science and Turf Grass Management. We are fortunate to have them as integral members of the team. Mike Saxton has joined our AREC team. Mike literally hit the ground running just in time to see us through spring planting. His expertise, experience, and enthusiasm are greatly appreciated. Gary Beu continues to produce outstanding student produced cheeses in our Hilltopper Creamery. Ordering info can be found later in the newsletter. Finally, I would like to recognize our own Dr. Tom Kingery. Tom was recently awarded an Honorary State FFA Degree in recognition of his multitude of contributions to FFA. This award will go nicely with the WKU Award that Tom recently received for his exceptional advising of our students. Additional information can be found later in the newsletter.

I invite everyone to attend our next Ag Alumni Gathering that will take place before the Homecoming football game on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Current plans include farm tours, a social program, and a meal. Events will begin at 10:00 am and we hope to be finished by 12:30-1:00 pm. This leaves room for tailgating from 1:00-3:00 and getting to the game at 3:00 pm. We are currently working to secure President Caboni again for the program. We will finalize the timing of the program and meal later to accommodate the President. Please look for homecoming updates on our webpage, Ag Alumni Facebook page, or please call our office later at 270-745-3151. We have another great event in the works with another BIG ANNOUNCEMENT! We look forward to seeing everyone there! Thank you all, for what you do. Stop by if you get the opportunity and, as always, my door is always open.

Hope your day is agricultural,

Fred DeGraves  
Chair, Agriculture & Food Science



Brian Lacefield



Chris Milam



Jack Britt



## 2018-2019 Outstanding Agriculture Students

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Picture not  
available



*Outstanding Undergraduate  
Student*  
**Julia McClain**



*Outstanding Agricultural Education Students*  
**Sabrina Young and Wes Estes**



*The Elmer Gray Outstanding  
Graduate Student Award*  
**Briley Loggan**



*Outstanding Agricultural  
Business Student*  
**Madison Connor**



*Outstanding Student in Agronomy–  
Plant Science*  
**Meagan Walters**



*Outstanding Animal Science  
Student*  
**Kylie Davis**



*Outstanding Horticulture Students*  
**Dixie Major and Carlie Seymour**



*Outstanding Turfgrass Science*  
**Ben Duncan**

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### WKU Student Chapter of the American Institute of Floral Design Compete in National SAIFD Competition.

WKU Floral Design students, Hope Reed, Keely Largent, and Paulina Jaurez who are members of the Dr. James M. Martin Student Chapter of the American Institute of Floral Designers competed at the AIFD National Symposium in Las Vegas, Nevada in July. The competition consist of four categories in wedding, sympathy, fashion, and interpretive floral design. Hope Reed placed 6<sup>th</sup> out of 52 in the category of interpretive floral design.

The WKU SAIFD Chapter was formed in September 2018 and named after the late Dr. James M. Martin who was a horticulture professor for the department during the 1980's, 90's, and early 2000's. Dr. Martin was responsible for developing the Horticulture concentration, as well as many study abroad programs for the department. The SAIFD Chapter is the official floral design team for WKU events. SAIFD Chapter is housed in the WKU Floral Design Training Center which is also where all the floral design courses are taught.



Submitted by: Roger Dennis MAE, AIFD, PFCI, AAF, KMF

## **Student and Staff News**

Will Chapman, Logan Duke, Kelly Eicher, Sawyer Matthews, and Meagan Amber Walters were the WKU Soil Judging Team members for the 2018 Southern Regional Soil Judging Competition, which WKU hosted in October. Twelve teams competed in the contest. Darwin Newton and Becky Gilfillen coached the team. Logan Duke, Sawyer Matthews, D.J. Price, Adam Sanderson, and Meagan Amber Walters competed in the National American Society of Agronomy Soil Judging Contest hosted by Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, CA. Twenty-six teams competed in this contest. We also congratulate our Graduates of the team, which include: Will Chapman, Logan Duke, and Kelly Eicher. During Fall 2018 semester, the Soil Fertility Class toured Phil Needham Agriculture Technology, Loveland Research Farm, Nutrien Ag and Waters Agricultural Laboratory in Owensboro. We appreciate all the support from our local Agricultural Industries and the time they take out of their busy schedules to provide tours and assist our students.

Congratulations to the 2019 winner of the Outstanding Agronomy Student Meagan Amber Walters, a Senior from Bonnieville, KY. Meagan is President of the WKU Agronomy Club and has been a departmental Agriculture Ambassador and head ASSET Counselor for the past 2 years.

We welcome Mike Saxton as our newest staff member; Mike assumed the role of Crops Technician on April 1, 2019. Mike is a two time WKU graduate and comes to us with several years of agronomic experience including roles with the local Southern States Cooperative and, more recently, Syngenta Seeds. Mike will serve a variety of roles including oversight of all field and forage crops at the AREC, coordination with participating industries to facilitate small-plot and large scale crops research, and assisting faculty with agronomic and/or precision agriculture demonstrations/educational sessions.

## **Research**

Drs. Paul Woosley and Todd Willian continue to conduct research on industrial hemp. Our sixth year of hemp research will include field trials that investigate the influence of various herbicide active ingredients on several hemp cultivars. Agronomy faculty are also continuing an experiment examining long-term effects (>10 years) of poultry litter and tillage vs. no-till effects on soil used for corn/soybean production. Dr. Woosley presented hemp research results at the Kentucky Hemp Industries Conference held on February 28<sup>th</sup> at the L.D. Brown Exposition Center.

## **USDA- WKU Agriculture Cooperative Research**

Drs. Paul Woosley, Annesly Netthisinghe, Becky Gilfillen, and Ms. Naomi Rowland (WKU Biology) continue a research project to investigate how *Clostridium botulinum* from applied poultry litter affects quality of alfalfa haylage. In addition, this research examines forage yield and quality of manure based alfalfa production.



Submitted by: Drs. Gilfillen and Willian

**Hemp research plot at WKU  
AREC – summer 2019**



The Agricultural Education program has had another exciting year. The WKU AgEd program has had many students involved in regional and state activities throughout the year. Mattie Minks served as a state FFA officer. Adam Sanderson, Anna Winchell, and Erin Masterson, worked as camp counselors at the Kentucky FFA Leadership Training Center. Zayne Priddy taught at FFA Camp and Susan Spinks, Harley Hawkins, Bradon Burks, and Zayne Priddy served as ASSET Counselors.

One of the many highlights from the year was to participate in the pre-service learning session at the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana in October. Four WKU Agricultural Education students were charged to work through STEM curriculum labs and learn how to evaluate their future students in a science based environment. They were also available to examine the many educational vendors and gather contacts for acquiring teaching materials, supplies and textbooks as they continue to prepare for their teaching career.

Students also participated in the National TEACH AG day by participating in activities on campus. Students enrolled in the live web cast from NAAE and also promoted the day by handing out free popsicles to students in front of EST to promote Agricultural Education.

Another highlight of the year was the spring exchange trip with Purdue University. WKU AgEd students were invited to visit the Purdue campus, exchange ideas on teaching, and tour an indoor shrimp facility. Students were allowed to discuss current topics in AgEd and compare programs at each school, and discuss teaching practices they will use in the future. They also stopped at the Indiana FFA Leadership Center.

The final event for the school year was the AES banquet that was held in May and top individuals were rewarded for their efforts for the academic year. Josh Mitcham, Director of the Kentucky FFA Leadership and Training Center, was the keynote for the event. Leadership awards were presented to freshman, sophomores, juniors, and seniors and the senior future teachers were recognized as well. Award recipients were Grace Clark, Mattie Mink, Catherine Wilson & Harley Hawkins, and Sabrina Stephenson, Wes Estes, Tori Carter, Erin Masterson. Wes Estes, Sabrina Stephenson, Erin Masterson, and Tori Carter were our graduating teachers for Spring 2019. Sabrina Stephenson and Wes Estes received the Ogden College Agricultural Education Award. Aaron Brooks received the Rising Sun Award and Arlee Blaker received the Crystal Eagle Award. The honorary award recipients for 2019 were Harvey and Lynn Hawkins from Edmonton, KY.

The Agricultural Education Society has also started a scholarship for Agricultural Education students. It cannot be awarded until we meet the \$10,000 minimum. The pullover and vest sales each year are being used to meet our goal. Contact any AES member for more information about assisting in the development of this fund.

The Department had four student teachers in the Spring of 2019. Sabrina Stephenson, Tori Carter, Erin Masterson and Wes Estes. All four successfully completed their student teaching semester and will be outstanding Agricultural teachers. Loren Gross and Erica May completed their MS in Agriculture with an emphasis in Agricultural Education. Loren was admitted to the Texas Tech University Doctorate Program and will be start his studies this Fall.

If you know of any student that would like to be an Agricultural Teacher, please forward their information to Dr. Kingery so he may invite them to campus for day visit. For further correspondence please contact Dr. Kingery at [thom.as.kingery@wku.edu](mailto:thom.as.kingery@wku.edu) or 270-745-5966



Submitted by: Thomas Kingery



Dr. Thomas Kingery of Bowling Green was awarded the Honorary State FFA Degree at a special ceremony during the 90<sup>th</sup> State FFA Convention in Lexington. The Honorary Degree is awarded to adults who have made a significant contribution to the state association. Past recipients of the award have included several Kentucky Governors, various leaders in agriculture and education, and numerous individuals who have provided service to the organization over the course of multiple years.

Dr. Kingery serves as teacher educator at Western Kentucky University. During his tenure he has helped prepare individuals for careers in Agricultural Education. He has also coordinated regional and state contests for FFA members and led the Western Kentucky University FFA Field Day. According to State FFA Advisor Brandon K. Davis, "We appreciate Dr. Kingery's service to the Agricultural Education profession and his efforts to provide opportunities for Kentucky FFA members across the state."

Kentucky FFA is an organization of nearly 14,000 middle and high school students enrolled in Agricultural Education courses. The organization currently has 155 chapters in 115 counties. Nationally, FFA has over 630,000 members in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The FFA mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education.



Photo Caption: The 2019 Kentucky Honorary State FFA Degree recipients are Dr. Bill Moody, Terry Shartzter, Danny Lay, Drew Graham, Dr. Thomas Kingery, Adam Hinton and Nick Dent (left to right).

## 2018-2019 *Agricultural Ambassadors*

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**Bradon Burks**

Agriculture Education  
Glasgow, KY



**Madi Giesler**

Agriculture Business  
Ferdinand, IN



**Julia McClain**

Animal Science  
Georgetown, KY



**Alexandra Palkovic**

Animal Science  
Thousand Oaks, CA



**Adam Sanderson**

Agriculture Education  
Lawrenceburg, KY



**Carlie Seymour**

Horticulture  
Upton, KY



**Meagan Walters**

Agronomy-Plant Science  
Bonnieville, KY



**Catherine Wilson**

Agriculture Education  
Elkton, KY

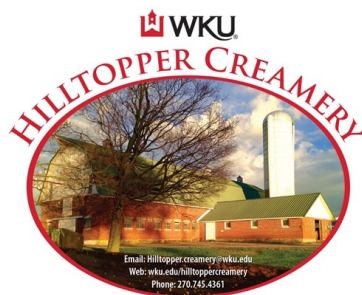


**2018-2019  
Agriculture Ambassadors**



# Hilltopper Creamery—Cheese

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## The Creamery's Cotton Year

Traditions tell us that the second anniversary is often celebrated by exchanging gifts of cotton. For proper celebration, Hilltopper Creamery now carries cotton t-shirts that are available for purchase. We also have a new type of cheese: Creamy Gouda! Our cheese and queso dips are made by WKU students enrolled in the AGRI 369 Cheese Processing course. All of us are having a lot of fun, and students are learning the art and science of making a variety of cheeses.

All products are available at our retail store in the Charles L. Taylor Agricultural Center on the WKU farm Tuesday – Friday 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM. We are also a vendor at the SoKY Marketplace on Saturdays from 8:00 AM – 1:00 PM. Additionally, you can shop our online store by going to our website [www.wku.edu/hilltoppercreamery](http://www.wku.edu/hilltoppercreamery) and clicking on “Shop Online”. Products can only be shipped from November 1<sup>st</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup>. We can ship to you, your friends, and relatives. If you wish, we can also enclose a personalized card! Just be sure to give us their name and shipping address. If there are any questions, please contact us at 270-745-4361 or by email at [hilltoppercreamery@wku.edu](mailto:hilltoppercreamery@wku.edu).

A great big THANK YOU goes out to everyone who has purchased our cheese during the last year. We hope you enjoyed it.

The Hilltopper Creamery staff



Submitted by: Gary Beu

# ASSET Conference

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Every year the Agriculture Department hosts a 5-day leadership program called ASSET. It stands for Agriculture Student Striving for Effective Tomorrows. The Agriculture Department selects a group of high school students who have completed their junior year of high school. These students excel in academics, extra- curricular activities and are leaders in their local community.

This year the Agriculture Department hosted 10 high school students interested in pursuing a degree in agriculture. Students experienced what it was like to live on campus, watch research being conducted on the Agriculture Research and Education Center and interacted with professors, students, professionals, and alumni in their field of interest.

The Agriculture Department would like to thank our sponsors **Champion Pet Foods, FMC, L.D. Brown Agricultural Exposition Center, clubs and organizations within the department.** After interacting with these students the Agriculture Department is excited and confident the future of agriculture looks bright.

ASSET Counselors included **Meagan Walters** (Head Counselor), **Alex Palkovic**, **Bradon Burks**, **Harley Hawkins**, **Zayne Priddy**, **Susan Spinks**.

ASSET participants included: **Jaycie Barger**, Guston, KY ; **Olivia Biggs**, Garfield, Ky; **Victoria Clan**, Elizabethtown, KY; **Chesney Flynn**, Hickory, KY; **Joshua Gammon**, Harrodsburg, KY; **McKenzie Gregory**, Monticello, KY; **Hannah Priddy**, Clarkson, KY; **Landon Rakes**, Lebanon, KY; **Dillon Short**, Glasgow, KY; **Claire Thomas**, Elizabethtown, KY



*If you have a high school junior or know of one that might be interested, please contact the Agriculture Department ([agriculture@wku.edu](mailto:agriculture@wku.edu) [www.wku.edu/agriculture](http://www.wku.edu/agriculture)) and we will make sure that the student receives an application.*





# Agriculture Business

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Message from Bethany Shive:

Recently I have been named a WKU Spirit Master, an honor I am very excited and humbled to have received. This is my second year at WKU and I will be graduating next May with a major in Agriculture, concentration in Agricultural Business and a minor in Business Administration. My future career plans include being a real estate and rural appraiser.

My involvement within the university expands to the Greek community as well as I am currently serving at the Sigma Alpha chapter President, and am the first Spirit Master to be affiliated with this Greek organization. While being an ambassador for WKU, I can't wait to shed that light on our agricultural program as well. This is an opportunity of a lifetime and am anxious to see where it takes me. I am so grateful for a sustained advisement and encouragement from Dr. Gumirakiza throughout my learning experience here at WKU. He has inspired me in many ways.

Best Wishes and Go Tops!!



Bethany Christine Shive

Drs. Gumirakiza and Stone in partnership are leading an innovative and comprehensive *partnership* between WKU, Need More Acres Farm, the Foundation for Connecting Communities, and three farmers markets: Southern Kentucky Farmers' Market, Community Farmers' Market, and Bowling Green Farmers' Market. The primary purpose for their project is to develop a FRESH (Farm Regionally/Locally, and Engage Supportive Households) App and expand direct producer-to- consumer market opportunities for locally-grown fresh produce. Specific goals are to: (i) develop the FRESH App to modernize and expand marketing strategies in this digital/Internet age, (ii) provide training and technical assistance to local agricultural producers, (iii) increase awareness, access, and consumption of locally grown agricultural products among community members including minority groups and low-income households, and (iv) make farmers' markets more family-friendly and convenient for social interactions as recommended by several studies as consumer-attractive. The App is expected to be available sometime during summer 2019. This is a half-million 3-year project funded by the USDA. The project included funding for a graduate student Autumn Milliner who is currently doing research on factors influencing nonattendance at the farmers' markets."

Submitted by Dominique Gumirakiza



Mike Saxton, Crop Tech

The Agriculture Research and Education Center had a successful year. WKU Ag. Alumni, Mike Saxton, accepted a position with AREC and began in April. He serves as AREC's Crop Technician and is responsible for crop production at AREC and coordinating associated agronomic research. Mike has over 15 years of industry experience. This year, AREC is cooperating with nine different agronomic companies and approximately 80% of the corn and soybean acreage is comprised of research plots. We have a record number of plot signs at AREC. Additionally, AREC is expecting record yields in corn and soybeans due to cooperative weather this year. Mike takes over the crop responsibilities from Farm Manager Robert Jaynes who retired this past fall. We would like to thank Mr. Jaynes for his 13 years of service to AREC.

In other agronomic related news, AREC established almost 20 acres of novel endophyte tall fescue this past fall. Three different cultivars were established which included WKU Distinguished Alumni, Garry Lacefield's namesake and an experimental cultivar from UK's breeding program. We look forward in having AREC's beef cattle and horses grazing the fescue this fall. We were also able to update our hay equipment this year with purchases of a new mow/conditioner cutter and v-rake.

Adam Blessinger is still doing a great job managing the dairy. Utilizing sexed semen coupled with the purchase of lactating cows from another dairy is helping us reach our goal of 50 milking cows. Once our replacement heifers are bred and calve, our goal should be reached next year. Additionally, we were able to upgrade the dairy's skid steer and Gator this year.

Jonathan West left AREC this summer to take a job with Farm Credit Services. AREC would like to wish him well in his new endeavors. We hope to have a new Livestock Technician on staff by the time you arrive for Homecoming this October. We currently have \$60,000 encumbered to upgrade livestock handling equipment at the Livestock Teaching Pavilion. Additionally, \$18,000 has been encumbered to make repairs to the Live Animal Evaluation Complex. A stack pack was added to this facility in December. Prior to Jonathan leaving, he was able to get our beef herd in the Young Sire program with Select Sires. This program provides donated semen from Select Sires on unproven bulls to WKU. In return, WKU provides Select Sires data they need to help prove new bulls.

The Equine unit has been active in replacing aged horses with younger horses that can be utilized by students in equitation classes. Beverly Gartland has been working with Dr. Gill in this area. Some horses have been donated, others purchased. Additionally, Bates Saddle Company held an event at the Equine Unit this past summer. Bates has been extremely generous in donating saddles to the Equine program. Additionally, a new truck has been purchased for AREC to help pull horse and cattle trailers.

Gary Beu continues to expand cheese production at Hilltopper Creamery. New additions include queso dips which are very popular. Gary was able to attend a cheese conference at Penn State University this past summer to learn the latest techniques in cheese production. Our cheese can still be purchased at the farm store located in the Taylor Center, the farmer's market downtown, online, and Chaney's Dairy Barn.

Joey Reynolds worked in conjunction with Beth Gafford of WKU's Recycling and Surplus to obtain a \$283,000 grant from the state to help the Compost Unit to continue its effort in composting food scraps from campus. Food scraps are ranked #1 in tonnage for items disposed in landfills. The Compost Unit will compost over 300,000 pounds of discarded food scraps from campus this year. A significant portion of this grant will go to purchase a new loader and installation of a black top pad at the Compost Unit.

Lindsay Meeks continues to serve as Ag. Expo Director. Over 40,000 individuals entered the L.D. Brown Agricultural Exposition Center this past year. This number does not include students. After several years of remaining in the red, the Ag Expo moved out of debt into the black. We commend Lindsay for her efforts in making this happen. Events at the Ag Expo range from livestock shows and a rodeo to a dog agility show and circus. The Ag Expo continues to be a focal point and meeting place for the public at AREC.

The Winchel Farm that was donated to the Department last year was leased out to WKU Ag. Alumni Brandon Henning. Mr. Henning will be row cropping approximately 90 acres of the farm. He attended WKU on a Beulah Winchel scholarship. How fitting that he be awarded the lease of the farm. Proceeds from the lease will go towards supporting students within our department.

Finally, Debbie Gabbard has been helping keep the 812 acres here in Bowling Green and 135 acre Winchel Farm just north of Leitchfield straight by managing accounts associated to AREC. AREC successes are a result of her and the rest of AREC's staff mentioned above. Their efforts help make AREC one of the best student agriculture laboratories in the country.

## WKU Equine News

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Beverly won 2nd place with her paper submission to an American Academy Of Veterinary Nutrition Annual Equine Nutrition Blog Competition sponsored by Buckeye Nutrition. Her paper is titled, "How Body Condition Can Impact Saddle Fit."

Congratulations Beverly!!



Submitted by: Jennifer Gill

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## WKU Equine News

The Equine Unit has acquired a new horse, named Frankie, His previous owner was Kristen Brennan, who is a research project manager for Alltec in Lexington. He is a Novice level 3 day eventing horse from Lexington, Kentucky and the first thoroughbred horse to be housed at the farm. Below are some pictures of Frankie doing what he loves to do which is jumping. Frankie is making many friends at the equine unit because of his calm and cool personality.



Mr. Jim Koostra (pictured left) has donated \$100,000 in equine dental care to WKU. This dental care has been instrumental in the humane care of the horses.

Thank you Mr. Koostra!!

Submitted by: Jennifer Gill



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We hope that you have enjoyed our Newsletter this year. Please make a gift today to support the Department of Agriculture. Your financial support will help with student learning opportunities outside of the classroom.

Please make checks payable to the "WKU Foundation"

Donations can be mailed to:

Department of Agriculture  
Western Kentucky University  
1906 College Heights Blvd #41066  
Bowling Green, KY 42101  
Or Visit:

[www.wku.edu/makeagift](http://www.wku.edu/makeagift)

Under Designations type Agriculture

*Save the Date  
for  
Alumni Gathering*

**Schedule TBA  
Saturday, October 19, 2019  
10:00 am—12:30 pm**

WKU Football Kickoff— TBA

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