

# BLUE LETTER

The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service Monthly Letter

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## FROM THE DIRECTOR

Every other year Wayne Miller produces *Rural Profile of Arkansas*, a publication examining economic conditions and challenges of Arkansas' rural counties and communities.

The report is one example of how Community and Economic Development (CED) can assist county agents who work with local business and political leaders in their communities. Extension can help develop strategies leading to economic stability and growth.

CED can provide many services such as an analysis of how local tax revenues and spending may bring about desired economic changes or how a community might proactively reach out to emerging diverse populations.

CED provides leadership training for citizens to better serve vital roles on local boards and committees. Sometimes various interests within a community need assistance resolving differences on difficult or complex issues. When that happens, CED faculty can facilitate in reaching solutions.

The Arkansas Procurement Assistance Center (APAC), as part of CED, helps small businesses acquire city, school district, county, state and national government contracts for products or services, immediately impacting the local economy.

The Public Policy Center explains to voters issues being placed on the ballot, whether the issues deal with initiated acts or bring about changes to the state's constitution.

CED's range of services enhances the standard of living at the municipal and county level and gives Extension another opportunity to enrich the lives of Arkansans.

Thanks for all you do.

– Tony Windham

## Big changes at the 4-H Center

Rooms in lodging units one and two at the 4-H Center have recently been renovated with new carpet, fresh paint and 32-inch televisions. Rooms in the second lodge also received new curtains, and thanks to a generous donation from the 4-H Leaders Association, the first lodge will soon have new curtains as well.

Bathrooms in both lodges still need new vanities, hallways need new carpets and each room needs new furnishings and television cabinets. If you're interested in donating toward our continuing upgrade, please contact the Arkansas 4-H Foundation.



**DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE  
RESEARCH & EXTENSION**

University of Arkansas System

University of Arkansas,  
United States Department of  
Agriculture, and County  
Governments Cooperating

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DR. TONY WINDHAM  
Associate Vice President for  
Agriculture - Extension and  
Director, Cooperative Extension Service

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# Strawberries in the snow; project shoots for wintertime berries

At a time when Arkansas-grown summer strawberries are a happy memory, Elena Garcia and her team are gearing up for their growing season.

Garcia, a professor and Extension fruit and nut specialist, is studying the use of high tunnels for winter and early spring strawberry harvest in Arkansas.

Her research, which aims to extend the short strawberry growing season in Arkansas, is one of 18 nationwide to earn a grant as part of the National Strawberry Sustainability Initiative, funded by a \$3 million donation from the Wal-Mart Foundation.

High tunnels “are plastic structures, almost like a greenhouse but not actively heated,” said Garcia. “Here in Fayetteville, we have been able to grow strawberries under our high tunnels during the winter months. We plant them in early September and fruit production starts in late November. Production continues all winter long until early spring.”



**Elena Garcia shows off strawberry plants fruiting in late December in high tunnels of plastic sheeting over a metal frame at the research and extension center in Fayetteville.**

Arkansas once ranked among the nation’s top strawberry growers, but California and Florida have taken over the majority of production. Total U.S. strawberry production was valued at \$2.4 billion in 2011.

By deflecting wind and trapping warmth, Garcia said the high tunnels provide passive heating that allows for the cultivation of the berries; plants are still covered on days when it is going to be very cold.

What excites her, she says, is that this method produces flavorful strawberries in the winter months that, she says, are superior in flavor to anything coming out of California or Florida during the winter months there. The high tunnel berries are ending their production about the time Arkansas farmers ramp up to plant outdoor strawberries.

She also thinks there’s a built-in market for farmers who produce winter strawberries.

“For the 2011-12 season, we were able to produce quite a bit, about a third more production than outside production,” said Garcia. “That’s good in the sense it’s more of a market run. In Fayetteville there are some winter markets, so people who are doing this could easily sell their berries for much higher prices than what the supermarkets are selling them for.”

It’s even a method that people can use at home, she said, building arches out of PVC pipe and stretching plastic over them or buying a kit from a supplier.

“There’s a range of structures that people can get; it’s very feasible,” said Garcia.

The Cooperative Extension Service is working to build interest for the high tunnel method among commercial farmers. They’re accustomed to strawberries as a spring crop, she said, so the idea of producing them in the winter takes some convincing, especially that there would be a ready market for them out of season.

Jim Goodson of Damascus is a strawberry farmer and president of the Mid-America Strawberry Growers Association. He’s familiar with the high tunnel concept but says it’s not yet been widely adopted in the region.

“It’s going to catch on, but it’s going to be slow to catch on,” he said. “It is extremely expensive getting established for the high tunnels. You’re looking at as much as \$20,000 to \$25,000 an acre. It has started to take off in South Carolina, North Carolina, and a bit in central California.”

There were an estimated 80 to 100 acres of strawberries in cultivation in Arkansas this year, with close to 5 million plants producing between 15,000 and 17,000 berries per acre.

As part of the National Strawberry Sustainability Initiative, grant recipients will have 12 months to complete their projects. The Center for Agricultural and Rural Sustainability will release the project reports in September 2014. ■

A graphic with a red background and a white floral design on the left. At the top is the U of A logo (University of Arkansas) with the text "DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE RESEARCH &amp; EXTENSION University of Arkansas System". Below that, in large white letters, is "SAVE the DATE" where "the" is in a black circle. Underneath is "01.10.14" in large white numbers. At the bottom, in a smaller white font, is "Clarion Hotel Medical Center, Little Rock, AR" and "Annual Division Awards Luncheon" in a white script font.

## Arkansas 4-H'er screens films, wins big

Payton Hubbard, Searcy County 4-H'er, recently attended a national 4-H Film Festival in Branson, Mo., where he and others learned new and exciting skills from world-renowned industry professionals, such as the lead makeup artist for the Star Trek movies.

Payton submitted two films for judging. His animation film, Benny: A Love Story, won first place and his narrative film, The Party, also won first place.

Both films may be seen on YouTube, by searching "Payton Hubbard" or by going to <http://youtu.be/FpmoXJ92kcY> and <http://youtu.be/1A5TvAb7yLI>. ■

## Corn Advisor app recognized with 2013 ASABE Educational Aids blue ribbon award

UA Division of Agriculture specialists were recognized with a blue ribbon award July 22 at the general session and keynote speaker event during the 2013 American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE) International Meeting in Kansas City, Mo.

The annual award recognizes outstanding effort and achievement in developing noteworthy educational materials and was presented to 21 percent of the entries.

The Division's team, Drs. Dharmendra Saraswat, associate professor and Extension engineer; Leo Espinoza, Extension soil scientist, and Jason Kelley, Extension wheat and feed grain agronomist, was honored for developing the Corn Advisor app for use on mobile devices.

The Corn Advisor app is available through Apple's iTunes Store (<http://alturl.com/j9ez9>) for use on iPhone and iPad and Google's Play Store (<http://alturl.com/buh5d>) for use on Android smartphone or tablet powered by Android 2.2 operating system or higher.

Being connected to the Internet is not required in accessing and using the app. ■

## Baker photo accepted into international art show

When Tony Baker isn't overseeing facilities, meetings and meals at the C.A. Vines 4-H Center, he's roaming around, camera in hand.

The fruits of his photographic labors can now be seen in three galleries, including a juried international show in Los Angeles.

Baker has one piece, titled "Road to Lamont," traveling with the Arkansas Art Council Small Works on Paper Exhibition that is at the Guachoya Cultural Art Center in Lake Village until the end of the month, then moves to Hendrix in Conway on Oct. 3-29.

He has two pieces, "Alone," and "Mystic Flight," in a nationally juried show that opened in July at the South Arkansas Arts Center.

The final piece, "Moth," was selected for the "Bugs Life" show now at Gallery 1650 in Los Angeles.

In the past, Baker has also shared his talents as a photography instructor at the Arkansas Arts Center. ■

## Biological and Agricultural Engineering graduate student wins ASABE competition

Gurdeep Singh, a post-graduate student in the Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering, was awarded third place in the M.S. category of the 2013 Boyd-Scott Graduate Research Award competition July 22 during the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE) International Meeting in Kansas City, Mo.

The award recognizes excellence in the conduct and presentation of research to build the knowledge base needed by engineers who design equipment, facilities and processes for the sustainable operation of a biological system.

Gurdeep won the award for his paper, "A Novel Simulation Approach for Biofuel Crop Production on Marginal Lands." Gurdeep is supervised by Dharmendra Saraswat, Ph.D., associate professor of biological and agricultural engineering and Extension engineer for geospatial technologies. ■

**What's new in publications? Find out at:**

[http://www.uaex.edu/depts/Administration/blue\\_letter/Monthly\\_Publications\\_Report.htm](http://www.uaex.edu/depts/Administration/blue_letter/Monthly_Publications_Report.htm)

## BENEFITS CORNER

### Keep your information current

Be sure to keep your home address updated in Banner. By keeping your information current, you help assure you will receive benefits enrollment material and other critical information when they are mailed.

You may update your personal information by going to

[http://banapps1.uaex.edu:9010/aces/twbkwbis.P\\_WWWLogin](http://banapps1.uaex.edu:9010/aces/twbkwbis.P_WWWLogin).

After you update your home address, you will be e-mailed contact information for each benefits vendor you have signed up for, so you may notify them of your current mailing address.

## Arkansas WHEP team places fifth at nationals

The Arkansas Wildlife Habitat Education Program's (WHEP's) senior 4-H team placed fifth at the National Invitational held July 21-24 at the Indiana FFA Leadership Center in Trafalgar. Drew County team members and their coaches continued the winning streak of Arkansas teams placing in the top ten in this highly competitive national event.



Arkansas WHEP team members from Drew County represented our state and placed fifth this summer at the national 4-H WHEP contest in Indiana. They are, from left to right, Lynn Lanthrip (coach), Bree-Anne Lanthrip, Sonya Sneed (co-leader), Brianna White, Chase Owen and Jacob Henson.

Participants identified wildlife species and answered questions testing their wildlife knowledge and understanding of ecological concepts. They also evaluated land for appropriate management practices for eight wildlife species from the eastern deciduous forest region, wrote a

wildlife management plan as a team and individually answered judges' questions about their plan.

Team members raised funds locally to help support their travel expenses to practice sessions with wildlife and fisheries biologists in Arkansas and near the site of the national contest. The team arrived a couple days early to the national contest area in Indiana and met with local wildlife biologists and park interpreters to better prepare for the contest.

For details about 4-H WHEP and other wildlife education programs, contact Becky McPeake at 501-671-2285, or check out our website at <http://www.arnatural.org/wildlife.htm>. ■

## Pope County 4-H Wrangler Club members compete in hippology at State 4-H Horse Show

Seven Pope County 4-H Wrangler Club members participated in the Arkansas State 4-H Horse Show competition, hippology.

These seven young ladies met once a week for the last year studying for this contest. They dedicated a great deal of their time to learning about all things horse, which is something for which all of these ladies have a strong passion.

Pope County was represented by two teams at the hippology contest, where they placed first and second. The same members also made up the Pope County Horse Bowl team, which placed first at the state contest. They are proof that hard work really does pay off! ■

### CHANGES AT 4-H CENTER (cont. from page 1)

#### New this year

Starting this year, you may make individual lodging reservations at the 4-H Center when you come to central Arkansas for special events, such as Razorback football games, concerts, livestock shows, and the list continues.

This offer is for Extension employees and their families and 4-H youth and their families.

When a special event comes to town, such as a football game or the state fair, the 4-H Center will e-mail employees a special code, which can be used to make an online reservation. We'll be sending details of this service to the counties soon.

The 4-H Center appreciates everyone who visits the Center and thanks for your support! ■

# Extension Service Smartphone apps by University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture

Dharmendra Saraswat, Ph.D., an extension engineer for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, offered a sneak preview of smartphone apps released in partnership with colleagues during 2013 Rice Expo. They include:

## Corn Advisor

The mobile app is a pocket expert for Arkansas' growing number of corn producers. It is available for free in both the Apple iTunes Store and the Google Play Store.



Users can also install the app on their mobile device by scanning the code below with QR reader application.

## Horticulture Plants

This app is a comprehensive photographic plant database covering 268 landscape plants for the mid-South using 931 top quality images.

The app is available for free at Apple iTunes Store

Users can also install the app on their mobile device by scanning the code at right with QR reader application.



## Manure Valuator

This app will help producers calculate the dollar and nutritive value of manure and allows them to share results via email.

The app is available for free at Google Play Store.

Users can also install the app on their mobile device by scanning the code at right with QR reader application. ■



## Ron Rainey receives national administrative leadership award

Ron Rainey was presented the Early Career Professional Administrative Leadership Award from the National Association of Agricultural Economics Administrators (NAAEA) during the 2013 Agricultural and Applied Economics Association (AAEA) annual meeting August 4 in Washington, D.C.

The annual award is presented to an AAEA member who is less than 15 years removed from completion of their final degree and who has demonstrated exceptional leadership skills.

Selection committee chair Ken Foster of Purdue University noted, "Dr. Rainey has distinguished himself as a leader at every level of our profession. He serves as a role model to members of the Arkansas agricultural community and exerts influence at the state and national levels through his leadership talent and insight.

"His efforts have a positive impact on rural families faced with increasing sources of uncertainty about their livelihoods." ■

## Stars shine bright at Craighead County Family Night Out

On July 19, Craighead County 4-H welcomed numerous talented 4-H'ers and their families to the City Youth Ministries campus for the first Family Night Out.

The Family Night Out included an all-you-can-eat hamburger dinner and a talent show full of singing and dancing. Craighead County 4-H agent Brittany Carwell said more than 200 attended.

The Family Night Out experience is part a 4-H Mentoring Grant in Craighead, Pulaski and Crawford counties. The 4-H Mentoring Grant is a sub-award grant from National 4-H and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). ■



# Meet the *new* employees!



**Sam Austin**  
Cash and Position Control Manager  
Little Rock State Office

- **What's your background?**

I am a certified public accountant and have over a decade of professional experience working as an accountant.

- **What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?**

I spent nearly a combined 10 years in the transportation industry where I worked as a corporate accountant with Arkansas Best and as a treasury accountant with USA Truck.

- **What are one or two things you would like your colleagues to know about you?**

Having spent most of my life in Fort Smith, Little Rock is still new to me. I'm looking forward to meeting people and making new friends.

- **What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?**

I hope to prove myself and show how valuable I can be to my department.

- **What brought you to Extension? What was it about Extension that you value?**

I have always been a big proponent of higher learning, and I thought it would be appealing to work for a college or education-type organization.

- **What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?**

I love doing fun things with my kids. Also, I love music and enjoy playing guitar. ■



**Katrina Burch**  
Family and Consumer  
Science Agent  
Lawrence County

- **What's your background?**

I taught school for 22 years.

- **What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?**

I have a master of science in educational leadership and curriculum. I have experience in developing and teaching varied curriculums to people of almost every age. And...I've been there and done that – married,

divorced, raised children, budgeted, planned menus, exercised, stopped exercising, aged, etc.

- **What are one or two things you would like your colleagues to know about you?**

I enjoy learning about almost anything; working with energetic, happy people; and operating under the “umbrella” that every day should be a joyful day!

- **What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?**

I would like to have an operational knowledge of AIMS and Banner!

Seriously, developing my technology and social networking skills would help in my goal of making an impact in my county.

- **What brought you to Extension? What was it about Extension that you value?**

My desire to be positively involved in my county.

- **What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?**

Family, friends and my two dogs – Hoss, the Dane, and Abbey, the Jack Russell. ■



**Serena M. Fuller**  
Associate Professor -  
Nutrition and Food Safety  
Family and Consumer Science -  
Extension

- **What's your background?**

I have a B.S. in animal science and a Ph.D. in nutritional biology from the University of California, Davis. My doctoral work explored

the complex genetic architecture of obesity and cardiovascular disease using a variety of mouse models. I am also a registered dietitian nutritionist. I completed my dietetic internship with a wellness focus at California State Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo, and have had adjunct faculty appointments at three different public institutions. Coincidentally, both sets of my grandparents were farmers (beef and dairy).

- **What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?**

My expertise is in the following areas: genetics of obesity and food intake, food literacy, nutrition education, dietetics/food service management and social-ecological model. My skills include curriculum development,

meeting facilitation, technical writing, grant writing, program evaluation and project management. For the past several years, I worked for a community-based organization in California developing, implementing and evaluating health-based programs for food insecure populations.

• **What are one or two things you would like your colleagues to know about you?**

I am excited to be here! I enjoy learning new things as well as being part of a team. I also value a systems approach and think reductionism is an ineffective way of investigating nutrition issues.

• **What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?**

Developing a 10,000-foot perspective of Extension as well as a deep understanding of the opportunities in my areas, consumer-focused nutrition education and food safety programming.

• **What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?**

Being active (running, swimming, biking, hiking, all of it), cooking and eating! ■



**Shalanda Lucas**  
Financial Program Manager  
Little Rock State Office

• **What's your background?**

I have a degree in finance from UALR, with professional experience in accounting and financial management for almost eight years. Originally from Louisiana, I have adapted to the

Natural State and, although I am a loyal LSU Tiger fan, I support the Hogs.

• **What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?**

I have a solid background in financial and process management combined with experience in oversight and compliance of state and federal programs.

• **What are one or two things you would like your colleagues to know about you?**

I am an avid sports fan and love the Saints and LSU Tigers. My friends say that I am crazy about the “purple and gold.” I also love cooking and yoga.

• **What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?**

Although I recently returned to Extension, I am excited about the new program area where I work, CARS Strawberry Sustainability Program. I look forward to designing and implementing financial processes to manage our newly-launched grants program as well as providing a high level of customer service to our collaborators.

• **What brought you to Extension? What was it about Extension that you value?**

Working in Extension gives me the opportunity to participate in a new program developed within CARS and collaborate with partners from across the country. I enjoy the opportunity to interact and see the value of the projects that we fund.

• **What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?**

I love my family and spending time with my young daughter. I have a deep passion for cooking and secretly want to be a chef studying at the Le Cordon Bleu in Paris. Well, I must say that my daughter already thinks that I am a chef because of the marvelous meals I prepare daily. ■

## Grants and contracts for Month Ending July 31, 2013

Project Title	Award Amount	Principal Investigator	Granting Agency
Cotton Incorporated-Cotton Specialists Partnership: Large-Plot, Replicated Variety Evaluations - AR	\$ 6,000.00	Blake McClelland	Cotton Incorporated
Revitalizing Strawberry Production in Arkansas and the Surrounding Region via Extended Season Production Systems	200,000.00	Elena Garcia	Walmart Foundation
2013 Cotton Lygus Open Field Efficacy Trials	55,000.00	Gus Lorenz	Monsanto Company
Soy Insect Protection 2 US 2013 Field Efficacy Trials	28,000.00	Gus Lorenz	Monsanto Company
Jarrold Hardke 2013 Testing	7,500.00	Jarrold Hardke	RiceTec
PTA for Business Firms (Arkansas Procurement Assistance Center)	314,776.00	Ray Blevins	Defense Logistics Agency
Arkansas Game & Fish Wildlife Education	2,075.00	Rebecca Thomas	Arkansas Game & Fish Commission
Novel Strategies for Managing Blast Diseases on Rice and Wheat	36,892.00	Yeshi Wamishe	Agriculture Experiment Station
<b>TOTAL JULY 2012 AWARDS</b>	<b>\$650,243.00</b>		

# Personnel changes

## Please welcome the following:

### **Sam L. Austin**

Cash and Position Control Manager, Financial Services, effective August 1, 2013.

### **Katrina A. Burch**

County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, Lawrence County, effective July 1, 2013.

### **Serena M. Fuller**

Associate Professor - Nutrition, Family and Consumer Sciences, effective August 5, 2013.

### **Tammy M. Laws**

Administrative Specialist, St. Francis County, effective July 8, 2013.

### **Julie C. Robinson**

Instructor - Instructional Design, Program and Staff Development, effective August 12, 2013.

### **Krystina L. Stark**

Secretary, Crop, Soil and Environmental Sciences, effective July 9, 2013.

### **Joshua J. Yates**

County Extension Agent - agriculture, Lafayette County, effective July 1, 2013.

## Extension says goodbye to:

### **Kathryn Aughtry**

Program Associate - Family Life, Family and Consumer Sciences, effective August 30, 2013.

### **Tara L. Askins**

County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, Sebastian County, effective July 31, 2013.

### **Dennis Bailey**

County Extension Agent - Staff Chair, Jefferson County, effective August 30, 2013.

### **Mark Brown**

County Extension Agent - Water Conservation, Pulaski County, effective July 23, 2013.

### **Brittany S. Carwell**

County Extension Agent - 4-H, Craighead County, effective August 30, 2013.

### **Lindsay L. Clements**

In-Service Training Manager, Program and Staff Development, effective July 26, 2013.

### **Mary A. Coor**

4-H Program Assistant, Washington County, effective July 31, 2013.

### **Guqueta David**

Payroll and Position Manager, Financial Services, effective July 22, 2013.

### **Kristen N. Davidson**

Instructor, Program and Staff Development, effective August 6, 2013.

### **Hannah B. Harris**

Program Assistant, Howard County, effective August 23, 2013.

### **Jamie Matherne-Dufrene**

County Extension Agent - 4-H, Hempstead County, effective August 5, 2013.

### **Robbie L. McKinnon**

County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, Pike County, effective July 29, 2013.

### **Naresh Pai**

Post Doctoral Associate, Biological and Agricultural Engineering, effective August 16, 2013.

### **John Pennington**

County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Washington County, effective July 25, 2013.

### **LaVetta A. Perkins**

County Extension Agent - Staff Chair, Hempstead County, effective August 1, 2013.

### **Mateo R. Rodriguez**

Program Assistant - Family, Sevier County, effective August 15, 2013.

### **Merritt J. Royal**

Director of Development, Development Office, effective August 23, 2013.

### **Traci N. Rushing**

Instructional Design Associate, Program and Staff Development, effective August 23, 2013.

### **Bryan Stobaugh**

County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Crittenden County, effective June 30, 2013.

### **Stephen R. Vann**

Assistant Professor - Urban Extension Plant Pathologist, Plant Pathology, August 27, 2013.