



Keeping you connected

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Johnson County 4-H agent named 2024 Arkansas Ag Woman of the Year

As an underrepresented group within agriculture, it's important for women to connect with their industry peers. Jeanie Rowbotham, Johnson County 4-H extension agent with the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, was recently named 2024 Arkansas Ag Woman of the Year by Arkansas Women in Agriculture, an organization dedicated to educating and supporting women in the field.

Rowbotham and her husband, Theron, own and operate Infinity Ranch in rural Johnson County, where Rowbotham has worked as an extension 4-H agent since 2007. They have two children, Mae and Tate, and the family manages four commercial turkey houses contracted to Butterball as well as a commercial cow and calf operation.

Rowbotham said it has been rewarding to be recognized for her work in agriculture.

“Being named Ag Woman of the Year has been an amazing experience,” Rowbotham said. “My life’s work is positive youth development and agriculture education, so it is wonderful to be recognized — but more than that, I just appreciate being able to tell the story of Arkansas farmers and ranchers. So many women in this state are just like me: raising their families alongside livestock and working on the farm, while holding down an ag job in town and being leaders in their communities. I’m honored to represent Johnson County and all the incredible work happening here.”

The Arkansas Woman in Ag Award was established by Arkansas Women in Agriculture, or AWIA, in 2023 to celebrate the contributions of women to the agriculture industry. Evette Browning, past president of AWIA, said Rowbotham was chosen among 15 other applicants by the organization’s education committee.

“This committee invites two other leaders within the ag community to provide input and fair assessment,” Browning said.

“Each applicant’s criteria are considered and ranked based on their stake in agriculture, significant impacts made, advocacy and the legacy they will leave for future generations. Many of our board members were excited to learn of Jeanie’s selection for this year’s Ag Woman of the Year Award, as they have been personally impacted by Jeanie’s dedicated service to agriculture.”

Rowbotham received the award on April 2 at the 2024 AWIA Conference, held in Hot Springs. Nearly 300 women from across the state gathered for seminars, classes and networking events during the two-day conference. After receiving her award, Rowbotham said she was approached by a college student from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff.

“She is also involved in 4-H and wanted to come talk to me, and I think that’s why organizations like Arkansas Women in Agriculture are important, because you get to connect with like-minded women that you normally wouldn’t meet,” Rowbotham said. “Meeting women in the industry and making those connections is priceless. If you can see her, you can be her.”

Read more [here](#). ■



Jeanie Rowbotham said receiving the Arkansas Ag Woman of the Year award from the Arkansas Women in Agriculture organization has been a rewarding experience. Rowbotham has worked as an extension 4-H agent in Johnson County for 17 years. Evette Browning, past president of AWIA, hands Jeanie her award, flanked by vice president Michelle Horton. (Photo by Lindsey Holtzclaw, AWIA.)

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Grant County 4-H SeaPerch team among world's top scorers at 2024 International SeaPerch Challenge

For a group of Arkansas 4-H members, months of hard work fine-tuning their underwater robots and their teamwork have paid off at the 2024 International SeaPerch Challenge.

After taking top honors at the Arkansas SeaPerch Challenge in March, four Arkansas 4-H teams advanced to the international competition held May 31-June 1 at the University of Maryland. Three Grant County teams and one Madison County team competed against 174 teams from 23 states, six countries and four continents.

The annual competition requires teams to assemble a remotely operated vehicle, or ROV, and maneuver it through underwater challenge courses. Teams are also judged on their technical design reports, which document the engineering and development process.

2024 International SeaPerch Challenge results:

Deep Water Vanguard from Grant County: Members Gavin McGinley, Gracie McGinley and Callen Shaw placed second overall in the high school stock class. Coaches are Brad and Serena McGinley.

Aquanauts from Grant County: Members Garrett Key, Priyam Laxmi and Eli Watson placed sixth overall in the open stock class. Coaches are Brad and Serena McGinley.

Submarine Crew from Madison County: Members Emma Griffin and Jayden Griffin placed 14th overall in the middle school stock class, seventh place in mission course and technical design report. Coaches are Whitney Griffin and Stephanie Franklin.

Wet Willies from Grant County: Members Jaxson Andrews, Luke Douthit, Ryleigh Kimbrell and Miley McGinley placed 25th overall in the middle school stock class. Coaches are Brad McGinley and Tina Melton.

Brad McGinley, Grant County extension agent for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture and SeaPerch coach, said more than 3,000 teams competed in local SeaPerch Challenges worldwide this season,



Deep Water Vanguard, a Grant County 4-H team, took second place overall in the high school stock class at the International SeaPerch Challenge May 31-June 1. Left to right: Coach Serena McGinley, Gavin McGinley, Callen Shaw, Gracie McGinley and Coach Brad McGinley. (Grant County 4-H photo.)

and the top 5 percent of those teams advanced to the international competition.

“To be among the top teams in the world is an amazing accomplishment,” McGinley said. “We are so proud of these teams. Last year, our high school stock team placed third, and this year, they moved up to second.”

McGinley said the Grant County 4-H SeaPerch teams have been preparing for both the state and international competition for months.

“We’ve been living and breathing SeaPerch since the state competition in March,” he said. “We’ve been working hard to perfect it. We’ve practiced one to two times a week since October. And since the state competition, we’ve had much to overcome. We had issues with the motor system going down, and we had to change it three times in the two weeks leading up to the competition.”

Callen Shaw, a member of the Grant County 4-H team Deep Water Vanguard, said the international competition was a “truly unique and unforgettable experience.”

Read more [here](#). ■

CES warehouse specialist awarded Quilt of Valor

Never Forgotten in Arkansas, a group of Saline County quilters with the Quilts of Valor Foundation, recently awarded a Quilt of Valor to Johnny Woodley, warehouse specialist for the Cooperative Extension Service, to honor his decades of military service to Arkansas and the United States.

The ceremony took place May 3 during a Technology and Textiles training at the CES State Office in Little Rock. Extension agents, program assistants and family and consumer sciences teachers gathered to learn about using STEM — science, technology, engineering and math — in textiles projects. One service-learning project included constructing a quilt block that will be used in a future Quilt of Valor.

Woodley has worked for the extension for 27 years as a warehouse specialist, part of the facilities management team, at the state office. He joined the Arkansas National Guard in 1990 as a private first class and currently holds the rank of Chief Warrant Officer 3 in the 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Headquarters with the Arkansas National Guard. During his service, Woodley

has deployed to Kosovo, Germany and twice to Iraq.

Throughout his military career, Woodley has earned numerous awards and decorations, including the National Defense Service Medal with one Bronze Star, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal with one Bronze Service Star, the Arkansas Federal Service Ribbon and the Arkansas National Guard Service Ribbon with four diamonds.



Two members of the Never Forgotten in Arkansas Quilts of Valor group wrap Johnny Woodley's quilt around him.

Read more [here](#). ■

Arkansas 4-H honors Hall of Fame inductee, teen leaders



Arkansas 4-H recognized a new crop of young leaders, naming 50 new Teen Stars and inducting one into the Arkansas 4-H Hall of Fame.

Zach Gardner, 18, of Fayetteville, was inducted into the Arkansas 4-H Hall of Fame, an award given to one 4-H member each year

who demonstrates high achievement, commitment and service.

Gardner has been a member of Washington County 4-H member for 13 years, and leadership is one of his project areas. Gardner has been a leader not just in 4-H but also in scouting, sports and his community. Read more about Zach [here](#).

Upcoming Events

24
JULY

West Clay County Row Crops Field Day | 8AM-12PM
1755-1581 Co Rd 181, Corning, AR
West Clay County row crops field day featuring rice, soybeans and corn

25
JULY

East Clay County Row Crops Field Day | 8AM-12PM
Clay County Rd 544, Greenway, AR
East Clay County row crops field day featuring corn, cotton and drone technology

7
AUG

Corn College
Mann Cotton Research Station, Marianna, AR

8
AUG

2024 NERREC Rice Field Day | 8AM-3PM
15327 Hwy 1 S, Harrisburg, AR

Visit our [interactive calendar here](#)

June Birthdays

Jim Wallace - July 1	Jimmy Moore - July 5	Thomas Vaughns - July 12	Susan Pickle - July 17	Roxana Jones - July 25
Michael Hedges - July 1	Shirley Walker - July 5	Carolyn Burns - July 12	Debbie Archer - July 17	Earl Vories - July 25
Wanda Pemberton - July 3	Mike Vowell - July 5	Yeshi Wamishe - July 12	Ora Lee Yates - July 19	Tony Windham - July 26
John Gunter - July 3	Debbie Still - July 6	Sung Lim - July 13	Linda Whittington - July 19	Debra Schneider - July 27
Sheryll Gregory - July 3	Millie Collins - July 7	Dolores McBride - July 14	Leon Ferguson - July 20	Mark Keaton - July 27
Monte Milligan - July 3	Andy Vangilder - July 7	Gloria Taylor - July 15	LeAnna Hicks - July 20	Ruben Johnson - July 28
Randy Chlapecka - July 3	Betty Archer - July 8	Wally Goddard - July 15	John Boyd - July 21	Wanda Shelby - July 28
Shirley Hesselschwerdt - July 4	Carolyn Lewis - July 8	Candace Carrie - July 15	Helen Glass - July 22	Tommy Thompson - July 29
Veda Thompson - July 4	Quinton Hornsby - July 8	Patsy Stephens - July 16	Gail Kizer - July 22	Madlyn Mason - July 30
Mike Klumpp - July 4	Jim Bemis - July 10	Nora Terry - July 16	Dianna Bowen - July 23	Edwin Colburn - July 31
Louise Williams - July 4	Liz Childs - July 10	Bobby Johnson - July 16	Relda Washburn - July 24	Henry Chaney - July 31
Jane Mowry - July 5	Linda Tanner - July 10	James Aikman - July 17	Virginia Cottrell - July 24	

Message from the director



The month of June provided plenty of opportunities for Extension professionals to be out and about in the state. Between statewide conferences, field days, community festivals and events, 4-H contests, and lots and lots of farm visits,

Extension faculty, staff, and administration have been keeping the state well-covered.

I have had the opportunity to make a couple of particularly notable visits this month. First, I traveled to Hope for the inaugural Director's Cut webinar, which we initiated remotely from the Hempstead County office. Terrie James and the rest of the Hempstead County staff treated us to some characteristically warm south Arkansas hospitality. It was great to see their new facilities and hear about the hard work that went into making it a reality. I am looking forward to these quarterly webinars and the opportunity they will provide to highlight some of the great things going on in Extension around the state.

The following weekend, my wife and I attended the Bradley County Pink Tomato Festival in Warren. On the way down, she asked if I was speaking at the event. "No," I said, "I don't know what kind of program they'll have, but I'm not on it." In fact, I was on the program, with a seat at the head table and everything. It worked out all right. It's not too hard to spend five or 10 minutes talking about all the things that UA Extension is doing. That was especially true at that event. The Pink Tomato Festival had Extension fingerprints all over it, from the EHC groups that set up for and prepared the All-Tomato luncheon, to the 4-H members

who served the food, to the Master Gardeners who had every inch of Warren in tip-top shape, to the ag agents who serve the tomato industry (and the rest of the south Arkansas agriculture sector) all year. CES was well-represented with agents and volunteers from around the region. It was extremely gratifying to hear so many civic leaders recognize Extension's contribution to the community and express their gratitude for it.

Visiting communities like Hope and Warren is one of the true joys of this job. Every community in the state undoubtedly has its own special character and its unique charms. Still, we all share so much in common – very much like a big, extended family (cliché as that may sound). And like a family, when one hurts, we all hurt. As we all know, the community of Fordyce, just half an hour up the road from where we were in Warren, has suffered an unspeakable tragedy in recent days.

There are no adequate words of consolation for this grief, nor words to explain such senseless violence. But we are going beyond words — taking action to help a community heal. For example, with the town's only grocery store closed during the investigation, we are serving as a drop-off location for non-perishable food items.

While our efforts may seem too little in the face of enormous trauma, I am reminded of what a pastor friend of mine called the ministry of presence; sometimes all you can really do for someone in their suffering is to be there with them. A lot of people across our organization are doing their best to be present with the good people of Dallas County right now. We should be prepared to settle into that role for a while. This one will take a long time to get through. ■

Scholarship donations

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

CES Retiree Scholarship

Afton and Barbara Simmons

Charlie E. Parsons

Don and Lorena Plunkett

Bobby and Annita Hall

Curtis and Terrie Treadway

Dr. Frank and Patricia Plafcan

Beverly Fountain

James and Susan Pickle

Bruce and Brenda Vick

Honorary or memorial donations should be forwarded to the Development Office, ATTN: Amy Hedges, Cooperative Extension Service, 2301 South University Ave., Little Rock, AR 72204. If joint recognition is desired, please indicate. To ensure 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.