

*"Who pooped in the water?"* is a question usually reserved for public pools or stand-up comedy. At the AAHL, Lauren Brooks is testing the rate at which agricultural fecal contamination is broken down by microbes in water bodies like rivers and ponds.

Lauren is devoting a great deal of her time and energy studying a problem that is much more serious and widespread than some may believe. Her research originally stemmed from a concern that there was not always an effective way to differentiate between sources of fecal contamination.

Flow through and recirculating systems at the AAHL allow Lauren to monitor both the rate of degradation of agricultural fecal input in a water body and the microbial communities responsible for that breakdown. Lauren is using the data to develop a ratio model which she hopes will be useful for allocation of pollutant sources leading to targeted pollution mitigation efforts.



*Lauren monitors the flow rates and takes samples for DNA analysis of the microbes*