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**Cooperative Extension Service launches summer internship program for agents**

By Ryan McGeeney
U of A System Division of Agriculture

**Fast Facts:**

* Paid internship lasts 10 weeks
* Incoming college seniors encouraged to apply
* Internship offers wide variety of experiences

(671 words)
(Newsrooms: With flyer at <https://flic.kr/p/2mLND9o>)

LITTLE ROCK — The Cooperative Extension Service is looking to help the next generation of extension agents get a running start toward a new career that’s focused on helping others.

Extension, the part of the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, is launching its first summer internship program in decades. The extension service is a unique county, state and federally funded service dedicated to technology and knowledge transfer to the public, begun in the early 1900s.

The program will accept between six and nine applicants for the 2022 season, which will run from May 23 through the last week of July. The internship is paid, but housing is not provided.

Cooperative Extension’s three district directors — Carla Due, Kevin Lawson and Jerry Clemons — developed the program at the direction of Bob Scott, senior associate vice president for agriculture and extension for the Division of Agriculture.

Due, Ouachita district director for the Division of Agriculture, said that after contacting other universities conducting cooperative extension internship programs, she and her fellow district directors constructed a program they believe will best meet the needs of Arkansas residents, as well as extension itself.

“We’re focused on making sure interns understand the total extension program throughout the state and individual counties, and not just their own academic discipline,” Due said. “Even if they’re an ag agent, for example, they’re going to spend time with the Family Consumer Sciences agent, and they’re going to spend time in the 4-H program, and vice versa. And it will all culminate in that last week at the 4-H State O Rama.”

The 4-H State O-Rama is an annual, weeklong gathering of 4-H members from across Arkansas. Although O-Rama has been held at the Arkansas 4-H Center near Little Rock for the last two years, organizers are planning to move the gathering back to the UA Fayetteville campus in 2022.

The Cooperative Extension Service employs agents in all 75 counties throughout Arkansas, who conduct outreach in agriculture, family consumer sciences, youth development through 4-H, and community and economic development. Lawson, extension’s Ozark District Director for the Division of Agriculture, said internship applicants will list their top three county preferences, so that they can work close to where they live, whether that be with a relative or in their own apartment.

Due said the work of interns will vary day to day, just as it does for extension agents.

“We want this program to open students’ eyes to the possibility of being a county extension agent,” she said. “To let them know what an extension agent does, and the rewards of being an extension agent. It’s not a sit-behind-a-desk type of job. It’s about helping people — whether one-on-one or in groups.”

Due said college students entering their senior year will be considered first among applicants, followed by juniors, sophomores and freshmen. She said there is not currently a closing date for applications, but that interested students should apply as soon as possible.

While extension agents work with Arkansas farmers and families throughout the year, summer is a particularly busy time, Lawson said, which will help ensure an eventful internship experience.

“The summer is just a more active time for us, whether it’s in agricultural, 4-H or FCS,” Lawson said. “Whether it’s forages, beef, row crops, there’s always something going on during the summer. We’re doing summer camps, canning classes and food preservation workshops.”

Both Lawson and Due said a benefit of the internship program to the Cooperative Extension Service was to help build an experienced pool of young workers with the knowledge, skills and interest in becoming an extension agent.

“We’ve gone to career fairs, and no one knows what an extension agent is,” Due said. “We want to build a good pool of applicants for future job openings. We also hope the interns will have a good experience and go back and tell their friends and classmates.”

College students interested in applying to the internship program should contact the Division of Agriculture Human Resources Department at 501-671-2219 or 479-502-9820 or visit <https://uada.edu/jobs>.

To learn about extension programs in Arkansas, contact your local Cooperative Extension Service agent or visit [www.uaex.uada.edu](http://www.uaex.uada.edu/). Follow us on Twitter and Instagram at @AR\_Extension. To learn more about Division of Agriculture research, visit the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station website: [https://aaes.uark.edu](https://aaes.uark.edu/). Follow on Twitter at @ArkAgResearch. To learn more about the Division of Agriculture, visit <https://uada.edu/>. Follow us on Twitter at @AgInArk.

**About the Division of Agriculture**

The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture’s mission is to strengthen agriculture, communities, and families by connecting trusted research to the adoption of best practices. Through the Agricultural Experiment Station and the Cooperative Extension Service, the Division of Agriculture conducts research and extension work within the nation’s historic land grant education system.

The Division of Agriculture is one of 20 entities within the University of Arkansas System. It has offices in all 75 counties in Arkansas and faculty on five system campuses.

The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture offers all its Extension and Research programs to all eligible persons without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital or veteran status, genetic information, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

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