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BLUE LETTER

August 2026

No. 3892



John D. Anderson

From the Director

In August, I met with my counterparts from around the southern region at the annual Southern Program Leaders Network conference in New Orleans. While we were there, we had the rare opportunity to spend quite a bit of time with Dr. Jaye Hamby, the Director of USDA-NIFA. As the agency responsible for administering not only our Smith-Lever capacity grant funding but also a variety of competitive grant funds, NIFA is an important strategic partner in the land-grant mission generally and for Cooperative Extension specifically. Dr. Hamby was well-acquainted with Extension before assuming his current role in USDA, and he is a strong supporter of our mission.

One of the main themes of Dr. Hamby's remarks to our group was the importance of documenting and reporting program impact. This is not necessarily something new; during my career in the land-grant system, I can't recall a time when we weren't working on better ways to document and effectively communicate the impact of our programs. I think it is fair to say, though, that we are in a season of heightened pressure on the federal budget. As is typical in such times, all spending receives more scrutiny – including spending on the capacity and competitive funds that are vital to our operations. That's not

a bad thing at all. Accountability is one of the core values of UADA. We expect it of ourselves even more than we expect it from our funding partners.

A big part of the reason that we adopted the PEARS reporting system was to improve our ability to document and communicate impacts. I am grateful to all our staff, agents, and specialists who have been doing their part to make PEARS an effective tool for that purpose. I know that nobody really loves reporting, and I know that any new system brings some initial headaches and challenges. But PEARS should give us better and more accessible information than we have ever had before for telling our Extension story. Also, given that so many states in the region are now using PEARS for program reporting, we may have the opportunity in the future to coordinate across the region to develop some common metrics and reporting practices that will allow us to track regional and even national impact. We have some way to go to accomplish that, obviously; but the convergence of technology and software is definitely creating an opportunity for us to tell our story on a regional and even national level. The land-grant system that we are a part of is a national system, and having a better way to demonstrate and communicate the benefits of that national scale and capacity would be a great thing. ■

INSIDE SCOOP

2. Bug Bash on Main
3. CALL Program
4. EFNEP Team at National Conference
5. Food Preservation Specialist Team Training
6. Tech Corner
7. Interns 'Get Real'...And much more!

Bug Bash on Main

The Mississippi County Extension Office helped host Bug Bash on Main, an event that drew 350-400 people to learn about insects and agriculture.

Extension partnered with Osceola Main Street, which received a grant from Main Street America for its Science

Discovery on Main Street program. Osceola was one of seven cities in the U.S. that received this grant. Osceola Main Street asked Extension to provide an Insect and Agriculture Science Day to fulfill parts of its grant.

All Mississippi County agents hosted stations during the event on

July 16. 4-H Agent Kamella Neeley presented a local bug program. FCS agent Jane Hermerding offered locally grown foods tastings while sharing about the foods' insect pests. Ag agents Jessica Fulgham and Alan Beach led insect catches and identifications.

Other attendees included Extension entomologist Glenn Studebaker and Austin Jones, a UA entomology instructor, widely known as the Bug Guy, who brought his Ento-Roadshow Trailer. Attendees enjoyed grasshopper jump-offs, roach races, cocoon wraps, bug crafts and a butterfly release. ■



Mississippi county 4-H agent Kamella Neeley and U of A Entomologist, The Bug Guy, Dr. Austin Jones doing the roach races for attending kids.



Mississippi County FCS Agent Jane Hermerding and Lee County Ag Agent Katie Huff serving up locally grown food tastings (watermelon, sweet corn and edamame) for event goers.

Newer Agent Training: Trustworthy Leadership

Fourteen county Extension agents participated in Newer Agent Training: *Trustworthy Leadership*, held July 15 at the Conway County Extension Office. This event kicked off a new series of Extension agent training sessions focused on the ICARE UADA values. As the inaugural session, this event highlighted the importance of integrity for UADA representatives.

The day began with Rebecca Simon leading participants in a discussion of recent successes, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. By sharing experiences and insights, agents strengthened relationships and built camaraderie with colleagues from across the state. Steve Siegelin facilitated a "Nuclear Safety" team exercise designed to strengthen trust, communication and collaboration. Participants worked together to solve complex problems while navigating

limited information and relying on one another to achieve success.

Simon and Siegelin then guided a discussion on the practical application of integrity within Extension. The conversation encouraged open dialogue, clarified expectations and explored ways agents can demonstrate integrity while serving Arkansas communities.

In the afternoon, Doug Whatley challenged participants with a team-based consequence mapping scenario that required them to make difficult decisions about allocating limited resources while maintaining public trust. The exercise prompted thoughtful discussion about ethical leadership, transparency and balancing competing community needs. The next Newer Agent Training will be Sept. 2 at the White County Extension Office. ■

CALL Program

The 2026 CALL Program wrapped up with a five-day industry tour through Missouri and Kentucky. This tour provides senior 4-H'ers the opportunity to visit industry-leading businesses, explore animal science career fields, cultivate professional networks, and develop career-readiness skills. The 2026 CALL Tour was held June 29 through July 3. This tour kicked off with a Lunch & Learn with Bumpers College faculty and staff and featured stops at Joplin Regional Stockyards, American Hereford Association, University of Missouri, Hermann Wurst Haus, Beshar Farms, Bayer Crop Sciences, Pleasant Hill Farms, Chaney's Dairy Barn, and Premier Club Goats.

The 22 selected members of the program attended leadership training in January, engaged with program activities through the spring, and wrapped up their

time in the program with the CALL Tour. Senior 4-H members active in livestock and leadership programs can apply for the next class by submitting a resume, cover letter, short essays, and completing a knowledge pre-test and interview. 2027 CALL Program applications will open Sept. 1 in ZSuite. ■



The 2026 CALL Tour at the American Hereford Association.



Lonoke County 4-H Members Practice

Cooking, Crafting & Gardening

Lonoke County 4-H had a busy summer with three exciting day camps that gave youth hands-on learning experiences.

Fun with Food Camp was a huge success, filling so quickly that a second session was added. Campers created fun, summer-themed foods, including Flip Flop Sandwiches, Kiwi Turtles, Strawberry Orange Octopi, candy "hot dogs" and "sushi," fish-shaped Moon Pie treats, and ocean-themed Jell-O cups. They also made strawberry-banana smoothies using the Smoothie Bike.



Benjamin, examining his plant leaves with his magnifying loop.

Crafty Creations Camp was equally popular, requiring a second session to accommodate demand. Participants completed seven fair-ready projects, including

pom-pom frames, button dragonflies, wooden owl ornaments, craft stick and straw wall hangings, tape-resist painted canvases, and stuffed caterpillars.

In partnership with the Lonoke County Master Gardeners, Green Thumb Camp introduced youth to gardening through hands-on activities.

Campers made mini herb greenhouses, bird and hummingbird feeders, flowerpots, pressed flower bookmarks, and beaded butterfly crafts. They also learned about seed identification, plant care, and composting before taking home their own mini worm farm.

These camps provided fun, creative opportunities for youth to learn new skills while exploring cooking, crafting and gardening. ■



Eryn instructing campers how to paint with watercolors.

Shares Successes at National Conference

The EFNEP Little Rock Team attended the Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior (SNEB) Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., themed “*Flourishing Through Change*.” Team members participated in educational sessions focused on nutrition education and community health promotion across a variety of settings.

During the conference, EFNEP team members and program educators presented two posters highlighting



(From L to R): EFNEP team members - Katie Holland, Amy McClelland, Katie Lambe, Dr. Teresa Henson, Cynthia Martin, Cathy Love, and Jacqueline Silva.

the impact and accomplishments of Arkansas's 2025 SNAP-Ed and EFNEP programs, showcasing the team's commitment to improving the health and well-being of Arkansas families and communities. The conference provided a valuable opportunity for the team to share Arkansas's successes, learn from colleagues across the nation, and strengthen

efforts to advance nutrition education and community health. ■

ArHOP Helps Create Crosswalks in Marianna

Extension staff with the Arkansas High Obesity Program (ArHOP), which works to reduce obesity in Arkansas through improved nutrition, physical activity and community collaboration, recently established two new crosswalks at busy intersections in downtown Marianna.

Extension staff and local volunteers painted the new crosswalks in June at the intersections of Poplar and Main streets and Poplar and Mississippi streets. Marianna police directed traffic

during installation. Youth volunteers helped with the installation.

Marianna Mayor Ora Stevens and Lee County Judge Terry Sandefer were also valuable partners on the project, said Darby Waites, Extension High Obesity Program regional program associate for UADA.

ArHOP is an initiative of the Cooperative Extension Service. Funding for the crosswalk project came from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control High Obesity Program.

The crosswalk project builds on another ArHOP program in Marianna, which installed wayfinding signage in downtown Marianna in 2023.

“I hope this leads to an increase in physical activity and highlights the need for more crosswalks and safety measures to make Marianna a safer and more active community,” Waites said. Read the entire story [here](#). ■



The Arkansas High Obesity Program recently helped establish two new crosswalks in downtown Marianna at the intersections of Poplar and Main streets and Poplar and Mississippi streets.

Food Preservation Specialist Team Attends Training

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Five of the six agent specialists, along with Quad Whitson, culinary nutrition program associate, and Lida Araghi, assistant professor- nutrition and food safety, attended a three-day training at the University of Georgia in Athens, where they learned about the most recent research-based recommendations, food safety, and best practices for home food preservation.

The training covered topics such as dehydrating, canning acidic and low-acid foods, kombucha, and steam canning. New equipment and emerging trends in home food preservation were also discussed. The team is excited to incorporate the information into future trainings and workshops. ■

Blackboard Learn will be Online Courses New Home

The University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture is implementing Blackboard Learn as the new learning platform for its public online courses. Beginning January 1, 2027, Blackboard Learn will become the primary home for online learning opportunities offered to Arkansas communities, producers, businesses, and other external audiences. Internal employee training and professional development courses are not included in this transition and will move to Workday Learning on July 1, 2027.

What you need to know:

- Public online courses will move to Blackboard Learn beginning January 1, 2027.
- Internal employee training is not moving to Blackboard Learn.
- Employee onboarding, in-service training, professional development, and other staff learning programs will transition to Workday Learning on July 1, 2027.
- Project teams will work with Blackboard

implementation specialists to prepare courses, configure the learning environment, and provide support throughout the transition.

Key Dates

External Educational Programs → Blackboard Learn → January 1, 2027

Employee Training & Professional Development → Workday Learning → July 1, 2027.

Why it matters: This transition supports the Division of Agriculture's mission to serve Arkansas through education, outreach, and research while providing a modern, accessible online learning environment for the communities we serve.

Do I need to do anything now? No. There is no action required at this time. Additional information, timelines, and training opportunities will be shared as implementation progresses. ■



Tech Support Scams: Think Before You Click

Tech support scams are designed to create panic and trick people into giving away access to their computers, accounts, or personal information. Scammers may use fake pop-up warnings, phone calls, emails, or text messages claiming that your device is infected or that your account has been compromised. Their goal is to convince you to provide passwords, share multi-factor authentication (MFA) codes, install software, make a payment, or allow remote access to your computer.

Watch for These Warning Signs

- Unsolicited calls or messages about a computer problem.
- Urgent requests to act immediately.
- Requests for passwords or MFA codes.
- Demands for payment to fix an issue.
- Pop-ups telling you to call a support number.
- Requests to install remote access software.

Remember: Legitimate IT staff will not ask for your password or MFA code. What should you do?

If you receive a suspicious call, email, text, or pop-up:

- Do not click links or call phone numbers provided in the message.

- Do not grant remote access to your device.
- Close the browser window or restart your computer if needed.
- Contact the IT Help Desk using known, trusted contact information.
- Report the incident to UADA IT Security.

If you think you may have fallen victim to a scam, contact the IT Help Desk immediately. Quick reporting can help protect your account, your device, and UADA data.

Zoom Pro Tip

Introducing the New Zoom Web Experience

The Zoom web portal has been updated to the [new Zoom web experience](#), as of Aug. 26. This update unifies the online interface to help users access features faster and manage settings more efficiently.

Hump Day Hacks

Hump Day Hack resources can be found on the [Hump Day Hacks Resource page](#) in Team Dynamix. July's hacks included copying only visible cells in Excel, tips on table accessibility in Microsoft products, tips on using TDX for IT services, and the push-to-talk button in Zoom. See you at the next Hump Day Hacks on the fourth Wednesday of the month! Hacks on the fourth Wednesday of the month! ■

2026 TECH TUESDAYS WEBINARS

Have you missed any past Tech Tuesday webinars or want to join future webinars? Check out the recordings and other resources on the [Tech Tuesday Blog page](#). More Tech Tuesday topics coming soon! Did you miss August's UADA to UARK Microsoft Migration Project webinar? Check out the recording and [resources](#).



Action Plan Report



The Office of Organizational Accountability and Evaluation will offer two Action Plan Report training sessions in September. An Action Plan Report in PEARS is a strategic document that outlines your programming goals, intended outcomes, and planned activities for a reporting period. Action plans connect your situation assessment to measurable outcomes and serve as the foundation for action plan reports. Action Plan Reports are where indicators are reported. The training sessions will be Sept. 15 from 2-3 p.m. and Sept. 22 from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. Four Q & A sessions (one for each program area) will be scheduled later. Watch your email for more information. ■

Interns 'Get Real'

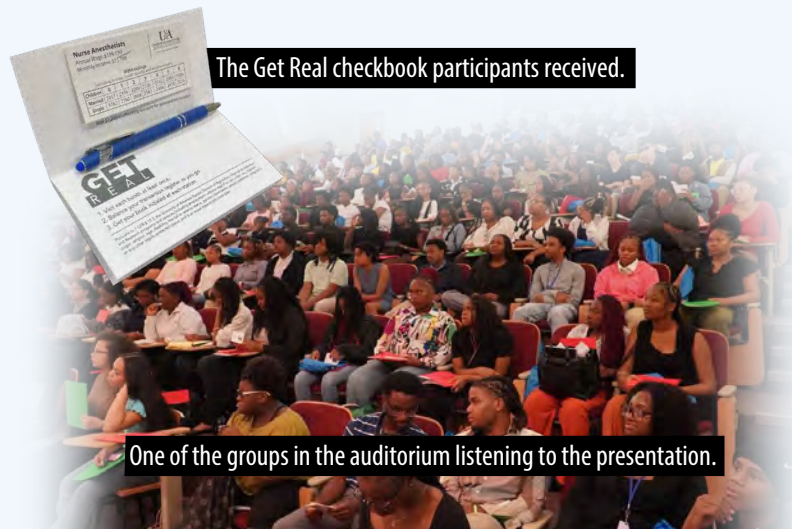
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On July 9, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock was a hub for learning, laughter and decision-making as more than 480 interns in the City of Little Rock's Summer Youth Employment Opportunity Program participated in Extension's "Get Real" financial simulation. The event challenged youth to step into adult roles and make decisions about housing, transportation, food, insurance, childcare and other everyday expenses while staying within a realistic budget.

Participants interacted with community partners, navigated unexpected financial scenarios, and discovered how quickly expenses can add up when balancing competing priorities. The interns compared budgets, adjusted spending plans, and reflected on how their choices affected their financial outcomes. More than a budgeting exercise, the event encouraged participants to think about future careers, family goals, and long-term financial well-being.

The program's success was made possible by a collaborative community effort. Volunteers from the

Central Arkansas Library System's *Be Mighty* program, Arkansas Securities Department, Get Loud Arkansas, the Little Rock Fire Department, Teen Health Arkansas, First Security Bank, City of Little Rock Housing and Neighborhood Programs Department, and the city's Office of Financial Empowerment helped lead stations and share their expertise, creating an engaging experience that equipped youth with practical financial skills for the future. ■



The Get Real checkbook participants received.

One of the groups in the auditorium listening to the presentation.

Extension's Hendrix Featured on Arkansas TV

Dr. Laura Hendrix, professor and extension personal finance expert for UADA, was one of five financial experts featured recently on the television program Arkansas Week.

Arkansas TV invited Hendrix to participate in a panel discussion for a program on Building Financial Confidence to guide viewers through every stage of financial life.



Laura Hendrix, professor of personal finance & consumer sciences, appeared on the show Arkansas Week on Arkansas TV with host Chris Kane. The title of the segment was Building Financial Confidence.

Host Chris Kane and the five financial experts discussed building a strong financial foundation, protecting finances, and building lasting financial confidence. Guests include Hendrix; Michelle Underwood Gass, CPA, CFP®, life planner for Paradigm Advisors; Rocklin Senavinin, CFP® for Fiduciary Wealth Management; Kathleen Lawson, executive director for Economics Arkansas; and Campbell McLaurin, deputy securities commissioner of the Arkansas Securities Department. The program was recorded July 10 and aired four times in July. Watch on the [Arkansas TV YouTube channel](#). ■

EHC Partners with Warren Library

Bradley County Extension Homemakers Clubs made more than 90 bags, quilts and reading pillows to give to children who participated in the Warren Library's summer reading program.

About 65 children participated in the summer program. Each child received a bag with items provided by the library, and a quilt or reading pillow based on the child's participation. Pillowcases and bookmarks also were included. Future plans include more partnerships between Bradley County EHC and the Warren Library. Read more [here](#). ■



Alayne Zimmerly, longtime EHC member, helps a child from the summer reading program select a quilt.



Lonoke County 4-H Summer Camps

'Make It Mondays'

Lincoln County 4-H hosted summer camps every Monday in July. Sixteen youth ages 5-11 attended two-hour sessions throughout the month. On July 6, the campers practiced their measuring and baking skills while learning to make biscuits using four ingredients. On July 13, they preserved strawberry jam and grape jelly.

The highlight, for adults and youth alike, seemed to be removing strawberry caps with metal straws. On July 20, the youth learned some introductory sewing machine

skills by sewing, stuffing and finishing bandana pillows. The final Monday put those sewing skills to the test by introducing pattern tracing, fabric cutting, ironing and machine sewing to create small tote bags. These camps brought youth together with awesome adult volunteers for memorable "Learn by Doing" activities! ■



Campers measure sugar to add to the boiling grape juice and pectin.

Powerful Tools for Caregivers Graduation Day

Graduation day marked an exciting milestone for participants in the six-week *Powerful Tools for Caregivers* program. Throughout the course, caregivers gained practical skills, helpful resources, and strategies to better care for their loved ones while prioritizing their own health and well-being.

Each week, participants developed personalized action plans that encouraged small, meaningful self-care goals. It was inspiring to watch their creativity, commitment, and confidence grow as they put those plans into practice and discovered new ways to manage the challenges of caregiving.

The group built meaningful friendships and a strong support network by sharing experiences, offering encouragement, and celebrating one another's successes. These connections will provide support long after the program has ended.

Participants left feeling empowered, encouraged, and equipped with the tools to continue caring for themselves while providing the best possible care for others. Their dedication to personal growth and self-care is a testament to the importance of investing in caregivers as they support family members and friends. ■



4-H Day Camps

Montgomery County 4-H members spent time exploring their communities, cooking and painting during summer day camps. Throughout the summer, youth explored local history with visits to Old Norman High School, the Norman Library, and the Heritage House Museum of Montgomery County. They enjoyed guided tours, participated in a

scavenger hunt, and shared picnic lunches while learning more about their community.

Campers also developed cooking skills by preparing Dutch oven peach cobbler and homemade ice cream before spending the afternoon swimming and enjoying fellowship at Big Fir.

The summer concluded with a special art workshop celebrating America's 250th anniversary. Each participant created a patriotic painting showcasing their creativity and artistic talents, followed by a pizza party to celebrate a successful summer. ■



Campers learned campside cooking skills.

EHC Cooking Up Something Good

Saline County Extension Homemakers enjoyed a productive and fun-filled day as they wrapped up annual business and began kitchen preparations for the Saline County Fair.

The first task of the day was making dough for their famous homemade dumplings. Prepared completely from scratch using a treasured recipe, the dough required plenty of mixing, kneading and rolling, providing quite the upper-body workout! It was easy to joke that the day doubled as an Extension Get Fit class.

While the work was important, the fellowship made the day even more meaningful. Between preparing dumplings, members shared stories, laughed together, exchanged ideas, and proudly showed photos of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The gathering served as a reminder that Extension Homemakers is about much more than completing projects. It is about building friendships, strengthening communities, preserving traditions, and supporting one another. ■



Saline County EH Members and FCS Agent rolling dough.

ArHOP's Vivian Okanume Promotes, Supports Arkansas

Breastfeeding Month

Arkansas High Obesity Program (ArHOP) policy, systems and environmental change efforts are underway to help early care and education centers become breastfeeding-friendly. Vivian Okanume, extension program associate, took a big first step to protect, promote and support breastfeeding by successfully getting a proclamation signed by Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders declaring August as "Arkansas Breastfeeding Month." ■



Vivian Okanume



Makena Can Cook



It is well known in Union County 4-H that Makena S. can cook! Makena has been competing in Dairy Foods and Rice is Nice in Union County for several years. Each year, she enters a party dish and a main dish for Dairy Foods, along with a main dish for Rice is Nice. Over the years, Makena has been successful and looks forward to hearing if one of her recipes was selected to advance to the state contest.

This year, she finally received the exciting news she had been waiting for: her recipe was chosen! For the party dish category of Dairy Foods, Makena prepared a cannoli pie. Her hard work and dedication paid off, earning her third place overall in the Party Dish category. This accomplishment is a wonderful reflection of Makena's commitment to 4-H, her love of cooking, and the skills she has developed through years of participation. ■



Perry County

4-H Summer Workshops – Fun and Educational

Perry County 4-H offered a series of summer workshops to help youth learn various skills – from making healthy food choices to camping safety.



Campers enjoying the campfire snack workshop.

At one workshop, youth learned healthy eating habits by exploring different food groups, making nutritious snack choices, and understanding how the foods we eat help support strong, healthy bodies. At another, they explored the

world of color by incorporating a variety of colorful foods into meals and snacks can support healthy eating habits and overall wellness.



4-H member creates a pinecone bird feeder.

The youth also built birdhouses while learning about various bird species and how birds help with pollination, seed dispersal, and natural insect control. At a Campfire Snack workshop, participants learned essential camping safety practices and made

campfire-style sandwiches, lemonade shake-ups, and walking desserts. ■



Youth participants learned the importance of healthy eating habits.



LEADERSHIP LOG

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LeadAR Class 21 traveled to Stuttgart for a two-day seminar exploring agriculture and natural resources that help drive Arkansas's economy. Through hands-on site visits and conversations with local leaders, class members gained a deeper understanding of the innovation, stewardship, and community leadership shaping the Arkansas Delta. The following is what the participants learned.

Day One: LeadAR Class 21 – Stewarding Arkansas' Rice, Water, Agriculture, and Natural Resources by Vernice Nazare King, founder, PlaceForResources. Read more and see photos [here](#).

Day Two: From the Dirt to the Table: A Newfound Appreciation for Arkansas Farmers by Vivian Brittenum, director of business services, Central Arkansas Planning and Development District. Read more and see photos [here](#).

Cultivating Leadership with Extension

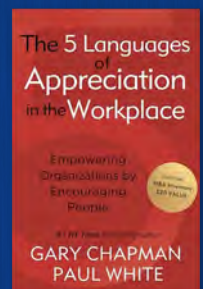
A simple “thank you” can make a difference in the workplace, but only when it is communicated in a way

that feels meaningful to the recipient.

During a recent Cultivating Leadership with Extension webinar, Dave Close of the University of Tennessee reviewed *The Five Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace* by Gary Chapman and Paul White. His presentation encouraged Extension professionals and other workplace leaders to become more intentional about how they recognize, encourage, and support their colleagues. Read details [here](#). Watch the recording [here](#).

Ag-tech Career Exploration (ACE)

The Ag-tech Career Exploration (ACE) program introduces Arkansas high school students to careers in agriculture, technology, and related industries through hands-on learning, industry visits, leadership development, and educational travel experiences. Applications for the 2027 ACE program will open Sept. 1, 2026, and close Oct. 30, 2026. Find details [here](#). ■



UADA Food Safety

The University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture had a strong presence at the International Association for Food Protection (IAFP) annual Meeting in New Orleans, where they demonstrated leadership in food safety research, Extension, and professional service. Faculty participants included Drs. Kristen Gibson, Amanda Philyaw Perez, Jennifer Acuff, Tomi Obe, Bill Potter, Sungil Ferreira and Lida Araghi.

Division faculty organized and moderated technical sessions, served in seven professional leadership roles, and delivered seven oral presentations and 12 posters representing collaborative state and national research and Extension efforts with colleagues and students. Their work highlighted poultry processing, produce safety, home and cottage food businesses, low-moisture food safety, alternative beverages, environmental monitoring, microbial



risk assessment, sustainability, and workforce development.

Dr. Kristen Gibson served on the IAFP Program Committee. Dr. Amanda Philyaw Perez served on the Fruit and Vegetable Safety and Quality Professional Development Group. Dr. Sungil Ferreira co-organized and moderat-

ed a symposium on food safety in alternative beverages. Dr. Jennifer Acuff represented the Arkansas Association for Food Protection. Dr. Bill Potter met with food safety and quality assurance leaders from industry to identify emerging workforce and training priorities while also participating in the Meat and Poultry Safety and Quality PDG and the Food Hygiene and Sanitation PDG. Dr. Tomi Obe's publications were highlighted in the Water Safety and Quality PDG, and one of her graduate students presented a flash talk featuring the team's most recent publication. ■

In Memory of Keith Harris

Soybean Science

The Soybean Science Challenge (SSC) hosted an educational booth at the Association for Career and Technical Education at Saline County and Technical Campus in Benton on July 20-21.

The late SSC Coordinator Keith Harris, and SSC Curriculum Specialist Diedre Young handed out soybean promotional items, lesson plans, resource guides and educational brochures to over 300 participants. Harris and Young encouraged attendees to tell teachers to use soybeans in classroom research by accessing the free resources available on Extension's 'soy-whatsup' website.



on July 23. This Blue Letter is our memorial to an amazing coordinator, a friend to those who needed an ear, and a coworker with a quirky sense of humor.



Late SSC Coordinator Keith Harris at the ACTE Conference in Benton.

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 info, contact Dr. Julie Robinson, jrobinson@uada.edu

As many of you know, Keith passed away unexpectedly or Diedre Young, dyoung@uada.edu ■

Slow Down Forrest City Campaign



Arkansas High Obesity Prevention Project (ARHOP) partnered with the City of Forrest City in assessing and painting speedbumps.

Extension's Arkansas High Obesity Prevention Project (ARHOP) partnered with the City of Forrest City to assess and paint more than 50 speed bumps.

The Slow Down Forrest City campaign is part of one of the ARHOPs focus areas related to physical activity. The other two areas are nutrition and coalition building. For this project, program staff focused on calming traffic so that residents can get to their everyday destinations safely. ■

ArHOP
Arkansas High Obesity Prevention Project



Saline County

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4-H'ers Jam Out

Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) agents from Saline and Pulaski counties partnered with the Saline County Library in Benton to teach 4-H'ers how to safely make and can peach jam.

During the workshop, participants prepared regular and reduced-sugar peach jam to take home. They also sampled premade peach jam and a nectarine-pineapple spread while learning safe food preservation techniques.



research-based recipes to prevent foodborne illness caused by improper canning.

Participants learned about safely canning high-acid foods and sweet spreads, recommended canning equipment, proper processing and cooling times, foods that can be safely canned, and the FAT TOM acronym, which explains the conditions that promote

The class emphasized the importance of following bacterial growth. ■

St. Francis County



4-H Members Stay Busy

Little Citizens, Big Community Cloverbud Camp

The St. Francis County 4-H Club recently hosted its two-day Little Citizens, Big Community Cloverbud Camp, giving children ages 5-7 an opportunity to learn about the people who serve their community. The camp was open to all interested youth and provided a fun, educational experience.

The campers toured the St. Francis County Courthouse, where they learned about the day-to-day operations of county government. They met County Judge Craig Jones, Sheriff Bobby Mays, and Circuit Judge Hess. Each shared information about their responsibilities and how they serve Francis County residents.

They Cloverbuds also visited with Mayor Larry Bryant, Forrest City firefighters and police officers, and Arkansas State Trooper Mason Peoples. Campers learned about each profession and asked questions.

The Cloverbuds not only gained great appreciation for the individuals who serve their community but also formed friendships with one another. As the two-day event ended, there were smiles, hugs, and even a few tears.



St. Francis County 4-Her's visited the Forrest City Fire Department.

Marianna Soil Testing Laboratory

St. Francis County 4-H members recently toured the Marianna Soil Testing Laboratory and the Lon Mann Cotton Research Station to learn more about agriculture and career opportunities in the ag industry. During the tour, members met with several employees who shared their journey that led them to their current careers. The Soil Testing Laboratory portion of the tour demonstrated how soil samples are received, tested and analyzed. At the Lon Mann Cotton Research Station, members learned about research farming and saw farm equipment and research fields. They also learned valuable background information and history about both facilities. ■

Grants & Contracts

PROJECT TITLE	AWARD AMOUNT	PI	GRANTING AGENCY
Education, Certification, and Technical Assistance for Produce Safety and Good Agricultural Practices for Small and Beginning Fruit and Vegetable Producers	99,994	Amanda Perez	WSBZ Farms
Disaster Recovery through Community Development	66,677	Hunter Goodman	Americorps
Arkansas Wheat Research Verification Program	14,500	Jason Kelley	Wheat Promotion Board
Pest Management Using Recommended Wheat Varieties	5,764	Jason Kelley	Wheat Promotion Board
CT NAH4HSI: Developing the next generation of nutrition, agriculture, and health professional through Connecticut Hispanic-serving Institutions	30,821	Jeantyl Norze	University of Connecticut
Expanding Potential Market Demand for and Access to Whole Soy Foods through Nutrition Education	6,500	Leigh Ann Bullington	Mid-South Soybean Board
NPTMI 2026-2027 - Arkansas Cotton Disease Predictive Tool Development	36,000	Terry Spurlock	USDA Agricultural Research Service
Pest Management Using Recommended Wheat Varieties	10,936	Terry Spurlock	Wheat Promotion Board
NPTMI 2026-2027 - Establishing Infra Corn	50,000	Travis Faske	USDA Agricultural Research Service
TOTAL NEW AWARDS FOR JULY: \$321,192			

New Pesticide Applicator Training Email

We are excited to share that we now have a dedicated email address for all things Pesticide Applicator Training (PAT): pat@uada.edu. Feel free to send your PAT-related questions and training fee transfer documents to this address. We would also appreciate it if you could share this email with anyone who may need information about pesticide applicator training. ■

Personnel Changes

Welcome Aboard:

Kate Turner – Extension Plant Pathologist - Plant Pathology, Rice Research & Extension Center

Allison Cordell – Administrative Specialist III - Family & Consumer Science, LRSO

Davin Ryles – Arkansas APEX Accelerator Procurement Counselor - Community, Professional, & Economic Development, LRSO

JT Cafferty – Program Technician - Crop Soil & Environmental Science, LRSO

Jimmie Tucker – County Extension Agent - Staff Chair/Agriculture - Columbia County

Tina Hunter – Deputy Program Manager - Arkansas APEX Accelerator - Community, Professional, & Economic Development, LRSO

Bryan Rusher – Director of Facilities Management, LRSO

Shanna Darling-Acton – County Extension Agent - 4-H, Faulkner County

Farewell to:

Breanna Wade – Program Associate - 4-H & Youth Development - Volunteer and Staff Development, LRSO

Karen Phillips – 4-H Program Assistant, Madison County

Belle Craig – County Extension Agent - 4-H, Yell County

