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BLUE LETTER

December 2022

No. 3848



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Happy Holidays and Thank You Everyone!

At the end of the year, I like to reflect on numbers, and thought I would share some interesting ones with you this month. Rather than focus on impact and contact numbers, I thought I might reflect on our first full year back in business so to speak since the pandemic.

For example, this past fiscal year, our first real full year of Extension activities and using Workday, our Finance Office processed over 62,000 business transactions. Of these around 45,000 were “not automated.” In other words, a human touch or approval was involved. This number includes around 6,422 travel requests. Most of these processes were conducted in a timely manner which is something that the Finance Office can be proud of. In Sponsored Programs, CES applied for over 350 grants since 2020 and obtained an additional \$26 million dollars in funding for Extension programs and related activities.

Human Resources has been busy as well as they have processed the hiring of 75 full time and over 100 part time positions, including 5 new faculty. These numbers only reflect new folks, not transfers to new positions.

I am especially proud and excited about some of our new hires out in the counties. I do not think many get the chance to see how hard our District Directors work to maintain the elusive 100% employment out in their counties, but it’s a challenge in an organization of our size.

In addition to filling current positions, we have opened 4 new county positions in the state this year. We have another 7-8 counties that are in various processes of considering new agents. This number is significant in that it reflects county support and the value that county government is placing on its agents.

To do all this hiring and conduct business, my office alone has formed at least 25 committees this year. These include promotion, search, and award committees and chairs. I want to personally thank all of you who when asked were quick to respond yes with your willingness to serve. This process and service is essential to the health of our organization.

Continued on page 2

INSIDE SCOOP

2. Arkansas Food Forum
3. Excellence Awards
4. Leadership Log
5. Soybean Science
5. Bumpers College Animal Science Faculty
6. Tech Corner
8. Steers and Beers
8. Credit Union Membership...And much more!



Local Foods Team Participated in Inaugural Arkansas Food Forum

On Oct. 20, two members of extension's Local, Regional & Safe Foods team joined other local food system leaders as panelists for the inaugural Arkansas Food Forum. The event, hosted by the [Arkansas Local Food Network](#) at the [Arkansas Regional Innovation Hub](#), was well-attended by growers, food business owners, industry professionals and others involved in the state's food system. In addition to networking and learning opportunities, guests enjoyed delicious local food from [The Root Cafe](#) and drinks from local breweries, including [Stone's Throw Brewing](#).



Delicious "local food" catered by the Root Café.

Panelists included Dr. Amanda Philyaw Perez, associate professor and extension food systems and safety specialist; Rip Weaver, extension food systems and safety program technician; Dr. Karen Keller Ballard, chief

executive officer of [B & B Legacy Farms](#); Karen Reynolds, grants and program manager for the [Arkansas Department of Agriculture](#); Michelle Shope, director of food sourcing and logistics for the [Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance](#); Jeremy Adams, executive director of the [Arkansas Farmers' Market Association](#); Anna Sawyer, community garden coordinator for the North Little Rock Community Garden Program; and Brandon Gordon, owner of [Five Acre Farms](#). Ruth Canada, engagement and outreach program office for [Heifer USA](#), moderated the event. Read the full story [here](#). ■



Panelists included Dr. Amanda Philyaw Perez and Rip Weaver who answered questions during the Arkansas Food Forum.

Continued from page 1

A lot has happened this past year in 4-H. I am extremely pleased to report that according to our best estimates, our 4-H enrollment has increased around 28% or 30 youth per county since the height of the pandemic. I know that this is the result of tireless efforts of our county agents and staff and all those involved in 4-H programming. As most of you have heard by now, our first search for a new 4-H leader has fallen short. I want to thank Dr. Angie Freel for her service to the State of Arkansas and the Cooperative Extension Service. We wish her all the best in her chosen new pursuits. Having said that the search will continue

and in fact is ongoing to find a new pool of candidates for interviews for our Assistant Vice President – 4-H and Youth Development position. This is one among many hiring goals I have for the coming year - more on that next month. I anticipate some new and exciting things happening within the Division of Agriculture in the coming year and look forward to working with you all.

In the meantime, I wish everyone happy holidays and thank you all for the hard work you have done this past year. I hope that you all take time off to enjoy the season with friends and family. ■

2022 Extension Employee Conference Excellence Awards



Extension, part of the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture recognized employees for these innovations and other examples of excellence. Winners were announced Dec. 5 during the service's annual employee conference at the state office in Little Rock.

Bob Scott, extension director, commended this year's winners for their "innovative spirit, their dedication and commitment" to the Division of Agriculture's mission of strengthening agriculture, communities, and families by connecting trusted research to the adoption of best practices.

This year's winners, who were nominated and selected by their peers. Read the entire article and details [here](#). ■



Employee of the Year – Mike McClintock (left) receives award from Dr. Scott.



Above: Early Career Award for Program Technician/Associate – Heather Wingo.



Left: Early Career Award for Classified Employee – Shauna McPherson.



Early Career Award for County Extension Faculty – Caramie Edwards.



Mildred and Liz Childs Professional Development Fund Scholarship co-winner Alta Lockley.



Mildred and Liz Childs Professional Development Fund Scholarship co-winner Katie Cullum.



County Team Award. Project: Main Street Learning Park. Pictured from left to right: Jeffrey Works, Pam Pugh, Debbie DeRossitte (retired), Brenda Cox, and Craig Allen.



Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Award. Pictured from left to right: Emilee Moody, Leigh Ann Bullington, Heather Wingo, Joy West, Millie Collins, Bryan Mader (back row). Not pictured: Julian Carpenter and Valerie Turner.



State Team Award. Project: Advancing New Technologies for Feral Hog Control. Pictured from left to right: Jason Davis, Kenny Simon, Amy Simpson. Not pictured: Megan Billson, Jennifer Caraway, Shawn Clark, Rachel Lipsey, Rebecca McPeake, Michael Paskewitz.



Leadership Lunch and Learn – Crucial Conversations

A crucial conversation is a discussion characterized by high stakes, differing opinions and strong emotions. Crucial conversations are often typical daily interactions as opposed to planned, high-level meetings. These conversations can have a huge impact on your life. Lisa Davis, program associate-leadership, reviews [tips on how to handle these conversations](#). ■



Leadership Lunch and Learn New Book Review Series for 2023

In 2023, we are excited to be hosting a book review series, featuring leadership experts from across the south. Each presenter will review a leadership development book. The Book Review series will give you the opportunity to hear the “Cliff Notes” version of many popular leadership development books. The series will kick off on Jan. 25, 2023, with Good to Great by Jim Collins, reviewed by Dr. Julie Robinson, Associate Professor-Leadership. Register [here](#). ■

iLEAD--Leadership Skills – A Work in Progress

by Renee Threlfall, Research Scientist, UA System Food Science Department. As a member of iLEAD Cohort II, I was challenged to summarize the virtual session from Nov. 18, 2022. Read blog post [here](#). ■

Applications Open for LeadAR Class 20

LeadAR, the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture’s leadership program, is accepting applications for its next class of leaders. For Arkansans who are passionate about the futures of their communities, LeadAR provides an in-depth learning experience covering important economic and social issues impacting the state. The 18-month LeadAR program will include two-day seminars in different regions of the state on topics such as infrastructure and public health, natural resources, public policy and media, community and economic development, row crop agriculture and livestock, poultry and local foods agriculture. Monthly virtual seminars will also cover topics including ethical leadership, communication and storytelling, and diversity, equity, belonging and inclusion.

“Through the LeadAR program, participants receive hands-on experience in skill development and gain a better understanding of local issues,” said Julie Robinson, associate professor and LeadAR director. “Participants see policy impacts at the local, state and national level and gain a better understanding of the legislative process.”

DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

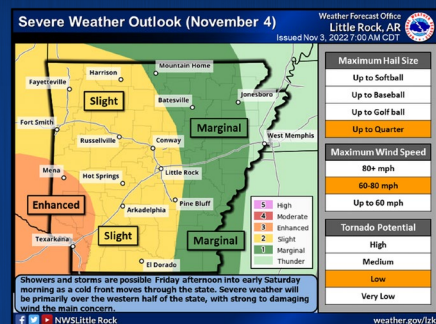
STRENGTHENING ARKANSAS COMMUNITIES

Apply today! CLASS 20 DEADLINE: 2/24/23

The deadline for applications is Feb. 24, 2023, and the application can be found at bit.ly/leadar20app. The LeadAR Advisory Council will conduct interviews from March 6-17, and all applicants will be notified of the Class 20 selections by March 31, 2023. ■

Sign up for Severe Weather Outlooks

Whether it’s tornado season or wildfire weather, it’s good to have a heads up before the sirens sound. If you’d like to be added to the email distribution list to receive severe weather outlooks from the National Weather Service, please email Mary Hightower at mhightower@uada.edu.



Please note that these emails are NOT severe weather warnings. Monitor your phone or media outlets for warnings and watches.

Farm Bureau Convention in Hot Springs

The Soybean Science Challenge (SSC) hosted an educational booth at the Arkansas State Farm Bureau Convention in the Hot Springs Convention Center Nov. 30 – Dec. 1. SSC Coordinator Diedre Young handed out soybean promotional items, lesson plans, resource guides and educational brochures to more than 200 participants. Young also encouraged attendees to tell teachers to use soybeans in classroom research by using the free resources available on extension's 'soywhatsup' website. Young emphasized that her job is to make teachers' jobs easier and that the Soybean Science Challenge has all the resources needed to make that happen.

The Soybean Science Challenge is a farmer-funded, statewide high school education program that seeks to increase student knowledge about the value of Arkansas soybeans to the Arkansas economy, the labor force and to feed and fuel the world.

The Soybean Science Challenge is a partnership between the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board and the U of A Cooperative Extension Service.

For more information, contact Dr. Julie Robinson, jrobinson@uada.edu or Diedre Young dyoung@uada.edu. ■



Texas Science Teachers Association Convention

SSC Coordinator Diedre Young also hosted a Soybean Science Challenge booth at the Texas Science Teachers Association Convention in Dallas, Texas, Nov. 8-11. Young interacted with more than 3,000 teachers from across the state. She encouraged them to use soybeans in classroom research by using the free resources available on Extension's 'soywhatsup' website. Young also presented a workshop on her lesson, "The Dicamba Debate."



For more information, contact Dr. Julie Robinson, jrobinson@uada.edu or Diedre Young dyoung@uada.edu. ■

Soybean Science Challenge Coordinator Diedre Young visits with teachers at the Texas Science Teachers Association Convention.



Connect with University in Mexico

Mike Looper and Daniel Rivera recently presented to a collegiate cattlemen's group through an informational webinar in November which connected students and faculty between the U of A and Universidad Autonoma de Nuevo Leon (UANL) in Monterrey, Mexico.



Mike Looper

Looper is a professor and head of the Department of Animal Science in the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences, and Rivera is director of the Southwest Research and Extension Center, a 1,185-acre laboratory managed by the UA System Division of Agriculture in Hope. After being

contacted by the group in Mexico, Looper and Rivera planned a webinar via Facebook Live to share about the department, research opportunities and experience among faculty members, as well as the background of the SWREC.

Rivera was contacted by the group at UANL after presenting during an Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service webinar in July, where he spoke about raising cattle in a drought. The university group, a club named Charolais-Charbray Juvenil, saw the webinar, which led to questions about cow management during droughts.



Daniel Rivera

UANL students and faculty have proposed plans to visit Arkansas next spring to tour the SWREC, various livestock operations and Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station farms and labs associated with animal science in Fayetteville.

(Excerpt from U of A Bumpers College news release, December 5, 2022; Robbie Edwards). ■

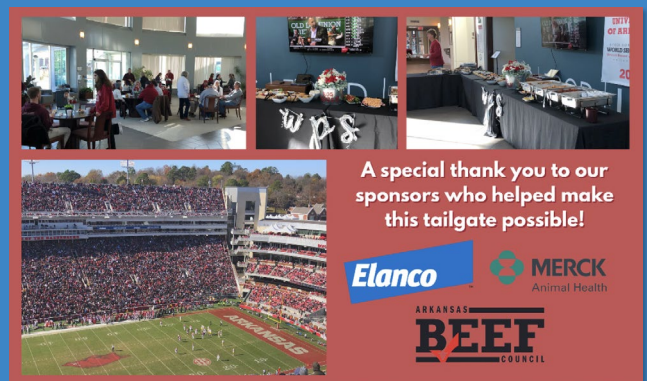
Animal Science Co-Hosted Tailgate

Animal Science co-hosted a tailgate for the Arkansas vs LSU game. Our goal was to bring together alumni and stakeholders that work in the area of animal health and well-being. This included Elanco, Merck, AR Beef Council and former and current Animal Science students who have or are pursuing veterinarian degrees. We had a great turnout and hope to bring the boot back home next year!

Departmental Notables

- Congratulations to Kenny Simon and Dr. Kathi Jogan on their recent promotions.
- Simon has been a program associate since 2007 and was promoted to Instructor, effective November 1, in the Cooperative Extension Service Animal Science Unit.

- Jogan was promoted to Teaching Assistant Professor effective Oct. 16. She has been with Animal Science for over 15 years. ■





Is Your Computer END-OF-LIFE? Time to Order a New One?

Now is the time to check your computer and see if it is end-of-life (EOL). To remain in compliance with our standards, all computers more than five years old must be turned into the warehouse for M&R. You can refer to the CES Computer Purchasing\Replacement Information located [here](#) for complete details:

How to determine if your computer is EOL?

Locate your service tag number (Dell) or your serial number (Surface/MAC) and follow the instructions found on our [website](#).

Please take the time to check each of your computers. If they are five years old or older, you need to plan to get them turned into the warehouse with a MISC 374D.

The computer order request form is located [here](#).
The MISC 374D disposal template is located [here](#).

Have questions?

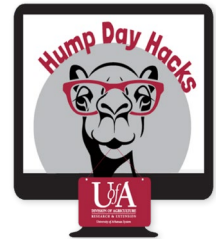
Contact the helpdesk for assistance – callcenter@uada.edu.

Zoom Pro Tip – Out of Office Message

Taking some time off around the holidays? Let your coworkers know you will be unavailable. With Personal Note in the Zoom client, you can set a message that will display when others try to send you a chat message. The Zoom Support site has instructions for setting your Personal Note from the desktop client or a mobile device.

Hacks from Hump Day

Have you missed Hump Day Hacks this year? Review resources on the Hump Day Hacks webpage.



Hump Day Hacks returns Jan. 25, 2023.
[Register](#) today! ■

2022 TECH TUESDAYS WEBINARS

Have you missed any past Tech Tuesday webinars or want to join future webinars? Check out the recordings and other resources on the [Tech Tuesday Blog page](#). More Tech Tuesday topics coming soon! Did you miss December's Best of 2022 Tech Tuesday? Check out the [recording and resources](#).



Animal Science

Paul Noland Graduate Student Awards Competition

Department of Animal Science graduate student candidates, both M.S. and Ph.D., will present their research at the 2023 Dr. Paul Noland Graduate Student Awards Competition on Jan. 12. The competition evaluates students in three areas: abstract, oral presentation and curriculum vitae. The winner will be awarded a \$750 travel stipend for regional and national research conventions. The award commemorates

the legacy of Dr. Paul R. Noland, an emeritus professor of animal science at the University of Arkansas. Noland served as head of the Department of Animal Science from 1988 until his retirement in 1994. He joined the faculty in 1951 after receiving his doctoral degree from Cornell University. Dr. Noland passed in 2015 at age 91. Competition winners will be announced in next month's column. ■

Animal Science Hosts Arkansas Cattlemen's Leadership Course

The Department of Animal Science hosted the fourth session of the Arkansas Cattlemen's Leadership Course (ACLC) Nov. 7-9 in Fayetteville. Participants learned about the processes their beef product undergo, from harvest to plate. In understanding those processes, participants will be better educated to tell the industry story at the meat case or an online blog as necessary. The program focused on beef cuts and the processes necessary to provide retail meat case products. Members of the class participated in processing their steer and were involved in a sensory and beef tenderness demonstration. Thanks to Drs. Kelly Vierck and Janeal Yancey, Tim Johnson (Manager, UA System Division of Agriculture Red Meat Abattoir), and staff/students in Animal Science and personnel from Tyson Foods for coordinating this event. This program was funded by the Arkansas Beef Council. ■



Steers and Beers

The Pulaski County Extension Office recently partnered with Stone's Throw Brewing to host a unique event hoping to showcase both businesses. The program "Steers and Beers" was designed to educate consumers about the beef industry and food safety in a relaxed atmosphere while also helping generate revenue for a local business. This allowed participants to freely ask questions or get up to go purchase beverages if they were inclined to do so. Dubbed a how to cook steak workshop "Steers and Beers" gave participants the opportunity to taste test the difference between grass fed and grain finished beef by serving sliders of both varieties.

Participants were served samples of different cuts (flank, chuck eye, flat iron, and sirloin), prepared in various ways to bring out the best in those cuts. The night included discussion of the importance of safely prepping and cooking those cuts of beef, talks on cost per cut, and trivia about Arkansas agriculture. ■



Marinated fajita meat being cooked during the Steers and Beers program.



Left to right: Andrew Bolton and Alicia Boatwright presenting during the Steers and Beers program.

Credit Union Membership and Benefits

Did you know that all CES employees: current and retired, immediate family members of CES employees: current and retired, and volunteers of CES departments and organizations are eligible for membership with CESFCU? And that once you are a member you are always a member even if you change jobs?

Savings

CESFCU offers savings products right for you with competitive rates: regular, vacation, holiday and other special savings accounts for that project or goal as well as 6- and 12-month Certificate accounts.

- Grow your savings with a limited-time CD Special:

12-month CD for 3.35% APY & 18-month CD for 3.75% APY.

Lending

CESFCU offers multiple loan products at low, competitive rates: share and certificate secured, unsecured/ personal signature, new, used, & older used vehicle, new and used boat/other personal watercrafts, recreational vehicle/fifth wheel, ATVs and side by sides, motorcycles, trailers, and farm equipment.

- CESFCU is cutting rates: Refinance your Auto, Boat, Motorcycle/ATV, RV, Trailer, etc.: Cut Rates Up to 1.50% for 5-Year-Old & Newer Collateral or Cut Rates Up to 1.00% for 6–10-Year-Old Collateral. ■

Grants & Contracts

PROJECT TITLE	AWARD AMOUNT	PI	GRANTING AGENCY
Marion Cty Youth Leadership 2023	4,000	Billie Collins	South Shore Foundation
Fostering Resilience and Ecosystem Services in Landscapes by Integrating Diverse Perennial Circular Systems (Year 2)	47,820	James Lee Mitchell	University of Wisconsin - Madison
Evaluation of Dyna-Gro rice varieties in Arkansas	101,940	Jarrod Hardke	Nutrien Ag Solutions
Development of Disease Mgmt Strategies 2023	35,605	Travis Faske	Arkansas Peanut Growers Association
Developing practical solutions for taproot decline (TRD) management	50,000	Travis Faske	Louisiana State University
Effects of air cleansing on reducing ammonia & improving growth performance in broilers	60,806	Yi Liang	CerroZone LLC
TOTAL AWARDS FOR NOVEMBER 2022: \$300,171			

Benefits Corner

Benefits Quick Reference Chart

- UMR Medical Coverage: 1-888-438-6105 (Classic, Premier, or Health Savings plans). List of providers: www.umar.com. Click on "Find a provider," "Medical," "Provider Network" - select "University of Arkansas System"
- MedImpact Prescription Drugs: 1-800-788-2949
- Flexible Spending Account (FSA): UMR Benny Card / 1-866-868-0145
- Arkansas Blue Cross Blue Shield (AR BCBS):
 - 1-888-223-4999. List of Dentists: <http://www.blueadvantagearkansas.com/portal/uasidental/Default.aspx>
- Eye Med: 1-866-800-5457 www.eyemed.com
- Retirement Issues:
 - Fidelity – 1-800-343-0860
 - TIAA-CREF – 1-800-842-2776
 - APERS – 1-800-682-7377 (Not Available for new enrollments)
 - ATRS – 1-800-666-2877 (Not Available for new enrollments)
- UA Employees eligible for retirement should provide The Benefits Team with a minimum of ninety (90) days advanced notice and are urged to retire on the last working day of the month.
- Human Resources Benefits: yourbenefits@uada.edu. ■



Accessibility Corner

Not everyone can see color. Most sighted users - even people with 20/20 vision - need enough contrast between text and its background to be able to read your content easily.

Having high contrast in your design is even more important for users who have low vision or who are colorblind.

By making sure your content has good color contrast, you can make sure that all users can easily read it.

Good color contrast combinations:

- Black on white
- White on purple
- Yellow on black

Bad color contrast combinations:

- White on orange
- Red on green
- Purple on black

How can I check my color contrast?

It is easy to check color contrast on your webpage or document, and there are several excellent resources to help. We recommend these tools:

- [WebAIM Color Contrast Checker](#)
- [Color Contrast Accessibility Validator](#)
- [Adobe Color Contrast Checker](#)

Have accessibility questions? Contact Madison Ellis or accessibility@uada.edu. ■

Personnel Changes

Welcome Aboard:

Bailey Graham – 4-H Program Assistant, Benton County

Rena Blackmon – Administrative Specialist III, Saline County

Vanessa Lewis – Program Associate, Community, Professional & Economic Development, Little Rock

