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BLUE LETTER

February 2024

No. 3862



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Revitalized

This month, I had the opportunity to attend the Southern Agricultural Economics Association (SAEA) annual meeting in Atlanta. This meeting is part of the larger Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists (SAAS) group that includes most of our agricultural disciplines. When I was a new Extension specialist, all the old hands that I worked with referred to this meeting as the Southern Ag Workers meeting, even though it hadn't been officially called that in years; and pretty much everyone from the agriculture side of the land-grant world in the Southern region participated. I have been a more-or-less regular attendee at this event since the late-1990s. While the disciplinary coverage of SAAS is not quite as broad as it was then, the SAAS event is still a great place to network with colleagues and to catch up on the issues and challenges common to the region across all of the land-grant mission areas.

One of the more gratifying aspects of attending the SAEA annual meeting in recent years has been seeing how Extension around the region has been revitalized by the hiring of the latest generation of Extension professionals. Most of the region's institutions – including the University of Arkansas, I am happy to say – have added a significant number of talented young agricultural economists to the ranks of their Extension faculty. The impact they are having, not just on their home institutions but on the profession as a whole, is evident at events like SAEA. I know this same phenomenon is true in other disciplines as well. I bring this up to make one important point: in our business, the only real asset we have is people. In Extension, and in higher education generally, our business is the creation and transmission of objective, research-based

knowledge. Knowledge is created and transmitted by people. Facilities and equipment are important tools, of course, but people are our only essential input.

It is exciting to see the people that we have coming into UA Extension right now. I had the great pleasure this week of welcoming our newest cohort of county agents. Steve Siegelin and the professional development team in Community, Professional and Economic Development (CPED) were offering new agent training to almost thirty new agents who joined our ranks in the past year. It was a real pleasure, not to mention a great honor, for me to welcome these new agents into the ranks of Extension professionals. These agents range from brand new college graduates to a thirty-year veteran of secondary education. All are bringing their unique talents, perspective, and enthusiasm to our work on behalf of Arkansas stakeholders.

At the same time our CPED crew was training new agents at the 4-H Center, District Directors, Carla Due and Jerry Clemons, were interviewing prospective interns for the 2024 internship cycle. We had an exceptional pool of internship applicants this year. Carla and Jerry had the difficult job of winnowing this pool down to about 15 interns who will join us this summer. The strong internship candidate pool that we had this year is testament to the success of that important program. This is easily one of the best programs that I have ever seen for introducing well-qualified college students to the rewarding career opportunities in Cooperative Extension. I am confident that we can look forward to more than a few of these interns eventually showing up in a new agent training as full time Extension employees. ■

INSIDE SCOOP

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4. Coaching Circles
5. Leadership Log
6. Tech Corner
7. Soybean Science
- ...And much more!

Paul Noland

Graduate Student Awards Competition

Department of Animal Science master and doctoral degree candidates presented their research at the 2024 Paul Noland Graduate Student Awards Competition on Jan. 11. The competition judges students in three areas: abstract, oral presentation and curriculum vitae. The winners are awarded \$750 travel funds for regional and national research conventions.

Samantha Howe (Ph.D.) and Paul Dahunsi (M.S.) won the 2024 Dr. Paul Noland Graduate Student Award. Howe presented “Identification of a bovine-derived next-generation probiotic for bovine respiratory disease.” Dahunsi discussed “Impact of product

size and subsequent consumer freezing on color, tenderness, and water-holding capacity of different beef muscles”. Both will be recognized during the department’s awards banquet.

The award commemorates the legacy of Dr. Paul R. Noland, an emeritus professor of animal science at the University of Arkansas. Noland served as head of the Department of Animal Science from 1988 until his retirement in 1994. He joined the faculty in 1951 after receiving his doctoral degree from Cornell University. Dr. Noland passed in 2015 at age 91. Brian Noland, Dr. Noland’s son attended this year’s competition. ■

Livestock Judging Team has Strong Performances

The University of Arkansas livestock judging team, coached by Dr. Bryan Kutz and assisted by graduate students Carter Culp and Ryan McDuffie, claimed third high team overall and was the champion team in the sheep and goat division at the National Western Stock Show in Denver. The team placed fourth in the beef cattle carload contest. At the Fort Worth Stock Show, the team was fourth high team overall and Reserve Champion Team in beef cattle. Next up are the Dixie Nationals in Jackson, Mississippi. ■



Livestock Judging Team: (L-R): Ryan McDuffie (grad assistant), Carson Hoth, Aaron Mahan, Emma Richards, Thomas Owings, Hannah Dozier, Tyson Kimble, Carter Culp (grad assistant), Dr. Bryan Kutz (coach)



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Support Staff Conference

March 27-28, 2024

2024 4-H National FCS Championship



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Arkansas 4-H members from Benton, Garland, Howard, Marion and Washington counties competed at the 4-H National FCS Championship & Conference in San Antonio, Texas.



Back row (L to R): Lillian S., Lowry, Taylor H., Kaylee C., Adelene W., Rebekah R. and Zella S. Front row (L to R): Natalie C., Sullivan S., Savannah R. and Lydia A.

- Marion County's Consumer Decision Making team made up of Kaylee C., Taylor H. and Rebekah R. placed 5th overall.
- Garland County sent an FCS Bowl team made up of Cadence V., Canaan H. and Lara L.
- Benton County's FCS Skill-a-thon team made up of Natalie C., Savannah R., Sullivan S. and Zella S. placed 2nd overall.
- Lara L. from Garland County competed in FCS Presentation & placed 4th overall.
- Washington County's Lydia A. competed in Fashion Revue - Purchased Dressy, placing 4th overall.
- Adelene W. from Howard County placed 4th overall in Fashion Revue - Purchased Casual.
- Benton County's Sullivan S. competed in Fashion Revue - Constructed Modified.
- Lillian S. from Benton County competed in Fashion Revue Constructed, placing 4th overall. ■

Northwest Arkansas FCS Team

Pilots New Behavior Change Nutrition Program

The Benton and Washington County FCS team (Cathy Love, Anna Goff and Trudy McManus) are offering a new behavior change curriculum called MIND Your Diet. The five-session program guides audiences through skills practice, priority setting, and facilitated group sharing to help participants adopt new eating patterns. The program introduces principles from the Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay (MIND) while delving into research findings, controversies, and gaps in knowledge regarding dementia and nutrition. The program was developed by Nutrition Specialist and Registered Dietitian Christine Sasse.



Christine Sasse

The pilot program is being conducted at the Schmieding Center for Senior Health for nine weeks. The agents piloting the program are offering extra sessions on

alternating weeks to check participant progress and offer supplemental programming to support the program goals. ■



Participants get the chance to see, feel, touch, and taste several varieties of whole grains in the whimsical "whole grain petting zoo" activity.

Coaching Circles Kicks Off



The FCS Coaching Circles are learning communities for Family and Consumer Science agents and state office technicians, associates and specialists that meet monthly to support each other on specific goals. The Early Career Coaching Circle is geared to those employed for five years or less. This group met on Jan. 10 for a workshop facilitated by Tristin Bolton (Crawford County FCS agent), Anna Goff (Washington County FCS agent), Dr. Bryan Mader (assistant professor – health), JoAnn Vann (Clark County FCS agent), and Heather Wingo (program associate – health) on how to put together an NEAFCS award application.

The Mid-Career Coaching Circle is for those who have been working 6-10 years and has a goal of recognizing and addressing symptoms of job burnout. We met on Jan. 17 to discuss the impact of work culture on burnout. Next month we will continue that discussion by exploring the identity of Extension.

The Seasoned Career Coaching Circle is for those with more than 10 years of experience and focuses on mentorship. This group met on Jan. 24 to discuss successful mentoring programs, the importance of confidentiality, and the role of mentor contracts. The impact of participation in the coaching circles will be assessed through a job embeddedness survey. ■

Evaluation and Accountability Team

Did You Know...

Extension has a new Evaluation and Accountability team?

- Dr. Jeantyl Norze, associate professor for organizational accountability & evaluation and Emily Smith, program associate of accountability and professional development

We Are Here to Support You.

Our team is dedicated to understanding needs and building capacity for Extension as it relates to evaluation and accountability. What does this mean exactly? In addition to overseeing Extension's reporting system, AIMS, and helping compile local, state and national accountability reports, our team strives to support employees, departments and programs with their own evaluative needs.

We Want to Learn from Your Experience!

To help direct our efforts, our first priority is to assess employees' experiences by gathering insights from staff, faculty, administrative leaders and others to improve and strengthen the culture of evaluation and accountability at Extension.

Currently, we are in the process gathering questions about needs, opportunities and challenges related to the [AIMS reporting process](#). By collecting common questions directly

from our reporters, we can uncover patterns and illuminate hidden problems—ones that can be easily fixed and ones that require more collaborative approaches.

Work in the Works

Below are a few samples of larger projects in the works. As we continue to build capacity and collaborate, we will update you on our progress.

- AIMS 2.0 is on track to be piloted! We are in the process of identifying testers using a random sample method.
- AIMS Online Course is also a priority for this year. A course will help answer common questions and standardize the reporting experience. We will be selecting a committee to help with the development, testing and launch.
- An Inventory of tracking and evaluation tools is also underway.

Resources & Reminders

- Reporting Deadline is the 5th of each month. Here is the login: <https://aims.uada.edu/>
- AIMS Support: is available on an ongoing basis. Contact Emily Smith at elsmith@uada.edu or 603-387-1584. ■



LEADERSHIP LOG

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iLead III Virtual Meeting - SMART EQ

The latest iLEAD seminar focused on Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and SMART goals. Read details written by Dr. Griffiths G. Atungulu, associate professor and director of University of Arkansas Rice Processing Program, [here](#).

The application period for the next Internal Leadership Education and Development (iLEAD) program is open now. iLEAD provides the opportunity for you to learn and apply new knowledge and skills to increase your leadership abilities. The year-long program, July 2024-June 2025, is open to UADA employees with three or more years of UADA employment. Visit the [iLEAD website](#) for complete details. The deadline to apply is Friday, March 8, 2024 at midnight.

LeadAR

LeadAR Class 20-Policy and Media Seminar Day One by Desarae Nelson, director, TRIO Student Support Services, UA Little Rock (LeadAR Class 20). On Jan. 25, 2024, LeadAR Class 20 participated in a Public Policy and Media session. Participants spent day one at the Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation (AECC) in Little Rock. Read details [here](#).



LEADAR CLASS 20



Members of LeadAR Class 20 learn firsthand about state policy and legislation.

Day Two - The 20th Extraordinary Session of LeadAR

by Meagan Davis, Attorney, Maddox and Maddox (LeadAR Class 20). As a former lobbyist, it was a true joy to return to the Capitol and witness my LeadAR classmates serving as legislators. I was impressed by the breadth and depth of bills presented, the amount of research and preparation put forth by classmates, and the cordial, yet passionate debates that took place throughout the day. I was also thrilled to experience the acting talent of our classmates who posed as concerned members of the public. Read details [here](#). ■

Award of Thanks

Last month, the Arkansas Blackberry Growers Association presented an award of thanks to Amanda McWhirt, extension horticulture production specialist. The award was given in recognition of McWhirt's exemplary service in organizing the Grower's Association and in appreciation of her work in promoting best practices for blackberry production in Arkansas and across the nation.

"Amanda was the one that got us together and organized the association," said Dan Smith, secretary-treasurer for the Arkansas Blackberry Growers Association. "Since the University of Arkansas is known nationwide for blackberry varieties, we needed a concerted effort to promote blackberries in our state."

With McWhirt's help, the association held its first meeting in 2019 and has been promoting blackberries in Arkansas

ever since. Now with 60 members, the association sponsors two annual field days, two newsletters and an annual educational conference. The Association also offers several promotional materials to their members, developed in partnership with McWhirt's program.

"Amanda was instrumental in organizing the Arkansas Blackberry Growers Association and she has been an asset to us ever since," Smith said. "We're thankful to have her as a part of our organization and are happy to give her this award of recognition." ■



Members of the Arkansas Blackberry Growers Association Board presenting Amanda McWhirt with an award of thanks. Pictured, (L to R): Dan Smith, Secretary-Treasurer; Les Dozier, Member at Large; Amanda McWhirt; Matt Wilson, President.

Welcome 2024! A new year with brand new phishing attempts.

What is Phishing?

Phishing attacks are counterfeit communications, usually email, that appear to come from a trustworthy source. These communications can compromise all types of data sources. Attacks can allow access to your online accounts and personal data, obtain permissions to modify and compromise connected systems and, in some cases, hijack entire computer networks until a ransom fee is delivered.

Is It Phishing?

Pay attention to the warning flags for malicious emails.

- The “From” email address is different from the “From” display name.
- Hover over links – if the address looks strange or irrelevant, don’t click on it.
- Spelling and grammar mistakes.
- Is the email addressed to a vague “valued customer” rather than you?
- Invoking a sense of urgency or fear is a common phishing tactic.
- Review the signature. Lack of details about the signer or how you can contact a company strongly suggests a phish.
- Assuming to know you.
- An email welcoming you to a new organization or claiming to be “John in sales,” could be a scammer using social engineering.

Always Remember

- Don’t click on attachments unless you know what it is and were expecting it.
 - Malicious attachments that contain viruses and malware is a common phishing tactic.
- Phishers are extremely good at what they do.
 - Just because an email has convincing brand logos, language, and a seemingly valid email address, does not mean it is legitimate.
- Legitimate banks and most other companies will never ask for personal credentials via email.

UADA Data Inventory

It is time to begin the 1st of 2 Data Inventory efforts for UADA for 2024. This is an important task that is directly related to information security and is a proactive measure to ensure we are prepared in the event a cyber-security incident occurs and UADA information is at risk. Additionally, conducting a comprehensive Data Inventory improves UADA's security posture and keeps us in compliance with UA security audit requirements.

What is a Data Inventory?

A data inventory is a compiled spreadsheet that logs the types

of data you collect, where the data is located within UADA, and the business purpose of such data.

Why Does Having a Data Inventory Matter?

1. Identifies information that must be tracked and safeguarded under the requirements of various laws, regulations, professional standards, or UADA Policies and Standards (FERPA, HIPAA, GLBA), regulations (e.g., GDPR), industry standards, etc.);
2. Establishes compliance with applicable regulations, standards, and policies; and
3. Accelerates breach incident investigation and containment.

Data Stewards have been assigned for each program area/department. They will be reaching out to you with the data inventory template that will need to be completed. For more information visit the data inventory [webpage](#).

Open Office Hours: Information Technology will hold Open Office Hours via Zoom for those who have questions about completing the data inventory due March 29th.

Friday, March 1: – 10 a.m. – 11 a.m. [Register](#) here.

Wednesday, March 6: – 2 a.m. – 3 p.m. [Register](#) here.

Friday, March 15: – 10 a.m. – 11 a.m. [Register](#) here.

Wednesday, March 20: – 2 p.m – 3 p.m. [Register](#) here.

Friday, March 29: – 10 a.m. – 11 a.m. [Register](#) here.

If you have any questions and/or concerns related to the Data Inventory, please register for one of the office hours sessions with you and your team at your convenience.

Zoom Pro Tip

Zoom AI Companion

If you have a licensed Zoom account, you now have access to the Zoom AI Companion. The Zoom AI Companion can assist you across the platform with features such as Meeting Summaries, Team Chat thread summaries, and Team Chat message composing. For more information on any of these new Zoom AI Companion features, check out Zoom’s Getting Started with Zoom AI Companion Features [support page](#). You may request a [short-term](#) or [long-term Zoom license](#) from the Video Conferencing team.



Hump Day Hacks

[Conditional Formatting in Excel](#)
[Removing Font Ligatures in Word](#)
[Microsoft Edge Collections](#) ■

2024 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 January’s [Creating with Canva](#) Tech Tuesday? Check out the recording and resources.



It's Community Garden Time!



The Soybean Science Challenge kicked off its Community Garden promotion in January with 24 community gardens already signed up to grow vegetable-grade edamame soybeans in their plots.

The soybeans are donated by B&B Legacy Farms with seeds to be mailed out from the state office in March and April. Soybeans are easy to grow, a complete protein, and are a welcome addition to any food dish. For a garden to receive soybean seeds, the garden needs to be educational/school-related, 4-H based, or

serve the food banks or other hunger-related projects in the area in which they are planted. Anyone whose garden fulfills the requirements and wants to plant edamame can go to www.uaex.uada.edu/soywhatsup 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 kharris@uada.edu.

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

For more information, please contact Dr. Julie Robinson at jrobinson@uada.edu, Keith Harris at kharris@uada.edu, or Diedre Young at dyoung@uada.edu. ■



Promise Garden in Hot Springs.

Clover 101: 4-H Club & Project Fair



More than 150 people attended Washington County's 2nd annual Clover 101 4-H promotional event on Jan. 30. This event, which is structured like a science fair, gives 4-H members from each of the county's 20 clubs the opportunity to set up a booth and talk about their 4-H projects and club activities. The event was promoted to area schools, homeschool groups and at public libraries. New and potential 4-H families who attended the event were able to meet 4-H members and leaders, ask questions, learn about project areas, and get information on

how to join. After the event, we tend to see a lot of crossover presentations from club members, when youth learn about new activities and recruit youth from other clubs to come and share at their own meetings.



Teen Leader and Goin' Showin' 4-H member, Joshua B., taught potential families about beekeeping and his hives.

This year's event featured 15 clubs, a bottle baby goat, rabbits and so much more for the public to interact with and learn about the 4-H way. It's incredible to see our members showcase their leadership skills and show new families how the 4-H program impacts their life. ■



4-H Adult Volunteer Evelyn Jones educated families about the Washington County 4-H Vet Science Club and the work that they do with her daughter in the club.

Benefits Corner

Dental

The university's dental plan, administered by Arkansas BlueCross BlueShield, offers coverage for preventive, basic and major services, and orthodontia services. The annual maximum benefit per person per calendar year is \$1,750.

Annual Benefit Maximum Rollover

If you or an enrolled dependent receives benefits of less than \$750 in a calendar year, up to \$375 of unused benefits will rollover into the following year. The accumulated rollover maximum is \$1,500.

Your rollover amount will be added to your annual maximum benefit 60 days after the last day of the calendar year. You (or your enrolled dependent) can use rollover money in that year and future years. You (or your enrolled dependent) must meet four conditions to be eligible for the rollover:

- Receive at least one covered preventive service during the calendar year.

- Pay less in total claims than the yearly threshold amount.
- Be enrolled in the dental plan on the last day of the calendar year.
- Keep your total rollover balance less than the accumulated maximum rollover amount.

You don't need an ID card to use your dental benefits – just let the provider know you have Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield coverage when you get to your appointment.

If you want to view or print an ID card, sign in to My Blueprint or download the [My Blueprint](#) app on the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#). ■



UADA's National Law Center is a Resource for You

The National Agricultural Law Center is the nation's leading source of agricultural and food law research and information. It is also a unit of the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. The NALC does not represent clients or give legal advice, but instead identifies, clarifies and educates stakeholders on legal issues impacting agricultural production.

The [NALC website](#) includes much of this information. With over 50 subject-specific "Reading Rooms," it covers a wide array of topics from animal welfare to industrial hemp production and is a focal point of the work done at the NALC. Resources include the [Ag & Food Law Blog](#) and [publications](#) such as white papers, factsheets, [state law compilations](#) covering various topics, and more. In addition to written resources, the Center hosts a [webinar series](#) on

current and emerging important agricultural and food law topics. These webinars are freely available to the general public, both live and archived. Further, Center staff frequently present in-person to groups throughout the state of Arkansas and the United States as a whole.



Questions about what we do? Contact us at nataglaw@uark.edu. Sign up for NALC communications, including "The Feed," a twice-monthly newsletter highlighting recent agriculture & policy developments, [here](#). ■

Personal & Family Finance Class

Mary Beth Groce, Faulkner County FCS Agent & Staff Chair spoke to a Personal & Family Finance class at the University of Central Arkansas on the importance of building good credit scores and making wise financial decisions. Most students in this course are in their early twenties and at a pivotal point in their lives, so the course is vital to their personal and professional success. Dr. Kimberley Sartain, Director of the FCS Education Program and course instructor was so impressed, she personally reached out to brag on Mary Beth and the value of Extension as a community partner.

“The presentation was on credit and could not have been more perfect for our students. We are just beginning a module on credit and the impact it has on so



Mary Beth Groce

many things. The presentation was clear and easily identified with the stage of life most of the students are in. It was exciting to see them asking questions and intently listening to her presentation. Mrs. Groce’s communication was excellent, easily understood, and engaging. It is

always a pleasure to have such resourceful professionals in the FCS field be a part of the university’s educational setting. She is a true asset to your organization. Thank you for allowing (and equipping) your Extension Agents to provide such a wonderful service. I will highly recommend her and hopefully have her back for future classes.” ■

Teen Leadership Dinner

Hempstead County Cooperative Extension Service, in collaboration with the Hempstead County Farm Bureau Women’s Committee, hosted a Teen Leadership Dinner on Jan. 25 at Hempstead Hall at the University of Arkansas Hope-Texarkana. In attendance were high school juniors and seniors participating in 4-H, FFA, FCCLA, and FBLA from Hope, Spring Hill and Blevins school districts. These students had recently received manners/etiquette lessons presented by Betty Wingfield, Hempstead County 4-H agent, prior to the event. Teachers, club sponsors and school administrators also attended.

Following the guest speaker, teachers and administrators offered words of wisdom to the youth.

The meal was provided by the Farm Bureau Women’s Committee and servers were Hempstead County 4-H Teen Leaders.



This dinner, along with the training, exposes youth leaders to proper manners, etiquette and social skills and then gives them an opportunity to practice what they’ve learned. ■



Hempstead County 4-H Teen Leaders serve at the dinner.

Brent Talley, former Arkansas State Representative, was the guest speaker for the evening. He shared his experiences and provided inspirational advice to the students.



Hope High School Principal, Kimberly Dunham, speaks to attendees.

Hosts Grant Writing Workshop

Kickstart Cleveland County hosted Dr. Hunter Goodman, assistant professor for the Community, Professional and Economic Development Department, for a conversation around grant writing at the Bethel No. 1 Family Life Center near Rison. The community development initiative for the county closed out the evening with volunteer awards. Goodman gave an overview of grant writing and how different organizations can identify grants pertaining to their organization. She explained the different types of grants and the elements funders would consider when reviewing grant applications. She also provided tips for organizations to write clear, focused details on applications.

Goodman said her presentation was a shortened version of the usual six-hour workshop she does on grant writing around the state, at which attendees would leave with the



Members of the grant writing workshop conducted by UADA Cleveland County. Kickstart Cleveland County hosted Dr. Hunter Goodman of the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service near Rison.

structure of an application. Cleveland County FCS Extension Agent and Staff Chair Danielle Watson polled the estimated 50 attendees to see if they would be interested in Goodman's full workshop. Watson said due to the feedback and success of this preview, a workshop will be planned for Cleveland County in the coming months. ■

Denver National Western Round Up

As Extension Agents, we get to see our young people do some amazing things and have once-in-a-lifetime experiences. Sherry Beaty-Sullivan, Polk County staff chair, and Clair Williamson, Polk County 4-H agent, took their Senior Livestock Judging Team to the Western National Round-up in Denver, Colorado, Jan. 2-6. Along the way, they stopped in Stillwater, OK, to work out on cattle and hogs on the OSU farm and in Hays, Kansas, on the campus of Fort Hays State University to work out on sheep and cattle.

The Polk County 4-H livestock judging team placed as follows: 10th place team in swine; 10th place team in cattle; Claire W. 7th place individual in cattle and the team place 11th overall. ■



Team members included (L to R): Ruby H., Lacy F., Claire W., and Ryan W., coached by Jeremy Huff (not pictured).

Help Arkansas Children's Hospital

The Randolph County Extension Homemakers recently joined forces to craft invaluable "teaching dolls" destined for the Arkansas Children's Hospital. These small, featureless, white rag dolls serve a crucial purpose in pediatric care. Doctors utilize them as educational tools, illustrating to young patients the nature of their ailments and the procedures ahead. The dolls become personalized visual aids, as physicians draw on them to pinpoint affected areas and mark operation sites.

During a collaborative effort at the Randolph County Extension Office, 15 dedicated volunteers, under the guidance of Family Consumer Science Agent Pamela Ray, operated various stations. These included cutting stations for fabric preparation, an ironing station for meticulous material pressing, multiple sewing stations for assembling the dolls, and a stuffing station to complete the creation process. The endearing outcome saw the production of 100 teaching dolls.

Bestowing these dolls upon the children provides not only a tangible representation of their medical journey but also a source of comfort. The youngsters find solace in snuggling with these dolls, transforming them into cherished companions on their road to recovery. ■



Front row (L to R): Barbara Simington, Shirley Fortner, Diane Cote, Pamela Ray-FCS, Veronica Rose; Back Row: Janet Wells, Connie Trublood, Kay Inness, Vicki McCabe, Judy Downs, Mary Billeaudeau, Shannon Bettis, Mary Ann Shepherd, Sue Fair, Mary Ann Carroll, and Wendy Ward.

"What's Cooking" Club

Drew County's "What's Cooking" Club is teaching 4-H members how to cook and try new foods in a fun way. At a recent meeting, members played a "Guess the Food" riddle game cast on a TV screen. They then discussed and reviewed uses for particular kitchen utensils and its purpose.

The members then teamed up and were given a recipe to prepare. Doing this gave students practice in reading and following a recipe. They had to prepare their areas, gather items from the pantry area, and work together to make the dish. All of the recipes were from "Let's Cook, Third Edition."



Ada R serving Gatsby S. the main dish.

The teams made Spinach Medley, Beef and Vegetables using Arkansas rice, and Tropical Fruit Pudding using tofu. After preparing their dishes, the teams discussed each member's roles in the process and the health benefits of the ingredients. The food was unanimously deemed delicious, and kids and parents got to try new recipes. ■

Cheyenne B. and Sklyer preparing the dessert.



Grants & Contracts

PROJECT TITLE	AWARD AMOUNT	PI	GRANTING AGENCY
Factsheet and How-To Videos Outlining Updated Leaf Tissue Nutrient Monitoring Recommendations for Southeastern Blackberry Production	5,000	Amanda L McWhirt	Southern Region Small Fruit Consortium
Long-Term Study of the Impacts of Crop Rotation on Southeastern Plasticulture Strawberry Production	5,000	Amanda L McWhirt	Southern Region Small Fruit Consortium
2024-01 Canola Biodiversity Protocol	8,845	Jon E Zawislak	Corteva Agriscience LLC
Sprouting Soybeans: Management Strategies That Reduce Late-Season Yield Loss and Protect Seed Quality	20,500	Jeremy Ross	Ohio State University
Developing a Technical Assistance Network to Help Producers Access FSA Farm Loan and USDA Farm Programs with an Emphasis on Underserved Communities: A Pilot Project	900,000	Ron Rainey	Washington State University
*Training Underserved Arkansas and Mississippi Crop Farmers to Understand and Utilize Crop Insurance as a Risk Management Tool	99,977	Hunter Biram	Southern Risk Management Education Center
TOTAL AWARDS FOR JANUARY 2024: 1,039,322			

* Award previously omitted by mistake

Personnel Changes



Welcome Aboard:

- Dylan Worth – Buyer, Procurement Office, Washington County
- Tina Munoz – County Extension Agent - Family & Consumer Science, Little River County
- Evan Ware – Program Associate - Local Food Systems Horticulture, Little Rock
- Shonta Windorf – Administrative Specialist III, Lonoke County
- Carrie Beth Stark – Instructor - 4-H & Youth Development, Little Rock
- Christie Wagley – County Extension Agent - Family Consumer Sciences/4-H, Poinsett County

Farewell to:

- Sherrie Ellen Smith – Instructor - ENPL, Washington County
- Abby Hilton – Fiscal Support Analyst, Little Rock
- Bailey Graham – 4-H Program Assistant, Benton County
- Tasha Pauley – Administrative Specialist III, Pulaski County
- Ashley Renee Dingman – 4-H Youth Development Associate, Little Rock
- Gabe Pace – County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Desha County