BLUE LETTER

September 2020 No. 3821



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Staying Strong

I am very encouraged to see all the activities reported in this month's Blue Letter! Everyday from my office I get to see the persistence and innovation that our employees show as they continue to effectively deliver programs to Arkansans, and we, as an Extension Service, are able to fulfill our mission even with the challenges of working under COVID-19 restrictions.

This effort may be having the biggest impact on the lives of our 4-H kids. We have had to get creative, but every online livestock event, every limited in-person workshop, fun shop, club meeting and other interactions are impacting, and perhaps normalizing, the lives of 4-Hers just a little bit in this time of uncertainty that they are growing up in. Recently, we have been happy to approve some in-person events with some very well thought out plans for social distancing. I applaud all the agents and specialists who have gone above and beyond to make these events happen.

I also want to recognize all the other groups that have submitted plans for holding COVID friendly in-person meetings in other areas of Extension, especially for the patience of those dealing with outside groups. Whether it is our meeting or someone using our buildings, we need to continue to lead by example with proper PPE and social distancing. This has resulted in a slight return to normalcy for some. For the most part, this has been a

smooth process, and I am pleased that at this point most plans that come through contain all the needed precautions. Please continue to use good judgment as we for now officially remain in Stage II.

We conducted our first webinar for "On the Job with Bob." I was pleased with the end product and will just say we have some very creative people in this organization and especially in our communications group. If you are not using this valuable resource in your program, then you probably need to talk to them to see what they can do for you! The purpose of this monthly webinar is really to keep everyone informed and to educate ourselves from time to time on what we do. This past one featured one of my favorites, the ballot initiatives publication. If you vote, then you should read this material; even if you do not vote, which you should, this publication offers a peek inside the lawmaking process and debate here in the Natural State.

Finally, I want to applaud the efforts of our online field day teams for rice, soybean and corn. These field days have been well-received and represent a real team effort between various individual programs, the Agriculture Experiment Station and our communications group. The turnout has been good for these, and we have learned a lot. I expect that we will continue to see events like this long after COVID-19 is a distant memory. Keep up the good work out there!

INSIDE SCOOP

- 2. Fall Schedule of Produce Safety Grower Trainings
- 3. Franklin Co. 4-H Teen Leaders Beautify Local Park
- 4. PTAC Day

- 5. Baxter Co. 4-H Stay Busy with Summer Workshops
- 6. Tony Baker's Photo Featured
- 7. Tech Corner ...And much more!



BL

Fall Schedule of Produce Safety Grower Trainings

The Local, Regional, & Safe Foods team, led by Dr. Amanda Philyaw Perez, hosts monthly remote Produce Safety Alliance

Grower Trainings to help produce growers understand comply with the FDA's Food Safety Modernization Act Produce Safety Rule.

Trainings will be offered Oct. 21-22, Nov. 9-10, and Dec. 1-2. Each month's training will be conducted 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m. over two consecutive days. Registration closes one week before the first date of each training. The trainings are available for fruit and vegetable growers as well as anyone

interested in learning about produce safety and the FSMA PSR. After attending both days, participants will receive a

certificate of completion. There are 20 seats available for the public and five seats available for county agents. Those interested can register for a training at www.uaex.edu/produce-safety. County agents can email Julia Fryer at jfryer@uaex.edu for free registration.

Savethe Date!

SEPTEMBER 23-24

OCTOBER 21-22

NOVEMBER 9-10

DECEMBER 1-2

All trainings are 8 a.m. -12:30 p.m.





Soybean Science Challenge Sees Bumper Crop of Community Gardens

The Soybean Science Challenge had a bumper year with 57 community gardens harvesting soybeans. The gardens were statewide and ranged from elementary schools to Master Gardeners.

Soybeans are easy to grow, are a complete protein and provide an excellent alternative to eating meat. The best thing is they taste good and are a wonderful addition to meals. For individuals or groups to receive soybean seeds, their garden must be educational/school related, 4-H-based or planted to serve the food banks or other hunger-related projects in the area in which they are grown. Anyone whose garden fulfills at least one of these requirements and wants to plant edamame can go to www.uaex.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.

The Soybean Science Challenge is a partnership between the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board and the Cooperative Extension Service. For more information, contact Dr. Julie Robinson, jrobinson@uaex.edu or Diedre Young dyoung@uaex.edu. ■



Franklin Co. 4-H Teen Leaders Beautify

Local Park

If you visit Ozark city park, you'll find colorful, themed park tables with no two alike. There's a 4-H table, a space-themed table, a splatter-painted table, a matchbox car table, a game table and a sports table. Other tables depict Arkansas river scenes, state symbols and even a koi pond. All of these are the handiwork of Franklin County 4-H teen leaders. They wanted to do a community service project to benefit their park.

The park tables needed fresh paint, and many of the youth enjoy art projects, so they proposed their idea to the Ozark mayor, met with them before the pandemic. The teens completed their park project July 13. Each teen leader was responsible for the art design and painting



Franklin County 4-H Member Zarah D. designed and painted a table that showcases Arkansas State symbols



Member Elizabeth D. wowed the community with a stunning depiction of the Ozark,
Arkansas River Bridge at sunset.

of a couple of

tables. The service project was a success with many community and city council members stopping by to admire their work. ■

Lawrence Co. 4-H Participates in ExCEL

Members of the Ralph Joseph Youth Leadership 4-H Club completed the ExCEL program where they learn to work together to overcome obstacles, step outside of their comfort zone, and test their limits. The club is made up of high school juniors from each school district in Lawrence County. Each year, a new group of juniors attends the ExCEL program, conducted by Luke Nipper and Taylor Knox, at the Arkansas 4-H Center. ■



Pictured Left to Right: Kaylee H., Savannah A., Oliva F., Walker S., and Kailey M. Participants create a "bridge" to get from one island to another across the course using boards and pedestals.

Department of Animal Science

Alumna Receives USDA Farm to School Grant

Kathy Hall, who teaches career and technical courses and agriculture at Central Junior High in Springdale, (M.S. in



1986 and Ph.D. in 1993) received a USDA Farm to School grant. The Animal Department looks forward to collaborating with Hall via virtual and face-to-face (when allowed) hands-on experiences and field trips to U of A System Division of Agriculture research farms. ■



Winrock Seeks Volunteers with Expertise

Winrock International is seeking volunteers for short-term virtual assignments in Ghana, Guinea, Senegal, Nigeria and Mali. Volunteers with expertise in postharvest storage of grains, food safety, agribusiness planning, branding and marketing of ag products, farm planning and management are particularly needed.

The USAID funded Farmer-to-Farmer program provides volunteer technical assistance to farmers, agribusinesses, and education and extension providers in developing countries to promote sustainable improvements in the agricultural sector. The program focuses on agriculture education and training, rural livelihood development, and postharvest quality. Volunteers typically spend 2 to 4 weeks on assignment; however, due to COVID-19,

Winrock is now connecting volunteers with beneficiaries virtually through platforms such as Teams, Google, and Zoom.

"This might really be an opportunity for some folks that have thought about working internationally, but are apprehensive about the travel," said J. Ples Spradley, associate professor - pesticide safety education, who has participated in the program. "My experiences with Winrock International have been wonderful, both professionally and personally."

Virtual assignments and an application link are on Winrock's website at www.winrock.org/volunteer. For more information, email volunteer@winrock.org. ■

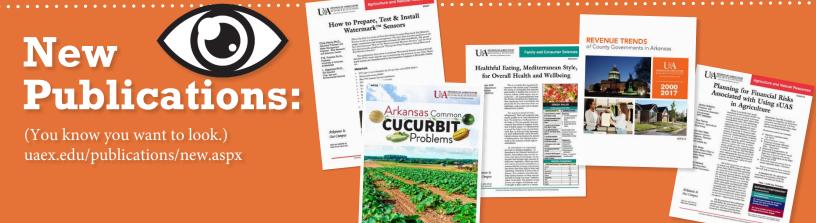
PTAC Day

Extension's Procurement Technical Assistance Center participated Sept. 16 in national PTAC Day, to celebrate the contracting success of small businesses that have benefited from training and technical assistance delivered by their local Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs).

The day was celebrated with social media campaigns, public relations initiatives, online and in-person events and more. Due to the pandemic, the 2020 celebration centerpiece was a free webinar for clients and others interested in government contracting.

Arkansas' PTAC center houses in the Cooperative Extension Service's main office in Little Rock; there's a satellite office in Bentonville. The center helps clients anywhere in Arkansas with bid opportunities, government certifications and registrations, solicitation reviews, trainings, one-on-one consultations and more. Staff are currently conducting outreach programs virtually. If you would like PTAC to conduct an outreach program in your county or know a business that would be a good fit for government contracting, contact PTAC by email at ptac@uaex.edu or (501) 671-2390.





Baxter Co. 4-H Stay Busy with Summer Workshops



Baxter County 4-H youth tried their hands at baking, barn quilt painting and jewelry making — all through the county's virtual summer workshop series. For each workshop, Baxter County mailed a supply list to all participants. Baxter County 4-H

Darlene Millard's finished barn quilt.

members received kits containing the needed supplies for the workshop. Volunteer instructors led the workshops via video conferencing with 24 youth and adults participating. In June, participants learned the basic techniques and chemistry of bread making while enhancing their fundamental skills in food preparation. In July, they measured,

taped and painted their barn quilts. One participant had this to say: "Thank you so very much for allowing me to participate! This was an excellent workshop and great collaboration. Kudos for innovative programming." The summer workshop series ended in August with a jewelry making session.



Above and right. Youth participants in summer workshops.



Jefferson, Pulaski Co 4-H Team Up to Offer Funshops

4-Hers from Jefferson and Pulaski counties looked forward to Thursdays this summer. That's when 4-H agents Pia Woods and Erica Williams delivered Connect Thursday 4-H virtual funshops. Since most youth summer camps and workshops



Pulaski County 4-H member, Faith W. makes slime during 4-H Funshop.

were canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the agents took the workshops to the students by delivering kits to their doorsteps. The kits included workshop supplies, which were provided at no cost to 4-H Club participants, thanks to financial support from the Jefferson County 4-H Club Foundation and the Pulaski County 4-H Club Foundation.

They created canvas paintings, slime, refrigerator pickles, strawberry freezer jam and ice cream. Most importantly, 4-H members connected with their 4-H peers and enjoyed pands-on learning activities while remaining safe during the pandemic.

the pandemic.

and they learned about food

safety and food preservation.

Pulaski Co. 4-H member, Faith W. cores strawberries to make freezer jam during 4-H Funshop.

Jefferson County 4-H member, Sylvana B. samples refrigerator pickles made during 4-H Funshop.

Youth learned about the science of a virus, how to document history by journaling, making wise consumer decisions,



BL Virtual Field Trip ⁶ Focuses on Collaboration

On Aug. 19, the Soil and Water Conservation Virtual Field Trip (VFT) series hosted its seventh live broadcast – Improving Soils and Profitability Through Collaboration. The onehour event featured Adam Eades, district conservationist for USDA-NRCS; Katie Womack, irrigation specialist for Greene County Conservation District; Clay Smith, Greene County row crop farmer; Dave Freeze, Greene County extension agent; and Matt Fryer, soil science instructor. Speakers discussed how their collaborative efforts have benefited the farmers they serve and the natural resources we share, through soil health on-farm demonstrations.

The subject matter experts answered questions live.

There was a combined total of 84 participants from 11 states and one participant from Nigeria. The VFT recording can be viewed at https://youtu.be/vED6YL8pC6Q. More information and links for the Soil and Water Conservation VFT series are here: https://bit.ly/NRCS-AR-Soil-and-Water-VFT-Webpage. The Soil and Water Conservation VFT series is funded by USDA-NRCS. For more information, contact series coordinator Rita Watson, virtual education specialist in Community, Professional and Economic Development, at rwatson@uaex.edu. ■











Speakers: Matt Fryer (UADA), Katie Womack (Conservation Districts), Dave Freeze (UADA), Adam Eades (NRCS), and Clay Smith (Farmer).

Tony Baker's Photo Featured

Congratulations to Tony Baker, whose photo "Entryway" has been accepted into the Arkansas Arts Council's 2021



Small Works on Paper exhibition. The black and white photo, depicting a scene on the shores of the Arkansas River at Little Rock, will be part of the Arkansas Arts Council's annual touring exhibit. Baker, the operations manager at the C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center, has been a fine art photographer since 2005. This is his

second time to have work accepted into the "Small Works on Paper" show. He's also been accepted twice into the American Royal Art Show, Arkansas Arts Center Museum School Gallery Exhibit and the South Arkansas Arts Center Juried Arts Competition. Baker previously taught photography at the Arkansas Arts Center.





Tech Corner



iDrive to be Discontinued October 23, 2020

All employees outside the state office will need to remove iDrive and setup OneDrive backup as quickly as possible. Submit a support request now to have the Call Center assist you - https://uaex.formstack.com/forms/call_center_direct.

It is imperative that you get this completed; you must ensure your data is protected at all times.

VPN now Requires MFA!

Logging into our VPN now requires MFA. This is the same credentials and MFA that you currently use for email and Workday.

Note: MFA for VPN does not support the "SMS (text) to phone" authentication method. If you are currently using this method, you will need to change to either the "call to phone" or "authentication app" method before you will be able to use MFA for VPN. Visit this site to change your method: https://aka.ms/mfasetup.

For anyone who needs instructions for setting up VPN, refer to these instructions: https://division.uaex.edu/employees/information-technology/get-connected/employees/aspx, click on VPN Remote Access.



TECH ME Seriously

Check out the latest TECH ME Seriously vlog posts:

- 1. How to use the OneDrive Mobile App for P-Card Receipts.
- 2. Best Practices in Panopto (Folder, Video, and Share Video Settings).

Visit https://employees.uaex.edu/techmeseriously to view vlogs.

Telework Tuesday

Join IT for their weekly open office drop-in session for answers to your software/hardware questions. Anything from Box, Zoom, Outlook, OneDrive to monitors, printers, cabling, and all other techie stuff.



When? Every Tuesday from 2 – 3 p.m. Look for the link to join in the Weekly Tech Talk newsletter delivered to your inbox on Monday afternoons. ■

UPCOMING TECH TUESDAY WEBINARS

- Tuesday, October 13: FoxIt PDF Pro The Game Changer.
- Tuesday, November 10: Beyond Doodle Taking Your Surveys to the Next Level.
- Tuesday, December 8: The Best of Telecommuting.

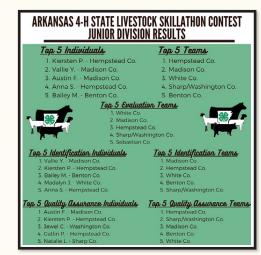
Did you miss the Workday Ready Tech Tuesday topics? Visit https://uaex.edu/techtuesdays to view recordings.





4-H Livestock Judging and Skillathon Contests Held Virtually

The 2020 Arkansas 4-H Livestock Judging and Skillathon Contests were held in virtual formats on Aug. 10 and 12. There were 67 4-H'ers from 13 counties who competed in the livestock judging contest and 55 4-H'ers from 11 counties who competed in the livestock skillathon contest. This was the first year for a junior division to be included in the skillathon contest. 4-H'ers judged 12 classes of breeding and market livestock, answered questions on one class, and gave 2-3 sets of reasons through JudgingPro.com.





Livestock skillathon contestants utilized

Microsoft Teams to compete in Breed ID, Equipment ID, Retail Meat Cut ID, Quality Assurance, Quiz, and Hay Judging individually. As a team, they also competed in Livestock Feeding Scenarios; Animal Breeding Scenarios; Management, Performance & Marketing Information Exercise; and Meat & Carcass Evaluation. ■

Webinars Offer Regulatory Assistance for Small Food Businesses

The Local, Regional & Safe Foods team will offer webinars on Oct. 16 and 23 as part of its Lunchtime Learning Series: Making Food for Profit. Both webinars will be 12-1 p.m. via zoom and registration is required.

Oct. 16 — Starting a Small Food Business in Arkansas: Cottage Food. Since 2011, the Arkansas Cottage Food Law has allowed residents to sell certain non-hazardous food items direct to the public. These "cottage foods" are specific types of food made in home kitchens; however, not all foods can be made at home and sold to the public. Food entrepreneurs and home-based food businesses can learn more about cottage foods in this webinar, co-hosted with Family & Consumer Sciences. Register here: https://uaex.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_WWB awTARRD2w UE0Z-biew.

Oct. 23 — Food Safety Documentation for Small Food Manufacturers: FSMA Compliance and COVID-19 Preparedness Small-scale food manufacturers (with less than \$1 million in annual sales) must understand and comply with state and federal regulations to safely produce packaged food products. Abby Snyder, food safety specialist with Cornell University, will lead this conversation about Good Manufacturing Practices, policies to enhance COVID-19 prevention and required FSMA documentation. Food manufacturers, food protection regulators and shared-use kitchen managers should attend. Register here: https://uaex.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN

UCNjJIRwQISabuAb1f Ubw. ■





Arkansas Beef Council Funds Research



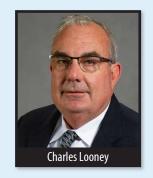
Several Animal Science faculty members have received funding from the Arkansas Beef Council.

Their research projects include:



BRITTNI LITTLEJOHN

Characterization of epigenomic and transcriptomic differences associated with high and low marbling in three different muscle types in beef cattle.



CHARLES LOONEY

Utilizing carcass ultrasound and genomic testing to predict quality traits in direct marketed beef from farm to consumer.



KELLY VIERCK

- Determination of eating quality of boneless and bone-in short loins following extended aging.
- Utilization of sous vide cooking applications to improve palatability.



JANEAL YANCEY

Effects of retail case environment and LED lighting temperature on color and oxidation of ground beef patties. ■

Arkansas Takes the Lead in Conference Virtual Fun Run



Several employees attended the virtual Southern Region- Program Leadership Network meeting in late August and won accolades for participating in the event's inaugural virtual fun run/walk. Extension's seven-member team won first place for having the most participants and for logging the most miles (22.6 miles). Participants included Bob Scott, Stacey McCullough, Vic Ford, Sharon Reynolds, Martha Sartor, Angie Freel and Tracy Courage. ■







Benefits Corner

Your HR personnel can answer questions about benefits available to you:

- Medical, dental, vision, life, FSA or HAS
- Leave whether it is FMLA, CAT Leave, maternity or FFCRA.
- Voluntary benefit options identity theft, legal assistance, critical illness, auto and home.
- Retirement savings plan— Are you enrolled in TIAA,
 Fidelity, or want to know how to alternate between the two?
- Getting ready to retire? Know your options. Send all benefit questions to yourbenefits@uaex.edu. ■

Grants and Contracts

PROJECT TITLE (GRANTS & CONTRACTS)	AWARD AMOUNT	PI	GRANTING AGENCY
Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program 2019	69,328	Aaron Cato	Board of Regents of the University of Georgia
Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program 2019	11,111	Amanda McWhirt	Board of Regents of the University of Georgia
Bioassays of new class of insecticides for control of Lygus Lineolaris, Tarnish Plant Bug	11,638	Gus Lorenz	Nichino America, Inc.
FY21 APAC agreement	523,797	Melanie Berman	Defenses Logistics Agency
TOTAL AWARDS FOR JULY 2020: \$615,874			

Personnel Changes

Welcome aboard:

- Christina Cook EFNEP Program Assistant, Mississippi County
- Baylee Milam Administrative Specialist II Animal Science, Little Rock
- Tomicca Parker EFNEP Program Assistant, Crittenden County
- Andrew Bolton County Extension Agent -Agriculture, Pulaski County, Little Rock
- Shonta Bean Administrative Specialist III, Union County
- Marla Lane EFNEP Program Assistant, St. Francis County, Forrest City
- Larry Dicus Junior Network Administrator Information Technology
- **Sydney Dillion** Administrative Specialist I, Arkansas County
- Christa Mazzanti County Extension Agent FCS, Chicot County, Lake Village
- **Jordan Ralph** EFNEP Program Assistant, Clay County, Piggott

Farewell to:

- Tazin Islam Program Assistant EFNEP, Pulaski County
- Kayla Kelsey 4-H Program Assistant, Montgomery County
- Halee Rosenberger Administrative Specialist III, Searcy County
- June Moody Administrative Specialist III, Lafayette County
- **Debra Schneider** Administrative Support Supervisor, Crawford County
- Shana' Williams Administrative Specialist II,
 4-H & Youth Development
- Imelda Perez Administrative Specialist II, Washington County
- Jane Ahrends Program Assistant 4H, Washington County
- **Kim Jackson** Administrative Specialist III, Rice Research & Extension Center
- Sarah Spangler County Extension Agent Agriculture/ Water Quality, Washington County, Fayetteville
- Gloria Taylor Administrative Specialist III, Miller County
- Addie Wilson Program Associate Health, FCS

