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BLUE LETTER

March 2019

No. 3803



March Forward!

It is March, and time continues to flow past faster and faster. I often feel like a Roomba in a cluttered house, but know my Division colleagues will lead us to that point of “not the best kept secret” and appropriate recognition.

I say Division on purpose. The UA System Division of Agriculture is us, and how we are funded by the state. It is important that everybody understand the missions of the land grant university, and that the Division has responsibility for research (the Agricultural Experiment Station) and extension (the Cooperative Extension Service). We have an MOA with the Bumpers College for the teaching mission, and all of us work on the service mission for the state and region.

We appreciate the effort on visibility and it is paying off. Less and less do I hear, “I did not know you did that!” or “you guys are the best kept secret in Arkansas.” So, thanks to all of you for working so hard on great work, but also let everyone know the good work being done. I get really tired of the daily barrage of negativity online and in the mass media, but my reality is exemplified in these pages and what I witness each day from you. A positive reality – good hard work, progress and a hopeful future for all. The reality of the UA System Division of Agriculture.

In this issue, Animal Science is pushing the envelope from UAPB to the Experiment Station to Extension stories... local to worldwide – impressive. Thanks to Dr. Looper,

faculty and staff for their submissions.

Innovation for the 21st century Division of Agriculture is on the increase, exemplified by the Soybean Science Challenge, a new grant on virtual field days and events, and the hiring of our first Innovation Manager, Karen Watts. If you have not talked to Karen about new technologies, it is time. We have many faculty and staff investing more time and thought into 21st century technology and it is showing across many program areas. And I repeat, it is time.

Vic Ford and I visited the Flower and Garden Show on its first day, and I must say that the Division display area was the best I have seen over the years, organized and professional looking. Commendations to Brian Helms and all of the faculty and staff who worked so hard over the three days. Arthropods, edible soybeans, feral hogs, 4-H projects, gardening, honeybees, poultry science – cannot make this stuff up! Thanks to all who made this the best evah.

I continue to receive lots of feedback on AEHC, our affiliate and one of the largest volunteer organizations around, now led by the one and only Karen Bell-Fox and program

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

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U of A

DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

UAPB Ext. Specialist Helps Goat Producers in Nepal Optimize Production Practices



Dr. Fernandez
SCO

PINE BLUFF, Ark. – Dr. David Fernandez, Extension livestock specialist and interim dean of graduate studies and continuing education at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, recently served as a volunteer for the U.S. Agency for International Development Farmer-to-Farmer program in southwestern Nepal. There, he helped local goat farmers optimize their production practices.

“Goat farming is an important source of income in many communities in the Surkhet District of Nepal, especially among women,” Dr. Fernandez said. “The popularity of the business has led small goat farmers to produce more goats.”

Despite increases in production, the farmers haven’t always been able to earn more money, he said. Many of them did not know how to breed goats appropriately for hardiness (health).

Random breeding in the goat herd meant that many goats that went to market were of inferior quality. The farmers also lacked an efficient parasite management plan to further ensure the overall health of the herd.

Over the course of the program, Dr. Fernandez emphasized the importance of developing a good record-keeping system and implementing a rotational breeding system. He also taught the farmers about effective parasite treatment and prevention. These measures will help reduce inbreeding and ensure larger, healthier offspring for sale. ■

Program participants learn how to use genetic selection to improve herd productivity and profitability.



Dr. Fernandez hosts a certificate completion awards ceremony for the producers.

UPCOMING TECH TUESDAY WEBINARS

Tuesday, April 9: Part 1 Video Series – Shooting Your Video
(Kerry Rodtnick, Ricky Blair and Nick Kordsmeier)

Tuesday, May 14: Part 2 Video Series – Editing Your Video
(Kerry Rodtnick, Ricky Blair and Nick Kordsmeier)

Second Tuesday of every month, starting at 9:00 a.m.

To view the recordings, visit <https://uaex.edu/techtuesdays>



Soybean Science Challenge Presents Cash Awards at Regional Science Fairs

The Soybean Science Challenge recently presented two regional science fair awards to students with the top soybean research projects. Emily S. won the Soybean Science Challenge \$300 cash award at the Arkansas School for Science and Mathematics Science Fair at their awards ceremony Feb. 25. Her teacher, Dr. Brian Monson, won the \$200 Teacher Mentor Award.

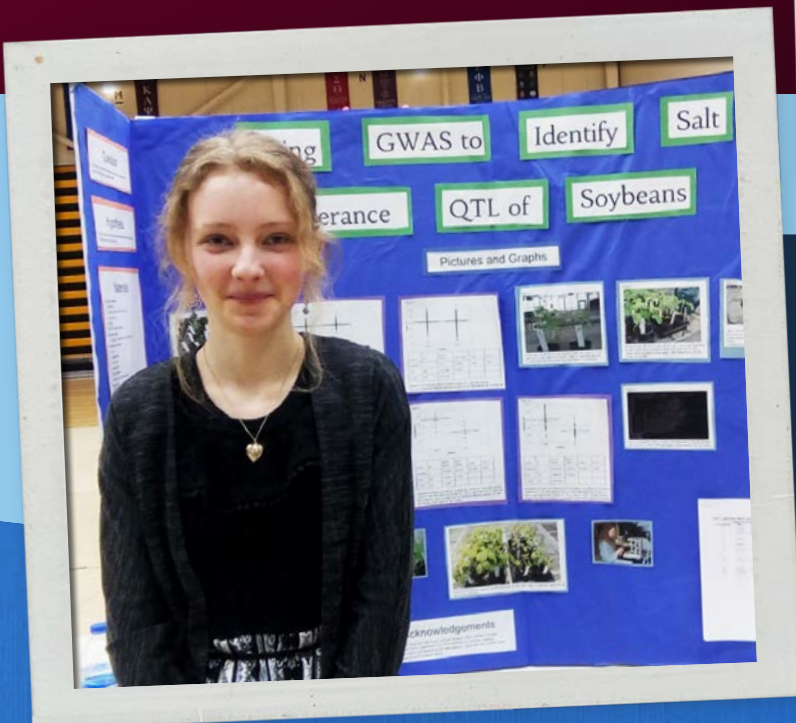
Chris C. won the \$300 Soybean Science Challenge at the Ouachita Mountain Regional Science and Engineering Fair at the awards ceremony at Mid-America Museum in Hot Springs March 1. His teacher, Julie Hathcock, received the \$200 Teacher Mentor Award. Funding for the Arkansas Soybean Science Challenge is provided through the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board in support of student scientific scholarship.

The Arkansas Soybean Science Challenge is a farmer-funded, statewide high school education program seeking to increase student knowledge about the value of Arkansas soybeans to the Arkansas economy, to the labor force and ultimately to feed and fuel the world.

The Soybean Science Challenge is a partnership between the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board and the Cooperative Extension Service.

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

Below, Emily S., 2019
ASMSA-WCSF Soybean Science
Challenge winner
Right, Chris C., 2019 OMRSEF
Soybean Science Challenge winner



Evie J., a sophomore at Stuttgart High School, stands in front of her science fair board at the UAPB Science Fair in February.

Evie is participating in the Arkansas Soybean Science Challenge and has utilized Quantitative Trait Locus (QTL) mapping to determine the salt tolerance of several varieties of soybeans. Her project will be displayed at the Southeast Arkansas Regional Science Fair on March 12.

Why are we called the U of A System Division of Agriculture?

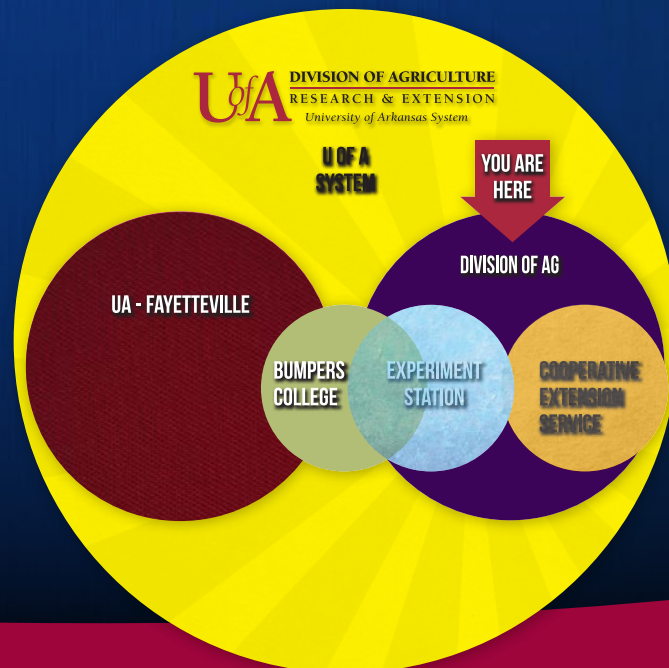
The Cooperative Extension Service and the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station make up the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture.

Both were once part of the UA-Fayetteville campus. However, in 1959, a law was passed separating the extension service and the experiment station from UA-Fayetteville.

While the Division of Agriculture is its own campus-level entity within the U of A System, it funds and shares some of its faculty with UA-Fayetteville's Bumpers College.

When you refer to us, always use "system" in the name to be clear that we are a part of the U of A System and not a piece of the Fayetteville campus.

If you have any questions about this, contact Mary Hightower, mhightower@uaex.edu. ■



Jennings Speaks at the NCBA's Cattlemen's College in New Orleans

Dr. John Jennings, professor - Forages, Department of Animal Science, recently spoke at the NCBA's 26th Annual Cattlemen's College in New Orleans. Dr. Jennings, along with Dr. Kim Mullenix from Auburn University, provided an overview of bermudagrass and bahiagrass-based forage systems used in the southeastern U.S., including a review of the recommended varieties, expected yields and potential stocking rate and animal performance expectations during the summer months. Further, potential improvements with the addition of legume species

and animal performance expectations of winter annual forages overseeded with bahiagrass/bermudagrass for winter grazing were presented.

Cattlemen throughout the United States know Cattlemen's College for its stimulating and thought-provoking sessions that help generate higher returns for their operations. The Cattlemen's College, sponsored since its inception by Zoetis, has been year after year the cattleman's first choice for education and profit-building advice. ■

Undergraduate Students Top Competition at Animal Science Meetings

The 2019 Southern Section of the American Society of Animal Science recently held its annual scientific exchange and business meeting in Oklahoma City. During the four days of meetings, researchers and students presented their recent research, Extension and teaching findings and/or methods.

Arkansas students did very well in the undergraduate competition, taking the top two honors. Awarded first place was Sophia Landers working with Dr. Tom

Yazwinski. Her presentation was titled *The efficacy of extended-release eprinomectin for the reduction of horn flies, face flies, and fecal egg counts of parasitic nematodes in replacement beef heifers*. In second place was Erin Davis. Her advisor is Dr. Charles Rosenkrans, and she presented research titled *Relationships among circulating prolactin concentrations, hair coat score, and weights of grazing cows*. Congratulations to both students and their advisors! ■

Heading off to the Beach!

**Come Celebrate Melanie Malone's
Extension Career**

**March 15 (3-6 p.m.)
at Faulkner County Extension
844 Faulkner Street
Please RSVP at 501-329-8344**



Melanie Malone displays her skills at a food workshop

New publications:

(You know you want to look.)
[uaex.edu/publications/
new.aspx](http://uaex.edu/publications/new.aspx)





2019 Flower and Garden Show



“Beautiful sights, sounds and the smell of hyacinths and camellias flooded the buildings while food vendors offered delicious food samples. Guests enjoyed the trolley rides and the upgraded concession food received rave reviews,” said Marybeth Rogers, executive director of the Arkansas Flower and Garden Show.

“The ‘*Watch a Pro at Work*’ live garden build was a hit as many attendees were able to ask

questions and learn during the build. We would like to send out a special thank you to the hundreds of volunteers who spent countless hours constructing the train garden and providing help throughout the entire show from set up to tear down,” said Marybeth Rogers.



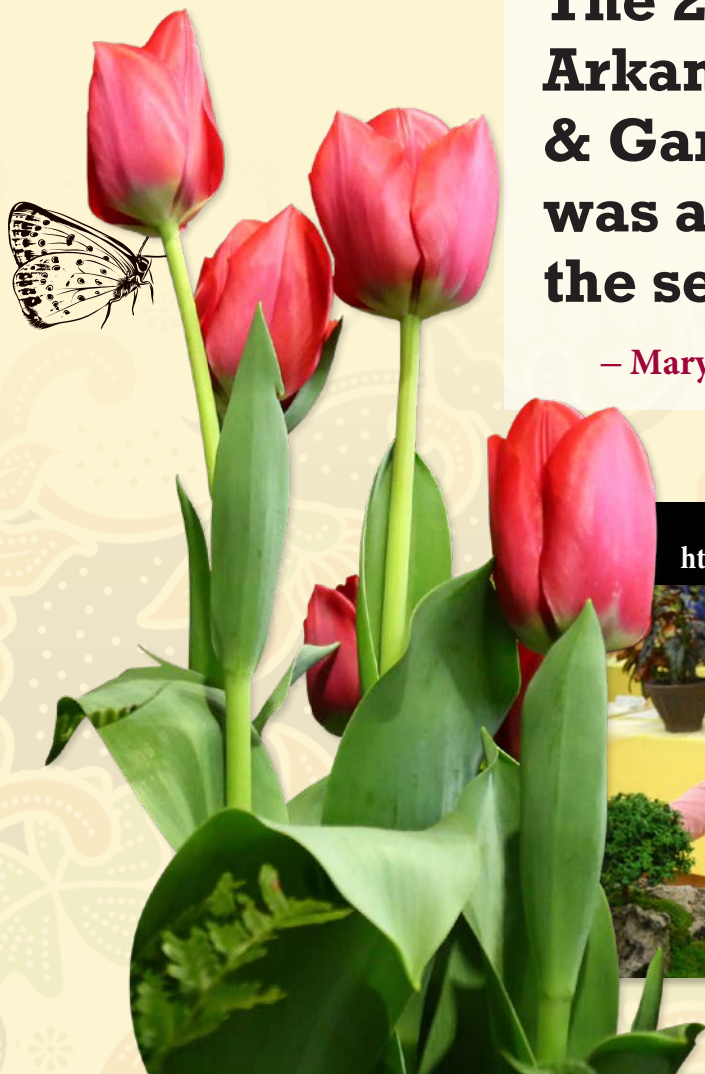
“**The 28th Annual
Arkansas Flower
& Garden Show
was a treat for
the senses.**”

— Marybeth Rogers

PLANNING FOR THE 2020 SHOW:

A Garden Odyssey show has already begun and we are focusing on adding some special events and expanding children’s activities. We have a lot of great ideas and would love to hear your thoughts too. Feel free to send your ideas to argardenshow@gmail.com. ■

To see all the photos go to
<https://flic.kr/s/aHsmBBfpwW>



Livestock Team Competes at Fort Worth and Dixie National Judging Contests



Group Photo – Left to right: Abby T., Victoria O., Cooper S., Mason B., Nathan D., Brittany L. and Chyanne F.

The University of Arkansas Livestock Judging Team successfully competed in the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo Intercollegiate Livestock Judging Contest, as well as the 54th Dixie National Livestock Show and Rodeo in Jackson, Mississippi. In Fort Worth, Texas, the team was 4th Overall High Team. Abby Taylor was 2nd High Individual in Cattle and 8th High Individual Overall while Nathan Davis was 2nd High Individual in Horses. Two days later at the Dixie National, the team placed 2nd High Team Overall with Abby Taylor as 10th High Individual Reasons and Overall. Congratulations to the team and coach Bryan Kutz! For more information about cattle production, visit www.uaex.edu or www.arkansas-livestock.com or contact your county Extension office. ■

Kegley and Zhao Awarded Animal Health Grants

Drs. Beth Kegley and Jiangchao Zhao were each awarded \$15,000 to conduct animal health related-research. Kegley's research will focus on '*Determining nasal, oral and ocular bacterial community relationship with infectious keratoconjunctivitis cattle (more commonly known as pinkeye)*' while Zhao's research will '*Identify bovine respiratory microbiome biomarkers for the onset of bovine respiratory diseases (BRD).*' USDA Animal Health funds are awarded on a competitive basis to Agricultural

Experiment Station faculty with an approved Animal Health CRIS project.

Animal Health funds are based in part on an institution's level of animal health-related grant activity and the number of applicable animal health projects reported to USDA. These funds will be used to stimulate development of external competitive funding. Congratulations to both Drs. Kegley and Zhao! ■

Arkansas Delegation Attends 2019 Extension Leadership Conference Sponsored by JCEP

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Jesse Bocksnick, Laura Hendrix, Hope Bragg, Julie Robinson, Katie Teague and Joy West pose for a picture in front of Katie Teague's poster during the poster session of the ELC Conference.

The Extension Leadership Conference, sponsored by the Joint Council of Extension Professionals, was held on Feb. 6 and 7, 2019 in San Antonio, Texas. The Extension Leadership Conference provides professional development that addresses leadership and management skill development critical for emerging Extension leaders. The theme for this year's conference was *Cultivating Leaders*, with an emphasis on how to develop leaders within the local community, as well as within the Extension profession. Concurrent session presentations illustrated, demonstrated and provided hands-on learning opportunities on skills or models that can be replicated by individuals and/or associations.

The conference was designed to foster and build leadership skills in current and potential leaders working in the Extension system, not just for those already in leadership positions. The conference keynote speaker was Grace Gorrell, who is a former county 4-H agent and faculty member at the University of Kentucky. Since retiring, Gorrell has begun a business, Leading with Grace, offering leadership training programs to a wide variety of audiences. Conference attendees also heard federal updates from USDA and Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) liaisons. Arkansas Extension personnel in attendance represented state and national professional organizations and presented poster and concurrent sessions. ■

329 Baby Red Hats Presented to the American Heart Association

The American Heart Association asked Washington County EHC members to help with their *Little Hats, Big Hearts* campaign. The goal was to give a new red hat to all babies born in northwest Arkansas during February, which is heart month.

EHC members were asked to help in late October, with a quick deadline. They reached out to family, friends, neighbors and their church groups to reach their goal. Washington County EHC members donated 329 crocheted and knitted red hats to help them attain their goal. ■

Below, from left to right, Janet Clausen, Ellen Nolan, Martha Brown, Kaye Taylor, Victoria Rose, Mary Margaret King, Alice Lampe, Jennifer Higginbotham, Betty Martin and Anna Goff, county agent.



Corning is Growing Together

Many rural communities in Arkansas experience issues stemming from population loss. When hit with a hardship, communities may need support to regain control of their economic vitality. In this regard, the Community and Economic Development unit commits a tremendous amount of time and effort to illuminating resources available to communities looking to boost community morale and develop their economy. One such resource is Breakthrough Solutions, a strategic planning program housed in the CED unit. Breakthrough Solutions engages communities in a strategic planning process. Recently, under the leadership of Clay County agent Stewart Runsick, Corning reached out to Breakthrough Solutions, resulting in a strategic planning partnership.

In response to its largest employer and only major grocery store closing, community members in Corning took control of their future through establishing Growing Corning Together. Currently, the program consists of citizens committed to developing their local Corning community through strategic initiatives and morale-boosting pursuits. Following these first initial meetings, the group has expanded to include a diverse array

of community members and stakeholders. Action teams meet in between the larger monthly meetings to address issues like downtown revitalization, business retention and infrastructure.

In addition to Growing Corning Together's meetings, they host activities aimed at community wide involvement such as community cleanups. Be on the lookout for upcoming events and program including an annual golf tournament, a talent show, movie nights, educational programs, and plans to repurpose abandoned buildings. We are proud of Growing Corning Together and look forward to hearing more reports. ■



March Forward

Continued

advisor, Dr. Laura Hendrix. What an outstanding group, and note in this issue that the Washington County EHC provided 329 red hats as part of the Little Hats, Big Hearts campaign of the American Heart Association. I cannot adequately explain the good that AEHC represents, but it is evident each day.

Speaking of good for the state, our rural towns and communities continue to benefit mightily from the efforts and leadership of CED staff and programs. From Kickstart Cleveland County to Move Manila Forward to Growing Corning Together to Create Bridges and many other efforts, CED is making a difference – a difference that our grandchildren and beyond will benefit from. Often we think only of the moment, or this year, and not long term. But our children and grandchildren will live with the consequences of our actions today, and CED is working to make future lives and livelihoods very,

very positive. What a legacy.

Other good work of note lately comes from Amanda Philyaw-Perez and staff in produce safety and local foods. This group has had high impact from the start and burn brightly, helping all understand local produce safety and production.

Sadly, last week Phyllis McQuany passed forward. I attended her service and it was a poignant reflection of the Phyllis we knew and loved, who made every day better at the State Office. Such a rare and good person, and now so missed.

Finally, I really appreciate the recent leadership of Jarrod Hardke, Gus Lorenz, Tom Barber, Jason Norsworthy, Tommy Butts, Jeremy Ross, Ples Spradley and Jason Davis in very trying circumstances. More and more, I appreciate all those who demonstrate true professionalism, who are the adults in the room, even when others cannot be. Thanks to all.

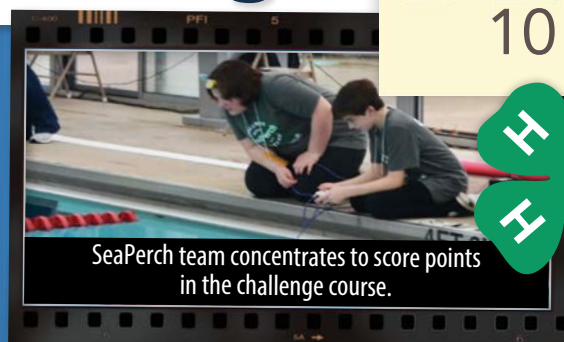
Have a great March! ■

4-H SeaPerch Challenge

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On Saturday, Feb. 23, a total of 24 teams from 11 counties joined at Bishop Park in Bryant to compete in the Arkansas 4-H SeaPerch Challenge. There were 84 youth who made up the 24 teams which included 65 juniors and 18 seniors. This event doubled in competing teams and tripled the number of counties participating. Much appreciation to the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas and Bryant Parks and Recreation for sponsoring the event to make it a success for these 4-Hers. We are hoping to expand participation and continue to grow the program in the future. Well over 100 people were in attendance including youth, coaches, parents and spectators.

Teams competed in four events to determine overall score. These events were a challenge course and obstacle course in the pool, team presentations and engineering notebook.



SeaPerch team concentrates to score points in the challenge course.

Four teams qualify to go to International Challenge on June 1-2, 2019, at University of Maryland. The first and second place overall teams will have a chance to represent Arkansas 4-H in June. Congratulations to all teams that competed and good luck to the teams moving on to the International Challenge. Go to <https://www.flickr.com/photos/uacescomm/sets/72157706961467335/> to see more photos and video. ■



SeaPerch team maneuvers through the obstacle course for the best time.

The overall winning teams are:

Junior Stock Class

- 1st - Speedy Gonzalez (Grant Co.)
- 2nd - The Titanic Crew (Grant Co.)
- 3rd - Black Warrior (Poinsett Co.)

Senior Stock Class

- 1st - Howard County Senior Team (Howard Co.)
- 2nd - JC Atlantis (Johnson Co.)
- 3rd - Fire Breathing Rubber Duckies (Grant Co.)

The 4-H SEEK Program Celebrates 20 Years!

The Science Enrichment Education for Kids (SEEK) program recently celebrated its 20th anniversary. The program, which takes place at the Arkansas 4-H Center, began in 1999 to meet the science needs of home-schooled students in the Central Arkansas area. What began as two classes with a total of 38 students has grown to 19 classes of approximately 400 total students. SEEK was recognized by national 4-H headquarters as Arkansas's only Program of Distinction in 2006.

Quotes from former SEEK students include:

"SEEK helped foster in me the desire to stop and observe more closely—with all five senses—the world around me. . ." ~ Hannah Clardy, postgraduate student in Edinburgh, Scotland.

" . . . being able to do hands-on activities, that allowed me to develop a love of science, spurred my future career choices!" ~ Shannon Pruitt, Epidemiology Research Fellow at the CDC.

" . . . My master's thesis was all about how seasonal environmental changes may produce physiological stresses . . . The more I think about it, the more I appreciate the experience I had at SEEK and how it has influenced the type of scientific questions I investigate." ~ Mackie O'Hara, PhD anthropology student at Ohio State University. ■

Some of our first SEEK students from 1999.



Ag Department Set to Inspect Some Produce Farms in May

Some farms in Arkansas that grow produce and which have over \$500,000 in annual food sales are scheduled to be inspected starting May 6 by the Arkansas Agriculture Department's produce safety inspectors.

Farms with diversified farming activities such as livestock, poultry, nuts, hay and that grow produce should evaluate if they make over \$500,000 in total farm food sales and over \$27,000 in produce sales. If so, they should attend a Produce Safety Grower Training and may be inspected in 2019 or 2020. For county agents who have growers that may fit this category, please share our website and contact information. For questions, please contact Dr. Perez at aperez@uaex.edu.

Dr. Amanda Philyaw Perez, assistant professor and state specialist for Food Systems and Food Safety, leads the state outreach and education program for helping produce growers understand good agricultural practices for reducing risks of a food safety issue and understand new regulatory standards. For registration for a Produce Safety Grower Training register here: www.uaex.edu/arkansas-produce-safety. ■



Create Bridges Forums

Five Create Bridges community forums were held in Ash Flat, DeQueen, Nashville and Ashdown in the past three months as part of the pilot program being run through the Community and Economic Development (CED) unit.

Attendees were invited to share their perspectives on retail, tourism, accommodations and entertainment sectors and started to develop strategies to strengthen these industries and support workforce and business development.

Two regions are participating in the Create Bridges pilot. The Ozark Foothills region includes Sharp, Fulton, and Izard counties in northcentral Arkansas, while the 3Cs, Cossatot Community Connection, region consists of Little River, Sevier and Howard counties in southwest Arkansas.

The regions' first planning meetings were held in December. Now that the forums are completed, each region will hold one retail academy at the end of March, focusing on area economic drivers. Following the academies,

the regions will hold retention and expansion roundtables for business owners and survey employees on their workforce experiences and aspirations.

UAEX CED, the University of Kentucky and Oklahoma State University are developing, refining and piloting the program.

If you are interested in learning more, reach out to Julianne Dunn at jbdunn@uaex.edu or check out our website at www.uaex.edu/createbridges. ■



Attendees at the Ozark Foothills forum in Ash Flat review and edit the regional asset maps focusing on retail, accommodations, entertainment, and tourism.

Grants and Contracts

| PROJECT TITLE | AWARD AMOUNT | PI | GRANTING AGENCY |
|--|--------------|----------------|---|
| Jarrold Hardke 2019 RRPB Equipment | \$14,000 | Jarrold Hardke | Rice Research Promotion Board |
| Cecil Traylor Wilson Garden Renovation | \$13,000 | Jerri Lephiew | Magnolia Advertising and Promotion Commission |
| TOTAL AWARDS FOR FEBRUARY 2019: \$27,000 | | | |

Upcoming Events

MARCH

- Mar. 15** (afternoon) – Benton County – Arkansas 4-H Horse Roping
Mar. 16 (afternoon) – Searcy County – Master Gardeners Meeting
Mar. 18 (morning) – Dallas County – DEEP (Diabetes Education) Class
Mar. 20 (morning) – Crittenden County – Pesticide Applicator Training
Mar. 21-23 (afternoon) – Pulaski County – Livestock Leadership Academy
Mar. 25 (evening) – Howard County – 4-H County O-Rama
Mar. 28 (evening) – Lawrence County – Drums Alive Class
Mar. 30 (afternoon) – Backyard Poultry Online Course

APRIL


- April 1** (all day) – Pulaski County – Wildlife Habitat Contest-Registration
April 2 (evening) – Ashley County – Bullseye Bandits 4-H Club
April 3 (afternoon) – Franklin County – Sprayer Calibration Workshop
April 6 (afternoon) – Washington, DC
 – National 4-H Conference
April 8 (evening) – Little River County – Little Recipe Club
April 9 (afternoon) – Ash Flat – Chronic Pain Self-Management Program

April 10 (evening) – Miller County – Cook Your Way to a Healthier You

April 11 (evening) – Saline County – Cattleman's Meeting

April 12 (afternoon) – Howard County – Pesticide Applicator Training


Go to <https://calendar.uaex.edu/cal/main/showMain.rdo> to see all of the upcoming events!



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 Outdoor Adventures • Wilderness Skills • Cooking Camp

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 University of Arkansas System

For more info contact Mike Simmons:
(501) 821-6884 or daycamp@uaex.edu
 or go to www.uaex.edu/daycamp

Benefits Corner

Important Flexible Spending Account Information:

You have until March 31, 2019 to submit documentation to UMR for eligible expenses incurred through Dec. 31, 2018.

National Nutrition Month

National Nutrition Month is an annual nutrition education and information campaign created by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. The campaign, celebrated each year during the month of March, focuses attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits.

Join your Wellness team and Katie Holland, CES registered dietitian, from FCS on Monday, March 18, 2019

at 11:00 am on a webinar so that you can learn more about healthy eating.

Following are a few tips for healthy eating that may be presented and that can also be found at <https://www.eatright.org/food/resources/national-nutrition-month/national-nutrition-month-celebration-toolkit>.

- 1) Choose foods and drinks that are good for your health.
- 2) Include a variety of healthful foods from all of the food groups on a regular basis.
- 3) Select healthier options when eating away from home.
- 4) Be mindful of portion sizes. Eat and drink the amount that's right for you.
- 5) Keep it simple. Eating right doesn't have to be complicated.

Personnel Changes

Welcome aboard:

Michelle Barnes - 4-H Program Assistant, Arkansas County, Dewitt

Sara Orłowski - Poultry Management Specialist, Poultry Science, Fayetteville

Karen Watts - Digital & IT Innovation Manager, Office of Information Technology, State Office

Julia Fryer - Program Associate - Office of the Associate Director of Agriculture and Natural Resources, State Office

Miranda Tucci - Administrative Specialist - Agriculture Economics and Agriculture Business, State Office

GibAnn Berryhill - Grants Pre-Award Officer, Office of Sponsored Programs, State Office

Farewell to:

Alyssa Huber - Program Technician-APAC, Community and Economic Development, Pulaski County, Little Rock

