

ASRED State Report – Alabama – Fall 2023

Strategic Plan

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES) 2022 – 2026 Strategic Plan was developed to serve as a road map and establish the priorities for the organization. Out of 31 overall strategies, the following 16 are in various stages of implementation within the first 12-months of the plan period.

Action Priority	Strategies being Implemented
Enhanced Educational Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess Agriculture, Forestry, and Natural Resources; Alabama 4-H; Human Sciences; and Federal Nutrition program areas for clarity in program direction, human resource needs, employee success, and leverage of college and university strengths. • Create a Community Development program area that leverages university strengths to help foster sustainable communities. • Enhanced Educational Capacity: Design an emergency and crisis response educational initiative to proactively prepare citizens and Extension personnel for weather and crisis events. • Enhanced Educational Capacity: Expand the Alabama Extension internship program to connect and orient college students with rewarding career opportunities.
Exceptional & Engaged Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer in-service training opportunities focused on building the customer service, knowledge, and skill capacity of all Extension personnel. • Enhance the onboarding and mentoring experience for new hires to ensure early career success.
Stewardship of Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess and adjust organizational structure to improve efficiency and to build a culture that reinforces mutual accountability, community, and organizational values. • Improve organizational capacity to secure extramural funding through grants, contracts, and appropriate use of fees.
Strategic Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position Alabama Extension as an efficiently delivered, competitive source of science-based information in the marketplace of ideas to increase awareness, enhance our reputation, and boost engagement with all stakeholders. • Develop a culture of marketing and enhanced customer service to ensure those promoting Extension are equipped with needed tools and consistent information. • Communicate efficiently through new media and digital platforms, including social media, to reach new audiences. • Improve communication with both internal and external audiences to ensure clear messaging and understanding of Extension’s purpose and goals.
Innovative Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a Customer Relationship Management system as an organizational resource for managing client and stakeholder data, enhancing distributed marketing, and improving efficiencies in event management and reporting. • Ensure that employees are knowledgeable about responsibilities and risks related to cybersecurity and data security.
Demonstrated Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize U.S. Census and Census of Agriculture data to make informed decisions in programmatic efforts, staffing, volunteerism, and training.

Seven Assistant Directors for Field Operations

Seven Assistant Directors for Field Operations will begin their duties on October 1. Each will be assigned to one of seven regions to provide oversight and leadership of County Extension Coordinators and shared oversight and leadership of Regional Extension Agents. This will increase the level of engagement between employees and supervisors. It is essential for enhancing organizational accountability and strengthening programmatic delivery as outlined in our strategic plan.

Transition to Extension Field Specialists

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES) transitioned from a county-based staffing model to a regional-based staffing model 20 years ago. Primary drivers of this transition were 1) budget constraints necessitating fewer human resources and 2) the need to move from general knowledge Agriculture, Home Economics, or 4-H County Agents to more focused Regional Extension Agents with specific subject-matter expertise in Animal Science, Agronomy, Human Nutrition, and Youth Development for example. It took time to make this transition. Nevertheless, Regional Extension Agents, in their respective subject-matter focus, have functioned as primary Extension educators delivering priority programs within their respective geographic regions of assignment. Looking back over the past 20 years, this transition was instrumental in meeting the needs of a better educated and more sophisticated clientele.

ACES is a dynamic and changing organization. As such, the Regional Extension Agent position has continued to evolve, especially as a new generation of employees have brought greater academic training and technical skills to the role. Today's Regional Extension Agent provides educational leadership and technical competence, on par with industry professionals, to establish credibility and trust as they represent University strengths across the state. They focus on helping Alabamians work together, create a vision, and make a difference through initiatives that address the complex issues and opportunities vital to Alabama's future.

In today's job market where early to mid-career professionals are in high demand, ACES is finding it increasingly challenging to hire and retain non-tenure track Regional Extension Agents with master's degrees in technical areas. We have established a non-tenure track career-ladder titled Extension Field Specialist. This position title reflects the evolution of the Regional Extension Agent position over the last 20 years and creates a professional title and pay scale within Extension to better compete with industry.

The plan is to transition qualified Regional Extension Agents to this position on January 1. We will retain the Regional Extension Agent career ladder and pay scale as an entry position for those working on a technical master's degree, those without a technical master's degree, or those employees who function solely as educators.

State Appropriation

The Alabama State Legislature approved an FY2024 increase of 5.75% for Auburn University Extension. A merit pool of 3% has been authorized by the University for FY2024 salary increases.

Overall

We were able to include a base salary program as well as a COLA and merit-based pay program for FY24.

We are pleased to welcome Dr. Nina Roofe as our new Assistant Vice President – Family and Consumer Sciences. Her start date will be September 25, 2023.

In addition, my director of stakeholder relations position is vacant. We are currently evaluating the needs for that office at the Division level.

We are very excited to host a ribbon cutting ceremony on our new county office at the Jackson County Extension Center which is not fully open.

4-H and Youth Development

4-H Youth Development is the most fundamental community development approach in Extension. Youth that engage in Arkansas 4-H develop critical life skills needed for long term success. At the county level more than 11,136 youth engage in a year-long experience in more than 600 clubs statewide. Adult volunteers gave more than 56,509 hours in service of 4-H. That is a value of more than \$1.4 million dollars of effort.

Statewide, youth engaged in 14,956 different educational opportunities. They developed career skills through state leadership events, state and national competitive events, and camping experiences. We awarded 33 graduating seniors more than \$105,000 in scholarships to help further their career success.

The Vines 4-H Center provides Arkansas youth with unique opportunities to develop life skills such as self-motivation, stress management, cooperation, social skills, and self-responsibility. It also helps connect youth to natural resources and away from technology. More than 1,000 youth engaged at the Center this year in educational opportunities.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Six field days were held at different division research facilities. Extension faculty played a prominent role on the program and county staff worked on getting producers to attend.

Loblolly pine decline is found across Arkansas. Extension personnel, the dean of the UAM College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Natural Resources, Arkansas Department of Agriculture, and the Arkansas Forestry Association. Diseases, weather, herbicides, and other factors are being considered. The Arkansas Department of Agriculture developed a web page to report dead pines by location and their personnel are reporting other locations with more detailed information being collected. It is hoped that an AI routine could be developed to help discover commonality of the spots showing decline. Lab samples are inconclusive for herbicides but show positive for the fungal agent for brown leaf spot.

Weed scientists held weed identification and herbicide injury training for county agents at the Jackson County Extension Center that was extremely well attended. These plots are established each year for this specific purpose. This training is essential for young county agents but is popular with the older agents too. Extension Educators who work with new agents make sure the newest agents attend and are mentored through the course. Reviews of the program by the attendees indicate the quality of the training.

Arkansas Extension has reinvigorated the EDEN program. A committee was commissioned, and the first meeting was held. Dr. Jeremy Ross is the chair of the committee.

Community, Professional, and Economic Development

CPED serves Extension internal and external functions. Internally focused support includes core professional development training for employees, coordination of federal accountability report

development and submission, management, and user support of online training for employees and the public, management of the Arkansas Information Management System (AIMS), strategic planning and facilitation, and program planning and evaluation support. Externally focused programs include leadership development; public issues education; local government; business development and support; workforce development; asset-based community and economic development; and agricultural awareness.

We restructured two vacant faculty positions and created two new program associate positions to better meet staff and organizational needs. Dr. Jeantyl Norze was hired as our new Associate Professor-Organizational, Accountability and Evaluation and Dr. Steve Siegelin as our new Associate Professor-Professional Development. The department is also coordinating the development of a new 5-year strategic plan for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture.

Faculty have received several grants in recent months. Dr. Julie Robinson received funding from NIFA to launch the Experiential Scholars Program (ESP) To Promote And Develop Extension Educators And Specialist program. Dr. Hunter Goodman received an Engage Arkansas AmeriCorps Planning Grant to support digital literacy education and funding from Heartland Forward to conduct digital equity research in support of the State of Arkansas' new broadband plan. Melanie Berman received funding from the Department of Defense for the FY24 Arkansas APEX Accelerator program to serve as a resource for large and small businesses to obtain procurement technical assistance in doing business with local, state, and federal agencies. Dr. Goodman was also just named to the International Association of Community Development Board of Trustees as Regional Trustee for North America and the Caribbean Islands.

County Extension Offices

The challenge in the counties this summer has been hiring qualified applicants into county agent positions. We continue to have agent turnover, and it is becoming more difficult to fill those positions. Several of these positions have been open for an extended period, and we are not getting candidates to apply. The District Directors are doing the best they can to recruit and get people into these positions, but it seems to get harder with each open position.

Counties are finding themselves busier than ever. Arkansas has seen an increase in people moving in from out of state. Many are buying land and not seeing it until they get here. Several of these people want to homestead, and our agents are the local experts that they are coming to. We have seen an increase in agents doing homesteading conferences and workshops. These have been joint efforts between the agriculture agents and the family and consumer science agents.

We come into the fall preparing for state 4-H events and county fairs. The next few months will be busy for agents with fairs and reports.

Family and Consumer Sciences

The Human Development and Family Life team added two new employees. Kayla Machen is a program technician working with early childhood education programs. Sophie Holmes is a program associate working in mental health and farm stress and resilience. Dr. Brittney Schrick conducted Mental Health First Aid training for UA Division of Ag faculty and staff.

The Nutrition Specialist for general nutrition, Christine Sasse, developed a new multi-session curriculum based on the Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay (MIND) Diet. The new MIND Curriculum is a 5-session behavior change program that mixes formal lectures, facilitated discussion, in-class activities, taste tests, and take-home practice "assignments". Research indicates that the MIND Diet can significantly lower the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. County FCS agents are being trained to conduct the program across the state.

Family and Consumer Sciences Educator, Leigh Ann Bullington, was hired in 2022 for the purpose of training new FCS agents. Ten agents recently graduated from new agent training, 17 are currently in training, and 7 FCS positions are open.

The Home Grown and Homemade series of cooking videos promote Arkansas farm products and are used in media campaigns. The project is in partnership with Farm Bureau. The latest video in the series features Arkansas lamb in a Shepherd's Pie recipe.

Extension specialists in FCS and CED partnered with Asset Funders Network to build and expand collaboration across the state. The BankOn project builds financial stability for Arkansans by connecting underbanked consumers with local financial institutions.

Specialists are part of a national workgroup developing a curriculum on household financial management for farm and ranch families. The workgroup is partnering with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to host national listening sessions on the financial needs of farm and ranch families.

The Health Team, led by Dr. Bryan Mader, received grants from both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity (CDC) awarded \$780,000 for Year 1 of the Arkansas High Obesity Project (ArHOP). The current CDC-funded Arkansas Delta Region Obesity Project (ArDROP) concluded its fifth year.

USDA awarded \$95,000 for an eighteen-month grant to expand the Extension Collaborative on Immunization, Teaching, & Engagement (EXCITE) project, including the integration of immunization education into a patient-focused health literacy program in partnership with ARcare, a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), and the largest rural care provider in Arkansas.

University of Florida

- Dr. Sasse appointed SVP Scott Angle to serve as Interim Provost until the permanent position is filled.
- Search for Provost is continuing with expectations of completion in 3 to 6 months.
- UF introduced a new All Funds budget model.
- New Legislations governing DEI.
- New Legislation governing Post Tenure Reviews
- New Legislation governing working with foreign entities.

UF/IFAS (Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences)

- Dr. Rob Gilbert has been appointed interim SVP for UF/IFAS while Dr. Scott Angle serves as the Interim Provost.
- Dr. Ben Sasse completed his first of several Agriculture tours around the state meeting with ag. Stakeholders and faculty.
- UF/IFAS received nearly \$11 million to build a Center for Applied Artificial Intelligence in Agriculture at the Gulf Coast Research and Education Center, which will serve as the hub for statewide efforts to lead a technological revolution in agriculture.
- UF/IFAS received \$6.2 million in the budget to continue and accelerate development of the science that underlies BMPs.
- UF/IFAS received \$3.8 million in recurring funding for workload so that we can meet the increasing needs of 22 million Floridians.
- UF/IFAS Leadership provided policy for use of AI Technology, including ChatGPT.

Administrative/Operations

- The Dean appointed Dr. Saqib Mukhtar to serve as Interim Assistant Director for Extension.
- The Dean appointed Dr. Karla Shelnut as Associate Dean for Extension Engagement. Her responsibilities will be to engage with internal stakeholders across University of Florida and External Stakeholders across the state to expand our offerings and reach.
- Dr. Norma Samuel has been appointed to serve as District Extension Director for the Central District.
- The search committee for the next Extension Associate Dean for Family, Communities and Youth will start interviews September 2023.
- Turnover in counties continues to be a challenge, however, hiring remains strong and open positions have been filled with qualified candidates.
- Extension held a 3-day Symposium for faculty professional development from May 9 – 11, 2023.
- The strategic plan steering committee consisting of 30+ faculty, staff, administrators, and stakeholders met and provided input to begin crafting the next Extension roadmap.
- Extension Professional Associations of Florida will hold a 4-day Conference from August 28-31, 2023, in Daytona Beach, Florida
- UF/IFAS Research and Extension participated in a recent virtual audit of USDA NIFA Capacity Programs.
- Hiring an Assistant/Associate Professor of Artificial Intelligence Extension.
- Developed new policy to govern International Travel and Engagement for Extension Faculty

4-H Youth Development

- More than 1100 participants in 4-H Day at the Capitol in Tallahassee. This is the largest single legislative awareness day in the state of Florida.
- As a result of the 4-H Pathways (funded by ECOP 4-H) university engagement initiative continues to develop new relationships for 4-H across campus. Currently in the works are a pilot middle school leadership training program at the University of Florida's laboratory school- PK Yonge, a high school mock trial program advised by faculty of the UF Law School, and upcoming conversation with UF Enrollment on development of college and career readiness curriculum for K-12 students.
- Florida 4-H is undergoing its strategic planning process, under the umbrella of the UF IFAS Extension Strategic Plan. A gap analysis methodology has been used and top three gaps identified are- 1) organizational alignment, 2) internal and external communication, 3) increasing agent capacity. These efforts will in turn support three may program goals- 1) Enrollment of 300,000 4-H youth, 2) revitalization of our three 4-H residential camps, 3) increased emphasis on workforce development.
- Second year of Community Conversations saw 4-H leadership visiting 6 counties to conduct listening sessions with internal and external stakeholders, and to increase capacity for new partnerships. Results are being coded to continue to inform program direction. The methodology and initial results will be shared at the IAFOR International Conference on Education in Honolulu, Hawaii.
- First year of NIFA AFRI FANE Work Ready grant (\$750,000 over four years) completed with 72 youth participating in year one. The program, co-organized by UF and FAMU, trained youth to earn agricultural industry certifications through Florida Farm Bureau's AEST program: [AEST – Start Here](#)
- Continued success in increasing capacity for Florida 4-H through grants:
 - \$30,000 National 4-H Council grant to provide camp scholarships for immigrant, Seminole tribe, military dependent, and foster care youth.
 - \$337,413.85 in product support and \$25,000 monetary through Apple, Inc. for Florida 4-H STEAM Initiative.
 - 2nd year of Volunteer Florida AmeriCorps grant to support Florida 4-H Camp year-round environmental education programs, \$300,000.
 - \$350,000 for PROSPER project- Opioid prevention family education programs.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

- Spanish Language Materials. **The UF/IFAS Extension Pesticide Information Office** now offers two pesticide license training manuals completely in Spanish. No other state currently offers fully translated training manuals. Additionally, there are three online training modules that are available for CEU credit that have been fully translated for a Spanish audience.
- Extension has begun providing professional development training for **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** personnel. In November 2022, the Invasive Species Council provided training to 30 NRCS personnel on invasive species management. Plans are underway to develop further training on agricultural practices in Florida.
- **UF/IFAS Extension Online Publications for Ag and Natural Resources-** During the last 12-month period, 223 new extension peer reviewed factsheets (EDIS publications) were published with a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) number. 184 of those publications were from Ag and Natural Resources faculty. During this period, the publications Website: [Ask IFAS - Powered by EDIS \(ufl.edu\)](#) had more than 7.8 million visitors.
- Dr. Gretchen Lescord joined UF/IFAS as the new Director of the **Florida LAKEWATCH program**, a 37-year-old program that facilitates citizen participation in the management of Florida lakes, estuaries, rivers, and springs through monthly monitoring activities. In addition, the Florida Legislature has approved a \$2 million dollar line item with funds for the construction of a new LAKEWATCH building.

- **Extension Florida Friendly Landscaping™ (FFL) Neighborhood Recognition program** – this is a new approach to spreading awareness of FFL. Recognition will include required practices, education and community engagement activities, and Implementation of Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Principles within the community. A manual and a toolkit for agents was developed to support this initiative.
- The Green Industries Best Management Practices program is implemented in **select Florida Prisons**. UF/IFAS Extension has provided training to 500 inmates at the Federal Correctional Complex, Coleman (FCC Coleman), a U.S. federal prison. The recidivism rate for those trained in GIBMP is 5.4% compared to the national average of 50%.
- **Manatee County Master Gardener Volunteers** created, maintained, and utilized eight themed demonstration gardens. These gardens educated over 1200 residents last year on **Florida Friendly Landscaping™**. These gardens showcase ways residents can be successful gardeners and save water with QR codes on plants that link to IFAS publications.

Family Nutrition Program (FNP)/Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)

- **FNP and Tice Elementary:** Tice Elementary shined bright this school year in Lee County. A PSE Specialist worked with the site to install a school garden and nutrition educators implemented direct education with a Soccer for Success series. Tice Elementary was also the recipient of a \$4100 donation from “Ding” Darling that included gardening materials and soccer equipment (goal posts, balls, cones, and pinnies) to support sustainability efforts beyond this school year.
- **FNP and Hawthorne Middle/High School:** FNP has developed a strong partnership in nutrition education and gardening in one of the most depressed regions in Alachua County. FNP has taught and worked with all the students (around 500) at the school. Students are learning about and growing herbs, fruits, veggies in raised garden beds. FNP identified the school as a potential site for an edible forest, then partnered with Brite Leaf Citrus Nursery to secure citrus trees to plant near the gardens. The first four trees are doing well; four more will be planted for snacking during the school year. Once established, the trees can last for decades, providing shade, access to fruits, and support learning about horticulture and nutrition. A nutrition educator provides lessons from Cooking Matters for Chefs and Kids and Gardening for Nutrition.
- **Policy, Systems and Environment work:** FNP has been actively participating in the School District of Lee County-Healthy Living Collaboration (SDLC-HLC) providing training, technical assistance, and resources to support the institutionalization of the Farm to School Program since 2021. FNP has supported with crunch events, SGLT and SLM training, a letter of support for the USDA F2S grant, awarded to the district in 2022, and has provided strategic planning consultation to support the development of a garden to cafeteria system. The initiative is looking to diversify Food and Nutrition Services procurement, while enhancing experiential learning opportunities, and food access for students, district staff, and families. The F2S grant allowed the district to install hydroponic systems in ten schools increasing school garden grown produce production. As a result, the use of garden produce for onsite meals and school meals participation has increased. The HLC, FNP and other community stakeholders such as Harry Chapin, the Lee County Department of Health, Lee UF/IFAS Extension, Sprouts, Wells Fargo, Florida Gulf Coast University, Brighter Bites, Lee Health, and The Collaboratory continue partnering to strengthen the F2S system and secure sustainability for years to come. The SDLC Superintendent has expressed his support to creating staff positions to ensure the continuity of the F2S program in the district. The HLC has also opened the venues for direct education recruitment and engagement in YUM nutrition education classes. For this school year, FNP and the HLC will continue partnering to facilitate crunch events in Oct/Nov, a training in Aug, and technical assistance to cafeteria staff to promote school garden grown produce using FNP provided materials and SLM strategies.

- **USDA AFRI:** The EFNEP PI is serving as a co-PI for a multistate USDA AFRI project titled “A Cost Benefit Analysis of EFNEP Utilizing Biomarkers of Chronic Disease Risk.”
- **R4 Technologies:** The SNAP-Ed PI has developed a relationship with r4 technologies – an AI/big data company that has developed a “priceline for food” technology. R4 has asked the SNAP-Ed PI to partner with them and develop a nutrition education component of this technology, which uses big data to predict the shopping habits of SNAP recipients then identifies growers with food that would otherwise have been wasted and has it distributed to the nearest retailer. The SNAP recipient then gets a coupon for this food. SNAP-Ed is in the process of getting approval to fund a pilot with r4 to deliver this technology in a Florida county with the nutrition education piece.
- **UF College of Education Lastinger Center New Worlds Reading Initiative:** The SNAP-Ed PI is serving as a co-PI for a five-year grant to recruit children not yet reading at grade level into a statewide literacy program. This will include providing nutrition books as well as creating a curriculum for families to teach literacy using nutrition concepts.

Family and Consumer Sciences

- Interviews for Associate Dean for Extension and Professor of Youth, Families, and Communities forthcoming
- Dr. LaToya O’Neal appointed Health Extension State Program Leader.
- University of Florida IFAS Extension, in partnership with University of Tennessee as the lead and the Southern Region) received approval from the USDA for a no cost extension for fiscal year 9/1/23-8/31/24. A Bridge grant is also pending. This funding will allow continuation of work to promote mental health and wellness in farming communities and to address the underlying causes of stress through our SAgE (Southern Agriculture Extension) Network.
- Received \$40,000 in funding from Bank of America.
- First Time Home Buyer Virtual UF/IFAS Extension offered 49 homebuyer sessions to 3103 students, along with 7 Spanish only classes. 98% of participants reported an increase in understanding of housing goals, creating a budget, understanding knowing debt-to-income ratios, types of mortgages and assistance available.
- Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) was provided to over 175 Floridians in 2023 bringing \$191,000 back into the community. Clients who utilized Extension’s VITA services saved an average of \$350.00 each for a total of \$65,000 in tax preparation fees.
- EDEN/Extension Disaster Education received both rapid-response grant from the USDA-NIFA following the Hurricane Ian to assess mental health impacts, and the EDEN national to assess disaster research in Extension past, present, and future. The team is working with IFAS Communication to update documents “crunch” of hurricane season 2023.
- A new *Food Systems Program* & Public and Private partnership was implemented. In 2022-2023, 19 Extension agents in 7 counties implemented systems-based Extension programs educating more than 300 Florida residents. Funding (\$11,150) in a public private partnership was received to support the development of a new local food, health and wellness Extension program.
- Food manager certification program (active in 15 counties) bounced back after the Covid with 150 participants in 2022. The program enables FCS agents to obtain professional level credential to teach food safety for selected commercial food operations.

Health Extension

- Dr. LaToya O’Neal was appointed State Program Leader for Health Extension.
- The **UF IFAS Extension and UF Health Rural Telehealth Initiative** began seeing patients with type 2 diabetes at four County Extension offices. Patients were seen as part of a pilot study that aimed to examine patient satisfaction and systems level factors associated with implementation of telemedicine kiosks through county extension. Publications and reports of study findings will be forthcoming.

- The **Florida VIP (Vaccinate, Immunize, Protect) for Healthy Communities Program**, a collaborative program with Florida A&M University Extension, continued to provide research-based education to Floridians in order to increase knowledge of vaccine preventable illnesses and increase access to vaccines among medically vulnerable adults. The program was implemented in nine counties. As a result, over 3,500 Floridians were engaged through community outreach and health education programs, over 70,000 Floridians were reached through media campaigns, and partnerships were developed and/or expanded with over 60 community-serving organizations.
- **UF IFAS Health Extension Program** has continued its collaboration with the **University of Florida Clinical and Translational Science Institute and UF Health Cancer Center** to provide health outreach, health screenings, vaccine access, farmworker sun and pesticide safety, and telehealth care in rural communities.

Community Resource Development

- *Community Voices, Informed Choices (CIVIC)* is piloting its new Food Security issue guide. This guide brings community members together to deliberate solutions to food security issues that plague our communities. These discussions will hopefully identify actions that communities can take to address this issue. An issue guide on climate change is being developed and will be piloted later this year.
- The *Strengthening Your Facilitation Skills* program has trained over 40 extension professionals and 35 community members. This program teaches participants how to facilitate meetings and groups to help them achieve their goals more efficiently.
- Florida Community Development uses *Ripple Effects Mapping (REM)* to evaluate the long-term impacts of programs such as the Master Gardener Volunteers, food policy councils, farm-to-school programs, and Best Management Practices working groups. This evaluation method is useful for identifying long-term program outcomes and impacts.
- Community Development partnered with Michigan State University Extension and Purdue University Extension to develop and deliver the *Sustainable Living Series*. This 7-week virtual program teaches participants how to be community advocates for sustainable actions and how to implement sustainable practices in their homes and businesses.
- *Growing Organizational Employee Skills (GOES)* will be piloted in August. This program teaches participants basic soft skills such as time management, prioritization, teamwork, and conflict management.
- *A Beginner's Guide to Grant Writing Workshop* is being developed and will launch in early 2024. This program will target small businesses (e.g., small agricultural producers, entrepreneurs), nonprofit organizations, community organizations, and municipalities.

Sea Grant Extension Program

- UF/IFAS continues to receive funding from Florida Sea Grant including nearly \$3 million specifically for county-based Extension and Education programming during their next 4-year funding cycle.
- Florida Sea Grant Extension Agents have helped support sustainable fisheries with new programs and multi-county efforts by:
 - developing and distributing over 2,000 “scallop sorters” that allow boaters to identify and release juvenile scallops, and track their use, to increase the size of the reproductive stock and fishery
 - distributing over 20,000 “bycatch reduction devices” (BRDs or ‘birds’) to commercial crab trappers to increase the release of turtles
- Florida Sea Grant is leading the development of two new programs:
 - *Florida Friendly Angler Certification Program*, which aims to educate anyone wanting to learn more about sustainable fishing
 - *Florida Friendly Visitor Training*, which aims to reach tourists and temporary residents with natural resource education

- Florida Sea Grant is helping organize three events this fall:
 - WOW (Women of the Water) – Sep 29 – Oct 1, 2023 – Sarasota, FL. A conference for women and gender minorities in aquaculture.
 - Stem-to-Stern – Nov 2, 2023 – Ft. Walton Beach, FL. A symposium for Florida’s state and county-based boating and waterways professionals
 - Regional Coastal Resilience – Dec 5-6, 2023 – Brunswick, GA. A workshop for South Atlantic and Caribbean Sea Grant Programs.



ASRED State Report

Administrative Update:

- Administrative Searches
 - Associate Dean for Research – Harsha Thippareddi named
 - Active Search for Associate Dean for Academic Programs
 - SE District Extension Director – ongoing
 - Center for Urban Ag Director - ongoing

New Extension Specialists Since April:

We have hired 11 new with Extension appointment in ANR, FACS and 4-H, with 3 more in the works.

Budget:

Very interesting developments budgetarily since we met in April! Governor vetoed numerous items and also exercised the option “to disregard” countless other items in the budget approved by the House and Senate. Never seen previously. Since then, the head of the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget has resigned and several new positions were appointed by the Governor. We are just getting instructions on the FY24 Amended budget and FY25 budget development. B Budget units are asked to economize with a 1% redirect, but can ask for up to a 3% enhancement in both FY24A and FY25 budgets.

County Operations:

We have settled at 328 County Extension Agents (Master’s Level) and ~70 Educators (Bachelor’s Level) in county positions. It has been particularly hard to find qualified applicants, especially in the row crop and vegetable Ag positions.

FY24 Starting Salaries:

- County Administrative Assistant and Program Assistant \$34,500
- Educator (BS degree) \$38,000
- Provisional Agent (has to get Master’s w/in 6 yrs) \$44,000
- Agent (Master’s) \$54,000

Our goal is to get to 350 agent positions statewide across the 3 program areas. Currently we need 5 additional ANR, 4 additional 4-H and 15 FACS Agents.

We have searched for an Extension Program Development Specialist to no avail. We have created three committees to take a broad, innovative and strategic look at big areas related to program development:

- Standard Operating Procedures
- Onboarding and Training
- Overall In-Service Training System and Process

We are also planning for a Civil Rights Audit in 2024 and implementing in-county self-assessments and reviews. Thanks to all who have shared info!

Extension Programming:

As we ended the FY23 programming year and submitted our productivity report to the Governor's office. We were excited to be able to report positive trajectory in all of our metric areas over FY22. If we use FY19 as a barometer of our "normal" productivity prior to the pandemic, we have recovered and even surpassed in some areas.

- Face-to-Face contacts – 92% of FY19 (~1.8M)
- Face-to-Face Contacts/Agent equivalent – 85% of FY19
- Continuing Education Units – 127% of FY19 levels indication effective use of innovative delivery methods
- All Contacts (including indirect) – 260% of FY19 (impact of social media and video)
- Diagnostic Services – 110% of FY19
- Educational Contact Hours Overall – 102% of FY19

4-H is the area we have had slower recovery:

- 4-H Youth served – 64% of FY19
- Educational Contact Hours K12 – 66% of FY19
- Summer Camp participation – 92% of FY19 (8640 campers)

Since FY18, our state funding has increased 12% while our county funding has increased 37%.

Programmatic Highlights:

Extension Behavioral Health Team

After Hurricanes Irma and Michael and extremely exacerbated by a pandemic and economic issues, Extension began to see more and more of a need for support of behavioral health and mental well-being. While not a traditional programming area, based on the documented needs of clientele, Extension began to train our employees in new areas and explore ways to resource these new efforts. Topical areas of programming include rural and farmer stress, emergency preparedness, relationships, opioid and substance abuse, vaccine education, depression and mental health concerns and so much more. The majority of these programs have significant grant

funding and are quite diverse. Patterned after our very successful Commodity Teams, the Extension Behavioral Health Team was formed and charged in June. This team includes a variety of experts in their own areas that have come together to develop some synergy around this issue. They will develop a plan of work with short, medium- and long-term outcomes and work with University and external partners as well as local health officials to get these resources to the people and communities who need them.

Crop Disaster Estimates and Mitigation

Changing weather patterns have wreaked havoc with our fruit, vegetable and row crops. Low chill hours coupled with late freeze events plagued the winter and spring and that has been followed by many extreme storms with damaging rain, floods and hail. Accurate and timely damage assessment are essential to federal disaster declarations and farmers are often in the position of absorbing the loss from one crop while trying to resource the planting of the next. Add in record inflation, high input costs and low commodity prices and it can feel like the “perfect storm!” Extension agents and specialists are our boots on the ground and are uniquely positioned to help producers prepare for the storms, assess the damages and figure out how to move forward. In the best of seasons, Georgia is primed for pests and disease, but when crops are compromised by storm damage, it can be even worse. In Extension, we call this reactionary programming and work hard to immediately mobilize to address the more pressing issues. Agents and Specialists work together to put a quantitative value on the damages so that growers can apply for crop insurance, federal disaster payments and other recovery funds.

4-H Marches on Making the Best Better

We are now three years past the pandemic and the 4-H'ers that became eligible for 4-H during that time are now in 7th and 8th grades and are our Middle School 4-H'ers. This group will forever be compromised by the lack of access and experiences during their late elementary school years. Next year this group moves to Senior 4-H and will be in a position to serve as leaders and peer mentors to our younger youth. Georgia 4-H has worked tirelessly to help make this transition easier and to help prepare these youth for the challenges of life. This summer our 4-H Camping numbers are at about 85 - 90% of pre-pandemic participation and our revenue is rebounding as well. We have learned so much about how to reach new and different audiences during the last three years, but it is refreshing to see youth thriving at some of our most tried and true programming opportunities like 4-H Summer Camp!

University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Report August 2023

Significant Activities

Significant Gift to College: We have received a \$100 million gift from Gattton Foundation with \$10 million additional matching state research dollars. They are infusing funding to support our students, research efforts, innovation, and develop a Companion Animal program. Extension programs and professionals will be engaged in the planning and development of projects that support the spirit of the gift. Our college will change its name to Martin-Gattton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment to honor the parents of Mr. Bill Gattton the philanthropist who developed the foundation.

Legislative Update: In the final days of the session, legislators passed a phase out of the Bourbon Barrel Tax. The barrel tax is a property tax on whiskey aging in warehouses. This tax has resulted in \$800,000 annual revenue to multiple county Extension District Boards and roughly \$39 million to local county governments. The phase out is over 20 years to allow local governments to plan for and diversify the tax base to make up for lost revenue. For the counties receiving this tax it has huge ramifications for their budgets.

UK Engage: The results of the [UK Engage Initiative](#) process have resulted in the naming of an Engagement operations [Leadership team](#) to support the overall goals:

- Provide organizational and engagement support;
- Build a campus culture of engagement and engaged scholarship;
- Invest in and incentivize engagement efforts;
- Set priorities for engagement; and
- Support faculty, staff and student engagement.

Our efforts are focused to engage the Extension system with new cross campus partnerships and collaborations to broaden the reach, scope and impact within the state of the University through its land-grant mission.

We have launched a [Land-Grant Engagement website](#) and a Land-Grant Academy to encourage faculty and Extension agents to think strategically about opportunities to work together. The [Land-Grant Engagement Academy](#) is designed for faculty and Extension agents to focus on maximizing community engagement efforts beyond the Martin-Gattton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment. The initial Academy is planned for a two-day session in the Fall to include a day of discussions and a day of tours to Extension offices.

Staffing Changes:

Extension Specialists for Professional Development: There have been many new Extension agent hires due to the vacancies that resulted from the three-year freeze on hiring county staff until our reorganization was complete. To ensure onboarding and mentoring effectiveness we

have designated three positions as *Extension Specialist for Professional Development* at the state level to provide program area support to supplement the Area Extension Directors' (AED) coaching. FCS, ANR/HORT and 4-H program areas each have designated a state level specialist assigned to work with AEDs to provide another layer of support and mentoring focused especially on Gen Zers in the workplace.

Program Highlights:

Behavioral Health Fellow – As a partnership with College of Social Work and the state 4-H office, a new position for Social Work graduate students was implemented at Lake Cumberland 4-H Camp. This position is a staff member at camp to proactively engage with youth, volunteers and agents during the week. The Fellow is focused on the research-based protocols of social emotional behavior intervention early in a young person's life in a recreational space. The Fellow is embedded in the total camp program – helping with camp store, serving as part of the camp staff, engaging with agents, and helping 4-H campers as issues arise. The three other 4-H camp facilities are being served by clinicians through telehealth and on-ground support.

UK Legal Clinic – Identified 11 areas of potential work with Extension across the state to develop partnerships with legal students to build out resource materials, legal support for clientele, legal trainings through Extension programs. Pilot program is in progress with one urban county to synthesize and prioritize students work for Fall semester.

Urban Extension Institute for Urban Fellows is going nationwide! With four successful cohorts in our Kentucky Urban Extension Initiative (UEI) Leadership Fellows program we are offering the program to professionals outside our state. UEI seeks to support the professional and personal development of Extension professionals at the county and state levels by developing urban education and research opportunities that advance the knowledge base of urban Extension. After acceptance into UEI, advisors will work with participants in group zoom meetings and individual coaching sessions to create and develop a locally focused project and support the creation of scholarly work.

Substance use and mental health programs – In the 2019 statewide Extension community assessment a top issue identified was substance use and mental health concerns in Kentucky. As a system we developed an integrated approach to support Extension professionals to raise awareness and facilitate programs and activities in local communities. Multiple partnerships have emerged with UK Healthcare, State Department of Health, USDA, Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Southeast Center for Agricultural Health and Injury Prevention and Human Development Institute. The overall impacts of the collaborative work has been synthesized into a [Substance Abuse Impact Brief](#) to share the short term outcomes of the work.



Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service
LSU AgCenter
Fall ASRED Meeting
August 21 -25, 2023 Orlando, FL

Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (LCES) Updates

Executive Leadership Changes

Dr. Tara Smith was named Director of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service on April 15, 2023, having served as Interim Director from December 15, 2022 to April 15, 2023. Dr. Mike Salassi was named Director of the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station having served as interim since December 1, 2022.

Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR)

- We will be filling an ANR program leader position this fall. This position will be a member of the extension executive leadership team. Following this, we will be seeking applicants (internal) for regional ANR coordinator positions. These positions will work closely with the ANR Program Leader and will coordinate professional development, onboarding and mentoring for ANR agents in each region.
- We are working with and through our regional directors to identify participants to serve on an **advisory committee** to begin discussions evaluating our ANR extension and outreach programs across the state, recognizing we need to evaluate our staffing plans and programmatic needs moving forward.
- Field days have occurred throughout the summer and have successfully demonstrated our research and applied extension programs and engaged our constituency across the state. Fields days feature our major commodities in the state or primary programming areas, including Rice, Sugarcane, Agronomic Crops, Beef and Livestock, Sweet Potato, Horticulture, and Soil Health. Fall field

days scheduled include two Beef and Forage fields days in the Central and Northeast Regions, respectively.

Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS)

- The LSU AgCenter is receiving \$4.02 million from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the five-year [High Obesity Program](#) (HOP). The program funds universities working with local cooperative extensions in mostly rural counties where 40% or more of adults have obesity. The funding will allow the LSU AgCenter Healthy Communities team to address health disparities related to nutrition, physical activity and obesity in 12 rural parishes. The team will be building on successes from the 2018-2023 funding cycle in six parishes (Assumption, East Carroll, Madison, Morehouse, St. Helena and Tensas) as well as expanding efforts into six additional parishes (Catahoula, Claiborne, St. Martin, Terrebonne, Washington and Winn).
- The LSU AgCenter Healthy Communities Model was published in the Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior, 2023. This model is community-participatory model that aims to foster physical activity- and nutrition focused PSE changes that serve the needs of historically marginalized populations. Qualitative results indicated that most impacts were seen in human capital, which was expected, given that the intervention is implemented by FCS agents who focus on providing nutrition and physical activity education.
- Louisiana Healthy Communities Coalition (LHCC) 2023 Annual Summit - Louisiana Health Matters: Factors That Make a Difference. This year's summit focused on the different social determinants of health and how

they impact Louisiana.

- The Build a Healthy Meal video project is in partnership with Louisiana Healthcare Connections, a Louisiana Medicaid provider. A total of 22 recipe videos are completed. The LSU AgCenter provides step-by-step instructions on how to prepare delicious, easy meals using low-cost ingredients that can be found at local grocery stores, dollar stores and farmers' markets.
- The LSU AgCenter's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is creating a training video series to present additional tools during the onboarding of new personnel and reinforcing skills for seasoned employees. The video series will provide a flexible format for EFNEP nutrition educators to learn skills and techniques that are critical to successful job performance.

4-H Youth Development

- The 2022-2023 Louisiana 4-H year on July 31st with 91,127 youth engaged in Extension youth delivered opportunities and over 10,520 volunteers assisted in the delivery of program.
- Louisiana 4-H Program received a \$750,000 USDA/NIFA grant for a new Agricultural Career Exploration with Drones program which engages 4-H youth in learning about drones and the opportunity to receive their FAA Drone License as well as certifications in agriculture land plotting, spraying, or field diagnosis (insects and diseases). Additionally, the grant will fund a precision agriculture hands-on experience with drones at each of the five AgMagic Ag Awareness events held throughout the state.
- Louisiana 4-H Program received a \$640,000 USDA/NIFA CYFAR grant to enhance youth development programming in the urban parishes of Jefferson and Orleans (greater New Orleans). Grant will focus on underserved, at-risk youth through the engagement of

leadership, citizenship, and technology.

- In collaboration with the Alabama and Mississippi 4-H Programs, Louisiana 4-H led the effort to submit a six-year grant to First South Farm Credit to fund the existing 4-H Livestock Ambassador Program in Louisiana and to establish 4-H Livestock Ambassador Programs within the Mississippi and Alabama 4-H Programs. Initial comments have been extremely positive, and each state have been in active conversations with their respective FSFC organizations.
- Louisiana 4-H, FFA, and LSU AgCenter Master Gardeners partnered with the Louisiana Farm Bureau to install over 100 rain gauges throughout the state monitored by youth and adult volunteers. The reporting of the rainfall is entered into the CoCoRaHS monitoring system. Through this community service project, it allows the state agriculture and livestock producers to access relief funds in times of drought.
- The state 4-H program had a successful camping this season at Camp Grant Walker with over 3,300 youth participating in 10 weeks of camp offerings.
- This fall Louisiana 4-H and FFA have partnered with Sunshine Quality Solutions (John Deere Dealership located in south Louisiana) to offer the Sunshine Quality Solutions 4-H and FFA Leadership and Career Academy. This new career focused program will place a youth at each of the 17 dealerships as sophomores or juniors. Over the next two to three years, the youth will have internship and learn areas of mechanics, sales, finance, precision agriculture, or customer service. At the end of their high school career the hope would be that the young person would go directly to work for Sunshine, go to University of Arkansas – Bebe for a John Deere Mechanic Certificate, or to a four-year university for sales, marketing, and finance.
- Over 1,400 attended the 2023 Louisiana FFA Convention and 1,200 participated in 4-H

University.

- Louisiana 4-H won the 2023 National Shooting Sports Championship that took place in Grand Island, NE.



MSU Extension received a 2.7 % budget increase for FY 24. A salary pool of 2% was provided for Merit based salary increases with a \$1,000 floor. Thus, all of the budget increase was directed to salaries and no additional funding was available to increase operating and/or travel budgets nor offset any inflation increases.

MSU Extension has 97 planned programs from specialists for Agent delivery in FY 24 across all programmatic areas with another 67 programs being developed for Specialist to clientele delivery.

Currently the search for the next Director for the Mississippi State University Extension Service is underway with interviews expected in Fall, 2023.

MSU Extension faculty and agents continued to increase grant and contract proposals and awards by setting a record in FY22 and are well ahead of schedule to set another record in FY23. External funding continues to be vitally important to maintain programs and operating income.

Dr. Linda Mitchell is the new Head for the Center for 4-H Youth Development effective July 1, 2023. Dr Mitchell has many years in Extension and 4-H, serving as an agent, 4-H Specialist, and Regional Extension Coordinator in her career. Most recently, Dr Mitchell has been the interim Head of the Center for 4-H Youth Development as well as serving as the Regional Extension Coordinator in the Northeast Region. A search is in place to fill the Regional Extension Coordinator position for the 22 counties in Northeast MS.

In the past several months, MSU Extension in collaboration with the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences has been working to fill several Department and Center Head vacancies. Dr. Christy Bratcher is the new Head of Animal and Dairy Sciences effective July 1, 2023. A search is underway for the Central Mississippi Research and Extension Center and the Head of the Department of Landscape Architecture. Additionally, interim Heads are in place for the Department of Bio-Chemistry, Entomology and Plant Pathology and the Department of Food Science and Health Promotion.

In the past 12 months we have filled ~20 Agent positions across the state and currently have 8 open Agent positions advertised. We have filled 5 faculty/specialist positions in FY 23 and currently have 9 searches being conducted.

MSU Extension also recently finalized the position description and the rank and promotion criteria for the Extension Specialist position. This position is a non-faculty position and can be used by any discipline, Department, Center or Region. A Master's is required to enter as a Specialist I but promotion to Specialist II and beyond requires a Ph. D. Salary and promotion ranks are similar to the University's Research Scientist title that is also non-faculty.

Submitted by Steve Martin, Interim Director, Mississippi State University Extension

August, 2023

NC State Extension Summer Update 2023

Rich Bonanno

Ag & Natural Resources

NC State Extension ANR agents (Field Faculty) and specialists participate in Program Teams to promote training in animal science, agronomic crops, horticulture, local foods, and water resources. Each team is provided \$50,000 in funding on an annual basis for planning, travel, supplies, and other training-related expenses. This continues to be a well-received source of funding to support their efforts and encourage the development of novel training approaches. For example, the animal science team meets each year in early- to mid-August for a 3-day training event to cover basic information and new developments, with updates throughout the year as needed.

Novel approaches to salary support and stipends are being tested this year as a way to reward and retain experienced agents. Agents participating in a state- and commodity-supported research and extension project for detecting and managing guava root-knot nematodes are receiving a stipend in addition to their salary to support work that is not normally part of their expected efforts. The same approach is being used for agents who are willing to work with farmers to beta test new developments coming out of the Plant Science Initiative.

CRD agents and specialists have been successful in securing grants for their efforts involving H2A and farmworker health, local foods, and farmer mental health. Several counties have opted to take over funding farmworker agents because of the program's impact on the specialty crop industry including Christmas trees, sweet potato, tomato, apples, and strawberries. Success in the area of broadband accessibility by one of our County Extension Directors (CED) has led to a large grant and advertisement of an area specialized agent to work across several counties. Broadband accessibility across North Carolina continues to be a challenge for most of our counties.

FCS

NC State Extension recently received funding for a CDC High Obesity Program project that will begin September 30, 2023, for a period of 5 years. This funding is designed to address counties that have high adult obesity prevalence over 40%. Because the CDC did not fund the full amount requested (funding approximately 2/3 of the amount requested), so it is currently unclear if we will be able to engage all 10 counties currently proposed for the project. The first year of the project will be focused on building partnerships and assessing the needs of those counties involved in the project. The strategies outlined for CDC funding include the following 4 areas:

- Food and nutrition security
- Safe and accessible physical activity
- Family healthy weigh programs
- Early care and education settings

The FCS program has four new programs/initiatives in the area of health and wellness. The first is the Food-based Early Education Lab (FEEd Lab) which empowers early childhood teachers and families with evidence-based strategies to improve children's dietary quality through early education, exposure, and access to healthy foods. The More Peas Please program is an innovative program designed to build a strong preschool STEM educator workforce. The program is designed to improve the quality of early STEM experiences by bridging the gap between preschool and K-12 learning environments. The new EFNEP Teen cruise program is designed to teach youth in grades 6-12 important life skills to promote optimal health. It addresses enhances learning and behavioral change for teens in the areas of nutrition, food preparation, food safety, and physical activity. Finally, a new initiative is improving health using nutrition and technology to influence dietary behaviors and improve health outcomes among disadvantaged families.

County HR

Extension HR is working closely with the District Directors to try to manage the current employment situation we are facing. With fewer applicants for our vacant positions, it can be difficult to find new hires. We're looking at other recruiting options to be more proactive in finding employees. We're also working on building employee engagement to help slow turnover. A big part of that is a weekly email that we send to all supervisors called Monday Morning Manager. In this email we inform our supervisors about several different HR topics including: wellbeing, cultural awareness, HR best practices, and employee engagement. We have heard from supervisors that they really appreciate the information we're sharing, we have even built a following from other campus departments including University HR and the OIED office.

Extension IT

This was a rebuilding year in Extension Information Technology (EIT). Several key vacancies were refilled. Two major applications were rewritten and refined. The Plant Disease and Insect Clinic (PDIC), operated by the NC State's Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology, serves growers, landscapers, homeowners and gardeners. The clinic partners with NC Cooperative Extension's county personnel who help identify common problems and assist clients in submitting samples. The digital version of the clinic processed more than 44,000 samples in the past year. The application was rewritten on the Django Python platform and will go live this fall, after the peak submission season has passed. Another key rewrite involved the Extension Eventbrite system. Eventbrite is Extension's registration system for most public non-credit events. So far in 2023, the organization has hosted 850 free and paid events within Eventbrite. Ticket sales during this period have totaled about \$233,700. By integrating Extension's internal Event Request Form, Employee Database and Reporting System with the Eventbrite API we are able to pass data into and out of Eventbrite in a way that ensures financial processes comply with NC State regulations and data collection meets federal and state reporting needs. The event database was rearchitected to improve the reliability and accuracy of all of the event data. Error

handling, notifications and reporting metrics were all improved. These changes improve the resiliency of our integration with Eventbrite, and will allow EIT to be aware of many common issues as soon as they happen.

EIT also worked with our Soybean team to a new interactive tool, Beans Gone Wild, to catalog soybean problems arising across North Carolina in a dynamic map. In this tool, background and conclusions about each problem, educational resources, and high-quality photos are provided. Posts are reviewed and recommendations are provided by the relevant NC State Extension Specialist prior to posting. Problems will also be saved into a library to access in future years for educational purposes. This tool is a resource for Extension Agents, farmers, and other agricultural industry professionals to have an understanding of problems arising across the state and associated resources.

County Operations

County Partnerships –

Currently reauthorizing the Memorandum of Agreement with each of the 101 Extension Centers, with a target date of completion of December 31, 2023.

Preparing for First Night, a banquet that is planned and sponsored by NC Cooperative Extension during the annual North Carolina Association of County Commissioners Conference. Five outstanding county partnerships will be recognized during that event.

Professional Development -

Two positions were recently refilled in the Extension Organizational Development Department, and the EOD Coordinator and EOD Program Associate are planning several new training and development events for 2023-24 including:

- An Early Career Conference (2 days) for all Agents and Program Assistants with less than 3 years of experience. The conference will feature Extension program and reporting basics, and will provide opportunities for new employees to meet with specialists on campus. 170 employees are expected.
- New County Extension Director Training (3 days) will take place with 31 CED's who have started in the past 3 years.
- District Training – 5 District and 1 Campus training will be held to provide uniform updates and training to the entire system, including strategic planning implementation and the FISH Philosophy.
- Monthly mentor and mentee training

Strategic Planning -

Four Extension Teams made up of both campus and county personnel are working to complete an implementation plan for the Extension Strategic Plan in August. This plan compliments the college plan which is also following this process. The Extension Plan focuses on 4 major goals:

- Expanding Extension Awareness and Utilization
- Providing High Caliber, Impactful Programming that Meets Community Needs
- Positioning NC State Extension as a Premier Employer in North Carolina
- Enhance the Impact and Benefit of Extension Communications

Oklahoma State Report

ASRED Meeting – Spring 2023

General notes

[OSU Strategy](#) continues to develop with a focus on innovating to nourish the world, leading in aerospace innovation and application, enhancing human and animal health (OneHealth) and powering a growing world population sustainably and responsibly. Agriculture, energy, health, workforce development, and STEM are woven throughout. An Extension Task Force met in the spring and one outcome is that we expect to have a university-led legislative initiative to improve salaries. (For reference, in June, we had a 3% merit-based raise program and raised our county educator starting salaries to \$37,000 with B.S. and \$41,000 with M.S. degrees so the need is huge). Randy Taylor, former ANR program leader, is serving as an Extension Fellow, meeting with Deans in other colleges and other Fellows with assignments related to the Strategy to identify ways to elevate and amplify Extension, which is one of the imperatives in the Strategy.

New hires since spring include: Dean and Vice President, DASNR, Jayson Lusk (August start); Assistant Dean, Ag and Natural Resource and Community Economic Development Program Leader, Jason Warren. Faculty hires include: Horticulture plant pathologist, Gibrin Mustafa (Oct), FCS Assistant State Specialist, Food Safety, Christi Evans; Biochem/STEM education, Ashley Mattison; Vegetable Crop Production Systems, Tyler Mason; Integrated Pest Management, Cotton, Altus, Maxwell Smith; FCS District Program Specialist, West, Susan Routh; Opioid Education (grant funded), Ty Gregson; Extension marketing program manager, OSU Ag Office of Communications and Marketing (formerly Ag Communication Services). Searches underway include: Weed scientist, Livestock parasitologist, Ag and natural resource policy economist, Cropping systems/integrated pest management, Water management, Processed meats, West District Area Ag Econ Specialist and several grant/contract/donation funded positions: Beginning farmer/rancher specialist, Health Disparity Specialists (3), Fatherhood coaches (10-12, see 24:7 Dad note below).

County educator turnover continues to be a challenge. 12 new Extension educators have been hired since January 1, with another 12-16 in the works, leading to an estimated 20% of county-based educators with one year or less experience.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

The **OSU Cattlewomen's Cow/Calf Boot Camp** combines elements of two successful programs, Annie's Project and the Oklahoma Livestock Boot Camps, offering an informative and engaging learning experience for female producers covering various methods of managing the production, financial, and market risks when operating a beef cow/calf operation. The program is a three-day workshop that combines traditional educational programming with hands-on demonstration and activities and classroom exercises. Topics include but are not limited to Cattle Evaluation, Bull Evaluation, Calf Management, Herd Nutrition, Hay Evaluation, Forage Production, Marketing, Production and Financial Records, Farm Transitions, General Management Practices, Farm Business Planning, Herd Health and Vaccinations, Facility Management and Selection, Reproduction Management, and Calving Management. Similar to Annie's Project, sessions are taught by female instructors when possible. Some

sessions include live animal demonstrations of the production practice being taught. Participants not only witness the practice being performed, but also have the opportunity to perform the practice as well. Some sessions include classroom exercises with practice using the techniques discussed. The first camp was June 2022 with a second in June 2023, each capped at 50 participants, resulting in 95 participants from five states (Oklahoma, Texas, Missouri, Kansas & Arkansas). Evaluations of the camps document an average increase in knowledge of 24.1%, a planned adoption rate of 74.4% and an overall value to the participants of \$51,710. Comments from participants include: "Wow! It was by far the best conference I've attended (and I've attended many). I am leaving with more confidence, knowledge and capability. I hope there is another as I can think of so many women that would benefit just in my circle.....Very real life and I feel like I can contribute as an equal partner in knowledge and skill set to my husband's and I's program. I very much enjoyed this program and it lived up to its name. I am much more confident with my knowledge now."

The **OSU Honeybees Program** has made significant advancements in the past few years in providing hands-on training and educational programming to empower our growing population of beekeepers. In 2021, the Educator Honeybee Production program established 7 training sites at county offices with demonstration hives. This training program was met with mixed success with respect to successful honey production but with challenges come opportunities to learn and optimize management strategies. These demonstration hives provided the hands-on training and experience our educators needed to better understand the best management practices required for successful honey production. As our capacity and understanding of beekeeping has grown, so has our programming. 268 people have participated in a variety of workshops/talks. More information about the growing OSU Honeybees program can be found at <https://extension.okstate.edu/programs/honeybees/>

Viticulture & Enology in Oklahoma is an up and coming industry. Currently there are roughly ~400 bearing acres of grapevine in the state with around ~52 licensed wineries. The OSU viticulture team manages a research vineyard located at the Cimarron Valley Research Station (CVRS) in Perkins, OK. This research vineyard currently has 7 different *Vitis* varieties that include: Niagara, Frontenac Gris, Chambourcin, Traminette, Cynthiana, Rubiayat, & Chardonel. The most recent project included planting 5 additional *Vitis vinifera* cultivar- Syrah, Mourvedre, Cabernet Sauvignon, Picpoul Blanc, Sauvignon Blanc-to study the feasibility of growing them in North-Central Oklahoma. Other program activities include: Wine Faults Workshop in January, Hands-on Grapevine Pruning Workshop in February, Grape Management Short Course monthly meetings from March – September, Monthly webinars on anything Enology or Viticulture, Small-scale winemaking from grapes produced at the CVRS, and personal site visits to wineries and vineyards around the state. With knowledge of good winemaking practices, and with a firm understanding of proper vineyard management techniques, the aim is to produce fine quality wines from grapes grown in Oklahoma.

Family and Consumer Sciences

Program highlights, including collaborative activities & funding sources:

- **Volunteer data.** 156 OHCE members actively serve as certified Master Volunteers across 30 counties. Of the active total, 24 individuals were trained to be the inaugural class of *Master Sewing Volunteers (MSV)*, and 23 serve Oklahoma County as active Master Wellness Volunteers. Participating OHCE groups reported that in 2022 they contributed over 106,000 hours of volunteer

service at an economic value of \$3.2 million and donated over \$603,000 in cash and goods to fairs, 4-H programs or members, and other groups and organizations.

- **Say Yes to FCS.** A capacity crowd of 117 high school students and 31 FCS teachers attended OSU's first "Say Yes to FCS" day for students interested in majoring in FCSED or who want to learn more about the opportunities available through this major. The event was hosted by county, district, and state FCS Extension personnel, CareerTech FCS program specialists, and current OSU FCSED students. It featured facilities tours, breakout activities with current FCSED students, and opportunities to build community among students with common interests. The next "Say Yes to FCS" day is scheduled for October.
- **Health Disparities Multi-County Educators.** OSU Extension secured more than \$729,00 from the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET) to hire three multi-county health disparities educators to complement existing educators in southeast Oklahoma. The primary goal of the positions is to provide health disparities resources and increase opportunities for optimal health, reduce factors that contribute to the incidence of chronic disease due to poor nutrition and food insecurity, and reduce factors that contribute to high-risk behaviors that lead to opioid/substance abuse. As a team, these educators will develop partnerships, strengthen state and community connections, and expand programming across the state.
- **24:7 Dad Program.** The Fatherhood Initiative, in conjunction with Oklahoma Cooperative Extension, Oklahoma State University's Human Development and Family Science department and OKDHS, is a grant funded program designed to enhance men's involvement in family life through a 12-week educational program. Eighteen program coordinators will be located in nine counties across Oklahoma.

Plans and new directions to pursue in 2024 focus on **OneHealth**, with efforts to raise the visibility of FCS in health by increasing the capacity to provide health education, promote healthy behaviors, and play a role in building health communities. A new FCS issue team is planned along with elevating existing FCS issue teams.

4-H Youth Development

Capitol Camp

Learning about the legislative process is the focus of the Capitol Camp (formerly labeled Oklahoma Youth Legislative Experience). The second event in summer 2023 had more than 70 youth from Oklahoma 4-H and Oklahoma FFA together at the State Capitol. Youth attended sessions on writing legislation that was important to them, met as committees, and debated bills on the floor of the Oklahoma House of Representatives. This event is a partnership between Oklahoma Farm Bureau, the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy along with 4-H and FFA. New this year, youth attended a workshop session led by Cathleen Taylor, assistant State 4-H Specialist for leadership and civic engagement on the importance of community service and how youth can help in their communities. In small groups, youth worked together to plan service projects for their communities. The service projects ranged from teaching younger kids to read to putting together food boxes for the less fortunate. "Giving back to our communities is an important part of both the 4-H and FFA programs. Learning how to evaluate what is important to us as members and how we can help was something I had never really thought about before this event," said Abby Logan, State 4-H President and two-time Capitol Camp participant. Plans are underway for a third annual event in 2024. A piece of legislation drafted at last year's event was passed by the legislature this year. House Bill 1546 directs the Oklahoma Department

of Corrections to develop an Orange Alert communication system at each correctional facility in the state to notify any resident within a 40-mile radius of the facility when a prisoner has escaped.

Helping Volunteers Thrive (collaborative 5-part series presented by the 4-H Volunteer Specialist of the Southern Region)

Two of the five sessions have been conducted. Oklahoma is the host state for the Zoom platform. Each session is recorded, posted and is being evaluated. To date, one-hundred fifty-four (154) Extension professionals across 26 states and Canada have participated in the two live sessions.

Master Sewing Volunteers

Twenty-four OHCE and 4-H volunteers took part in the inaugural Master Sewing Volunteer program April 27-28. These dedicated craftsperson's will return to their home county and district sharing their time and talents to impart knowledge, skill mastery, and to increase local economic impact.

Shooting Sports

Oklahoma 4-H Shooting Sports launched the inaugural Oklahoma 4-H Shooting Sports Ambassador program in April 2023. This program is designed for youth in the 8th-12th grade who are active in their county and state 4-H shooting sports programs. The program's purpose is to help young people develop Leadership Skills, Communication Skills, Market the 4-H Shooting Sports program, develop and maintain donor relations, and represent Oklahoma 4-H Shooting Sports to the best of their ability. We hope to train this group of young people to become National 4-H Shooting Sports Ambassadors, if they so choose.

Food, Fun, 4-H @ School

Oklahoma 4-H developed an eight lesson, school enrichment curriculum titled *Food, Fun, 4-H in Our Great State*. The series provides teachers and students with hands-on lessons highlighting Oklahoma grown commodities. Ten Oklahoma schools, reaching over 200 youth third – sixth grade, piloted the new curriculum during the spring of 2023. Based upon feedback, minor modifications are being made to the curriculum and plans to launch the materials through county Extension offices this fall. Each lesson contains commodity background information, a terminology section, classroom activity, a mindful minute skill, physical activity break, a class food insecurity challenge, and recipes. Each lesson's recipes include highlighted commodities that can be made in the classroom without a heat source, a recipe with minimal equipment and a couple of recipes that can be made by the youth at home with their family. A monthly Food, Fun, 4-H for the Family supplemental newsletter is also available for teachers to send home with students reinforcing learning about agricultural commodities. The family newsletter highlights Oklahoma grown commodities and the impact they have on our state, a family physical activity, mindful minute and recipes that include nutritional background.

ATV Safety

Through the OSU 4-H and Oklahoma Farm Bureau ATV Safety training, youth gain a better understanding of fundamental ATV operations and safe riding practices. Youth are encouraged to use the training to steer clear of dangers by staying aware and utilizing their safe riding skills for ATV operating. In February we received a grant from the University of Texas at Tyler's through the Southwest Ag Center to purchase helmets to be given out to those who come to the facility in Guthrie for the ATV training. The ATV Safety program has presented at seven Ag Safety Day workshops since the start of

spring, seeing 1,725 youth and 23 adults. Additionally, the Choctaw Nation invited the program out for their three-day Wildlife Youth Summer Program to discuss ATV Safety where we spoke to 182 youth. Since the start of the year, the program has held 29 classes with 158 youth and six adults completing their ASI certification. Thirty-nine of these youth participated in the course at training facility in Guthrie and received a helmet, thanks to our grant from the University of Texas Southwest Ag Center. As we reach the end of summer and the start of a new school year, the goal is to expand our connections to schools and tech centers across the state.

Innovate Summit

The Innovate Summit is a positive youth development program designed to teach youth life skills and introduce them to career opportunities in STEM related fields. The purpose of this project is to train youth to teach other youth STEM related workshops and learn how to present fun and exciting programs. By providing hands-on programming and events in a large variety of projects, 4-H is not only helping youth learn the life skills they need to be the leaders of tomorrow, but it is also teaching its members they can lead today and can make tangible, significant changes in their clubs, their communities, their state, and their world. At the 2023 Innovate Summit, ten adults and fourteen youth were trained in two different tracks: Engineering and Agriscience. In the Engineering track, participants built hydraulic presses, Ferris Wheels and terrariums. Participants in the Agriscience track learned about biosecurity, corn genetics and pollinators. All participants were also trained in coding activities using the Sphero BOLT robots and the Game Changes STEM Challenge kits. Innovators have reached 706 youth.

STEMists

Two college interns were hired to serve as 4-H STEMists this summer. These STEMists were trained in a suite of STEM activities and spent the summer traveling around the state providing STEM education programs to counties. Activities taught include: All About Insects, BOLT into Coding. Soil Vapor Detection Circuits, Launch into Learning: Roller Coasters and Catapults, and Waterwheel Work: Waterpower. 211 youth in 13 counties were reached.



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College of Agricultural Sciences
Puerto Rico Agricultural Extension Service

ASRED Sate Report – Puerto Rico 2023

Introduction

The Puerto Rico Agricultural Extension Service (PRAES) is responsible for developing, establishing, and evaluating the four Programmatic Areas of Extension. PRAES continues reviewing and updating 1) our educational programs such as productivity, efficiency, and success indicators that better respond to the NIFA Reporting System recent format, 2) technological tools (e.g., online data collection platforms) and 3) publications (after launching our universal guide for PRAES publications now we are focusing in updating our Online Web Page content). During the past years we continue working with:

- Transforming our educational materials to increase its accessibility, considering past challenges such as the pandemic and the clientele socioeconomic status.
- Reinforcing educational experiences through non formal education while reconnecting and integrating the educational programs with the help of the program leaders to develop a more robust integration of PRAES.
- Encouraging special projects (focused on intensive work in specific critical issues that address identified needs) has been one of our most helpful tools to promote educational programs integration.
- Improving the impact of our educational programs through more precise and accessible data collecting tools (Educational Programs online platforms).

The PRAES current faculty and staff had minor changes and includes 62 Extension Agents, 23 specialists, 49 Family Consumer Sciences Educators and 168 non-teaching staff.

Agriculture, and Natural Resources (ANR) Program

- Efforts continue focusing on educating our farmers and ranchers through traditional and non-traditional educational activities to improve the quality of their products through the proper management practices that contribute to increasing production, competitiveness, efficiency, and biosecurity in their enterprises. Pertaining to Animal Systems, a total of 111 educational activities were provided to ranchers with 948 people benefiting from these and 75 reporting to adopt at least one recommended practice. In



the last years, an increased interest in bee keeping has been observed and reflected by the increased number of educational activities in apiculture (i.e., 33.3 % of the total training under animal production). The proportion of educational activities in beef and dairy cattle reached 31.5 and 19.8 % of the total activities in animal systems, respectively.

- Regarding Plant Systems, a total of 141 educational activities were provided to farmers with 4,168 people benefiting from these and 250 reporting to adopt at least one recommended practice. Vegetables, farinaceous and non-citrus fruits continue to be the areas most demanded for training, accounting for 72.34% of all the educational interventions provided to our farmers For FY2022, a new PRAES program was created and focused on adding value to the coffee produced in Puerto Rico. This program focused on adding value to the coffee produced in Puerto Rico. Educational activities and follow up visits were centered in providing producers the adequate management practices at the pre- and post-harvest level to improve the quality of their coffee. Additional training provided recommended marketing strategies to improve their competitiveness in the market. In animal systems, combined research, and extension efforts to characterize the slick haired phenotype in the *Bos taurus* dairy breeds have also continued.
- In terms of Natural Resources Conservations, efforts were aimed to improve resilience and response to extreme climate changes while maintaining productivity and protecting vital water and soil resources. The most salient educational activities included: 1) 24 people trained in collecting, storing, and re-using rainwater for agricultural purposes, 2) 31 people trained in fire prevention in forests and pastures, 3) 19 people trained in natural disasters and emergency management to reduce losses and maintain the operation of their farms. Of the people that were instructed in these topics, 15 reported adopting at least one of the recommended practices offered by PRAES personnel. Achievements pertaining to mitigating the impact of climate change on agricultural production by improving agricultural practices, supporting soil and water conservation, and encouraging composting included a series of train the trainer workshops (n=6) were offered to extension agents covering soil sampling, soil analysis interpretation, and nutrient recommendations were provided. In turn, the county agents provided 15 training courses to 75 farmers on soil management and fertility. Some of the most important achievements of this program include the adoption of practices and recommendations that have improved the conditions on more than 45 farms, 11 farmers incorporated the use of soil amendments based on soil fertility results, 8 farmers changed their fertilizer formulations to more closely coincide with the needs of the crops

grown and 52 individuals adopted recommended conservation practices to effectively manage the soils on their farms.

The Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) Program

- For this period, activities towards the goals of the program centered efforts in establishing alliances with several health-related organizations to expand the impact of our work. Efforts concentrated in educating women of 21 years of age or older about health, prevention and early detection of breast and cervical cancer.
- Efforts to improve resilience and response to extreme climate changes while maintaining productivity and protecting vital water and soil resources. The most salient educational activities of FY2022 included: 1) 24 people trained in collecting, storing, and re-using rainwater for agricultural purposes, 2) 31 people trained in fire prevention in forests and pastures, 3) 19 people trained in natural disasters and emergency management to reduce losses and maintain the operation of their farms. Of the people that were instructed in these topics, 15 reported adopting at least one of the recommended practices offered by PRAES personnel.
- Achievements pertaining to the natural resource protection amid extreme weather and natural disasters program were highlighted under the new results (Mitigating the impact of climate change on agricultural production by improving agricultural practices, supporting soil and water conservation, and encouraging composting). A series of train the trainer workshops (n=6) were offered to extension agents covering soil sampling, soil analysis interpretation, and nutrient recommendations were provided. In turn, the county agents provided 15 training courses to 75 farmers on soil management and fertility. Soils from 30 farms were sampled and analyzed and results discussed with farmers providing the appropriate recommendations. New collaborations between PRAES and NRCS boosted the dissemination of information on soil nutrient management information to farmers and producers. Some of the most important achievements of this program include the adoption of practices and recommendations that have improved the conditions on more than 45 farms, 11 farmers incorporated the use of soil amendments based on soil fertility results, 8 farmers changed their fertilizer formulations to more closely coincide with the needs of the crops grown and 52 individuals adopted recommended conservation practices to effectively manage the soils on their farms.

4H and Youth program. A collection of interdisciplinary 4-H initiatives focused on creating inclusive spaces for children and youth.

- Ruta 4-H:
 - 1,294 participants completed non-formal education in healthy lifestyles.
 - 35 youth leaders trained to broaden the educational reach of healthy lifestyles.
 - 5 youth leaders represented Puerto Rico at the Healthy Living Summit 2022.
- Acceso
 - Benefited more than 75 homeless people benefited by receiving articles and food collected in 4-H DropBOX stations.
 - 4-H leader (n=6) provided workshops about general hygiene and hand washing and offered time to organized food storage at homelessness center.
- The Bug Camp
 - Kids and youth learned about related professional careers in entomology and the role of insects in food production, environmental diversity, and their impact in reducing world hunger.
 - 15 participants completed camp activities and five extension educators served as mentors.
- 4-H Bee Team
 - 15 4-H participants completed 45 hours of education and practices related to apiculture.
 - 5 participants served as peer educators in Pollinators Fairs, in school activities and at the Agri-Innovation Week by Corteva Agriscience.
- Explora
 - 4-H participants (n=56) explored career opportunities and strategies to better face the challenges related to college life

Community Develop Resources (CDR) Program

- During this period, the program activities focused on improving the capacity of our audience in producing their own food and generating income-producing alternatives that can significantly increase the recovery prospects of its communities. Some of the advancements included 1) a total of 252 community visits that resulted with 451 interviews made to community members to identify basic community needs, 2) 32 courses offered on principles of organization, self-management and community empowerment benefiting 128 people and, 3) the collaboration of 56 governmental or non-governmental organizations with PRAES in the development and organization of

communities. In turn, 39 communities were organized and 22 established a community project in collaboration with other Extension educational programs (4H, Agriculture or Family and Consumer Sciences) to solve one or more of pre-identified needs.

- Activities continue aiming to promote income-producing alternatives to increase the recovery prospects of our communities and improve their food security. Two awards were obtained that boosted the impact of this program, incorporating more than \$75,000 to build the necessary infrastructure. These fundings were used to educate community organizations about agroecological systems as a resilient management strategy and community enterprise, and to organize educational centers to train communities about aquaculture systems and marketing. As part of the CSM program result include the participation of 78 leaders in the design and development of their communities generating a total of 245 volunteer hours, 23 communities made progress in meeting their quality of life, 10 action plans were developed or updated by community members to address a problem and 2 communities were organized for the preservation and conservation of coastal resources and other natural resources.
- PRAES continue investing in our leaders to increase our impact and achievements. A total of 393 volunteers were trained in leadership and PRAES programs giving in return 433 hours of volunteer work as community leaders.

External Resources

To support PRAES work, a total of 15 competitive proposals were submitted to various sources, including CORTEVA, USDA NRCS, MIDA, USDA-NIFA, Extension Foundation, USDA-FS, USDA-NIFA, Southern Research & Education, and National Agricultural Statistics Service. A summary table categorizing these is included. Of the 15 proposals, 11 were approved (\$ 1,366,188), 1 was denied (\$ 49,999) and 3 are pending (\$ 254,998). In terms of own income and intended use, the Pesticide program generated \$ 98,805 while the Food Safety program generated \$ 27,344.

Plans and new directions to pursue in 2024.

- Develop and Improve Extension programs to increase PRAES impact and better address the needs of our audience.
- Continuing promoting the participation of volunteers, specially through new online platforms managed through the DCR Program, that allow PRAES to expand its impact around the island.
- Increasing the production of digital publications and improve our webpage. Due to the fiscal crisis, PRAES is establishing collaborations with the Business Administration and Engineer Departments to hire undergrad students to accomplish these goals.

- Concluding the production, validation, and training of the Extension Educational Program Online Platforms. This will improve the quality and quantity of the data collected from each Extension program, allowing Extensionists to create more robust clientele profiles and identification of needs.

PRAES Web Page: <https://www.uprm.edu/sea/>



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ASRED IMPACT REPORT

August 2023

This has been a very busy year for Clemson University Cooperative Extension. Our program teams have been very engaged with developing and implementing programs and our county agents and Extension Associates continue to increase their publications. We have revamped our promotion ladder for all areas of professionals in Extension. We are currently working on SalesForce and rolling it out now.

We are excited about our budget request as it makes its way through the general assembly. Our number one ask was to bring all our staff to the mid-market range. We got a 5% cost of living increase and PSA received a 1.2 million dollar salary adjustment to help bring our staff up close to mid-market range. This will help us in the recruitment and retention of our folks. Below is a brief report on all of our program areas.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Horticulture Program Team

The Clemson Extension Horticulture Team offers a diverse mix of in-person, virtual, and hybrid programs. We now have twelve online, multi-module courses offered through [Clemson Online](#), and those served 1,623 participants in 2022. One, "[Bee A Friend to Pollinators: Pollinator Education & Agricultural Literacy for SC Educators](#)," is the first Clemson Extension professional development course to receive the Quality Matters (QM) certification. QM™ standards and review processes are recognized nationally and internationally for being supported by research and based on best practices. Our [School Gardening for SC Educators](#) program recently received a two-year contract for \$318,385 from the SCDE Office of Health and Nutrition to expand on the 200-plus school gardens currently supported. Additionally, the team will collaborate with other state agencies and partners to host the 2024 SC Farm to School Summit.

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

103 Barre Hall Clemson, SC 29634

P 864-656-3382 | www.clemson.edu/extension

Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to people of all ages, regardless of race, color, gender, religion, national origin, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital or family status and is an equal opportunity employer.



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Another online program, [SC Certified Landscape Professional](#), has certified over 500 professionals since its inception in 2020, 150 within the last year. The program was delivered to prison inmates in collaboration with the South Carolina Department of Corrections (SCDOC) Division of Programs, Reentry, and Rehabilitative Services in 2022. Forty inmates enrolled in the course, 36 completed it and gained knowledge, and 31 became certified, giving them a valuable credential for reentry into the workforce. [SCGrower.com](#) continues to grow in reach, with over 480 subscribers and 20,000 views in 2023. The Food Crop team conducted a farm gate survey on six key horticultural crops. The team is managing the leafy greens section of the \$70M [Climate-Smart Commodities Grant](#) and has hired two new Extension Associates dedicated to the project. We launched an online and on-demand commercial pesticide applicator exam prep training in the fall of 2021, with more than 105 participants completing the course to date. Participants showed greater than 30% improvement in pre- and post-test scores.

For FY2023-2023, [South Carolina Master Gardener](#) volunteers reached 184,210 adults and 24,246 youth through 66,219 hours of volunteer service. This service is equivalent to 38.4 full-time Extension Agents and is valued at \$2,105,764. The [Home & Garden Information Center \(HGIC\)](#) staff responded to 17,383 calls and emails, and the HGIC website received over 6.5M page views. The weekly HGIC newsletter has over 12,000 subscribers. Extension educators contributed over 200 unique blog posts to the HGIC website in 2022.

Forestry, Natural Resources, Water Resources Program Team

Clemson Extension's Natural Resources Program Division focuses programmatic activities in the fields of forestry, wildlife, and water. The Forestry and Wildlife Team created a new asynchronous program titled Master Tree Farmer (MTF). The Master Tree Farmer course is a "hybrid" course combining online and face-to-face learning. It incorporates self-paced lectures, discussions, quizzes, and other web-based methods of participant-instructor interactions, along with hands-on participation activities in the field. The course contains 7 Modules and 30 hours of content. The Water Resources Team focused on several areas including the development and delivery of 3 hybrid courses, a realtor's course, and native plant certificate training. Over 500 individuals participated in multi-week, in depth training opportunities. The professional audiences included engineers, real estate agents, landscape architects and designers, and pond management companies.

Agronomic Crops Program Team

- State Corn and Soybean Meeting- ~200 attendees, December
- State Cotton Meeting- ~250 attendees, January
- State Peanut Meeting- ~250 attendees, January



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- Agents have provided ~575 growers with EPA mandated dicamba use training
- Agents are beginning re-training growers for EPA mandated gramoxone use certification required every three years
- Agents have conducted multiple (~12) county level production meetings for growers
- Agents and specialists met in March and planned trials for county level implementation
- Agents are providing initial private pesticide license certification, as well as continuing to provide recertification to ensure license requirements are met
- Field visits remain the core of our program, agents are beginning to work one-on-one with growers to address in field issues

Agribusiness Program Team

The Clemson Agribusiness Team has a wide breadth of team programs and initiatives. These include:

1. Continued expansion of Tax School; farm tax school, timber tax, partnerships and business structures, and special topics.
 - a. Continued work through national committee and other institutions with a contract with USDA FSA to provide publications, training, etc. to landowners, faculty & staff around the country, FSA personnel.
2. Small and Beginning Farmer/Rancher through expansion into advanced programming.
3. Ag & Art Tour, in process to determine if expansion can take place financially.
4. Ag Bus Center to develop cooperatives and perform feasibility studies to determine the potential for a variety of agricultural enterprises.
5. Women in Agriculture, Annie's Project continues to grow and expand.
6. Integration of Veteran based programming within already established programming including but not limited to Beginning Farmer, Ag & Art, etc.
7. Farm Stress and Mental Health: SC Agriwellness. Programming, marketing, and a designated 1-800 for farmers and those within the SC Ag industry for crisis counseling AND a minimum of 3 free counseling sessions with a mental health professional either in person, via phone, virtual, or text.

Livestock and Forages Program Team

Over the past 6 months the Livestock and Forages Team has concentrated on diversifying programmatic efforts. These efforts include 3 small ruminant workshops, equine webinar and face to face workshop, 1st Annual Palmetto Hay Summit, Beef Cattle Marketing workshops, Warm Season Annual Forage webinar, Climate Smart Grant workshops, Backyard Poultry



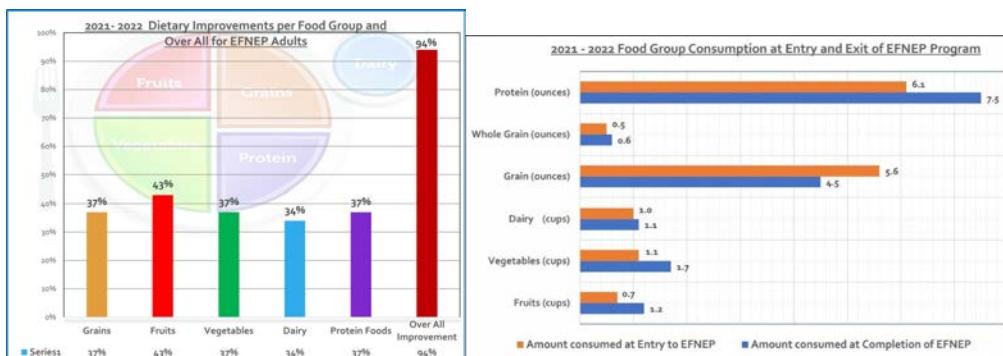
workshops, and Poultry Processing. Over the months of September-October the team will be implementing demonstration plots that will highlight cool season annual forage establishment, soil health, and selection. These demonstration plots will be followed by field days in March-April 2024. Currently 9 demonstration plots will be implemented throughout South Carolina. Through virtual programs and social media, the L&F Team have reached over 3000 people with posts and webinars that cover multiple species of livestock. In addition, we have over 19 Land Grant Press publications with 3 publications currently under review. Currently the Livestock and Forages Team publishes 1-3 articles a month in the Carolina Cattle Connection that reach thousands of cattle producers in North and South Carolina.

Other upcoming workshops include Beef Cattel Grading and Marketing Seminars, Equine Pasture Management Workshops, Regional Beef Cattle Field Days, Mobile Poultry Processing, 3 Regional Small Ruminant Workshops, and Fescue Management Webinar.

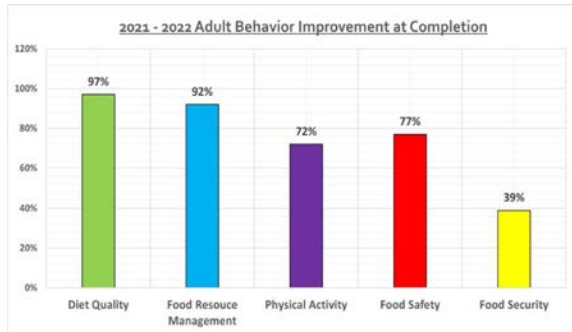
EFNEP Program Team

In 2022, Clemson University received \$1,601,176 to conduct Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in South Carolina. In 2022, EFNEP employed 22 (19.1 FTE) Nutrition Educators (NE) who are the members of the community they serve. In turn, EFNEP Nutrition Educators worked directly with 441 adult family members and 3,356 youth. These educators tailored lesson on Diet Quality and Physical Activity, Food Resource Management, Food Safety and Food Security to meet the specific needs of their respective program participants. Total participation increased in 2022 as university and communities continued to adapt environment resulting from the global pandemic of the two previous years.

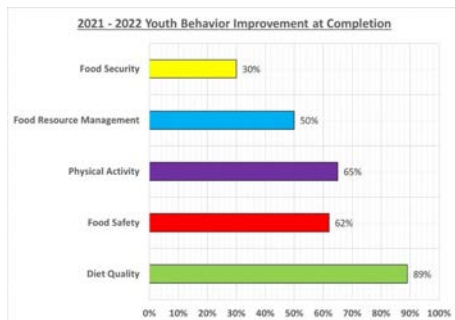
EFNEP 2022 Data DEMONSTRATED RESULTS



2022 data reported through 24 hours Diet Recall showed 94% graduates ate more closely to MyPlate.gov recommendations.



Changing Adult Behavior-2022 data showed 97% improved behavior in Diet Quality.



Data showed 89% youth were influenced to improve behavior in Diet Quality.

Rural Health and Nutrition Extension Program Team

Obesity and Chronic Disease are health challenges in South Carolina. To address these issues, programs focusing on chronic disease self-management and general health maintenance were created and continue to be evaluated by the Extension Rural Health and Nutrition program team. The team programming effort for healthy food access and physical activity access has been funded by CDC for a second cycle. Extension Rural Health and Nutrition Team (initially funded in total through grants) is now funded through the state and FTEs have been secured. External funds and partnerships will supplement and expand programming efforts of the RHN team.



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Participants enrolled in direct education programs show positive trends in knowledge gain, behavior change, weight loss, and physical activity. Communities touched by PSE work have increased food access points, increased walkable routes, and increased access to physical activity. Additionally, PSE partnerships have produced deliverables such as bi-directional referral expansion for health programs, small-scale aggregator for low-income community, food pantry service area expansions, human milk bank depot expansion, and school district wellness policy expansions.

Food Systems and Safety Program Team

The Clemson Extension Food Systems and Safety Team is in full swing this summer with home food preservation workshops and events. The team's county agents are delivering home canning workshops around the state, emphasizing pressure canning, water bath canning, steam canning, and making pickles and preserves. This fall and winter, the team held the first Master Food Preserver course, and prospective Master Food Preservers have been assisting the agents during canning season with workshops to earn volunteer service hours. The team is excited to have Master Food Preserver volunteers to help them to reach audiences during this busy time of year. With their help, they have been able to attend more tabling events promoting canning workshops, help deliver workshops, write blogs for the Home and Garden Information Center, and prepare canning videos.

The Food Systems and Safety team also continues to support food entrepreneurs and manufacturers in the state. In the Spring, 23 food entrepreneurs completed the Food2Market food entrepreneur course. Since the first of the year, the Food2Market team members have interacted with 80 new food entrepreneurs and 200 cottage food contacts and completed over 200 product tests. The team is also working with partner agencies to update the South Carolina Home-based Food Production Law Guidance book issued in Fall 2023.

4-H Program Team

4-H Programs continue to grow – Based on county 4-H program reach in our 4HOnline system, we rebounded to pre-COVID enrollments in the 2021-2022 program year with over 57,000 youth. This year, we are on track to exceed 75,000 youth with the program year ending August 31, 2023. Notable 4-H programs in South Carolina are growing as we continue to evolve program offerings to meet the ever-changing needs of our youth. Programs this spring/summer:

- o 4-H Engineering Challenge & Legislative Day: <https://news.clemson.edu/4-h-events-in-states-capital-showcase-modern-face-of-youth-development/>



- o State 4-H Congress: <https://news.clemson.edu/state-4-h-congress-celebrates-the-moxie-to-make-fairy-tales-come-true/>
- o 4-H Pollinator Garden: (interpretive pollinator garden collaboration with Conestee Nature Preserve, 4-H, and the Bee Cause Project) <https://www.wyff4.com/article/south-carolina-garden-teaches-pollination/44006657>
- o Cooking Capable: (Youth-developed workshop program to teach cooking skills and nutrition to youth with special needs. Particularly funded by a competitive proposal process through National 4-H Council and Lead to Change.) <https://www.morningagclips.com/cooking-capable-with-ivy-a-4-h-nutrition-program-for-youth-with-special-needs/>
- o 4-H Public Health Workbook Project (\$250,000 grant-funded program with Healthy Me, Healthy SC and the Department of Public Health)
- 4-H Computer Science Program (\$150,000 in grant funding from National 4-H Council and Google partnership to implement CS education in SC.) <https://www.wspa.com/news/local-news/google-gives-150000-to-promote-youth-coding-in-upstate/>

4-H Pinckney Leadership Program - Started in 2017, the program has grown tremendously since its inception. With just 20 youth in the first high school summer conference, it is now a year-round program reaching hundreds of middle and high-school students. Another tremendous thing about the program is the pipeline it creates with youth as they grow and develop as leaders. Scholarships from the program support leaders in their post-secondary education, as well as many of the program graduates returning as counselors and staff. This spring/summer, this program reached approximately 500 youth through the following events/activities: (listed in chronological order)

- o 4-H Pinckney Leadership Program Mentor Groups (12 sessions year-round)
- o 4-H Pinckney Leadership Roundup – Columbia (195 participants)
- o 4-H Pinckney Leadership Roundup – Florence (128 participants)
- o South Carolina Delegation to Citizenship Washington Focus
- o 4-H Pinckney Leadership Conference – Session 1 (31 participants)
- o 4-H Pinckney Leadership Conference – Session 2 (35 participants)
- o 4-H Pinckney Leadership Conference 2.0 (25 participants)
- o 4-H Pinckney Leadership Camp (90 participants)

4-H Healthy Lifestyles Program – The State 4-H Healthy Habits Summit brings together teams of teen leaders and adult mentors/coaches to learn about culinary arts, health, nutrition, and how to deliver the Cooking like a Chef 4-H Summer Camp in their local communities. Experts



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from industry, youth development, and other Extension program teams come together for this intensive one-day workshop. Approximately 100 youth and adults participated in the summit and delivered almost 20 summer camps as a result of their engagement. <https://news.clemson.edu/summit-helps-equip-youth-across-sc-with-culinary-skills-nutrition-training/>

4-H Shooting Sports – This is one of the most successful volunteer-led programs we have in the state. Our state 4-H shooting sports coordinator trains volunteers and coaches, as well as works closely with other organizations to deliver the program. Four youth selected to represent our state at the National 4-H Shooting Sports Championships this summer.

4-H/FFA Wildlife Habitat Education Program (WHEP) - Revived in our state in 2019, this program provides national resources and competition. Agents and specialists together from multiple teams and industries to deliver the program in South Carolina to youth 9-18 years of age. In the four years we have participated in the National WHEP Contest, either our FFA or 4-H team has become the national champions.

- o [In 2019, our FFA team won the national contest \(4-H team placed 3rd\).](#)
- o (2020 cancelled due to COVID)
- o [In 2021, our 4-H team won the national contest.](#)
- o [In 2022, our FFA team won the national contest.](#)
- o This summer (2023), our FFA team won the national contest (4-H team placed 3rd).

SalesForce Update

Client Relationship Management Software:

Clemson Cooperative Extension identified the need to manage relationships (internal/external), process event registration, send/track emails, store digital program files, build business continuity and culminate data for state and federal reporting requirements. In response to this need, an RFP was initiated for a CRM software, of which Salesforce was selected. Since, we have completed a buildout of the Salesforce platform to address the needs stated above, but also incorporate other items as identified by staff during specific discovery sessions. We are currently in the “understanding and executing” phase of our Salesforce project. Communicating with staff the purpose and value of making the change to Salesforce, and providing detailed training modules. The software will become available for all staff within Extension starting on October 1st with full implementation being completed by January 1st of 2024. We anticipate a streamlined approach to reporting and data management for our staff, and anticipate a decrease in actual reporting workload (due automatically generated reports/surveys) on our agents/staff.



8 Ways Clemson Extension Will Use Salesforce?

Salesforce offers almost endless capabilities and options for Extension, but below is a high-level overview of tasks Salesforce will manage for Extension:

1. Integrate data from other platforms (In-Person, EventBrite, CUMIS, etc.).
2. Manage clientele lists (mailing, mailing labels, and email lists) and programmatic interests.
3. Automate post-event evaluation communication and process
4. Manage product data (publications, videos, courses, etc.)
5. Provide reports (clientele, course, organization activity)
6. Manage required program file information in compliance with USDA directives
7. Improve team communications (with Salesforce Chatter)
8. Coordinate the distribution of team and district level newsletter content.

University of Tennessee Extension Update, Fall 2023

The International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP) has named UT Extension as its **2023 Employer of the Year**. This award recognizes employers who have created a workplace culture that strives to realize the full potential of administrative professionals and encourages their growth, both professionally and personally.

UT Extension officially opened the new **4-H and Youth Development Center at our Lone Oaks Farm** in West Tennessee, on May 22, 2023. The state-of-the-art facility has already completed its first summer of 4-H camping with rave reviews from youth, volunteers, and Extension agents alike. The Center is designed to provide interactive learning opportunities for students through hands-on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education, leadership development, and agriculture programs not available in traditional classrooms. It includes world-class laboratories, horticulture systems, gardens, hiking trails, recreational activities and more. This is the first purpose built 4-H and Youth Development Center in Tennessee.

The Tennessee General Assembly and Governor Bill Lee's administration funded \$28 million to construct the **Tennessee Water Education and Training Center**, which will be a first-of-its-kind training facility at UT Extension's Lone Oaks Farm in West Tennessee. The WET Center will provide opportunities for hands-on training programs in hydraulics, hydrology, erosion, and flood management. The West Tennessee River Basin Authority, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), and UT Extension partnered in this effort.

UTIA has received \$12.5 million in federal American Rescue Plan funds to start construction on our **Protein Innovation Center** on the UT Knoxville campus with a focus on teaching, research, extension, and workforce development in support of the meat industry in Tennessee.

Celebrating 25 years, UT Extension's **Center for Profitable Agriculture** (cpa.tennessee.edu) helps Tennessee farmers identify, analyze, develop, and sustain value-added products and enterprises. For many Tennessee family farms, adding new products or services that expand their income beyond the traditional wholesale of large quantities of a commodity makes a difference to the profitability and security of their operations. UT Extension launched the center in 1998. Since 2002, the center has operated as a partnership between UT Extension and the Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation, combining the considerable resources of both organizations.

In May 2023 UTIA opened the **robotic milking** system at the East Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center Little River Unit. The newly renovated dairy facility features co-location of two robotic milkers (120-cow capacity) and the traditional milking parlor systems all under the same roof. The new facility will host extension trainings as well as applied research activities.

UT Extension's Family and Consumer Sciences program was awarded nearly \$4.5 M in funding to develop nationally available resources for family members and other individuals that are in caregiving situations, especially those that are Alzheimer's and dementia caregivers. The UT Extension team will develop "**Pat's Game Plan**" in honor of the late Pat Summitt, championship winning coach for the UT Lady Vols basketball team that suffered from dementia and Alzheimer's disease. The Pat Summitt Foundation was established by Pat and Tyler Summitt in November 2011 with the mission of advancing Alzheimer's and dementia research for treatment and a cure, providing care and support for patients and caregivers, and educating the public on Alzheimer's disease.

The Tennessee 4-H & Youth Development Program celebrated our **100th anniversary of the State 4-H Roundup**. The first statewide 4-H event in Tennessee took place in July of 1923 when 196 delegates from 16 counties arrived by automobile, by train and by streetcar and many were loaded with baskets full of eats for a huge dinner on the ground on Monday evening, July 23, of that year. From that early beginning, Roundup has seen many changes. It was discontinued for a short time during the Great Depression and again during World War II when the UT campus served as a training base for the U.S. Army Air Corps. Celebrations for the 100th Roundup happened at county, regional and state levels.



Texas ASRED Report

August 2023

Keeping Texas Prepared

As a result of the 88th Legislative Session, which concluded in May 2023, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service has received some extremely positive news and financial support from the Texas Legislature.

The last days and weeks of the session produced two bills that financially impact Extension. The first bill is the base budget – House Bill 1 – which was signed into law by Governor Abbott in the last few days. The second bill is the supplemental budget – Senate Bill 30 – signed earlier in June, also containing additional agency funding.

In the overall state base budget, the Legislature has passed back-to-back 5% increases for state employees, including the Extension Service, to take effect in July 2023 and September 2024. The Legislature has also adopted a state supplemental budget that funded 75% of our exceptional item ask for the "Keeping Texas Prepared" initiative of the Texas A&M University System.

Between these two pieces of enabling legislation, the Legislature appropriated an increase of roughly \$38 million dollars to our agency budget. This allows the agency an increased ability to respond to current and emerging needs of Texans, to educate communities, and to engage with public and private collaborators. Over the last three months, all agency departments, units, and regional program leads have gone through a comprehensive position prioritization and budget analysis that will inform new hires and new positions that are essential to support the agent network and to provide subject matter expertise.

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Disaster Assessment & Recovery (DAR) Unit

As part of the Keeping Texas Prepared initiative, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service has expanded and realigned our Disaster Assessment and Recovery (DAR) Unit to enhance our programming and response capabilities.

To fulfill the increased responsibilities granted by the Texas Legislature, the DAR unit will restructure to bolster its disaster preparedness, response and recovery capabilities statewide to more closely align its efforts with the state's disaster districts and other Texas

A&M University System Disaster Response and Recovery Agencies including the Texas Division of Emergency Management, TDEM, Texas A&M Forest Service, Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory and the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service.

This includes alignment of our DAR agents into a new organizational and supervisory structure within four geographic areas. In total, DAR plans to add 13 positions. This will increase the total amount of field agents embedded across the state to 27. Additionally, DAR will add four area chiefs who will be assigned to oversee the 27 agents along with a logistics coordinator and recovery coordinator.

Through the strength of our statewide agent network, we continue to operate as a force multiplier, under the direction of Texas Department of Emergency Management, TDEM, to serve the growing needs of Texans in all 254 counties.

This layered, comprehensive AgriLife Extension network positions DAR to offer one of the most unique and effective disaster response infrastructures nationwide. We are grateful to our state leaders for providing resources to strengthen our agency's work in support of local jurisdictions, our sister agencies and FEMA emergency support functions.

The DAR Unit is led by **Dr. Monty Dozier**, who serves as the DAR Program Leader. The first phase of hiring new positions began July 10. The new organizational infrastructure is effective Sept. 1, 2023.

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Volunteerism Updates

AgriLife Extension deeply appreciates the immense support we receive from our dedicated group of volunteers. They play a vital role in identifying issues, helping us plan and execute programs, and serving as strong advocates for our agency. These volunteers are a crucial part of the services we offer, highlighting the need to provide our Extension employees with the necessary tools and resources to effectively lead, manage, and engage with them.

Guiding this effort is **Dr. Laura Huebinger**, our Extension Program Specialist – Volunteer Development. Through the Extension Volunteer Standards program, we are dedicated to ensuring a safe and secure environment for everyone participating in AgriLife Extension programs. This encompasses our clients, volunteers, employees, and the entire agency.

This Summer, we're introducing significant enhancements to our background screening process for non-4-H volunteers. These awaited changes mark an exciting step forward as we implement new database management and training modules tailored for our AgriLife Extension volunteers. These improvements have been made possible through the remarkable collaboration of our Master Volunteer coordinators, the AgriLife Extension Office of Data & Accountability, and the Volunteer Steering Committee.

To facilitate effective communication and access to essential information, Dr. Huebinger and the Volunteer Steering Committee have revamped our agency intranet's Volunteerism

page. This resource hub now houses all related documents, rules, guidelines, and training videos. It serves as a central and valuable repository, enabling agents and specialists to easily locate accurate information to support our volunteers and their impactful efforts across Texas.

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AgriLife Extension Intranet

In 2023, the Texas A&M AgriLife Intranet launched as a collection of integrated Microsoft SharePoint sites that come together in one centralized hub for essential forms, branding materials, guides, event calendars and much more. Currently, the intranet includes already defined spaces for our professional service groups and the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

With nearly 1,800 full time employees across Texas, AgriLife Extension is a very large and diverse organization. With that in mind, our intranet was created to help bring our employees closer together and reduce redundancies in the resources we have available online. This also helps keep our internal documentation and efforts more secure and creates collaborative spaces for agents, specialists, managers and support staff.

The Extension intranet site infrastructure and governance documents were created by AgriLife Extension Strategic Initiatives Lead **Chris Elam**. These guidelines and best practices have been adopted by the AgriLife Intranet Governance committee as the model for future site expansion and hub creation to serve other units, agencies, and departments within Texas A&M AgriLife.

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4-H Youth Development Program Review

As part of our strategic initiatives, we are committed to continuous feedback and analysis of our programming and service opportunities. In 2023, our agency is engaged in two program reviews – one for 4-H Youth Development, and one for Urban Programs.

The Texas 4-H Youth Development program review was conducted from May 1-4, 2023 in a by a review team of 4-H professionals from outside of Texas. The review team included: **Dr. Maria G. Fabregas Janeiro** - Associate Professor and Missouri 4-H Center for Youth Development Senior Director, **Dr. Carrie Stark** - State 4-H Youth Development Director, University of Nevada, Reno, **Dr. Mike Yoder** - Associate Director & State Program Leader, North Carolina State University, and **Ryan Hensley** - Executive Director Tennessee 4-H Foundation.

The review team was selected by **Dr. Courtney Dodd**, Associate Director-Health, Families, and Youth and **Dr. Montza Williams**, Texas State 4-H Program Director. The members of the review team received in advance the following documents: Texas 4-H Clover Guide,

Annual Report, Rules & Guidelines, Directory, and Texas 4-H Financial Management Guide; they also received the agenda and suggested questions for the discussion.

Over the four days of the review, the team traveled from Dallas/Fort Worth through county Extension offices, the Texas 4-H Conference Center, and ended at the AgriLife Extension headquarters in College Station. The review team met with diverse groups during their visit, including TEAFCS, TCAAA, TAE4HYDP, 4-H Conference Center Team, Mason County Extension Agents, Texas 4-H Foundation Staff & Executive Committee of the board, District 4-H Specialists, State 4-H Specialists, Extension Leadership Team, Regional Program Leaders, District Extension Administrators & County Extension Directors, and Department Specialists. In addition to these groups, the program review team was able to meet with Texas 4-H Youth, the Vice Chancellor & Dean of the College of Agriculture & Life Sciences, and the Extension Director.

By May 25th, the review team finalized and delivered a Final Report to Dr. Williams and Dr. Dodd. The Extension Leadership Team met with the review team on Monday, July 17th to discuss the findings of the report and to ask clarifying questions.

In next steps, the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program will work in conjunction with the Extension Leadership Team to build a statewide workgroup with a plan of action on specific opportunities and recommendations we have gleaned from the program review. There will be representatives from each of the Extension professional associations participating in the workgroup as well as county agents and specialists from across Texas.

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Urban Programs Review

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will also conduct an Urban Programs Review in October 2023. The purpose of the Urban Program Review will be to provide an outside perspective into the effectiveness of Texas's Urban Program, with primary focus on our designated 7 urban counties of Harris, Dallas, Tarrant, Bexar, Travis, Fort Bend, and El Paso.

The goal will be to evaluate the program, funding, staffing, outreach and visibility of the programs in these most populous counties. Of Texas' 29.5 million residents, 60% of our total population lives in these 7 counties.

The Urban Programs review team will be comprised of personnel from outside of Texas, many of whom will be identified at the National Urban Extension Leaders conference in Houston, TX, being held from August 8-10, 2023.

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ASRED Report 2023, Virginia Cooperative Extension

Increasing Stewardship of Private Forest Lands, 2009-22

RELEVANCE:

Forests cover more of Virginia than any other use. Because 68% of the Commonwealth's forests are privately owned, private forest landowners (PFLs) are an important link to meet the Commonwealth's goal that "Virginia's natural resources will be enhanced." Regionally, "private forestland stewardship" is a priority issue in the (old) Northern District Forestry and Natural Resources Situation Analysis. Extension's Northern District holds 3.5 million acres of these woodlands. Traditionally, PFLs have been difficult to reach because of their sheer numbers and short ownership tenure. As land continues to be sold and divided into smaller pieces, forestland ownership is turning over. On average, a given piece of woodland will have a new owner every seven years or less. As a result, there is a continual need to educate new landowners and acquaint them with professional assistance availability. Research into landowner decision making highlights the importance of planning, professional assistance and peer influence to increase stewardship while meeting society's demands.

RESPONSE:

A variety of educational offerings target forest landowners with learning and networking opportunities, both directly and indirectly. The annual Landowners' Woods & Wildlife Conference and Forestry & Wildlife Bus Tour showcase good management practices and connect landowners with local natural resource professionals. Virtual programming is delivered through real-time scheduled meetings and YouTube postings with #FifteenMinutesInTheForest and has reached 12,679 individuals since 2020. Peer-to-peer learning is increasingly facilitated through the Virginia Master Naturalist (VMN) Program. Forest management related trainings are offered to several chapters through the Northern District for basic and continuing education training. Another indirect response to meet landowner needs is through real-estate professionals who represent a first point of contact for new landowners. Real Forestry for Real Estate (RFRE) equips real estate professionals with basic forestry knowledge and material to share with new landowners. Additional efforts target landowners through online and printed media such as the On-line Woodland Options Course.

RESULTS:

Due to rapid turnover of landowners in the region, traditional means alone of educating landowners is implausible. Certified Virginia Master Naturalists serve as ambassadors of the Northern District Extension Forestry program reaching several hundred landowners a year through guided walks, exhibits and peer connections. As a result of real-estate professional training, approximately 400 new landowners are reached each year and connected with local resource professionals. An average of 500 landowners, representing approximately 20,000 forested acres, participates in at least one educational offering each year in the Northern District. Participants of management related programs indicated an increase in knowledge and an intention to put practices into place. Follow-up evaluations reveal various implementations such as, completed management plans, controlled invasive plants, improved wildlife habitat and successful timber sales. Approximately 30% of program participants contact a natural resource professional following educational events. This work influences the fact that in 2022, over 119

management plans covering 12,058 acres were developed for and with landowner input and nearly 11,608 acres received active management in the Northern District (VDOF, 2023)

Addressing Underserved Farmer's Needs

Relevance

In Virginia, the number of women reporting as the principal operator on their farm has increased dramatically in the last five years. The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) reported 7,653 farms, totaling 780,688 acres, were run by a female principal operator in 2012. These numbers have increased to 16,456 farms in 2017, farming 2,043,877 acres. Cattle are ranked second in total sales of Virginia farms. Therefore, increasing the knowledge and skills of cattle production for women became the focus of the Women in Agriculture Program Team in 2021. During a post program survey of the 2021 Cattle WISE (Women Increasing Skills and Education) program, attendees stated there was a major need for equipment-specific programming. The 2018 data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that the agricultural sector is still the most dangerous in America with 574 fatalities, including 19 fatalities in Virginia's agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting sectors. Accidents and injuries on the farm are primarily due to interactions with livestock or equipment.

Response

Upon seeing the success of the 2021 Cattle WISE program and acting on the surveyed response to future need for equipment education, the Women in Agriculture Programming Team modified their planning to incorporate and address this need. The program team chose to expand the program into two full days of programming; one day dedicated to Equipment WISE and the second day would be Cattle WISE. The program was held at the Virginia Tech Kentland Farm on October 21 and 22, 2022. The Cattle WISE programming mirrored the previous year (Low Stress Cattle Handling, Reproduction: Breeding and Dystocia, and Beef Quality Assurance-Chuteside), but allowed more time within sessions. The planning team applied for and received a grant from the Virginia Cattle Industry Board (VCIB) to support the CattleWISE program's financial needs. Equipment WISE was designed to focus on: tractor operation, maneuvering trailers, proper tie down of loads, ATV safety, sprayer calibrations, small engine troubleshooting and chainsaw operations. The planning team partnered with the Virginia Tech Pesticide Programs, the Virginia Tech Environmental Health and Farm Agriculture Safety Training Program, Virginia Department of Forestry, ABS Global, the Virginia Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine at Virginia Tech, and the Virginia Tech Kentland Farm to provide hands-on instruction in the previously mentioned areas. Finally, the planning team sought out private industry partners to support the Equipment WISE program's financial needs.

Results

A post program survey of the Cattle WISE program showed nearly 100% of the participants felt the information and activities met or exceeded their expectations and nearly 95% of those surveyed stated they would be utilizing Low Stress Cattle Handling techniques in their operations in the next year. When asked about the BQA training and chuteside activities, nearly 95% of participants stated that the presenters and information provided either met or exceeded their expectations. Finally, when asked to rate the Reproduction rotation and activities, 100% of participants felt the presenters, activities, and information provided was excellent. One individual stated "I participated last year and I liked that this year was more in depth! It was good to have the extra time for cattle."

At the conclusion of the Equipment WISE program, participants were surveyed about their experience. Over 95% of participants stated that the Trailers: Backing and Driving, Securing Your Load and Tractors: Driving and Operation, PTO's and Implements either met or exceeded their expectations and ranked the information provided as excellent. These types of results showed the planning team the value of adding Equipment to the already established Cattle WISE programming. Furthermore, over 88% of participants stated that the Chainsaw Station was beneficial and informative. Due to the nature of this topic, and holding safety as our highest priority it was difficult to make this a fully hands on experience. Our goal is to work to make this station more interactive and applicable to the participants. Finally, 92% of individuals stated that their confidence level in the given topic areas had increased due to the programming provided during Equipment WISE. One individual stated that she was "excited to show off to my dad!" and "I'll be promoting others to participate in future events." During the two days, there were 34 participants from 21 counties in Virginia.

Teen Summit: Empowering Teen Voice

Relevance: Teens are the next generation, and in order to ensure we have a commitment to diversity and inclusion in the future, it is important that we engage them in a movement towards an inclusive, civil society for all individuals. Teens have often mentioned that they don't have a safe place to discuss issues that are weighing heavy on their minds, such as, racial and gender inequality, environmental justice, food insecurity, educational inequality, women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and religious equity. We continue to see a growing need for social justice programs in youth development organizations. With issues facing the United States and Virginia around social justice related topics, youth are interested, empowered, and looking to help solve these problems in their communities.

Response: To address this concern and need, Virginia 4-H held a spring and winter Teen Summit event to provide teens with an avenue to discuss issues important to them and inspire them to take charge by empowering them with the skills they need to turn ideas into action. Not only are they empowered to make changes in their communities, this program is teen led and driven, giving teens an opportunity to create a summit that empowers and meets the needs of their age group and peers; all while allowing them to develop and practice critical life skills.

Anchored in the InclusiveVT mission and its diversity strategic plan. These opportunities specifically prepared the participants for service (consistent with Ut Prosim) through an

understanding of issues of identity, the human condition, and life chances. The purpose of the Teen Summit program is to educate and make teens aware of what social justice is, teach them how to advocate for issues they are passionate about, and allow them to consider the most effective ways to make a positive difference in their communities.

Results: Teen Summit created an opportunity for 90 youth to experience one of the Teen Summit events during the 2022 year. Of these youth, 41 participated in the Spring 2022 Weekend Event, and 49 teens participated in the Winter 2022 event. The event was planned and created for teens by teens. 10 teens and 5 adults worked together to plan the events. The teen leadership team created the event with organizing speakers, a panelist, workshops, etc. They initiated and planned all programming and events during the weekend, as well as marketing materials, logistics and other information needed to make the event work.

Participants at all events were asked to complete an evaluation and the responses received were quite notable. During the Spring and Winter 2022 Summit, 96% of the teens indicated that they learned something new, 85% agreed or strongly agreed that the Summit was a safe and brave safe, 89% felt motivated to make a difference, and 85% learned something that they will use in the community. One teen participant responded when asked how the weekend impacted you, “this event has done so much for my confidence and self esteem, I can not thank you all enough.” When specially asked what they will do back in their communities as a result of their participation in Summit, one teen stated “I would like to implement discussion in my own 4-H clubs around social justice issues.” Another noted, “I would love to implement more safe and brave spaces in my community where youth can openly discuss and be themselves.”

During both the Spring and Winter Teen Summits, the passion areas among the teens that were most highly noted were: Mental Health (82%), LGBTQ+ Rights (77%), Women’s Rights (76%), Racial Justice (67%), Inclusivity in 4-H (65%), Environmental Justice (63%), Disability Inclusion (56%), and Education Equity (53%). Youth were asked to self-identify with the champion groups identified by the National 4-H Council - Access, Equity, and Belonging Taskwork. Of these, 72% identified as belonging to the mental health and wellbeing group, 66% identified as LGBTQ+, 35% identified as racial/ethnic youth, African American, and 18% identified as youth with disabilities. Only 7% of youth who attended the Teen Summit events, did not identify with any of the champion groups.

Administrative Changes:

Dr. Mike Gutter was hired as Director of Virginia Cooperative Extension and Associate Dean for the College. Dr. Gutter previously was at University of Florida where he served as Associate Dean for Extension the previous 8 years. Dr. Robert Corley has been named the Interim Dean and Administrator for 1890 Extension at Virginia State University; he also serves as the Associate Vice Provost for Academic Affairs.

Lonnie Johnson’s position was elevated to Senior Associate Director of Field Operations. Search underway for Assistant Director Community Engaged Health.

Budget: The state budget is still in negotiations at this time.