

BLUE LETTER

The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service Monthly Letter

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From the Director

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Interim Associate
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UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE

From the Director

Program and Staff Development is changing the way the Division of Agriculture welcomes new employees, trains staff and equips new supervisors with needed skills.

The changes follow a needs assessment survey of extension employees taken April 13-30. The survey, e-mailed to 802 employees, elicited 589 responses from all levels of faculty and staff.

Dr. Karen Ballard, interim director of PSD, said the idea behind the survey "was to put faculty and staff in the driver's seat" and enable the department to reprioritize resources.

The department has initiated:

■ **A new employee on-boarding process.** The new on-boarding workshop, "Check-in and Tune-up for New Hires," debuts October 8. The key components include an online New Employee Welcome Center, a formal mentoring/shadowing program and training for supervisors of new hires.

■ **Agent training goals.** State and county faculty members from multiple disciplines have committed to serve on the Agent Core Competencies Training Workgroup. The group's goal is to find how

Extension can best help agents identify needs and guide professional development efforts. The team's proposals will be presented to the Extension Executive Team.

■ **Supervisor training.** PSD, in conjunction with the Extension Supervisor Workgroup, is addressing the training and development needs of Extension supervisors. The workgroup began meeting in late August, reviewed the needs assessment data and identified skill sets needed for supervisors to be successful. A training track for future, new, and current supervisors will be the first step in implementing the Supervisor Training System.

PSD has also initiated an open-enrollment system for in-service training. There will still be deadlines, but as faculty and staff come onboard, or see new skill development needs, the open enrollment will allow them to gain needed training.

The survey feedback also prompted an in-the-works revamp of the PSD website and access to online learning opportunities. On July 1, PSD launched the Moodle-powered online course interface <http://courses.uaex.edu>, with 14 courses for employees and

the public. The course site is available for faculty to expand its educational reach.

We appreciate PSD's renewed vision and the work it has done to enable our faculty and staff to better serve our constituents.

— Tony Windham

Honorary and Memorial Gifts

The following honorary and memorial gifts were recently received in support of programs and funds within the Cooperative Extension Service. This list covers gifts deposited during the month of July.

■ CES Retiree Scholarship Fund

In memory of Silas Ferguson

Fann Woodward

In memory of Jessie Zagar

Fann Woodward

■ Mildred and Liz Childs CES Professional Development Fund

In honor of Liz Childs

Merritt and James Royal

Honorary or memorial donations may be forwarded to the Development Office, Cooperative Extension Service, P.O. Box 391, Little Rock, AR 72203. 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.

— Merritt Royal

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Conference Highlights Marketing Resources

A one-day workshop to aid growers in their marketing efforts is set for Sept. 9 at the Cooperative Extension Service headquarters in Little Rock. Speakers will include a grower as well as representatives from the National Agriculture Law Center, Center for Agriculture and Rural Sustainability, Bentonville Downtown Development and the Applied Sustainability Center discussing strategies and resources.

Conference goers will be able to explore a new resource: MarketMaker, which can be previewed at www.uaex.edu/marketmaker. The workshop is intended for any grower who markets an agriculture product, primarily food products.

Other issues on the agenda:

- Obtaining a premium for your products and/or services,
- Understanding the increasingly legal and regulatory environment,
- Finding free online electronic marketing resources,
- Understanding effective business and marketing strategies,
- Learning about MarketMaker, Arkansas Grown, or Certified Arkansas Farmers' Markets
- Understanding cost-share and state Agriculture Department programs for growers.

Register or learn more about the conference by visiting the following link: http://www.aragriculture.org/marketing/marketing_workshop/information.htm

Registration is \$10 and must be received by Sept. 3. If space and material are available, registration will continue. If you have registration questions, contact Brenda Duggins, bduggins@uaex.edu (501-671-2347). To learn more about the program contact Ron Rainey at 501-671-2175 or rrainey@uaex.edu.

– Ron Rainey

Economic Survival Toolkit

Tough economic times have not only put pressure on families but also on extension personnel to provide sound information quickly to Arkansans in trouble.

A multi-discipline group of faculty and staff has assembled the Economic Survival Toolkit, a library of resources agents can offer their clientele.

The toolkit is available in SPOT. To use the resources, log into SPOT, join the Economic Challenge group, and go to files. The library will include about five dozen files including food columns, radio scripts, fact sheets about farm profitability, financial management and stress management.

Suggestions for additions to the library are welcome and may be addressed to Ron Rainey, rrainey@uaex.edu.

The Economic Challenge Committee was comprised of Ron Rainey, James Marshall, Laura Connerly, Scott Stiles, Shannon Caldwell, Terry Griffin, Wally Goddard, Stacey McCullough, Pia Woods, Terrie James, Danny Griffin, Anne Sortor, Darlene Millard, Brian Helms, Tony Windham, Noah Washburn, Denise Roulhac and Mary Hightower.

National Youth Science Day Gets a “Biofuel Blast”

Millions of youths will be getting a “Biofuel Blast” next month during the second annual 4-H National Youth Science Day on Oct. 7.

Youths will become scientists for the day, discovering how ordinary household products can create alternative energy, and how that fuel can power many of the things we use each day, thanks to an experiment designed by the University of Wisconsin.

The experiment offers several activities to showcase how cellulose and sugars in plants can be used to create ethanol. In one activity, for example, youth will combine corn syrup and yeast in a plastic container and cover the bottle’s mouth with a balloon.

They will watch as the yeast breaks down the natural sugars in the corn, which will release ethanol gas that will inflate the balloon. Youths are encouraged to test the experiment in the classroom, in their 4-H clubs, or at home.



Photo from left to right: Christopher R., Kennedy B., Sarah K., and Arielle N., introduce themselves to the other state teams at the Invitational held in Zwolle, La.

4-H Wildlife Team Competes in National Invitational

The 4-H Wildlife Team earned a placing in memory at the national invitational in Louisiana.

Sixteen teams competed from throughout the United States, and Arkansas earned seventh on the wildlife management plan.

“That’s the highest ranking that I can remember for an Arkansas team on the wildlife management plan,” said Becky McPeake, 4-H wildlife habitat evaluation program coordinator.

The Pulaski County team earned the honor of representing Arkansas by winning the state contest in April.

“They were the happiest kids in the room when Arkansas was called,” said their coach Kathy Kline.

For more information, including the experiment worksheets, go to <https://www.4-h.org/NYSD/> or contact Willa Williams, 4-H STEM instructor, at wwilliams@uaex.edu.

Coming Soon: New Enhancement to Online Hiring System

As you know, the online hiring system debuted at Extension in Fall 2006 and the system has been a wonderful success. Posting vacancies, reviewing applications and resumes, and obtaining necessary approvals electronically have become second nature to our hiring supervisors.

Another enhancement is on the way. A module is being added to the system that will allow every employee to have his/her position description in the system for updating performance evaluations, promotion, and on-the-job training.

Donna Rothberg, director of Human Resources, said the new PD Module will streamline the hiring process. "If an employee leaves, the hiring supervisor will be able to post the vacancy from the employee's position description," she said. "The posting will be automatically populated from the position description, which takes the guesswork out of figuring out what needs to be in the

vacancy announcement. "In addition, a supervisor will be able to provide an accurate position description to an applicant during the interview, so the applicant will know exactly what job duties/responsibilities to expect," Rothberg said.

Watch for more information on this new PD Module enhancement in the coming months.

– Donna Rothberg

Breakthrough Solutions Conference Set for September 11

"Building Vibrant Communities During Tough Times," this year's Breakthrough Solutions conference, is designed to provide creative ideas for community development, according to Dr. Mark Peterson, professor-community development for the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture.

The conference is set for Friday, Sept. 11, at the Cooperative Extension Service headquarters, 2301 S. University Ave., Little Rock.

The keynote for the conference is "Creating Economic Opportunities through Entrepreneurship," by Don Macke, director of the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship at the University of Nebraska.

Other presentations include "Visionary Thinking – Going Beyond Assets" – how communities can use their assets as leverage, and "Emerging Markets in Our Own Backyard" – unseen opportunities for broadband in rural Arkansas.

The conference will have breakout sessions addressing diverse issues such as creative economies, alternative energy and 21st century economic engines.

Breakthrough Solutions Conference information, agenda, and registration is available at <http://survey.uaex.edu/registrations/PCED/intro.htm>

For other information about the conference, contact Aly Signorelli at 501-671-2072, or by e-mail, breakthroughsolutions@uaex.edu.

Personnel Changes

Please help me welcome the following:

Robyn A. Burlon, County Extension Agent-Family and Consumer Sciences, Benton County, effective August 3, 2009.

Jill D. Pennington, Administrative Specialist, Southeast Research and Extension Center, effective August 24, 2009.

Lindsey G. White, Program Assistant-Youth, Howard County, effective August 3, 2009.

Extension says goodbye to:

Robert J. Felsman, Extension Livestock Management Specialist, Animal Science, effective August 15, 2009.

Donna D. Hoskyn, County Extension Agent-Staff Chair, Delta District, effective August 14, 2009.

Hollice A. Linck, Clerical Assistant, Van Buren County, effective July 31, 2009

Frank T. Jones, Extension Poultry Specialist-Section Leader, Agriculture and Natural Resources, effective August 15, 2009.

Jodie A. Pennington, Professor-Dairy Specialist, effective August 4, 2009.

Tracey C. Rancifer, County Extension Agent-Community Development, Pulaski County, effective August 26, 2009.

Elizabeth J. Roberts, Administrative Specialist, Southeast Research and Extension Center, effective July 31, 2009.

Donna L. Taylor, Associate for Administration, Office of Associate Vice President for Agriculture-Extension, effective August 7, 2009.

Kimberly D. Wolfe, Administrative Support Supervisor, Program and Staff Development, effective August 7, 2009.

Grants and Contracts

Project Title	Award Amount	Principal Investigator	Granting Agency
2009 University of Arkansas EIPM Coordination Proposal	25,000	Dr Gus Lorenz	Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Services
2009 University of Arkansas EIPM Coordination Proposal	62,950	Dr Gus Lorenz	Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Services
2009 University of Arkansas EIPM Coordination Proposal	87,985	Dr Gus Lorenz	Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Services
2009 University of Arkansas EIPM Coordination Proposal	19,955	Dr Gus Lorenz	Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Services
2009 University of Arkansas EIPM Coordination Proposal	26,570	Dr Gus Lorenz	Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Services
Initiation and Implementation of the Managing in Tough Times National Extension Initiative	52,150	Dr. Anne Sortor	United States Department of Agriculture
2009-2010 4-H Afterschool	84,613	Dr. Anne Sortor	Arkansas Department of Human Services
2009-2010 Guiding Children	126,081	Dr Wally Goddard	Arkansas Department of Human Services
2009-2010 Best Care	169,441	Dr James Marshall	Arkansas Department of Human Services
2009-2010 Best Care Connected	55,476	Dr James Marshall	Arkansas Department of Human Services
Childcare Voucher Family Support Worker Training	75,000	Dr James Marshall	Arkansas Department of Human Services
Geospatial Inventorying and Optimization Analysis for Best Management Practices in 12-digit HUC Subwatersheds in L'Anguille River	87,508	Dharmendra Saraswat	Arkansas Natural Resources Commission
Energy Education Project	44,368	Tom Riley	Arkansas Energy Office
Parkin Archeological State Park Butterfly Garden	750	Richard Klerk	Endowment Foundation of Cross County/ARCF
Evaluation of Sampling Procedures for Detecting Tarnished Plant Bug Populations in Cotton:AR III	4,300	Dr. Glenn Studebaker	Cotton Incorporated
Evaluation of Cotton Yield Loss Caused by Twospotted Spider Mites AR III	6,600	Dr. Glenn Studebaker	Cotton Incorporated
Economic Contribution of Drew Memorial Hospital	2,500	Dr Wayne Miller	Drew Memorial Hospital
Evaluation of Cotton Yield Loss Caused by Twospotted Spider Mites AR	6,600	Dr Gus Lorenz	Cotton Incorporated
Achieving Profitable Cotton Production: Plant Bug Management-AR I	5,513	Dr Gus Lorenz	Cotton Incorporated
Evaluation of Sampling Procedures for Detecting Tarnished Plant Bug Populations in Cotton:AR II	6,000	Dr. Scott Akin	Cotton Incorporated
Evaluation of Sampling Procedures for Detecting Tarnished Plant Bug Populations in Cotton:AR	6,000	Dr Gus Lorenz	Cotton Incorporated
Achieving Profitable Cotton Production: Plant Bug Management-AR III	5,513	Dr. Glenn Studebaker	Cotton Incorporated
Achieving Profitable Cotton Production: Plant Bug Management-AR II	5,513	Dr. Scott Akin	Cotton Incorporated
Evaluation of Cotton Yield Loss Caused by Twospotted Spider Mites AR II	6,600	Dr. Scott Akin	Cotton Incorporated
2009 Lygus Efficacy Trial	20,000	Dr Gus Lorenz	Monsanto Company
Encapsulated Acetochlor in Cotton-EUP Academic	4,880	Dr. Tom Barber	Monsanto Company
TOTAL JULY AWARDS	\$997,865.00		