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BLUE LETTER

May 2020

No. 3817



FROM THE DIRECTOR

A New Normal

May has arrived and much of the state remains wet and below normal temps. I am ready for hot weather although I recognize I will regret those words when it happens.

Speaking of “normal”, the Division is working on Stage 1 of our facility re-opening plan, and I appreciate all the thought and effort that has gone into this. I especially appreciate the county extension staff and district directors who have worked diligently with our county leaders in coming up with appropriate plans to re-open county facilities. This has certainly been complicated.

With regard to “normal”, I am not sure we will ever fully return to the way things were before. And perhaps that is OK. I think it would be wise to continue to develop digital alternatives to everything we do so we continue to be able to offer our programs, publications and so forth to all – anytime, anywhere. I commend everyone for doing this during the past couple of months, but the effort needs to continue to be more fully developed. The future is hard to predict, but I would guess we will need these capabilities more in the future, not less. Welcome to the 21st Century Cooperative Extension Service.

I read the obituary for Mrs. Dawson in Jefferson County a couple of days ago. She was a former 4-H'er and an EHC club member. I suppose it is a strange thing to say, but her obit was rather inspirational and reflective of the life well-lived, and a truly remarkable life at that. Within the Blue

Letter this time is a reflection of your remarkable work. I hope you read and appreciate the comprehensive impact of this organization and all our colleagues.

I certainly appreciate the time and effort of AACES in naming the various awardees listed in this issue. Peer nomination and recognition is an important part of professional life, so I hope all of you take this on in the future. Nominate and support recognition of your peers, please. Congratulations to all of the AACES Award Honorees, great job!

And, likewise I appreciate the effort of ACAAA in naming the various awardees for their awards. The list is certainly inspiring and deserving, so congratulations to all those named. Great work!

Finally, I recognize the recipients listed of the Arkansas Press Women awards. These awards honor those in communication of some type, and our type is “excellence” as obvious by the names of our colleagues selected. All do excellent work!

Again, this Blue Letter exemplifies the excellence of our organization, an organization of people committed to and exemplifying excellence. And no better example of our excellence comes to mind than Faith Fritch, stellar 4-H'er from Benton County. Congratulations, Faith!

I hope everyone has a great May and June!

INSIDE SCOOP

2. 2020 Census: New Tools & Initiatives
3. Soybean Science Challenge Presents Awards
4. Arkansas Press Women Awards
5. Tech Corner
6. First Virtual Town Hall, Support Staff Conference
7. Inspiring 4-H Scientists Through Facebook Videos ...And much more!

2020 Census: New Tools & Initiatives

The 2020 Census is still underway and our organization continues to play an active role in ensuring communities across Arkansas can thrive over the next decade. While Arkansas has achieved a response rate of over 50%, many counties have response rates well below our state and national average.

To help counties increase community participation in the 2020 Census, we launched two new initiatives that started May 11.

THE 2020 CENSUS RESPONSE RATE CHALLENGE

Are you curious how many people are responding to the 2020 Census in your community? What about how your county measures up against other counties in Arkansas? Participate in the 2020 Response Rate Challenge to bolster participation in the 2020 Census and compete against other counties in a friendly competition. The county that experiences the highest percent increase in response rate by Oct. 31 will receive a catered lunch for their entire office.

[Review the 2020 Response Challenge Directions here.](#)

JOIN THE 2020 CENSUS VIDEO CHALLENGE – MAKE A VIDEO!

What are innovative ways you can educate your community members about the 2020 Census? Create and post a video to help motivate your community to participate in the 2020 Census. The CPED unit will pay for the registration and travel of the winner's national professional development conference of their choice.

[Review the 2020 Census Video Challenge & Sample Scripts here.](#)

Check out the [2020 Census Toolkit](#) for new tools, initiatives and COVID-19 updates. To add this toolkit to your own box, click the green “Go to My Account” button located in the top right-hand side of your box account. E-mail Emily Smith at elsmith@uaex.edu with any questions. ■

Annual

Cleburne Co. Master Gardener Plant Sale

The Cleburne County Master Gardeners were planting and preparing for their annual plant sale when COVID-19 arrived. But that did not stop the Master Gardeners from giving back to their community. They hosted a weeklong curbside plant and seed giveaway called “Seeds for Happiness” at the Extension Office. More than 100 people received seeds and plants as well as educational information on gardening and COVID-19, all while social distancing. ■



Rebecca Simon Honored with Early Achiever Award

Rebecca Simon, Program Associate - Early Childhood/Family Life, is the recipient of the 2020 Early Achiever Award from the University of Central Arkansas Family and Consumer Sciences Department. The Young Achiever Awards are presented to FACS graduates who have served professionally for at least 15 years and are well known in their respective fields for exceptional work. ■



Soybean Science Challenge Presents Awards at Virtual State Science Fair

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The 2020 Soybean Science Challenge state student research winners were announced at the 66th annual Virtual Southwestern Energy Arkansas State Science and Engineering Fair April 3.

First place and \$1,000 was awarded to Alyssa Butler, a junior at Carlisle High School. Her teacher, Carly Bokker, won the \$300 First Place Teacher Mentor Award.

Second place and \$500 was awarded to Amna Khan, a sophomore at Central High School. Amna was the regional SSC winner at Central Arkansas Regional Science and Engineering Fair. Her teacher, Lee Conrad, won the \$200 Second Place Teacher Mentor Award.

Honorable Mention and \$250 was awarded to Emilee Webb and Taylor Melton from Poyen High School. They were the regional

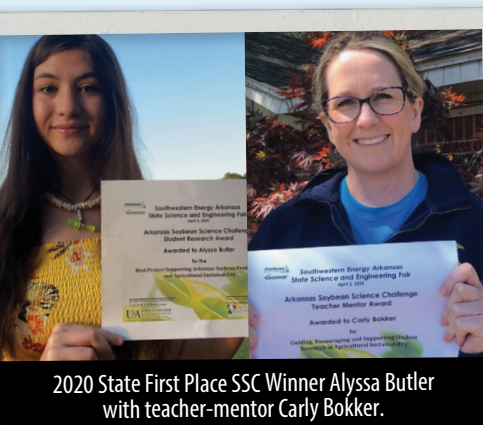
SSC winners at Ouachita Mountains Regional Science and Engineering Fair. Their teacher, Amanda Jones, won the \$100 Honorable Mention Teacher Mentor Award.

The Soybean Science Challenge is a farmer-funded, statewide, high school education program that seeks to increase student knowledge about the value of Arkansas soybeans to the Arkansas economy, to the labor force, and ultimately to feed and fuel the world.

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



2020 State Second Place SSC Winner Amna Khan with teacher-mentor Lee Conrad.



2020 State First Place SSC Winner Alyssa Butler with teacher-mentor Carly Bokker.



2020 State Honorable Mention Winners Emilee Webb and Taylor Melton with Teacher-Mentor Amanda Jones.

Research by Animal Science Faculty Featured in the Journal Applied Animal Science

Research that was conducted and published by animal science faculty and funded by the Arkansas Beef Council was featured in the April issue of the Applied Animal Science journal.

The research, “Comparison of meat quality and health implications of branded and commodity beef,” compared beef labelled as “naturally raised” and conventional beef

to see if there were differences in meat quality. Department of Animal Science researchers within the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station included Cari Keys Fuller, Jason Apple (retired), Janeal Yancey, Tim Johnson and Mike Looper.

The full article and published research can be accessed on the Applied Animal Science [website](#). ■

Arkansas Press Women Awards

Multiple Division of Agriculture employees received awards in an annual communications contest hosted by Arkansas Press Women. Awards were presented in a virtual ceremony on April 25 to Julianne Dunn, Kristin Higgins, Mary Hightower, Ryan McGeeney, Fred Miller and Emily Smith.

Higgins, program associate in the Public Policy Center, received first place in public relations materials, first place in web and social media for a social media campaign; first place in radio and television; and second place in web and social media for blogs and for an electronic newsletter. Dunn and Smith shared a first-place award for their social media campaign called “LoveARcommunities” that featured people across the state impacted by programs in the Community, Professional and Economic Development unit.

Hightower, chief communications officer at the Division of Agriculture, received second place for specialty articles about agriculture. McGeeney, communications specialist, received two honorable mentions for his specialty articles about agriculture.

Miller, science editor for the Division of Agriculture, received first place in writing for an online publication, first place for specialty articles about agriculture, and second place for his news photograph about the tick study.

Smith, program associate in CPED, received first place for web and social media for her blog post about the Break-through Solutions program.

Higgins and Miller’s work have been entered into the National Federation of Press Women’s Annual Communications Contest. Winners of that contest will be announced in June.

Founded in 1949, Arkansas Press Women is an association of professional communicators in journalism, public information, business, education and government. ■



Kristin Higgins received first place in public relations materials.



Emily Smith received first place for web and social media.



4-H & EHC Member from Calhoun Co. Donates 450 Masks



Calhoun County 4-Her and EHC member Kaitlyn W. has sewn 450 masks. She has donated them to the Community Action Development Council, DHS, nurses and pharmacies, SAU Tech, Ouachita County Medical Center, Hope Landing and others.

Kaitlyn is also making extras to fill a drop-off box. Her goal is to sew 1,000 masks to donate so that people can stay well. She has been in 4-H for nine years and EHC for three years. She will be a senior at Hampton High School this fall. ■

Accessibility Tips

Do all images in documents require alternate text?

All images in documents either need to have alternate text (alt text) describing the image, or the image needs to be marked as decorative.

When we first started with implementing our plan to make our documents accessible, we stressed the need to make sure that all images within our documents contained alternate text for visually impaired readers.

What does alt text do?

The alternate text feature allows us to include a description of the image, and then the description is read out loud by

assistive technology. While we have not stepped away from that need, we also understand that some of these images are truly decorative (i.e. are not used to provide additional information to the reader) and could be skipped entirely by assistive technology.

How do I decide if my image is decorative?

If the text in your body copy refers to the image, then the image is informative and needs a description. If the image is clip art or ornamental, mark the image as decorative. Still not sure? Go to the [alternate text decisions tree](#) page on the w3schools website. ■



Tech Corner



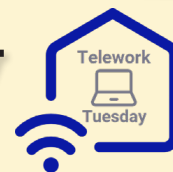
Do You Have Zoom 5.0?

Please update to Zoom 5.0 now. After May 30, 2020, all older Zoom versions will receive a forced upgrade when trying to join meetings.

The security enhancements included in Zoom 5.0 include:

- Security controls are now grouped together and found by clicking the Security icon on the host meeting menu bar.
- “Report a User” - Hosts can report users to Zoom’s Trust & Safety team, who will review any potential misuse of the platform and take appropriate action.
- “Enable Waiting Room” - All hosts may now turn on the Waiting Rooms while their meeting is already in progress.
- “Lock Meeting” - Lock your meeting after everyone has arrived to prevent any unwanted disruptions.
- “Remove Participants” - The host may remove a participant and they will be unable to re-enter the meeting.

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 mornings.

UPCOMING TECH TUESDAY WEBINARS



- 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.

U of A System Division of Agriculture Hosts First Virtual Town Hall, Support Staff Conference

The Division cancelled many events due to COVID-19, but not the 2020 Support Staff Conference (SSC). The conference, featuring the first-ever UADA Virtual Town Hall Meeting and support staff training sessions, was delivered through Zoom to a record number of participants April 30-May 1.

The VTHM welcomed 817 participants who submitted over 50 questions through the Zoom Q&A. Eleven questions were answered live during the broadcast, and additional questions were answered through real-time text responses by 17 AES and CES financial services and human resources subject matter experts. The Support Staff Conference hosted 236 participants, including 61 AES and 173 CES employees and UA employee assistance professionals.

Dr. Karen Ballard, conference director, introduced and facilitated the meeting and conference sessions. Dr. Julie Robinson served as moderator for the VTHM Q&A.

Mary Poling, VTHM and conference Zoom producer, made the complex production and breakout room management seamless, supported throughout by IT and Communications teammates.

Kerry Rodtnick, Nick Kordsmeier and Ricky Blair produced the videos and managed the pre-sessions, which brought us together and paid tribute to our Division support staff.

Kudos to the team of over 50 Division administrators, faculty and staff who made this virtually happen! ■



WE
NO TEAM
GOAL



2020 support
staff conference

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

Virtual Plant Sale Exceeds Goals

Despite COVID-19, the Hot Spring County Master Gardeners took their annual plant sale online this year, and it led to record-breaking plant sales. The group reported income of \$5,487, exceeding their goal of \$2,000 for scholarships and club activities.

For nine days, the gardeners sold plants advertised through the HSCMG Facebook page and arranged curbside pickups. One or two gardeners packaged boxes outside the office and assisted with loading from 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. each day. Social distance was maintained, hands were sanitized between each person and all the money was disinfected with Lysol. The club reported 111 buyers, including 58 repeat buyers.

Through social media, they made 3,781 direct contacts and 13,451 indirect contacts. The HSCMG Facebook page increased in likes by 267 after the virtual plant sale announcement. ■



Hot Spring County Master Gardener Ann Wright and County Agent Rachel Bearden during curbside pickup at the virtual plant sale.

Inspiring 4-H Scientists Through Facebook Videos

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Lonoke County 4-H Agent Sara Beth Johnson is using social media to inspire her 4-H'ers, among others, to get hands-on with home science activities. With short videos posted to the Lonoke County 4-H Facebook page, Sara Beth leads youth step by step through projects like the Crayon Rock Cycle, Magic Balloon, Edible Soil and how to make a Homemade Lava Lamp, all using supplies that youth likely already have at home. The videos have over 19,000 views, 3,440 engagements and have been viewed in 18 states! Lonoke County 4-H'ers have indicated they love having fun, hands-on, science activities to do at home until their 4-H clubs can start meeting again. ■



4-H Volunteer Receives Kindness Award



Left to right - Jennifer Reed, award winner, with Megan Huddleston and Heather Akins.

KAIT8 virtually surprised Randolph County 4-H volunteer Jennifer Reed on April 24 with a \$408 "Great Acts of Kindness" check, which she gave back to the community.

Reed and her husband, Doty, have been Randolph County 4-H volunteer leaders for more than 15 years. Jennifer played an important role in organizing the county fair's scholarship auction over the years, raising more than \$30,000 for scholarships for Randolph County high school students. She also helped organize the yearly county fair's blue ribbon sale, raising more than \$130,000 for 4-H and FFA youth. Jennifer volunteers for many other organizations such as Make-A-Wish, Relay for Life, Brenton Cox Warrior Foundation, the Backpack program and Children's Miracle Network. ■

Governor Hutchinson Wears Mask Made by 4-H Member

U of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture
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We couldn't be more proud!

During his COVID media briefing today, Gov. Asa Hutchinson recognized 4-H State Officer Faith Fritch for the clover-strewn 4-H face mask she made him, embroidered with his first name. The governor also recognized the efforts of volunteer groups affiliated with the Cooperative Extension Service: Extension Homemakers, Master Gardeners, Extension Get Fit and 4-H clubs. Among them, they have created and donated more than 30,000 face masks.

"So thank you, Faith, for the excellent mask that I will wear, and as a former 4-H member, I'm very, very proud of that." #covid19 #staysafe



AACES Names Award Winners

- **Karen DiCicco-Brett Barham Extension Innovation Award.** Recognizes one appointed extension employee for innovation in programming or use of technology to further the mission of Extension within the last three years.

- **Stewart Runsick – Outstanding County Agent Award.** Recognizes one county extension agent for outstanding service in the performance of all job responsibilities within the last three years.



- **Amy Cole-Linda Meeks Support Specialist Award.** Recognizes one appointed extension support specialist for superior service in the performance of all job responsibilities within the last three years.

- **Kimberly Rowe and Kristin Higgins-Gary Burke Memorial Award.** Recognizes one appointed extension program associate or program technician who has demonstrated commitment, character, accomplishment and professionalism within the last three years.

- **Wayne Miller-Jeanette Roberts Outstanding Specialist Award.** Recognizes one appointed extension faculty member for superior service in the performance of all job responsibilities within the last three years.

- **Laura Hendrix-Faculty Project Performance Award.** Recognizes one appointed extension faculty member for outstanding performance in a single, difficult assignment within the last three years.

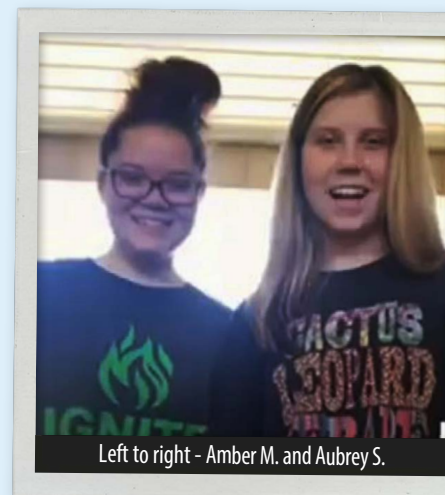
- **Andrea Price-Jane Osborne Memorial Award.** Recognizes one classified appointed extension employee whose efforts have exemplified professionalism in the performance of all job responsibilities within the last three years.



- **Judy Riley-Service Award.** Recognizes unselfish service and dedication to the Cooperative Extension Service or to the Land-Grant System. ■

Sevier Co. Ambassadors Stepping UP!

Sevier County Ambassadors Amber M. and Aubrey S. have been going above and beyond the call of duty for their county. They have been making and posting educational videos for youth in the county. Not only are they teaching real life skills such as check writing, they also are doing fun stuff like wreath making to keep spirits up. ■



ArDROP Adopts New Food Purchasing Policy

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The Arkansas Delta Region Obesity Project team – better referred to as ArDROP – in collaboration with the Manila Food Pantry in Manila, AR, was able to pass their first fully executed food pantry healthy purchasing policy in April. The newly adopted policy outlines parameters – adapted from Feeding America’s Foods to Encourage – by which the pantry agrees to adhere to when making food purchases, as a supplement to their indispensable donation inventory.

The purpose of the healthy purchasing policy is to guide the Manila Food Pantry’s decisions about foods purchased and

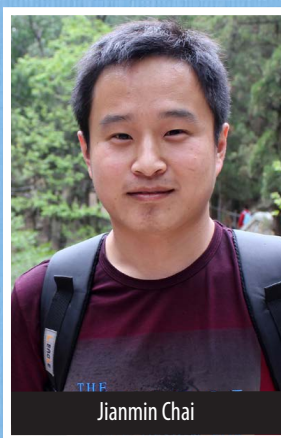
distributed in an effort to contribute to a healthier diet for their patrons, as well as aid in alleviating hunger and food insecurity within the community.

The success comes as an effort of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s High Obesity Program cooperative agreement, awarded to the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Research & Extension in 2018. The goal of the program is to help Arkansas communities with a greater than 40 percent adult obesity rating address community obesity levels via nontraditional methods of increasing access to healthy foods and places to be physically active. ■

Animal Science Graduate Student Awarded Grant

Animal Science graduate student, Jianmin Chai, was recently awarded a grant from the Office of Research and Innovation and Graduate Professional Student Research Council to investigate the respiratory microbiome of beef cattle and the influences on bovine respiratory disease (BRD) using next-generation sequencing.

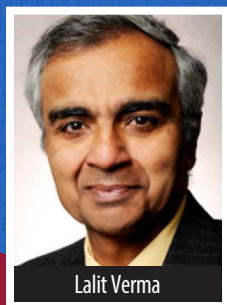
Chai, who will team up with U of A System Division of Agriculture animal science faculty member Jiangchao Zhao, aims to characterize the nasal microbiome from pre-BRD and BRD



cattle, as well as their healthy controls using a MinION nanopore sequencing platform. The nanopore sequencing is a cost-effective way to profile bacterial communities, and detect, simultaneously, DNA and RNA virus species since the MinION is small, portable and runs on a laptop.

This design will work to better understand the longitudinal shifts of the microbiome in healthy and BRD cattle after entering the feedlot and compare the microbiome community between healthy and BRD-afflicted cattle. ■

Lalit Verma Wins Alumni Award



Lalit Verma, head of the Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering at the University of Arkansas, was named a 2020 Alumni Masters by the Nebraska Alumni Association.

Verma (Class of 1976) was included for his outstanding contributions as an educator, researcher and leader through the development and promotion

of biological engineering. As a department head, he led transformations of the agricultural engineering programs at the University of Arkansas and Louisiana State.

The Alumni Masters and award winners were to be recognized on campus in April; however, both events were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. ■

Mississippi Co. 4-H'ers Help Local Farmers



When local farmers were having a difficult time finding protective masks for their workers, they contacted the Mississippi County Extension Service for help. 4-H families across the county responded by making 200 face masks in two weeks for local producers.

The 4-H mask-making project provided youth with a constructive activity that allowed them to contribute to their community. Each 4-H family who volunteered for the project received a mask kit provided by Mississippi County 4-H. Each mask kit contained all the supplies necessary to make 10-12 masks including fabric, ties and thread. The kits also contained enough fabric for each 4-H'er to create their own mask using fabric with the 4-H symbol.

Through this project, 4-H youth connected with their communities and gained a sense of pride and satisfaction by creating masks for our farming community. As one 4-H'er said, "Of course I'll help our farmers. My family and I like to eat and our farmers are the ones who work hard to make sure we have food to feed everyone." ■



Mississippi Co. 4-H members helped local farmers by making 200 face masks in two weeks. 4-H members, Gabrielle, Abigail and Caleb, work together to make cloth face masks to help farmers meet CDC guidelines to minimize the effects of the COVID-19 virus.

Living Well Challenge Wraps Up

The eight-week Living Well Challenge (LWC) pilot has wrapped up for the season. Goals of the LWC were to help participants develop five healthy lifestyle habits: cook more meals at home, eat more fruits and vegetables, drink fewer sweetened beverages, improve sleep and increase movement.

Through information on the website, blog, and emails and accountability through the private Facebook group, participants were given the support to help them meet the challenge goals.

Participants reported a total of 65 pounds and 12 inches lost even through the trials of the pandemic.

Prairie Co., Katie Cullum-White Co., Dianna Bowen-Lonoke Co., Diane Clement-Cleveland Co., Carla Due-Miller Co. and Debbie Baker-Clay Co.



Highest Weight Loss Percentage Winner: Shelly Garth.

Quotes from participants:

"I have not had a soda since we started the program. I have eaten more fruits/veggies and exercised more in the past 8 weeks than I have in a very long time."

"Having the Living Well Facebook group helped my mental well-being and helped me be successful, especially considering our COVID situation."

Thank you to Amy Cole, Karen DiCicco, Gretchen Skinner and Becky Bridges for the invaluable technical expertise in developing the LWC website and blog; Julie Thompson for design expertise; Dr. Laura Balis and Dr. Bryan Mader for program guidance; and all employees who participated in the pilot and gave us insights to improve the challenge for public rollout in the future. ■



Most Challenge Points Winner: Shaw Nee Tichenor.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE OVERALL WINNERS:

Most Challenge Points: Shaw Nee Tichenor - CEA-SC Sebastian Co.
Highest Weight Loss Percentage: Shelly Garth, administrative specialist, Independence Co.

The LWC team included these FCS agents: Shea Wilson-

ACAAA State Meeting & Awards Banquet

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The ACAA state meeting and awards banquet was canceled due to the pandemic but that didn't stop our association from recognizing our state winners via Facebook.

STATE WINNER COMMUNICATION AWARDS:

Computer Generated Presentation- Arkansas Diamond Plants
- Amy Tallent

Personal Column- County Extension News – Brad Runsick

Feature Story- 4-H Veterinary Clinic
- Rachel Beardon

Newsletter, Individual –

White County Horticulture
Newsletter – Sherri Sanders

Newsletter, Team – Poinsett County
Cotton News – Jeffrey Works &
Craig Allen

Video Presentation – Scouting for
Armyworms – Terrell Davis

Fact Sheet- Forage Herbicide Quick Reference Guide –
Brad Runsick - **Team Members:** Blair Griffin & John Boyd

Publication – MP467 Arkansas Small Fruit Management
Schedule – Sherrie Smith – **Team Member:** Sherri Sanders

Web Site – U of A Marion County Extension-
UAEX Facebook Page – Brian See

Published Photo – 4-H Survival Day Camp – Allison Howell

Program Promotional Package –

Promoting the Peach
Pruning Workshop –
Sherri Sanders **Team Members:**
Chris Meux, Barbara Batiste &
Tonisha Thorpe

Bound Book – Arkansas Common
Landscape Problems –
Sherri Sanders **Team Members:**
Sherrie Smith, John Hopkins,

Mary Hightower, John Boyd & Chris Meux

SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Search for Excellence in 4-H & Youth Programming –
(Agriculture Awareness for White County Youth)
- Sherri Sanders **Team Member:** Jan Yingling

Search for Excellence in Crop Production – (Row Crop
Education Programs Benefit Clay County Producers)
- Stewart Runsick

Search for Excellence in Forestry & Natural Resources –
(End of Season Grower Discussion & Irrigation Tour) -
Amy Tallent **Team Members:** Brent Griffin & Jan Yingling



Terrell Davis

Jackie Lee, Lizzy Herrera, Julie Robinson, Kerry Rodtnick,
Leah English, Chris Meux, Mary Hightower, Mary Poling
& Jennie Popp

Search for Excellence in Livestock Production –

(Young Cattlemen Series of Carroll County) - Olivia Foster

**Search for Excellence in Young, Beginning, or Small Farmers/
Ranchers –** (Southwest Arkansas Small Ruminant College)
- Sherry Beaty-Sullivan **Team**

Members: Nicole Nichols,
Amy Simpson, Stacey Stone,
Cindy Ham, Rex Herring,
Jennifer Sansom, Samantha Kroll,
Lance Rice & Jennifer Caraway

**Search for Excellence in Sustainable
Agriculture Recognition Program –**

(Educating the Public on Sustainable
Agriculture & Local Foods in White
County) - Sherri Sanders

Agriculture Awareness

& Appreciation Award

– Allison Howell

Young Professional's Award –

Allison Howell

Achievement Award –

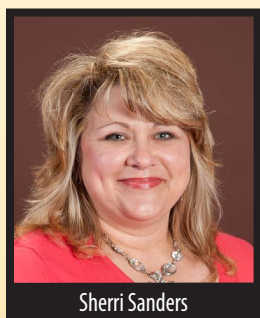
Russell Parker
Michael Paskewitz
Jan Yingling

Distinguished Service Award –

Kevin Norton
Beth Phelps
Phillip Sims ■



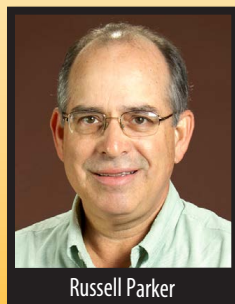
Rachel Beardon



Sherri Sanders



Jan Yingling



Russell Parker



Kevin Norton

Faulkner County Master Gardeners Donate Plants

Faulkner County Master Gardeners usually have one of the largest plant sales in the state. With the COVID-19 pandemic, however, local leaders felt there was no way to conduct the sale in a safe way this year. Some plants had already been started for the sale when the decision was made to cancel. Master Gardeners were able to use some of the plants in their community landscaping projects, and some will be held for the 2021 sale. After hearing the landscaping budget for UAMS had been cut due to expenses related to COVID-19, the group decided to donate the rest of the plants to UAMS to ensure that staff and patients at the hospital would still have colorful flowerbeds to enjoy. Faulkner County Master Gardeners donated about 160 lantanas, 100 caladium bulbs, 30 elephant ears and 150 other perennial flowers. Master

Gardeners Mary Wells and Diane Howe grew the lantanas in a small hobby greenhouse while Cathie Connaughton propagated the perennial flowers at her house. If these plants were purchased retail, the value would be close to \$1,000. ■



Penny Talbert (left), the landscape manager at UAMS, and Faulkner County Master Gardener Mary Wells load donated plants that will be planted in flowerbeds around UAMS.

Grants and Contracts (cont. next page)

PROJECT TITLE	AWARD AMOUNT	PI	GRANTING AGENCY
Rice Insect Control	12,328	Ben Thrash	Rice Research Promotion Board
Soybean Insect Management	14,190	Ben Thrash	Soybean Promotion Board
Cotton Incorporated-Cotton Specialists Partnership: Large-Plot, Replicated Variety Evaluation- AR	10,000	Bill Robertson	Cotton Incorporated
Pilot Program to Demonstrate Implementation and Benefits of the US Cotton Trust Protocol and Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) Cotton Program	30,000	Bill Robertson	Cotton Incorporated
Rice Enterprise Budgets and Production Economic Analysis	8,500	Breana Watkins	Rice Research Promotion Board
Soybean Enterprise Budgets and Production Economic Analysis	10,266	Breana Watkins	Soybean Promotion Board
UACES Early Care and Education Projects (Best Care, Best Care Connected, Guiding Children Successfully, and 4-H Afterschool)	322,500	Brittney Schrick	DHS Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education
4-H Junior Master Gardeners Retta Brown Community Garden - Union County	1,400	Cherrie Sweeney	Union County Community Foundation
SNAP-ED Program FY2021	2,143,778	Debra Head	Arkansas Department of Human Services
Soybean Insect Management	14,493	Glenn Studebaker	Soybean Promotion Board
Determining the Effectiveness and Economics of Dual Gene vs Three Gene BT Cotton and fit for Conventional Cotton for Arkansas Cotton Growers	20,000	Gus Lorenz	Cotton Incorporated
Educating Growers and Consultants on Insect Monitoring and Control	5,000	Gus Lorenz	Soybean Promotion Board
Insect Management in Mid-South Pest Management: AR	55,000	Gus Lorenz	Cotton Incorporated
Investigating Emerging Production Recommendations for Sustainable Soybean Production	24,298	Gus Lorenz	Soybean Promotion Board
Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc, Evaluation Agreement State of Work 2020-01	15,000	Gus Lorenz	Pioneer Hi-Bred
Rice Insect Control	59,829	Gus Lorenz	Rice Research Promotion Board
Soybean Insect Management	27,247	Gus Lorenz	Soybean Promotion Board
Agronomic Production Practices for Rice	99,500	Jarrold Hardke	Rice Research Promotion Board
Agronomics of Alternative Irrigation Strategies for Rice	50,000	Jarrold Hardke	Rice Research Promotion Board
Arkansas Rice Performance Trials	99,000	Jarrold Hardke	Rice Research Promotion Board
DD50 Thermal Unit Thresholds and Seeding Date Effects for New Cultivars	60,000	Jarrold Hardke	Rice Research Promotion Board
Nitrogen Recommendations for New Rice Cultivars	57,000	Jarrold Hardke	Rice Research Promotion Board
Optimum Rice Plant Spacing and Seeding Rate	24,000	Jarrold Hardke	Rice Research Promotion Board
Rice Research Verification Program	93,636	Jarrold Hardke	Rice Research Promotion Board
Developing Profitable Irrigated Rotational Cropping Systems	16,000	Jason Kelley	Soybean Promotion Board
Improving Technology Transfer for Profitable and Sustainable Soybean Production	32,530	Jeremy Ross	Soybean Promotion Board
Investigating Emerging Production Recommendations for Sustainable Soybean Production	189,817	Jeremy Ross	Soybean Promotion Board
Soybean Research Verification Program	197,448	Jeremy Ross	Soybean Promotion Board
Soybean Science Challenge	79,582	Julie Robinson	Soybean Promotion Board
Promoting Irrigation Water Management for Soybeans	61,492	Leo Espinoza	Soybean Promotion Board
The Arkansas Discovery Farm Program	24,808	Michael Daniels	Soybean Promotion Board
Determining the Impact of Disease and Stinkbug Feeding on Soybean Quality	14,102	Nick Bateman	Soybean Promotion Board
Insect Management in On-farm Grain Storage	42,834	Nick Bateman	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Rice Insect Control	43,107	Nick Bateman	Rice Research Promotion Board

Benefits Corner

In the course of implementing Workday through Project One, the University of Arkansas System has determined that some of its institutions utilize different methods for calculating the 12-month period in which an employee may take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Some institutions utilize a “counting forward” 12-month period, measured from the first date of an employee’s use of FMLA; some have counted backward from the first use of FMLA; and others have used a fixed 12-month period, such as the calendar year. While each method is allowed under the law, the System needs to implement a consistent method for the transition to Workday.

In light of this, the System has issued a new policy titled “UASP 425.2 Family & Medical Leave Act – Calculation of Leave,” which, beginning July 1, 2020, requires all campuses to use the “counting forward” 12-month period for the purposes of the FMLA.

Any employee of the University of Arkansas who takes FMLA leave between now and June 30, 2020, may do so using either the existing method for the campus (which, for this campus, is the calendar-year method) or the “counting forward” method, whichever method is most beneficial to the employee. Employees who are currently under approved FMLA leave during the fiscal year will continue through the end of the employee’s already established FMLA leave period.

UASP 425.2 is posted on the UA System website (<https://www.uasys.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2020/04/UASP-425.2-FMLA-Calculation-of-Leave-4.20.20.pdf>) and on the UA System benefits website: <https://benefits.uasys.edu/>.

Cooperative Extension employees who have questions may contact Nytalya Salter or Del Johnson in Human Resources at yourbenefits@uaex.edu or 501-671-2219. ■

Personnel Changes

Welcome aboard:

Bridget Fortenberry - Director of Human Resources, Little Rock
Megan Maulden - County Extension Agent – 4-H, Benton
Stacey Stone - County Extension Agent – Staff Chair, Prescott
Imelda Perez - Administrative Specialist II, Fayetteville
Kaitie Golden - CES Program Assistant, Murfreesboro
Nancy Morehead - Buyer, Fayetteville

Farewell to:

Temu Mulaw - Plant Pathology - Program Tech, Stuttgart



PROJECT TITLE (GRANTS & CONTRACTS CONT.)	AWARD AMOUNT	PI	GRANTING AGENCY
Soybean Insect Management	14,065	Nick Bateman	Soybean Promotion Board
Comprehensive Disease Screening of Soybean Varieties in Arkansas	41,467	Terry Spurlock	Soybean Promotion Board
Determining the Impact of Disease and Stinkbug Feeding on Soybean Quality	26,421	Terry Spurlock	Soybean Promotion Board
Determining the Value of Fungicide Application on Regional, Field Level, and Within Field Scales	32,834	Terry Spurlock	Soybean Promotion Board
Promoting Irrigation Water Management for Soybeans	6,636	Terry Spurlock	Soybean Promotion Board
Understanding Taproot Decline, a Soybean Disease of Increase Importance in Arkansas	18,856	Terry Spurlock	Soybean Promotion Board
A Team Approach to Weed Management in Soybean	51,753	Tom Barber	Soybean Promotion Board
A Team Approach to Improved Weed Management in Rice	73,214	Tom Barber	Rice Research Promotion Board
A Team Approach to Weed Management in Soybean	56,466	Tommy Butts	Soybean Promotion Board
A Team Approach to Improved Weed Management in Rice	80,596	Tommy Butts	Rice Research Promotion Board
Comprehensive Disease Screening of Soybean Varieties in Arkansas	58,439	Travis Faske	Soybean Promotion Board
Development of an Effective Program to Manage Fungicide Resistant Diseases of Soybean in Arkansas	35,346	Travis Faske	Soybean Promotion Board
Field Trial Service Agreement	33,000	Travis Faske	BioConsortia, Inc
Integrated Management of Soybean Nematodes in Arkansas	46,876	Travis Faske	Soybean Promotion Board
Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc. Evaluation Agreement Statement of Work #2020-02	14,400	Travis Faske	Pioneer Hi-Bred
Pioneer Hi-bred International, Inc. Evaluation Agreement Statement of Work #2020-03	14,400	Travis Faske	Pioneer Hi-Bred
Stone County Master Gardeners	500	Tyler Caston	Walmart Foundation
Evaluation of Contemporary Rice to Straighthead, a Physiological Disorder of Unknown Cause	10,000	Yeshi Wamishe	Rice Research Promotion Board
Evaluation of Fungicide Application Timing and Coverage to Suppress False Smut and Sheath Blight of Rice	25,000	Yeshi Wamishe	Rice Research Promotion Board
Rice Breeding and Pathology Tech Support	60,040	Yeshi Wamishe	Rice Research Promotion Board
TOTAL AWARDS FOR APRIL 2020: \$4,658,994			