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BLUE LETTER

April 2019

No. 3804



Action Packed April

It is April, showers and all. My sinuses respect the pollen right now; that sea of yellow covering cars and parking lots, impressive is not the word.

Impressive is the word for our programs and impact recently. This letter is filled with examples of the many programs we lead or contribute to – a shorter list might be what we are NOT involved in.

We certainly appreciate the leadership in all of our program areas – 4-H, ANR, FCS or CED – along Operations (Support) who keep everything humming – this letter is filled with their excellence.

However, I want to note two things mentioned in the letter that have been brought to my attention with jarring reality by some of our retirees and other colleagues. America Saves is a program to educate people about saving during their working lives so that later life is easier. Dr. Laura Hendrix and others do a great job on financial literacy, and saving is a fundamental aspect. Please watch the videos referenced and educate yourself about personal finance. One day, it will be too late.

The other item is the Tobacco Pledge. Our HR staff keep reminding us about this pledge, now a part of our health care benefits that will cost you money if you do not participate. You have until May 31. Again, one day it will be too late.

I also want to remind you about the Administrative Support Staff Conference coming up April 25-26, organized by Dr. Karen Ballard, and I hope that if you work in admin support you will attend, learn and continue to develop those skills needed to succeed in the 21st century Division of Agriculture. Professional development has always been important, in any career, but never more so than in the fast-changing 21st century – don't be left behind, or at some point, left out.



FROM THE DIRECTOR

And speaking of the 21st Century, Karen Watts and Dr. Julie Robinson, along with others, will host the first ever Hackathon for high school age youth April 26-27. This continues the advent of our focus on innovation and 21st century technology, led by Karen and IT, as well as engaging youth in rapidly advancing computer science technology. This is a critically important initiative for the Division.

Finally, April is a huge month for field programs in ANR, and I commend all our field scientists and agents having to deal with the aftermath of the crazy fall and winter months. Hopefully, we can pull through with near normal production in all areas, fingers and toes crossed!

HAVE A GREAT APRIL!

INSIDE SCOOP

2. 4-Hers get Certified in Stop the Bleed
3. Department of Animal Science Hosts the 2019 Arkansas State Beef Quiz Bowl
4. America Saves Campaign
5. Southwest Arkansas Cattlemen's College
6. Farm Stress Program
7. The Broken-Tailed Cat Who Hitchhiked His Way into Lonoke Ext. Center's Heart
9. Multi-County Beef Meetings
10. Estate Planning Workshops...And much more!

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DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

Columbia County 4-H Members Attend Conference

And Meet Country Music Star

Members from Columbia County 4-H participated in the American Small Farmer Conference. Kate C., Myla W., 4-H volunteer leader, Misty Whitehead, and Jerri Lephiew, the Columbia County agent – staff chair, participated in educational sessions/forums, visited vendors from the Ozarks and networked with other like-minded individuals. The two days were spent learning about homesteading, elderberries, basic marketing of goods and advancements in approaches to soil science. Teddy Gentry, founding member of the country music group Alabama, was the keynote speaker for the conference. Gentry spent extra sessions with the youth participants and aided instructors with other sessions. Myla, who is a musician herself, got the opportunity to play her guitar for Gentry. Gentry picked her guitar some himself and signed the guitar for Myla. ■



(L to R): 4-H Volunteer Leader, Misty Whitehead; Kate C., Ag Agent/Staff Chair, Jerri Lephiew; Myla W. and Teddy Gentry of the country music group, Alabama.



4-Hers Get Certified in Stop the Bleed

The Polk County 4-H Program partnered with Mena Regional Health Systems to present the nationally recognized Stop the Bleed program on March 18. Twenty-five Polk County 4-Hers and parents became certified in lifesaving techniques. Kohlea C., an 11-year-old 4-Her who is interested in healthcare, expressed an interest in the program after suffering a rather bad cut from barbed wire that required numerous stitches. She, along with her mom, worked with Mena Regional Health Systems staff to teach the program to area 4-Hers over spring break. MRHS employees Tammy Harrison, Pam Posey and Debbie Nelson instructed the 4-Hers on how to identify situations where life-threatening bleeding is

occurring, and techniques to use if you are involved in a situation where bleeding is uncontrolled. The training included wound packing and proper use of tourniquets.

Bridgett Martin, Polk County FCS/4-H agent, said, "We are glad that Kohlea was interested in such a great program. It fits in great with the Health component of 4-H which sometimes gets overlooked. It was also very timely considering the Arkansas House just passed HB1014 requiring that bleeding control training be taught as part of high school health courses. Overall this information was very life applicable and our 4-Hers are already ahead of the game in that training." ■



Reagan Richmond practices applying a tourniquet to Kohlea C. during the Stop the Bleed training in Polk County.

Department of Animal Science Hosts the 2019 Arkansas State Beef Quiz Bowl

The Department of Animal Science hosted the annual statewide Beef Quiz Bowl this year in Fayetteville at the Pauline Whitaker Animal Science Center on Feb. 22. This program is funded by the Arkansas Beef Council through revenue collected from the Beef Check-Off. This Cooperative Extension Service activity provides students in Arkansas with an incentive to learn more about management, food safety, forage nutrition, quality assurance and end beef product. Educational material was provided for county extension agents and vocational agriculture instructors to further the learning process beyond that of their beef 4-H and FFA projects.

Students were tested on many levels of question difficulty. The questions, compiled by the Animal Science faculty, covered all aspects of beef production. Teams were comprised of four students and competed in a double-elimination tournament.

Twenty-one teams, 84 students plus 4-H agents, agriculture instructors and parents attended this event. Preparation for this contest allowed students to sharpen their knowledge about beef cattle production. Additionally, students improved communication, goal setting, critical thinking, team building skills and ultimately enhanced their interest in beef cattle. This program has a great impact on educating students and encouraging a broadened perspective about their role in beef production, food safety and consumer acceptance. These efforts

will be continued through the Animal Science, Cooperative Extension Service, Arkansas Beef Council and agriculture teachers across the state. Congratulations to the Washington County 4-H "Beef Masters" (pictured) for winning first, and to the Washington County 4-H "The Bull Pen" who won second place. Salem FFA from Fulton County took home the third place trophy. ■



From left to right: Denise Trotter, Coach, Kale S., Mason M., Alana C., Madeline L., and Travis Justice from the Arkansas Beef Council.

Ranch Horse Team Competes at Celebration of Champions Collegiate Invitational Show

Team members competed in the Celebration of Champions National Reined Cow Horse Collegiate Invitational in Fort Worth. Reined cow horse competitions include working a single cow in an arena, performing specific maneuvers including circling the cow, turning it in a specified manner and performing a reining pattern. There were eight schools competing and each school brought their top three riders. Congratulations to Jordan Shore, animal science instructor and coach, and team members Ashton W., Santos M. and Luke M. on outstanding team and individual performances. ■



UA Ranch Horse Team members Ashton W., Luke M. and Santos M.

Arkansas Show Camp Scheduled for June

Registration Deadline May 27

Hosted by the University of Arkansas System, Division of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, the 2019 Arkansas Show Camp will be held at the Southwest District Fairgrounds in Hope, June 24-26. There are two different registration fees: \$200 (includes lodging) and \$150 (excludes lodging). Registration with full payment is due May 27. All species, cattle, sheep, goats and hogs, are included, and the participant, ages 9 to 19, should bring their animal with them, as this is a hands-on learning experience. For more information, please contact Dr. Chelsey Kimbrough, ckimbrough@uaex.edu or (501) 503-6592. ■

America Saves Campaign

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The Cooperative Extension Service marked America Saves Week with a strong presence in the national campaign. The campaign was spearheaded by Laura Hendrix, associate professor in Family and Consumer Sciences, who served on the national planning committee for America Saves Week 2019.

Arkansas extension encouraged participation through two short videos created by Ricky Blair and Nick Kordsmeier in the Communications Department. The two videos generated more than 12,500 views and were coupled to an active social media presence in Twitter and Facebook. The two videos were also used by the Consumer Federation of America, the national America Saves office. America Saves Week 2019 was Feb. 25-March 2.

“The resources we created were shared with partner organizations across the country. An important aspect of the mission of the Cooperative Extension Service is to be a catalyst of prosperity for Arkansans,” Hendrix said. “The America Saves Campaign allowed Extension to partner in a national program that helps to educate and motivate consumers to take steps to build financial stability.” Click on the image below to view the videos. ■



New Publications:

(You know you want to look.)
uaex.edu/publications/new.aspx



Southwest Arkansas Cattlemen's College

The Southwest Arkansas Cattlemen's College was designed to give young and beginning ranchers the tools they need to be successful in their ranching operation. We targeted young and beginning ranchers, in an eight-county area of Southwest Arkansas. Many were older producers who had been away from the farm for several years but were looking to retire and come back home to the family farm and wanting it to be successful. Others were young and brand new to ranching and needed information to help them be successful full-time operators. The cost per participant was \$50. Many of the counties found sponsorships to award scholarships to their participants.

The design of the program was to have four daylong sessions once a month with both classroom and

experiential learning experiences. Topics were taught by county extension agents and extension specialists. Each day of the series was divided into topic areas:

- 1) **Pastures and Forages**
- 2) **Genetics and Reproduction**
- 3) **Health and Facilities**
- 4) **Nutrition and Producer's Choice**

A total of 20 producers graduated from the series. From the evaluation, 87 percent of the producers indicated that they would implement three or more new practices that they learned about from this series. Agents involved with this program included: Sherry Beaty-Sullivan, Jennifer Caraway, Terrell Davis, Rex Herring, Samantha Kroll, Darren Neal, Amy Simpson and Stacey Stone. ■



The graduates of the SWARCC

UPCOMING TECH TUESDAY WEBINARS



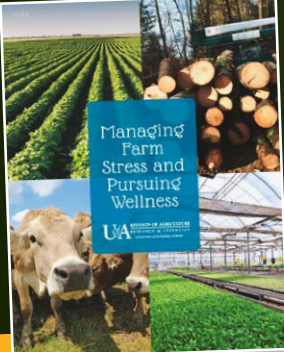
Tuesday, May 14: Part 2 Video Series – Editing Your Video

(Kerry Rodtnick, Ricky Blair and Nick Kordsmeier)

Tuesday, June 11: Video Series – Social Posting and Promoting your Video

(Kim Rowe and Nick Kordsmeier)

Second Tuesday of every month, starting at 9:00 a.m. To view the recordings, visit <https://uaex.edu/techtuesdays>



Farm Stress Program

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Dr. Brittney Schrick, Family Life assistant professor, Rebecca Simon, program associate and Leigh Ann Bullington, Woodruff County FCS agent, presented the new Farm Stress Program to over 100 attendees at the Farm Bureau Women's Conference in Little Rock on March 9. Over three sessions, participants learned to spot signs of stress and tools for managing stress from the standpoint of agricultural work and rural families. Participants gained materials to use at home and to share with loved ones or their communities that introduce the principles of managing stress, and they were given information on how to request this

program for their communities. All county FCS agents have access to these program materials, booklets, handouts, evaluations and stress barns can be ordered from the state office to publicize and support county efforts. ■



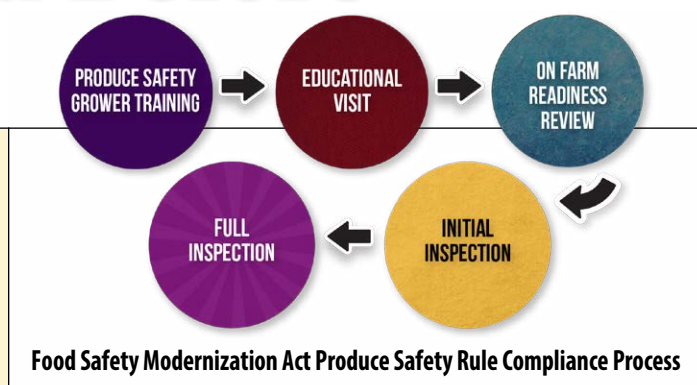
Rebecca Simon presenting Managing Farm Stress and Pursuing Wellness at the Farm Bureau Women's Meeting March 9 in Little Rock.



Leigh Ann Bullington presenting Managing Farm Stress and Pursuing Wellness at the Farm Bureau Women's Meeting March 9 in Little Rock.

On Farm Readiness Reviews Being Scheduled Before Inspections

As the Produce Safety Team strives to fulfill the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture's motto "educate before and while you regulate," scheduling On Farm Readiness Reviews, OFRR, with produce farmers is underway to prepare them for upcoming Food and Drug Administration inspections. Compliance with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule begins this year for some farms with over \$500,000 annual food sales, and farm inspections performed by the Arkansas Agriculture Department start May 6. To help farmers prepare for this process, Cooperative Extension service offers a voluntary and confidential OFRR opportunity for farmers to visit one-on-one with the Produce Safety Team about the requirements. Produce Safety Team members will walk through the farmer's operation



and discuss their practices. By the end of the visit, the farmer will have a list of suggested improvements needed to comply with the rule. The goal of the OFRR is to move away from the audit checklist mentality and to help farmers understand how to implement produce safety practices on their farms in their daily routines. To schedule an OFRR, contact any Food Safety Team member at www.uaex.edu/arkansas-produce-safety. ■

The Broken-Tailed Cat Who Hitchhiked His Way Into Lonoke Ext. Center's Heart

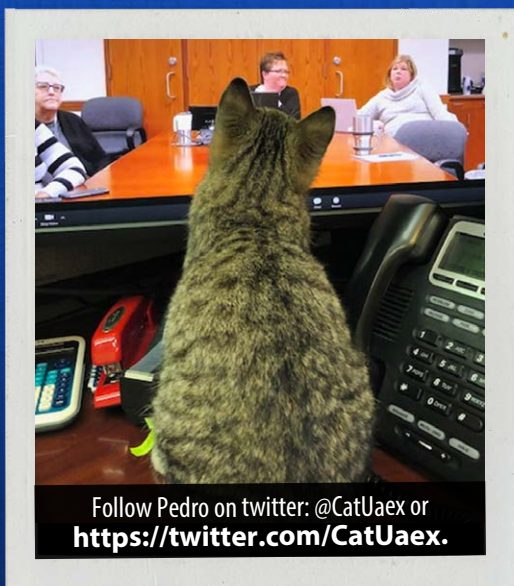


Cats always seem to know where they will be loved, and the story of the broken-tailed tabby who hitched his way into the hearts of the Lonoke Extension Center is no exception. Pedro or Nostradamus, depending on who you ask, arrived at Lonoke the morning of Feb. 27 in a rather unconventional way.

"He is such a lucky kitty, he survived about 24 hours in two different motors to make it here," said Jodi Blackard, entomology administrative coordinator. "He entered my husband's motor while he was in the woods and then transferred to mine in the middle of the night after I tried for hours to get him out of my husband's truck.

"He hitched a ride to Extension the next morning and won Gus's heart ... I thought for sure he died and went to heaven!" she said. Blackard says Gus Lorenz, extension

entomologist, calls the little guy Nostradamus, but "the rest of us have settled on Pedro."



Follow Pedro on twitter: @CatUaex or <https://twitter.com/CatUaex>.

She says her husband was about 45 miles from the Lonoke Extension Center when Pedro climbed aboard, "but his ride only started there, then my husband drove another 100 miles around Lonoke and White counties delivering wood before arriving back at our house where sweet Pedro switched engines and rode the remaining 15 miles into work with me the following morning."

"I was here about 30 minutes when Katherine Brown came running in and had him in her arms – she watched him climb out from under my car and he ran to the head house door and sat and cried," Blackard said. "Starving and very greasy, with a broken tail but he was OK!" Blackard says the shop cat has become "quite a beloved member of our crew." ■

SNAP-Ed Cooking Class



Pulaski County SNAP-Ed program assistant, Patti Spradley, leads a nutrition and cooking class at Goodwill Industries of Arkansas. Participants of the SNAP-Ed Creates Class learn valuable skills to improve the quality of their lives in a relaxed group setting. Patti encourages each person to take part in the bi-monthly nutrition and cooking program where adults learn the importance of eating more fruits and vegetables. Goodwill Industries of Arkansas has partnered with Pulaski County SNAP-Ed to help this community "create" a better future for themselves. ■



Arkansas 4-H Livestock Leadership Academy

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The 2019 Arkansas 4-H Livestock Leadership Academy was held March 21-23 at the Arkansas 4-H Center in Ferndale. Forty 4-Hers from across the state spent three days learning about leadership skills and participated in farm tours. Day one consisted of the 4-Hers doing the Low Ropes Course with the ExCEL Program and Minute To Win It team challenges. Day two consisted of farm tours in North Central Arkansas. Livestock Leadership Academy participants visited Clover Leaf Farm in El Paso where they run 60 white-headed Dorper sheep and utilize dogs to help work their flock. Stop number two was at Chimney Rock Cattle Company in Concord where they learned about the history and technologies that are being used on the Brangus operation.

The tours rounded out at the Cleveland County Livestock Auction where Luke Mobley talked about the Arkansas Bull Sale and how it came about. While there, they also heard cattlemen from across the Southeast talk about their operations and gave words of wisdom. The participants were able to walk through the pens and see the bulls being offered in the sale. The academy wrapped up on day three with reflections and evaluations. ■



Luke Mobley gives advice to Livestock Leadership Academy participants at the Cleveland Co. Livestock Auction and discusses the Arkansas Bull Sale.



Pope County 4-H Agent Emily Hawkins leads the Livestock Leadership Academy in icebreakers.



The Livestock Leadership Academy visited Chimney Rock Cattle Company and learned about their Brangus operation.



Livestock Leadership Academy participants learn about Clover Leaf Farm's Dorper sheep operation.

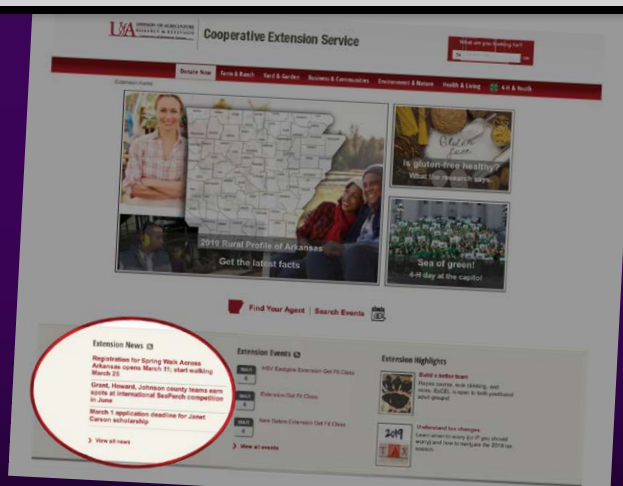


Their were 40 4-H'ers from all across the state who participated in the 2019 Livestock Leadership Academy.

Front Page News You Can Use

Looking for a news story to use in your local paper? Look no further than the front page of uaex.edu. And if you click on view all news, you'll see all of our archived news stories back to 2014.

If you want to be on the email list to receive our news stories, email Mary Hightower at mhightower@uaex.edu and Communications will add you to the distribution list. ■



Planting of Rice Breeding Nursery Is Underway at Division's Rice Research and Ext. Center

By taking advantage of the much anticipated sunny and dry spring weather, the medium-grain rice breeding program at RREC started its 2019 season by planting the pedigree panicle row nursery near Stuttgart on March 27. Pedigree panicle row nursery is a critical part of the breeding program that advances and evaluates the segregating progenies ranging from F3-F7 and selects superior uniform lines for the preliminary yield trial. Each year more than 60,000 panicle rows are individually prepared (see the inlet), planted, selected and advanced.

This past year Dr. Xueyan Sha's program released two new Clearfield® rice varieties for commercial production. ■



Tony Beaty (driver) and Jill Bulloch operate a Hege magazine row planter with assistance from rice breeder Dr. Xueyan Sha.

Multi-County Beef Meetings

On Tuesday, March 19 and Thursday, March 21, Logan, Franklin, Johnson, Newton, Crawford, Scott and Sebastian County Extension teamed up to conduct the 2019 Multi-County Beef Meetings. The meetings were held at the Frank-lin County Extension Office in Ozark and Mansfield City Hall, respectively. Agents gave presentations on several topics including salt and mineral needs of cattle, water quality in beef production, vaccine handling, fly control and recognizing when a product is too good to be true. More than 40 producers attended these meetings and were treated to lunch following the talks. Attendees reported that they in-creased their knowledge of the topics covered and planned to make changes based on knowledge gained. ■

Jesse Taylor discusses the life cycle of the fall armyworm.



Multi-County Forage Meeting

On Tuesday, March 5, Logan, Franklin, Johnson, Newton, Crawford, Faulkner and Sebastian County Extension teamed up to conduct the 2019 multi-county forage meeting. The meeting was held at the First National Bank Community Center in Paris. Agents gave presentations on several topics including army-worm control, broomsedge management, using summer annu-als, legume establishment and management and weed control. Over 40 producers attended this meeting and reported an in-crease in knowledge on each of the topics covered. The meeting concluded with lunch provided to participants. ■

Blair Griffin discusses the questionable math offered by some internet fertilizer companies.



Estate Planning Workshops

Where do I start when creating an estate plan? What's the best way to transfer assets to my beneficiaries? Who will make decisions for me in the event I become incapacitated? These are a few of the questions that were answered during a two-night Estate Planning workshop held in Logan County.

More than 45 participants attended the workshop organized by FCS agents in Logan, Franklin, Scott and Sebastian counties. A free dinner was provided to participants through the sponsorship of South Logan County Farm Bureau, Scott County Farm Bureau and the Logan and Scott County EHC.

Participants had the opportunity to hear from UAEX associate professor, Dr. Laura Hendrix, FCS agent

Attorneys Brenda Vassaur Taylor and Isabelle Taylor Maerki explain the benefits of a revocable trust to workshop participants on day one of the estate planning workshop.

Debbie Miller and attorneys, Brenda Vassaur Taylor, Isabelle Taylor Maerki and Betsy Danielson. Speakers covered topics such as getting started on an estate plan, probate, trusts, farm transfers, power of attorney and transfer of non-titled property.

Participants were so pleased with the workshop that a third workshop has been requested. One participant said, "I didn't realize we could be doing things like putting 'payable upon death' on my accounts. This has been very informative and I believe we would greatly benefit from another estate planning workshop." ■

Statewide Joint Cover Crop Trainings Held With County Ag Agents and NRCS Agents

Throughout February and March, three joint trainings were held across the state with UACES ag. agents and NRCS agents on cover crop basics and cover crop use in vegetable systems. In total, 23 UACES ag. agents and 43 NRCS agents were trained on how they could use the materials for their own county cover crop trainings. The agents also got to visit a local grower or research station to see planted winter cover crops and learn about field sampling techniques, and how cover crops are implemented into different production systems. The trainings were supported by a grant to Horticulture specialists

Amanda McWhirt and Jackie Lee from the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Profession Development Program. Acting NRCS state agronomist, Troyce Barnett, collaborated in helping to deliver the training and coordinate NRCS agents to attend.

County agents Ryan Neal (Benton County), Rachel Bearden (Hot Spring County), Jennifer Caraway (Miller County) and Brett Gordon (Woodruff County) were instrumental in helping plan and deliver the trainings in their extension districts. Further, new UACES soil instructor Matt Fryer helped deliver the trainings and demonstrated field monitoring techniques that will be used in upcoming county demonstrations.

The final PowerPoint slides, fact sheets and videos for use by agents will be uploaded at: www.uaex.edu/sarecovercrop. ■



Field demonstration of infiltrometer.

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2019 State and Regional Soybean Science Challenge Awards



Natalie Blake, 2019 State Science Fair and Southeast Arkansas Regional Science Fair Soybean Science Challenge winner with mentor, Shannon Blake.

The 2019 Soybean Science Challenge state student research winner was announced at the 65th annual Southwestern Energy Arkansas State Science and Engineering Fair March 30 at UCA in Conway.

Extension professor, Dr. Julie Robinson and Soybean Science Challenge coordinator, Diedre Young, presented the \$1,000 award on behalf of the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board to Natalie Blake, a junior at Star City High School. Natalie also received a \$300 award for the Southeast Arkansas Regional Science and Engineering Fair and was runner-up for Best of Fair at the regional level. Her mentor, Shannon Blake,

won the \$200 Teacher Mentor Award at the state and regional levels.

Regional SSC awards were presented across Arkansas, including ASU-Jonesboro, Hot Springs-ASMSA and ORMSEF, UA-Little Rock, UA-Fayetteville, UA-Monticello and SAU-Magnolia.

Regional SSC student research winners included Emily S., Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences and Arts; Chris C., Glen Rose High School; Amna K., Little Rock Central High School; Cooper B., Salem High School; M., Alma High School and Rayne C. from Taylor High School. ■



Cooper Bassham, 2019 Northeast Arkansas Regional Science and Engineering Fair Soybean Science Challenge winner with Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board member Gary Sitzer and teacher Amanda Smith.

Arthropod Museum

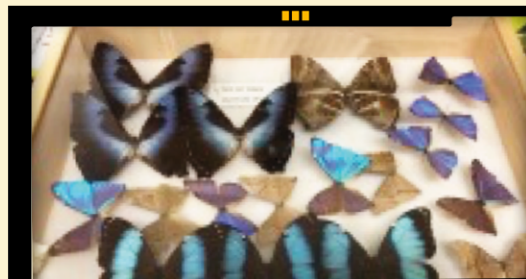
The Arthropod Museum is a massive collection of more than 1,000 drawers, each containing anywhere from a handful to dozens of insects. Some come from exotic locations around the world, while others are species that are found only in the Ozarks.

The collection's current home, a room in the University of Arkansas' agriculture building in Fayetteville, is cramped with narrow aisles making it difficult to host visitors. However, the Arthropod Museum will move this spring to a more inviting location at 1580 Mitchell Street.

"The specimens and the data they represent hold countless stories about insects throughout the state, and those specimens are used by researchers trying to manage insect pests or discover new species," said Robert

Wiedenmann, professor of entomology for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture and the Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences. Its diversity and size make the Arthropod Museum an irreplaceable asset for education and research.

"Insects help the naturally curious from age 4 to 94 to discover the natural world," Wiedenmann said, "and the new home for the museum will make the collection much more accessible to school children as well as the general public." ■



Monroe County 4-H Accomplishes Much in March

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From feeding the members of the Monroe County Quorum Court and Monroe County Extension Council to learning life skills and having fun, Monroe County 4-H members made the most of their March.

They started the month with practicing their public speaking while honing their Dairy Food Contest recipes at the county's interpretative event. Attendees left with smiles and quenched appetites, both from good food and knowledge of the county 4-H program. Senior members fulfilled Color Guard and server duties at the Clarendon Chamber Banquet.

Spring Break was full of fun and learning. Junior and Senior members tackled problem solving and pattern recognition in "Code Your World" and later taught the importance of ATV Safety to Cloverbuds. 4-H Day Camp provided a little "Life, the Fair and Fun" for all.



Making Stone Soup taught the importance of cooperation, sharing and the value of others, not to mention it was good to eat. We made bird houses and feeders to help our animal friends, helped our community by stuffing Easter eggs for the Brinkley Chamber Egg Hunt, and helped ourselves by learning to sew on a button and the importance of wearing sunscreen. And don't forget the County BBQ Contest.

Perhaps you can guess how we topped off all of these wonderful activities. We had our 4-H awards and Recognition Banquet. Great food and awards are always a wonderful finish! ■

APTAC Spring Conference

Arkansas Procurement Technical Assistance Center, PTAC, program director, Melanie Berman, and procurement counselors Max Franks and Liz Russell attended the 2019 Association of Procurement Technical Assistance Centers, APTAC, Spring Conference in Reno, Nevada, March 11-14. The conference provided high-quality, highly-relevant training for PTAC staff, just as our Arkansas PTAC provides premium events for small businesses interested in government contracting. Attendees learned about up to date topics from many federal government agencies including, but not limited to, the Department of Defense Office of Small Business Programs, Army Corps of Engineers, General Services



Max Franks, Liz Russell and Melanie Berman, all Arkansas PTAC staff, attended the national PTAC conference in Reno, Nevada.

Administration, GSA, Defense Logistics Agency, DLA, as well as many government contracting consultants and other PTAC staff from across the county.

It is important for Arkansas businesses to be aware of Arkansas PTAC and the multitude of government contracting opportunities across the state. During the 2018 fiscal year over \$679 million in government contracts went to Arkansas

based businesses. Arkansas PTAC clients were awarded \$119 million. If you know of an Arkansas-based business interested in government contracting, have them contact Arkansas PTAC at 501-671-2390 or ptac@uaex.edu. ■

Education, Leadership, and Community Service

The Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council was originally formed and continues to serve as a branch of outreach education for the Cooperative Extension Service. There are more than 3,679 members in 320 clubs. Major events including the state meeting, district rallies and March workshop hosted 1,170 participants. The first annual AEHC Impact Survey revealed that, as a result of participation in EHC, respondents are more active as volunteers or leaders (87 percent); made positive changes based on the information they learned (53 percent); gained confidence to speak in front of groups, skills to plan and organize meetings, ability to lead a meeting, and making a difference in their community (40 percent). Some comments were, "EHC is an empowerment to me; it motivated me to assist in delivering to other people who are in need. EHC has helped me grow as a person and has given me the confidence to be a leader. I have learned valuable lessons that have helped me in my everyday life. I feel like I am making a difference in my life and the lives of others."

This year marks AEHC's first time to work toward developing a strategic plan. AEHC leaders met with trained facilitators to discuss the future of the Extension Homemakers program in Arkansas. Arkansas Extension Homemakers are planning for the future. Dr. Karen Ballard and Dr. Julie Robinson led the AEHC executive team members and past presidents in strategic planning sessions. Volunteers and county agents are serving on work

groups to develop action steps to move forward toward these goals.

FUTURE GOALS INCLUDE:

- Expanding partnerships and public events.
- Adopting a statewide community service project.
- Sustaining and expanding membership.

Volunteer hours totaling 325,454 were given by 7,724 volunteers for a total value of \$8,035,459.26. Clubs and councils across the state awarded 33 college scholarships at a value of \$22,500. At the March 6 AEHC Spring Workshop, homemakers adopted a statewide community service project to address food insecurity. Nick Bradford with Arkansas Food Banks was the featured speaker and addressed ways EHC clubs can help food banks. Many clubs already partner with local food banks. In current AEHC community service projects for Arkansas Children's Hospital, EHC members make graduation gowns for NICU babies and make teaching dolls that are used to explain medical procedures to the children who are being treated. These are just a few of EHC's many service projects. In addition to the new statewide project, existing AEHC community service projects will continue. AEHC is one of the largest volunteer organizations in Arkansas. ■



EHC members made graduation gowns for NICU babies and teaching dolls used to explain medical procedures to the children who are being treated.

Dr. Karen Ballard and Dr. Julie Robinson led the AEHC executive team members and past presidents in strategic planning sessions.



Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council leaders visited the state capitol on March 5. They met with legislators and visited with the governor. Thanks to Phyllis Bell, LeadAR alumna, for helping with arrangements to meet Governor Hutchinson.

Upcoming Events

APRIL

April 15 (afternoon) – Searcy County – Master Gardeners Meeting

April 18 (evening) – Hoxie – Drums Alive Class

April 20 (afternoon) – Online – Backyard Poultry Online Course

April 23 (afternoon) – Ozarka College-Ash Flat Campus
– Chronic Pain Self-Management

April 25 (evening) – Malvern – Annie's Project

April 29 (morning) – New Salem – Extension Get Fit Class

April 30 (afternoon) – Piney Grove – Get Fit Class

MAY

May 1 (afternoon) – Ashdown

– Senior Get Fit Exercise Class

May 2 (evening) – Hot Spring County

– Annual 4-H Special Needs Fishing Derby

May 4 (afternoon) – Online – Backyard Poultry Online Course

May 8 (afternoon) – Ashley County – Smarties 4-H Club

May 11 (afternoon) – Faulkner County – Master Gardener Plant Sale

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

Grants and Contracts

PROJECT TITLE	AWARD AMOUNT	PI	GRANTING AGENCY
Southern Regional Center for Food Safety Training, Outreach and Technical Assistance Continuation, and Lead Regional Coordination Center	\$9,000	Amanda Philyaw Perez	University of Florida
2019 NRA Foundation Multi-County 4-H Shooting Sports White County	\$397	Amy Heck	NRA Foundation
2019 NRA Foundation Multi-County 4-H Shooting Sports Sebastian County	\$2,355	Araceli Oswald	NRA Foundation
Arkansas Cotton Research Verification/Sustainability Program	\$50,000	Bill Robertson	Cotton Incorporated
Cereal Rye Termination Timing	\$27,000	Bill Robertson	Cotton Incorporated
Evaluation of Cotton Yield to In-Season Soil-Applied Potassium	\$8,000	Bill Robertson	Cotton Incorporated
Target Leaf Spot IPM	\$15,000	Bill Robertson	Cotton Incorporated
2019 NRA Foundation Multi-County 4-H Shooting Sports Grant County	\$3,500	Brad McGinley	NRA Foundation
2019 NRA Foundation Multi-County 4-H Shooting Sports Crawford County	\$775	Brandi Davis	NRA Foundation
2019 NRA Foundation Multi-County 4-H Shooting Sports Lawrence County	\$3,000	Bryce Baldrige	NRA Foundation
2019 NRA Foundation Multi-County 4-H Shooting Sports Clark County	\$240	Cindy Ham	NRA Foundation
Landscaping for Beauty and Outreach	\$990	Darrin Henderson	Madison County
2019 NRA Foundation Multi-County 4-H Shooting Sports Pulaski County	\$2,580	Jesse Bocksnick	NRA Foundation
2019 NRA Foundation Multi-County 4-H Shooting Sports Franklin County	\$1,072	Jesse Bocksnick	NRA Foundation
2019 NRA Foundation Multi-County 4-H Shooting Sports Hempstead County	\$3,499	Jesse Bocksnick	NRA Foundation
2019 NRA Foundation Multi-County 4-H Shooting Sports Greene County	\$3,000	Jesse Bocksnick	NRA Foundation
Arkansas 4-H Shooting Sports Championships 2019	\$19,500	Jesse Bocksnick	NRA Foundation
2019 NRA Foundation Multi-County 4-H Shooting Sports Lonoke County	\$3,370	Keith Perkins	NRA Foundation
2019 NRA Foundation Multi-County 4-H Shooting Sports Ashley County	\$1,524	Kevin Norton	NRA Foundation
2019 NRA Foundation Multi-County 4-H Shooting Sports Izard County	\$3,300	Micharel Paskewitz	NRA Foundation
2019 National Value Added Agriculture Conference	\$63,275	Ron Rainey	Agricultural Marketing Service - USDA
2019 NRA Foundation Multi-County 4-H Shooting Sports Crittenden County	\$3,398	Sarah Stone	NRA Foundation
Integrating Multiple Tactics into Cotton Weed Management Programs to Target the Palmer Amaranth Soil Seedbank	\$20,000	Tom Barber	Cotton Incorporated
TOTAL AWARDS FOR MARCH 2019: \$244,774			

Benefits Corner

Tobacco Pledge

April 1-May 31, 2019 the UMR portal at www.umar.com will be open for employees to complete the tobacco pledge.

If you already completed the pledge and you aren't currently paying the \$50 per month tobacco surcharge, there is no need to update your pledge at this time.

If you are currently paying the \$50 surcharge and would like to enroll in a tobacco cessation program to avoid that surcharge for July-Dec., this is your opportunity. Or, if you overlooked the first participation opportunity during the 2018 open enrollment, this is your chance to complete the pledge.

Complete the pledge and confirm that you are not a tobacco user, or that if you are a tobacco user, you will

enroll in a recognized tobacco cessation program, and for the months of July-Dec. 2019, the \$50 tobacco surcharge will be removed.

Completing the pledge is easy: Go to UMR at www.umar.com. If you haven't registered, complete your registration using your University Health Plan ID card information. After logging in, click on "Health Center", then "Wellness Activity Center" and "Get Started".

Complete the pledge by making one of three choices: confirm that you are not a tobacco user, confirm that you are a tobacco user and you will enroll in and participate in a recognized tobacco cessation program or confirm that you are a tobacco user and you will not participate in a cessation program. ■

Personnel Changes

Welcome aboard:

Barbara Graves - Administrative Specialist – Family & Consumer Science, Helena
Cheyenne Manuel - Research Field Technician – Crop, Soil & Environmental Science, Newport
Jenifer Forrest - Administrative Specialist – Development Office, State Office
Tonya McKenzie - County Extension Agent – Family & Consumer Science, Lake Village
Amanda Lingo - Payroll Services Specialist, Financial Services, State Office
Cory Tyler - County Extension Agent – Agriculture, Salem
Melanie Rogers - 4-H Program Assistant, Sheridan
Liz Russell - Procurement Counselor – Community and Economic Development, State Office

Farewell to:

Lydia Guffey - Administrative Specialist, Heber Springs
Tiffany Carpenter - Campus Postmaster, Facilities Management, State Office
Jenny Ross - County Extension Agent – Agriculture Economics and Agriculture Business, Lonoke
Leigh Helms - County Extension Agent – Family & Consumer Science, Harrisburg
Jennifer Mendenhall - Administrative Specialist, Pine Bluff
Melanie Malone - County Extension Agent – Staff Chair, Conway
Kathy Rawlingson - Administrative Specialist, Harrison
Sandra Blocker - Administrative Specialist, Marianna

