

BLUE LETTER

The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service Monthly Letter

No. 3769 • May 2016

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Last month, I had the chance to visit with many of you at the three district meetings. It was a great opportunity for me to not only provide updates but also to meet many of our new agents. Some were so new, they'd only been on the job a day or two.

Those fresh faces were the proof of the hard work done to re-engage counties in our finances. Those efforts made with your quorum courts, when fully realized, will mean an additional \$1.5 million for our county-level staffing.

Even with that success, our challenges aren't over. The state Legislature finished its fiscal session with flat funding approved for higher education.

The Division is also facing challenges in terms of the rising cost of health care, about which you received notification.

However, we've seen a lot of bright spots. The governor has called upon non-formula entities like the Division of Agriculture to find ways to better demonstrate their value to the state. Formula funding does what its name implies – there's a formula to distribute money to our state two- and four-year colleges. For entities like the Division of Agriculture, there has been no formula and no way to equate our educational efforts to the regular two- and four-year colleges.

Even with the challenges we have faced and will continue to face, we are still strong – kept strong by our continued investment in people who are carrying out great programs. Thanks for all you do in helping the people of Arkansas.

– Tony Windham

Sharp County 4-H club honors men and women in military

Rebels 4-H Club of Sharp County recently had a very special guest speaker and proud 4-H dad, Chief Warrant Officer Beau Dean, who was preparing for deployment. Dean spoke to the group about jobs performed by men and women in the military and about what it is like to be separated from your loved ones.

To honor the troops, the club collected care package items: shampoo, toothbrushes, deodorant and other toiletry items, along with hard candy, snack foods and more. The club put together 13 care packages full of goodies along with handmade thank you cards and mail to troops in Afghanistan.



4-H members putting together care packages. Back row: Marley C., Landon N., Ben W., Kenzie M. and Taci H. Front row: Austin W., Briley W., Graci H., Blakely W. and Mallory M.

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DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

University of Arkansas,
United States Department of
Agriculture, and County
Governments Cooperating

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DR. TONY WINDHAM
Associate Vice President for
Agriculture - Extension and
Director, Cooperative Extension Service

Division personnel, work featured on AETN's 'AgriArkansas'

If you hadn't already discovered this, the Arkansas Educational Television Network has been featuring Division personnel since the program began airing last year. A few shows you might take a few minutes to watch:

- April 2015 – **Stacey McCullough**, interim assistant director - Community and Economic Development, talking about AgriTourism. http://www.aetn.org/programs/agriarkansas/april_2015
- June 2015 – **Jennie Popp**, professor - AgriBusiness and Agricultural Economics; Tamara Walkingstick, associate director - Arkansas Forest Resources Center; and former extension agent Melissa Beck talk about women in agriculture. http://www.aetn.org/programs/agriarkansas/june_2015
- September 2015 – **John Payne**, retired extension agent, talking about River Valley agriculture. http://www.aetn.org/programs/agriarkansas/september_2015
- October 2015 – **Vic Ford**, director of the Southwest Research and Extension Center, talks about agriculture on the Gulf Coastal Plain. http://www.aetn.org/programs/agriarkansas/october_2015
- December 2015 – **Dustan Clark**, extension veterinarian, talks about avian flu in the segment on agriculture in the Ozarks. Harrison Pittman, director of the National Agricultural Law Center, is a panelist. http://www.aetn.org/programs/agriarkansas/december_2015
- March 2016 – This edition focuses on the work of the Cooperative Extension Service in Arkansas, with interviews and discussion with **Tony Windham**, associate vice president - Agriculture-Extension; **Joe Waldrum**, recently retired as head of the LeadAR program; **Vic Ford**; **Chuck Wilson**, director of the Northeast Research and Extension Center; and **Kelly Bryant**, director of the Southeast Research and Extension Center. Just-retired Clay County Extension Staff Chair **Andy Vangilder** talks about resistant pigweed. http://www.aetn.org/programs/agriarkansas/march_2016
- **John Clark's** overview of the Division's fruit breeding efforts will be among the features in an upcoming 'AgriArkansas.' ■



Agents team up with KUAF for series on Ozark agriculture

Thumbs up to Benton County's Johnny Gunsaulis and Neal Mays for establishing a partnership with KUAF, Fayetteville's NPR affiliate, to do a series on Ozark agriculture. KUAF featured the series as its Community Spotlight. There were 18 segments as of May 1. You can find the segments linked from the media resources page at uaex.edu: <http://uaex.edu/media-resources/news/>. ■



Care package items and cards collected for troops deployed to Afghanistan.

Sharp County 4-H club honors men and women in military (cont.)

Since sending the packages, 4-H members have received thank you cards from the troops. One such card read: "Thanks for all the wonderful letters and stuff. It always makes our day to get something in mail call. Often getting a small gift or letter is the highlight of any soldier's day or week. Your letters help remind us why we are here and connect us with home. God bless."

The club also made a display for the courthouse with photos of family members and friends who are serving or who have served in the military. ■

Financial Literacy Month proclamation



On behalf of the Jump\$tart Coalition, a proclamation was signed by Gov. Asa Hutchinson to officially declare April Financial Literacy Month in the state of Arkansas. Pictured left to right: Chad Kauffman, Erin Patterson, Heather Savage, Kris Bertelsen, Governor Asa Hutchinson, Marsha Masters, Dr. Linda Kyees, Mary Beth Sanders, Pulaski County extension agent - family and consumer sciences, and Dr. Mary Ann Campbell; not pictured Laura Hendrix, assistant professor - family and consumer sciences.

Call for Nominations for Extension Excellence Awards

Nominations are now being solicited for the Extension Excellence Awards. Don't miss this opportunity to recommend a deserving co-worker, team or program effort for recognition. Please review the award categories and details at <http://www.uaex.edu/extension-policies/personnel/awards/cespl-74.aspx>.

Beginning this year, nominations will be submitted online at <http://forms.uaex.edu/awards>.

- You must create a login and password for the submission site.
- You can submit one nomination per award category. If you need to submit multiple nominations in the same category, you will have to create a second account.
- Text boxes are limited to 3,200 characters and spaces.
- You will receive an email message when you submit your nomination. Jay Smith in ANR will receive an email message for each submission.
- You will be able to edit your nomination after submission (up until the deadline below). Email confirmation will be sent for edits.
- Resubmission of a non-awarded nomination is acceptable and encouraged. Please submit it using the site.
- Paper/email submissions will not be accepted.
- **Submissions are due by close of business on Tuesday, May 31, 2016.**

For technical issues with the site, please contact Wilma Lewis at wlewis@uaex.edu.

For questions regarding nomination submissions or the guidelines, contact Jay Smith (jhsmith@uaex.edu) or Amy Hedges (ahedges@uaex.edu).

We look forward to receiving your submission. ■

4-H makes a splash at the Arkansas 4-H SeaPerch Challenge

On April 2, about 60 Arkansas 4-H members from around the state met at the C.A. Vines 4-H Center to participate in the first-ever Arkansas 4-H SeaPerch Challenge, organized by Rick Fields, Arkansas 4-H science and curriculum coordinator.

Fields describes the SeaPerch program as “an innovative aquatic engineering program that provides 4-H'ers with the opportunity to learn about robotics, marine engineering, tool safety and technical procedures through building an underwater remotely operated vehicle, or ROV, as part of a STEM curriculum.



4-H'ers from around the state participated in the Arkansas 4-H SeaPerch Challenge.

During the Arkansas 4-H SeaPerch Challenge, teams of 4-H'ers were tasked with deploying their ROVs to accomplish various missions and maneuvers within a competitive setting. This year's competition featured two aquatic field events and a poster competition. Throughout the competition, 4-H'ers demonstrated problem-solving skills, teamwork and technical competency. Congratulations to the two first-place teams!

- Senior 4-H division: The M.C. Tech Sirens of Monroe County – Kira Jefferson, Zainab Shah, Mae York and Sue York; coached by Valerie Turner, Monroe County extension agent - family and consumer sciences.
- Junior 4-H division: The Johnson County Atlantis team – Abby Frizzell, Ant'Erica Green, Karissa Johnson, Logan Johnson, Savannah Loving and Frank Tollison; coached by Jeanie Rowbotham, Johnson County extension agent - 4-H.

In addition to collecting trophies, these two teams will be competing against youth from all over the U.S. at the Sixth National SeaPerch Challenge May 20-21 at Louisiana State University.

When discussing her team's experience with the SeaPerch program, Rowbotham said: “They were excited to compete in a statewide STEM competition and eager to learn more about robotics. It was amazing to see how this group of young people worked together to learn something completely new to them. I was truly impressed with their hard work and diligence.”

Turner made similar remarks, saying that “Our kids worked very hard as a team to pull it all together. We are looking forward to the national competition and representing Arkansas 4-H to the best of our abilities.” ■

Arkansas State University honors Craighead County Master Gardeners

Craighead County Master Gardeners were honored to receive the Distinguished Service Award presented by the Arkansas State University College of Agriculture and Technology at their awards banquet on April 19. Nomination for the award, which is given for outstanding service to the college throughout the year, is made by a faculty member and then voted upon by the entire faculty of the college. The Craighead County Master Gardener program is the first group to be recognized with the Distinguished Service Award. A permanent plaque recognizing the Master Gardeners will be displayed in the Hall of Honor at the College of Agriculture and Technology Building, with a duplicate given to Craighead County Master Gardeners to display at the Craighead County Extension Office.



Master Gardener-sanctioned projects in conjunction with the A-State Horticulture program include the Horticulture Display Garden, the Greenhouse and Floriculture FFA CDE. Craighead County Master Gardeners have also provided over \$14,000 in scholarships to deserving students in the Horticulture program at Arkansas State University. ■

Extension on YouTube

Views	Title
35,920	How to Build A Rain Barrel to Protect Water Quality former county agent John Pennington
46,349	Song Birds Wildlife Specialist Becky McPeake
148,866	Pruning Crapemyrtles Horticulture Specialist Jim Robbins

BENEFITS CORNER

Arkansas Employee Assistance Program

The Arkansas Employee Assistance Program, AEAP, is a benefit provided at no cost to you by Extension because we are committed to the well-being of valued employees. The program is designed to assist in the identification and resolution of employee problems adversely affecting job performance. AEAP provides counseling, information and referral for employees and their immediate family members.

The AEAP is:

- Short-term, solution-focused counseling
- Individual coaching sessions typically 30 to 45 minutes in length
- Offered by telephone or at several locations throughout the state
- Accessed without using your annual or sick leave
- Completely confidential
- Free

AEAP sessions, either by telephone or office visit, during working hours using official Extension time are coordinated through your supervisor, so this is a less confidential process than sessions scheduled outside working hours.

For an appointment during working hours, submit an [EBEN-327](#), Request for Leave form, and obtain your supervisor's approval in advance. For sessions held at the AEAP offices, you are required to bring a return-to-work slip from the AEAP to your supervisor. With this procedure, the session is not recorded on the classified employee time sheet or Banner leave report as it is considered documented official time.

For appointments or AEAP locations, call 501-686-2588 or 800-542-6021. ■

What's new in publications?
Find out at:

<http://www.uaex.edu/publications/new.aspx>

Meet the *new* employees!



Shannon Autrey
County Extension Agent -
Family and Consumer Sciences
Conway County

- **What's your background?**

I received my undergraduate degree and master's degree from the University of Central Arkansas. I also completed my dietetic internship

there and am a registered and licensed dietitian.

Following college, I worked about nine years for the Arkansas Department of Health in the WIC program.

- **What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?**

In my previous job, I provided high-risk nutrition counseling for pregnant and postpartum women, infants and children up to the age of five. I also managed the breastfeeding peer counseling program for a seven-county area. I became a board-certified lactation consultant in 2013. That job gave me the opportunity to work with various teams and in many different settings, which I think will be beneficial in my career as a county agent.

- **What are one or two things you would like your colleagues to know about you?**

I've loved Extension for many years. I was a Clover Bud and continued in 4-H until I graduated high school.

- **What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?**

There is so much to learn! I plan to take advantage of as many opportunities as possible to increase my knowledge and skills in all areas of Extension. I'd like to become confident enough in food preservation and canning to offer at least one workshop in that area before my first year is over.

- **What brought you to Extension? What was it about Extension that you value?**

I came to Extension because it felt like coming home. After working outside of the county I lived in for several years, I realized that I wanted to be able to give more back to the community and county than I had been able to do with my previous job. Extension's mission articulates just what I wanted to do for my

county and community – “strengthen agriculture, communities and families by connecting trusted research to the adoption of best practices.”

- **What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?**

My two children keep me busy! I have a seven-year-old son and a four-year-old daughter. I love cooking with them and enjoying the outdoors with them. I also like to crochet when I get a few spare moments. ■



Amanda McWhirt
Extension Specialist -
Horticultural Crops
Little Rock State Office

- **What's your background?**

I grew up in Missouri and have lived throughout the South.

- **What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?**

My educational background is in horticulture and soil science. I have worked on tomato and strawberry research projects. I was also a Peace Corps volunteer in Honduras, where I worked with small vegetable producers.

- **What are one or two things you would like your colleagues to know about you?**

I love visiting the locals-only/ hole-in-the-wall restaurants on county visits.

- **What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?**

Visit all 75 counties.

- **What brought you to Extension? What was it about Extension that you value?**

I enjoy working with agents and growers to help producers of horticultural crops find ways to be more efficient and productive. I value that Extension directly serves local communities.

- **What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?**

Traveling and running. ■



Robin Moore
4-H Program Assistant
Fulton County

• **What’s your background?**

I am a lifelong resident of Fulton County with past 4-H leader experience.

• **What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?**

I bring a desire to encourage young people with learning opportunities that provide growth and confidence as well as service in our community. My past work experience includes skills in child care and clinical medicine (patient care and management).

• **What are one or two things you would like your colleagues to know about you?**

I like to read and research interesting topics.

• **What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?**

I would like to expand my knowledge of Extension services.

• **What brought you to Extension? What was it about Extension that you value?**

Being able to work in my hometown in an organization that has resources to improve and develop our quality of life and business opportunities.

• **What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?**

I like to teach knitting, basket making and beginning herb classes. ■



Jennifer Pruitt
Administrative Specialist
Saline County

• **What’s your background?**

This is my first full-time job in about seven years. My husband, Tim, and I own Avilla Hardware, Inc., in Saline County.

• **What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?**

I’ve been working at our kids’ school, Arkansas Baptist, now Baptist Prep, for the past six years in their extended care program as well as substituting at our high school.

• **What are one or two things you would like your colleagues to know about you?**

I am a Christian, have been married to the love of my life (Tim) for 22 years, and I’m the proud mom of an 18-year-old daughter, Emma, and a 15-year-old son, Kane.

• **What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?**

My main goal for my first year at CES is to survive (my brain has been on information overload since I began April 1)! I enjoy learning about the different services offered by Extension, 4-H, etc., and like knowing I can be helpful to the people in my community.

• **What brought you to Extension? What was it about Extension that you value?**

I’m glad to be working at our Saline County Extension office and very thankful for all my welcoming, kind co-workers.

• **What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?**

I love Jesus and studying the Bible, spending time with my church family and friends, laughing, reading, being outdoors and consider myself an expert napper! ■



Shaw-nee Sorensen
County Extension Agent - Family and
Consumer Sciences
Sebastian County

• **What’s your background?**

I graduated from The University of the Ozarks in May 2015 with a bachelor’s degree in health science including four minors: biology, psychology, public health and political science. I am currently pursuing my master’s degree in family and consumer sciences at the University of Central Arkansas.

• **What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?**

I have a background in planning and implementing health fairs. I also bring leadership skills, enthusiasm, perseverance, compassion and dependability.

• **What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?**

I would like to absorb all the information possible, which will lead me to creating successful programs in the surrounding area.

- **What brought you to Extension? What was it about Extension that you value?**

I have always had trouble choosing only one thing I want to do for the rest of my life. With Extension, I do not have to choose due to the multiple program areas in which I will work.

- **What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?**

I enjoy doing any outdoor activity, exercising, playing sports, cooking, baking and doing crafts. ■



Laura Trotter
County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences
Calhoun County

- **What's your background?**

I have a bachelor's degree in early childhood education P-4 from Southern Arkansas University in Magnolia. I previously taught second grade at Hampton Elementary.

- **What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?**

I am bringing my knowledge of childhood development and teaching skills with me into Extension.

- **What are one or two things you would like your colleagues to know about you?**

I love to be outdoors, and I love to read.

- **What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?**

During my first year in Extension, I hope to be well established in my county by conducting programs to enrich and educate the population of Calhoun County.

- **What brought you to Extension? What was it about Extension that you value?**

I was brought into Extension at the suggestion of a friend who thought I would be a good agent. So naturally, I applied, and here I am! The thing that I value most about Extension is that, in my short time here, I can already tell that it is family oriented. Everyone is so nice and welcoming that it feels like a big family already.

- **What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?**

Outside of work, I like to fish and hunt. I also enjoy spending time with my husband and two sweet puppies and reading in my spare time. ■

Grants and contracts for Month Ending April 30, 2016

Project Title	Award Amount	Principal Investigator	Granting Agency
Arkansas Cotton Research Verification/Sustainability Program	3,667	Bill Robertson	Cotton Incorporated
Management of Sugarcane Aphid in Grain Sorghum	12,400	Glenn Studebaker	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Refining the Economic Threshold for Whorl Feeding Caterpillars in Non-Bt Field Corn	7,998	Glenn Studebaker	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Rice Stink Bug Damage Assessment in Grain Sorghum	8,250	Glenn Studebaker	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Efficacy of Bollgard 3	11,430	Gus Lorenz	Monsanto Company
Insect Control in Grain Sorghum	8,500	Gus Lorenz	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Management of Sugarcane Aphid in Grain Sorghum	16,200	Gus Lorenz	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Refining the Economic Threshold for Whorl Feeding Caterpillars in Non-Bt Field Corn	7,997	Gus Lorenz	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Rice Stink Bug Damage Assessment in Grain Sorghum	8,250	Gus Lorenz	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Corn Verification	120,000	Jason Kelley	Corn & Grain Promotion Board

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Grants and contracts (cont.)

Project Title	Award Amount	Principal Investigator	Granting Agency
Developing Profitable Irrigated Rotational Cropping Systems	26,000	Jason Kelley	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Evaluation of High Input Practices to Increase Corn and Grain Sorghum	30,000	Jason Kelley	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Evaluation of Differences in Fixed and Flex-Ear Corn Hybrids	15,000	Jason Kelley	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Diseases in Fields Undergoing Two Different Management Strategies Where Grain Sorghum Was Added to a Corn-Soybean Rotation	500	Jason Kelley	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Development of Online Course for Corn Producers and Consultants	25,000	Julie Robinson	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Advanced Year County Development Institute Community Project	3,000	Mark Peterson	University of Central Arkansas
Arkansas Discovery Farm Program	5,000	Michael Daniels	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Management of Sugarcane Aphid in Grain	12,400	Nick Seiter	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Refining the Economic Threshold for Whorl Feeding Caterpillars in Non-Bt Field Corn	8,005	Nick Seiter	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Rice Stink Bug Damage Assessment in Grain Sorghum	8,500	Nick Seiter	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
National 4-H Shooting Sports Championships 2016	9,796	Rex Roberg	NRA Foundation
4-H Shooting Sports Instructor Training	2,400	Rex Roberg	NRA Foundation
4-H Shooting Sports Range Events State Competition	25,080	Rex Roberg	NRA Foundation
Development of Effective Strategies for Simultaneous Drying and Decontamination of Corn to Improve Quality and Prevent Mycotoxin Development	1,000	Sammy Sadaka	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
The Effect of Varying Levels of Phytase With and Without an NSP Enzyme Product on Broiler Chick Performance	15,720	Susan Watkins	Huvepharma,INC.
Comparison of Spatial Dynamics of RKN and Other Diseases in Fields Undergoing Two Different Management Strategies	14,990	Terry Spurlock	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Develop Practical Management Strategies for Foliar Corn Diseases in Arkansas	9,500	Terry Spurlock	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Application Technology and Demonstration Program	20,000	Tom Barber	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Development of Effective Weed Control Programs in Corn	36,000	Tom Barber	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Determining Yield Effects from Drift Rates of Common Herbicides and Evaluation of New Herbicides and Technologies in Grain Sorghum	11,451	Tom Barber	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Develop Practical Management Strategies for Foliar Corn Diseases in Arkansas	35,200	Travis Faske	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Energy Savings Through Waste Heat Recovery in Poultry Barns	18,350	Yi Liang	University of Missouri
Total Awards for April 2016	\$537,584		

Personnel changes

Please welcome the following:

Jane Ahrends

Program Assistant - 4-H, Washington County, effective April 1, 2016.

Shannon Autrey

County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, Conway County, effective April 1, 2016.

Elizabeth Easley

County Extension Agent - 4-H, Mississippi County, effective April 1, 2016.

Shelly Garth

Administrative Specialist, Independence County, effective March 16, 2016.

Kathleen Holt

Administrative Specialist, Yell County - Dardanelle, effective April 4, 2016.

Jayson McGaugh

Program Assistant - 4-H, Sebastian County, effective April 1, 2016.

Amanda McWhirt

Extension Specialist - Horticultural Crops, Horticulture, effective April 4, 2016.

Robin Moore

Program Assistant - 4-H, Fulton County, effective April 1, 2016.

Vickie Perkins

County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, Columbia County, effective April 1, 2016.

Bobby Powell

County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Yell County - Danville, effective April 1, 2016.

Jennifer Pruitt

Administrative Specialist, Saline County, effective April 1, 2016.

Jay Smith

Administrative Support Supervisor, Associate Director of Agriculture and Natural Resources, effective March 16, 2016.

Shaw-nee Sorensen

County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, Sebastian County, effective April 1, 2016.

Laura Trotter

County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, Calhoun County, effective April 1, 2016.

Extension says goodbye to:

Leah Collie

Program Technician - Weed Science, Crop, Soil and Environmental Sciences, effective April 15, 2016.

Dorian Cox-Still

Program Assistant - EFNEP, Miller County, effective April 8, 2016.

Beverly Dunaway

Program Associate, Southern Regional Risk Management Education Center, effective April 8, 2016.