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BLUE LETTER

April 2024

No. 3864



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Steadily in Motion

There doesn't seem to be much down time on the Extension calendar anymore: not that there ever was very much, I guess. We have rolled right from winter meeting season into spring conferences, with little gap in between. In the last few weeks, I have had the opportunity to attend a handful of conference events that I think exemplify several of the things that make CES such a great organization.

During the last week of March, I attended the Association of Southern Region Extension Directors (ASRED) meeting in Lexington, Kentucky. It is always encouraging to meet with colleagues from other states who face similar issues and challenges to share ideas and learn from one another. Sharing what we have learned – sometimes from hard experience – for the benefit of our neighbors is at the core of the Extension mission. The fact that we can do this at the regional and even national level by networking state-level systems is a somewhat underappreciated aspect of the CES design.

As soon as I got home from ASRED and the macro-level exercise in the kind of idea exchange that Extension does so well, I saw the same thing taking place at a more micro-level at the UA Division of Agriculture's Support Staff Conference. That conference provided an outstanding opportunity for peer-to-peer training to address immediate organizational needs. Dr. Stacey McCullough's team in Community, Professional, and Economic Development did a characteristically outstanding job putting the program together, organizing and executing

the event, and facilitating individual workshop session to offer a top-shelf professional development experience for staff from across the Division (not just CES).

I left the staff conference and headed straight to Norfolk, Arkansas, for the Arkansas County Agricultural Agents Association (ACAAA) annual meeting. Our various county agent associations represent an integral mechanism for the professional development of agents and specialists. A highlight of the ACAA meeting for me was seeing the Achievement Award (AA) and Distinguished Service Award (DSA) recognition bestowed on several of our agents. To me, having been involved with the National Association of County Agricultural Agents (NACAA) as an Extension specialist, these recognitions carry a lot of weight. To have met the rigorous standard of excellence established by these organizations – and recognized throughout the CES system across the nation – should be counted as a major career milestone.

Finally, on April 2, I had the honor of attending our annual UA CES retiree luncheon. Close to 50 of our organization's retired members met in Benton to renew longstanding relationships and to award three scholarships to current CES employees who are pursuing further education. The loyal commitment of our retirees – commitment to UA CES, certainly, but also commitment to Extension's educational mission generally – should be an inspiration and an encouragement to us all. ■

INSIDE SCOOP

2. 2024 Support Staff Conference
3. Fishing Derby
4. Total Eclipse of 4-H Day Camps
5. Extension Retiree Scholarships
6. Tech Corner...And much more!
7. Leadership Log
...And much more!

2024 Support Staff Conference

This year's Support Staff Conference — "Total Eclipse: Celebrating our Support Staff Stars" — set a record for largest attendance, with more than 200 attendees. Presenters from Division of Agriculture departments offered 23 different face-to-face sessions and 10 Zoom sessions.

and Communications led us with excellent service and quality. Our support staff stars networked with peers and friends across the state and Division and experienced professional and personal growth opportunities. Dozens of people showed their appreciation for our stars by contributing items, goodies and gift baskets.

This year's event was organized by a core CPED team including Steve Siegelin, Vanessa Lewis, Lynn Wilson, Genean Butler, Casey Hill, Stacey McCullough and others. The Advisory Committee with members from the Division, AES and CES was crucial in guiding the development of the program. Thank you Nytalya Salter, Daniela Kidd

Ben Aaron produced a [conference video highlight](#). The Resources and Networking FUN Ice Cream Social event at the end of the conference featured door prizes, music, dancing, and lots of cool desserts. Mark your calendars for next year's conference: May 1-2, 2025. ■



Deacue Fields meets with participants during the ice cream social.



Linda McCargo, left, and Karen Clark, right, take part in a precision language exercise.

and Amy Hedges! Teams from Information Technology



Ice cream social to wrap up the Support Staff Conference, March 27-28, 2024.

Members of the True Colors personality assessment class at the Support Staff Conference.

Agri-Business Person of the Year

Craighead County Staff chair Branon Thiesse was honored as the Agri-Business Person of the Year Branon Thiesse by the Jonesboro Regional Chamber of Commerce Agri-Business Committee. The chamber held its Agri-Business breakfast on Feb. 7 at the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas facility.

The purpose of the meeting was to bring the agriculture community together and to strengthen the future of the next generation of agriculture leaders by supporting the A-State Agri-Business scholarship. ■



Chamber Agriculture Committee Chair Jim Tubbs and County Extension Agent-Staff Chair Branon Thiesse (right).



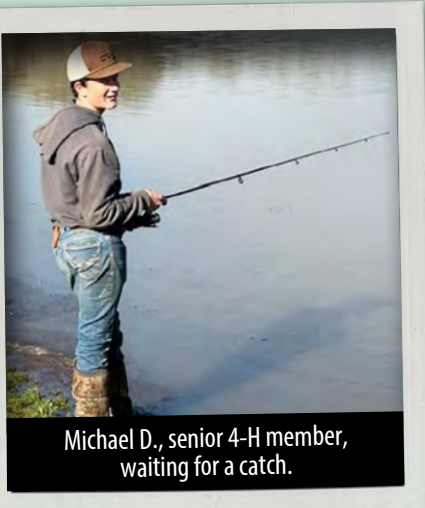
Fishing Derby

Independence County Extension collaborated with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission to host their first fishing derby on March 16 at Newark Lake in Newark.

More than 100 people enjoyed a beautiful morning of fishing. The event was open to both 4-H and non-4-H youth. This event provided a wonderful opportunity for Independence County to reach out to area youth who wanted to learn more about fishing and 4-H.

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission stocked the pond with catfish and provided information about the rules and regulations for fishing in Arkansas. Independence County 4-H and Extension presented prizes in three divisions: Cloverbud and younger (4-8 years old), Juniors (9-13 years old), and Seniors (14-19 years old). Each age division had awards for smallest fish caught, largest fish caught, and most fish caught.

Participants caught 28 fish during the two-hour competition and then enjoyed a picnic. The event gave 4-H participants a great introduction to fishing before competing in the annual Independence County 4-H Sport Fishing Contest. ■



Michael D., senior 4-H member, waiting for a catch.

Meats Evaluation Contest Doubles Participation



Forty-two 4-H members from six counties participated in this year's State 4-H Meats Evaluation contest held April 2 at the University of Arkansas Red Meat Abattoir. Participation doubled from last year.

The contest includes retail meat cut identification; evaluating classes of retail cuts, carcasses, and subprimals; a questions class and a set of oral reasons for juniors; and three sets of oral reasons for seniors. The Arkansas Beef Council and Tyson Foods sponsored the meat product

used in the contest. Officials for the contest included Dr. Kelly Vierck and Stephanie Shimer from the University of Arkansas Meat Science group and Dr. Nicolas Herrera from Tyson Foods.

The Champion Senior Team is from Stone County and was coached by Stone County agents Anna Harlan and Tyler Caston. The team qualifies for the National 4-H Meats Evaluation Contest at the American Royal in Manhattan, Kansas this fall. The Champion Junior Team from Madison County was coached by Madison County FCS/4-H Agent Caramie Edwards. ■



Champion Senior Team – Stone County 4-H
Left to right: Blake M., Addison K., Tucker C., Ava K.



Champion Junior Team – Madison County 4-H
Left to Right: Wyn Y., Sarah Grace S., Ryan E., Jaxon E.

Soybean Science Challenge Presents Awards at State Science Fair

On March 31, Soybean Science Challenge Coordinator Keith Harris and Associate Diedre Young attended the Arkansas State Science Fair at UCA in Conway. Three Arkansas State Science Fair awards were presented to students with the top soybean research projects. State Soybean Science Challenge First Place winners are awarded \$1,000; second place, \$500; and honorable mentions, \$250. Teachers win \$300, \$200 and \$100, respectively. Thirteen projects from across the state were judged by three judges from Extension - Dr. Jeremy Ross, Dr. Mike Daniels, and Dr. Terry Spurlock.

Winners were:

- **1st place – Bennet Chen and Teacher-Mentor Tarsha Parker**
- **2nd – Jana Abuelem and Teacher-Mentor Katie Parson**
- **Honorable Mention – Sullivan Schaffer and Teacher-Mentor Allison Schaffer**

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, 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 info, contact Dr. Julie Robinson, jrobinson@uada.edu, Diedre Young dyoung@uada.edu, or Keith Harris kharris@uada.edu. ■



First place: Bennet Chen, Teacher-Mentor Tarsha Parker-Little Rock Central High School.



Total Eclipse of 4-H Day Camps

Thirty-four Saline County youth became “eclipse-perts” during the three Total Eclipse of 4-H day camps offered by Saline County extension.

Darcy Howard and Carl Freyaldenhoven, NASA Partner Eclipse Ambassadors from the Central Arkansas Astronomical Society, educated the attendees on the eclipse. They explained what cause and process of a total solar eclipse and how to safely view the eclipse.

The youth also learned and hypothesized the effects of the eclipse on plants and animals and participated in other eclipse-inspired activities, included making eclipse t-shirts, galaxy bagels, sunflower seed paper and UV bead bracelets.

Elements from a variety of 4-H project mandate areas were presented within the diverse set of activities facilitated. ■



Hollie H. demonstrates what the corona looked like during totality of the total solar eclipse.

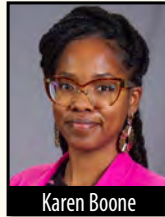


Saline County 4-H Agent, Katie West, leads day camp participants in making uv bead bracelets to show the effects of uv rays

Extension Retiree Scholarships Awarded

Extension retirees awarded \$825 scholarships to Karen Boone, county extension agent - FCS/SNAP in Pulaski County; Matt Davis, county extension agent - staff chair in Jackson County; and Christina Myrkle, 4-H program assistant in Pike County. Recipients were recognized at the retiree luncheon on April 2 at the Benton Event Center.

Karen Boone has served as a SNAP-Ed county agent at the Pulaski County Extension office since 2019. She is pursuing a Master of Science degree in Health Education and Promotion from UA Little Rock to enhance her ability to educate Arkansans on health and nutrition. In a letter of recommendation, a colleague of Karen's wrote that "While working with Karen, I have experienced an individual who is passionate about her career, academic goals, and community. She continues to make positive changes in the health of the community she serves while continuing to pursue her skills in the health and nutrition field."



Karen Boone

Matt Davis has been with Extension since 2016 and is pursuing a Ph.D in Educational Leadership: Higher Education Administration at Arkansas State University. Matt, who is currently a county extension agent - staff chair in Jackson

County, aspires to serve as an upper-level administrator and create meaningful change and opportunities for UADA employees. In one of Matt's letters of support, the writer shared this: "Matthew's accomplishments as an Extension Agent, including the promotion from Agent 1 to Agent 2, graduating from the iLead Internal Leadership Course, and the successful coordination of opportunities for the Jackson County Extension Center, showcase his commitment to his field, his local community and the Cooperative Extension Service."



Matt Davis

Christina Myrkle has been with Extension since 2019 and currently serves as a 4-H program assistant in Pike County. She is pursuing an Associates Degree of General Studies at UA Cossatot. She wants to further her education as she works towards the goal of becoming a 4-H county agent. Christina's colleague shared that "I am extremely impressed by Christina's dedication to Extension. Not only is she fully involved in 4-H, but she takes an interest in everything that Extension has to offer. She has a wealth of knowledge under her hat and with her furthering her education, she will only continue to excel forward." ■



Christina Myrkle

Mathews Presents at ASAE

Brandon L. Mathews, program associate of economic development in the Community, Professional and Economic Development unit, gave a presentation to the Arkansas Society of Association Executives (ASAE) on video content creation that focused on the "RQEs of Successful Content" (relevant, quality, and evergreen).

The presentation took place at The Vines Center and was one of the largest luncheons in the group's history.

Attendees represented organizations including the Arkansas Ag Council, Hospitality and Tourism Associations, and the Arkansas Center for Health Improvement.

Mathews will also present on this topic at 2024 National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals.

"As a longtime trusted, nonbiased source of information, Extensions are losing ground to popular YouTubers and Content Creators who have a vested interest in putting money in their own pocket," Mathews said. "By embracing the digital landscape and 'creator tactics', I think our profession can reclaim lost ground and give our constituents information when and how they want it." ■



Brandon L. Mathews giving a presentation to ASAE members about video creation on YouTube.

A PIN Is Required

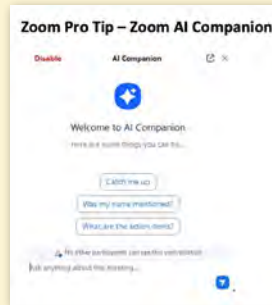
As part of our effort to improve our information security posture, UADA requires that a Personal Identification Number (PIN) or biometric be required to open Office Apps on mobile devices.



The PIN is a passcode used to verify that the correct user is accessing the organization's data in an application. Users will be prompted to enter the PIN they created in apps such as OneDrive, Outlook, Word, Excel, or PowerPoint. Users will also be prompted for their PIN when they open an "organizational" document or file. We also require a PIN when accessing Box on a mobile device. The PIN is a 4-digit code, and users can opt-in to use Face ID or fingerprint.

Zoom Pro Tip – Zoom AI Companion

If you have a licensed Zoom account, you now have



access to the Zoom AI Companion. The Zoom AI Companion can assist you across the platform with features such as Meeting Summaries, Team Chat thread summaries, and Team Chat message composing. For more information on any of

these new Zoom AI Companion features, check out Zoom's Getting Started with Zoom AI Companion Features support page. You may request a short-term or long-term Zoom license from the Video Conferencing team.

Hacks from Hump Day



- [Freeze Panes in Excel](#)
- [PowerPoint Pre-session Slides](#)
- [Font Colors](#)
- [PUBS Ordering System](#) ■

2024 TECH TUESDAY 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 [March's Tech Updates with the Division CIO Tech Tuesday](#)? Check out the recording and resources.



Grant Writing Workshops

The Community, Professional & Economic Development's EDA University Center for Rural Resilience and Workforce Development hosted a grant writing workshop on April 9 in the newly renovated IZARD County Extension office. Nearly 20 individuals across the county attended the "Capacity Building through Grant Writing" workshop. Thanks to Elizabeth Daigle, Christy Tomlinson, and Michael Paskewitz for their hard work and planning to make the event a success!

More grant writing workshops are planned this Fall. Contact Brandon L. Mathews at bmathews@uada.edu for more information. ■



Dr. Hunter P. Goodman, Assistant Professor – Community, Workforce, and Economic Development, speaking to workshop attendees who are preparing a grant narrative.



Leadership Lunch and Learn

Dr. Julie Robinson, associate professor, reviewed Stephen Covey's *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* for the March Leadership Lunch and Learn. Read details [here](#). Watch the March Lunch and Learn [here](#).



Dr. Julie Robinson

LeadAR

LeadAR 20 Community and Economic Development, **Newport – Day One**, by *Daniel Phillips*, State Surveyor, Arkansas Department of Transformation and Shared Services. We started this visit the night before with great food at Fathead Pizza in Newport. This is where we first met Jon Chadwell, executive director of the Newport Economic Development Commission. Chadwell knows a thing or two about economic development in Newport, as we would all soon learn. Read blog post [here](#). LeadAR 20 Community and Economic Development, **Newport – Day Two**, by *Sherry Beaty-Sullivan*, County Extension Agent, Agriculture/Staff Chair. Day Two in Newport started with Rachel Norris, director of Domestic Programs for the Clinton School of Public Service. She informed the class that the Clinton School impact in Arkansas up to this point was 600+ projects with over 150,000 service hours. Students in the school do three projects throughout their three years in the school. Students help find solutions for organizations before starting a project through needs assessments, program planning, program evaluation, program impact, they also assist with funding, and facilitation. Learn how to partner with the Clinton School on field service projects [here](#). Read blog post [here](#).

iLEAD Cohort III: March Virtual Seminar

by *Patricia Johnson*, Human Resources Specialist - March 26, 2024. Our fifth iLEAD virtual session was hosted by Steve Siegelin, associate professor of professional development at the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture (UADA). This session was highly informative with enlightening information from both our guest speakers: Chris Lee, chief information officer, and Jeffery Weaver, director of government affairs and stakeholder engagement. Read details [here](#).

iLEAD Cohort IV Announced

iLEAD Cohort IV (July 2024 – June 2025):

1. **Jennifer Acuff**, Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist – Food Science
2. **Tracy Courage**, Communications Director – Extension
3. **Blake Erbach**, County Extension Agent and Staff Chair – Perry County
4. **Heather Frankenberger**, Fiscal Operations Manager
5. **Tina Hart**, Greenhouse Manager-DREX AES Station
6. **Mishanna Lanes**, Regional Program Associate - FCS
7. **Brandon Mathews**, Program Associate - Economic Development
8. **Ananda Moscoso-Schmitt**, Program Technician – Horticulture
9. **Linda Pate**, Departmental Administrative Manager – Biological & Agricultural Engineering
10. **Andrea Price**, Video Conferencing Technician – IT
11. **Amy Simpson**, County Extension Agent and Staff Chair – Clark County
12. **Ali Ubeyitogullari**, Assistant Professor – Food Science

Extension Offers Mental Health First Aid Training

Dr. Brittney Schrick and mental health program associate Laura Grutz facilitated a session of Mental Health First Aid at the Little Rock State Office in conjunction with the EHC Spring Workshop and as part of the EHC Cares initiative. Twenty-seven EHC members representing more than 10 counties attended and learned how to safely respond to people who may be experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis. Another Mental Health First Aid class will be held on May 9 at the Little Rock State Office. It is open to any interested UADA employees. Please reach out to Laura Grutz (lgrutz@uada.edu) if you are interested in enrolling.

At the EHC Spring Workshop, Dr. Schrick facilitated the QPR Suicide Prevention training for EHC members to learn to respond to someone thinking of suicide. The participants learned about the importance of asking questions and following up with someone who shows signs of suicidal thoughts.

Both Mental Health First Aid and QPR are available on request and partially funded through grants from the USDA Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network and the Arkansas Department of Agriculture. For more information, contact Dr. Schrick at bschrick@uada.edu. ■

Poinsett County Hosts

4-H Spring Break Day Camp



Poinsett County 4-H hosted two Spring Break Day Camps at the Main Street Learning Park in Harrisburg.

Forty-three youth and eight adult volunteers participated in the camps. During the week, they built campfires, gardened, created wildflower seed bombs and natural bird feeders, explored the science behind lemon volcano eruptions, roasted hotdogs and s'mores and made slushies.

The Poinsett County extension staff created the Spring Break Day Camp experience as a part of an effort to increase

4-H enrollment, build an adult volunteer base and showcase the Main Street Learning Park facility.

Community response to this activity was overwhelmingly positive with more than 3,000 reached via Facebook advertising in just days and an almost immediate waitlist of participants. ■



Greg Simpson, county extension agent - agriculture helps 4-Hers get their hands dirty, seeds planted and ready for growing.



4-Her's cooked their own lunch and then made smores!

Faulkner County Hosts

Open House

More than 100 Faulkner County residents attended Faulkner County Extension Office's open house where they learned more about services available. With a portion of funding for the county extension office coming from a voluntary tax, the Faulkner County Quorum Court suggested that the county extension office do a push to educate county citizens about the tax. The idea of an open house was born, and staff developed ideas to showcase services.

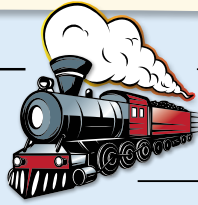
Ag Agent Krista Quinn and the Conway Tree Board hosted a free tree giveaway. Quinn and the Faulkner County Master Gardeners also hosted an "Ask an Expert" booth where attendees could ask gardening questions and a station where they demonstrated how to sharpen gardening tools.



From left to right: Kami Green, Krista Quinn, Mary Beth Groce, Tracy Clark, front row Mindy Beard, Kevin Lawson.

Ag Agent Kevin Lawson accepted soil samples, provided information about soil testing and answered ag-related questions. Staff Chair Mary Beth Groce tested pressure canner lids, did a cheese making demo, and fielded questions about family and consumer sciences. 4-H agent Kami Green and 4-H Teen Leaders hosted a kids zone with fun activities and provided information about 4-H and how to join.

Since the open house, several youth have joined 4-H, and the agents have reported more calls and attendance at workshops since the open house. ■



Check out these new publications in the UADA Pubs site:

1. [FSA86 A Guide to Business Structures.](#)
2. [FSA88 Leveraging Enterprise Budgets to Calculate Breakeven Points.](#)
3. [FSA85 Location, Location, Location: Mapping the Risks for Arkansas Broiler Production.](#)
4. [FSFC209 My Doctor Says I Have Gout: Where Do I Start?](#)
5. [FSA1103 Financial Analysis Example for Photovoltaics on a Broiler Farm.](#)

New Video

1. [Arkansas Cattlewomen's Bootcamp 2024.](#)
2. [Winter Pruning - How to Prune Primocane Fruiting Blackberries.](#)
3. [Why Do Honeybees Swarm?](#)

In the News:

[Poultry Chain on KATV.](#)

Social Media: Need some ready-made social media graphics for May? Check out our new [May Social Media Kit.](#)

Featured Website Content

1. [Find a Master Gardener plant sale near you: uaex.uda.edu/plant-sales.](#)
2. [Explore Homesteading in Arkansas: uaex.uda.edu/homesteading.](#)
3. [A to Z Vegetable Gardening.](#)
4. [Spring Resources for Farm & Family uaex.uda.edu/spring.](#)

Got an event? Add it to the UADA calendar at [uada.edu/add-events.](#)

Communications Staffers Members Win Excellence Awards

Three members of the Communications Team won awards from the Association for Communication Excellence. Videographers Kerry Rodtnick and Ben Aaron won first place in the video category with their 4-H Day at the Capitol Video. News writer Rebekah Hall won third-place in the Writing for Newspapers category with her story: "El Dorado orchard produces artisan Mayhaw jelly with help of Share Grounds program". Graphics designer Chris Meux won third place in the Logo Design category for the logo he created for The Fowl Frontier: Poultry Science Unplucked podcast hosted by Dr. Zac Williams. ■

Economic & Workforce Development

Offers New Newsletter

UADA's EDA University Center for Rural Resilience and Workforce Development FACT Sheet Newsletter is for anyone working in the space of economic and workforce development, regardless of their program specialty, who wants to stay in the know about Funding, Activities, Communities, and Tools from around the state, region and nation.

Doing economic or workforce development? We want to feature your work! Contact Brandon L. Mathews at bmathews@uada.edu. Sign up: <https://forms.office.com/r/6LCyy6Qcj4> or scan the QR code. ■



NACDEP Conference

CPED's Brandon L. Mathews, program associate of economic development, was selected to present at the 2024 National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP) on the topic of "Thinking Like a Content Creator." Mathews' workshop will focus on what he calls the RQEs of Successful Content (Relevant, Quality, and Evergreen) and ways Extension professionals, regardless of their specialty or background, can repackaging their content and make it more engaging to reach a broad audience. "As a longtime trusted, nonbiased source of information, Extension are losing ground to popular You-Tubers and Content Creators who have a vested interest in putting money in their own pocket. ■

FCS Agent Input Needed for DFEND

The DFEND program needs Family and Consumer Science agents to share their nutrition and physical activity insights as part of an online focus group.

Participants can earn a \$50 e-Wal-Mart gift card for sharing their ideas that can help shape future nutrition and physical activity resources for FCS extension agents and programs.

What's involved:

- 45-minute online questionnaire about nutrition & physical activity
- 60-minute interactive focus group via Zoom (video recording required)

To see if you qualify, complete the screening questionnaire or reach out to dfend@uada.edu with any questions. [Screening link.](#) ■

UCA Alumni Awards

FCS Agent Joy West and Mary Beth Groce received awards March 5 at the UCA Scholarship & Alumni Awards Reception. Joy West was honored with the Distinguished Alumni Award. This award is for graduates of the Nutrition & Family Science Department who demonstrate outstanding accomplishments and leadership in FCS professions. After graduation she taught FACS in the public school for one year before joining Arkansas Extension in 2012. Joy is the FCS agent in Jackson County.

Mary Beth Groce was recognized with the Young Achiever Award. This award is for alumni within 15 years of graduation who demonstrate emerging leadership and professional achievements in FCS. After graduation, Mary Beth was hired with Extension and will celebrate her 10-year anniversary in September. She is the FCS agent and staff chair in Faulkner County. ■



Left to right: Joy West, Dr. Nina Rooft (AVP - FCS), Mary Beth Groce.

EFNEP Personnel Recognized

EFNEP Instructor Keith Statham-Cleek and EFNEP Educator Jacqueline Silva from Benton County received recognition for their years of service to the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program during the National EFNEP Conference held in Washington D.C. in February. Keith has worked 20 years, and Jacqueline has worked five years with EFNEP. EFNEP is the oldest limited resource nutrition education program in the country. ■



American Forage & Grassland Conference

County agents, extension specialists, and faculty from the Dale Bumpers Small Farms Research Center in Booneville participated in the annual American Forage & Grassland Conference held Jan. 7 – 11 in Mobile AL. Five county agents presented four posters highlighting demonstration/research work conducted across the state on various forage production topics. Specialists Dirk Phillip, Bronc Finch and Ryan Loy gave oral presentations on work they have conducted on silvopasture, soil fertility and forage economics, respectively. Jonathan Kubesch won 2nd place in the Emerging Scientist competition. In addition to the conference, there was a “tour day”.

Tour participants visited two southeast Alabama farms and the Gulf Coast Research & Extension Center. Farm visit topics included hay production, establishment of winter annual pastures with drones, and use of winter annuals

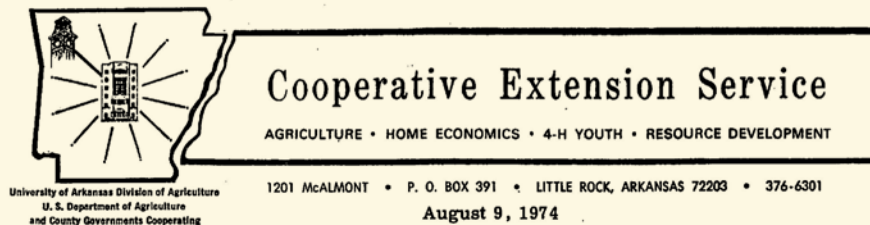
to double crop cotton and soybean fields. At the Research and Extension Center, participants received information on ryegrass varieties and herbicide weed control, and Maggie Justice discussed strategies to prepare cattle for the feedlot. The conference and tour gave attendees the opportunity to network with forage experts and industry representatives from across the United States. ■



AR was well represented at the American Forage and Grassland Conference: From left to right: Christine Nieman, Maggie Justice, Kolten Wright, Joie Bogart, Michelle Mobley, Sarah Stone, Chris Grimes, Jenna Martin, Kenny Simon, Johathan Kubesch, Bronc Finch, Jerri Dew, and Danny Griffin. (Dirk Philipp and Ryan Loy, not pictured.)

Throwback Moment...

This is letterhead from a letter written in 1974. If you look at the logo, it has a drawing of the building at McAlmont with a line connecting it to Old Main at the UAF campus. ■



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 uada.edu. And if you click on view all news, you'll see all of our archived news stories back to 2014.

News and Facts About Arkansas Agriculture

Everywhere you look, you're surrounded by agriculture. Even if there's not a farm for miles around, agriculture is deeply interwoven with your life. It's on your grocery store shelves. It's at the farmers market. It's the cotton in your jeans, the biofuel in your gas tank, or even the leather in your baseball mitt.

POCKET FACTS 2023

Arkansas
Agriculture

Grants & Contracts

PROJECT TITLE	AWARD AMOUNT	PI	GRANTING AGENCY
Resilient Food System Infrastructure Cooperative Agreement	864,527	Amanda Philyaw Perez	Arkansas Agriculture Department
UADA Feed Kits	2,500	Allison Harman	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
2024 Baxter County NRA Funding	623	Amanda Rychtarik	National Rifle Association Foundation (NRA)
Impact of Water Quality on Insecticide Applications to Cotton	10,000	Ben Thrash	Cotton Inc.
Investigating Emerging Production	47,796	Ben Thrash	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Refining Insect Thresholds	44,685	Ben Thrash	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Impact of Water Quality on Insecticide Applications	20,001	Ben Thrash	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Developing Scouting Thresholds for Stinkbug in Soybean	5,716	Ben Thrash	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
A Team Approach to Weed Management	65,727	Bob Scott	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Soybean Enterprise	10,000	Breana Jordan Watkins	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Economics Analysis of Soybean Production	7,316	Brian Deaton	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Refining Insect Thresholds	8,843	Glenn Studebaker	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Developing Scouting Thresholds for Stinkbug in Soybean	5,487	Glenn Studebaker	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Presentation on Internet Safety for Kids	2,500	Hunter P. Goodman	Mississippi State University
Application of Water Before Seed is Covered in Cotton	16,800	Jason Davis	Greenway Equipment
Development of a Turn-Row Soybean Veg Health Analysis	19,989	Jason Davis	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Determining the Value of Fungicide Application	17,409	Jason Davis	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Development of Data Driven Recommendations	46,876	Jeremy Ross	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Investigating Emerging Production	173,482	Jeremy Ross	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Improving Technology Transfer	71,911	Jeremy Ross	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Science For Success	117,488	Jeremy Ross	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Monitoring the Extent of Potassium Deficiency	10,500	Jeremy Ross	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Soybean Verification Program	208,168	Jeremy Ross	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
LeadAR	5,000	Julie C. Robinson	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Arkansas Future Ag Leaders Tour	5,000	Julie C. Robinson	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Soybean Science Challenge	78,585	Julie C. Robinson	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
2024 Drew County Wildlife Education Program	2,000	Lynn Lanthrip	Drew County Conservation District
2024 Drew County Shooting Sports and Outdoor Club	2,772	Lynn Lanthrip	Drew County Conservation District
Smart Discovery Farming to Build Sustainable Agriculture	108,874	Mike Daniels	University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB)
Arkansas Discovery Farms	23,688	Mike Daniels	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Economics of Soil Health	6,580	Mike Daniels	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Site Specific Assessment of Soybean Response	34,900	Mike Hamilton	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Refining Insect Thresholds	15,588	Nick Bateman	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Determining Factors Associated with Poor Grain Quality	24,000	Nick Bateman	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
2024 Pope County Butterfly/Pollinator Garden and Bat House Project in Pottsville City Park	1,000	Pamela Luker	Pope County Conservation District
2024 Arkansas County NRA Funding	623	Phil Horton	National Rifle Association Foundation (NRA)
2024 Arkansas PSEFMP	20,285	Ples Spradley	Extension Foundation
2024 Hot Spring County NRA Funding	512	Rachel Bearden	National Rifle Association Foundation (NRA)
Agriculture Finance, Tax and Asset Protection II	1,000,000	Ron L. Rainey	Utah State University
2024 Sebastian County NRA Funding	623	Shaw nee Marie Tichenor	National Rifle Association Foundation (NRA)
Comprehensive Disease Screening	43,136	Terry Spurlock	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Developing a Satellite Based Field Scouting Tool	14,860	Terry Spurlock	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Determining the Value of Fungicide Application	34,591	Terry Spurlock	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Determining Factors Associated with Poor Grain Quality	31,000	Terry Spurlock	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Understanding Taproot Decline	39,243	Terry Spurlock	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
A Team Approach to Weed Management	66,094	Tom Barber	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Development of Disease Management Strategies for Peanut Production in Arkansas	30,582	Travis Faske	Arkansas Peanut Growers Association
Fast Tracking MG4 and Early MG5 Cultivars	25,424	Travis Faske	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Comprehensive Disease Screening	58,249	Travis Faske	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Integrated Management of Soybean Nematodes	47,690	Travis Faske	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Monitoring and Management of Fungicide Resistant	36,956	Travis Faske	Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
Southern Root-Knot Nematode in Maturity Group 4 Soybean: Characterization of Resistance Mechanisms and Breeding	75,000	Travis Faske	Mid-South Soybean Board

TOTAL AWARDS FOR MARCH 2024: \$3,611,199

Benefits Corner

UMR Live Well Reward\$ Wellness Program

For employees enrolled in the UMR medical plans and opted in to the Live Well Reward\$ program for 2024, the university offers the opportunity to qualify for lower out-of-pocket limits and to earn wellness rewards. If you are enrolled in the Classic Plan or the Premier Plan and you opted in to the Live Well Reward\$ program, you'll automatically receive the lower medical out-of-pocket maximum:

- **Classic Plan:** You'll save \$1,250 (individual coverage) or \$2,500 (family coverage) on your medical plan's annual out-of-pocket maximum.
- **Premier Plan:** You'll save \$500 (individual coverage) or \$1,000 (family coverage) on your medical plan's out-of-pocket maximum.

Through this online wellness program, you can receive cash incentives up to \$500 a year (1 point = \$1) by completing certain wellness activities, screenings and assessments, including:

- Annual Wellness Visit (50 points)
- Breast Cancer Screening (50 points)
- Cervical Cancer Screening (50 points)
- Colorectal Cancer Screening (50 points)
- Prostate Cancer Screening (50 points)
- Cholesterol Screening (50 points)
- Diabetes Screening (50 points)
- Flu Vaccine (50 points)



- Action Plans (50 points each, up to 250 points maximum)
- Ongoing Condition CARE Coaching Engagement (must complete three coaching calls to be considered engaged) (50 points)
- Being Tobacco/Nicotine Free (50 points)
- Tobacco/Nicotine Cessation Coaching Completion as a reasonable alternative for tobacco/nicotine usage (50 points)

Note: Points do not expire and do roll over to the next year.

You may self-report the completion of wellness activities in the Wellness Activity Center through the UMR website. You can redeem your points for your choice of digital or physical gift cards, merchandise, travel vouchers, and more through [Online Rewards](#). Visit umr.com to review details on the wellness activities and incentives.

Note: Wellness rewards are for university employees only.

For any questions pertaining to the wellness program or your rewards, contact UMR at 800-826-9781 or visit umr.com. For benefits questions, contact yourbenefits@uada.edu. ■

Personnel Changes

Welcome Aboard:

Breanna Wade – Program Associate - Volunteer & Staff Development - 4-H & Youth Development, Little Rock

Ryan Caldwell – Fiscal Support Analyst - Accounts Payable/Finance

Clare O'Brien – 4-H Program Assistant, Pulaski County

Sharon Smith – Grant & Contract Analyst, Little Rock

JeAlberne Smith – 4-H Program Technician - 4H & Youth Development, Little Rock

Jonathan Kubesch – Assistant Professor - Forages - Animal Science, Little Rock

Farewell to:

Landon Smith – Crop Soil & Environmental Science - Program Technician - Weed Science, Jackson County

Tabatha Duvall – Community, Professional, & Economic Development - Program Associate, Little Rock

AJ Russell – 4-H Program Assistant, Sebastian County

Sandra McGinnis – Administrative Specialist III, Lawrence County

Jean Ince – County Extension Agent - Staff Chair, Howard County

John Wesson – County Extension Agent - Water Quality, Sevier County

Mariette Spidel – Administrative Specialist I, Washington County

