

BLUE LETTER

The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service Monthly Letter

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Division of Agriculture's 2011 annual report is out, and copies are available at the state office, county offices and research and Extension centers.

The report captures our wide range of programs and the positive effect our work has on our neighbors all across the state. As you read of our successes, share these stories with your clientele, colleagues and stakeholders.

One such success is the SNAP-Ed program delivered by family and consumer sciences. In Miller County, Carla Haley brought SNAP-Ed to Fouke Elementary School to provide nutrition education in classrooms. The principal, teachers and staff made a full commitment to the program.

Since then, Fouke Elementary School has become a national example of how good nutrition can be the launch pad for academic excellence.

A story in *Arkansas Medical News* noted a nine percent reduction in obesity rates as a result of SNAP-Ed. As obese students lost weight, attendance and test scores improved, possibly because the weight loss improved self-esteem, according to Principal Ken Endris. Better test scores were the result.

In recognition of the school's improved test scores, the 2011 National Center for Educational Achievement named Fouke Elementary as one of 83 high-performing schools in Arkansas. Endris attributes their success to SNAP-Ed and its effect on faculty, teachers, students and parents.

Statewide, SNAP-Ed school-based nutrition education programs are in 58 counties and reached more than 33,000 students in 26 preschools and 153 schools in 2011.

As word spreads about Fouke Elementary School's success, we can expect more interest in signing on as partners with our local county Extension offices.

Be sure to pick up a copy of the annual report and read about our successes divisionwide.

Thank you for all you do.

– Tony Windham

2012 Galaxy Conference

The 2012 Galaxy Conference will be held on March 28-30 at the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute on Petit Jean Mountain near Morrilton. The Galaxy Conference is planned and conducted through the joint efforts of the professional associations: AACES, AAE4-HA, NEAFCS-AR and ESP.

This year's Galaxy Conference will feature 27 concurrent educational sessions, eight "Arkansas Adventure" tours and classes, a poster session featuring the work of Extension educators from across the state and five keynote speakers. Descriptions of the Galaxy sessions and activities can be found in the conference program at

<http://intranet.uaex.edu/galaxy>.



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

Full-time Galaxy Conference registration until February 24 is \$125 (which includes all meals and breaks). After February 24, full-time registration will be \$150. There are also part-time participation rates of \$100 for a two-day registration and \$60 for one-day registration. Part-time registrations include all meals and breaks for the days registered.

Register online for the Galaxy Conference at:

<http://www.regonline.com/2012galaxyconference>.

Sizes of all Galaxy Conference educational session classes and many of the Arkansas Adventure activity classes are limited. When sessions are full, they will be closed.

For additional information about the Galaxy Conference, contact Rich Poling (rpoling@uaex.edu) at 501-671-2084 or BeVerly Sims (bsims@uaex.edu) at 501-671-2263. ■

Jefferson County Master Gardeners sponsor annual show — Fees from show will help fund youth garden

UACES's Master Gardeners of Jefferson County will hold its 24th annual Home and Garden Seminar from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 11 at the Pine Bluff Convention Center.

Fees from vendors and sponsorships help fund the garden show and the youth garden, a project of Jefferson County Master Gardeners, which provides young men and women the experience of planting and harvesting produce supervised by Master Gardeners.

Master Gardeners teach young people about preparing the soil, fertilizing and watering. Last year, the Master Gardeners spent \$1,000 on plants used in the demonstration garden. Some days, there are as many as 200 children visiting.

In 2011, the garden gave more than 2,000 pounds of produce to the Salvation Army, Neighbor to Neighbor and senior citizens.

Activities at the annual February seminar will include two educational workshops, four how-to sessions and activities for children and teenagers. New this year will be Meet the Masters – Master Gardeners will share their expertise on various lawn and gardening subjects at predetermined times in the Master Gardeners booth. ■



Wargo awarded “Friend of the Division”

Dr. Tony Windham, associate vice president for agriculture-Extension, presented Andrew Wargo of Desha County a “Friend of the Division” award at the recent 2011 Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts (AACD) Conference in North Little Rock for his service.

Wargo has served with distinction in soil and water conservation. He has served as president of the AACD, a board member of the Boeuf-Tensas Irrigation District, and Arkansas’ representative to the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD).

Wargo has partnered with and supported Division of Agriculture initiatives including working with the Division’s weed scientists to bring national attention to the herbicide resistance of pigweed in cotton by convincing the NACD to adopt the issue as a top priority.

Wargo has been instrumental to the success of the Arkansas Discovery Farm by serving as vice-chair of the program’s stakeholder committee and by helping raise support for a Cotton Discovery Farm in Southeastern Arkansas. These efforts along with his professionalism and quick wit have earned him the “Friend of the Division” award.

Wargo is employed by Baxter Land Company, and he and his wife, Barbara Jean, have two sons, three grandsons and a new granddaughter. ■

U.S. Poultry Foundation awards \$19,043 grant to University of Arkansas

The U.S. Poultry Foundation recently awarded a \$19,043 student recruiting grant to the University of Arkansas' Poultry Science Department.

Wes Morris, group vice president of retail poultry and prepared foods for Tyson Foods, and U.S. Poultry board member, presented the check to Dr. Michael Kidd, director of the Center of Excellence for Poultry Science, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.

"More students are going to college in the U.S. than ever before, but the majority choose majors outside science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields," said Kidd.

Most students don't understand the career potential of STEM fields and the poultry industry, explained Kidd, who said funds from the U.S. Poultry Foundation are vital to the university's recruitment.

The U.S. Poultry Foundation board recently approved student recruiting grants totaling more than \$180,000 to attract students to the six U.S. universities with poultry science departments and 14 other institutions with poultry programs.

The U.S. Poultry and Egg Association represents the poultry industry, serving member companies through research funding, education, communication and technical assistance. Founded in 1947, the U.S. Poultry & Egg Association is based in Tucker, GA. ■



(L to R) Wes Morris, group vice president of retail poultry and prepared foods for Tyson Foods and U.S. Poultry board member, and Dr. Michael Kidd, director of the center of excellence for poultry science, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.

Mid-South Commercial Vegetable Growers Expo set for Feb. 21

New varieties, industry trends and agritourism liability are on the agenda Feb. 21 at the third annual Mid-South Commercial Vegetable Growers Expo at Arkansas State University-Beebe.

The meeting will be held at the campus student center, 1000 West Iowa Street in Beebe, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. A \$35 registration fee will cover food and educational materials.

For more information or to register by Feb. 17, contact the White County extension office at 501-268-5394 or Sherri Sanders, White County extension agent for the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, ssanders@uaex.edu.

There is no charge for extension personnel to attend this meeting. The agenda includes information about GAP, diseases, insects, agritourism, alternative crops and weed control. ■



Save the Date!

March 28-30

2012 Galaxy Conference
Winthrop Rockefeller Institute on Petit Jean
Triple "R" on the Rocks
March - , 2012 *Retreat | Relax | Renew*

Wilson earns ASA Soybean Extension Education Award

Chicot County Extension Staff Chair Gus Wilson was recognized recently with the 2011 Arkansas Soybean Association Soybean Extension Education Award.

Working with soybeans has been a consistent theme in his 10 years with the Cooperative Extension Service of the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. Wilson has four years working in Chicot County and previously worked in Jackson and Ashley counties.

One area in which Wilson has worked hard is finding salt-tolerant soybean varieties for growers in his county.

“We have a problem with chlorides and are always trying to find a better variety to plant,” Wilson said. “We conducted three saltwater tests in our county as we find the best variety that will adapt to our irrigation conditions.”



Additional feathers in Wilson’s cap are Charles Poole and his son Rick, two Chicot County soybean producers who finished in the top five of this year’s Arkansas Yield Challenge.

Wilson received a plaque and monetary award with the recognition. Of the ASA award, Wilson said: “I was proud to receive it.”

Meet the *new* employees!



Terra Daniels
Program Associate
Southern Regional Risk
Management Education Center
LRSO

- **What’s your background?**

My background includes an undergrad in agribusiness from ASU

Jonesboro and a MBA in healthcare management from the University of Phoenix. I have experience working with Trade Adjustment Assistance as a business consultant, where I thoroughly enjoyed brainstorming with farmers to figure out ways to improve their business.

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

The knowledge and skills that I am bringing to Extension are my people skills, the ability to listen and a ton of creativity!

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

One thing I would like for my colleagues to know

about me is that I will always represent Extension with respect and enthusiasm.

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

I would like to meet and discuss the MarketMaker program with each and every producer in the state of Arkansas! I also want to find out how MarketMaker can be useful to them and help each producer understand the value of this FREE program.

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

The value of the Extension Service is what brings me to want to work at Extension. I fully believe in everything the Extension Service does and want to contribute as much as possible to help make the everyday life of the farmer easier.

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

My hobbies outside of work include painting abstract art, gardening and going to the drag strip on the weekends with my husband. ■



Janan Foster
County Extension Agent - 4-H -
Family and Consumer Sciences
Sebastian County

• **What’s your background?**

I grew up in Clinton, AR. Following high school graduation, I earned a B.S. degree in home economics, from the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. I moved to Little Rock and worked briefly with

Faulkner & Associates Advertising Agency and the Arkansas Retail Grocers Association before joining the Arkansas Egg Council/Ark. I worked for the Livestock & Poultry Commission for over 17 years in promotion and consumer education. During this time, I completed a master’s degree in journalism from UALR. I moved to DeSoto, Texas, and took additional graduate courses at Texas A&M, Commerce, to become certified to teach family and consumer sciences. For the past 9.5 years, I have taught secondary family and consumer science classes in Garland, Dallas and Duncanville, Texas.

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

Throughout my career, I have worked with and have taught diverse audiences courses in child development, nutrition and life skills. I am outgoing, highly energetic, relate well to most people and have a vast amount of volunteer experience.

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

I am open to change, and I am a team player.

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

I want to learn as much as I can about the possibilities available, and I hope to encourage more 4-H participation in Sebastian County and Fort Smith schools. I want to build positive relationships with those wanting to accomplish similar goals for future accomplishments.

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

An unexpected life change enabled me to return to Arkansas. Extension is a valued player in the lives of Arkansas youth and citizens. Through programs promoting health, wellness, financial fitness, community involvement, etc., I feel that I can be a part of an organization that is making a difference in the lives of our citizens.

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

I love to travel, dance, walk, shop, attend open-house and estate sales, plays, snow ski, water ski, hike, camp and make the most of time spent with friends and family. ■

Kristin Higgins
Program Associate
Public Policy Center
LRSO



• **What’s your background?**

For the past decade, I have been a reporter covering city and county governments in Arkansas. Most recently, I was the Little Rock City Hall reporter for the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*. I’m a U of A graduate.

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

I brought my arsenal of journalism skills, from researching to writing and editing. I look forward to writing fact sheets on state ballot questions and putting out another issue of *Energizing Arkansas*.

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

I have a wonderful 19-month-old daughter named Kahlan, and this past summer I rafted the Arkansas River in Colorado. I fell into a hydraulic hole and managed to live and tell the story.

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

I’d like to make the public more aware of the Public Policy Center and how we can help them.

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

Newspapers aren’t child friendly, so I was looking for a job that required the same skills and fostered more public involvement. So far, I’m impressed by the continuing education offered here.

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

I love a good book or being outdoors, hiking. I’m a big fan of museums as well. ■



Pamela (Pam) Pruitt
County Extension Agent -
Family and Consumer Sciences
Mississippi County

• **What's your background?**

I have a B.S.E. in home economics, from UCA, Conway and a M.A. in counseling from

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA. Currently, I am enrolled in a doctorate for educational leadership with an emphasis in higher education from Union University, Jackson, TN. I taught family and consumer sciences courses for 25 years in Blytheville public schools and summer enrichment FCS- related classes at Arkansas Northeastern College for 10 years.

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

I have experience in teaching FCS courses to various age groups. I am active in professional organizations as a presenter, officer and active member. I'm involved in community organizations and service learning activities and have attended hundreds of hours of FCS, education and professional development in-service and various other trainings and conferences.

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

I am a lifelong learner interested in learning all I can to help others achieve their goals and dreams through FCS education. I believe professional development through activity in professional organizations enhances and facilitates job performance and productivity.

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

I would like to grasp the strategic plan objectives and implement them in Mississippi County to aid residents in improving their quality of life.

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

As a public school teacher and community member, I have been aware for many years of the value of Extension employees and programs in providing quality materials and resources to facilitate personal growth and development. I value the commitment to research-based education and variety of programs that can make a difference in the lives of residents in my community and state.

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

My immediate family, consisting of my husband, son and daughter-in-law and grandson with one more on the way, and my extended family occupy the majority of my time outside of work. As I am a member of a doctoral cohort (Ed.D. Union University), my studies occupy a large amount of my time outside work, leaving little time for other activities. ■

Amber Runswick
County Extension Agent -
Family and Consumer Sciences
Baxter County



• **What's your background?**

I received both my B.S. and M.S. degrees from UCA. I also completed a dietetic internship through UAMS. I'm a registered dietitian and have spent the last few years working with patients in a hospital setting.

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

Since I'm a dietitian, I have a strong background in nutrition. Also, right after completing my dietetic internship in 2008, I worked in a temporary position with the SNAP-Ed program at the Extension state office.

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

Many people that I come across are not familiar with Extension. I would love to be able to introduce more people to Extension and the services that we provide.

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

Community education is something that has been important to me for some time. Providing education about the importance of good nutrition is what initially drew me toward becoming a dietitian. Working for Extension will be a great way for me to get to educate and help people in the community.

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

First and foremost, I love spending time with my husband, our two dogs and our families. I'm a bit of a bookworm and spend a lot of time reading. I also enjoy all sorts of crafts, and I love to bake. ■

Information Technology Update

Newly implemented Banner password expiration reminder

An automated reminder is now being sent to Banner users approximately five (5) days before their Banner password expires. The e-mail reminder includes instructions on how to reset their Banner password as well as synchronizing their Spot and Windows/Novell passwords.

Having your passwords synchronized allows you to go directly into AIMS or Publications through Spot without reentering your login credentials.

If you encounter problems or would prefer assistance, contact the Call Center, and they will guide you through the synchronization process. ■

Questions or assistance? Contact the IT Call Center:

Local Call: 501-671-2255

Toll Free: 866-779-3375

E-mail: callcenter@uaex.edu

BENEFITS CORNER

In an effort to help you attain or maintain a healthy weight, the UA Health Plan has added nutritional counseling and weight management options for all QualChoice participants and their covered dependents.

Being overweight cannot only affect how you look and feel about yourself but can ultimately lead to illness. Some conditions that can be related to or worsened by being overweight are diabetes, hypertension, stroke, cancer and depression.

There are three levels of participation: Level 1 is prevention; Level 2 is weight loss for individuals with a BMI equal to or greater than 27 and Level 3 is for individuals with a BMI equal to or greater than 30.

For additional information, please go the QualChoice.com web site.

Grants and contracts for Month Ending December 31, 2011

Project Title	Award Amount	Principal Investigator	Granting Agency
Southern Regional Risk Management Center at the U of A Cooperative Extension Service	\$1,168,912.00	Ron Rainey	USDA/NIFA
Audubon's NATIVE Project: Native Agriculture to Invigorate Ecosystems	5,000.00	Becky McPeake	Audubon Arkansas
4-H Military Partnerships: 4-H Army Youth Development Project	85,746.00	Maureen Rose	Kansas State University
Small Steps to Health and Wealth (SSHW) Rural Pilot Program	23,032.00	Rich Poling	Colorado State University
Implement Plan of Work for the SARE Program	21,946.00	Elena Garcia	University of Georgia
Implement Plan of Work for the SARE Professional Development (PDP) Program	9,987.00	Elena Garcia	University of Georgia
Healthy Relationship and Marriage Education Training Project, YR 4	8,733.00	Wally Goddard	University of Missouri
4-H National Mentoring Program	82,000.00	Noah Washburn	National 4-H Council
Development of an Invasive Species Response Outreach Pilot Project	95,000.00	Jon Barry	Arkansas State Plant Board
Hot Springs Village Study IV	5,000.00	Wayne Miller	Hot Springs Village Property Owner Association
Cotton Research Verification/Applied Research	74,208.00	Tom Barber	Cotton Incorporated
Development of Management Strategies for New Cotton Cultivars	23,275.00	Tom Barber	Cotton Incorporated
MOA - Storm Water Education Program/EPA	144,312.00	Katherine Teague	Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission
TOTAL	\$1,747,151.00		

Personnel changes

Please welcome the following:

Nelson R. Benson

County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Mississippi County, effective January 3, 2012.

Terra L. Daniels

Program Associate - Southern Regional Risk Management Education Center, LRSO, effective January 3, 2012.

Lisa J. Foster

County Extension Agent - 4-H - Family and Consumer Sciences, Sebastian County, effective January 17, 2012.

Lydia J. Guffey

Administrative Specialist, Cleburne County, effective January 17, 2012.

Kristin N. Higgins

Program Associate - Public Policy Center, LRSO, effective January 3, 2012.

Pamela S. Pruett

County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, Mississippi County, effective January 3, 2012.

Amber L. Runsick

County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, Baxter County, effective January 3, 2012.

Erika T. Thomas

County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, Perry County, effective January 17, 2012.

Joy L. West

County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, Yell County-Danville, effective January 17, 2012.

Extension says goodbye to:

Terry W. Griffin

Associate Professor - Economist, Agricultural Economics and Agri Business, effective January 20, 2012.

Christine I. Wagley

County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, Nevada County, effective January 13, 2012.