

“While we will miss the Dairy very much, we are excited about this Center and how it will take the education of our students to the next level,” says Katherine Koudele, chair, Department of Sustainable Agriculture. “At the Center they will develop the skills needed in their future careers and put into practice what they have learned in the classroom.”

Ideas for the Agriculture Education Center were benchmarked with similar schools that have successfully transitioned from an industry to a wholly educational facility. The finished site is proposed to eventually include seeded, fenced pastures for rotational grazing; small animal and calf barns; greenhouses; a classroom; an Animal Science Complex to house sheep, goats, llamas/alpacas, yearling cattle, horses and miniature horses; an indoor riding ring; an outdoor horse arena; an outdoor horticultural garden production space; a growing out pond for fingerling fish; and recreational paths along the St. Joseph River and around the Center.

The Center would enable students to have immersive experiences in raising and caring for animals and plants in conjunction with class requirements, research and senior projects. It would also allow the Department of Sustainable Agriculture to partner with other departments on campus for therapy programs, preparation for national and international mission service, and collaborative research and teaching.

Connections would be facilitated with the local community, as well. Teachers in K–12 classrooms could bring their students to the Center for outside-the-classroom scientific learning experiences.

Completion of the Agriculture Education Center is projected in five phases over the course of five or more years as funds become available. The first educational phase has been approved to begin in April 2019, with educational operations at the Center starting in September.

“We are excited for the educational opportunities the Center will bring but also for the chance to preserve the agricultural legacy of Andrews,” says Koudele. “We have been a part of our county’s agricultural community for 118 years, and it is an honor to carry on the tradition of our founders.”

For more information or to contribute to the project, visit andrews.edu/agriculture.