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## BLUE LETTER

February 2022

No. 3838



FROM THE DIRECTOR

# Valuable Resource

I am grateful this spring that COVID numbers in Arkansas have declined. Along with this decline, COVID restrictions that have been in place for over 2 years during the pandemic have been relaxed or eliminated over the past month. This includes our mask requirement at the Little Rock State Office as well as restrictions on travel, meeting sizes and the elimination of contact tracing. I want to again thank all my Extension colleagues for their efforts during this time. I want to specifically mention Human Resources Director Bridget Fortenberry. She had the daunting task of trying to prevent the spread of this virus during work- and work-related events. This has not been an easy and sometime not popular job, but her and her teams' efforts have undoubtedly kept us safer during this time as well as keeping us in compliance with state and federal mandates.

Our most valuable resource in Extension is our people. In the past two years, we have seen a large turnover in jobs. This is especially true out in our more rural counties. These are the counties that probably need us the most, so this is a concern to me. One of the measures we have taken that hopefully will help us identify new potential county agents is our new summer intern program. District Director Carla Due has taken a leadership role on this program along with the other District Directors Jerry Clemons and Kevin Lawson. We have now identified 11 interns for our inaugural class in the summer of 2022. I am excited about this investment in our future.

We have a great summer planned for these interns and several of you will play a role in making it a success.

A major effort for my office in 2022 will be to fill vacant Extension faculty positions. We are in the process of filling our urban entomology and non-row crop weed science positions. In addition, there are plans for two positions in Animal Science as well as another agent educator position with a focus on beef cattle. We have had key retirements in other areas as well including two positions in Community Professional & Economic Development, and we have a nutrition position open in Family and Consumer Sciences. My focus will be on finding faculty that understand the Extension mission and will support county programs.

Many of you have asked about salary programs; I am hopeful that the Division will have something to announce soon. More details on this to come, but know that administration values your efforts and understands the financial challenges and opportunities that are out there for our employees. My goal is to make Extension more competitive in this area every chance I get. I am also pleased that budgetarily we can do this as well as look at filling all vacant positions.

I know that many of you have wrapped up meeting season and are heading into your programmatic year. I personally cannot shake the feeling that my protocols are not ready and that I need to find chemical and seed. Old habits are hard to break. I wish all of you a successful spring season and good luck with all your efforts. ■

## INSIDE SCOOP

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4. Leadership Log
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7. Tech Corner
8. Benefits Corner...And much more!

**U of A**  
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE  
RESEARCH & EXTENSION  
University of Arkansas System





# You're Invited!

## National Conference Presentation Opportunity

Extension IT is thrilled to host the 2022 National Extension Technology Conference in downtown Little Rock, June 20-23!

You are cordially invited to join us, and we encourage you to submit presentation proposals.

### But I'm not in IT. Why Would I Attend?

The NETC conference has a myriad of learning opportunities for everyone, not just IT professionals. We offer sessions on contact reporting, online learning and courses, customer/client support and creating innovative educational materials for county programs. You can learn what other extension services are doing to solve real-world (and extension-specific) problems. We promise there WILL be a session for you! Register now and join us!

### I'm not a "Tech Person." What Could I Present?

Our tracks are diverse and extend outside of traditional IT topics. We've had agents, specialists, and support personnel present over the years, and we'd love to feature Arkansas-based presentations and show off our talented Extension colleagues! Check out our list of tracks below and submit a presentation proposal today!

- Client Support
- Career Development
- Systems & Infrastructure
- Web & Social Media
- Teaching & Learning
- IT Management
- Applying Technology
- Innovation ■

# Virtual and Interactive Best Care

In 2022 Benton, Madison and Washington counties presented 10 hours of Best Care Professional Development training for Early Childhood Educators through interactive Zoom sessions. Classes led by Trudy McManus, Caramie Edwards and Anna Goff were held on Jan. 22 and Feb. 5, with a total of 150 participants.

For the second year, there was a significant increase of participation from attendees using the chat, audio and poll features. Questions were answered either by the moderator or the agent leading the lesson, and participants shared suggestions with each other on the topics.

Here are a few quotes from recent evaluations:

**"I enjoyed it very much. It provided lots of great ideas and helpful information. Thank you!"**



Top left - Caramie Edwards (Madison Co.), top right - Anna Goff (Washington Co.), bottom - Trudy McManus (Benton Co.)

**"I really enjoy being able to do zoom lessons. You all did a great job."**

**"Very good and informative class. Thank you for all your hard work and all you do!" ■**

# New Livestock & Forestry Research Station Director

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## Aims to Expand, Advance Research Programs

Shane Gadberry said the Livestock and Forestry and Research Station is a natural fit for him to advance his work on behalf of Arkansas beef producers.

After 25 years as an extension livestock specialist for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, he has been appointed resident director of the research station near Batesville.

The Livestock and Forestry Research Station is one of six research stations operated by the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station, the research arm of the Division of Agriculture. The division also operates five research and extension centers, numerous other research sites and extension offices in all 75 Arkansas counties.

He earned bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in animal science at the University of Arkansas. He has been an extension beef cattle specialist since 1997, was promoted to assistant professor in 2004, associate professor in 2010 and to full professor in 2017.

"We are thrilled to attract Dr. Gadberry to this new role," said Jean-François Meullenet, senior associate vice president for agriculture-research and director of the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station. "Shane has done a lot of work on the Livestock and Forestry Research Station over the years, and he was an obvious choice to fill this position."

I know Don Hubbell is leaving the station in great shape and I look forward to Dr. Gadberry's leadership."

"Dr. Gadberry brings a wealth of experience to the station at Batesville," said Nathan McKinney, associate vice president for agriculture-research and assistant director of the Agricultural Experiment Station. "I am confident that our staff and stakeholders will be very happy with his leadership."

Gadberry said his experiences at the Batesville station over the years have convinced him that it has the infrastructure to expand research. "The station provides an abundance of resources that can support our research faculty as they ask the relevant questions, design a program and find answers that will benefit Arkansas beef producers," he said.

The Livestock and Forestry Research Station has 3,042 acres, including a 1,250-acre beef cattle unit. Research programs have focused on developing and identifying fescue tolerant beef cattle using DNA mapping and epigenetics.

"The work is about advancing knowledge and growth in Arkansas' beef and forestry industries and economies," he said. ■



Shane Gadberry



## Walk Across Arkansas Spring 2022 is Here!

Starting Feb. 28, participants can register to participate in the Spring session of Walk Across Arkansas. Competition will begin March 14 and end on May 15. Join us this session to "step up" your physical activity game! We encourage Division employees to register and compete as a team as well! Remember to register using a personal email instead of your active directory email. Register online on at: [walk.uada.edu](http://walk.uada.edu). See you soon! For any questions, please contact [hwingo@uada.edu](mailto:hwingo@uada.edu). ■





If you are interested in applying to participate in iLEAD, the dates for the second iLEAD cohort have been set. Applications are now open. For more information or to apply, click [here](#). The deadline to apply is midnight on Friday, April 29, 2022.

#### iLEAD Cohort II 2022-2023 Schedule:

- Virtual – July 15, 2022
- Face-to-Face – August 17, 18, & 19, 2022
- Virtual – September 16, 2022
- Face-to-Face – October 13 & 14, 2022
- Virtual – November 18, 2022
- Face-to-Face – December 15 & 16, 2022
- Virtual – January 20, 2023
- Face-to-Face – February 16 & 17, 2023
- Virtual – March 17, 2023
- Face-to-Face – April 20 & 21, 2023
- Virtual – May 19, 2023
- Face-to-Face – June 15 & 16, 2023

#### iLEAD Cohort One Learns About Their Conflict Management Styles

What is your conflict management style? iLEAD participants explored the five styles outlined in the Thomas-Kilmann assessment in their January virtual session. To read the entire article click [here](#).

#### LeadAR Class 19 January 2022 Session Recap

For the January session, LeadAR Class 19 pivoted from a scheduled face-to-face session on public policy and media to a virtual session about the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act and combating misinformation. Read the entire article [here](#).

#### Most People Think they are Self-Aware, but few Actually are

What is emotional intelligence? Dr. Jeff King, associate professor and co-chair of The Ohio State University Leadership Center, shared his insights on the topic in the January Leadership Lunch and Learn session. To read the entire article click [here](#). ■

## Accessibility Quick Tips

Who is responsible for making our content at extension accessible? All of us! Thankfully, accessibility doesn't have to be hard. The accessibility team is working to make sure we all have the training materials available to teach everyone the basics of digital accessibility, and we want your feedback!



Tell us what you would like more help with, and the best way we can give you that training. By filling out our Employee Accessibility Survey, you are helping build a more inclusive Arkansas.

Beginning Document Accessibility Training – Word, PowerPoint, & Excel, March 3, 2022.

Whether you use Word, PowerPoint, or Excel to create your content, we have training opportunities to show you the ins and outs of making your files accessible. Our accessibility team will instruct attendees on how to add metadata, image descriptions and heading levels to Microsoft documents. Each element improves accessibility and makes your content accessible to clientele with disabilities. Join our document accessibility training team on March 3 for two training opportunities: 10 a.m. (Word & PowerPoint) and 1:30 p.m. (Excel). We will record the sessions for anyone who can't participate live. ■

#### Word and PowerPoint accessibility training:

- 10 a.m. [Register](#) for Word & PowerPoint accessibility training

#### Excel Accessibility:

- 1:30 p.m. [Register](#) for Excel accessibility training



# It's Community Garden Time with the



The Soybean Science Challenge kicked off its Community Garden promotion in January with four community gardens already signed up to grow edamame soybeans.

The soybeans are donated by the Natural Soybean and Grain Alliance with seeds to be mailed from LRSO in April. Soybeans are easy to grow, a complete protein and are a welcome addition to any food dish. In order for a garden to receive soybean seeds, the garden needs to be educational or school related, 4-H based or serve the food banks or other hunger-related projects in the area in which they are planted.



and click on the “grow your own protein” icon (not the seed store icon). The icon opens directly into the fillable PDF site. Download, complete and send to [dyoung@uada.edu](mailto:dyoung@uada.edu). If you have any problems with the registration form, just contact Diedre Young and she will help you complete it.

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

Anyone whose garden fulfills the requirements and wants to plant edamame can go to [www.uaex.uada.edu/soywhatsup](http://www.uaex.uada.edu/soywhatsup)

For more information, contact Dr. Julie Robinson, [jrobinson@uada.edu](mailto:jrobinson@uada.edu) or Diedre Young [dyoung@uada.edu](mailto:dyoung@uada.edu). ■

## Food Scientist Renee Threlfall Named

# ASHS Southern Region Distinguished Researcher

Renee Threlfall, a research scientist in enology and viticulture at the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture and the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences, has been named winner of the Julian Miller Sr. Distinguished Researcher Award.



Renee Threlfall

The award is presented by the Southern Region of the American Society for Horticultural Sciences. It recognizes an outstanding record in research on one or more horticultural crops and in one or more areas of horticultural research for a period of 10 or more years.

Threlfall is a member of the faculty in the Department of Food Science in the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences. She is also a researcher and scientist with the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station, the research arm of the U of A System Division of Agriculture.

Her research and extension focuses on processing and postharvest storage of specialty crops (wine grapes, muscadine grapes, table grapes, blackberries, strawberries, peaches, hops, etc.) and value-added processing of horticultural crops. She has more than 40 refereed journal publications. To read the full article, click [here](#). ■

# American Forage & Grassland Council Meeting

Cooperative Extension Service agents and specialists attended and participated in the American Forage & Grassland Council Meeting (AFGC) in Wichita, Kansas, held Jan. 10-12, 2022.

The AFGC is an international organization made up of 20 affiliate councils in the United States and Canada with a total individual membership of about 2,500. AFGC brings together forage and grassland professionals from across the world annually to share research, best practices and to network. All agents and specialists

presented posters on forage demonstrations that they had assisted in conducting. ■



Olivia Foster, Carroll Co.



Those attending included: L to R, Terrell Davis, Pike Co.; Kenny Simon, LRSO; Cory Tyler, Fulton Co.; Cody Stroud, Sharp Co.; Danny Griffin, VanBuren Co.; Brian Haller, White Co.; Dr. John Jennings, LRSO; Olivia Foster, Carroll Co.; Kim Rowe, Hempstead Co.; and Dr. Shane Gadberry, Livestock & Forestry Station Batesville.

## SNAP-Ed Training Highlights: FCS Agent Initiatives



The SNAP-Ed Team is hosting a virtual training series focusing on planning, implementing and evaluating policy, systems and environmental (PSE) change interventions using FCS agent initiatives as examples.

At the February training, Conway County FCS Agent Shannon Autrey discussed her work with the Main Street Morrilton Farmer's Market. She advised the market managers on the process for obtaining EBT machines to accept SNAP benefits, which increases access to fresh fruits and vegetables for under-resourced families and individuals. Additionally, Autrey helps promote the market and serves on their advisory committee.

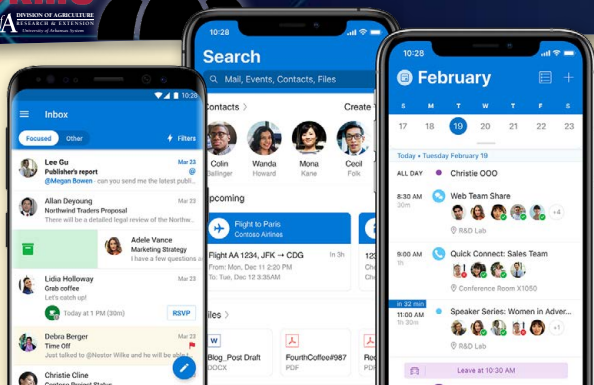
Cross County FCS Agent Millie Collins shared information about her Parkin-ARcare food distribution program. Her team provides food boxes, along with SNAP-Ed approved recipes, to approximately 80 community members each month. Prior to COVID restrictions, they also offered food demonstrations and taste tests and plan to continue that programming

when possible. Debbie DeRossitte, FCS Agent from Poinsett County, detailed the steps involved in turning an empty lot next to the extension office in Harrisburg into Main Street Learning Park (MSLP). Through county resolutions, in-kind donations, fundraising and a lot of hard work, MSLP will provide the perfect location to hold SNAP-Ed sessions, teacher in-services, youth programs and more! ■



Jeffrey Works, CEA-Ag/4-H; Pam Pugh, Administrative Specialist III; Craig Allen, Staff Chair; Poinsett Co. Judge Randy Mills; Debbie DeRossitte, CEA-FCS/4-H; Harrisburg Mayor Justin Kimble. Standing on the future site of Main Street Learning Park beside the Extension office in Poinsett Co.





## Outlook Required

If you're using your phone's default mail app or a third-party email app like Apple mail, Thunderbird, etc., it's time to switch!

This change was originally scheduled for March 1 but for security reasons, we moved the date up.

To protect institutional and personal data, Microsoft Outlook will be required to access UADA email and calendar. This policy began Monday, Feb. 21.

The Outlook app is available for download at [owa.UADA.edu](http://owa.UADA.edu) and for mobile devices in the Apple App Store or Google Play Store. Log in with your @UADA.edu email address and password. If prompted, select Office 365.

Outlook Online is also available at [owa.UADA.edu](http://owa.UADA.edu) to securely access your UADA email and calendar from any web browser. This change is being implemented to increase the security of institutional and personal data for our employees. With the rise of Extension email on personal devices, security measures provided by Outlook are necessary. These include, but are not limited to, the enforcement of multi-factor authentication, ability to secure email data if the device is lost or stolen, and email encryption.

In addition to increased security, Outlook allows you to manage both your UADA email and calendar from one app and is completely integrated with the Office 365 suite, including OneDrive and Teams (see [Outlook tips and tricks you should know](#)).

If you have questions, need help [setting up Outlook](#), or experience any login issues, please contact your IT Support:

**CES Call Center**

**E-Mail:** [callcenter@uada.edu](mailto:callcenter@uada.edu)

**Local (501) 671-2255, Toll Free: (866) 779-3375**

**Hours: Monday thru Friday**

**7:00 AM to 5:30 PM**

**<https://support.uada.edu>**

**AES Call Center**

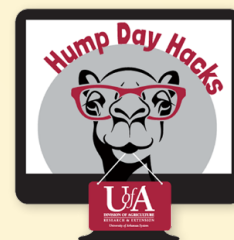
**E-Mail:** [agritech@uark.edu](mailto:agritech@uark.edu)

**Phone: Local (479) 575-3420**

**Hours: Monday thru Friday**

**8:00 AM to 5:00 PM**

**<https://agritech.uark.edu>**



**NEWLY UPDATED:**

## Hump Day Hacks Resource Page

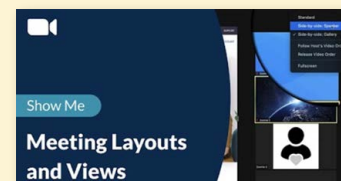
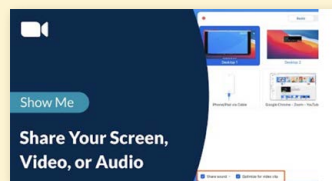
Keep your tech skills sharp. Check out the newly updated resource pages for Hump Day Hacks: <https://humpdayhacks.uada.edu>.

**ZOOM QUICK REFERENCE**

## "Show Me" Videos

Share Your Screen, Video, or Audio (3.5 minutes)

Customizing Zoom Meeting Layouts and Views (3 minutes)



Don't miss our next Social Skills training March 17 at 9:00 a.m. where Melissa Johnson and Amy Cole will be discussing "Audience" for UADA Social Media!

[Register and check out past Social Skills sessions.](#)

## 2022 TECH TUESDAYS WEBINARS

**Register and join us for the March 8, 2022**

**Tech Tuesday "Nearpod" webinar.** Did you miss February Tech Tuesday [Qualtrics vs Microsoft Forms](#)? Check out the recording and resources.



# Benefits Corner

Do you want to be rewarded for taking the right steps toward a healthy pregnancy and delivery? When you join the UMR Maternity CARE program, you'll have the opportunity to earn a \$300 reward card plus a free pregnancy or infant care book of your choice. You'll also get access to coaching and educational materials from an OB-GYN nurse via phone calls and the CARE app, powered by Vivify Health.

**To qualify for a reward card, you must:**

- Enroll in first or second trimester.
- Remain engaged in the program during the entire pregnancy.
- Complete the post-partum call and survey.

Don't miss out on \$300 for giving your baby a healthy start.

Call 1-844-604-6244 OR scan the QR code to complete the enrollment form online. ■

## Grants and Contracts

PROJECT TITLE	AWARD AMOUNT	PI	GRANTING AGENCY
Model State Program Training	11,111	Amanda L McWhirt	University of Georgia
Model State Program - Program Assistant Grant	33,332	Amanda L McWhirt	University of Georgia
Southern Center for Food Safety	18,000	Amanda Philyaw Perez	National Institute of Food & Agriculture
Improving Crop Residue Burning and Management Recommendations in the Arkansas Delta Region - Amendment	16,347	Jarrod Hardke	Arkansas State University
Rice Breeding	122,550	Jarrod Hardke	Nutrien Dyna-Gro Rice Breeding
Distance Learning and Telemedicine	571,456	Karen Watts DiCicco	US Department of Agriculture
Faulkner County Food Preservation Classes	1,000	Mary Beth Groce	Walmart, Inc.
<b>TOTAL AWARDS FOR JANUARY 2022: \$773,796</b>			

## Personnel Changes

### Welcome Aboard:

Leslie Middleton – Executive Assistant, Development Office, Little Rock  
 Cody Tucker – Administrative Specialist II, 4-H & Youth Development, Little Rock  
 Austyn Wright – Program Technician - Crop Soil & Environmental Science, Rice Research Extension Center  
 LaTeshia Blevins – County Extension Agent - Family & Consumer Science/4-H, Baxter County

### Farewell to:

Robert L Goodson – County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Phillips County  
 Dianna L Bowen – County Extension Agent - Family & Consumer Science, Lonoke County  
 Keiddy Urrea-Morawicki – Instructor - Plant Health Clinic, Fayetteville  
 Clay Gibson – County Extension Agent - Staff Chair, Chicot County  
 Carlie Bothum – County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Howard County  
 Grant Tyler Hampton – Program Associate - Rice Agronomy, Rice Research Extension Center

