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BLUE LETTER

January 2021
No. 3825



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Forecast Looking Bright Moving Forward

Happy new year! Here is to 2021 being a better and more productive year than the last. While that may not seem hard to do, we should note that our final year contact numbers show that Extension continued to do what we do best during this time. Overall contacts increased by more than 20 percent with the addition of COVID-related materials. In addition, if you take out COVID numbers, we still had basically a flat year compared to 2019. Many thanks to all of you who put forth the effort to go virtual and continue to have an impact. Thanks to Diane Mashburn for providing me with a summary of these results.

We already have had some accomplishments in 2021. Our virtual county meetings have so far been a great success. We hosted more than 250 people at the corn meeting on Jan. 12 and more than 450 people at the rice meeting on Jan. 14. We still have a few more meetings to go. I think attendance at these meetings after so many months of Zoom meetings is a testament to the importance of our information to those working in agriculture in Arkansas.

The employee evaluation process continues, and we are working through some Workday-associated issues with how we will report this year. I encourage everyone to stay positive and be patient. Hopefully, once we get through this first year,

things will go smoothly next year. In addition to evaluations, this is a time for program planning for 2021. I expect that we will remain under some sort of COVID-19 protocol for the first part of this year. With this in mind, I encourage all programmatic employees to plan accordingly and continue to do outreach virtually as much as possible until we can return to more in-person meetings. Hopefully, this is something that you discussed or will discuss with your supervisor during the evaluation/planning period.

For January and likely February, we have been and will continue to be limited to meetings mostly of 10 people or fewer. My hats off to all those who have been able to adjust to this limitation. Special thanks to Ples Spradley and all the county agents who are conducting multiple pesticide applicator trainings. What was normally one or two meetings has turned into several. This is an important service we provide and really works best in-person. You are doing your part to decrease the spread of COVID-19 while maintaining this critical function that we provide for growers in partnership with the Arkansas State Plant Board.

Finally, I just encourage all Extension employees to hang in there. I believe the vaccines will start to mitigate the spread of this virus soon, and we will come out of this stronger and with new ideas for the future. ■

INSIDE SCOOP

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- And much more!

Dr. Cartwright to be Inducted into Arkansas Ag Hall of Fame

Dr. Rick Cartwright, retired director of the Cooperative Extension Service, is one of six people who will be inducted into the Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame later this year for leadership and service to the state's largest business sector in 2021.

A date for the induction ceremony for Class XXXIV has not been set, according to the Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame.

Cartwright, an internationally known rice pathologist, joined the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture in 1992 and served in numerous roles for both extension and the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station. He became extension director in 2017 and retired in 2020.

"No one is more deserving," extension director Bob Scott said. "When I first started with in 2002, Rick was a mentor and when he left extension in 2020, he still was. He was just that kind of friend, co-worker and colleague. I am pleased that he was accepted to the Ag Hall of Fame."

Other 2021 inductees include:

- Joe Don Greenwood of Hermitage, a longtime agriculture educator.
- The late Russell Roy Reynolds, longtime director of the Crossett Experimental Forest.

- Randy Veach of Manila, a former Arkansas Farm Bureau president.
- Mark Waldrip of Moro, founder of Armor Seed Co.
- Andrew Wargo III of Watson, longtime farm manager of Baxter Land Co.



Dr. Rick Cartwright

Last year, two longtime extension employees were inducted into the Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame: Thomas Vaughns and William E. "Gene" Woodall.

Vaughns worked 20 years as a Crittenden County extension agent and 4-H leader and 14 years as a horticulture specialist at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. He is also a World War II and Korean War Veteran and a member of the Tuskegee Airmen.

Woodall, of Little Rock, worked 26 years as an extension agent in Pulaski, Yell and Monroe counties and later as a cotton specialist at extension's state office in Little Rock. He also created the Cotton Research Verification Trials. ■

Izard Co. Helps Distribute Face Masks

Izard County Cooperative Extension Service and the Office of Emergency Services partnered to distributed face masks to 328 families right before the Christmas holidays.

Family and Consumer Science Agent Elizabeth Daigle partnered with Izard County Emergency Service Coordinator Gary Dickerson to help educate Izard County residents about COVID-19 safety measures.



(Pictured L-R) FCS agent Elizabeth Daigle and Gary Dickerson

The Cooperative Extension Service had an opportunity to receive face coverings at no cost from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. After receiving the masks, Daigle and Dickerson planed a two-day distribution Dec. 17-18, that served 328 families in Izard County. Having the opportunity to meet and greet the local county residents was a highlight of the two days, Daigle said. ■

Working to Improve Animal Welfare

Arkansas extension veterinarian Heidi Ward is working to ensure new research findings reach the people and places it can help the most.

Ward is a board member of the Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization, a consortium of veterinarians, animal scientists and food animal industry leaders who promote animal welfare through auditor training and audit certification. She was among the presenters Nov. 4-5 at the Food Safety Net Services Office in Greeley, Colorado, on beef feedlot animal welfare training.



Heidi Ward

In addition to classroom sessions, the training included a mock audit at an operating feedlot. The training included cattle handling, facilities overview, transportation and spotting acts of neglect and abuse. The two-day session was also an opportunity for industry members to be certified as feedlot auditors.

“We conducted animal welfare scenarios that led to active discussions,” Ward said. “I was on hand for the

feedlot mock audit to answer questions. There were eight people in the auditor certification course.”

In her presentation, Ward covered feedlot cattle health and welfare, including documentation, biosecurity, processing and treatment protocols and implementation. A key factor is a good working relationship between the feedlot and veterinarian and a willingness by the feedlot to follow a DVM’s advice.

Ward’s talk was scheduled to follow a presentation by probably the most well-known animal welfare researcher, Temple Grandin. Grandin is a professor at Colorado State University and the subject of a critically acclaimed HBO biographical film.

“The topics chosen for the training were based on feedback from the PAACO board as to what constitutes a well-rounded animal welfare training for beef feedlots based on the latest research across the globe,” Ward said. “There are currently two beef feedlot audits approved by PAACO, one of which is through the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association.”

Ward’s great presentation earned kudos; but perhaps the best review was that Grandin “stayed for my presentation.” ■

Weather Reports Available



Want to get information about severe weather straight to your inbox? Email Mary Hightower at mhightower@uaex.edu, to be included on the distribution list to receive the latest severe weather forecasts from the National Weather Service. ■

New publications:

(You know you want to look.)

uaex.edu/publications/new.aspx



The Food Safety Modernization Act Turns 10!



FDA FOOD SAFETY
MODERNIZATION ACT

On Jan. 4, the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) turned 10 years old. FSMA gives authority to the FDA to regulate the way foods are grown, harvested and processed so that Americans have a federally regulated front-line defense against foodborne illness. This was the largest overhaul of the nation's food safety system since the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetics Act of 1938. Read more about this anniversary [here](#).

As the Produce Safety Rule portion of FSMA is implemented in Arkansas, the Local, Regional & Safe Foods (LRSF) Extension Team is proud to educate and assist produce growers by providing Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) Grower Trainings, On-Farm Readiness Reviews (OFRR), and technical assistance.

More than 329 participants have completed the PSA Grower Training in Arkansas, and 13 of our largest farms have had an OFRR prior to inspection by the Arkansas Department of Agriculture. The LRSF team seeks to identify produce farms that require training prior to a FSMA PSR Inspection by the ADA.

ARKANSAS
PRODUCE
SAFETY

The next remote PSA Grower Trainings will be held Feb. 10-11 and March 31-April 1. For

more information on Food Safety Modernization Act, the Produce Safety Rule, upcoming trainings, visit www.uaex.edu/producesafety. ■

LEADERSHIP LUNCH & LEARN

UofA DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

feed your mind

LeadAR

Community, Professional, and Economic Development (CPED) will host a new Leadership Lunch and Learn series starting this month. The Lunch & Learn series will be open to University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture employees and LeadAR Alumni.

Sessions will take place monthly and will focus on professional development topics with a leadership twist. In January, the Lunch and Learn series begins with a LeadAR reunion and introduction of the series overall.

The virtual Lunch & Learn sessions will be held on the last Wednesday of each month, 12:15 – 1 p.m. We invite you to join us for these sessions.

Session Topics and Dates

- January 27: LeadAR reunion
- February 24: Motivation/Engagement
- March 31: Strategic/Critical Thinking
- April 28: Communication
- May 26: Conflict Resolution
- June 30: Embracing Technology
- July 28: Innovation
- August 25: Networking/Social Influence
- September 29: Managing Change
- October 27: Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- November 17: Time Management

For more info contact Lisa Davis, ldavis@uaex.edu. ■

Brent Griffin Remembered



Brent Griffin

Brent Griffin, who spent much of the past two decades serving Prairie County as an extension agent, is being remembered not only for his dedication to agriculture, but also for his bright outlook on life.

Griffin died Jan. 10. He was 48. He is survived by his mother, Mollie Wood Griffin, and a brother, Blake Griffin.

Griffin joined the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture in 1998 as an extension agriculture agent in Prairie County. In 2006, he moved to the private sector, taking a position with River Valley Seed. He returned to the Cooperative Extension Service in 2009 and was appointed staff chair in Prairie County.

During his first stint with extension, Griffin worked with Hank Chaney, a former county staff chair in both Prairie and Faulkner counties. Chaney is now an extension area agriculture and natural resources specialist.

“Brent was very sharp, very intelligent,” Chaney said. “He was also kind of mischievous. He was fun to be around.” Still, “if we ever got in a bind, you could always depend on him.

“Brent loved what he did. He really cared about his clientele. He cared about the growers and the people of Prairie County,” Chaney said. “He always went above and beyond. He was that type of agent.”

Chaney said one of Griffin’s strengths was his ability to clearly explain complex issues such as crop insurance

and Farm Bill changes. “I think he did an excellent job as staff chair,” Chaney said. “I can’t get over that he’s gone.”

Bob Scott, director of the Cooperative Extension Service, worked with Griffin in his former role as extension weed scientist. Scott remembered Griffin going the extra mile — trying to help his growers untangle some of their more difficult production challenges.

“Brent was a hard worker, always in the field, and always coming up with something new,” Scott said.

Jerry Clemons, extension’s Delta District director, remembered that “he was very good at what he did. Very respected.”

Prairie County extension agents Shea Wilson and Amy Tallent remembered Griffin as a man who warmed the office with his sense of humor.

“We are heartbroken over the loss of our colleague,” Wilson said. “Brent has been a part of our team for over a decade. He was not just a co-worker; he was part of our extension family. Brent was a real character who kept us on our toes and laughing. We are really going to miss him.”

“He was a great mentor and friend,” Tallent added. “He will be greatly missed in the Prairie County agricultural community.” ■

Nevada County Organizes Food Drive

In November, Nevada County Extension teamed up with 4-H, Extension Homemakers and Master Gardener clubs to organize a canned food drive for Arkansas Food Share in Prescott, Arkansas. More than 490 pounds of non-perishable food items and \$1,550 were donated to help local families in need. ■



(Pictured L-R) Emmaline W. (4-H), Cora C. (4-H), J.c.C. (4-H), Nancy Smith (EHC), Raynelle Gober (MG), & David W. (4-H), standing with the collected food drive items.

Clay County Students Participate in Virtual Ag Learning Experience

From October to December, Clay County youth attended virtual after-school sessions to learn about agricultural products produced in the county.

Agent Allison Howell taught 17 students about the many agriculture products produced in the county including cotton, rice, corn, soybeans, cattle and poultry. They attended six virtual sessions via Zoom regarding each product and how they are grown, produced and used. After a PowerPoint presentation for each product, the students made a craft or snack related to each one.

Lessons highlighted the county's agricultural products and byproducts and gave participants an opportunity for hands-on learning. Students learned about opportunities in Clay County and about the diversity of Clay County's agriculture. The teachers and students were

all pleased with the after-school program. Students participated in a pre- and post-tests to evaluate their knowledge of the subjects. Teachers who helped with the program said they would like to see this program conducted again this year. ■



Participants making scary faces out of rice cakes during the rice session.



Virtual 4-H Camps



4-H hosted a virtual baking/decorating camp Nov. 6-8 that served 94 youth ages 5-19. Campers created baked goods from scratch, including sugar cookies, apple pie, apple-filled cinnamon rolls and frosting and crescent rolls. Campers also learned basic cupcake and cookie

decorating techniques and made butter cream and royal frosting to decorate their cookies and cupcakes. This camp was a family function for many of the campers.

The Virtual Baking/Decorating 4-H Camp was one of seven extended virtual camps that reached more than 250 youth. In 2020, 4-H also hosted 26 single-session camps that reached more than 130 youth. The single-session virtual camps are now held monthly. The spring single sessions will be held on the second Tuesday of the month at 4 p.m. (January – May). These sessions are open to anyone who would like to attend. Supply lists for each session will be posted on the uaex.edu/camp website one week prior to each session. ■



4-H virtual baking/decorating camp members gain new skills.



Accessibility Awareness Tip

This month's Accessibility Awareness tip involves making tables accessible. Check out our tips to make your table accessible. Also coming at the end of January will be a series of short video snippets on making tables accessible.

Incorrect Work Mailing Addresses

The issue:

- The wrong work address is listed for AES employees in Workday.
- Addresses in the personnel directory were turned off until the issue is resolved.
- Snail mail for AES employees is being inadvertently delivered to the Little Rock State Office. This delays the delivery to the intended recipient.

The resolution:

There are people currently working to correct the work addresses, and it should be resolved within the next few months. Once fixed, we will turn on addresses again in the personnel directory, the work addresses in Workday will be correct, and AES employee's snail mail will be delivered to the right location.

You too Can Prevent Being Zoom Bombed

You will be Zoom Bombed in your meeting if you don't "Tech Me Seriously" and watch the 7-minute video on securing your Zoom meetings located [here!](#)

Checkout Zoom's Help Center with the latest updates on meeting security: <http://bit.ly/Zoom-Help-Center-Meeting-Security>.

Tech Tuesday



Did you miss the "Look Your Best Online in 2021 – getting started with the proper equipment for online meetings and webinars"? Visit <https://uaex.edu/techtuesdays> to view the recording.

Social (Media) Skills Training

Join us for the monthly Social Skills training and meet Melissa Johnson, Extension's new Social Media Manager! She received both her Bachelor's and Master's degrees (2018) in Professional and Technical Writing at UA Little Rock.



Melissa Johnson

After graduating, she began working as a marketing agent in Tourism & Travel. She managed social media for the Hot Springs landmark, The Arlington Resort Hotel & Spa, where she got a taste of hospitality business, sales and marketing, and most importantly, the value of

presence within a community.

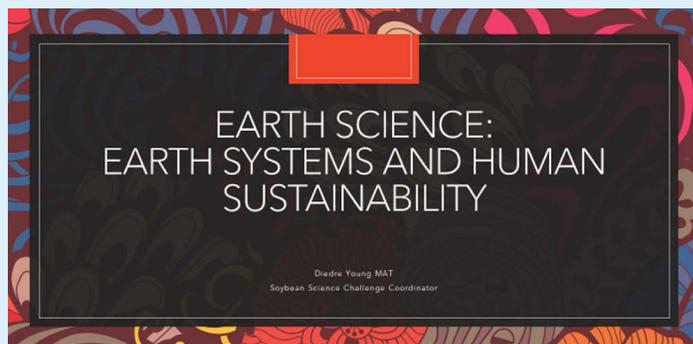
She is also an artist and teacher. She creates art for commission, displays her art in galleries such as Circle Gallery in Hot Springs, sponsors and volunteers with Low Key Arts, and will be teaching writing courses and workshops this Spring in the community art program at Emergent Arts.

Melissa says, "It is extremely important to me to connect with real humans doing real human things. Working with Extension will provide me with a sense of touching base with the real world and real people around me. I look forward to the experience. Thank you for letting me be a part of it." ■

Soybean Science Challenge Offers Mini-Lessons

Soybean Science Challenge Coordinator Diedre Young has produced 11 mini lessons for virtual and face-to-face junior high and high school classrooms. The lessons, each 5 to 10 minutes long, cover a broad range of science subjects, with each lesson featuring an agricultural premise using real-world issues to introduce the essential STEM field to teachers and students.

To access these mini lessons, please go to: https://www.uaex.edu/farm-ranch/special-programs/Education_in_Agriculture/soybean-science/virtual-mini-lessons.aspx. 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 extension.

For more information, please contact Dr. Julie Robinson, jrobinson@uaex.edu or Diedre Young dyoung@uaex.edu. ■

Soil and Water Conservation Holds Tenth VFT

On Nov. 17, the Soil and Water Conservation Virtual Field Trip (VFT) Series hosted its tenth live broadcast — “An Introduction to Agricultural Sustainability.” During the one-hour broadcast, Dr. Mike Daniels, professor and co-director of the Arkansas Discovery Farms Program, introduced UADA sustainability research principles and goals. Dr. Marty Matlock, professor and executive director of the University of Arkansas Resiliency Center, talked about sustaining prosperity as it relates to agriculture and population. Dr. Ron Rainey, professor and co-director of the Center for Agricultural and Rural Sustainability (CARS), discussed the sustainability programs offered by CARS. The subject matter experts answered audience questions live.

Attendees included 348 participants from 14 states and one from the United Kingdom. The VFT recording can



be viewed at <https://youtu.be/KRDWFmhXUS4>. You can find more information and links for the Soil and Water Conservation Virtual Field Trip series at <https://bit.ly/NRCS-AR-Soil-and-Water-VFT-Webpage>. The Soil and Water Conservation Virtual Field Trip series is funded by USDA-NRCS. For more information, please contact Rita Watson in Community, Professional and Economic Development at rwatson@uaex.edu. ■

Local Food Business & Share Grounds Webinars

The Local, Regional & Safe Foods (LRSF) Extension team and partners are releasing a series of webinars on the steps for starting a food business in Arkansas.

These webinars provide valuable information for people interested in developing a food product in a certified food manufacturing kitchen. They highlight the Arkansas Food Innovation Center in Fayetteville and the Share Grounds Certified Kitchens and Distribution Centers in Marshall, McCrory and Rison.



- Markets for Food Products and Produce
- Trends in Value Added Food

Coming Soon:

- Taking the Next Steps to Food Entrepreneurship
- Introduction to Food Processing
- Getting Started: Venturing in Food Processing
- SG Project: Bringing Value to Arkansas
- Personal Hygiene and Sanitary Food Handling
- Microbiology of Food Processing

Webinars in this series will be launched over the next few months and then incorporated into an online course used to onboard clients at the Share Grounds Kitchens.

Published Webinars:

- Establishing Your Food or Beverage Business
- Introduction to Share Grounds

For more information and to view the webinars, visit the Local Food Business & Share Grounds Webinars Extension webpage: <https://www.uaex.edu/business-communities/local-foods/webinars.aspx> and the LRSF team's YouTube playlist: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzw-lawVM4o4HhBY8-I1hpij08J6zKvizI>. ■

Lonoke Co. 4-H Community Service Challenge

Lonoke County 4-H is offering a 2021 4-H Community Service Challenge! Each month, youth are challenged to complete a specific community service project. Challenges are designed so youth can complete each task on their own, as a family, or as a 4-H club, while ultimately having a county-wide impact.

4-H Agent Sara Beth Johnson shared the social media graphic with agents across the state, and agents from nearly 50 counties have expressed interest in promoting the challenge in their respective county 4-H programs as well! ■



LeadAR Class 19 Cohort “Zooms” into Session

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10

The LeadAR class met for their second virtual session via Zoom on Nov. 20, 2020. Through a variety of creative presentations, stories and videos, LeadAR class members shared information on different leadership theories.

Hilary Trudell, director of local programs and regional outreach for the Clinton School of Public Service, facilitated a DiSC® personality assessment discussion. DiSC® is a personal assessment tool used to help improve teamwork, communication and productivity in the workplace. ■



Agent Helps High School Students Learn Interview Skills

Pope County FCS Agent Pamela Luker presented “The Art of Interviewing” to Arkansas Tech University Upward Bound students on Nov. 7. The participants were high school students from eight high schools in three counties.

The participants learned how to prepare for a job interview, what to expect during an interview, and what to do after an interview. The students also participated in mock interviews to practice answering interview questions.

Area leaders assisted with the interviews, including Pope County Sheriff Shane Jones, Dardanelle Councilman Rashad Woods, 5th Judicial Chief Deputy Prosecutor Heather Patton, Johnson County 4-H Agent Jeanie Rowbotham, and representatives from the Pope County Library System, Arkansas State Parks and the Arkansas River Valley Action Council. ■

Benefits Corner



It is extremely important to keep your contact information current in Workday. Your Workday Profile page displays information about you, including your office location, phone number and compensation. The visibility of sensitive information is controlled by individual users' security profiles. Some changes may require additional documentation or review by your HR partner.

Please access your Workday Profile Page to manage your personal and professional contact information.

To access your Workday profile page, click your Profile icon, then View Profile. Your Profile page displays.

To Add or Change your contact information:

1. Click the **Contact** tab. The Contact subtab is selected.
2. Click **Edit**. Within each section, click the **Edit** button to change existing information or click **Add** to add new information. You can also click within a field to edit. Please review the privacy setting to make sure your work phone number is listed as “public.”
3. Click **Submit**.

In addition to adding or changing your contact information on the Workday Profile Page, you may also add or change emergency contacts and your profile photo, just to name a few options. ■

Grants and Contracts

PROJECT TITLE	AWARD AMOUNT	PI	GRANTING AGENCY
Arkansas Cotton Research Verification/ Sustainability Program	\$50,000	Bill Robertson	Cotton, Inc.
4-H Grows Here School Garden	\$3,000	Debbie J Baker	Walmart Foundation
Arkansas Delta Region Obesity Project	\$94,746	Debie Head	UAMS
2021 NWA Urban Stormwater Ed Program	\$211,919	Katie Teague	Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission
Pesticide Safety Education Funds Management Program	\$18,050	Ples Spradley	eXtension Foundation
Integrating Multiple Tactics into Cotton Weed Management to Target the Palmer Amaranth Soil Seedbank	\$31,359	Tom Barber	Cotton, Inc.
Determining the best management strategies for southern root-knot nematode and target spot in cotton	\$13,598	Travis Faske	Cotton, Inc.
Economic and Fiscal Contribution of Hot Springs Village	\$22,733	Wayne P Miller	Hot Springs Village Property Owners Association
TOTAL AWARDS FOR DECEMBER 2020: \$445,405			

Personnel Changes



Welcome Aboard:

- Tina Coley - Administrative Specialist III, Pulaski County
- Jessa Heavin - County Extension Agent – Family and Consumer Sciences, Van Buren County
- Emily Keathley - Administrative Specialist II – Community, Professional, & Economic Development, Little Rock
- Beth Vandre - Administrative Specialist III – Sebastian County
- Melissa Johnson - Social Media Manager – Information Technology, Pulaski County

Farewell to:

- Anna Landrum - Administrative Specialist III, Pulaski County
- LeAnna Hicks - Program Assistant - EFNEP, Phillips County
- Kristen Dickson - Fiscal Support Analyst – Credit Union, Little Rock
- Tibebu Gebremariam - Program Associate – Plant Pathology, Stuttgart
- Leah Cribbs - Administrative Specialist III, Crawford County
- Brianna Ham - Program Assistant - EFNEP, Little Rock
- Mike Simmons - 4-H Center Program Facilitator, C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center