

November 2025 No. 3883



John D. Anderson

From the Director

By the time you read this, Thanksgiving will likely be behind us. You might be debating whether to power through a few more days of turkey sandwiches or clear out the fridge and move on. My advice? Don't quit just yet — if you're tired of sandwiches, turn that turkey into soup!

Thanksgiving is a unique holiday. It's not tied to a specific person or event but rather set aside for reflection and gratitude — a practice that research shows is healthy year-round, though I admit I don't do it nearly enough. It's nice to have a day built into the calendar to remind us.

I also think it's fitting that our Division awards ceremony happens in November, close to Thanksgiving. Both occasions invite us to pause and focus on what's gone right. Too often, our time and energy are consumed by problems or potential issues, while successes quietly go unnoticed.

Parents of more than one child might relate to this phenomenon—or maybe that's just me.

I want to congratulate all of our Division award winners for their outstanding work and thank them for setting an example of excellence. I won't list every name here for fear of leaving someone out, but I do want to highlight one award in particular: the John White Team Award, which went to the Feral Hog Team this year. That team included the late Becky McPeake. We were honored to have her husband, Stan, accept Becky's award on her behalf. Becky's career exemplified excellence to the very end, and it was a privilege to recognize her one more time.

During my own Thanksgiving break, I've reflected on something I'm deeply grateful for: all of you. This year has brought its share of challenges, but your hard work, dedication, and commitment to service have been both inspiring and a source of pride. I hope you enjoyed some well-deserved rest and time with loved ones this holiday — you've certainly earned it. ■

INSIDE SCOOP

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DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE RESEARCH & EXTENSION **Madison County**

4-H Meats Eval Team Places 4th Nationally

Arkansas' State Champion 4-H Meats Evaluation team placed 4th overall in the National 4-H Meats Judging

Madison County 4-H is 4th Overall Team at the National 4-H Meats
Judging Contest. (L to R): Dr. Josh Hasty, Cache S., Phalynn S.
(alternate), Ashlyn D., Vallie Y., Jade E., Coach Caramie Edwards.

Contest as a part of the American Royal. This contest, organized by the American Meat Science Association, was held in Manhattan, Kansas in October. The four-member team was coached by Madison County 4-H/FCS Agent Caramie Edwards and Dr. Josh Hasty, a 4-H volunteer and Tyson meat scientist.

The team was also earned 3rd place in Pork, Beef, Retail Judging, Retail ID, Reasons, and Total Judging.

Team members also earned individual - 3rd in Pork, 4th in Retail Judging, 5th in Reasons, 5th in Total Judging, and 10th Overall. The dedication and hard work of these Madison County 4-Hers and coaches are truly commendable. ■

Poinsett County

Ag Day 2025

Ag Day began in 2017 as a Poinsett County Cooperative Extension youth event to provide elementary students with a hands-on opportunity to learn about farm and agriculture life. The annual event has increased in attendance and impact over the past eight years to become the largest event of its type in the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension system!

Ag Day 2025, held October 14th at the Main Street Learning Park in Harrisburg, was the best ever - hosting 546 second and third grade students from every school district in Poinsett County. Sponsors included Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board, Momentum Ag and Poinsett County Farm Bureau.

Sixty-two volunteers, including Harrisburg FFA students, rotated groups of elementary students



and educators through 10 learning stations staffed by educators and industry leaders. Exhibitors included Northeast Rice Research & Extension Center, Witcher Farms, Jeff Woods Bees, Greenway Equipment, Eagle Seed, Poinsett Farm Bureau, Arkansas Game & Fish, Poinsett State Park, Cross County and Jackson County Extension, and UADA.

Elected county officials and state legislators, who were among the early supporters of Main Street Learning Park, expressed their continued support for both Ag Day and the park.



Jefferson County Greens Field Day

More than 90 people attended the Jefferson County Master Gardeners annual Greens Field Day at the Jefferson County Extension Office demonstration garden on Nov. 6. Jefferson County Ag Agent Brady Harmon and Master Gardener Kenneth Smith presented information about growing and harvesting greens. Several Master Gardeners assisted the attendees with harvesting and weighing the greens. Attendees harvested 575 pounds of greens to share.





EFNEP Western Style

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) Little Rock Team held its annual statewide meeting at the Little Rock State Office on Oct. 16, welcoming program assistants and agents from the Ozark, Ouachita, and Delta Districts. This year's theme,

(L to R): EFNEP Agents and Program Assistants- Cathy Love, Wendy Crawford and Jacquline Silva; Back (L to R): Ashley Edgmon, Stephanie Overman

and Vernoica Guerrero-Pesina.

"EFNEP Western Style," brought a fun and festive atmosphere, with attendees donning jazzy cowboy attire to celebrate the occasion.

The agenda was highly interactive, featuring a virtual welcome from Dr. John D. Anderson

and Dr. Nina Roofe, along with warm greetings from district and associate directors who expressed their appreciation for the EFNEP program assistants and the impactful work they do in their counties.

Program assistants engaged in meaningful discussions

on recruitment and retention strategies and networked with one another. Program assistants were recognized for achieving their adult and youth program goals. Certificates of achievement were presented in celebration of their dedication and success in serving their communities through



Dr. Teresa Henson presents Ms. Louvenia Harris Certificate of achievements for EFNEP Adult and Youth programming.

FCS Agents Honored at NEAFCS Conference

Forty-one Extension employees participated in the 2025 National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This year's theme was SPARK connections, SPARK innovations, SPARK Communities, and SPARK growth.

Faulkner County Agent Mary Beth Groce and Benton County Agent Trudy McManus received Distinguished Service Awards. Michelle Carter, regional program associate for CDC HOP, received the Continued Excellence Award.

Other award winners included:

- Quad Whitson & Team Communications TV/Video Award - 1st place National Winner & 1st place Regional Winner
- **Joy West & Team** Excellence in Multi State Collaboration Award - 1st place National Winner & 1st place Regional Winner.
- Heather Wingo & Team Family Health & Wellness Award - 1st place National Winner & 1st place Regional Winner.
- Laura Hendrix & Team Educational Curriculum Package Award - 1st place National Winner & 1st place Regional Winner.
- Anna Goff & Team Mary W. Wellness Memorial Diversity Award - 2nd place National Winner & 2nd place Regional Winner.
- JoAnn Vann & Team Social Media Education Award-3rd place National Winner &



2nd place Regional Winner.

- Heather Wingo & Team Program Excellence
 Through Research Award 3rd place National Winner
 & 2nd place Regional Winner.
- **JoAnn Vann** Communications Written Media Award 2nd place Regional Winner.
- **Heather Wingo** Communications Written Media Award 3rd place Regional Winner.

Joy West Elected NEAFCS Southern Region Director

Jackson County FCS agent Joy West will serve as Southern Region Director for the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences for the next two years. She was elected during the 2025 NEAFCS session held in Grand Rapids, Michigan. In this leadership role, West will serve as the liaison between the NEAFCS executive board and the state affiliate presidents in the southern region. ■

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 **uada.edu**. And if you click on view all news, you'll see all of our archived news stories back to 2014.

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



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Montgomery County

Honors Veterans with "All Veterans Park"

Montgomery County celebrated the groundbreaking of the new All Veterans Park at Mt. Ida City Park on Nov. 8. Members of the Extension Homemakers Council (EHC) and 4-H joined community leaders and residents to honor local veterans and their families. During the ceremony, the Montgomery County EHC "Stitchin' Friends" group recognized 12 county veterans with handmade patriotic quilts in appreciation for their service and sacrifice. Each quilt is a unique, once-in-a-lifetime gift presented in a custom case.

"Stitchin' Friends," established in 2007, is part of the Montgomery County Extension Homemakers Council. The group has 11 active members who meet weekly, spending 50 to 80 hours on each quilt. Their work is supported by generous community donations.

Including the Nov. 8 presentation, the club has presented 295 quilts to Montgomery County veterans. Approximately 400 people attended the event, with Montgomery County 4-H and county fire departments assisting by setting up and taking down chairs and tables. The ceremony highlighted community pride and gratitude for those who served our nation.

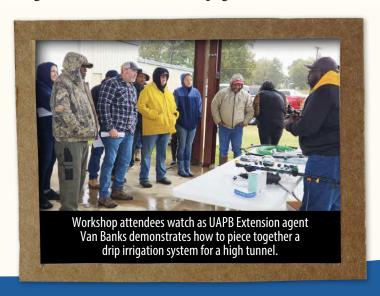


East Arkansas High Tunnel Workshop

The UA System Division of Agriculture High Tunnel Production team hosted a full-day high tunnel workshop Oct. 29 in Marianna, in partnerships with the University of Arkansas Pine Bluff and Arkansas Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE). Despite the cold and rain, more than 40 people attended the workshop and learned from specialists who presented or demonstrated topics related to best practices for high tunnels, including soil and pest management and drip irrigation systems.

Many who attended expressed how valuable the workshop was and appreciated learning about all the resources available to them as Arkansas growers. For more information about high tunnel production,

contact Taunya Ernst (ternst@uada.edu) or visit the High Tunnel Production webpage. ■





LEADERSHIP LOG BL



iLEAD

From Kittens to Cotton: iLEAD V Digs Deep into the Fields and Future of Arkansas Agriculture

From rescuing kittens to exploring cutting-edge research fields, iLEAD V's second seminar offered participants an unforgettable look at Arkansas agriculture in action. Over two days in northeast Arkansas, the cohort experienced the full spectrum of the state's agricultural heartbeat—from cotton and soybeans to rice and research innovation—discovering how science, teamwork, and a shared passion for learning drive progress both in the fields and behind the scenes. Read blog posts. Day One by Marla Lane, St. Francis County Family and Consumer Science Agent/Staff Chair. Day Two by Lacie Rothrock, Human Resource Generalist.









Collage of iLEAD V's experience in northeast Arkansas from cotton to kittens.

LeadAR

LeadAR Class Prepares to Tackle Policy After Reflecting on National Study Tour

The current LeadAR Class 21 gathered virtually to reflect on lessons from their recent national study tour in Washington, D.C., and to prepare for their upcoming policy-focused session in Little Rock this January. Read details here.

Leadership Lunch and Learn Leadership Lunch and Learn: When Everyone Leads.

The October Leadership Lunch and Learn featured a review of "When Everyone *Leads: How the Toughest* Challenges Get Seen and Solved," by Ed O'Malley and Julia Fabris McBride. Karl Bradley with the Extension Foundation guided participants through the book's message that leadership is an activity anyone can practice, inspiring all to lead from where they are. Watch the recording <u>here</u>.



Experiential Scholars Program (ESP)

Read the blog post <u>here</u>.

Applications open. The Experiential Scholars Program (ESP) is a paid 9-week summer internship program for undergraduate juniors and seniors interested in working in water/soil conservation, food health/nutrition/ safety or community development. Each scholar will be assigned a focus area mentor. Mentors will train, provide hands-on learning opportunities and will work with interns to develop a special project such as a field demonstration, organizing a public meeting or other related task as part of the internship. More details here. Applications close on January 31, 2026. ■



Tech Corner

Browser & Browser Extension Policy Update

As part of our ongoing commitment to security and compliance, we are rolling out a new browser policy starting November 3, 2025, that will block unapproved browsers and browser extensions across our environment.

Why are we Blocking Unapproved Browser Extensions?

Browser extensions can be incredibly useful, enhancing productivity, customizing user experience, and streamlining workflows. However, they also pose serious security and compliance risks:

- Many extensions request broad access to browser activity, which can expose sensitive data such as login credentials, customer information, and internal systems.
- Even popular and trusted extensions can be compromised through malicious updates or sold to third parties with questionable intentions.
- Extensions can be used as vectors for malware, phishing attacks, and unauthorized data collection.

If you rely on a specific extension for your work and do not see it on the <u>approved list</u>, please submit a <u>software request</u> to have the browser extension reviewed.

Can Hackers Control Your Computer?

Yes, hackers can take control of your computer, and it's more common than many realize. Whether through phishing emails, malicious downloads, or exploiting outdated software, attackers use various tactics to gain access. One of the most dangerous tools in a hacker's arsenal is Remote Access Trojans (RATs) malware that allows them to control your system without your knowledge. Once inside, they can steal data, monitor activity, install more malware, or even lock your files and demand ransom.

How Does it Happen?

- Clicking on suspicious email links or attachments
- Downloading software from untrusted sources
- Using public Wi-Fi without protection
- Failing to update your operating system and apps

Warning Signs Include:

- Slow performance or strange pop-ups
- Programs opening or closing unexpectedly
- Disabled antivirus or firewall
- Unusual network activity

Protect Yourself by:

- Keeping software and antivirus tools up to date
- Using strong, unique passwords and enabling multi-factor authentication
- Avoiding public Wi-Fi for sensitive tasks or using a VPN
- Being cautious with emails and unfamiliar websites

Cybersecurity isn't just an IT issue, it's a shared responsibility. Whether you're behind a desk or on the go, simple habits like updating software, spotting phishing attempts, and using strong passwords go a long way. The more proactive we are, the harder it becomes for hackers to succeed. Stay informed, stay secure, and help build a safer digital environment for everyone.

Zoom Pro Tip – Share Your Screen Without Revealing Your Desktop

Sometimes you need to share your screen during a Zoom meeting, but you need to keep the information on your desktop private. Here are 2 ways to manage what you share with attendees.

First, you can temporarily "hide" the files stored on your desktop before starting a Zoom meeting.

- 1. Right click on your desktop
- 2. Select "View"
- 3. Uncheck "Show desktop icons"

Then, "unhide" the files after the Zoom meeting.

- 1. Right click on your desktop
- 2. Select "View"
- 3. Check "Show desktop icons"

Second, you can select to share an Application Window during a Zoom meeting.

- 1. Select "Share" in the Zoom meeting controls
- 2. Select the application window
- 3. Select "Share" button

For more details, visit **Sharing your screen or desktop on Zoom**

Hump Day Hacks

Hump Day Hack resources can be found on the Hump Day Hacks Resource page in Team Dynamix. October's hacks included detecting and reporting Phishing emails, using Quick Steps in Outlook, using the Waiting Room feature in Zoom, and Accessibility Shortcuts for Adobe Acrobat.

See you at the next Hump Day Hacks on Jan. 28, 2026! ■



2025 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 <u>Tech</u>
<u>Tuesday Blog page</u>. More Tech Tuesday topics coming soon! Did you miss November's Ask the Experts? Check out the recording and resources.

Soybean Science Challenge Hosts Booth



The Soybean Science Challenge (SSC) hosted a booth at the Arkansas Public School Resource Center's (APSRC) annual fall conference in Hot Springs on Oct. 21.

The APSRC is a service-oriented, nonprofit membership organization that offers support, technical assistance, and training to charter schools and school districts across the state.

Keith Harris, SSC coordinator, and Diedre Young, SSC curriculum specialist, interacted with more than

Diedre Young, SSC Curriculum Specialist (L), discussing the SSC programs' mission, resources, and benefits with attendees at the APSRC Annual Fall Conference.

200 teachers, support staff, program directors, and district administrators. The SSC team encouraged attendees to use the program's standards-aligned lessons, curriculum, and other

free resources, available on the Extension's 'soywhatsup' website.

The SSC also directs the School and Community Garden Project to engage youth in hands-on project-based

learning about agriculture, healthy eating, environmental stewardship, and



agriculture careers. This project's goal is to have a soybean-growing garden at every school in the state.

The Soybean Science Challenge is a partnership between the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board and the Cooperative Extension Service. The program is a farmer-funded, statewide middle and high school education program that seeks to increase student knowledge about the value of Arkansas soybeans to the Arkansas economy, to the labor force, and to feed and fuel the world.

For more information, contact Dr. Julie Robinson, jrobinson@uada.edu or Keith Harris, krharris@uada.edu. ■

Delta Jewels EHC Club Wins Best of Show

The St. Francis County EHC club, The Delta Jewels, started earlier this year, and they have been busy ever since. In October, the Delta Jewels entered a homemade mini house in the arts and crafts category at the St. Francis County Fair.

Not only did it win first place, it also won Best of Show! This month, they constructed and delivered sock gift bags to residents of Crestpark Nursing Home in Forrest City. Club members include Betty Harris, Jessica Harris (president), Mykela Sparkmon, Mary Hawkins and Jennifer Harris. Well done, Ladies! ■



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Bringing Back the4-H Volunteer Conference

4-H volunteers, agents, and professionals across the state and country gathered November 7-9 at the 4-H Center to attend the revived Arkansas 4-H Volunteer Conference. Approximately 50 attendees visited workshops spanning topics such as recognizing child abuse, allergy awareness, creepy crawlies, team building, self-care, and the basics of some of our core programming across the state, including O-Rama, Poultry, Food for Thought, and more. 4-H volunteers are what make our program function, and we couldn't be more appreciative of their service to 4-H. Each volunteer was able to take away valuable resources, including curriculum, hands-on kits, educational presentation slides, and a range of other materials.

In addition to the learning aspect of this conference, participants had time to network with others, a core component of building relationships, sharing resources, and learning



from and connecting with those who have had similar experiences. Volunteers and 4-H professionals alike can mark their calendars for the next conference, Nov. 13-15, 2026. ■



Small Ruminant Extension Workshops

Aim to Expand Sheep & Goat Markets

The Sheep and Goat Carcass Fabrication Workshop was held on Oct. 22-23 at the Arkansas State University Meat Lab in Jonesboro, attracting 20 meat plant workers and producers interested in learning how to properly fabricate carcasses into valuable meat cuts, how to produce cold cuts and sausages, and the use of the offal as a source of protein, which is normally discarded.

The Sheep and Goat Culinary Short Course was held Oct. 28-29 at the Arkansas Food Innovation Center in Springdale, attracting 10 chefs, nutritionists, educators, home cooks, and small ruminant producers to develop butchery skills and cooking techniques tailored to specific meat cuts, flavor profiles, and presentation, including offal and charcuterie.

To serve as the speaker in these two workshops, UADA brought Chef Anderson Rocha, an internationally renowned animal scientist and chef specialized in sheep and goats, with 25 years of experience.

At the end of the Culinary Short Course, Chef Rocha and the participants presented their creations in a tasting menu dinner at the Pauline Whitaker Animal Science Center for U of A/UADA faculty, staff, and administration, as well as stakeholders, showcasing the importance of the small ruminant industry and the versatility of lamb and goat meat in the culinary arts. The event was broadcasted live on the Arkansas Small Ruminant Extension Facebook page (@uaex.smallruminants). The initiative, sponsored by Farm Credit, was a cornerstone of the new phase of the UADA Small Ruminant Extension program, which adopts a value chain approach to lay the groundwork for expanding markets and consumption of sheep and goat products.

Craighead County

Master Gardeners Receive Award

Beautification starts with community pride, and no one shows that better than the Craighead County

Master Gardeners. They are making a difference in Jonesboro and were recently awarded a Certificate of Merit by the Keep Jonesboro Beautiful committee for their work on the Craighead County Courthouse gardens. The Downtown Project committee also cares for gardens at the Craighead County Extension courthouse. ■





Howard County

EHC Crocktober

Howard County Extension Homemakers Council held their annual Crocktober soup luncheon on October 21 at the Howard County Extension Homemaker Center in Nashville. All of the clubs worked together to make delicious soups for the community, and the Master Gardeners provided a beautiful display at the entrance. The soups offered were White Chicken Chili, Texas Stew, Creamy Tomato Basil Soup, and Zesty Chicken Soup. ■

Grants & Contracts

PROJECT TITLE	AWARD AMOUNT	PI	GRANTING AGENCY
Best Management Practices for Neopestalotiopsis in Arkansas Strawberries	\$54,983	Aaron Joseph Cato	Arkansas Agriculture Department
Crop Protection and Pest Management – Arkansas Extension Implementation Project (2025–2026)	\$224,138	Glenn Studebaker	National Institute of Food & Agriculture (NIFA)
City of White Hall Stormwater Education & Outreach Program (2025–2028)	\$31,683	Kevin L Harris	City of White Hall
Corteva Rice Delphacid Study (Protocol NA2557M052C1)	\$4,800	Nick Ryan Bateman	Corteva Agriscience LLC
Southern Risk Management Education Center Program (2025–2028)	\$2,121,750	Ron L. Rainey	National Institute of Food & Agriculture (NIFA)
TOTAL AWARDS FOR OCTOBER 2025: \$2,437,354			

Agents Prep for Poultry Contests

Agents from around the state recently met in Saline County for a two-day poultry contest in-service training. They learned the rules for the different contests, including O-Rama Poultry Skill-A-Thon, poultry judging, and poultry BBQ. They also learned what it takes to train teams for those different events and participated in mock judging contests including agents judging chicken nuggets, identifying poultry breeds, and displaying their grilling skills.



Benefits Corner

As we approach the conclusion of the calendar year, we would like to remind all employees of several important dates and deadlines related to your benefits and year-end processes. Please review the information below carefully to ensure your records are accurate and up to date.

1. Benefits Review and Updates

- For those that are enrolled in the University's Medical Plan, UMR, you will receive new ID Cards for the 2026 plan year. The cards will be mailed to your home address directly from UMR.
- Review and update your personal information, including emergency contact, and mailing address.
- Review your beneficiary designations for your life insurance and retirement plans.

2. Flexible Spending and Health Savings Accounts

• For those participating in an FSA, please note that eligible expenses must be incurred by December 31 to qualify

for reimbursement under the current 2025 plan year.

- Any unused FSA funds that are not eligible for carryover will be forfeited after the deadline.
 The maximum carryover amount is \$640.
- HSA contributions for the year may be adjusted through December 31st.

3. Annual Leave Balances

- Review your annual leave balance to ensure that you will not lose annual leave at the end of the year.
 Remember that you can only carryover 240 hours of annual leave.
- Please remember to enter your annual leave and birthday (if applicable) in Workday per the Holiday Schedule for December 29th, 30th and 31st.

If you have any questions regarding your benefits or year-end procedures, please contact the Human Resources Department at yourbenefits@uada.edu. ■

Personnel Changes

Welcome Aboard:

Ally Grote – Assistant Professor - Beef Cattle Specialist - Animal Science, LRSO

Jorja Tyler – EFNEP Program Assistant - Family & Consumer Science, Randolph County

Wendy Crawford – EFNEP Program Assistant - Family & Consumer Science, Crawford

Lori Wilson – EFNEP Program Assistant - Family & Consumer Science, Cross County

Reese Davidson – Fiscal Support Specialist - Business Office, LRSO



Md Sahidur Rahman – Animal Science - Program Associate, LRSO Corbin Huffstutter – 4H & Youth Development - 4-H Program Technician, Arkansas 4-H Center Programs Leslie Sullivan – Administrative Specialist III, Prairie County

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