

# BLUE LETTER

The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service Monthly Letter

No. 3762 • October 2015

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

### Virtual Field Trip explores orbital farming, plant genetics

In a mere 25 minutes, more than 1,600 students from three states and more than 60 sites traveled thousands of miles between the Kennedy Space Center and the research lab and greenhouse at the University of Arkansas campus to learn about the science behind agriculture and specifically, genetic modification of plants.

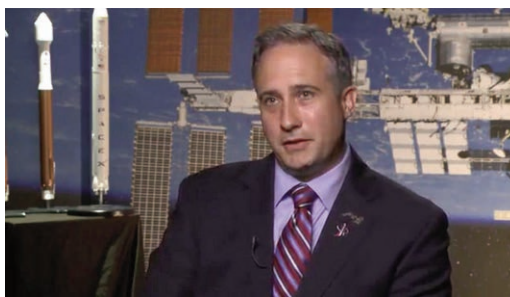
The original presenter lineup for “Gardens of the Galaxy: A Battle for the Food of the Future,” were two Division of Agriculture plant pathologists – Professor Ken Korth and Assistant Professor Burt Bluhm. Though named long before, the event’s title turned out to be prophetic. Two weeks before the launch date, the project was joined by Trent Smith, manager of the Veggie project for NASA. Veggie is NASA’s program to research the growth of food crops in space.

Karen Ballard, who spearheaded this project, said that the response to this year’s Virtual Field Trip far exceeded her expectations. School participation was up 333 percent and student participation was up 387 percent from last year. Students submitted 304 questions during the broadcast. Even more gratifying, she said, was hearing from participants inspired to pursue their own applied research ideas in preparation for next year’s science fairs.

The virtual field trip, part of the Soybean Science Challenge, is funded by the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board.

This project trip was more than a webcast. By taking existing elements and abilities and recombining them with fresh eyes, the result is the kind of innovation that shows Extension’s relevance in education. Congrats to the team on a job well done.

– Tony Windham



Trent Smith, project manager for Veggie, NASA's ag-in-space research. (Image courtesy of NASA)



Ken Korth, plant pathology professor for the U of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, is on camera during a virtual field trip walkthrough.

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DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE  
RESEARCH & EXTENSION

University of Arkansas System

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

## Inside:

- Extension Service to sponsor ten tax update schools
- Dates to remember
- Lonoke Co. 4-H'ers at World Dairy Expo
- Date set for cattle conference
- Benefits Corner
- Meet the New Employees
- Kick It Into Clover Drive
- Grants and contracts
- Personnel changes

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

## Extension Service to sponsor ten tax update schools

Know a professional tax preparer, farmer, small business owner or anyone else interested in income tax preparation? You can refer them to one of our two-day Income Tax Schools. The schools begin Oct. 26 and continue until Dec. 4.

Each class runs from 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. and meets the guidelines for 16 hours of continuing professional education. Registration is \$220 per person, except at the Batesville location, where lunch is included in the \$235 fee.

The instructors are tax experts with extensive experience with the Internal Revenue Service. Representatives from the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration will also conduct sessions. We are an approved IRS Continuing Education Provider.

School dates and locations:

- Harrison – Oct. 26-27
- Fayetteville – Oct. 29-30
- Batesville – Nov. 2-3
- Van Buren – Nov. 5-6
- Jonesboro – Nov. 9-10
- Monticello – Nov. 12-13
- West Memphis – Nov. 16-17
- Hope – Nov. 19-20
- Hot Springs – Nov. 30 - Dec. 1
- Little Rock – Dec. 3-4

Additional information, including registration information, can be found on our website:

<http://www.uaex.edu/business-communities/business-entrepreneurship/tax-school.aspx>.

For more information, contact Kaitlyn Baker or Kim Magee at (501) 671-2072. ■

# REMEMBER

**State Faculty Conference**  
December 7, 2015, 10:00 a.m.  
Little Rock State Office

**Division Awards Luncheon**  
January 8, 2016  
Arkansas 4-H Center, Ferndale





**LONOKE COUNTY 4-H'ERS AT WORLD DAIRY EXPO:** The Lonoke County 4-H Dairy Judging team represented Arkansas 4-H at the World Dairy Expo Dairy Judging Contest on Sept. 28. Pictured, left to right, are team members Gavin Walker, Mallory Perkins, Austin Stagner, Briana Walker and Mark Butler.

## Date set for cattle conference

**TOPICS INCLUDE:**


*Herd Health Program • Cattle Market Outlook  
What Feeders Want in the Cattle They Buy  
Managing Winter Hay Feeding  
Why Vaccines Don't Work  
Feeder Cattle Grading  
Tradeshow & more!*

Texarkana, AR

For more information contact Jerry Clemons  
Email: [jclemons@uaex.edu](mailto:jclemons@uaex.edu) • Phone: 870.246.2281

The 2015 Four States Cattle Conference is brought to you by



## BENEFITS CORNER

### Free \$ from the UA System!

Are you contributing to the defined contribution plan fund sponsors – Fidelity and/or TIAA-CREF? Are you taking full advantage of the UA System 10% retirement match offered through the Cooperative Extension Service (CES)?

CES automatically contributes an amount equal to 5% of your salary to your fund sponsor account. You are encouraged to contribute to your account as well. Your contributions over 5% are matched by CES up to 10%. Employees are vested after 12 continuous months of employment and participation in the plan. Vested means you own the monies contributed by CES.

You may change your contribution at any time, but why not find a balance that works for you and Set It and Forget It!

The Salary Deferral Agreement Form, EBEN 228, should be used to make changes to your contributions. For more information regarding UA Retirement Funding Plans review <http://www.uaex.edu/extension-policies/employee-benefits/fringe/cesp8-19.aspx>.

**Flu shots** will be available Oct. 20 from 8:30 - 2:00 p.m. at the LRSO Room 107.

### Is your home address updated in Banner Self Service?

Human Resources and various vendors will be mailing 2015 group benefits material to your home address in the coming months. ■

What's new in publications? Find out at:

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

## Meet the *new* employees!



**Julie Brogan**  
Administrative Specialist  
Benton County

### What's your background?

I earned a Bachelor's degree in animal science, with a minor in equine science and a minor in ag business from the University of Arkansas. I earned an Associate of

Science degree, an Associate of Arts degree and an Associate of General Studies degree from Northwest Arkansas Community College.

### What knowledge, skills and/or experience are you bringing to Extension?

I have experience with computer programs, such as Microsoft word, PowerPoint and Excel. I am also organized and accountable.

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

I am a hard worker and enjoy keeping busy.

### What would you like to accomplish your first year at Extension?

I'd like to get more familiar with the programs and services Extension offers and make myself an asset to the Benton County Cooperative Extension office.

### What brought you to Extension? What was it about Extension that you value?

I was looking for jobs that complimented my degree from the University of Arkansas. I value the services that the Extension Service offers to the community

### What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?

I love to be outside; I love to fish, kayak and mountain bike. ■



**Tori Copeland**  
Program Technician - Mentoring  
4-H and Youth Development

• **What’s your background?**

I am from Paragould in Greene County. I was a 4-H member for 14 years; my main 4-H project was Consumer Education, which I

applied to my secondary projects of Sheep, Swine, Health and Leadership. I was a State 4-H Record Book Winner, State 4-H Ambassador and served as State Officer my last year in 4-H. I worked three summers as an intern at the state 4-H office and part-time while attending college at UALR.

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

My prior experiences with 4-H as a member and as an employee have allowed me to step right in to my duties in the department. Knowledge of county, district and state office processes has been invaluable. Working part-time assisting the state 4-H faculty provided me with the internal perspective needed for successful planning and coordinating of the many activities and events that so many young Arkansans participate in throughout the year.

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

(1) I was a student athlete for four years participating in cross country and track for UALR. (2) I love the beach!

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

Grow the 4-H Mentoring program into eleven county sites producing one of the highest dollar value grants received in the 4-H program.

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

My 4-H career – now I will be able to give back to the program that has provided me with so much.

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

Running and spending time with family and friends. ■



**Michael Freyaldenhoven**  
Program Technician - Water Quality  
Public Issues Education

• **What’s your background?**

Tyson Foods production manager; manager, University of Arkansas Swine Research Farm; Body Walk program coordinator, UAEX;

AgrAbility program technician, UAEX; Farm to You Coordinator, UAEX.

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

I have experience dealing with water quality issues concerning best management practices, farm management plans and environmental protection.

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

Meet the goals and expectations of our storm water education grant.

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

My previous experience as an employee with Extension was very rewarding. The level of professionalism and sincere concern for Arkansas agriculture among all the people of Extension is very gratifying.

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

Outside of work, I enjoy playing guitar and outdoor activities like gardening and fishing. ■



**Graham Peterson**  
Director of Facilities Management  
Facility Management

• **What’s your background?**

I have always lived in Arkansas. I am originally from Little Rock but finished high school at Perryville. I moved to Conway after high school and, other than the last four years which I spent in El Dorado, I have been in Faulkner County ever since.

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

Education: B.S. history, B.S. construction management, M.B.A. Professional accreditation: LEED A.P., OSHA 30-hour certification. Work: Extensive background in remodeling and new construction, from framing houses to state-of-the-art construction in higher education facilities. Immediately prior to this, I worked for South Arkansas Community College in El Dorado for four years as its director for facilities management. I was actually working as a superintendent for a contractor, remodeling one of their buildings, when they offered me the position of director!

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

I prefer to be called an Arkansawyer not an Arkansan (no such state as AR-Kansas). I have a thing for biscuits and chocolate gravy. (Right now some of you are saying “chocolate gravy”? Yes, chocolate gravy is a real thing, and it’s glorious.)

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

In addition to all of the other tasks we work on here in Facilities Management (building, grounds and custodial maintenance; warehouse; postal services; security and access control; motor pool; front desk and educational wing), I have a specific interest in energy management. I would like to see where we have opportunities to save energy and therefore save money, which we can reallocate to other areas of Extension.

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

While I value the time that I spent in El Dorado, I never felt like it was home. Since I am from central Arkansas, I wanted to move back here, particularly back to our farm in Faulkner County. The opportunity to work for the U of A System and the Cooperative Extension Service was just too good to pass up.

What was it about Extension that you value? I think what Extension does is great, and I fully support our mission to “provide research-based information through non-formal education to help Arkansans improve their economic well-being and the quality of their lives.” My family has been involved with Extension for years with 4-H. Prior to that, they were the beneficiaries of the research that Extension does. So Extension has been a part of my life for a long time.

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

I love to be outside – hunting, fishing, hiking camping and gardening. (I have a ton of heirloom seeds, if anyone wants to do some swapping.) I’ll even rake leaves to spend time outdoors. I also like to build things – working with wood is also a hobby of mine. ■



**Mason Shuffield**  
Program Assistant - EFNEP  
Pulaski County

- **What’s your background?**

I was born in North Carolina but was raised in Little Rock. I graduated from Joe T. Robinson High School in 2010. I then went to CBC in

Conway on a soccer scholarship (possibly greatest experience of my life). After just a semester, I moved home to work and save money to put myself through school. I attended UALR for a year and a half before having to quit school entirely to work and save more money. I am in pursuit of a health science degree and want to be a health coach as my dream job. I have worked in every aspect of the restaurant industry for just under 10 years. This includes drive-through, delivery, serving, cooking and managing. I have both of my parents to thank for everything that I have experienced in life so far.

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

In high school, with the help of a couple of friends, I coordinated charity fundraising concerts for the Invisible Children that raised a few thousand dollars through t-shirt, apparel and ticket sales along with general donations. This gave me valuable leadership skills that will push me through every other experience I have.

After playing soccer as part of my school “payment,” I wanted to become the best that I could be, so I started studying workout regimens and nutrition. Everything I did was to become a better soccer player, but I gained a vast amount of knowledge in doing so and got the courage to pursue my true passion following high school.

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

One thing that I would like my colleagues to know about me is my passion for sports and competition. I’m not the best, but I always love the opportunity to attempt to be the best.

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

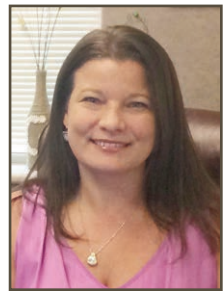
I really would like to become more comfortable with my job here as I have never worked in a setting like this before. I also want to continue to expand my knowledge of physical activity and food as well as how these things can affect the body by continuing my degree for the first time in two years.

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

Karen Withers (mother of one of my best friends) referred me to the Extension website where I was able to find EFNEP, apply and very fortunately get the job. This job will allow me to work in a field that I care about as well as get a degree that I have wanted for so long.

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

At the risk of sounding repetitive, soccer is my main hobby and how I spend most of my free time. After that, I enjoy hanging out with close friends to watch most any sporting event. (If nothing is on, we are usually competing ourselves.) I also spend a large amount of time playing with my two dogs: Bruce and Oliver. ■



**Gretchen Skinner**  
In-Service Training and Distance  
Education Manager  
Program and Staff Development

**What's your background?**

I came from UALR/MidSOUTH Training Academy. I worked there for 15 years as part of a federal grant

through the School of Social Work. My educational background is in psychology and social work.

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

I bring to Extension 15 years of experience working with training databases and managing training activities.

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

I grew up in Heber Springs, and I am a Certified Volunteer Manager.

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

During my first year at Extension, I would like to make connections with other Extension employees and create a work family that will last throughout my employment and beyond.

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

I have been so amazed at all the different ways Extension is directly involved in the community in facilitating improvements. It makes me feel very proud to be a part of the mission. My love of social work, the community and the people in it are the reasons I made the move to Extension.

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

Outside of work, I love to read, watch movies, play Rock Band with my husband, take care of my two little puppies and be the best aunt to my little two-year-old niece. ■



# Grants and contracts

for the month ended September 30, 2015

Project Title	Award Amount	Principal Investigator	Granting Agency
Franklin County 4-H Shooting Sports Club - Franklin County Conservation District	1,500	Cindy Ham	Franklin County Conservation District
Evaluation and Confirmation of Resistance to Tarnished Plant Bug in Cotton	6,899	Glenn Studebaker	Agriculture Experiment Station
Determining the Impact of Common Pesticide Applications When Applied to Southern Row Crops on Managed Honey Bee Health	120,000	Gus Lorenz	USDA, ARS MSA
Field Trial Agreement	20,000	Gus Lorenz	Bayer Crop Science LP
Create an Extension Learning Network for Unmanned Aerial Systems in Agriculture	9,300	Jim Robbins	University of Nebraska
Health Literacy and Emergency Preparedness Programs for Medicaid Recipients in Rural Arkansas	162,364	Lisa Washburn	National Institute of Food and Agriculture
National 4-H Council Youth Choice Healthy Living Project	33,000	Lisa Washburn	National 4-H Council
2015 Water Quality Specialist	99,000	Michael Daniels	Natural Resources Conservation Service
Independence County 4-H Thunder Valley Shooting Sports Grant (GIF)	2,500	Nathan Reinhart	White River Planning and Development District
Protocol #NA15K1A001-Enlist Duo (FG-2726) Systems Approach for Weed Management in W3FRE Cotton Utilizing PRE Followed by POST Sequential Programs	10,000	Tom Barber	Dow AgroSciences LLC
Reimbursement of Expenses for 4-H Representation at National Conferences and Events FY16	19,796	Tom Troxel	Arkansas Livestock and Poultry Commission
Integrated Management of Nematodes	2,025	Travis Faske	Soybean Promotion Board
<b>Total New Awards for September 2015</b>	<b>\$486,384</b>		

## Personnel changes

Please welcome the following:

### **Julie Brogan**

Administrative Specialist, Benton County, effective August 17, 2015.

### **Tori Copeland**

Program Technician - Mentoring, 4-H and Youth Development, effective September 1, 2015.

### **Michael Freyaldenhoven**

Program Technician - Water Quality, Public Issues Education, effective September 1, 2015.

### **Mason Shuffield**

Program Assistant - EFNEP, Pulaski County, effective September 1, 2015.

### **Keith Gresham**

County Extension Agent - Staff Chair, Dallas County, effective September 1, 2015.

### **Kayla Gill**

Head Housekeeper, Vines 4-H Center, effective September 1, 2015.

### **Gretchen Skinner**

In-Service Training and Distance Education Manager, Program and Staff Development, effective September 1, 2015.

### **Graham Peterson**

Director of Facilities Management, Facility Management, August 17, 2015.

### **Gail Swiney**

EFNEP and Food Safety Program Technician, Family and Consumer Sciences, effective August 17, 2015.

### **Chanta Pulliam**

4-H Program Assistant, Jefferson County, effective August 7, 2015.

Extension says goodbye to:

### **Mitch Crow**

County Extension Agent - Staff Chair, St. Francis County, effective September 30, 2015.

### **Shanna Jones**

Administrative Specialist, Entomology, effective September 30, 2015.