The American Society of Animal Science (ASAS) introduced Early Career Achievement Awards in 2007 to recognize the achievement of outstanding young scholars working toward the mission of ASAS, namely to, “foster the discovery, sharing, and application of scientific knowledge concerning the responsible use of animals to enhance human life and well-being.” In the fifth year (2011) of this award, 2 recipients were selected, and in the sixth year (2012) of this award, 3 recipients were selected from a competitive review of candidates nominated by current ASAS members. Candidates are not required to be ASAS members, and there are no restrictions on country of residence, but nominees must have completed their most recent degree within 10 yr of the time of nomination. Nominations are comprised of a brief biography, summary of scholarly work, and letters of support from at least 2 ASAS members. Collectively, this material must demonstrate that the achievements of the nominee serve the mission of ASAS.

Successful recipients are required to contribute a presentation at the Joint Annual Meeting, submit an abstract for that presentation, and submit a manuscript highlighting the presented material. In return, they receive a travel allowance, complimentary registration at the meeting, and 2-yr membership in ASAS, sponsored by the ASAS Foundation. Finally, recipients become members of the award committee in the following year, and participate in the challenging task of identifying their successors.

The nominees represented the diversity enjoyed by the ASAS membership pool in terms of countries of origin, discipline or species interests, public or private sector employment, job responsibilities in terms of teaching, research and extension, and gender. There was much less diversity in the level of achievement of these nominees; all the candidates were worthy of recognition for performance beyond the level of their average peers, whether in terms of research grants and peer-reviewed publications, leadership in their disciplines, graduate and undergraduate teaching, or extension activities. Most candidates did many of these activities, regardless of the nature of their appointment.

The 2011 Early Career Achievement Awards were presented to Drs. Anna K. Johnson and Kimberly Vonnahme. The 2012 Early Career Achievement Awards were presented to Drs. Robert Rhoads, Jr., Paul Beck, and Kelly Swanson. Dr. Vonnahme presented at Joint Annual Meeting (JAM) in 2011 in New Orleans. Dr. Johnson’s 2011 awardees’ presentation, along with the presentations by the three 2012 awardees were given at the JAM in 2012 in Phoenix. For purposes of continuity, the papers from 2011 awardees are being published concurrent with the papers of the 2012 awardees in a single issue of Journal of Animal Science.

Dr. Anna K. Johnson is an Associate Professor at Iowa State University in the Department of Animal Science. She received BS and MS degrees in the United Kingdom from the University of Reading and the University of Edinburgh, respectively. Johnson earned her doctoral degree in animal welfare from...