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BLUE LETTER

November 2020

No. 3823



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Thankful to Serve

How can a year be both long and go by quick at the same time? I guess the answer is to live through and work during a pandemic and an election year. Hopefully by the time this issue of Blue Letter comes out at least one of these issues will be resolved. November is the month of Thanksgiving, and I hope that you all can find things to be thankful for, even in 2020. I want to express my thanks to all the employees both out in the counties and in our state office who have found ways to soldier on during this trying time. I have been impressed by the resilience of county staff in both staying open for business during this time and for continuing to pursue productive and creative ways to conduct as much of their county programs as possible. I also want to thank those at the faculty and state office level who have done the same or made it possible for others to do their job. There are too many to name here, but we have some very creative, dedicated and innovative colleagues in this organization. If you are thinking of a fellow Extension employee right now, stop reading and take the time to send them a quick thank you note, and copy me!

We are wrapping up many programs from 2020 that were very successful. Our 2020 Ballot Issue Voter Guide has proved very popular throughout the state. County programs like the Day to Day with Diabetes online support group and the UAEX at Home Facebook site continue to grow their audiences. 4-H continues to serve youth with

online offerings, along with a social media campaign last month promoting the 40th anniversary of the C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H center. One of my favorite online offerings has been the DFEND nutrition program, which has grown in popularity this fall and will be funded for another year with increased promotion through the counties. This month alone, we've also offered a virtual forestry field day, a soil health virtual field tour focused on agricultural sustainability, and agents in White and Miller counties recently co-hosted a pecan growing workshop as part of a Grow Your Own Groceries webinar.

Much like your programmatic and county efforts, the day-to-day business of the Division has also continued. Award notifications went out this month, and I really enjoyed seeing so many of my fellow employees nominated. I am looking forward to our Extension Excellence awards program and our Division awards. We have hired many new employees and said good-bye to many friends this past year. After spending some time with my colleagues from other states, I can tell you that our ability to hire new employees during the pandemic is a small victory, considering many other states cannot. I am also encouraged by the number of grant applications that have come across my desk — proof that we plan to continue serving our fellow Arkansans. In addition, we are working on employee evaluations and laying the groundwork for our 2021 plan of work. Innovative

Continued on page 2

INSIDE SCOOP

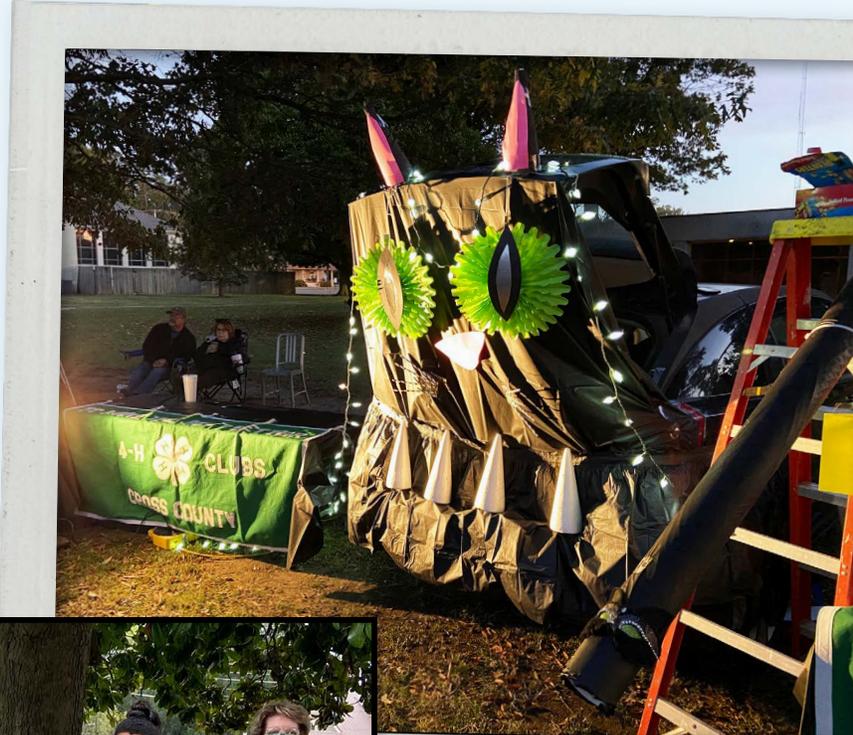
2. Cross County 4-H is on the Move
3. Educational Landscape Trail
4. Learn Your True Colors
5. Tech Corner
6. Animal Science Teams Raise Over \$40,000
7. Extension Working to Reduce Feral Hogs...And much more!



Cross County 4-H is on the Move!

Gov. Asa Hutchinson has a new addition to his face mask supply, thanks to Cross County 4-H. In late summer, six 4-H members learned basic sewing skills and sewing machine safety in a three-day camp. Using those skills, campers sewed masks with 4-H cotton fabric for themselves, including one for Gov. Asa Hutchinson, who is a 4-H alumnus.

Cross County also turned Halloween into an opportunity for finding prospective 4-H members. Extension staff and volunteers constructed Oscar the Big Black Cat trunk or treat display. The treat bags, which included contact information and information on joining 4-H, were “shot” down a decorative five-foot-long pipe to ensure social distancing. More than 300 children and adults joined the fun on the courthouse lawn. ■



L-R: Linda Stegall, 4H Program Assistant; far right - Millie Collins, CEA-FCS, with members of Cross Roads 4H and the mask they made for Governor Asa Hutchinson, 4H alumnus, after completing a three-session sewing camp.



Top and bottom photo: Trunk or Treat on Halloween night! Recruiting members and leaders for 4H.

Thankful to Serve from page 1 continued...

programs and methods of programmatic delivery have resulted in good impact reporting and numbers in AIMS. This data continues to be very important to us, as we show that we can do our jobs under these conditions. Although we remain in Stage II, many of you have chosen to attend meetings in person, and I have approved most travel as well as meeting plans for groups over 10. This process will continue as long as we remain in this stage.

We continue to learn how Workday has impacted our day-to-day experiences. I recently completed Open Enrollment as I hope most of you have and found the process to be

reasonable to slightly easy. I, like many of you, am still feeling my way around Workday. We have to continue to be patient as we learn the Workday ropes and be patient with our colleagues who are still working hard during this transition. I know there have been challenges, but based on what we know from other universities that have made the transition, we are doing pretty well. The Workday team has recently provided information about how to enter holiday leave, the 2021 holiday schedule, and other changes to the way we do things. I encourage you to continue to attend and partake in the various training opportunities that our Workday team offers you. ■

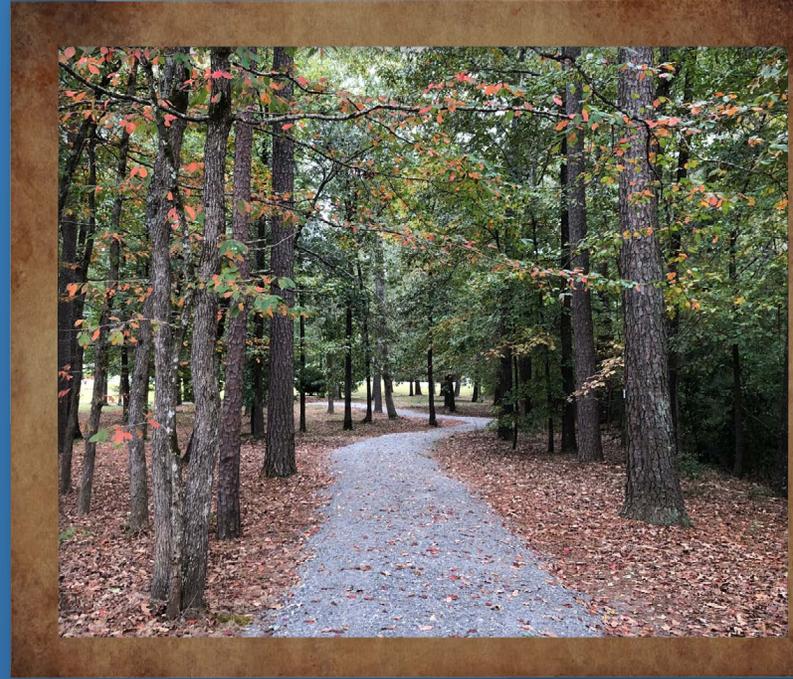
Educational Landscape Trail

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The next time you're at the State Extension Office, take a few minutes to explore the educational landscape trail along Coleman Creek.

With the help of the Arkansas Forestry Division, staff have inventoried all of the trees along the trail to facilitate proper planning and management of the tree canopy. The inventory includes the species, size and condition of the trees and will be useful information as we make management decisions and determine priorities. We are also working on identifying, preserving and enhancing the native understory shrubs and wildflowers and have begun the process of eradicating invasive non-native plants.

Coleman Creek begins near the intersection of University Avenue and Cantrell Road in Little Rock and flows south to empty into the Fourche Creek wetlands just south of the UA Little Rock campus. ■



4-H offers L.I.F.E. Training to Leaders



4-H educators from 14 counties participated in a two-day in-service called "Leadership Initiatives for Everyone" taught by 4-H programs staff Luke Nipper and Taylor Knox. The training focused on how to facilitate leadership and

team-building activities. Each participant received an activity bag full of useful tools to help them lead team building initiatives and teach life skills to 4-Hers and other groups in their counties. ■

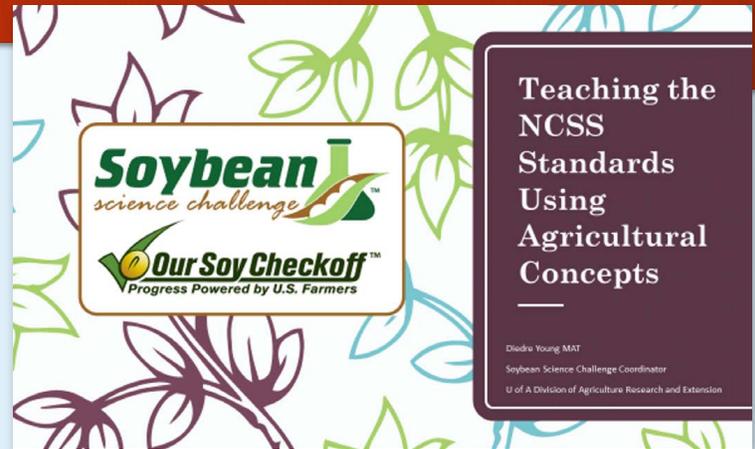


Soybean Science Challenge Sponsors

Arkansas Science Teachers Association Virtual Conference

The Soybean Science Challenge (SSC) sponsored and participated in the Arkansas Science Teachers Association virtual conference Oct. 8 and 10. SSC Coordinator Diedre Young presented two virtual workshops on teaching the Next Generation Science Standards using agricultural concepts in the classroom.

Young encouraged attendees to tell their fellow teachers to use soybeans in classroom research by using the free resources available on Extension's 'soywhatsup' website. The Soybean Science Challenge is a farmer-funded, state-wide high school education program that seeks to increase student knowledge about the value of Arkansas soybeans to the Arkansas economy, to the labor force, and ultimately to feed and fuel the world.



The Soybean Science Challenge is a partnership between the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board and the Cooperative Extension Service. For more information, contact Dr. Julie Robinson, jrobinson@uaex.edu or Diedre Young dyoung@uaex.edu. ■

Learn Your True Colors

Several staff members recently attended a True Colors® facilitator workshop. True Colors® is a personality profile tool using a color spectrum to provide a way for people to quickly understand themselves and others.

“The most important thing I learned was that there is not one color or set of personality characteristics that are better than others,” Katie Frizzell said. “Understanding different people’s strengths, stressors, and values can help build great teams that work well together.”



Several extension personnel completed the True Colors® facilitator training (October 19-21) taught by David Eng.

Katie Frizzell, Ashley County FCS agent, attended the training and said she signed up to learn more about the concepts so she could help community members who work on teams with different personalities.

Extension personnel who completed the training include:

Katie Frizzell – Ashley County
Trish Ouei – Benton County
Tamara Allen – Boone County
Lisa Davis – Community, Professional, and Economic Development
Rachel Bearden – Hot Spring County
Carla Due – Miller County
Elizabeth Easley – Mississippi County
Sherry Beaty-Sullivan – Polk County
Creenna Bocksnick – Arkansas 4-H Center
Katie Teague – Washington County
Leigh Ann Bullington – Woodruff County

For more information about True Colors®, contact Lisa Davis, ldavis@uaex.edu. ■



Tech Corner

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What is the monthly Accessibility Awareness Challenge?

Interested in using e-newsletters for your clients or program area? Check out the new LEARN course, Getting Started with Constant Contact!

Beginning in November, each month, we will be focusing on one accessibility issue by:

- Describing a single accessibility issue.
- Giving examples.
- Offering easy steps to correct them on your webpages (or digital media).

What we are asking you to do:

Monsido considers all accessibility issues unaddressed until you review the issue or take action to remediate it. For OU website editors and content managers, your challenge is to address each month's issue on your pages.

Details about November's Issue: Accessible Link Text.

We are asking you to address the first issue, "Link text is meaningful when read out of context."

How to Make Link Text Accessible.

When remediating link text, try to think of "call to action" words you can use to replace the unclear or non-descriptive links.

Instead of

"Learn more"
"click here"

Use this

"Register for PAT workshop"
"See examples of centipede grass"

Find additional instructions on the [Accessibility Awareness Challenge](#) page.

Need help?

If you have any questions or need an account on Monsido, please contact Becky Bridges, bbridges@uaex.edu, or Amy Cole, accole@uaex.edu.

How will we measure results?

We will run a Monsido scan at the end of November to see the results of the challenge. With your help, we hope to see a drastic reduction in link text issues!

We'll send December's challenge at the beginning of next month.

Happy editing!



Check out the latest TECH ME Seriously vlog posts:

1. Box File Upload Feature.
2. How to Embed Panopto Videos into the Website.
3. How to use the OneDrive Mobile App for P-Card Receipts.
4. Best Practices in Panopto (Folder, Video, and Share Video Settings).

Visit <https://employees.uaex.edu/techmeseriously> to view vlogs. ■

UPCOMING TECH TUESDAY WEBINARS

■ Tuesday, December 8: The Best of Telecommuting

Did you miss the "Beyond Doodle - Taking Your Surveys to the Next Level Tech Tuesday?"

Visit <https://uaex.edu/techtuesdays> to view recordings.



Animal Science Hosts Young Cattlemen Leadership Class in Fayetteville

The Department of Animal Science hosted the fourth session of the Arkansas Cattlemen's Young Cattlemen's Leadership Class on Oct. 26-28 in Fayetteville. The 18 participants gained an understanding of the processes their beef product undergoes and will be better educated to tell the industry story. The program focused on beef cuts and the processes needed to provide retail meat case products. Class members participated in processing their steer and were involved in a sensory and beef tenderness demonstration. Faculty members Kelly Vierck and Janeal Yancey, along with Tim Johnson, manager of the division's red meat abattoir, coordinated the event, which was funded by the Arkansas Beef Council. ■



Animal Science Teams Raise Over \$40,000

The Animal Science teams got creative with their fundraising this year. Typically, the judging and horse team members provide community services via camps, clinics, and other educational training sessions that assist in funding their programs. Because of COVID, the teams launched a

“Team Up to Support our Animal Science Team” crowdfunding campaign. They raised more than \$40,000 that will support departmental teams, including the ranch horse, livestock judging, and equine judging teams, in addition to the animal science general fund. ■

Gadberry Addresses North Mississippi Area Beef Conferences

Shane Gadberry, animal science professor, was a guest speaker at the North Mississippi Area Beef Conferences Oct. 22-23 in Ripley and Batesville, Miss. He discussed mineral nutrition, how to determine mineral deficiency, and the chemistry forms found in commercial mineral supplements. ■



Shane Gadberry

Extension Working to Reduce Feral Hogs

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The Division of Agriculture is a member of a multi-organizational state task force working to eradicate feral hogs statewide, and Extension was awarded \$400,000 to conduct educational outreach and measure success of feral hog eradication efforts by conservation districts.

Outreach targets four pilot areas that include 12 counties in Arkansas over the next three years.

Feral hogs are an invasive, non-native species which cause agriculture damage, pollute water, compete with native wildlife for habitat, and transmit diseases to people, pets, livestock and wildlife. Eleven county agents serve as trap coordinators for 12 trap systems used in field demonstrations. Most of these trap systems use technology in which a trap gate is triggered from a mobile phone app.

Landowners who receive trapping services, as well as adjacent landowners and others in the pilot area, will be surveyed about their feral hog encounters. Innovative uses of drone technology will be explored. Landowner education starts with preparing an adaptive strategy based

on trail camera surveillance and modifying pig behavior, such that hogs appear regularly at a bait station before the trap is triggered. For more information, contact Becky McPeake. ■



UA county agriculture agents attended an in-service training about feral hog traps and trapping technology, June 2019.

Crop Enterprise Budgets Available

The 2021 Arkansas Crop Enterprise Budgets are available to assist Arkansas producers and other agricultural stakeholders in evaluating expected costs and returns for the upcoming crop production year.

The budgets will be available in pdf and Excel formats, allowing users to change inputs and prices to fit each producer's unique situation. The final update, including an updated cotton outlook, will be available by Dec. 1.

Returns are beginning to become positive again as we have moved into a time of higher commodity prices and lower fuel and fertilizer pricing. Rice leads the pack with the highest net returns expectation, followed by soybeans.

The release of the 2021 cotton budgets will be delayed due to lack of available seed pricing. Inputs in the budgets are Extension recommendations as determined by field trials from the Crop Research Verification Program (CRVP) for each crop. Interactive budgets can be utilized to evaluate alternative costs and returns for optimal profit potential. Input decisions should be evaluated with an understanding that yield and revenue maximizing inputs are not necessarily the inputs for maximizing profit.

County agents can provide information for Extension input recommendations. The 2021 crop enterprise budgets are available at <https://www.uaex.edu/farm-ranch/economics-marketing/farm-planning/budgets/crop-budgets.aspx>. ■

Faculty Receive Research Equipment Grant

A group of Animal Science faculty, led by Brittni Littlejohn, has been awarded a research equipment grant from C-Lock Inc.'s Research Equipment Grant program. The grants provide an opportunity for institutions to research and test cutting-edge ideas that use C-Lock Inc. technology which will improve efficiency, productivity, and sustainability in animal agricultural production.

The Animal science faculty will use the grant for an automated system will allow feeding of up to four different diets to cattle housed in the same pen, thus

dramatically increasing experimental power compared to a traditional pen-fed scenario. This equipment will help the department be more competitive in USDA and SARE granting opportunities.



Brittni Littlejohn

C-Lock Inc., based in Rapid City, South Dakota, funded eight of the 44 research proposals it received. ■

'Grow Your Own Groceries' Series

Agriculture and FCS staff from across the state teamed up to present 12 virtual Grow Your Own Groceries public education programs that have now reached more than 800 people. Faulkner County agents started the programs in June, and the response from the public was so favorable that they asked other Extension staff to assist with presenting and facilitating programs throughout the summer and fall.

A single crop was featured in each program, with an agriculture agent providing information about growing the crop and an FCS agent providing a cooking demo and information about cooking and preserving the crop. An average of 245 people registered for each presentation with

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Grow Your Own Groceries: Blueberries

Ryan Neal & Trudy McManus
Benton County
Cooperative Extension Service

93% of participants indicating they gained knowledge that will help them grow their own food in the future. Of the participants, 91% have made or plan to make one of the recipes presented in a program.

Extension staff assisting with this series include Shannon Autry, Brett Gordon, Carla Due, Colin Massey, Leigh Ann Bullington, Megan Wells, Randy Forst, Ryan Neal, Julia Fryer, Kim Krummel, Sherri Sanders, Trudy McManus, Berni Kurz, Julie Treat, Mary Beth Groce and Krista Quinn. ■

Virtual Field Tour Addresses Soil Health

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On Nov. 5, the Soil and Water Conservation Virtual Field Trip (VFT) series hosted its ninth live broadcast and addressed soil health. During the one-hour broadcast, Matt Fryer, soils instructor, discussed the science and research being conducted to quantify soil health practices taught by UADA.

Robby Bevis, president of the Arkansas Soil Health Alliance, talked about the alliance's mission. Adam Chappell, a Cotton Plant farmer who is a member of the alliance, discussed soil health from a farmer's perspective and why he believes it is necessary to abandon conventional production practices on his farm. The subject matter experts answered audience questions live.

There were 112 Zoom participants from 14 states. The VFT recording can be viewed at https://youtu.be/EDO-z_SyKAc.



Host & Speaker: Matt Fryer (UADA) far left. Speakers: Robby Bevis (ASHA President & Farmer) and Adam Chappell (ASHA & Farmer).

You can find more information and links for the Soil and Water Conservation Virtual Field Trip series at <https://bit.ly/NRCS-AR-Soil-and-Water-VFT-Webpage>. The Soil and Water Conservation Virtual Field Trip series is funded by USDA-NRCS. For more information, contact Rita Watson, virtual education specialist in Community, Professional and Economic Development, at rwatson@uaex.edu. ■

Students Learn About Weather Effects on Food Production

During the past two years, Madison County Extension has partnered with the Huntsville School District to develop a school garden program through a part-time SNAP-Ed position dedicated to providing nutrition-related curriculum to elementary students. The success of this partnership resulted in additional funding from the district for an onsite garden and greenhouse.

Recently, the Arkansas Discovery Farms provided funding to install an onsite weather station to enhance student learning about how weather impacts food production. This program directly impacts more than 250 youth weekly.

“With the addition of the weather station to our garden, we are able to use real-time data for the students to learn about weather,” said Jamie Adams, youth program assistant. “In the students’ garden time, we talk about the importance the weather has on gardening. I have pushed out the website to the teachers in both schools to utilize the graphs for their science and math classes.” ■



Jamie Adams, Youth Program Assistant in Madison County, prepares to educate elementary students on how weather impacts food production by using a new weather station provided by the Arkansas Discovery Farm program.

Benefits Corner

Tobacco Pledge

It's Open Enrollment and time to complete the Tobacco Pledge within Workday!

If you are Enrolling / Enrolled in the UA Medical Insurance, select Tobacco Pledge 1 and make your election from the drop-down bar.

If you are Waiving UA Medical Insurance, select Tobacco Pledge 2, which indicates you are opting out and/or

Support · Service · Resource *Benefits*



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waiving UA medical insurance. Click "Save" after making your election.

Questions – email yourbenefits@uaex.edu. ■

Renew You Healthy Weight Program Educates

The Renew You Healthy Weight online program recently concluded a 10-week session, successfully serving 121 people.

The forum helps educate adults about nutrition, physical activity and self-care. Each week consisted of an educational lesson on Monday, a mid-week discussion on Wednesday, and an end-of-the-week check-in and review

on Sunday. Participants received weekly recipes and exercise routines to try.

Evaluation results show that participants increased their physical activity, cook more at home, and can better identify the correct food portion sizes. One participant reported losing 10 pounds. Multiple participants said the program was valuable to them. ■

New Publications:



(You know you want to look.)
uaex.edu/media-resources/news/

How to Prepare, Test & Install Watermark™ Sensors
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Arkansas Common CUCURBIT Problems
Arkansas Common CUCURBIT Problems

REVENUE TRENDS
of County Governments in Arkansas
2000 2017

Family and Consumer Sciences
Cooking, Mediterranean Style, Health and Wellbeing

Arkansas In Our Campus

Personnel Changes



Welcome aboard:

- Cassandra Redden - Administrative Specialist II, Texarkana, Miller County
- Danielle Johnson - Administrative Specialist III – Horticulture, Little Rock
- Misty Douzart - Administrative Specialist III, Marshall, Searcy County
- Alicia Hogan - Administrative Specialist III, Stuttgart, Lonoke Agricultural Center
- Betty Wingfield - 4-H Program Assistant, Hope, Hempstead County
- Lauren Crow - 4-H Program Assistant, Fayetteville, Washington County
- Amanda Stark - Administrative Specialist III, De Valls Bluff, Prairie County

Farewell to:

- Brooke Saunders - Administrative Specialist III, Facilities Management, Little Rock
- Sue Oglesby - Administrative Specialist III, Mena, Polk County

Grants and Contracts

PROJECT TITLE (GRANTS & CONTRACTS)	AWARD AMOUNT	PI	GRANTING AGENCY
Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) Program 2019	33,333	Amanda McWhirt	The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia by and on behalf of the University of Georgia
2020-2021 4-H Healthy Habits	84,500	Angie Freil	National 4-H Council
Cover Crop Management Publication for Upper Mid-South	2,300	Matt Fryer	Cotton, Inc.
Effect of Cultural Strategies & Application Technologies on Weed Control in Flooded & Furrow-Irrigated Rice	444,757	Thomas Butts	NIFA
TOTAL AWARDS FOR OCTOBER 2020: \$615,874			

Front Page News You Can Use

Looking for a news story to use in your local paper? Look no further than the front page of uaex.edu. And if you click on view all news, you'll see all of our archived news stories back to 2014.

If you want to be on the email list to receive our news stories, email Mary Hightower at mhightower@uaex.edu and Communications will add you to the distribution list. ■