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BLUE LETTER

April 2017
No. 3780



Kudos and 'conversations'

March was a great month, where we saw new beginnings and possibilities, as you will see in many of the reports within this newsletter, as well as in the breadth of our activities.

Argentina, food preservation, herbicide injury, high school student financial management, 4-H and youth day camps, horticulture updates, poultry health, ballot issues, city to farm connections, 4H Youth Leadership, Ag Day, cattle worming, mushrooms, 4-H achievement, professional development, retiree honor, community breakthroughs, chicken barbecue contests, tulip projects, wildlife and feral hogs, pest management, entomology awards, 4-H school programs, livestock youth leadership, student nutrition. We do seem to be involved in everything.

Special kudos to Bob Scott, Cal Shumway (Arkansas State University), John Boyd and our IT folks who created the herbicide symptomology database on our website. This was heavy lifting, but very worthwhile and badly needed in our state.

Special kudos to Ples Spradley, Julie Robinson and Jason Davis for creating, on short notice, the online course for pesticide applicators to complete so they could be certified by the Arkansas State Plant Board to use dicamba-based herbicides under new regulations. This was critical, and time sensitive, and somewhat of a tense situation, but our folks simply took care of it and now we have had over 700 applicators take the course so far. Pretty amazing if you knew the situation.

Special thanks to those involved in organizing the Galaxy Conference at the 4-H Center recently, and who hosted the retiree luncheon. We had a large number of retirees attend, and they shared with me their appreciation for the location and the manner the event was held to allow a lot of social time beforehand. We hope to continue to improve this effort over time.

Special thanks to our Ag Agents who held their annual association conference in Fort Smith in March. I was able to visit with many and came away with many good comments and suggestions.



FROM THE DIRECTOR

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LeadAR Class 17 gets a firsthand look at Argentina

LeadAR Class 17 embarked on a 12-day international study tour to Argentina in early March. Sixteen participants and two Community and Economic Development faculty were part of this educational opportunity.

The tour began with two days in Buenos Aires, where the group visited the largest fruit and vegetable distribution market in the country, received a welcome from the U.S. Embassy and USDA Agriculture representatives and enjoyed tango lessons and a show.

Travel around the country with the group visiting a farming operation which produces beef, soybeans, popcorn, wheat and oats. In Rosario, Argentina, the group investigated how grain is transported on the Parana River and visited a soybean promotion organization and the Rosario Board of Trade.

Additional stops during the 12-day trip included the Argentina/Uruguay Hydroelectric Complex to tour facilities; an experience at the El Palmar National Park, known for its palm tree habitat; and a visit to Colón to tour the National Agricultural Technology Institute – Experimental Station, where the main focus is rice improvement projects.

The group visited the home of the first president of Argentina, called Palacio San José, before returning to Buenos Aires, where they visited the Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Health and the Argentina Trade Chamber and toured the Liniers Livestock Market and the School of Agriculture of the University of Buenos Aires.

LeadAR, the Arkansas Agricultural and Rural Leadership Program, is conducted by the U of A System Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service. For more information contact Noah Washburn at nwashburn@uaex.edu. ■



Front row left to right – Randy Newman, Kim Magee, Noah Washburn, Avinash Thombre, Shannon Caldwell, Andrea Leding, Heather Harvey, Gracia Shroud, Lisa Chappell, Donna Ferguson, station staff, Jorge Cazenave (tour guide), and station staff. Back row – Sarah French, Jeremy Richey, Craig Allen, Dr. Alberto Livore (station director), Price Boney, Brad Fortner, Matt McDonald, Brittany Dennis, Amelia Rich-Elam and station staff.



Herbicide Injury Database

Herbicide symptomology database aims to help county agents with field and home plant injury diagnosis

A new database has been added to the Extension web site at <https://plants.uaex.edu/herbicide/default.aspx>. The Herbicide Injury Database is a searchable collection of more than 1,000 photos illustrating the effects of various herbicides on plants.

This database was a collaborative effort between Dr. Cal Shumway of Arkansas State University and Drs. Bob Scott and John Boyd with the Division of Agriculture. The photos mostly came from a collection that has been amassed after almost 20 years of work done annually to provide training plots for the inspectors of the Arkansas State Plant Board as well as county agents and other interested parties. This training was conducted initially by Dr. Shumway on the ASU campus and in recent years has been under the direction of Dr. Bob Scott at the Newport Extension Center.

The pictures are available for download, and other resources, such as a symptomology handbook and searchable pdf files, can also be obtained at the site. ■



Photo of glyphosate damage to wheat taken from the web database.

Food Preservation training the trainers

Six Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service agents conducted a hands-on workshop in the Family and Consumer Science foods lab at the University of Central Arkansas to teach recently hired program technicians and Family and Consumer Science agents basic food preservation principals and how to conduct food preservation workshops.

Agents conducting the training were Karla Dement, FCS agent, Izard County; Renee Myers, staff chair, Marion County; Terrie James, staff chair, Hempstead County; Michelle Carter, FCS agent, Bradley County; Debbie Baker, FCS agent, Clay County - Piggott; and Jane Newton, FCS agent, Lincoln County. Training was conducted on the proper use of pressure and water bath canners and the basics of freezing and dehydrating foods safely.

The recent upsurge of interest in home food preservation makes it imperative that FCS agents know the basics in order to answer food preservation safety questions as they receive them. Many agents are also being asked to conduct workshops in all areas of food preservation. Answering questions regarding home-preserved foods and their safety is an integral part of the FCS agents' position. ■



Left to right: Shannon Autrey, Angela Scott, Charla Hammonds, Tori Copeland, Shaw nee Sorensen, Laura Trotter, Bridgett Martin, Alta Lockley and Sarah Gamboa. Not pictured: Kristal Draper, Meredith Wayman and Katherine Frizzell.

Mena High School seniors learn financial management

Despite position vacancies in Polk County, efforts continued to address the #1 priority identified by the County Extension Council for FY17: financial literacy. Toward that end, Mena High School seniors completed "Get Real, Here's the Deal" as part of their senior English class this month.

Coordinated by staff chair Carla Vaught, conducted by Dr. Laura Hendrix, and shadowed by incoming Family and Consumer Sciences agent Bridgett Martin, the program was a real eye-opener for many of the participants.

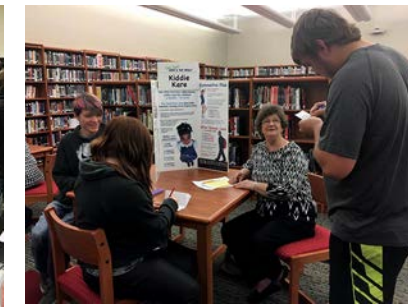
When asked, "Have you changed your attitude about financial management in any way?" some of the responses were:

- "It made me think about my future and imagine my life when I'm an adult, and it affected some of my educational decisions and financial goals."
- "I take it much more seriously considering the impact it can have on my life."
- "Life is harder than what I was thinking."
- "I now understand more of the planning process and expenses that are to come."

Bridgett is planning to conduct this program in the other two county schools before the year ends. ■



Realtor Tiffany Lane assists "Get Real, Here's the Deal" participants with selecting their living accommodations.



Master Gardener LaRayne Risenhoover walks "Get Real, Here's the Deal" students through child care.



EHC member Jane Buttermilk works with students to discuss needs versus wants at the "Get Real, Here's the Deal" station.

What's new in publications? Find out at:
<http://www.uaex.edu/publications/new.aspx>

BENEFITS CORNER

Owe money to the IRS? Steps you can take now so you may not owe next year at tax time.

Make sure you are contributing the **maximum** that you can afford to the **retirement plan**. If the contribution is pre-tax, this will lower your taxable income. The pre-tax limits for 2017 are \$36,000 if you are under age 50 and \$48,000 if you are over age 50.

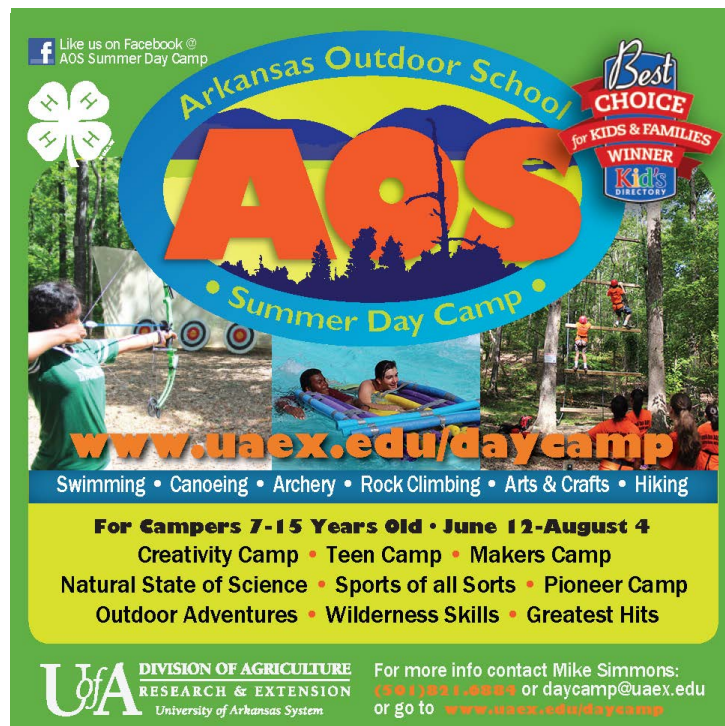
You may contribute even if you are not benefits eligible or if you are participating in an alternative State retirement system. To increase your voluntary contribution or start contributing to the Defined Contribution Plan, complete a Voluntary Salary Deferral Agreement Form, EBEN 228, and submit the form directly to the CES Human Resource Department.

Keep in mind the employee mandatory contribution will increase to 2 percent in July 2017.

You may also need to have more federal or state tax withheld out of each check. You may **change your federal and/or state tax withholdings** by completing a W4 Form, which can be located at www.irs.gov, and submitting the form directly to the CES Payroll Department.

For more information about taxes, please visit the IRS website at www.irs.gov.

Day camp reminder



Like us on Facebook @ AOS Summer Day Camp

Arkansas Outdoor School
AOS
Summer Day Camp

Swimming • Canoeing • Archery • Rock Climbing • Arts & Crafts • Hiking

For Campers 7-15 Years Old • June 12-August 4
Creativity Camp • Teen Camp • Makers Camp
Natural State of Science • Sports of all Sorts • Pioneer Camp
Outdoor Adventures • Wilderness Skills • Greatest Hits

For more info contact Mike Simmons: (501) 951-8000 or daycamp@uaex.edu or go to www.uaex.edu/daycamp

The 2017 Summer Day Camp will be June 12 through August 4. Remember that Cooperative Extension employees receive a 25% discount on Day Camp registration. ■

What's Up Wednesdays; Horticulture Happenings

Horticulture specialists (Jackie Lee, Amanda McWhirt, Janet Carson and Jim Robbins) are holding Zoom meetings on the third Wednesday of every month for extension agents to highlight current events influencing horticulture crops, including fruits, vegetables, pecans, turf and ornamentals.

The format focuses on a hot topic that is of current importance in the state with a short presentation, then open discussion for all counties and specialists to participate. These calls will be valuable in facilitating communication throughout the state to help us better serve clients and respond in a proactive manner to impending events covering both pests and production practices.

The first call was held on March 29 and had more than 30 participants. The hot topic, freeze damage across the state, was presented by Dr. Amanda McWhirt. We learned that some areas in Arkansas have lost 70 to 80 percent of peaches, while some areas were not affected at all. Janet Carson and Jackie Lee also spoke about spider mites, rose rosette disease, crape myrtle bark scale and other topics.

It was great fun, and we hope you all will join us for the next What's Up Wednesday on April 19 via Zoom from 9:30-10:30 am. ■

USDA Domestic Poultry Field Training held at U of A

A Domestic Poultry Field Training was held March 28-31, 2017, at the University of Arkansas and Washington County Extension offices. The training was coordinated by Dustan Clark, Extension poultry health veterinarian, and hosted by the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture/Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, which offers professional development training services workshops throughout the United States. Instructors were from the Poultry Science Department, USDA, Arkansas Livestock and Poultry Commission, Arkansas poultry integrator companies, and allied industry.



Participants and speakers.

The 22 participants were USDA veterinary medical officers and animal health technicians from California, Colorado, Idaho, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, Oregon, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Washington and Wyoming. The curriculum included presentations on an overview of the poultry industry, poultry anatomy and physiology, poultry welfare, bio-security, hobby poultry flocks, poultry production, live bird market surveillance, poultry welfare and well-being, poultry hatcheries, avian influenza (AI), poultry depopulation and disposal methods during a disease outbreak, safety principles during an outbreak, avian influenza surveillance, composting of poultry mortality, a tour of a poultry farm and hands-on labs encompassing personal protective equipment, poultry



Touring a poultry farm.

necropsy, proper poultry handling and restraint, diagnostic sample collection and poultry processing.

The goal of the Domestic Poultry Field Training is to meet the current and future scientific and technical education and training needs of USDA veterinary service personnel. ■



Processing poultry.

Incorporating ballot issue education into your programs

November 2018 seems far away, but calendars are already filling up for next year. Be sure to save some space for programming related to statewide ballot issues.

Agents had an opportunity at last month's Galaxy Conference to pick up ideas from the Public Policy Center on incorporating ballot issue education into existing programs. The ideas Kristin Higgins spoke about touched on priorities identified by county Extension Councils.

Higgins said 46 counties identified financial literacy as a priority, something that goes hand-in-hand with ballot issue education. (After all, many ballot issues are related to taxpayer money.) Higgins suggested including some basics on ballot issues in financial literacy programs.

Other suggestions included:

- Suggesting 4-H'ers use ballot issues as an O-Rama citizenship topic.
- Teaching parliamentary procedure skills by holding mock debates over referring issues to voters.
- Teaching conflict resolution by using ballot issues as a topic.
- Including voting in life skills programs.
- Using ballot issues in activities teaching media literacy skills.
- Hosting a voter registration as a community service activity.
- Incorporating ballot issue education into club fair booths.

Contact Higgins at khiggins@uaex.edu for more information on how ballot issues can be incorporated into your existing programs. ■

Extension partners with Connecting City to Farm

The Drew County Extension staff was contacted early in February by Connecting City to Farm Executive Director Kris Habashy, who requested assistance with their upcoming Farm Camp. The nonprofit organization is in its second year of programming and advocates safe and affordable nutrition through the lens of agriculture.

The first of three four-day camps was held at a farmhouse in the community of Boydell on March 12-15. Campers were exposed to the real world of agriculture for the first time. Few had ever breathed in the smell of fresh-tilled soil or sat in the buddy seat of a huge tractor in operation.

Extension staff members Karen Ballard, Rick Fields, Steve Kelley, Hazelene McCray, Leigh Ann Bullington and Keith Cleek worked to provide hands-on education for the thirty-plus group of inner city Dallas youth. Volunteer support was supplied by Extension supporters Bearlain Lewis and Margee Taylor.



Dallas youth, camp staff members and Extension staff join for a group picture.

After the event, we received a much appreciated email from Kris who said, "It's hard to adequately communicate our appreciation for your efforts. You were organized, effective and engaging. Thank you for enriching our environment so youth can have a taste of how modern agriculture provides for our country."

Visit <http://www.connectingcitytofarm.com> to read more about this great organization we are privileged to have as partners. Plans are already being made for educational support for future farm camps in April and June. ■

Youth were cleverly guided through a STEM activity to understand the difference between pneumatic and hydraulic systems and how they are applied to both urban and farm life. To emphasize the soybean industry, staff members utilized the curriculum from the Arkansas Soybean Board's Soybean Science Challenge. A food demonstration was conducted using healthy soy products. Youth taste-tested edamame, raspberry soy drink shakes and a healthy soybean-based stir fry.

Phil Baugh, co-founder of the organization, said, "Thank you. You all went above and beyond anything we ever expected. I had no idea Extension had such great, professional people."



Extension staff members Leigh Ann Bullington, Keith Cleek and Hazelene McCray prepare food demonstrations.

Tri-county 4-H Leadership Road Trip



On March 21, 17 4-H youth from Lonoke, Prairie, and Monroe counties participated in a "Leadership Road Trip" workshop. They began their adventure by answering questions about themselves and the people close to them. Through hands-on activities, youth learned how to recognize their own ability to work as a team, develop an awareness of first impressions, identify leadership traits and personal goals, practice communication and make a commitment to lead.

As a result of the workshop, 100 percent reported they were able to organize a group to reach a goal, use different leadership styles, get others to share in leadership, work out problems presented to them, contribute as a member of a team, accept responsibility for doing a good job, understand the importance of following through on commitments and have control over their own personal goals. Ninety-four percent reported they were able to listen carefully to what others say, while 88 percent reported they list their options before making a decision, evaluate decisions they made and can settle disagreements in ways that are not hurtful. Finally, 75 percent reported they can now clearly state thoughts, feelings and ideas to others and can keep useful and accurate records. ■

Benton County hosts third annual Ag Day celebration

On Tuesday, March 21, Benton County Extension and other community partners came together to celebrate National Ag Day. The event was held at the Walmart Auditorium at the Northwest Arkansas Community College in Bentonville.

Speakers included local farmers and researchers who worked together through Discovery Farms or Watershed Conservation Resource Center on innovative agricultural practices, the live production manager for Cargill Turkey Division and special guest Cynthia Edwards, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture with the Arkansas Agriculture Department.

Door prizes of locally produced agriculture products were given away during the presentations, and the event was broadcast live on KURM radio. ■

Bismarck Beef Night

The 2nd Annual Bismarck Beef Night was held on Tuesday, March 7. This event targeted beef cattle producers, focusing on herd health issues.

Dr. Heidi Ward, Extension veterinarian, made a presentation on the importance of worming and wormer rotation schedules; Dr. John Jennings, Extension forage specialist, spoke on fescue toxicity; and Rachel Bearden, county Extension agent, discussed vaccination protocols and schedules. As producers prepare for spring and begin planning their management practices, these issues are all very important.

This event was sponsored by Boehringer Ingelheim, Hot Spring County Cattlemen's Association and the Bismarck FFA program. In an effort to reach more producers on the opposite corner of the county seat, Hot Spring County has been pushing to have more programs that are more accessible for producers. There were 43 in total attendance. One hundred percent of producers reported their knowledge increased in all three subject areas and found the information relevant and useful. Every producer was also sent home with copies of MP 504, *Research Based Answers to Frequently Asked Questions on Fescue Toxicity*, and several fact sheets. ■



Extension forage specialist Dr. John Jennings discusses fescue toxicity with Bismarck cattle producers.

District Dig Ins inspire Master Gardeners as spring arrives



Dr. Vic Ford educates the Master Gardener volunteers about mushrooms in Clark County.

Master Gardener volunteers from various areas of the state attended one of three District Dig In events in March. New for this year, the educational seminars were offered to unite members within their districts as well as provide a horticulture educational opportunity.

From Union County to Washington County and many points in between, 150 Master Gardeners gained knowledge in the areas of conifers, herbs, mushrooms or vegetable gardening. Janet Carson gave a Master Gardener program update at each location in addition to information on new

annuals and perennials for 2017.

We greatly appreciate our guest speakers for the three events – Dr. Vic Ford, Dr. Gerald Klingaman, Susan Belsinger and Chris Cooper. Thanks to the county extension agents, extension staff and Master Gardeners in Clark, St. Francis and Sebastian counties who helped with planning and setup in the three districts.

Pope County 4-H Achievement Banquet

Pope County was honored to have the Honorable Andrea Lea, State Auditor, attend the 4-H Achievement Banquet on March 9 at the Saint John's Catholic School Parish Hall where over 130 people came out to have dinner and recognize the outstanding achievements of Pope County 4-H members.



Pope County Teen Leaders with the Honorable Andrea Lea, State Auditor. Pictured from left to right are McKenzie Hood, Caleb Jacobs, Andrew Ward, Ashlyn Ward, Andrea Lea, Ethan Jacobs, Katelyn Danzy and ClaireAnna Harmon.



2017 GALAXY CONFERENCE
MARCH 15-17 • C.A. VINES ARKANSAS 4-H CENTER

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

present state awards. The annual Credit Union meeting was also conducted by BeVerly Sims.

John Philpot, a former extension communications employee, reminisced about the “good old days.” “His stories were eye-opening for young agents,” said Mary Ann Kizer of Jefferson County, 2017 Galaxy Planning Committee chair.

Elise Mitchell, chief executive officer of the Mitchell Group and capnote speaker, offered attendees advice on the way forward, encouraging all to “lead through the turn.” She compared leadership skills to riding a motorcycle, saying, “You never watch the turn when driving a motorcycle because you will always go off the road.”

She said that the “journey mindset” would help extension agents achieve success and significance in their own professional journey. Everyone received an autographed copy of Mitchell’s book, provided by the Galaxy Committee, before they headed home refreshed and inspired.

Earlier, Mark Cochran, vice president - agriculture, U of A System, gave attendees an update on state funding after meeting with legislators. He thanked agents for their encouragement of the Friends of Extension and stated, “Now, they are more important than ever.” Rick Cartwright, interim extension director, spoke during the retirees’ luncheon and yielded a portion of his time to Philpot.

Winners at this year’s Galaxy Conference

This year’s award winners:

Epsilon Sigma Phi - Alpha Iota Chapter

- Distinguished Service – Keith Perkins, Lonoke County
- Early Career Award – Dianna Bowen, Lonoke County
- Distinguished Team – Diane Clement, Cleveland County; Mary Ann Kizer, Jefferson County; Michelle Carter, Bradley County; and Jane Newton, Lincoln County
- Friend of Extension – Britt Talent, Cleveland County Herald
- Meritorious Support – Nora Terry, Cleveland County

Galaxy 2017 provides a look forward and a look back

“Blue Jeans and Extension Dreams,” 2017 Galaxy Conference 2017, provided participants both a look back and a look forward.

The annual meeting, held this year at the C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center, is an opportunity for extension’s professional organizations – Epsilon Sigma Phi, NEA-FCS and AAE4-HA – to meet, conduct business and



John Philpot

AACES

- Brett Barham Extension Innovation Award – Mary Poling, Information Technology, Little Rock State Office
- Faculty Project Performance Award – Diane Mashburn, Program and Staff Development, Little Rock State Office
- Gary Burke Memorial Award – Lauren Copeland, Family and Consumer Sciences, Little Rock State Office
- Jane Osborne Memorial Award – Phalon Montgomery, Animal Science, Little Rock State Office
- Jeanette Roberts Memorial Award – Laura Hendrix, Family and Consumer Sciences, Little Rock State Office
- Linda Meeks Support Specialist Award – Jill Williams, Human Resources, Little Rock State Office
- Outstanding County Extension Agent Award – Sherri Sanders, White County
- Outstanding Researcher Award – Paul Beck, Southwest Research and Extension Center
- Service Award – JJ Pitman, C. A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center

AAE4-HA

- Rookie of the Year – Cynthia Rorie, Crittenden County
- Achievement in Service – Hope Bragg, Desha County
- Distinguished Service Award – Noah Washburn, Community and Economic Development, Little Rock State Office; and Pia Woods, Jefferson County

NEAFCS

- Distinguished Service Award – Jane Newton, Lincoln County
- Continued Excellence Award – Jean Ince, Howard County ■

Kudos and ‘conversations,’ cont.

I sincerely appreciate the quality work and intense effort of all our extension colleagues, and I say great job to award winners at the Galaxy Conference and the Ag Agents Association meeting – awesome.

In this issue, we also noted certain regional awards to colleagues including Rebecca McPeake in leading the wildlife habitat restoration project as well as DIY hog trapping (I am not making this up) along with Carroll Guffey and others; and John Hopkins, Kelly Loftin, Becky McPeake, Bob Scott and Sherrie Smith for the *Pest Management Newsletter*. I also note that John Hopkins was recognized as Urban Entomologist of the Year with Nick Seiter as New and Upcoming Entomologist at the Southeast Branch ESA meeting in Memphis. At this same meeting, Aaron Cato won the Ph.D. student competition and Joe Black won the Master’s competition, both students of Dr. Gus Lorenz. Outstanding job to all.

Finally, we will start a new effort at routine communication this Friday as I visit with Dr. Julie Robinson and extension colleagues who wish to join as we begin “Conversations with Cartwright,” a monthly 30-minute webinar where I provide updates on a range of topics and even try to answer questions. Until next time, please have a great and safe April.

– Rick Cartwright

2017 Breakthrough Solutions Conference and Art Show set for June 7 and 8

The 2017 Breakthrough Solutions Conference and Art Show is set for Thursday, June 8, with the theme “Re-Imagining Your Community/Region in the 21st Century Economy”; pre-conference workshops take place on June 7. This will be a unique opportunity for community leaders to learn how to develop their communities to be successful in the 21st century economy, as they seek to attract tourists, businesses, entrepreneurs, families and retirees. We will also hear about exciting community projects and opportunities in eight high priority issue areas.

In keeping with the re-imagining theme, the first ever Breakthrough Solutions Art Show will also take place at the conference, offering adults and youth an opportunity to showcase how they have re-imagined their communities.

Two half-day pre-conference workshops on June 7 are:

- “Re-imagining Your Community in the 21st Century Economy – Step by Step”, and
- “Developing Cultural Competence – Becoming an Effective Leader Across Cultures and Boundaries.”

The workshops will provide valuable insights and tools that address two of the most important issues facing communities today.

These events will take place at the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, 2301 South University, in Little Rock. More information on these events will soon be available at www.uaex.edu/breakthrough-solutions. ■



Miller County 4-H is on fire again!

Miller County 4-H is on fire again ... literally! We brought back the Broiler BBQ Cookoff Contest to Miller County on Saturday, April 1 – our first in over 10 years. We had six excited 4-H'ers gather at the Miller County Courthouse Saturday morning at 8:15 with brand new grills in hand.

It was a learning experience for all of us as we assembled grills and then let the youth put the amount of charcoal they wanted into the bottom and put on lighter fluid. After the rules were gone over by Miller County 4-H agent Samantha Kroll, it was time to light the fires.

Each contestant prepared two 2- to 3-pound chicken halves provided to them. They were evaluated during all stages of chicken preparation by the judges utilizing the barbecue skills score sheet on cleanliness and food safety.



4-H'ers choose seasonings for their chickens.

The youth enjoyed preparing their own concoctions as they mixed and measured desired spices and sauces. At the end of the cooking time, each contestant presented one intact, barbecued chicken half to be judged.

Contestants were scored by barbecue skills, sensory evaluation and presentation by a set of judges that included our very own Miller County Extension Homemaker Club president, Mrs. Bettie Huntley.

All six chicken breast halves were completely cooked through and were very tasty. One of the judges told the youth at the end of the competition that there were no losers there that day. They all did an exceptional day and are a great group. We look forward to taking them to the District Broiler BBQ Cookoff. ■



Contestants fire up their grills.

Fulton County Master Gardener tulips near peak bloom

In the winter of 2016, Fulton County Master Gardeners undertook a colossal beautification project with hopes of drawing attention to Salem's downtown courthouse square area and Fulton County as a whole. A small group of eight of the county members planted between 9,000 and 10,000 tulip bulbs around Salem, with over half of those being put in around the courthouse square.



Tulip bed with Master Gardener sign and courthouse in background.

Despite the snow and cold temperatures this past month, the blooms have held up well. The group intends to grow and extend the project to other communities in the county in future years, with hopes that Fulton County can become known as the tulip capital of Arkansas! If you're passing through the northcentral part of the state, it would be worth the detour to make a pass through Salem's courthouse square. ■



From left: Members Ralph Moore (president), Becci Bartz, Paula Howell and Suzanne Hartrick.

Extension specialists receive Southern Regional Extension Forestry awards

Each year, the Southern Regional Extension Forestry Awards for Excellence highlight outstanding Extension forestry and natural resource projects from across the southeastern United States. Extension professionals nominate projects for awards, and from those nominations, a jury of Extension peers selects the most innovative and influential entries.

Congratulations to the following Arkansas Cooperative Extension specialists whose projects were recognized with 2016-2017 Southern Regional Extension Forestry Awards for Excellence.

BRONZE AWARD OF EXCELLENCE Wildlife Habitat Restoration on Private Lands Conference

Institution: Arkansas Cooperative Extension
Project Contributors: Dr. Rebecca McPeake, Joseph

Krystofik, Ted Zawislak, Daniel Greenfield, Bubba Groves, David Long, Debbie Moreland, Darren Spinks, Jim Baker, Amanda Mathis and Joe Marschall.

SILVER AWARD OF EXCELLENCE Do-It-Yourself Hog Trapping Strategy

Institution: Arkansas Cooperative Extension
Project Contributors: Dr. Rebecca McPeake, Carol Guffey and Dr. Billy Higginbotham.
Link: <https://www.uaex.edu/publications/pdf/MP537.pdf>

GOLD AWARD OF EXCELLENCE Pest Management News

Institution: Arkansas Cooperative Extension
Contributors: Dr. John Hopkins, Dr. Kelly M. Loftin, Dr. Becky McPeake, Dr. Bob Scott and Sherrie Smith.
Link (bottom of the page): <https://www.uaex.edu/farm-ranch/pest-management/>

Perryville 4-H Teen Leaders showcase 4-H programming at 4-H Night With the Mustangs

On March 30, nearly 200 students and family members attended the Perryville High School 4-H Club's 4-H Night With the Mustangs. This evening was an opportunity for Perryville High's Teen Leaders to showcase 4-H programming to the community and develop relationships with younger students and their families.

There was a range of activities from STEM robotics, BB gun range, archery range, leather crafts, small animal area, Farm Bureau AG simulator and Farm Bureau milking demo to Dr. Tamara Walkingstick with her Dutch oven cobbler demo.

This effort came out of Perryville High School's involvement with the 4-H National Mentoring Program which supports the initiatives that assist in the development and maturity of community programs providing

mentoring services to high-risk populations. The program objective is to provide direct one-on-one mentoring, or group mentoring, to under-served youth populations and to reduce truancy, juvenile delinquency, drug abuse and other high-risk behaviors. Perry County was chosen to participate in this program as part of the grant awarded recently to Arkansas 4-H.

Everyone enjoyed a barbecue meal, and door prizes were given out. This is just the first of several family events planned to develop these mentoring relationships among teen 4-H members and their younger mentees. ■



Participants enjoy a barbecue dinner at 4-H Night With the Mustangs.



BB gun activity at 4-H Night With the Mustangs.



Small animal area at 4-H Night With the Mustangs.

Extension wins big at entomology meeting

Extension Entomology brought home several important awards from the annual meeting of the Southeastern Branch of the Entomological Society of America held in Memphis last month.

Nick Seiter, assistant professor and extension entomologist, received the Early Career Award, and John Hopkins, associate professor and extension urban entomologist, received the Distinguished Achievement Award for his work in urban entomology. Joseph Black, a master's degree student, received the Southeastern Branch Student Award, and Aaron Cato, a Ph.D. student, received the Robert T. Gast Award.



Nick Seiter receives Early Career Award.

John Hopkins receives Distinguished Achievement Award.

Joseph Black receives Southeastern Branch Student Award.

Aaron Cato receives Robert T. Gast Award.

Hot Spring County agents teach Malvern GT/EAST students about healthy meals, snacks

Last year Hot Spring County agents started working with the GT/EAST (gifted and talented/Environmental and Spatial Technology) class at Wilson Intermediate School in Malvern. The students under the direction of their teacher, Angela Greene, invited Kristal Draper, Hot Spring County Family and Consumer Sciences agent, to speak to the class about nutrition. She provided menus and recipes of healthy fruits and vegetables for healthy snacks.

The class applied for a mini grant from Walmart and received \$50 to buy the ingredients for Waldorf salad. The goal by the GT/EAST class was to survey a fifth-grade class, the teachers and staff at Wilson Intermediate School and determine the needs based on the informal survey results.

A dietician met with the class to discuss the nutritional value of the



salad. After the results were determined to be positive, but with a need for more flavor, cinnamon was added to the yogurt used to make the salad. The class also compared the nutrition in different fruit juices.

This year, under the direction of teacher Brenda Rush, the students served the salad and juices to the district wellness committee on Feb. 15. The class has received approval to add the Waldorf salad and preferred fruit juices to the breakfast and lunch menus at Wilson Intermediate School.

This nutrition project was a team effort and a collaboration featuring classes, school food service, Walmart, GT/EAST teachers, Hot Spring County extension agents Kristal Draper and Rachel Bearden (county extension agent - agriculture), and the school improvement director, Terri Bryant.

The next project planned is serving the salad and juices to the administrative team.

2017 Livestock Leadership Academy held at 4-H Center

The 2017 Livestock Leadership Academy was held March 23-25 at the Arkansas 4-H Center. Thirty-two 4-H members from across the state were in attendance.

Day 1 focused on leadership development with the academy participating in the Low Ropes Course offered through the ExCEL program. The evening consisted of a Minute To Win It Tournament and bonfire with s'mores.

Day 2 focused on agriculture and its role legislatively. The academy participants went to the Capitol where Senator Bruce Maloch spoke to them about the legislative process. Governor Asa Hutchinson also spoke to the group. Their visit to the Capitol was finished with a tour by the Secretary of State's Office. The group then traveled to Arkansas Farm Bureau where Mollie Dykes spoke about Agvocacy and Michelle Kitchens covered Congressional Insights. Upon return to the 4-H Center, participants listened to a career panel consisting of Cynthia Edwards, Arkansas Agriculture Department, Mollie Dykes, Arkansas Farm Bureau, and Tom Murray, Big Branch Breeders Service. Judy Riley spoke about table etiquette during supper. A scavenger hunt and dance completed the evening.

Day 3 wrapped up with reflections of the past two days and an evaluation.



Livestock Leadership Academy participants completing the Broken Bridge during the Low Ropes Course through the ExCEL program at the Arkansas 4-H Center.



Senator Bruce Maloch hosted the Livestock Leadership Academy in the Senate Chamber on Day 2 and spoke about the legislative process.

Grants and Contracts for Month Ending March 31, 2017

Project Title	Award Amount	Principal Investigator	Granting Agency
Trecepta vs. Competitive Traits for Yield and Efficacy in the Coastal Region	23,580	Gus Lorenz	Monsanto Company
Southern Risk Management Education Center at the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service	49,611	Jim Robbins	National Institute of Food and Agriculture
Bono 4-H Legacy Park	1,000	Maleigha Cook	Blue & You Foundation
South Shore Marion County Youth Leadership	2,000	Renee Myers	South Shore Foundation
Developing a Comprehensive Management Program for Foliar Diseases of Soybean	5,000	Travis Faske	Southern Illinois University
Development of Disease Management Strategies for Peanut Production in Arkansas	20,516	Travis Faske	National Peanut Board
Total Awards for March 2017	\$101,707		

Personnel changes

Please welcome the following:

- Casey Battles**, EFNEP Program Assistant, Miller County, effective February 16, 2017.
- Mike Brown**, Program Tech, Horticulture, effective March 1, 2017.
- Angie Burkett**, EFNEP Program Assistant, Woodruff County, effective March 1, 2017.
- Sarah Gamboa**, County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, St. Francis County, effective March 1, 2017.
- Nakya Griffin**, EFNEP Program Assistant, Hempstead County, effective February 16, 2017.
- Becky Kersen**, 4-H Program Assistant, Pope County, effective March 1, 2017.
- Sheila Lively**, CES Program Assistant, Grant County, effective March 1, 2017.
- Katie Rodriguez**, Administrative Specialist, Crop, Soil and Environmental Science, effective February 16, 2017.

Extension says goodbye to:

- Brittini Bolden**, Administrative Specialist, Human Resources, effective March 24, 2017.
- Judy Drewrey**, Administrative Specialist, Sebastian County - Greenwood, effective March 24, 2017.