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BLUE LETTER

April 2020

No. 3816



21st Century Cooperative Extension Service



FROM THE DIRECTOR

It is late April and it still feels like winter, at least to me. I am ready for warm weather, probably the understatement of the winter and early spring, but I am famous for understatements. On the other hand, it is hard to overstate the challenges we have been undergoing since the COVID-19 pandemic hit the USA, and now we are in our second month of telecommuting for the most part. While I avoid the word “normal” anymore, this winter and spring have been far from that word in any sense. But we are known for adapting and figuring out how to get things done, and that is what we have been doing, as evidenced in this remarkably diverse newsletter.

I certainly commend the response of everyone to the current situation. When all this started, we knew we would need to adjust, to find “digital” alternatives as much as possible, to stay open and continue to help people, but also follow public health guidelines to minimize spread of the virus. I say “fantastic job” based on where we started, what we have done, what we have created, and what we have become. I can confidently say that we are truly

“the 21st Century Cooperative Extension Service,” and we have been showing people what that means.

This newsletter is filled with examples of digital alternative programming to help people when we are unable to meet and visit - from virtual camps to virtual BBQ contests to animal chats to a massive outreach campaign to educate the public. Kudos!

We also figured out how to help “hands on” by making masks by the tens of thousands across the state, and sincere thanks for these efforts led by AEHC members, county agents, other volunteers, 4-H, Laura Hendrix, Rachael Price and many others. This was massive.

I also note the efforts by Vic Ford, John Anderson, Mike Looper and others to analyze the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the livestock industry and provide solid information to help our stakeholders navigate the difficult times in their sector. This creativity was matched by many county agents and 4-H/FCS faculty/staff who invented and distributed virtual learning exercises,

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Extension Homemakers Clubs: 10,000 Masks and Counting

Arkansas Extension Homemakers Clubs across the state have sewn more than 10,000 face masks, which they have donated to health organizations and individuals in their communities. And they continue to sew more because requests continue to come in.

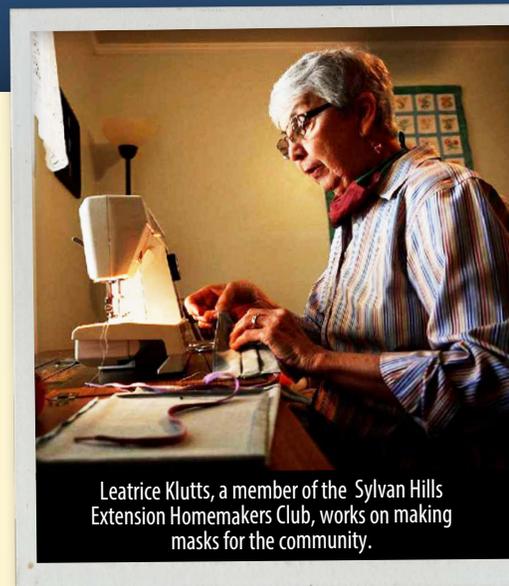
Members of the Sylvan Hills Extension Homemakers Club in Pulaski County teamed up with a Sunday school class at Second Baptist Church Little Rock to make more than 1,000 masks for Baptist Health Medical Center in North Little Rock, St. Vincent Rehab, Robinson Nursing Home, Jericho Way, Access Therapy, the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Arkansas Children's Hospital and the Salvation Army. View the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette photo gallery [here](#).

Here's just a sample of the EHC efforts around the state:

- **Washington County** — **1,052 masks** for MANA Breast Center, Westwood/Springdale/Fayetteville Health & Rehab, Maples at Har-Ber Meadows Nursing Home/Rehab, Washington County Meals on Wheels, Washington Regional, Circle of Life Hospice, Rollins Funeral Home, Ozark Counseling, Arkansas Veterans

Home, local churches and children's ministry.

- **Garland County** — **464 masks** for Elite Home Health, Superior Senior Care, CHI St. Vincent, Area Agency on Aging and Healthy Connections, National Park Medical Center, Garvan Woodland Gardens, Hot Springs Convention Center, dental offices and Veterans Administration in Jackson, Miss.
- **Bradley County** – **450 masks** for hospitals, nursing homes, doctors' offices, Human Development Center, mayor's office, friends and family.
- **Dallas County** — **437 masks** for nursing homes, health care workers, health care facilities and individuals.
- **Pike County** — **162 masks** for local hospitals, nursing homes, fire departments and first responders. ■



Leatrice Klutts, a member of the Sylvan Hills Extension Homemakers Club, works on making masks for the community.

U of A Faculty Member Hosts Small Ruminant Facebook Live Chat



Dr. Chelsey Kimbrough

Chelsey Kimbrough, faculty member in the Department of Animal Science, teamed up with her sister, Crystal Ahrens, to host a Facebook Live about small ruminants on April 10.

Dr. Kimbrough discussed basic sheep and goat management practices, and Ms. Ahrens discussed topics related to meat quality. The duo recorded their live chat, which has been uploaded and embedded and can be seen [here](#). ■



NEAFCS-AR Announces Winners

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The Arkansas affiliate of the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) recently recognized the state award winners on March 30 during a Zoom meeting.

Communications Awards

The Internet Education Technology Award went to Amy Monk of Montgomery County and Wellness Webinar team consisting of Laura Hendrix, Shannon Caldwell, Addie Wilson, Katie Holland, Emily Hays, JoAnn Vann, Pia Woods, Nytalya Salter, Mary Poling, Christine Alongi, Karl Lenser and Dee White. Wellness webinars were designed to encourage healthy living among Extension employees.

Another Internet Education Technology Award was given to Katie Frizzell of Ashley County and team Amy Cole, Becky Bridges and Kim Rowe for *Savvy in the South*, a blog created to share reliable information in a world filled with inaccurate information.

Heather Jackson of Pike County was a winner of the Newsletters Award. The Pike County *Health & Wealth Newsletter* shares resources about FCS.

Dianna Bowen of Lonoke County was another winner of the Newsletters Award for her *Healthy Living, Happy Homes* newsletter.

Program Awards

Joy West of Jackson County won the Dean Don Felker Family Resource Management Award. Joy taught parolees financial skills and decision making.



Keith Statham-Cleek won the Distinguished Service Award.



Heather Jackson is one winner of the Newsletters Award.

The Human Development/Family Relationships Award went to Joy West of Jackson County. Citizens on parole or probation learned skills to interact positively with others.

The Social Media Education Award went to Katie Frizzell of Ashley County and team members Amy Cole, Becky Bridges and Kim Rowe for *Savvy in the South*.

The SNAP-Ed/EFNEP Education Award winners included Debie Head and her team Keith Statham-Cleek, BeVerly Sims, Cynthia Martin, Katie Reid and Vivian Okanume for their Mapping Strategy for EFNEP.

Charla Hammonds of Logan County won a SNAP-Ed/EFNEP Award for her work with the Two Bite Club that teaches elementary students about MyPlate.

The Past Presidents' New Professional Award was given to Katie Frizzell of Ashley County for her innovative programs.

Service Award

The Distinguished Service Award goes to Keith Statham-Cleek, program associate - EFNEP Management. Keith has worked 16 years, first as an FCS agent and now supervising programming for the 18 EFNEP counties in Arkansas. ■

21st Century Cooperative Extension Service (Continued from page 1)

kits and information statewide. This had a big impact on parents and youth at home during this time. This was all truly a great effort.

I am also thankful to all our colleagues who continued to do the job and project an air of normalcy, as much as possible anyway. While our specialists, agents and support staff made the effort to get out the facts about COVID-19, we also kept doing much of what has to be done. We still made farm visits and put in demos and tests, responded to a jillion questions, and provided advice to any and all – albeit using social distancing and phones, etc., a lot more. But we got it done anyway. We probably will not know until this is over what this meant to many stakeholders - this “sense of normalcy” as

it were, that is so badly needed when all you hear during the 24/7 “news” cycle is something else.

Anyway, this Blue Letter, better than many I can think of, represents us at our diverse best and just goes to show that regardless of the circumstances, we are going to work, we are doing our jobs, and we are helping people with facts. There has been no other time in recent memory when this powerful land-grant mission effort has been so needed. And we are going to show people how to get through this, and we will be a better organization because of it. I think we already are, because of you.

My sincere thanks, and I have never been prouder of you. Have a great late April and early May, and hope for hot weather! ■

Farm Safety Signs Find International Audience



Dr. Sammy Sadaka's farm safety signage is famous worldwide. A young farmers association from Netherlands recently contacted Sadaka, associate professor in the Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering, and asked permission to reprint safety signs found on the Extension website.

The group is starting a project about farm safety on dairy farms and plans to print the warning signs on the stickers that farmers can place in high-risk areas of their farms. ■



Social Skills
UVA UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
EXTENSION & EDUCATION
University of Arizona System

Tech Corner

Zoom Security

Due to recent Zoom security issues and recommendations, the following settings have been applied on the UADA CES Zoom account:

- "Enable to join before host" is disabled and locked.
- "Require a password" is enabled for scheduled, instant, and personal meetings.
- "Mute participants on entry" is enabled.

How will this affect users?

Participants will NOT be able to join a Zoom meeting until the person who scheduled the meeting "starts" the meeting. Whoever schedules the Zoom meeting must start and be in the Zoom meeting for anyone to be able to join that meeting.

Passwords will be generated and embedded within the meeting joining link. If an individual uses the meeting ID only,

they will be required to enter the meeting password to join the meeting.

Check out the best practices for securing your Zoom meetings: <https://bit.ly/UADA-Zoom-Security-Resources>.

Telework Tuesday

IT now offers a weekly, open office drop-in session every Tuesday from 2-3 p.m.



Join us for answers to your software/hardware questions - anything from Box, Zoom, Outlook, OneDrive to monitors, printers, cabling and all other techie stuff.

Look for the link to join in the Weekly Tech Talk newsletter delivered to your inbox on Monday mornings. ■



UPCOMING TECH TUESDAY WEBINARS

- Tuesday, May 12: Intro to Podcasts
- Tuesday, June 9: Game On – Intro to Workday
- Tuesday, July 14: Game On – Making Workday Work for You
- Tuesday, August 11: Game On – Workday Topic TBA

Did you miss Workday Ready topics on New for You in 2020! (MFA & Microsoft A3 Licensing) and Zoom Ready (Zoom Chats, SSO, Equipment, Group Messaging and Projects), Computer Efficiency, Excel- Basics, visit <https://uaex.edu/techtuesdays> to view recordings.

Spring Planting Underway at Rice Research & Extension Center

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Despite COVID-19 and the rain over the past couple of months, the medium-grain rice breeding program at the Rice Research and Extension Center near Stuttgart is ongoing. The program started the 2020 season April 6 by planting the first of its pedigree panicle row nursery with a Wintersteiger cell planter (Picture 1) and planting the first Clearfield® yield trials with an Almaco plot planter (Picture 2).

Pedigree panicle row nursery is a critical part of the breeding program that evaluates and advances the segregating progenies ranging from F3-F7 and selects superior uniform

lines for the preliminary yield trial. Each year over 60,000 panicle rows are individually prepared, planted, selected and advanced. Breeding lines derived from pedigree panicle rows are first evaluated in the preliminary Stuttgart Initial Trials (SIT) before they advance into the multi-location advanced yield trials for their yield, milling, quality, agronomic characteristics and disease resistance/susceptibility.



From L to R: Richie Weaver, Jill Bulloch and Tony Beaty work with the Wintersteiger cell planter. Not pictured: Emily Carr and Kase Bounds.

In addition to the medium-grain program, the RREC remains open for research, and all other programs are forging forward. No meetings are being held on-site as employees telecommute and practice social distancing. ■



Dr. Xueyan Sha and Tony Beaty (driver) utilizing the Almaco plot planter.

Zoom...it is “Bellissima”

Through the power of Zoom video conferencing, 4-H instructor Hope Bragg recently hosted a movie screening of “*The Forgotten History of Camp Monticello*,” a film depicting the story of an Italian World War II prisoner of war camp, for 4-H youth, the Arkansas Archaeological Society and Monticello residents.

Plans for the film’s debut were modified after the filmmakers became quarantined in Milano and Rome, Italy, and social distancing went into effect in Arkansas.

As the Zoom began, conversation was a little different as the participants joyfully communicated in Italian with family members who had been invited to the discussion from across the world. Family members who had not seen each other for months were reunited!

As Arkansas participants joined, the conversation returned to

English, and 4-H youth, families, and Monticellonians had an amazing opportunity. Not only did they learn that Monticello had a major impact on the lives of so many in Italy, but they also witnessed the common thread that we share in this truly global pandemic. (Kids were impressed as one participant was late because he was on the phone with Hugh Jackman—but that is another story!) ■



Participants from around the world converge in Zoom to discuss movie with Arkansas 4-Hers, families, and Arkansas Archaeological Society members.

Soybean Science Challenge Announces State, Regional Winners

Four high school students and their mentors have been recognized as state winners of the 2020 Soybean Science Challenge for their research supporting Arkansas soybean production and agricultural sustainability.

Alyssa B., 16, a sophomore at Carlisle High School in Carlisle, won first place for her project “Greenhouse comparison of genetically similar soybean varieties and resistance to the Southern Root-Knot Nematode.” She received a \$1,000 cash award provided by the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board. Her teacher, Carly Bokker, received a \$300 teacher mentor award at state.

Amna K., 16, a sophomore at Central High School in Little Rock, won \$500 for her project “Defatted Soy as a high performance energy storage material for super-capacitor.”

She also received \$300 as the regional winner of the Central Arkansas Regional Science and Engineering Fair held at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock in March. Her teacher, Lee Conrad, won a \$200 teacher mentor award at both state and regional.

A state honorable mention award was shared by Emilee W., 17, and Taylor M., 18, both seniors at Poyen High School in Poyen, for their project titled “Deadly Deterioration, what’s really in your drink.” Their teacher, Amanda Jones, won a \$100 state award and a \$200 regional award.

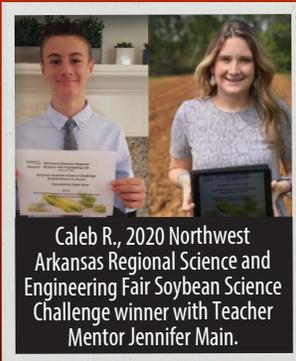
The competition encourages students in grades 9-12 to participate in scientific research that can impact the state of Arkansas as well as the world. ■



Amna K., 2020 Central Arkansas Science and Engineering Fair Soybean Science Challenge Winner with Teacher Mentor Lee Conrad.



Cooper B., 2020 Northeast Arkansas Regional Science and Engineering Fair Soybean Science Challenge winner with Teacher Mentor Amanda Smith.



Caleb R., 2020 Northwest Arkansas Regional Science and Engineering Fair Soybean Science Challenge winner with Teacher Mentor Jennifer Main.



Tori M., 2020 Southwest Arkansas Regional Science Fair Soybean Science Challenge winner with Teacher Mentor Connie Orsak.



Natalie B., 2020 Southeast Arkansas Soybean Science Challenge winner with Teacher Mentor winner, Shannon Blake.

Virtual BBQ Workshop

Franklin County 4-H Agent Casey Jarding recently hosted an online BBQ workshop featuring 4-H barbecue champions who shared what they have learned over the years.



Meredith H., Franklin County 4-H Member.

4-Hers included Franklin County 4-H member Meredith H., who is the 2019 state and national 4-H Turkey BBQ champion, and Abby F., a Johnson County 4-Her who won the 2019 state 4-H Broiler BBQ championship and placed fourth at nationals.

When social distancing measures became necessary, Jarding took the planned workshop online rather than cancel it, and invited all

Arkansas 4-H members, volunteers and staff to participate.

Meredith and Abby used video, PowerPoint, and personal anecdotes to share information about fire control, food safety, BBQ contest preparation and recipe tips. More than 20 people attended the April 1 workshop, including 4-H members, volunteers, agents and program assistants.

In an evaluation poll, participants said they are more prepared to compete or to help others compete in a 4-H BBQ contest and plan to use what they learned when grilling at home. ■



Abby F., Johnson County 4-H Member.

The New Faces of Share Grounds



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Arkansas now has three certified kitchens and distribution centers - or food hubs - at existing fairgrounds around the state. The sites are known as Share Grounds, and Dr. Amanda Philyaw Perez and the Local, Regional, & Safe Foods team have been working to prepare for each site's grand opening, including hiring two new kitchen managers.

Valour Taylor Cobbins will manage the Woodruff County site in McCrory, and Dawn Kelly will oversee the Searcy County site in Marshall. Ryan Sinclair continues in his role as manager for the Cleveland County site in Rison.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Share Grounds kitchen managers are working remotely and are available for phone or online video chats with potential clients. The team is also creating a video training series on how to start a food business and the process for becoming a client at the Share Grounds.

If you know someone interested in making and selling local, value-added foods, please direct them to one of the kitchen managers or visit the [Share Grounds website](#). ■



Lacy Lewis and Ryan Sinclair testing a product at the Share Grounds kitchen in Cleveland County.



Ryan Sinclair, Cleveland County Share Grounds at Cleveland County Fairgrounds.



Valour Taylor Cobbins, Woodruff County Share Grounds at Three County Fairgrounds.



Dawn Kelly, Searcy County Share Grounds at Searcy County Fairgrounds.



Arkansas 4-H Camps Go Online

Arkansas 4-H Camps is hosting 4-H virtual camp sessions on Wednesdays at 2 p.m. via Zoom to engage youth in activities and projects that can be completed at home. Supply lists are posted on the Friday before the session. Youth can use many of the projects for fair submissions or as entrepreneurial inspiration. Anyone is welcome to join in. Instructional videos for the projects will be posted later. ■



The Berryhill family from Hot Spring County participates in a virtual camp.

4-H SeaPerch Hosts Record Number of Participants



A record number of youth participated in this year's SeaPerch Challenge, hosted by Arkansas 4-H and sponsored by the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas.

This year, 43 teams (162 entrants) from 16 counties across Arkansas, participated in the event on March 6 at The Center at Bishop Park in Bryant. More than 300 people attended, including youth, coaches and spectators.

The underwater robotics competition tests youth on their engineering, problem solving, teamwork and technical skills.

Before the competition, each team built its own Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV). On competition day, teams maneuvered their ROVs through an underwater obstacle course and completed challenges, scoring points for completion



Junior Stock Winners from Grant County are presented their award by Electric Cooperative of Arkansas CEO Buddy Hasten. Team Madissygarjack is comprised of Sydney M, Jackson F, Garrett K, and Madison A, and coached by Brad McGinley, Serena McGinley and Tina Melton.

The overall winning teams are listed below. For a full listing, visit the Arkansas 4-H SeaPerch website at <https://4h.uaex.edu/programs/science/engineering-technology/seaperch.aspx>.

Junior Stock Class

- 1st Place – Grant County - Madissygarjack
- 2nd Place – Madison County - Trumpinators
- 3rd Place – Grant County - Turbo Flare

Senior Stock Class

- 1st Place – Madison County - RoboClovers
- 2nd Place – Howard County - Swimming Goats
- 3rd Place – Grant County - Fire Breathing Rubber Duckies

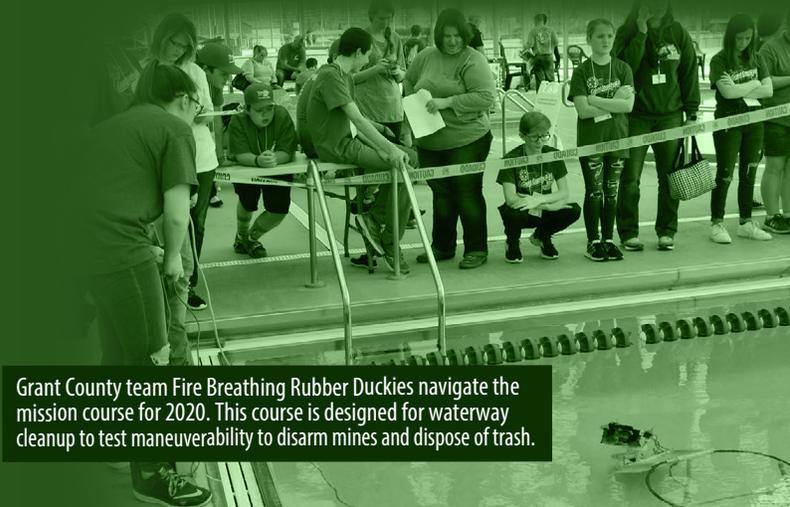
For 2020, the international competition is being replaced by an online component of SeaPerch Onshore: Online & Untethered. More details at <https://www.seaperch.org/onshore>. ■



Senior Stock Winners RoboClovers from Madison County are presented their award by Electric Cooperative of Arkansas CEO Buddy Hasten. Team members Austin F., Laven F., and Tucker S. are proud to win at their first competition. The team is coached by Caramie Edwards.

of tasks. This year's mission, which simulated a waterway clean-up, was inspired by real-life circumstances where ROVs can assist with clean-up efforts, such as floating garbage patches and submerged explosives.

Teams competed in four events to determine overall score. The events included a challenge course and obstacle course in the pool, team presentations and a technical design report. SeaPerch Challenge participation has increased by nearly 250% over the past two years and continues to grow.



Grant County team Fire Breathing Rubber Duckies navigate the mission course for 2020. This course is designed for waterway cleanup to test maneuverability to disarm mines and dispose of trash.

FCS Agents Find Creative Ways to Reach Clients

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Creativity in times of crisis is a strength of Family and Consumer Science agents, who recently started a new Facebook site to connect with clients during the COVID-19 pandemic.

At Home with UAEX offers a huge variety of virtual learning opportunities for social media users, running the gamut from videos to blogs to links for further research. FCS agents from across the state are providing research-based information on COVID-19, food preservation, hand hygiene, activities for children, nutrition, wellness, fitness and more.

JoAnn Vann (Clark County) reached out to fellow Ouachita District FCS agents. Heather Jackson (Pike), Amy Monk (Montgomery) and Katie Cullum (White) joined JoAnn,



followed by Carla Due (Miller), Kristal Draper (Hot Spring), Jean Ince (Howard), MaLinda Coffman (Fulton), Julian Carpenter (Independence), Trudy McManus (Benton), Rachel Chaney (Yell) and Millie Collins (Cross).

In its first two weeks, At Home With UAEX reached 4,419 viewers with information on COVID-19 alone and many other additional clients with non-pandemic subject matter. FCS agents plan to expand the project and add a written document that can be electronically delivered or mailed. ■

Soil and Water Conservation Virtual Field Trip Broadcasts From Scott

The Soil and Water Conservation Virtual Field Trip (VFT) series recently hosted its fourth live broadcast – this time from the Marion Berry Pump Station in Scott.

The March 19 virtual field trip focused on critical groundwater areas and featured the Dabbs Farm near Stuttgart and the Bayou Meto Water Management Project.

The Dabbs - Lori, Terry and Trent, who are Arkansas Discovery Farms cooperating farmers - spoke about water conservation practices on their farm in the Grand Prairie critical groundwater region. Ed Swaim, executive director of the Bayou Meto Water Management Project, talked about the Bayou Meto Water Management Project, and Extension Water Quality Program Associate Lee Riley served as host. He and the subject matter experts answered questions live from the audience, which included 239 participants from 13 states.

The Soil and Water Conservation VFT series is funded by



Speakers: Lee Riley (left) (University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture), Terry Dabbs (Dabbs Discovery Farm), Edward Swaim (Executive Director at Bayou Meto Water Management District), Trent Dabbs and Lori Dabbs (both from the Dabbs Discovery Farm).

USDA-NRCS. A recording of the virtual field trip can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/29QN11d3-Kg>.

For more information, contact series coordinator Rita Watson, virtual education specialist in Community, Professional and Economic Development, at rwatson@uaex.edu, or visit at https://www.uaex.edu/farm-ranch/special-programs/Education_in_Agriculture/virtual-field-trips.aspx. ■

Extension, 4-H get Legislative Shout-out

Arkansas Senator Bruce Maloch of Magnolia, who represents District 12, gave kudos to the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture for its compilation of COVID-19 resources as well as a shout-out to Arkansas 4-H for its virtual offerings to families struggling to homeschool children during the pandemic.



Senator Bruce Maloch mentioned Extension and Arkansas 4-H in his weekly Facebook Video

Maloch posts weekly videos on his Facebook page at [Facebook.com/BruceMaloch](https://www.facebook.com/BruceMaloch) with updates about COVID-19 and the legislature. Last week, he gave a nod to Extension and 4-H and provided links to our website and the Arkansas 4-H page.

The video is available [here](#). Comments begin at the 3:30 mark. ■

Extension Homemakers Launch Online Campaign to Provide 1 Million Meals

The Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council has started an online meal drive as part of their “Nourishing our Roots; Nurturing our Future” campaign to provide one million meals.

Last fall, the state’s 320 EHC clubs chose food insecurity as their statewide community service project and set a goal of raising enough money and collecting enough food to provide one million meals. Since then, clubs have been forced to cancel planned food drives and fundraising events due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Instead, they’ve partnered with six area food banks and will be crowdsourcing donations.

“By partnering with the area food banks, we can leverage our buying power,” said Roberta Shankle of Hardy, a member of the Hardy Country Ladies EHC and the statewide EHC meal drive coordinator. “Ten dollars can buy a few items at your local store, but food banks can use that same \$10 to purchase much more food, and that means more meals for needy families.”

Beginning April 23, anyone can make an donation via uaex.edu/EHC. The gift will go to the food bank of the donor’s choice. Regional food banks buy large quantities of food.

One dollar provides anywhere from four to 10 meals depending on the food bank, which is how the EHC clubs will track donations.

The EHC clubs will continue fundraising through 2021, said Karen Bell Fox, AEHC president. “We have an ambitious goal, and we’re committed to this,” Fox said. “We believe that working together in a group we can have a powerful impact in our communities and our state by helping get food into the hands of those among us who are struggling.” ■

Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council

23.6% of Arkansas children are **FOOD INSECURE.**

U of A DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System
www.uaex.edu/EHC



HELP US RAISE 1 MILLION MEALS!

Division of Agriculture and Department of Animal Science Respond to COVID-19 Pandemic

With COVID-19 wreaking havoc on the livestock markets, the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture teamed with the Arkansas Cattlemen's Association to connect nearly 200 cattle producers in an online webinar to discuss the impacts of COVID-19 on the cattle industry and offer guidance for navigating an unpredictable future.

The March 26 webinar offered helpful information from several industry experts, including Animal Science faculty member John Jennings, who discussed the impacts of

COVID-19 on the beef industry and forage plantings; John Anderson, agricultural economics professor; Jody Almond from Farm Credit; and Tyler Davis from Diamond Bank USA.

On behalf of the Arkansas 4-H Veterinary Science program, Department of Animal Science faculty member Heidi Ward delivered a box of isolation gowns and masks to Briarwood Nursing and Rehabilitation in Little Rock on March 25 to help protect the residents and their staff from COVID-19. ■

Grants and Contracts

PROJECT TITLE	AWARD AMOUNT	PI	GRANTING AGENCY
Evaluation of Bt Traits for Corn Earworm Control	3,851	Ben Thrash	Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board
Arkansas Cotton Research Verification/Sustainability Program	50,000	Bill Robertson	Cotton Incorporated
Evaluation of Cotton Yield to in-Season Soil Applied Potassium	8,000	Bill Robertson	Cotton Incorporated
Enterprise Budgets	10,000	Breana Watkins	Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board
Insect Management in On-Farm Grain Storage	4,612	Glenn Studebaker	Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board
Evaluation of Bt Traits for Corn Earworm Control	4,712	Glenn Studebaker	Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board
Insect Management in On-Farm Grain Storage	9,646	Gus Lorenz	Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board
Evaluation of Bt Traits for Corn Earworm Control	7,189	Gus Lorenz	Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board
Corn DD50 Program	18,000	Jason Kelley	Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board
Overcoming Yield Limitations in Corn	25,000	Jason Kelley	Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board
Arkansas Corn and Grain Verification Program	125,000	Jason Kelley	Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board
Rotational Cropping Systems for Arkansas	26,000	Jason Kelley	Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board
2020 NRA Foundation Multi-County 4-H Shooting Sports Cash Awards	16,710	Jesse Bocksnick	NRA Foundation
Evaluation of Soil Sampling Methods	29,000	Leo Espinoza	Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board
Irrigation Scheduling for Corn Production in Arkansas	5,732	Leo Espinoza	Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board
Arkansas Discovery Farms	5,000	Mike Daniels	Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board
Insect Management in On-Farm Grain Storage	3,441	Nick Bateman	Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board
Evaluation of Bt Traits for Corn Earworm Control	4,248	Nick Bateman	Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board
Ozone Fumigation from Corn	46,000	Sammy Sadaka	Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board
Cover Crops into Corn Rotations and Soil Health	9,053	Terry Spurlock	Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board
Irrigation Scheduling for Corn Production in Arkansas	6,624	Terry Spurlock	Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board
Integrating Multiple Tactics into Cotton Weed Management Programs to Target the Palmer Amaranth Soil Seedbank	31,351	Tom Barber	Cotton Incorporated
Evaluation of Herbicides	35,905	Tom Barber	Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board
Assess Management Nematodes in Arkansas	34,654	Travis Faske	Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board
Cover Crops into Corn Rotations and Soil Health	8,455	Travis Faske	Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board
Determining the best management strategies for southern root-knot nematode and target spot in cotton	13,598	Travis Faske	Cotton Incorporated
Crawford County Food Challenge Program	1,000	Tristin Bolton	Blue & You Foundation
TOTAL AWARDS FOR MARCH 2020: \$542,781			

Benefits Corner

Please review the following important information to learn about additional services and options available to you due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This information can also be found on the UAS benefits website: <https://benefits.uasys.edu/health-and-wellness/understanding-the-coronavirus>.

Medical

You should have received a new medical ID card that includes Teladoc information.

Wellness

The qualified wellness visit requirement for 2021 Wellness Program incentives will be waived this year. You must complete the Tobacco Pledge and Notice during open enrollment to qualify for 2021 Wellness.

Dependent Care FSA

You can change your 2020 Dependent Care FSA election if you have excess funds. Documentation is not required. However, you must contact Human Resources directly to make a change (yourbenefits@uaex.edu).

Claims Submission Deadline

The 2019 FSA claims submission deadline has been extended, for this year only, to April 30, 2020. For the Dependent Care FSA, the expenses must have occurred on or before March 15. After April 30, any amount remaining in your Health Care FSA (over \$500) and Dependent Care FSA will be forfeited. This is an IRS regulation, and this date cannot be extended.

Expansion of Qualifying Expenses

You can now submit over-the-counter medications (without a prescription) and menstrual care products for reimbursement from your Health Care FSA and Health Savings Account. This does not include vitamins and supplements. This change is effective for all expenses incurred as of Jan. 1, 2020. UMR will reprocess any newly qualifying expenses that were denied prior to these new guidelines.

Dental

On July 1, your annual dental benefit maximum will increase to \$1,750 per person. Additional coverage is not retroactive. There will be no dental rate increases on July 1, 2020. ■

Personnel Changes

Welcome aboard:

Carol Ann McAfee - County Extension Agent – 4-H, Garland County, Hot Springs

Sophie Spann - Program Technician – Child Care, Family & Consumer Science, Little Rock

Timothy Hicks - Procurement Counselor, Community, Professional & Economic Development, Little Rock

Deb Kreul - 4-H Program Assistant, Howard County, Nashville

John Thomas - AR 4-H Development Officer, 4H & Youth Development, Little Rock

Kristen Dickson - Fiscal Support Analyst, Credit Union, Little Rock

Nicole Nichols - County Extension Agent – Agriculture, Saline County, Benton

Farewell to:

Mark Peterson - Professor - Economic & Community Development, Little Rock

Marshall Robertson - Project/Program Specialist, Vines 4-H Center, Little Rock

Skip Armes - County Extension Agent - Staff Chair, Searcy County, Marshall

Sarah Stone - County Extension Agent - 4-H, Crittenden County, Marion

