

Extension partners with Connecting City to Farm

The Drew County Extension staff was contacted early in February by Connecting City to Farm Executive Director Kris Habashy, who requested assistance with their upcoming Farm Camp. The nonprofit organization is in its second year of programming and advocates safe and affordable nutrition through the lens of agriculture.

The first of three four-day camps was held at a farmhouse in the community of Boydell on March 12-15. Campers were exposed to the real world of agriculture for the first time. Few had ever breathed in the smell of fresh-tilled soil or sat in the buddy seat of a huge tractor in operation.

Extension staff members Karen Ballard, Rick Fields, Steve Kelley, Hazelene McCray, Leigh Ann Bullington and Keith Cleek worked to provide hands-on education for the thirty-plus group of inner city Dallas youth. Volunteer support was supplied by Extension supporters Bearlain Lewis and Margee Taylor.



Dallas youth, camp staff members and Extension staff join for a group picture.

After the event, we received a much appreciated email from Kris who said, "It's hard to adequately communicate our appreciation for your efforts. You were organized, effective and engaging. Thank you for enriching our environment so youth can have a taste of how modern agriculture provides for our country."

Visit <http://www.connectingcitytofarm.com> to read more about this great organization we are privileged to have as partners. Plans are already being made for educational support for future farm camps in April and June. ■

Youth were cleverly guided through a STEM activity to understand the difference between pneumatic and hydraulic systems and how they are applied to both urban and farm life. To emphasize the soybean industry, staff members utilized the curriculum from the Arkansas Soybean Board's Soybean Science Challenge. A food demonstration was conducted using healthy soy products. Youth taste-tested edamame, raspberry soy drink shakes and a healthy soybean-based stir fry.

Phil Baugh, co-founder of the organization, said, "Thank you. You all went above and beyond anything we ever expected. I had no idea Extension had such great, professional people."



Extension staff members Leigh Ann Bullington, Keith Cleek and Hazelene McCray prepare food demonstrations.

Tri-county 4-H Leadership Road Trip



On March 21, 17 4-H youth from Lonoke, Prairie, and Monroe counties participated in a "Leadership Road Trip" workshop. They began their adventure by answering questions about themselves and the people close to them. Through hands-on activities, youth learned how to recognize their own ability to work as a team, develop an awareness of first impressions, identify leadership traits and personal goals, practice communication and make a commitment to lead.

As a result of the workshop, 100 percent reported they were able to organize a group to reach a goal, use different leadership styles, get others to share in leadership, work out problems presented to them, contribute as a member of a team, accept responsibility for doing a good job, understand the importance of following through on commitments and have control over their own personal goals. Ninety-four percent reported they were able to listen carefully to what others say, while 88 percent reported they list their options before making a decision, evaluate decisions they made and can settle disagreements in ways that are not hurtful. Finally, 75 percent reported they can now clearly state thoughts, feelings and ideas to others and can keep useful and accurate records. ■

Benton County hosts third annual Ag Day celebration

On Tuesday, March 21, Benton County Extension and other community partners came together to celebrate National Ag Day. The event was held at the Walmart Auditorium at the Northwest Arkansas Community College in Bentonville.

Speakers included local farmers and researchers who worked together through Discovery Farms or Watershed Conservation Resource Center on innovative agricultural practices, the live production manager for Cargill Turkey Division and special guest Cynthia Edwards, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture with the Arkansas Agriculture Department.

Door prizes of locally produced agriculture products were given away during the presentations, and the event was broadcast live on KURM radio. ■

Bismarck Beef Night

The 2nd Annual Bismarck Beef Night was held on Tuesday, March 7. This event targeted beef cattle producers, focusing on herd health issues.

Dr. Heidi Ward, Extension veterinarian, made a presentation on the importance of worming and wormer rotation schedules; Dr. John Jennings, Extension forage specialist, spoke on fescue toxicity; and Rachel Bearden, county Extension agent, discussed vaccination protocols and schedules. As producers prepare for spring and begin planning their management practices, these issues are all very important.

This event was sponsored by Boehringer Ingelheim, Hot Spring County Cattlemen's Association and the Bismarck FFA program. In an effort to reach more producers on the opposite corner of the county seat, Hot Spring County has been pushing to have more programs that are more accessible for producers. There were 43 in total attendance. One hundred percent of producers reported their knowledge increased in all three subject areas and found the information relevant and useful. Every producer was also sent home with copies of MP 504, *Research Based Answers to Frequently Asked Questions on Fescue Toxicity*, and several fact sheets. ■



Extension forage specialist Dr. John Jennings discusses fescue toxicity with Bismarck cattle producers.

District Dig Ins inspire Master Gardeners as spring arrives



Dr. Vic Ford educates the Master Gardener volunteers about mushrooms in Clark County.

Master Gardener volunteers from various areas of the state attended one of three District Dig In events in March. New for this year, the educational seminars were offered to unite members within their districts as well as provide a horticulture educational opportunity.

From Union County to Washington County and many points in between, 150 Master Gardeners gained knowledge in the areas of conifers, herbs, mushrooms or vegetable gardening. Janet Carson gave a Master Gardener program update at each location in addition to information on new

annuals and perennials for 2017.

We greatly appreciate our guest speakers for the three events – Dr. Vic Ford, Dr. Gerald Klingaman, Susan Belsinger and Chris Cooper. Thanks to the county extension agents, extension staff and Master Gardeners in Clark, St. Francis and Sebastian counties who helped with planning and setup in the three districts.

Pope County 4-H Achievement Banquet

Pope County was honored to have the Honorable Andrea Lea, State Auditor, attend the 4-H Achievement Banquet on March 9 at the Saint John's Catholic School Parish Hall where over 130 people came out to have dinner and recognize the outstanding achievements of Pope County 4-H members.



Pope County Teen Leaders with the Honorable Andrea Lea, State Auditor. Pictured from left to right are McKenzie Hood, Caleb Jacobs, Andrew Ward, Ashlyn Ward, Andrea Lea, Ethan Jacobs, Katelyn Danzy and ClaireAnna Harmon.



2017 GALAXY CONFERENCE
MARCH 15-17 • C.A. VINES ARKANSAS 4-H CENTER
U of A DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

Galaxy 2017 provides a look forward and a look back

“Blue Jeans and Extension Dreams,” 2017 Galaxy Conference 2017, provided participants both a look back and a look forward.

The annual meeting, held this year at the C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center, is an opportunity for extension’s professional organizations – Epsilon Sigma Phi, NEA-FCS and AAE4-HA – to meet, conduct business and



John Philpot

present state awards. The annual Credit Union meeting was also conducted by BeVerly Sims.

John Philpot, a former extension communications employee, reminisced about the “good old days.” “His stories were eye-opening for young agents,” said Mary Ann Kizer of Jefferson County, 2017 Galaxy Planning Committee chair.

Elise Mitchell, chief executive officer of the Mitchell Group and capnote speaker, offered attendees advice on the way forward, encouraging all to “lead through the turn.” She compared leadership skills to riding a motorcycle, saying, “You never watch the turn when driving a motorcycle because you will always go off the road.”

She said that the “journey mindset” would help extension agents achieve success and significance in their own professional journey. Everyone received an autographed copy of Mitchell’s book, provided by the Galaxy Committee, before they headed home refreshed and inspired.

Earlier, Mark Cochran, vice president - agriculture, U of A System, gave attendees an update on state funding after meeting with legislators. He thanked agents for their encouragement of the Friends of Extension and stated, “Now, they are more important than ever.” Rick Cartwright, interim extension director, spoke during the retirees’ luncheon and yielded a portion of his time to Philpot.

Winners at this year’s Galaxy Conference

This year’s award winners:

Epsilon Sigma Phi - Alpha Iota Chapter

- Distinguished Service – Keith Perkins, Lonoke County
- Early Career Award – Dianna Bowen, Lonoke County
- Distinguished Team – Diane Clement, Cleveland County; Mary Ann Kizer, Jefferson County; Michelle Carter, Bradley County; and Jane Newton, Lincoln County
- Friend of Extension – Britt Talent, Cleveland County Herald
- Meritorious Support – Nora Terry, Cleveland County

AACES

- Brett Barham Extension Innovation Award – Mary Poling, Information Technology, Little Rock State Office
- Faculty Project Performance Award – Diane Mashburn, Program and Staff Development, Little Rock State Office
- Gary Burke Memorial Award – Lauren Copeland, Family and Consumer Sciences, Little Rock State Office
- Jane Osborne Memorial Award – Phalon Montgomery, Animal Science, Little Rock State Office
- Jeanette Roberts Memorial Award – Laura Hendrix, Family and Consumer Sciences, Little Rock State Office
- Linda Meeks Support Specialist Award – Jill Williams, Human Resources, Little Rock State Office
- Outstanding County Extension Agent Award – Sherri Sanders, White County
- Outstanding Researcher Award – Paul Beck, Southwest Research and Extension Center
- Service Award – JJ Pitman, C. A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center

AAE4-HA

- Rookie of the Year – Cynthia Rorie, Crittenden County
- Achievement in Service – Hope Bragg, Desha County
- Distinguished Service Award – Noah Washburn, Community and Economic Development, Little Rock State Office; and Pia Woods, Jefferson County

NEAFCS

- Distinguished Service Award – Jane Newton, Lincoln County
- Continued Excellence Award – Jean Ince, Howard County ■

2017 Breakthrough Solutions Conference and Art Show set for June 7 and 8

The 2017 Breakthrough Solutions Conference and Art Show is set for Thursday, June 8, with the theme “Re-Imagining Your Community/Region in the 21st Century Economy”; pre-conference workshops take place on June 7. This will be a unique opportunity for community leaders to learn how to develop their communities to be successful in the 21st century economy, as they seek to attract tourists, businesses, entrepreneurs, families and retirees. We will also hear about exciting community projects and opportunities in eight high priority issue areas.

In keeping with the re-imagining theme, the first ever Breakthrough Solutions Art Show will also take place at the conference, offering adults and youth an opportunity to showcase how they have re-imagined their communities.

Two half-day pre-conference workshops on June 7 are:

- “Re-imagining Your Community in the 21st Century Economy – Step by Step”, and
- “Developing Cultural Competence – Becoming an Effective Leader Across Cultures and Boundaries.”

The workshops will provide valuable insights and tools that address two of the most important issues facing communities today.

These events will take place at the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, 2301 South University, in Little Rock. More information on these events will soon be available at www.uaex.edu/breakthrough-solutions. ■



Kudos and ‘conversations,’ cont.

I sincerely appreciate the quality work and intense effort of all our extension colleagues, and I say great job to award winners at the Galaxy Conference and the Ag Agents Association meeting – awesome.

In this issue, we also noted certain regional awards to colleagues including Rebecca McPeake in leading the wildlife habitat restoration project as well as DIY hog trapping (I am not making this up) along with Carroll Guffey and others; and John Hopkins, Kelly Loftin, Becky McPeake, Bob Scott and Sherrie Smith for the *Pest Management Newsletter*. I also note that John Hopkins was recognized as Urban Entomologist of the Year with Nick Seiter as New and Upcoming Entomologist at the Southeast Branch ESA meeting in Memphis. At this same meeting, Aaron Cato won the Ph.D. student competition and Joe Black won the Master’s competition, both students of Dr. Gus Lorenz. Outstanding job to all.

Finally, we will start a new effort at routine communication this Friday as I visit with Dr. Julie Robinson and extension colleagues who wish to join as we begin “Conversations with Cartwright,” a monthly 30-minute webinar where I provide updates on a range of topics and even try to answer questions. Until next time, please have a great and safe April.

– Rick Cartwright

Miller County 4-H is on fire again!

Miller County 4-H is on fire again ... literally! We brought back the Broiler BBQ Cookoff Contest to Miller County on Saturday, April 1 – our first in over 10 years. We had six excited 4-H'ers gather at the Miller County Courthouse Saturday morning at 8:15 with brand new grills in hand.

It was a learning experience for all of us as we assembled grills and then let the youth put the amount of charcoal they wanted into the bottom and put on lighter fluid. After the rules were gone over by Miller County 4-H agent Samantha Kroll, it was time to light the fires.

Each contestant prepared two 2- to 3-pound chicken halves provided to them. They were evaluated during all stages of chicken preparation by the judges utilizing the barbecue skills score sheet on cleanliness and food safety.



4-H'ers choose seasonings for their chickens.

The youth enjoyed preparing their own concoctions as they mixed and measured desired spices and sauces. At the end of the cooking time, each contestant presented one intact, barbecued chicken half to be judged.

Contestants were scored by barbecue skills, sensory evaluation and presentation by a set of judges that included our very own Miller County Extension Homemaker Club president, Mrs. Bettie Huntley.

All six chicken breast halves were completely cooked through and were very tasty. One of the judges told the youth at the end of the competition that there were no losers there that day. They all did an exceptional day and are a great group. We look forward to taking them to the District Broiler BBQ Cookoff. ■



Contestants fire up their grills.

Fulton County Master Gardener tulips near peak bloom

In the winter of 2016, Fulton County Master Gardeners undertook a colossal beautification project with hopes of drawing attention to Salem's downtown courthouse square area and Fulton County as a whole. A small group of eight of the county members planted between 9,000 and 10,000 tulip bulbs around Salem, with over half of those being put in around the courthouse square.



Tulip bed with Master Gardener sign and courthouse in background.

Despite the snow and cold temperatures this past month, the blooms have held up well. The group intends to grow and extend the project to other communities in the county in future years, with hopes that Fulton County can become known as the tulip capital of Arkansas! If you're passing through the northcentral part of the state, it would be worth the detour to make a pass through Salem's courthouse square. ■



From left: Members Ralph Moore (president), Becci Bartz, Paula Howell and Suzanne Hartrick.

Extension specialists receive Southern Regional Extension Forestry awards

Each year, the Southern Regional Extension Forestry Awards for Excellence highlight outstanding Extension forestry and natural resource projects from across the southeastern United States. Extension professionals nominate projects for awards, and from those nominations, a jury of Extension peers selects the most innovative and influential entries.

Congratulations to the following Arkansas Cooperative Extension specialists whose projects were recognized with 2016-2017 Southern Regional Extension Forestry Awards for Excellence.

BRONZE AWARD OF EXCELLENCE Wildlife Habitat Restoration on Private Lands Conference

Institution: Arkansas Cooperative Extension
Project Contributors: Dr. Rebecca McPeake, Joseph

Krystofik, Ted Zawislak, Daniel Greenfield, Bubba Groves, David Long, Debbie Moreland, Darren Spinks, Jim Baker, Amanda Mathis and Joe Marschall.

SILVER AWARD OF EXCELLENCE Do-It-Yourself Hog Trapping Strategy

Institution: Arkansas Cooperative Extension
Project Contributors: Dr. Rebecca McPeake, Carol Guffey and Dr. Billy Higginbotham.

Link: <https://www.uaex.edu/publications/pdf/MP537.pdf>

GOLD AWARD OF EXCELLENCE Pest Management News

Institution: Arkansas Cooperative Extension
Contributors: Dr. John Hopkins, Dr. Kelly M. Loftin, Dr. Becky McPeake, Dr. Bob Scott and Sherrie Smith.

Link (bottom of the page): <https://www.uaex.edu/farm-ranch/pest-management/>

Perryville 4-H Teen Leaders showcase 4-H programming at 4-H Night With the Mustangs

On March 30, nearly 200 students and family members attended the Perryville High School 4-H Club's 4-H Night With the Mustangs. This evening was an opportunity for Perryville High's Teen Leaders to showcase 4-H programming to the community and develop relationships with younger students and their families.

There was a range of activities from STEM robotics, BB gun range, archery range, leather crafts, small animal area, Farm Bureau AG simulator and Farm Bureau milking demo to Dr. Tamara Walkingstick with her Dutch oven cobbler demo.

This effort came out of Perryville High School's involvement with the 4-H National Mentoring Program which supports the initiatives that assist in the development and maturity of community programs providing mentoring services to high-risk populations. The program objective is to provide direct one-on-one mentoring, or group mentoring, to under-served youth populations and to reduce truancy, juvenile delinquency, drug abuse and other high-risk behaviors. Perry County was chosen to participate in this program as part of the grant awarded recently to Arkansas 4-H.



Participants enjoy a barbecue dinner at 4-H Night With the Mustangs.

Everyone enjoyed a barbecue meal, and door prizes were given out. This is just the first of several family events planned to develop these mentoring relationships among teen 4-H members and their younger mentees. ■

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BB gun activity at 4-H Night With the Mustangs.



Small animal area at 4-H Night With the Mustangs.

