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## BLUE LETTER

September 2024  
No. 3869



FROM THE DIRECTOR

# Harvest Season

I am writing this column on the first full day of fall. It hasn't felt much like autumn in the past couple of weeks, but if AccuWeather is to be believed, that great Arkansas fall weather should be arriving just about right on schedule. After a long, hot summer, fall is always a welcome relief. There is plenty to like about this time of year besides the great weather, though. Kids are back in school and out of the house, which is always nice. Football season is in full swing. That can be a good or a bad thing, to be fair. So far, this year has been mostly good for the Hogs (excepting a bit of unpleasantness in Stillwater). And deer season is fast approaching. My bowhunting friends are already locked and loaded for opening day – figuratively speaking, of course.

In Extension, fall is one of the busiest times in an always-busy year. Harvest season keeps agents and specialists alike jumping. This month, we had the added excitement of hurricane remnants crawling right over the Delta at the peak of harvest. Extension personnel provided exceptional service to our stakeholders, offering advice and assistance to keep harvest progressing as rapidly as possible in advance of the storm and

thoroughly assessing damage in its wake. I hesitate to give a shout-out to specific personnel because I know a lot of our folks were working hard through this event, but Jarrod Hardke and Zachary Treadway were very much in the spotlight, as our rice and cotton crops were at a particularly vulnerable stage when the bad weather hit. As would be expected, they served us and our stakeholders exceptionally well.

Speaking of being in the spotlight, fair season is in full swing as I write this. Nothing puts our county Extension staff in the spotlight like the county fair; it is an all-hands-on-deck event. For those of you in the counties, I know that this time of year means a string of long days and late nights – and maybe even some challenging interactions with parents, exhibitors, etc. I also know that family obligations don't slow down to accommodate the fair-week schedule. For what it's worth, I very much appreciate the effort. I have had the chance to stop by a couple of fairs this year. What I have heard consistently and repeatedly is lavish praise for the local Extension staff from stakeholders. "We couldn't do this without them" is a common refrain. I hope that sentiment will help keep you warm on a crisp autumn evening. ■

## INSIDE SCOOP

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- ...And much more!



# Food Desert Elimination Grant

The Jefferson County Master Gardeners received a \$10,000 Food Desert Elimination Grant recently announced by Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders and the Arkansas Department of Health - Arkansas Minority Health Commission.

The Commission awarded four grants to recipients who focus on food desert elimination. “Arkansas is now ranked #1 in food insecurity, and every county in the state now has at least one food desert, so providing these funds to organizations doing this targeted work will certainly be impactful,” Arkansas Minority Health Commission Director Kenya Eddings said.

Grant funds can be used for a variety of purposes including



From left to right: Timothy Wallace, Jefferson County Extension agent; Kenneth Smith, Jefferson County Master Gardeners president; Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders; District 65 State Rep. Vivian Flowers; District 64 State Rep. Kenneth Ferguson; Pine Bluff First Ward Councilwoman LaTisha Brunson.

community needs assessments, focus groups, technical assistance, and more.

The Jefferson County Master Gardener President Kenneth Smith and extension agent Timothy Wallace attended a recent press conference to receive the award.

“I am so pleased to know that the work we are doing here

in Jefferson County is being supported and encouraged to continue,” said Timothy Wallace, Jefferson County’s extension agent for horticulture and 4-H and also the Master Gardener advisor. “The work we do here with the Master Gardeners is so much bigger than us. It is life changing for our community and people we serve.” ■

## Save the Date

**What:** Investing in Rural Prosperity: A Forum on Braiding and Blending Federal and Private Funds.

**Where:** Extension LRSO Education Wing.

**When:** Oct. 16, 2024, 9:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.  
(Lunch provided).

**Description:** Extension will host the Arkansas Community and Economic Development Alliance (ACEDA) meeting featuring the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. While billions of federal dollars have been allocated to help expand economic prosperity in rural America, barriers remain for these areas to fully access these funding options, including meeting matching fund requirements. By layering public and private funding, rural communities can obtain the flexibility and capacity needed to navigate and leverage resources.

Join policymakers, practitioners, community leaders, funders, and others from across the region to:

- Hear how organizations have leveraged local assets

to secure funding and financing for community and economic development projects.

- Learn about federal funding opportunities from government officials.
- Hear how local rural leaders have developed capacity, partnerships, and strategies to blend and braid public and private funding opportunities.



Martha Claire Bullen



Michael Rivera

**Keynote Speakers:**

- **Martha Claire Bullen**, Director of Community Sustainability, Communities Unlimited
- **Michael Rivera**, Director of Lending, Communities Unlimited

Free to attend. RSVP required. Contact Brandon at [bmathews@uada.edu](mailto:bmathews@uada.edu) for details and marketing. Join ACEDA’s email list: <https://uaex.uada.edu/aceda>. ■



## Faulkner County

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# Fish Fry Fundraiser Nets \$12,000



The Faulkner County 4-H Foundation, Faulkner County 4-H Clubs, and the Faulkner County Extension Office

hosted a fish fry and auction on Aug. 9 that drew more than 300 attendees and raised over \$12,000 for Faulkner County 4-H.



Faulkner County 4-H and Teen Leaders help serve food at the fish fry and auction. The event had over three-hundred attendees.

The Faulkner County 4-H Foundation and clubs created baskets that were live auctioned and gathered auction items for a silent auction. The foundation's fundraising committee worked diligently to host the event, working alongside the Faulkner County Teen Leaders, and are already working on plans for the 2025 event. ■

## Hot Spring County

# 4-H Show Off Culinary Skills



Two Hot Spring County 4-H members won big at the Arkansas Farm Bureau's "Dairy Foods" and "Rice is Nice" state competitions held July 18 at the Arkansas State Fairgrounds in Little Rock.

Jase S., 11, participated in the 2024

Amanda B., 14, participated in the Arkansas Farm Bureau Dairy Foods Contest. Berryhill prepared an Oreo cheesecake and won second place in the party dish category. She received a \$125 gift card.

For each contest, six contestants were selected for the statewide competition from winners of the local rice and dairy foods contests. Each contestant was required to send in a copy of their recipe, and a summary of why they selected their recipe. The contestants had 3 hours to prepare the dishes in front of the judges. The judges then tasted each dish and asked the contestants questions regarding their dish. ■



Amanda B. won second place in the party dish category with her Oreo cheesecake.

Arkansas Farm Bureau Rice is Nice Cooking Contest in July at the state fairgrounds in Little Rock. Jase S. won first place in the main dish category and a \$150 gift card for his chicken enchilada rice casserole.



Jase S. won first place in the main dish category with his chicken enchilada rice casserole.



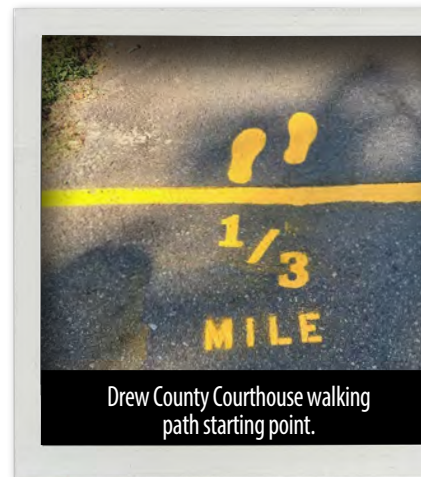
# Courthouse Gets New Walking Path

Last month, the health team installed a new walking path around the Drew County Courthouse in Monticello, so employees and community members can engage in physical activity throughout the day, evenings and weekends. The walking path is one-third of a mile, with three laps equaling a mile.



From left to right: Mishanna Lanes, ArHOP Regional Program Associate, Dr. Bryan Mader, Michelle Carter, ArHOP Regional Program Associate, Hazelene McCray, Drew County Family and Consumer Sciences Agent and Dr. Teresa Henson.

Drew County is one of 11 counties that are part of the Arkansas High Obesity Prevention Project (ArHOP). The walking path is one of many county projects the team is tasked with implementing under ArHOP. ■



Drew County Courthouse walking path starting point.

# Grant Writing Workshop

Nearly 60 participants from two states and more than six counties attended ‘Capacity Building Through Grant Writing’ workshop on Sept. 4 in Sebastian County. Hunter P. Goodman and Brandon L. Mathews from the Community Professional and Economic Development unit led the training as part of Extension’s EDA University Centers for Rural Resilience and Workforce Development.

Participants learned how to develop SMART Goals, construct a Logic Model, and collaborate using Asset-Based Community Development best practices to forge strong partnerships and write better grant proposals. To quote one attendee: “I have discovered that I can become a great resource and contribution in my community with the skills, resources, and networking gained through this program and its workshop. So thank

you!” Special thanks to Amanda Spradlin from Sebastian County Extension office and Western Arkansas Community Foundation for their planning efforts and community outreach.

The workshop was the first between EDA’s two newest University Center in Arkansas—Extension and UA Fort Smith – Center for Economic Development—with more to come. Other partners included Western Arkansas Planning and Development District and EDA’s Austin Region Office.

Find future workshops at <https://calendar.uada.edu> and searching “grant writing.” For more info, email Brandon at [bmathews@uada.edu](mailto:bmathews@uada.edu). ■



Attendees listen to Dr. Hunter P. Goodman at ‘Capacity Building Through Grant Writing’ workshop held at the Bakery District in Fort Smith, AR on September 4.



From left to right: Brandon L. Mathews, Program Associate - Economic Development; Dr. Hunter P. Goodman, Assistant Professor Community, Workforce, & Economic Development; April Campbell, Economic Development Representative – U.S. Economic Development Administration Austin Regional Office; Kendall Ross, Associate Vice Chancellor – Economic and Workforce Development at UA Fort Smith.



# LEADERSHIP LOG

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## Three Days in the Life of iLEAD IV

iLEAD Cohort IV gathered for their first face-to-face seminar in the year-long journey at the C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center on Aug. 14-16. iLEAD is program for University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture (UADA) employees created to foster a trusting, collaborative learning environment to develop leadership skills. The team approach supports the



iLEAD Cohort IV had their first face-to-face seminar at the C.A. Vines 4-H Center for team building .

discovery of diverse perspectives and provides participants with a peer support network as well. Three members of iLEAD IV reflect on the teambuilding seminar. Read blog post [here](#).

## Leadership Lunch and Learn

In a world where leadership often feels synonymous with authority and command, Amy Jen Su's *"The Leader You Want to Be: Five Essential Principles for Bringing Out Your Best Self—Every Day"* arrives as a refreshing guide for those seeking to blend authenticity with effectiveness. Jen Su draws from her extensive experience in leadership coaching to offer a nuanced approach to personal and professional growth. In the August Leadership Lunch and Learn series, Dr. Lauren Griffeth with the University of Georgia reviewed this book. She said, "I love this book." Read the blog post [here](#). Watch the [recording](#).

## LeadAR Class 20

The August virtual seminar focused on preparing Class 20 for the international study tour to Morocco taking place Sept. 14-24. Stay tuned for details of their experience abroad. ■

## Arkansas County

# EHC Provides Pillows for Comfort



A comfort pillow is just a little thing that can remind others that someone cares! The Arkansas County Extension Homemakers met at the Cooperative Extension Service for a day of fellowship, fun, food and helping others. EH members donated their time and talent to cut material, sew and deliver 47 pillows to Crestpark Nursing Home. Comfort pillows are made of machine-washable fabric and stuffed with fiberfill for easy care. Members of the Arkansas County Extension Homemakers have made it their mission to help others. ■



Arkansas County Extension Homemakers with comfort pillows made for Crestpark Nursing Home.



## UADA Cloud Storage Migration Update

The UADA Box-to-OneDrive copy/migration for UADA



Box is almost complete. The team is now focused on the 2 departmental/group shares that are left in UADA Box and is actively migrating those to UADA SharePoint/OneDrive. Thank you to each and every one for the hard work and patience during this change. Your questions, comments, feedback and tickets are greatly appreciated. Once the project is completed, approximately 86 TB of data will have been migrated from Box to OneDrive. Project completion date is October 2024. *Reminder: This project does not impact your UARK Box folders/files.*

## Microsoft Company Portal

The Microsoft Company Portal allows each UADA user using a UADA domain managed device (e.g., desktop computer, laptop, tablet, etc.) to select software to install without the need for administrative privileges. The applications in the Company Portal will automatically update as long as your device is compliant, which can be determined by looking within the Company Portal application.

**Install Apps:** In the company portal you can browse and install approved apps/software that have been approved for UADA. **Check Compliance:** Ensure your device meets the security requirements set by UADA. The portal will notify you if any actions are needed. **Troubleshoot Issues:** Use the troubleshooting tools within the app to resolve common issues or contact UADA IT help desk. **Note:** Some software requires a license. If you have questions reach out to UADA ITS.

To access this app on your UADA laptop/desktop, select the Company Portal app when you search your device's installed apps or your mobile store. Knowledge Base Reference: Article - [Microsoft Company Portal](#).

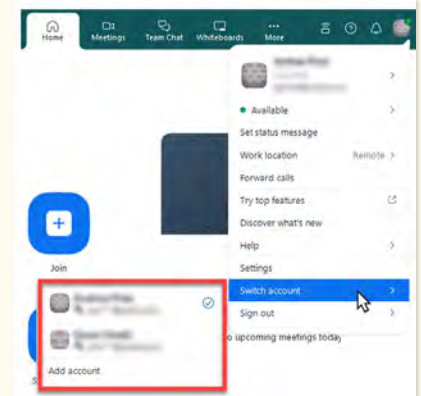
## Admin By Request

Admin By Request gives each UADA user using a UADA domain managed device (e.g., desktop computer, laptop, tablet, etc.) the ability to download whitelisted (approved) software not available in Company Portal, request administrative rights on their device, and to uninstall programs. A key benefit is that users can request admin rights without having to put in a ticket with the help desk.

Admin By Request is in audit mode for a two-week period before its official activation. We will be rolling out activation (removing admin rights) by departments. Knowledge Base Reference: Article - [Admin By Request](#).

## Zoom Pro Tip

New to the Zoom Workplace app: sign in to multiple accounts! Zoom now makes it easier to switch between multiple accounts through the Workplace app. Simply add your additional account and then use the switch account option to switch between your signed in accounts. See the Zoom Support page for more detailed instructions on [switching between multiple accounts](#).



## Hump Day Hacks

- [Finding Files and Folders in OneDrive](#)
- [Find What You Need with Search in Microsoft 365 apps](#)
- [Creating Accessible Tables in Excel](#)
- [Adding Slicers to Tables and Pivot Tables](#) ■



## 2024 TECH TUESDAY WEBINARS

Did you miss 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 August's [Stop Writing Emails No One Is Reading](#) Tech Tuesday? Check out the recording and resources.

# Seeds of Excellence

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“Thanks to all of you.” “We appreciate all the effort, time, dedication, backpacks and other goodies that extension staff provided to us.” “We learned so much, especially from our peer-to-peer groups.” That was just a few of the comments heard and written on the sticky board evaluation at the end of the recent new employee orientation.

from Dr. Debbie Nistler. Dr. Tom Barber shared information on Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Expo booths hosted by extension benefits providers and departments were available for browsing after lunch. Conversations between hosts and participants abounded.

The peer-to-peer sessions occupied most of the afternoon, with multiple participants commenting that those sessions were most beneficial and valuable.

The IT team quizzed participants on their tech knowledge, handing out prizes to the winners. Participants left more tech savvy than when they arrived. HR and Communications also shared information about their departments. And, then there were door prizes!

Participants declared atmosphere welcoming and informative. The upcoming new employees orientation will be Jan. 15, 2025, at the state office. ■



Dr. John Anderson shares information about Extension to new employees.



From left to right: Karen Watts DiCicco and Samantha Barker offer IT support to new employees.

After the new employees introduced themselves, extension director Dr. John D. Anderson presented information on extension's organization, goals, and mission. Next CPED Director Dr. Stacey McCullough, engineered a scavenger hunt through their offices to answer questions about CPED. New employees heard about Family and Consumer Sciences from Dr. Nina Roofe and about 4-H and Youth Development



Vanessa Lynn Lewis leads a fun Heads-Tails Ice Breaker.

## Animal Science Students Visit Australia Outback

Drs. Ken Coffey and Kathi Jogan led a service-learning study abroad course for a group of University of Arkansas students to learn about managing cattle in Australia. Students spent time on Wambiana Station, a working cattle ranch in the outback.

During their stay, students learned about cattle husbandry and grazing practices on this large commercial cattle station 'in the bush'. Cultural components of this course included visits to the Sydney Opera House and the Barango Reserve where they learned about how native flora and fauna are used for food, tools and weapons by Aboriginal peoples. Students snorkeled on the Great Barrier Reef, interacted with native animals including wombats and dingoes and even held a koala.

To learn more about what students learned and did during this course, click this link: <https://padlet.com/Ansdept/2024-aus-adventures-yf2yslkhfrjz2h4b> Thanks to Drs. Ken Coffey and Kathi Jogan for leading the study group. ■



University of Arkansas students visit a working cattle ranch in Australia.



# Bagwell Family Farmstead Visit



Crittenden County 4-H youth enjoyed a memorable field trip in August to the Bagwell Family Farmstead in Marion, Arkansas, graciously hosted by Jonathan Bagwell. The day was packed with engaging activities that offered both fun and educational experiences.

The morning began with a flower-cutting session, where the kids picked fresh blooms from the farm's gardens. Thanks go to the Flower Girls of Marion — Courtney-Jean Guy and Heather Whittemore—who brought vases and shared their flower-arranging expertise with the 4-H members, who learned how to create beautiful bouquets. The hands-on help made the experience even more special, and the kids were thrilled with their floral creations.



4-Hers creating floral arrangements with The Flower Girls.

The adventure continued with an exciting opportunity to catch chicken pullets. The young 4-Hers learned about poultry care and had a blast interacting with the chickens. They also gathered fresh eggs to take home, adding a tangible reward to their farm experience.

The day was a fantastic blend of learning and enjoyment, providing the Crittenden County 4-H youth with a deeper appreciation for farming and nature.

A huge thank you to Jonathan Bagwell for hosting, and to Courtney-Jean Guy and Heather Whittemore for their invaluable contribution to the flower arranging activity. ■



From left to right: Heather Whittemore, Courtney-Jean Guy (The Flower Girls), Alexandria Salisbury (Crittenden Co. 4H Agent), and Jonathan Bagwell (Bagwell Family Farmstead).

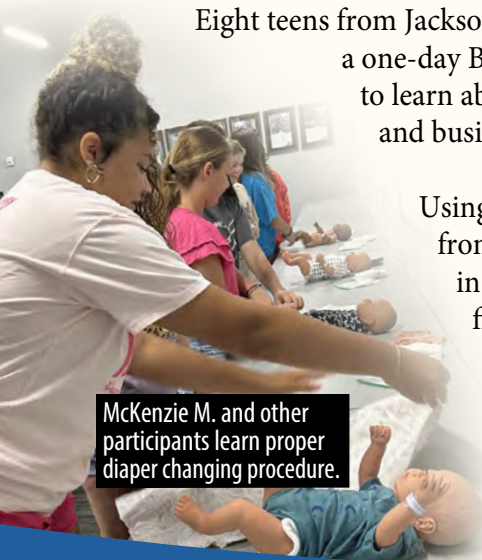
## Babysitting Training a Big Success

Eight teens from Jackson County participated in a one-day Babysitting Basics training to learn about the responsibilities and business aspects of childcare.

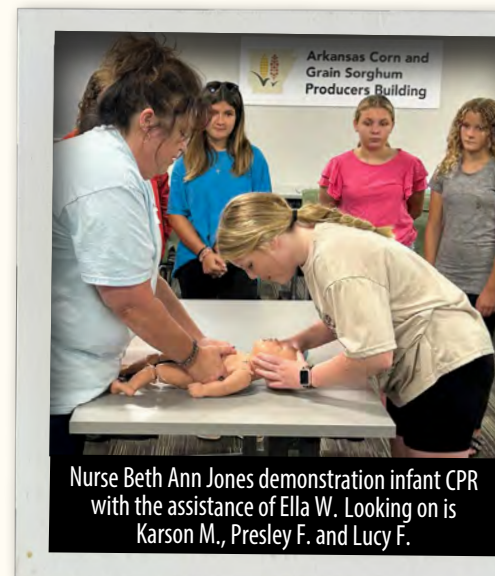
Using the expertise of nurses from Unity Health Hospital in Newport, the teens got firsthand experience in dealing with emergency situations including CPR. The hospital even provided small

first-aid kits for the participants babysitting bags.

This was the first time in over 10 years that this program was offered in Jackson County, and it was well received by the teens and their families. ■



McKenzie M. and other participants learn proper diaper changing procedure.



Nurse Beth Ann Jones demonstration infant CPR with the assistance of Ella W. Looking on is Karson M., Presley F. and Lucy F.



# FCS Promotes Rice Cooking at NERREC

FCS Instructors Leigh Ann Bullington and Keith Statham-Cleek, along with five FCS county agents, prepared approximately 400 servings each of Cheese & Green Chile Squares, Southwest Salsa Bites, Spinach Rice Cups, and Instant Rice Pudding for the grand opening of the Northeast Arkansas Rice Research and Extension Center on Aug. 30.



FCS County Agents Brianna Sheppard (Woodruff), Christie Wagley (Poinsett), Joy West (Jackson), Mattie Ricker (Cross), Katrina Sellers (Craighead), and Tori Fowler (Lawrence) helped prepare the dishes for attendees to sample. The recipes and the nutrient composition were provided to those in attendance. ■



From left to right: Joy West, Leigh Ann Bullington, Mattie Ricker, Christie Wagley, Keith Statham-Cleek, Katrina Sellers, Tori Fowler, and Brianna Sheppard.

## Baxter County

# Pet Parade Connects Generations

Baxter County's community service project at Lake Forest Senior Living brought generations together through a Pet Parade. Several seniors do not have family nearby and don't get many visitors. Residents of the facility were able to pet or hold pets belonging to 4-H members.

This was the first time to do the pet parade, and both the kids and seniors enjoyed it! Since this event, other nursing homes have reached out to host a pet parade at their facility. ■



Seniors really enjoyed getting to pet the animals as well as interact with 4-H'ers.



A senior from Lake Forest, & her daughter, enjoyed petting a longhorn for the first time ever.



# National Student Leaders Connecting Conference

Students from the Departments of Animal Science and Food Science attended the National Student Leaders Connecting Conference (SLC) at the University of Nebraska where they learned about opportunities within the University of Nebraska Animal Science's research and processing facilities.

The students — Cason Frisby, Paul Dahunsi, and Stephanie Shimer — toured facilities such as Omaha Steaks, Universal Pure, Smart Chicken, Certified Piedmontese, Tyson Case Ready and Pepperoni Plants, Conagra Brands headquarters, American Foods, and Cargill facilities. Students also learned about career opportunities with Tyson, Greater Omaha, Conagra, Nestle Purina, and Corbion.

The conference was sponsored by the American Meat Science Association. ■

## Livestock Quiz Bowl and Skillathon



The last of the nationally qualifying 4-H Livestock contests wrapped up at the end of the summer. Fifty-five 4-Hers from six counties competed in the State 4-H Livestock Quiz Bowl contest Aug. 8. The next day, 91 4-Hers from 17 counties competed in the State 4-H Livestock Skill-a-thon contest. These contests were hosted on the campus of Arkansas Tech University.

In Livestock Quiz Bowl, the champion senior team is from Madison County and will represent Arkansas 4-H at the National 4-H Livestock Quiz Bowl in Louisville, Kentucky, in November. The second-place senior team is from White County and will compete at the National Western Roundup in Denver. The champion junior Livestock Quiz Bowl team is from Nevada County 4-H. This contest is based on general livestock knowledge tested in a double-elimination quiz bowl format.

Skill-a-thon in Louisville Kentucky in November. The champion junior Livestock Skill-a-thon team is from Madison County 4-H. The Livestock Skill-a-thon

contest evaluates general livestock knowledge and teamwork through applied team scenarios. Some of the contest sections included quality assurance exercises, live animal evaluation, hay evaluation, wool evaluation, livestock breeds identification, animal feeding, marketing scenarios, meat and carcass evaluation, and equipment identification.

These 4-H contests are made possible with assistance from University of Arkansas Animal Science faculty, Arkansas Tech faculty, and Pope County extension agents. Special thank you to the Pope County Farm Bureau and Farm Credit of Western Arkansas for providing meals for each contest. ■



The Champion Senior Livestock Skill-a-thon team from Greene County 4-H. Left to right: Tucker C., Addison K., Ava K., Blake M.



The Champion Senior Livestock Quiz Bowl team from Madison County 4-H. From left to right: Cadence A., Ashlyn D., Vallie Y., Jade E., Cache S.

In Livestock Skill-a-thon, the champion senior team is from Stone County and will represent Arkansas 4-H at the National 4-H Livestock



White County 4-H'ers complete the Team Quality Assurance section demonstrating looking at the goat's teeth to estimate the animal's age.



# Start First Summer Farmer's Market

On June 8, Community members enjoyed food, vendors, local produce and breads at the June 8 launch of the first Crittenden County summer farmers market.

Obesity Prevention Project regional program associate from the Little Rock State Office.

The farmers market started June 8 on the Crittenden County Courthouse Square in Marion, and residents from Marion, West Memphis, and surrounding areas came out to support it. The market is open on the second Saturday of the month through September from 8 a.m.- noon. ■

Crittenden County residents have access for the first time to a summer farmers market, thanks to the leadership of Crittenden County FCS agent Morgan Chrestman, and Mishanna Lanes, Arkansas High



Community members came out to enjoy food, vendors, local produce and breads at the launch of the first Summer Crittenden County Farmers Market.



Morgan Chrestman, Crittenden County Family and Consumer Sciences Agent and Mishanna Lanes, ArHOP Regional Program Associate setting up for the July 13th Farmer's Market

# Arkansas Forage and Grassland Council Welcomes New Board Members

The Arkansas Forage and Grassland Council is proud to announce two new members to the executive board of directors, Kenny Simon and Dr. Jonathan Kubesch. Kenny has assisted with AFGC events for over 15 years. He was elected to serve on the board in February of 2023 and was recently elected chairman of the board.

The executive secretary of the AFGC is appointed by the vice president of the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, with preference given to the extension forage specialist. Dr. John Jennings, retired extension forage specialist, served in this role for more than 20 years until he retired in 2023. Jennings now serves as an ex-officio advisor to the AFGC board. Kubesch started as the new extension forage specialist in April. Dr. Deacue Fields, head of the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, recently appointed Kubesch to serve as executive secretary.

AFGC members represent the academic community, producers, private industry, institutes and foundations. Eighteen elected members serve on the board. Board members include Mike Andrews, Mitch Baltz, Jennifer Caraway, Jake Cartwright, Matt Flynt, Shane Gadberry, Jared Garrett, Che Gordon, Matt Hoiem, Michelle Bufkin-Horton, Jeremy Huff, Daniel Rivera, Sam Tabler, Levonna Uekman, Larry Wells, and Kolton Wright.

The Arkansas Council is an affiliate of the National American Forage and Grassland Council. Its primary objective is promoting the profitable production and sustainable utilization of quality forage and grasslands. AFGC is dedicated to advancing the use of forage as a prime feed resource for livestock. ■



# Outreach Prepares High School 4-Hers for Ag Tech Careers

Applications are open for the new Ag-Tech Career Exploration (ACE) program created to introduce high school 4-H students (ages 16-19) to advanced technologies in agriculture. ACE is designed for students interested in pursuing careers that utilize agricultural technology such as drones, sensors, food genetics, and robotics.

Through tours in Arkansas and abroad, hands-on experiences, and job shadowing, participants learn about the benefits of agricultural technology. Applications are open now until Nov. 1. The program dates

are January – July 2025. The application link and complete details are available on the [website](#). ■

## Grants & Contracts

PROJECT TITLE	AWARD AMOUNT	PI	GRANTING AGENCY
Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) 2023	33,000.00	Amanda L McWhirt	University of Georgia
Path C the FDA's Cooperative Agreement Program for State and Territories to Implement a National Produce Safety Program	166,964.00	Amanda Philyaw Perez	Arkansas Agriculture Department
Southern Regional and Lead Coordination Centers for FSMA Food Safety Training and Outreach	20,001.00	Amanda Philyaw Perez	University of Florida
Sebastian County Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Conference Sponsorship	7,409.98	Amanda Spradlin	University of Georgia
Lawrence County Medical Emergencies Preparation	1,870.00	Bryce N Baldridge	Blue & You Foundation
Arkansas Extension Implementation Project	224,138.00	Glenn E Studebaker	National Institute of Food & Agriculture (NIFA)
Test Efficacy of Biorational Products for Enhancing Grain Yield and Quality of Rice	13,000.00	Jarrod Hardke	Valent BioSciences LLC
Using the Arkansas Watershed Stewardship Program to Increase Watershed Management Plan Implementation in Arkansas	233,521.00	John H Pennington	Arkansas Natural Resources Commission
Education on Regional Approaches to NWA Stormwater and Flood Management	30,000.00	Katie Teague	Arkansas Agriculture Department
Southern Risk Management Education Center 2024-2027	2,121,750.00	Ron L Rainey	National Institute of Food & Agriculture (NIFA)
Mechanistic Understanding Of Water Homeostasis In Divergently Selected Broilers For Low- Or High-Water Efficiency	300,000.00	Sara Katherine Orłowski	National Institute of Food & Agriculture (NIFA)
<b>TOTAL AWARDS FOR AUGUST 2024: \$3,151,654</b>			

# Benefits Corner

## Open Enrollment Begins Oct. 21 for Benefits Eligible Employees

The annual benefits open enrollment period for UADA employees to select plans for 2025 will begin on Oct. 21 at 8:00 am and will close at 11:59 p.m. on Nov. 4. Employees will receive an open enrollment task in their Workday inbox. While most benefit selections are automatically re-enrolled, all employees interested in the following benefits must manually re-enroll:

- Healthcare Flexible Spending
- Dependent Care Flexible Spending
- Critical Illness
- UMR Live Well Reward\$ Wellness Program (through the UMR website).



Please watch your emails for more information regarding open enrollment.

If you have any questions, please email [yourbenefits@uada.edu](mailto:yourbenefits@uada.edu). ■

# Personnel Changes



## Welcome Aboard:

**Quad Whitson** – Culinary Nutrition Program Associate - Family & Consumer Science, Little Rock

**Leslie Sullivan** – Administrative Specialist III, Prairie County

**Andrew Milsom** – Post Doctoral Fellow - Animal Science, Little Rock

**Catrina Tatum** – Administrative Specialist III, Bradley County

**Alyx Herring** – Administrative Specialist II, Benton County

**Jacob Hackman** – Assistant Professor - Forestry Management & Forestry Extension - Forest Resources, Little Rock

**Veronica Guerrero-Pesina** – EFNEP Program Assistant - Family & Consumer Science, Benton County

**Bill Potter** – Associate Professor - Extension Poultry Scientist - Poultry Science, Washington County

**Nicole Emerson** – Program Associate - Plant Pathology - Plant Pathology, Lonoke Agricultural Center

## Farewell to:

**Rip Weaver** – Horticulture - Food Systems and Safety Program Technician, Little Rock

**Pam Pruett** – County Extension Agent - Family & Consumer Sciences, Mississippi County

**Josh Phelps** – Associate Professor - Family & Consumer Science, Little Rock

**Emily Lane Smith** – Program Associate - Community Professional & Economy Development  
Accountability & Professional Development, Little Rock

**Robert Cash** – 4H & Youth Development - Maintenance Specialist, C A Vines Arkansas 4-H Center