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Division of Agriculture Offers Resources for Managing Stress During Disasters

Farmers and communities inundated by flooding along the Arkansas River have to cope with more than water damage and ruined or delayed crops. The stress of facing such massive loss may take as big a toll on mental health as it does on property.

“Disasters pile stress on top of loss and physical danger,” said Brittney Schrick, extension family life specialist and assistant professor of family and consumer science for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. “The flooding in the state is especially hard,” she said, “because it’s a disaster happening in slow motion.”

Arkansans on farms and in cities and towns along the Arkansas River have had to endure a sense of vulnerability as they watched the river levels rise for days, inundate their property and neighborhoods, and then recede, leaving behind mud, ruined homes and property as the surge moved on to downstream communities.

The stress may be hidden by the tasks of preparing for disaster, Schrick said, but the anxieties are building, often manifesting as feelings of powerlessness to avoid the danger.

Disaster-related stress manifests differently in everyone, but individuals can watch for signs in themselves, their families and neighbors.



Scenes of flooding in Jefferson County, Arkansas.

“People often feel physical symptoms like stomach-aches, headaches and heart palpitations,” she said. “They may experience anxiety they can’t relieve because they feel powerless to do anything.”

Signs of stress

Stress can manifest in excessive activity by those who are trying to keep busy in order to avoid dealing with stress.

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Managing Stress *(Cont. from page 1)*

“People may notice mood changes in family members,” Schrick said. “People don’t act like themselves, expressing unusual emotions like negativity, anger or lethargy.”

Other signs of stress include irritation, restlessness and difficulty sleeping or relaxing. “These are especially common when people are displaced by floods and living in unfamiliar or uncomfortable surroundings,” she said.

The stress can affect relationships too. People may take out anger or emotional outbursts on family members or close friends. Still others may behave in the opposite manner, becoming withdrawn and closed off to others.

Resources for dealing with stress


The Division of Agriculture is among the places with resources that can help people manage stress during disaster, and are as close as the county extension office.

“All family and consumer science agents in the county offices have access to resources that can help their communities,” Schrick said.

Resources include one-hour education programs for managing stress, generally, and for managing farm stress are available on request from county extension offices. The extension service is currently working to build additional resources on recognizing symptoms and helping families deal with the stresses of displacement. The resources also include dealing with the physical damage such as cleaning up flood damage and knowing what’s safe to keep.

Other resources for stress management may include a workplace employee assistance program.

To learn about Extension Programs for managing stress in Arkansas, contact your local Cooperative Extension Service agent or visit www.uaex.edu. Follow us on Twitter at @UAEX_edu.

The Division of Agriculture also has stress management resources available online: <https://www.uaex.edu/health-living/personal-family-well-being/personal/managing-stress.aspx> 

Burcham named director of NE Rice Research and Extension Center

Tim Burcham will be stepping up his duties with the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture as director of its planned Northeast Rice Research and Extension Center.

Burcham was previously dean of the Agriculture College at Arkansas State University and held a joint appointment with the Division of Agriculture. ASU in Jonesboro is one of the campuses that works with the Division of Agriculture to provide publicly funded education, extension and research all across Arkansas.

The center, being created by the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture in partnership with the Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board, will be built in Poinsett County – the heart of Arkansas’ northern rice growing region.

“I am humbled and honored to be entrusted with a leadership role in the establishment of the Northeast Rice

Research and Extension Center located near Jonesboro,” Burcham said. “The opportunity to establish a world-class rice research facility that seeks to optimize rice production and producer profitability utilizing the latest technological advances excites me about the future of rice production in Arkansas.”



Tim Burcham

Burcham anticipates that the combined research and outreach strengths of the Division of Agriculture and Arkansas State University will provide a “multiplier effect with the potential to improve every aspect of rice production in Arkansas.”


(See Burcham, page 2)

Mary Dunn Passes Away

Mary Eunice Barrett Dunn, age 93, of Germantown, TN, passed away July 4.

Dunn joined extension as a home economist in 1946 after graduating from the University of Arkansas. She retired in 1983 after 37 years of service. Retirement allowed her to dedicate more time to her church and family, and do something she had always wanted to do...see the world. Over the next 20 years, she visited 20 different foreign countries on five continents. From climbing Ayer's Rock to sailing the Nile, she didn't let retirement slow her down.


She is survived by one son, Robert (Bobby) Monroe Dunn and wife Vickie of Germantown, TN; a granddaughter Sarah Katherine (Katie) Dunn also of Germantown; a niece Jane Barrett of Clarksville, AR; a nephew Charles (Chuck) Barrett and wife Ginger of Shalimar, FL.

Services were held Tuesday, July 9 at Shaffer Funeral Home in Ozark, AR. There also was a Memorial Service in Germantown, TN. 

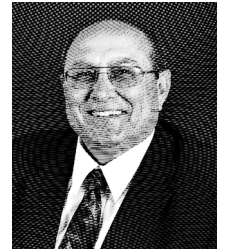
Burcham *(Cont. from page 2)*

"Rice is such an important crop for farmers in northeast Arkansas and it is a major economic driver for our region and the state," Burcham said. "I look forward to working with Division of Agriculture leadership and members of the Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board to shape the future of this new center; a future that will play a vital role in the success of Arkansas rice producers, processors and consumers. It's the leadership opportunity of a lifetime!"

As director, Burcham will develop a master plan for the center, which will include research in the area's unique soils; as well as a general education component. Burcham will also oversee construction of the facility. In addition to using Rice Promotion Board funds, Burcham also will work on developing other funding sources to support a world-class agricultural education center.

Burcham's appointment takes effect Aug. 1. 

To Our Extension Retirees




July is here but oddly enough, still no really hot weather. At least not hot enough for me, a former rice guy. So hopefully hotter weather is coming, as I like it better than the cold. Gold is purified by heat, and we all want to be gold, I think.

Sadly, I convey the recent passing forward of Dr. Kelly Bryant. Kelly was an ag economist and served the Division in many capacities over his too-brief career and life. He was Dean of Agriculture at UAM, Director of the Southeast Research and Extension Center, and more recently Interim Department Head for Ag Economics and Ag Business for the Division and Bumpers College in Fayetteville. All of us extend our deepest condolences to his family.

Also, I convey the recent retirement of Dr. Robert "Bobby" Coats on July 1. Bobby had a long career in Extension work as Ag Economist, with specialization in rice economics and more recently as host of a popular series of nationwide webinars on many agricultural economics topics of interest. He has accepted a job with the Arkansas Department of Agriculture as an economist and analyst, so his story and our relationship will continue. Good luck, Bobby.

The recent flooding along the Arkansas River was a disaster for many, and miserable, but it did bring to the surface the noble and tireless work of local county agents in the affected areas. They physically assisted many growers and citizens, coordinated responses, monitored levees and voiced reason as needed in the heat of the moment. My thanks to all our county agents on the front lines at these times.

Just a reminder that the 4-H State O'Rama will take place at the Fayetteville campus the week of July 22. This is also a reminder that all is not doom and gloom in the world, despite what the news media says. That negative reality is not mine, because I witness every day the enthusiasm of 4-H youth, our staff, the volunteers and parents. They get up every morning and decide to be happy and do good, and then they do it. That is the reality of Cooperative Extension work. I hope you are able to go about and visit or witness 4-H leadership in action, it will help.

I hope you have a great July and summer. 

August Birthdays

Ms. Berline Wright, August 1	Ms. Gloria Vasser Pickett, August 19
Mr. Billy J. Moore, August 1	Dr. James Bryan Ragland, August 20
Mr. Raymond L. Dunan, August 1	Mrs. Estella Hayes, August 20
Mrs. Linda Faye Buckley-Chappel, August 3	Mr. Rickey Doland Wiedower, August 20
Ms. Betty Pe Holman, August 4	Ms. Jan Rogers, August 21
Mrs. Louise Burns, August 5	Mrs. Barbara Simmons, August 21
Mr. Carroll Wallace Guffey Jr., August 8	Mrs. Claudia K. Corbin, August 21
Mr. Ronald W. Beaty, August 9	Ms. Betty Youngman Thomas, August 23
Mr. Paul Stewart Ballantyne, August 9	Mr. Earlton Sanders Jr., August 23
Mr. Delbert Taylor, August 11	Mr. Steve M. Jones, August 23
Mr. Marion Eugene Terhune Jr., August 12	Mr. Terry Davis, August 25
Mrs. Marian Snortland, August 15	Ms. Carla Jean Vaught, August 25
Ms. Beverly A. Fountain, August 15	Mrs. Martha Elaine Albright, August 26
Dr. Barbara A. Holt, August 17	Dr. Frank T. Plafcan, August 28
Mr. Mark Everette Brawner, August 17	Mr. Lott Rolfe III, August 29
Ms. Laura Luther, August 19	Dr. John M. Langston, August 30
Mrs. Carolyn L. Grimes, August 19	

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Yes, I want to support the fundraising initiative in support of the Cooperative Extension Service Retiree Scholarship.

Enclosed is my gift of \$_____. My gift is in honor / in memory of _____.

Name/Address for notification of honorary and memorial gifts:

Please make check payable to the **UA Foundation** and mail to Brian Helms, Development Office, 2301 South University Avenue, Little Rock AR 72204-4940.

Scholarship Donations

The following gifts were recently received to support professional development opportunities for faculty and staff of the Cooperative Extension Service.

■ Cooperative Extension Service Retiree Scholarship

Jim & Ella Geisler

Frank Plafcan

In Memory of Bob Ott

Jimmie Bowling

In Memory of Charlotte Mills Fant

Donna Graham

In memory of Juanita Fuller

Glenda McLaughlin Rushing

In memory of Mary Dunn

Margaret Alexander

In memory of Ken Combs

Tom Leslie

In memory of Kelly Bryant


Yvonne McCool

In memory of Dennis R. Millard

Darlene Millard

In Honor of Liz Childs

Margaret Alexander

Honorary or memorial donations should be forwarded to the Development Office, ATTN: Brian Helms, Cooperative Extension Service, 2301 South University Ave., Little Rock, AR 72204. If joint recognition is desired, please indicate. To ensure that proper notification is sent, please also include in whose honor or memory the gift is made and the mailing address of the person to receive the notification. 

New Retirees

The following Extension employees have joined the ranks of the retirees:

Dr. Terry Kirkpatrick – Southwest Research & Extension Center

Terry began working at the Southwest Research & Extension Center in March of 1984 as a Plant Pathologist. At retirement, he was Professor and acting Assistant Director of the Southwest Research and Extension Center. Terry had 35 years of service.

Laura Goforth – Office of Communications

Laura began with Extension in August of 1975. She was serving as an Associate Designer/Editor at the time of her retirement. Laura had 43 years of service. 