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## BLUE LETTER

March 2026  
No. 3887



John D. Anderson

# From the Director

It feels like spring is really here to stay at this point. I know that feeling can be deceptive, but I'm going out on a limb and predicting uninterrupted spring weather from here on out. The dogwood trees seem to agree with me. As I write this, the pleasant weather has enticed farmers into rapidly returning to their fields for planting. The only hold up right now seems to be that some are finding it too dry to plant – definitely not our normal spring situation.

The return of planting season means that winter meeting season has reached its end. It was a busy one. The market uncertainty and financial challenges facing row crop farmers this year added a heightened sense of urgency to this year's meetings. Right now, every decision matters, which means that reliable, accurate, and timely information is highly valuable.

I was able to attend several of the production meetings around the Delta over the last few weeks, and I was extremely proud of the product that our agents and

specialists are putting out to our stakeholders. Every meeting included a wealth of information about a wide variety of relevant management topics, with lots of clear, research-based advice and recommendations. It's easy to take this creation and distribution of this important information for granted. After all, we've been doing it for generations. But even a relatively straightforward project – a variety trial, for instance – represents a tremendous commitment of resources (land, labor, capital, and management) over multiple years.

The information and support provided by Extension doesn't just happen. It is produced through a lot of hard work by a dedicated and talented team of highly trained experts. It is important that we communicate this story as widely and as often as we can. Our continued support depends on the public's understanding of the importance of what we do. This year, the importance of our work ought to be clear. Our farmers are facing a tough challenge. I am confident that they are doing so with Extension-provided information and decision support that is among the best in the world. ■

## INSIDE SCOOP

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- ...And much more!

# Vivian Okanume Highlighted

Vivian Okanume, extension health program associate for the High Obesity Program grant, is an NDTR, Certified Lactation Consultant and has a Certification in Public Health credential. In her role, Okanume said she focuses on “policy, systems and environmental change.”

“For example, I help to develop and implement breastfeeding food safety policies for breastmilk storage, handling and preparation, and help to provide professional development opportunities for our participating early care and education centers,” Okanume said. “We also develop and distribute educational and promotional materials that help these centers become breastfeeding-friendly.”



Okanume said she sees nutrition as a “fundamental driver of health,” beginning at the early stages of life.



Vivian Okanume

“There are so many benefits at the beginning of life, even prenatally, where nutrition sets the stage for what’s to come across a lifespan,” Okanume said. “At extension, we have a unique position to

put that awareness out there in these communities that are hard to reach — the importance of breastfeeding and all the benefits that it has for mom and baby that will shape outcomes later in life.” ■

## Lactation Room Available


The Little Rock State Office now has a designated lactation room. This room provides a private, clean space for new moms who need to pump or breastfeed while at work. The lactation room is equipped with a comfortable lounge chair, refrigerator, white noise machine, nursing pads, hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies. The creation of this dedicated room helps to foster a more family-friendly culture here at UADA. To learn more regarding breastfeeding, your rights, and its benefits for moms and their babies, please contact the Arkansas Department of Health or call the Arkansas Breastfeeding Helpline (1-844-344-0408). It is available 24/7. If you are pregnant or need more information on parental benefits, please contact the Office of Human Resources to receive helpful information regarding your possible leave options and other employee benefits. ■

## Vegetable Growers Conference a Success

The first Arkansas Vegetable Growers Conference welcomed more than 100 vegetable growers, educators, and stakeholders from across the state on Feb. 19-20 at the Little Rock State Office.

The agenda included various presentations on pest management, drip irrigation, good agricultural practices, property management and more. Attendee feedback was overwhelmingly positive and appreciative. This event

would not have been possible without the collaborative effort and support from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. ■



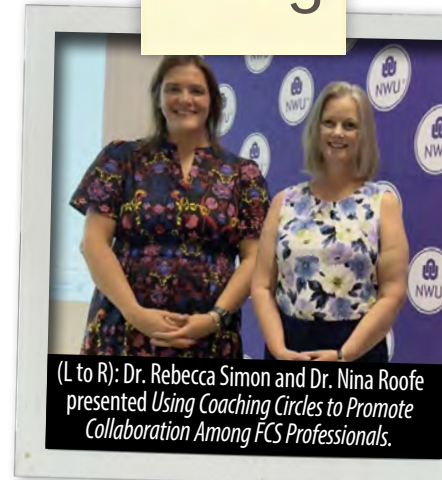
Dr. Aaron Cato (Horticulture IPM Specialist) speaks to an auditorium full of vegetable growers and other stakeholders.

# International Family Ecology & Consumer Sciences Conference

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The South African Association of Family Ecology and Consumer Sciences, in conjunction with IFHE, held its 17th International Conference March 9-12, 2026, at Mount Amanzi, South Africa. The conference began with the IFHE Council Meeting on March 6-7, followed by optional excursions on March 8. The conference theme was Science as Collaboration and included keynote addresses from Dr. Amanda McCloat (Home Economics Education – An International Perspective on the Reform of Home Economics curricula), Professor Josef De Beer (The Relevance of Indigenous Knowledge), Professor Mohamad Sabri (Financial Literacy as a Collaborative Science: Empowering Families and Consumers in a Digital Era), Professor Linda Malan (Nuclear

Techniques in Nutrition: Advancing Evidence for Better Health), Professor Joyce Chitja (Collaborations and Partnerships: The New Competition for Impact), Mrs. Adele Human (Patterns in Consumer Studies Learner and Teacher Performance in Formal Assessment), a Textile & Design Exhibition and numerous breakout sessions in all FCS content areas. Dr. Rebecca Simon and Dr. Nina Roofo presented “Using Coaching Circles to Promote Collaboration Among FCS Professionals.” ■



## Seeds Across Seas

### What Arkansas and Sicily Farmers Learned

What happens when farmers from Arkansas and Sicily finally sit down together? That question was at the heart of Seeds Across Seas, a five-day agricultural exchange that brought researchers, extension specialists, and farm leaders from Sicily to Arkansas this spring.

At first glance, the two regions seem very different. But over the course of the week, the similarities became clear. Both are deeply agricultural, grappling with water challenges, climate pressures and the growing question of who will farm next.

The Sicilian delegation — including researchers from the University of Palermo and Italy’s Council for Agricultural Research and Economics — visited farms, research stations, and extension offices across the state. They saw innovations

in irrigation, aquaculture, integrated pest management and farmer-driven research.

What struck them most was Arkansas’s Cooperative Extension Service — a model that connects researchers and farmers through trusted local relationships.



The exchange concluded with a working session on heritage wheat, exploring how ancient Mediterranean grain varieties and modern agricultural science might create new opportunities for farmers on both sides of the Atlantic.

The partnerships are just beginning, but the goal is clear: build resilient food systems, support the next generation of farmers, and strengthen agriculture through shared knowledge. Sometimes, the most powerful seeds are ideas. ■

# High Schoolers Tackle Real-Life Budgeting Challenge

In February, high school students across Montgomery County gained valuable “real-life” lessons in money management through Get Real – Here’s the Deal!, a hands-on personal finance simulation designed to prepare young people for financial independence.

This interactive experience allows students to step into their future and make practical financial decisions based on career and lifestyle choices. By participating in the simulation, students learn essential money management skills such as balancing a checkbook, managing credit, budgeting monthly income and covering basic living expenses. They quickly see how occupation and lifestyle

decisions directly affect their financial resources and long-term security.



Regina Powell (right) helps students make practical financial decisions.

The program offers a safe, supportive environment where students can make financial mistakes and learn from them—without real-world consequences. By experiencing the realities of budgeting and financial responsibility firsthand, students gain a deeper understanding of how everyday financial choices can impact their stability for years to come. The simulation is especially impactful as students begin thinking about their futures and preparing for life

on their own. A total of 68 students attended the event, and overall evaluation results were very positive. ■

## Everyday Essentials

Saline, Pulaski and Lonoke County Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) agents relaunched the Everyday Essentials series on February 12 with Lesson 3: All About Fats at the Saline County Library, Benton Branch.



Activity time for participants led by FCS Agents.

During the session, participants explored the important role fats play in overall health. While many Americans consume more fat than recommended, raising the risk of obesity, heart disease and diabetes, fat remains an essential nutrient the body needs to function properly. The key is understanding the difference between healthy and unhealthy fats and making balanced choices each day.

The Everyday Essentials series will conclude in Saline County with Lesson 4: Your Body & Water on March 26. In this final session, participants will learn why water is vital to the body, discover foods that support hydration, and gain tips on ensuring their drinking water is safe and healthy. We invite community members and agents to join us. ■



# 221 Sewn Hearts to Arkansas Children's Hospital



Focused at her sewing machine, Naomi T. stitches hand-sewn hearts that will provide comfort to babies and families at Arkansas Children's Hospital.

Several members of Sevier County 4-H recently traveled to Arkansas Children's Hospital to deliver 221 sewn hearts to support babies and their families.

These special hearts serve as comfort items for newborns receiving care. Each heart is first worn by the mother so it

can absorb her scent, then placed with the baby. This simple yet meaningful act helps babies and their mothers feel connected even when they cannot physically be together, strengthening bonding during what can often be a difficult and emotional time.

The project began when 4-H'er Braylee R. felt called to help meet the need for hearts. She invited members of her 4-H club to join her, and together they worked diligently, carefully sewing each heart by hand. Their dedication and compassion were evident in every stitch. Delivering the hearts in person made the experience even more meaningful as members witnessed how their efforts would impact families.

Service projects like this highlight the true heart of 4-H, teaching young people the importance of compassion, leadership, and giving back. Sevier County 4-H members not only demonstrated exceptional sewing skills, but also the powerful difference youth can make in the lives of others. ■

## Best Care Training

County agents from across central Arkansas teamed up to bring a lively and interactive Best Care training hosted at the First United Methodist Church of Benton. Pulaski County Agent Alicia Boatwright, Saline County Agent LaTaaka Harvey, Grant County Agent Susan Michelle Thomason, Lonoke County Agent Devyn Britt and Instructor of Early Childhood & Family Life Rebecca Simon, Ph.D., collaborated to host the free professional development event for early childhood providers.

In addition to earning PDR hours and CEUs, participants enjoyed a playful, hands-on approach to learning.



Agents setting up. (L to R): Susan Michelle Thomason in front of her Devyn Britt. Holding the sign is LaTaaka Harvey and behind her is Alicia Boatwright.

With guidance and support from the facilitators, attendees explored developmentally appropriate activities through creative stations such as monkey string, Play-Doh play, stress bottle making, water painting/coloring, bracelet making and a discussion table designed to spark conversation and idea-sharing.

The goal was to give providers practical tools they can use immediately while also reminding them that learning can be fun, messy, and full of imagination. The event drew strong participation and plenty of smiles as educators explored new ways to support children's growth and development. ■

## Protecting Your Data

### Outlook & OneDrive Screenshot Restrictions

To help safeguard sensitive information and reduce the risk of data exposure, Microsoft has disabled screenshot functionality within Outlook and OneDrive on mobile devices. This change is designed to protect private emails, attachments, and files from accidental or intentional sharing outside the organization.

By limiting screenshot access, we strengthen our overall data security posture and ensure compliance with privacy and security regulations. These protections help maintain the confidentiality of organizational data while reducing the risk of information leakage.

### Need Screenshot Access for Your Work?

We recognize that some roles may require screenshots for legitimate, work-related tasks such as documentation, training, or troubleshooting.

If you believe screenshot access is necessary for your job:

- Submit a [Screenshot Exclusion Request form](#)
- The Security Team will review your request and determine whether an exception can be granted

This review process helps balance productivity needs with our responsibility to protect sensitive information. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact the IT help desk.

## Required Tablet OS Upgrade and Intune Onboarding

To maintain security compliance, all tablets must meet the following minimum operating system requirements: Android 13 or later or iOS 17.x or later. Keeping devices up to date ensures they receive critical security patches. Older OS versions no longer receive updates and may expose company data to cyber risks.

### Devices That Cannot Be Upgraded

Any tablet that does not meet these requirements must be

turned in to Marketing & Redistribution (M&R). Please follow the established process for the Little Rock or Fayetteville locations. For assistance or details, contact your asset manager.

### Intune Onboarding (Required)

Tablets that meet the minimum OS requirements must be brought to IT for Intune onboarding and proper inventory tagging. This process cannot be completed remotely. The tablet owner must be present to log in during onboarding.

### Before Your Appointment

- [Back up your device](#)
- Be aware the device will be reset as part of onboarding

Please schedule your onboarding appointment with IT as soon as possible using the [Tablet Onboarding Request Form](#). For more information, see [Tablet OS Compliance & Intune Onboarding](#). Thank you for helping keep our systems secure.

### It's time for our bi-annual data inventory!

As part of our commitment to data governance and compliance, it's time to complete the bi-annual data inventory. Deadline: Thursday, April 30, 2026. All employees must review and update their inventories by this date. Data Stewards for departments/program areas will be reaching out with the data inventory template.

### What You Need to Do:

- Review your current inventory: Ensure all data assets are documented.

## Zoom Pro Tip

### Recording Meetings to Your Computer

Did you know you can record Zoom meetings straight to your computer? Local recording (recording to your computer) makes it easy to save a copy of your meetings to review or share later. You can find your local recording by opening File Explorer, clicking Documents, then the Zoom folder. You can find your locally stored recordings by going to the settings menu in the Zoom Workplace desktop app, then selecting Recording. ■

## 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 March's [\[Countdown to Compliance with ADA Web Accessibility Rule\]](#) Tech Tuesday? Check out the recording and resources.





## iLEAD

Two iLEAD participants shared their experiences from the iLEAD seminar held in Pine Bluff and Lonoke.

### From Sweet Potatoes to Fish Health: iLEAD Cohort V Learns at UAPB-Seminar 4, Day 1

by Adam Willis, Newton County staff chair

On Feb. 18, iLEAD Cohort V gathered for Seminar 4, Day One, at the beautiful campus of University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB). The morning began with a warm welcome from Dr. Christopher Mathis, interim dean and research director, who set the tone for the day by highlighting the university's commitment to research, outreach and community engagement. Read more [here](#).

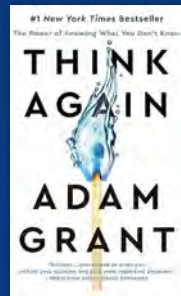
### iLEAD V Seminar 4 Day 2: From Vital Research for Arkansas Agriculture to Outdoor Skills for Youth

by Betty Wingfield, Hempstead County 4-H agent

We began our second day of iLead Seminar 4 at the Lonoke County Extension Center. Jodi Swint, project/program specialist, and Michael Emerson, program associate – plant pathology, guided our morning tour. We learned that the county office was constructed in the 1980s, with the research center added in the 1990s. The facility includes the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) Water Management Lab, shop space, offices,

covered storage and greenhouses to allow for year-round research. Read more [here](#).

## Leadership Lunch and Learn



The Leadership Lunch and Learn (LLL) Book Review series has resumed. In a recent LLL webinar, Hannah Gerken, extension program specialist II at Texas A&M University, invited participants to “think again” about how they see themselves, their work, and the people they serve, using Adam Grant’s book *Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don’t Know* as her guide.

Read more [here](#). Watch the recording [here](#).

Want quick access to other previously reviewed books? Visit the LLL website [here](#). ■



(L to R): Betty Wingfield and Samantha Barker, iLEAD V, observe advanced equipment and learn about ongoing efforts to produce disease-free sweet potato plants and improve crop resilience.



**2026**  
**SUPPORT STAFF CONFERENCE**  
*Celebrating Excellence*

# Support Staff Conference



Registration is open for the in-person 2026 Support Staff Conference.

Join your friends and colleagues for a great networking and professional development learning opportunity April 23-24 at the C.A. Vines Center.

Training sessions feature AI Guidelines, Health and Wellness, Leadership, ExCel, Herb Gardening and more.

**Click [here](#) to register!**

# Hazelene McCray Honored with Award

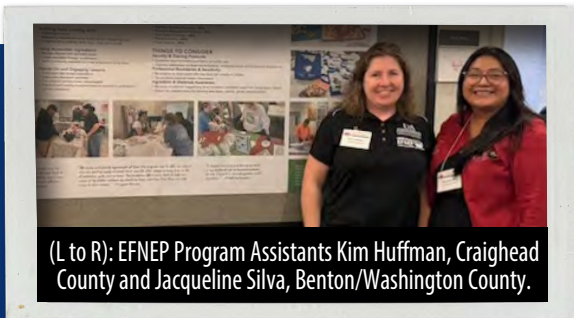
Hazelene McCray, Drew County Extension staff chair and family and consumer sciences agent for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, was recently recognized with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Monticello-Drew County Chamber of Commerce.

“All small towns rely on a few of the same people to do a lot of different things, and Hazelene is one of those people,” said Glenda Nichols, executive director of the Monticello-Drew County Chamber of Commerce. “You can depend on her to be an asset to whatever committee or organization she serves on. She brings her A-game every time.”

McCray said her favorite part of working for extension is “making a difference in others’ lives and reaching other people to tell them about our programs.” ■



Hazelene McCray, staff chair and FCS agent, receiving her Lifetime Achievement Award.



(L to R): EFNEP Program Assistants Kim Huffman, Craighead County and Jacqueline Silva, Benton/Washington County.

## Program Assistants Highlight Impact

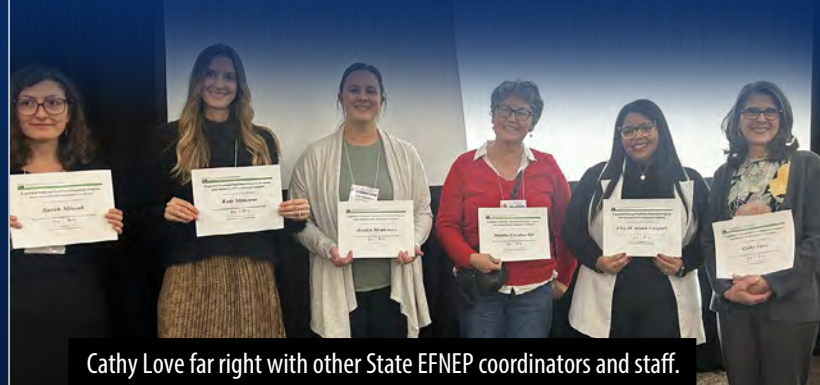
EFNEP (Arkansas Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program) program assistants Kim Huffman (Craighead County) and Jacqueline Silva (Benton County) presented a poster at the 2026 National EFNEP Coordinators’ Annual Conference, held in Kansas City, Missouri. Their poster, titled “Empowering Arkansas Families Through Nutrition and Workforce Re-entry Partnerships,” highlighted an EFNEP-delivered nutrition education initiative implemented with Arkansas re-entry agencies in 2025.

The poster highlighted the impact of EFNEP partnerships with re-entry agencies in supporting healthier lifestyles and strengthening food security among Arkansas families. ■

## EFNEP Supervisor Celebrated

Cathy Love, FCS Agent in Benton County, was recognized at the National EFNEP Coordinators’ Conference for her 10 years of service as the EFNEP Regional Supervisor. In this role, Love provides mentorship and training to EFNEP program assistants, helping strengthen their ability to deliver impactful nutrition education to families and communities across the region.

Her dedication, leadership and commitment to the program have played an important role in supporting both staff development and the success of EFNEP participants. ■



Cathy Love far right with other State EFNEP coordinators and staff.



# Kiss the Pig for 4-H

Gin City 4-H recently conducted the “Kiss the Pig for 4-H” fundraiser for Lafayette County 4-H FY26 programming. The event took place at the Farm Bureau Bi-Annual Meet the Candidate Forum, Feb. 12.

Farm Bureau served a meal, and attendees listened to nine candidates, Senator Steve Crowell and former Ouachita County 4-H member, Representative Wade Andrews, speak about the upcoming election. Eight county officials and the county OEM Director had agreed to become nominees to be voted for to raise money for 4-H.

Members sold 534, \$2 votes, raising \$1068.00. Sherriff Jeff Black won the right to Kiss the Pig for 4-H. Black took it in stride before kissing a (very cute) baby pig. ■



Gin City 4-H raised \$1068.00 for FY26 Lafayette County 4-H programming. Members participating included: (L to R) Adryanna Burton, Lena Downs (pig wrangler), Sherriff Jeff Black (pig kisser), Billy Downs, Sunnie Downs and Jerri Dew.

# UADA Cohosts Arkansas AgrAbility Conference

Representatives from several state agencies and multiple states gathered on February 18 and 19 to learn about resources available through the National AgrAbility program. Dr. Brittney Schrick, associate professor and family life specialist for UADA, along with Jennifer Craig of Arkansas Farm Bureau and Rick Anderson of iCAN Assistive Technology, hosted a two-day training

for rehabilitation and agriculture professionals to build skills for working with injured or disabled farmers. The goal of the National AgrAbility program is to connect farmers with assistive technology and other services that allow them to continue farming after an injury or other physical limitation.

Throughout the two-day meeting, rehabilitation professionals gained better understanding of the specific needs of farmers, and the groups took first steps to building a stronger support network across Arkansas to better serve farmers.

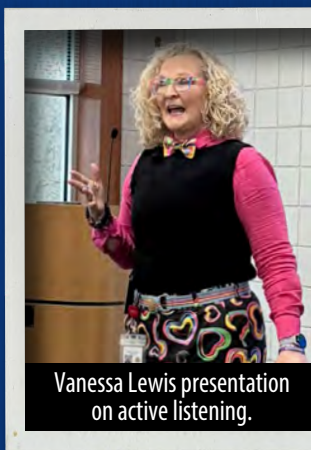
For more information about the National AgrAbility program, including links to “The Toolbox” Assistive Technology Database and other resources, visit [agrability.org](http://agrability.org).

For more information about resources available in Arkansas, contact Dr. Brittney Schrick (bschrick@uada.edu) or Arkansas Rehabilitation Services at 1(800) 330-0632. ■



Cattle farmer, Dustin Hill of Glen Rose, shows participants at the Arkansas AgrAbility Conference how to operate a squeeze chute.

# E.A.R.-Resistible' Listening with Intention Presentation



Those attending the Feb. 18 AACES Beans, Brains and Things meeting experienced a delightful interactive presentation on “EAR-Resistible Listening with Intention” and lunch from Chick-fil-A.

Presenter Vanessa Lewis, FCS Program Associate-Health, shared that listening consumes approximately 45-55 percent of total communication time, making it our most-used skill. She emphasized that most of us immediately forget or misunderstand about 50 percent of what we hear. Lewis conducted a listening activity demonstrating information lost across multiple listeners. What an ear opener!

Lewis defined active listening as the intentional practice of fully focusing on, understanding and responding to a speaker in a way that shows genuine attention and respect. Active listening also involves being mentally present and engaged with the speaker’s message, emotions and intent.

Barriers to active listening were demonstrated in another communications activity. Barriers identified included external (outside noise), internal (stress or other

circumstances), speaker credibility and style of presentation. The No. 1 barrier acknowledged was our phones.

Lewis recommended the E.A.R. Framework:

- E – Engage: Give full attention.**
- A – Acknowledge: Reflect or paraphrase what’s said.**
- R – Respond: Ask a question/comment showing understanding before offering an opinion.**

Lewis encouraged the group to “Be the reason someone feels welcomed, seen, heard, valued, loved and supported.” ■



## Grants & Contracts

PROJECT TITLE	AWARD AMOUNT	PI	GRANTING AGENCY
Blackberry Production Video Series	10,000	Amanda McWhirt	Southern Region Small Fruit Consortium
Mid-South Entomology Working Group Insect Management in Mid-South Cotton	35,000	Ben Thrash	Cotton Inc.
Determining an Economic Threshold for Tarnished Plant Bug on Thryvon Cotton	2,500	Ben Thrash	Cotton Inc.
Development of a Farm and Ranch Management Degree Program	22,500	Janeal Yancey	University of Arkansas at Fayetteville
Determining Prevalence Of Alpha Gal Syndrome	15,000	Janeal Yancey	Arkansas Beef Council
Urban Stormwater Program	228,000	Katie Teague	Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission
Integrated Dynamics of Climate Resilience and Risk Aversion in Agriculture	8,331	Mike Daniels	National Science Foundation
Arkansas Cotton Verification Program	18,000	Zachary Treadway	Cotton Inc.
<b>TOTAL AWARDS FOR FEBRUARY 2026: \$339,331</b>			

# Soybean Science Challenge Awards



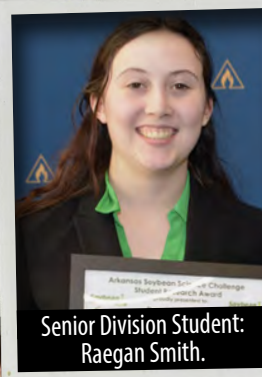
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The Soybean Science Challenge (SSC) recently presented awards at five regional science fairs.

The student awards were presented for the senior (high school) and the junior (middle school) divisions at the regional science fairs which had students who qualified for the Soybean Science Challenge. Student awards include a certificate, an award bag with SSC prizes, and a \$400 cash prize in the senior division and a \$200 student award in the junior division. Teachers of the student winners are awarded with a certificate, an award tote with SSC items, and a \$200 cash prize in the senior division and a \$100 cash prize in the junior division.

The Soybean Science Challenge is co-sponsored by the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board and the University

of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service. For additional information, please contact Dr. Julie Robinson [jrobinson@uada.edu](mailto:jrobinson@uada.edu) or Keith Harris [krharris@uada.edu](mailto:krharris@uada.edu). ■



Senior Division Student:  
Raegan Smith.



(L to R): Teacher: Mr. Patrick Briney and Senior Division Student: Gideon Blevins.

## Taunya Ernst Selected for Award

Taunya Ernst received the 2026 Arkansas State Conservationist Partnership Award! The Arkansas State Conservationist's Partnership Awards were established in 2013 and are intended to highlight those who exemplify the partnership approach that NRCS was founded on and illustrate that through partnering we achieve even greater conservation successes. Ernst's nomination highlights her personal efforts to bring Extension together with NRCS to support specialty crop growers. The presentation of the award was held during the Arkansas Conservation Partnership Awards Luncheon in conjunction with the 2026 Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting, on March 13th at the Wyndham Hotel in North Little Rock. ■



Taunya Ernst

## Winning Ways Works

with EHC Training

New and experienced agents gathered on Nov. 7, 2025, for the statewide Winning Ways to Work with EHC Training was held at the Little Rock State Office. Guest Speakers included Marie Linqest, Certified Volunteer Training Instructor and Executive Director of the Arkansas Public Administration Consortium (APAC) at UALR, Dr. Laura Hendrix, AEHC Advisor, and Anna Goff, FCS Program Associate. Topics included: Managing Volunteers, Advisor Roles, Monthly Office Hours, Educational Lessons and Training, Forms and Due Dates, Membership Database, Growing EHC and more. ■

Agents attend LRSO Training



# Sheep & Goat Genetic Improvement Field Day

More than 60 Arkansas and out-of-state producers gathered at Heifer Ranch in Perryville on Feb. 27 for the Sheep & Goat Genetic Improvement Field Day.

Dan Quadros, small ruminant specialist for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, led participants in a visual assessment demonstration on Estimated Breeding Values for a group of rams, which Quadros called a “game changer for genetic improvement.”



“Until now, small ruminant producers in Arkansas have primarily relied on visual assessment for animal selection,” Quadros said. “At this event, attendees learned how genomics is becoming the new frontier of livestock production, with applications in health, reproduction and meat quality.”

Attendees were surprised with one hundred-percent goat meat burgers for lunch. Blake Erbach, Perry County extension agent and

The event included speakers from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Texas A&M University and the Division of Agriculture as well as a panel of producers. Hands-on demonstrations included parasite diagnosis, body condition assessment, ultrasounds for pregnancy checks and carcass evaluation, and more.

staff chair, said the success of the field day was due to a “combination of education, demonstration and networking that empowered producers with practical genetic and management tools for long-term flock improvement.” ■

## Front Page News You Can Use

Looking for a news story to use in your local paper?

Look no further than the front page of [uaex.uada.edu](http://uaex.uada.edu). And if you click on "view all news", you'll see all of archived news stories back to 2014.

# Benefits Corner

## SmartCare Program

If you are enrolled in a university medical plan, you can save on health care costs through the SmartCare program, by visiting a provider at a University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) facility, the Pat Walker Health Center, or the University of Arkansas at Little Rock Health Center. You don't have to sign up for SmartCare. If you come to a Smartcare facility for your care and are enrolled in a university medical plan, UMR will automatically apply adjustments based on the UMR medical classic, premier or health savings plan you are enrolled.

For in-depth information regarding SmartCare visit: <https://benefits.uasys.edu/uada/health/smartcare-program>.

## Finding a SmartCare Provider

UAMS Providers: Use the [Find a Doctor search](#) to find primary care physicians or specialists who work at a UAMS facility.

Pat Walker Health Center Providers:  
Visit the [Patient Portal](#) or call 479-575-4451.



## Make an Appointment

**UAMS:** You can schedule appointments via email at [smartcare@uams.edu](mailto:smartcare@uams.edu). You also have priority access to appointments through a dedicated appointment line: 501-686-8749.

**Pat Walker Health Center:** Schedule an appointment online through the [Patient Portal](#) or call 479-575-4451. Visit the [Appointments page](#) of the Pat Walker Health Center website for more information.

**University of Arkansas at Little Rock Health Center:**  
Call 501-569-3188 to make an appointment.

## Do you have questions regarding your University Benefits?

Please utilize the [yourbenefits@uada.edu](mailto:yourbenefits@uada.edu) email address. The email is monitored and allows your benefits team to respond in a timely manner. ■

# Personnel Changes



## Welcome Aboard:

**Sarah Tipton** – Administrative Specialist III, Prairie County  
**Robin Hansen** – 4-H Program Assistant - 4H & Youth Development, Vines Center  
**Amy Bond** – Administrative Specialist III, Phillips County  
**Chancee Jennings** – Administrative Specialist III, Ashley County  
**Martin Finley** – Buyer - Procurement, Washington County

## Farewell to:

**Kim Huffman** – Family & Consumer Science - EFNEP Program Assistant, Craighead County  
**Ericca Lynn Corker** – County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Bradley County  
**Angie Freel** – 4H & Youth Development - Instructor, LRSO  
**Jasmine Long** – Family & Consumer Science - Administrative Specialist III, LRSO  
**Cathrine Schwader** – Deputy Program Manager - Arkansas APEX Accelerator - Community, Professional, & Economic Development, LRSO