

The County Agent

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NACAA - 6584 W. Duroc Road - Maroa, IL 61756 - (217)794-3700

President's Corner

What a Centennial Celebration in Sioux Falls, NACAA!

NACAA's 100th Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference and Centennial Celebration in Sioux Falls were outstanding. The South Dakota Association along with the Associations from North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Nebraska are to be commended for a job well done. So to all of you we say a heartfelt Thank you!

Happy Centennial NACAA, the cakes and ice cream were a wonderful social activity during state photos along with late evening fellowship.

The AM/PIC was filled with over 423 hours of professional development, professional improvement, leadership development, and recognition. Many thanks go out to the Council Chairs, Committees, and Educators, Administrators, Industry Partners for all of the great program ideas, information, and more. I know I was able to glean some great ideas for programs for my producers here in Virginia, and I hope you did as well.

Some highlights I would like to share, first and foremost it was great to see everyone in Sioux Falls. I love connecting with co-workers from across the country, to catch up on the past year, meet new attendees, and share many ideas and concerns.

We had an opportunity to have several Administrators with us in Sioux Falls. It was humbling to me to hear how impressed they were with the programs: professional development, professional improvement, general sessions, entertainment and more.

I challenge each of us to make sure our Administrators know what we accomplish at the AMPIC. Invite them to come to Arkansas or a State near you that is hosting in the future.

The Opening session Sunday evening was out of this world. Brule' was magical. I admit I had chills come over me several times during their performance. The recognition of Veterans and the sharing of culture through music and stories, were truly enchanting, and very enlightening.

The general session was inspiring. Dr. Waded Cruzado truly made one proud to be a Cooperative Extension Educator. She helped reaffirm how important Cooperative Extension is to all aspects of agriculture, as well as youth and families. Dr. E. Gordon Gee was equally impressive. I feel confident we have not only come a long way in Cooperative Extension but have many more paths to walk to assist all agriculture producers with their operations and positively influence youth and families. It was amazing to see such a supporter of agriculture and Cooperative Extension receive the Outstanding Service to American and World Agriculture Award. Dr. E. Gordon Gee was excited, pleased, and humbled by the award. He is an inspiration to many.

On Wednesday, it was exciting to hear from the Outstanding Young Farmer: Matthew
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NACAA President Cynthia Gregg and Dan Bricker

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President's Corner

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and Patricia Erickson, amazing couple and loved hearing about their operation and the OFA program. The USDA Under Secretary Michael Scuse was very enlightening and I enjoyed hearing about the future prospective from USDA. What fun to hear from the Joint Council of Extension Professionals representatives Kim Gressley and Ann Berry. They did a great job for JCEP along with a little fun with Henry Dorough, and the highlight of presenting the Professional of the Year to Betsy Greene of Vermont, Congratulations. What can one say about the program by Manny Scott, it made you laugh, cry, and gave one chills, a truly wonderful Capstone Speaker.

First Timers were another highlight. There were over one hundred First Time Attendees. It was an honor for me to work with the program this year. I enjoyed meeting and getting to know them as well as learning from them. Chuck Otte did a phenomenal job as the speaker for the First Timers Luncheon. Jenny Fischer of Nasco attended her First AM/PIC and did an amazing job with the program.

This year was the first year of the Diversity Scholarships for 1890 and 1994 Land Grant University Extension Educators, who are non-member attendees. The program goal is to stimulate interest in NACAA and help increase membership from the 1890 and 1994 Land Grant Universities. This year's inaugural recipient was Marcus Garner of Alabama. He submitted an article to the "County Agent"; that I encourage you to read. I am excited about his enthusiasm for NACAA. I enjoyed meeting and talking to Marcus.

As the week progressed more and more outstanding professional development and professional improvement opportunities were available to attendees. It was a wonderful vast array of programs presented in the disciplines of Agronomy and Pest Management, Agricultural Economics, Teaching and Technology, Early Career Development, Animal Science, Sustainable Agriculture, Horticulture and Turfgrass, and more. The programs presented by Industry including Pipeline Ag Safety Alliance, Environmental Tillage Systems, Climate Change, the list goes on and on...was very useful. All attendees had an opportunity to learn valuable information to take back and share and utilize in their program as well as with co-workers. It is at times hard to choose where one wants to go with such great presentations occurring over multiple days at multiple times. No matter how hard we try to rearrange the schedule to keep conflicts at

(continued on page 3)

NACAA Centennial Posters Available



Professional quality 18" x 24" posters are available from the 100th Anniversary Celebration/2015 AM/PIC in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The posters are \$15/poster - and an additional \$7 will cover postage/handling (mailed in a durable mailing tube).

Orders and payment can be handled online at <http://www.nacaa.com/about/NACAAprints.php>

The County Agent

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Photos of the 2015 AM/PIC can be found for free upload at <http://www.nacaa.com/ampic/2015/2015AMPICPhotos.php>

President's Corner

(cont. from page 2)

a minimum, unfortunately it will still occur. I hope everyone had a chance to go to as many sessions as they could.

There was an amazing set of tours offered at this year's AM/PIC, allowing travel to multiple states, not to mention Pre-Conference Tours! I know the tour I took was outstanding on Thursday. I learned so much and I have actually used some of the information I learned since I got back home. Pre-Conference Tours were heralded as some of the best. Congrats to all the Educators and Committee Members who made the contacts with the outstanding producers, agri-businesses, cultural sites, agri-tourism sites, etc. You all did an amazing job and we all met some memorable people, again thank you for that honor.

Recognition is always a highlight of the AM/PIC for many in attendance and this year was no exception. This year the changes to the poster session did not affect it adversely; it was well attended and once again a highlight of the Exhibit Hall. The numerous Search for Excellence Awards Programs were outstanding and the program winners were top notch. Communication Awards were once again a large program and all nominees and winners have much to be proud of as you do amazing work, and thank you for sharing. The Hall of Fame Winner presentation is a highlight of outstanding careers of some amazing co-workers. Achievement Award and Distinguished Service Award Winners receive one of the highest recognition for NACAA Members; these winners are inspirational to many. I would like to say Thank you to all of the many 2015 Winners for the amazing job you do and your willingness to share with everyone.

The NACAA Board for 2015-2016 was elected at the Voting Delegate Session. The officers and regional directors and vice directors are as follows:

President: Cynthia L. Gregg, Virginia

President-Elect; Mark Nelson, Utah

Vice-President: Alan Galloway, Tennessee

Secretary: Matt Herring, Missouri

Treasurer: Wes Smith, Georgia

Past President; Mike Hogan, Ohio

North Central:

Director: Chris Bruynis, Ohio

Vice Director: Connie Strunk, South Dakota

Northeast:

Director: Virginia Rosenkranz, Maryland

Vice Director: J. Craig Williams, Pennsylvania

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Director: Lenny Rogers, North Carolina

Director: Jerry Brown, Kentucky

Vice Director: Bill Burdine, Mississippi

Vice Director: Andrew Overbay, Virginia

Western:

Director: Janet Schmidt, Washington

Vice Director: Stephen Brown, Alaska

Our NACAA Executive Director Scott Hawbaker is to be commended for all of his hard work not only during the AMPIC but year round on our behalf. He does his job so flawlessly and makes it look easy. I cannot thank him enough for all he does for us. He is the constant with donors and sponsors and he is the keeper of all things NACAA. When you have a chance to visit with Scott, via phone, email or in person, you quickly find out he is knowledgeable and willing to do all he can to assist members with getting answers to questions. Again, thanks Scott for all you do.

Again, WOW what a Centennial Celebration in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Now we begin the second century of NACAA. This upcoming 101st year will be a year of professional development, professional improvement, recognition, impacts, and changes. As one thing that seems to be constant is change. This year we will have an opportunity to look at how we have and are impacting lives of our producers and communities. Sometimes we do not see the impacts immediately, but over time and in small steps. This is okay because we can be a helping hand and a positive influence to our clientele, co-workers and others in our communities. As individuals and as a collective group, we do make a positive difference to the lives of so many. It is a privilege to work with you, and it is an honor to serve as your NACAA President this year. If you need me, please contact me and I will promise to make every effort possible to get you an answer to your question.

I would like to be the first to extend you an invitation to participate in the many upcoming webinars presented by the various committees. I also would like to ask you to make plans to join me and the Great Folks from Arkansas who are hosting the 2016 NACAA AM/PIC, our 101st, in Little Rock, Arkansas, July 24-28! We look forward to seeing you there!

Thank you again for all you do!



FDA Team Makes Safe Feed Information Easy to Find

The agency in the Federal government with most of the responsibility for safe animal feed is not the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Instead, it is the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

In the United States, federal law defines food as food for humans or animals, which means that the federal government's responsibility to protect animal food safety is just as important as the responsibility to protect human food safety.

Congress gave human food safety responsibilities to both the Department of Agriculture and the FDA, but the responsibility for animal feed safety lies largely within FDA, specifically in FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM).

At CVM, we have developed an initiative to continually review and coordinate federal feed safety rules, standards, policies, and programs. It's called the Animal Feed Safety System (AFSS). The initiative highlights the importance of animal feed in animal health and human food safety. The initiative is managed by an AFSS Team, made up of representatives from different parts of CVM, other parts of FDA, and state feed regulatory agencies.

AFSS applies to the rules and policies for production, labeling, and use of all animal food. It encompasses the entire spectrum of FDA activities, including voluntary as well as mandatory programs. It covers commercial operations, on-farm mixing, transportation, and distribution – basically, the work of AFSS applies to anyone who handles feed.

The AFSS Team recognized when it first got started that animal producers have a critical role in ensuring the safety of animal feed, whether the feed is mixed on the farm or purchased from a commercial feed manufacturer. For that reason, the focus of the Team is informing and educating to the livestock producer; to help make sure the producer has the information about standards needed to ensure safe feed.

CVM's AFSS Team recognizes in NACAA a shared interest in providing accurate and timely information to the livestock producers in the United States. We recently saw that NACAA was a good group to engage with for outreach to producers, so we decided to have a presence at the 2015 NACAA annual meeting, held in Sioux Falls, SD. We had a booth at the trade show, and AFSS Team member

Mr. Shannon Jordre spoke at one of the Trade Talk sessions, discussing CVM's role in feed safety. We felt we received a good reception from the group.

A wealth of information about feed safety – information valuable to livestock producers – is available, but often producers don't know about it. The information is not easy to find. The AFSS Team is working to let producers know that feed safety information exists and to make that information available. The Team has assembled a body of material and placed it all on one Internet web page – www.FDA.gov/safeeed, and configured that page so that you can read it on a computer, tablet, or smart phone.

On the page, you can find information about feed ingredients, about requirements for manufacturing animal feed, and about how to report a problem with animal feed. The "SafeFeed" page is also a good place to come for news about changes in safe feed requirements.

In addition, we have posted short videos about "Safe Animal Feed," "Helping Animal Producers Understand Medicated Feed Labels," and "Medicated Feed Rules for Animal Feed Manufacturers" on the page – all aimed at making information more available to livestock producers. More videos are planned. For example, two videos on the recent changes to the veterinary feed directive (VFD) rule should be available by the end of the year.

The key to ensuring safe feed is prevention – preventing problems before they can happen. The AFSS is dedicated to the goal of prevention, and much of the information on the "SafeFeed" web page is aimed at helping livestock producers understand their role in ensuring safe feed so they can prevent problems.

Please go to the "SafeFeed" web page. And if you have any questions when you are there, you can click on the "Get Assistance" navigational button, and see how to contact CVM. When contacting CVM, just say that the message is for the AFSS Team.



2015 Service to American/ World Agriculture

Dr. E. Gordon Gee

President, West Virginia University

Emeritus President, The Ohio State University



Dr. Gee is a world renowned leader of higher education who has made long-lasting impacts on agricultural research and Extension in the United States and several other countries.

Dr. Gee is among the most highly experienced and respected leaders in higher education, having been named in 2009 by Time magazine as one of the top ten university presidents in the United States. He chairs the American Council on Education's Commission on Higher Education Attainment, and is a Fellow in the prestigious American Association for the Advancement of Science, the world's largest and most prestigious science organization. He has been named the Outstanding Academic Leader on behalf of Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Dr. Gee has served as President or Chancellor for more than 33 years at five different universities in various parts of the United States, and has a major presence on countless state and national higher education policy commissions and the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities (APLU).

Dr. Gee's leadership of two of the largest land-grant universities in the United States-- West Virginia University and The Ohio State University, have resulted in higher profiles, expanded resources, and greater effectiveness of agricultural research and Extension programs in those states and the nation.

Gee serves on numerous boards and commissions including the Board of Trustees of the National 4-H Council, serving on the Executive Committee. His commitment to 4-H and agriculture is evidenced through frequent visits to county

Extension offices, farms, and agricultural research facilities throughout the state. While serving as President of The Ohio State University, Gee visited farms, county fairs, agribusinesses, and county Extension Offices in each of the state's 88 counties, typically riding in a pickup truck driven by the county agent in the county he is visiting.



Gee has been a champion of expanding the role of agricultural research to solve the world's most pressing problems related to hunger, sustainability, nutrition, and energy, both in the US and globally. Gee promoted agricultural research, teaching, and Extension programs conducted by Ohio State's College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences in Africa and Asia while serving as President of The Ohio State University.

Gee routinely challenges faculty throughout the university to "be more like Extension" when addressing societal needs and problems. While at Ohio State, Gee oversaw a new program which is using nearly \$250 million dollars in new funding to hire 500 new faculty members in three broad Discovery Themes which will address complex technological, social, and environmental problems facing the world today. One of these Discovery Themes is Food Production and Security, which is directly linked to the college of agriculture. The other two Discovery Themes; Energy and the Environment and Health and Wellness also will involve college of agriculture faculty and programs.

Dr. Gee has received numerous honorary degrees, awards, fellowships, and recognitions. He is the author of 11 books, and served as Judicial Fellow and Staff Assistant to US Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren Burger.

There is no greater champion and leader for agricultural research and Extension in the world than E. Gordon Gee.

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NACAA Professional Excellence Poster Competition

Applied Research National Winners

1st Place



USE OF BENEFICIAL BACTERIA TO TREAT NUTRIENTS IN POND WATER

Haberland, M.¹; S. Mangiafico²; Debra Haberland³

¹Environmental & Resource Management Agent, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Cherry Hill, NJ, 08002

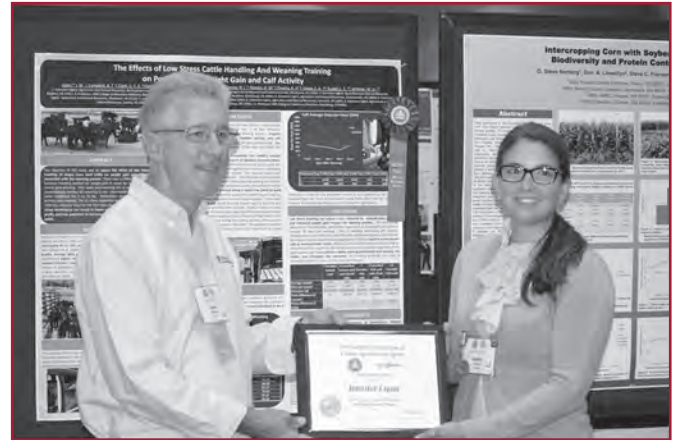
²Environmental & Resource Management Agent, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Woodstown, NJ, 08098

³Field Assistant, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Cherry Hill, NJ, 08002

Agriculture and urban ponds often suffer impaired water quality from high levels of nitrogen and/or phosphorous that typically triggers excessive “blooms” of algae or cyanobacteria. Bacteria are known to breakdown nitrogen and phosphorous and ammonia in controlled wastewater treatment plant processes. Based on this information, commercial enterprises market beneficial bacteria products scaled for application to reduce nutrient levels in eutrophic ponds. This project tested a beneficial bacteria product to determine its effectiveness to reduce high phosphorous levels in a controlled pond water experiment. The bacteria in the tested product were: 2-Bacillus subtilis, 2-Bacillus amyloliquifaciens, B. pumilis, B. licheniformis, and B. megatarium. We compared three treatments of pond water, versus three treatments of pond water with beneficial bacteria added. All treatment water was filtered to 5µ. All treatments were supplied with air to keep the water aerated, mixed, and to

encourage microbiological activity. Samples were collected weekly for three weeks. A second set of treatments was also compared, but no supplemental air was added. Sample parameters included DO, temp., pH, conductivity, and orthophosphate (soluble phosphorous). The orthophosphorous values were analyzed using a LaMotte Smart3 Colorimeter. All the 190 liter treatment containers were maintained at ambient pond water temperature and light conditions by floating them in the pond. A raw pond water sample was collected each week and compared to the treatments. Results showed no significant difference in orthophosphorous reduction across all treatments with the addition of the beneficial bacteria.

2nd Place



THE EFFECTS OF LOW STRESS CATTLE HANDLING AND WEANING TRAINING ON POST-WEANING WEIGHT GAIN AND CALF ACTIVITY

Ligon, J.M.¹; Campbell, B.T.²; Clark, C.T.³; Clark-Deener, S.G.⁴; Currin, J.F.⁵; Gregg, C.L.⁶; Grosse, R.I.⁷; Norton, H.M.⁸; Overby, K.H.⁹; Siegle, L.A.¹⁰; Tucker, L.C.¹¹; Whittier, W.D.¹²

¹Agriculture and Natural Resource Extension Agent, Va Cooperative Extension, Buckingham, VA, 23921

²Beef Extension Specialist, Southern Piedmont Agricultural Research and Extension Center, Blackstone, VA, 23824

³Agriculture and Natural Resource Extension Agent, Va Cooperative Extension, Boydton, VA, 23917

⁴Professor, Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine, Blacksburg, VA, 24061

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¹⁰Agriculture and Natural Resource Extension Agent, Va Cooperative Extension, Amelia, VA, 23002

¹¹Agricultural and Natural Resource Extension Agent, Va Cooperative Extension Agent, Lunenburg, VA, 23952

¹²Professor, Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine, Blacksburg, VA, 24061

The objective of this study was to assess the effect of low stress handling of Angus cross beef cattle on stress, measured by weight gain and calf activity, associated with the weaning process in the cow/calf operation in Virginia. There was a difference at a p-value of 0.0001 between handling method for weight gain in calves at one week and one month post-weaning. One week post-weaning the low stress calves outgained the conventionally handled calves by 12 lbs. One month post-weaning the low stress calves outgained the conventionally handled calves by 20 lbs. Pedometers were used to assess calf activity in steps per hour post-weaning. The low stress calves expended less energy by taking 600 to 1000 less steps per hour for the first three days. Handling cattle using low stress techniques can result in lower stress, increased gain, increased profit, and has potential to increase other areas of production in beef cattle.

3rd Place



BROOMSEDGE CONTROL IN PERENNIAL WARM-SEASON FORAGE GRASS STANDS

Sharpe, Kenneth¹; Twidwell, Edward²; Strahan, Ronald³; Andrew Granger⁴

¹County Agent, LSU AgCenter, Livingston, LA, 70754

²Professor, LSU AgCenter, Baton Rouge, LA, 70803

³Associate Professor, LSU AgCenter, Baton Rouge, LA, 70803

⁴County Agent, LSU AgCenter, Abbeville, LA, 70510

Broomsedge (*Andropogon virginicus* L.) is a perennial warm-season grass weed species that infests permanent warm-season perennial grass pastures and hayfields throughout Louisiana. The objective of this study was to evaluate six options for control of broomsedge in perennial warm-season grass stands at three locations in Louisiana in 2014. Treatments included: control; lime plus fertilizer only; glyphosate applied at 1.5 pints/acre; clipping every 60 days; clipping every 30 days; and lime plus fertilizer plus clipping every 30 days. The lime plus fertilizer and glyphosate treatments were applied in late-March and clipping treatments were initiated on May 1. Broomsedge plant counts were

taken in November at all locations using 2 ft x 2 ft quadrats. Five quadrats were taken per treatment. Statistical analysis was performed using the three locations as replications. The control treatment averaged 2 broomsedge plants/sq ft. Two of the treatments (glyphosate and lime plus fertilizer) did not significantly reduce broomsedge plant counts relative to the control ($P=0.05$). The treatment of clipping every 60 days also did not cause a significant reduction, but it did reduce broomsedge plant counts by 47% relative to the control. The treatment of clipping every 30 days and the combination treatment of lime plus fertilizer plus clipping every 30 days significantly reduced broomsedge plant counts by 66 and 73%, respectively, relative to the control. Results of this study suggest that a frequent clipping schedule of every 30 days is required to significantly reduce broomsedge plant populations in warm-season perennial pastures and hayfields.

Extension Education National Winners

1st Place



INCREASING INTEREST IN S.T.E.M. ON “FANTASTIC FRIDAYS”

Mcginley, B.¹

¹County Extension Agent - Staff Chair, University Of Arkansas Division Of Agriculture, Sheridan, AR, 72150

Careers are increasingly focused on skills related to science, technology, engineering, and math (S.T.E.M.). S.T.E.M. professions are among the highest paying and also the basis for a globally competitive economy. These jobs require advanced degrees and Montgomery County has a lower percentage of college degrees compared to the state average. A series of summer day camps entitled “Fantastic Fridays” were conducted to increase Montgomery County youth’s interest in S.T.E.M. Fantastic Friday Day Camps focused on various S.T.E.M. topics including: plant science, rocketry, astronomy, photography, wood science, and engineering. Hands on learning activities in each session provided participants with knowledge and encouraged discovery and innovation. Day camps were conducted on various Fridays throughout the summer and concluded each year with a trip to Mid-American Science Museum. As a result of the program, 64% of participants indicated they would like a job related to science. While 91%

indicated, they wanted to learn more about science, liked to see how things are made, and can tell others how to do an experiment. Percentage of participants able to identify the effect of wind resistance on rockets increased from 57% to 75%. Sixty-two percent of kids gained knowledge of the effects of mass and pressure on rocket stability. Percentage of participants having knowledge about the size of the solar system, galaxy, and universe increased from 48% to 78%. Evaluation results from this program indicate hands on learning activities are an excellent tool to increase student interest in S.T.E.M.

2nd Place



REGIONAL YOUTH LIVESTOCK FIELD DAYS: A SUCCESSFUL EXTENSION MODEL EDUCATING YOUTH AND ADULTS FROM MULTIPLE COUNTIES AND STATES

Heitstuman, M.D.¹; Schmidt, J.L.²; Sanford, K.A.³

¹Extension Director, Washington State University Asotin/Garfield County Extension, Asotin, WA, 99402

²Extension Director, Washington State University Whitman County Extension, Colfax, WA, 99111

³4-H Coordinator, University of Idaho Nez Perce County Extension, Lewiston, ID, 83501

With an estimated 60% of the 4-H members in Southeastern Washington and Northern Idaho enrolled in livestock market projects, there is a need to provide hands-on education to both youth and adult leaders on how to successfully raise and market livestock from “Farm to Plate”. With only 5 Extension faculty with 4-H livestock responsibilities in this 15-county area, the regional model was adopted as an effective method to deliver high quality educational programming. Since 2004, Asotin, Whitman and Nez Perce County Extension Offices have offered one-day regional field days attended by over 1500 youth and adults. These programs provide the latest research-based information on selection, nutrition, quality assurance, healthcare, and showmanship techniques.

Presenters include Extension faculty/staff; local veterinarians; successful producers; feed representatives; and students with knowledge of beef, sheep, swine and goats. This regional model addresses unmet needs at the county-level, while efficiently utilizing the time of Extension faculty and staff. As field day attendance has increased, programs were modified to include additional speakers and group rotations; dividing participants by level of experience; and adjusting schedules to offer the most popular field days an-

nually. In 2014, 100% of participants increased their level of knowledge of how to care for, feed, handle and show their livestock. Over 90% indicated that they would immediately apply what they learned; and 72% had attended a previous field day.

As a result of the field day model, participants from a large geographical area have been able to access high-quality training at an affordable price.

3rd Place



GEORGIA MASTER COMPOSTER PROGRAM TRAINS VOLUNTEERS TO PROVIDE COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Tedrow, A.M.¹; Janssen, S.H.²

¹County Extension Agent, University Of Georgia, Athens, GA, 30606

²Waste Reduction Administrator, Athens-Clarke County Solid Waste Department, Athens, GA, 30605

Created in 2011 by Athens-Clarke County Extension and the Athens-Clarke County Recycling Division, the Georgia Master Composter Program addresses the increasing need for composting education in Georgia. Participants complete a nine-week composting course and then share their knowledge with thousands of community members through approved volunteer opportunities. Totalling over 30 hours of instruction, the course includes nine class sessions and a field trip. Facilitators collaborate with public and private entities and statewide organizations to provide unbiased, scientifically accurate composting information and hands-on programming. Students receive instruction in the chemistry and microbiology of composting, types of and reasons for composting, climate and conditions in Georgia that impact composting, and training for teaching varied audiences. Currently, the Georgia Master Composter Program has trained 56 participants. As volunteers, these participants help fulfill composting education requests, introducing the Extension network to new individuals and community groups. To date, Georgia Master Composter Extension Volunteers have interacted with 3,775 community members. These dedicated volunteers serve a vital role in reducing landfill waste and improving soil in their local community. In addition to education, the Georgia Master Composter Program provides visibility for Extension. Prior to the program, over 50% of Master Composters were unfamiliar with Extension. The program has also generated many new partnerships between Extension and a variety of Georgia communities and organizations.

NACAA Hall of Fame Award

The NACAA Recognition and Awards Committee is proud to present these four recipients with the NACAA Hall of Fame Award. The Hall of Fame Award recognizes one member or life member from each NACAA region. Each state can nominate one individual. Based on a 500 word summary and three letters of support, the state nominees are evaluated on their Extension programming, state and national association activities and humanitarian efforts beyond the normal call of duty.



Our thanks to John Deere for sponsorship!

**2015
Northeast Region
Hall of Fame Award
Thomas J. Gallagher
New York
38 Years**



**2015
Southern Region
Hall of Fame Award
Eddie Holland
Texas
31 Years - Retired**



**2015
Western Region
Hall of Fame Award
Rob. L. Grumbles
Arizona
38 Years - Retired**



**2015
North Central Region
Hall of Fame Award
Neil Broadwater
Minnesota
37 Years**



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2015 COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS

AUDIO RECORDING



National Winner

Bachman, G.*¹, Taylor, Amy*²

¹ Horticulture Specialist, Mississippi State, Biloxi, MS, 39532

² Extension Associate II, Agricultural Communications, Mississippi State, MS, 39762

Southern Gardening Radio is a daily (260 segments per year) 2 minute radio segment designed to air within Mississippi radio programming. Southern Gardening Radio is heard on more than two dozen radio stations across Mississippi as well as Mississippi Public Broadcasting.

Segments are designed for persons interested in lawn and garden care and seasonal interest.

The goal of Southern Gardening Radio is to educate and inspire the home gardener in Mississippi.

The following segments are being submitted as examples of the body of work for Southern Gardening Radio.

Southern Gardening Radio, Virginia Sweetspire,

<http://msucares.com/news/radio/southerngardening/audio/15/sg021715.mp3>

Southern Gardening Radio, Winter Lichen,

<http://msucares.com/news/radio/southerngardening/audio/15/sg020215.mp3>

BOUND BOOK



NATIONAL WINNER

Barnhill, J.*¹, Heflebower, R.*², Hunter, B.*³, Olsen, S.H.*⁴, Pace, M.*⁵, Wagner, K.*⁶

¹ Agriculture Agent, Utah State University, Ogden, UT, 84401

² Horticulture Agent, Utah State University, St. George, UT, 84770

³ Horticulture Agent, Utah State University, Farmington, UT, 84025

⁴ Agriculture Agent, Utah State University, Farmington, UT, 84025

⁵ Agriculture Agent, Utah State University, Brigham City, UT, 84302

⁶ Horticultural Agent, Utah State University, Salt Lake City, UT, 84190

Surveys at home and garden shows and calls to the Extension office indicated an increasing interest in organic gardening. There were limited factsheets available on organic gardening and so a comprehensive book on organic gardening was developed. The primary audience was home gardeners and small-scale farmers. The book was introduced at an organic gardening workshop in Salt Lake County. Ten preview copies were sent to each Extension office in Utah to be distributed to community garden managers, natural resource management professionals, and community leaders. Copies were also sent to independent garden centers in Utah. Those receiving preview copies were asked to fill out a survey. Of surveys returned, 100% said they were likely or very likely to recommend the book and 90% rated the book as useful or very useful. Wagner and Olsen served as the senior writers for the book and the other NACAA members helped write sections of the book. University specialists as listed on the title page contributed to different sections of the book. The book was printed by USU Publication and Design and a total of 1,000 copies were printed. Books were adopted and sold by three Extension offices, two garden centers, and were sold at the Wasatch Community Gardens spring plant sale. Over 556 copies have been distributed to date.

COMPUTER GENERATED GRAPHICS PRESENTATION



NATIONAL WINNER

Schieck, S.*¹

¹ Extension Educator, University of Minnesota, Morris, MN, 56267

“Overview of PED Virus” was presented to employees at United FCS - Willmar, MN on May 27, 2014. I was invited to present about Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea virus (PEDv) to inform employees so they could better relate to clients. Approximately 20 United FCS employees attended. With PEDv first confirmed in the United States (US) in May 2013, I have had numerous requests to talk about PEDv and biosecurity. Portions of this presentation have been used to speak to manure haulers, county feedlot officers, and others.

My presentation focused mostly on PEDv, but I also talked briefly about Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome virus so United FCS employees could better understand how the viruses affected swine production. I also spoke about biosecurity so any United FCS employee that visits swine farms could be informed.

PEDv causes severe diarrhea and vomiting that can affect pigs of all ages and quickly affects 100% of the herd. Piglets less than 7 days of age are affected the worst experiencing severe dehydration leading to death. PEDv is spread through contaminated manure. At time of presentation, sow farms experiencing PEDv were reporting virus to claim on average five weeks of production. There is no specific treatment available except maintaining hydration. Vaccines had not yet been approved. Following strict biosecurity protocols is the best way to prevent PEDv from spreading.

Presentation was developed utilizing National Pork Board’s PEDv fact sheets and research-based information from a variety of sources from Land-Grant Institutions in the US.

FACT SHEET



NATIONAL WINNER

Barkley, M.*¹

¹ Extension Educator, Penn State University, Bedford, PA, 15522

The Pasture Renovation fact sheet was developed as part of a Livestock Grazing Home Study Course, a six lesson course developed to teach livestock producers how to improve their pasture management skills. The publication is part of the lesson regarding pasture management. It was designed to give an overview of the various methods that can be used by livestock producers to improve pastures. The publication is part of the third lesson on pasture management. The publication was formatted to a CD and mailed out as part of the postal version of the course and was also loaded onto a website. Thirty two livestock producers (26 via internet/email and 6 via postal service) participated in the first course last fall. As a result of participating in the course, 100% of follow up evaluation respondents indicated they learned something new and 83% planned to make changes to their pasture management techniques. The publication was prepared using Microsoft Publisher software. Entrant wrote the publication, took photos, formatted the publication for print, and loaded the publication to the Penn State Extension website.



NATIONAL AWARD WINNERS

FEATURE STORY



NATIONAL WINNER

Haley, III, N.V.*¹, Armstrong, Jim*², Smith, Mark*³

¹ Regional Extension Agent, Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Fort Payne, AL, 35967

² Extension Specialist Professor, Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Auburn, AL, 36849

³ Associate Professor Extension Specialist, Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Auburn, AL, 36849

The relationship that has been developed between the Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES) and Buckmasters Ltd. (producers of the nation’s most popular deer hunting magazine and television show) has been of great value to both partners and to Buckmasters nationwide viewership and more than 210,000 members. Perhaps the greatest example of the benefits of this collaboration comes in the form of articles that ACES provides that further extends Extension outreach, education, and awareness while providing Buckmasters and its members with a consistent source of non-biased, peer-reviewed, scientific information.

One such product was an article provided by ACES that headlined the cover of the September 2014 issue of *Buckmasters Magazine*. The headline, “Hunting Quality Deer May Be a Handshake Away” referenced the article titled “The Co-Op Advantage: you could be one handshake away from quality deer”, which introduced readers to wildlife management cooperatives. ACES chose to provide this topic for publication as cooperation among adjoining landowners has become paramount in managing towards quality wildlife, specifically white-tailed deer, and their associated habitat. Throughout much of the country this technique of partnership is relatively unknown and underused. The article, authored by Norm Haley and edited by Dr. Jim Armstrong and Dr. Mark Smith, focused on breaking down the benefits of wildlife cooperatives and served as an explanation and template towards developing or joining an effective wildlife cooperative, in addition to outlining techniques and suggestions to make them effective and long-lived.

LEARNING MODULE



NATIONAL WINNER

Moncada, K.M.*¹, Sackett, J.L.*², Sheaffer, C.C.*³, Coulter, J.A.*⁴, Gunsolus, J.L.*⁵, Jacobson, A.J.*⁶, Lamb, J.A.*⁷

¹ Scientist, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN, 55108

² Extension Educator, University of Minnesota Extension, Mankato, MN, 56001

³ Professor, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN, 55108

⁴ Associate Professor, University of Minnesota Extension, St. Paul, MN, 55108

⁵ Professor, University of Minnesota Extension, St. Paul, MN, 55108

⁶ Ph.D. Student, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN, 55108

⁷ Professor, University of Minnesota Extension, St. Paul, MN, 55108

Corn is one of the most important crops in Minnesota and the United States. Most Americans consume or use its products every day. Even so, many adults and youth have little to no understanding of the corn plant and its history, production, and uses. The *All About Corn* e-learning modules were developed to provide an interactive educational opportunity for secondary and post-secondary students to learn more about agriculture and corn production. They can be integrated into online or classroom courses such as crop production, biology, and botany and could be especially useful for “flipped classrooms.” The modules utilize various forms of audio and visual enhancements and interactive quizzes to reach people of all learning styles and can be watched at the convenience of the individual. Though geared towards students, any person interested in learning more about corn production has access to the modules. The *All About Corn* e-learning modules are available at <http://www.allaboutcorn.umn.edu/> and are hosted on University of Minnesota Extension’s corn website. The *All About Corn* website also includes an evaluation survey to gauge user interest, understanding, and background. Each of the modules (Corn Uses, Corn Production, Biology of Corn, and Corn Breeding) was prepared using Adobe Presenter. The author’s contribution includes draft narrative, visual and quiz development for two modules, review and editing of all modules, and audio narration of three modules.



NATIONAL WINNER

Lyndsay Ploehn
Extension Educator
Purdue Extension
Porter County

Lyndsay Ploehn, Purdue Extension Associate Educator in Porter County, was needing a way to communicate with Master Gardeners. Porter County has a large following of Master Gardeners (115) in the Porter County Master Gardener Association, but almost 200 Master Gardeners are not members of the association and still need information. The Garden Thyme newsletter was created to inform all Porter County Master Gardeners of current garden information, volunteer and education information, and to introduce Master Gardeners to each other by highlighting projects, recipes, and gardening tips. The newsletter is distributed by email to 300 Porter County Master Gardeners as well as to 300+ surrounding county Master Gardeners. It is also available on the Purdue Extension Porter County website: www.extension.purdue.edu/porter

Upcoming Issues of The County Agent Magazine

December, 2015

Awards/Committee Directory
Deadline for articles: December 1, 2015
Mail Date: December 28, 2015

April, 2016

AM/PIC Registration Issue
Deadline for articles: February 25, 2016
Mail Date: March 15, 2016

June, 2016

Open Topic Issue
Deadline for Articles: May 20, 2016
Mail Date: June 15, 2016

NATIONAL WINNER

Buehl, Eric*¹, Dindinger, Jennifer*², Rockler, Amanda*³, Takacs, J.*⁴, Varsa, Krisztian*⁵

¹ Watershed Restoration Specialist, University of Maryland Extension - Sea Grant, , ,

² Watershed Restoration Specialist, University of Maryland Extension - Sea Grant, , ,

³ Watershed Restoration Specialist, University of Maryland Extension - Sea Grant, , ,

⁴ Watershed Restoration Specialist, University of Maryland Extension - Sea Grant, , ,

⁵ Watershed Restoration Specialist, University of Maryland Extension - Sea Grant, , ,

Headwaters is the electronic newsletter written, edited, and published quarterly by the University of Maryland Sea Grant Extension's Watershed Protection and Restoration Program (WPRP) team. In its first year (2014), the newsletter increased program visibility, collaborative opportunities, and new partnerships.

With an audience of more than 5,000 readers, *Headwaters* provides a platform to share programs and projects with colleagues from partner agencies and organizations in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. *Headwaters* keeps pace with the evolving landscape of watershed restoration by addressing relevant topics in watershed restoration & climate science, education, programming, projects, and research. It also highlights the programs and projects of partner organizations and in doing so emphasizes the collaborative efforts of the WPRP team and demonstrates the breadth of coverage the team can offer. Articles are short, typically 300 - 500 words, with numerous hyperlinks to partners' webpages, scientific articles, and contact emails and written to be accessible to a wide array of readers, from science professionals to community members. This format makes the newsletter engaging and increases its impact. Additionally, some hyperlinks lead readers to alternate locations within the newsletter, making it easier for them to connect themes by topic or by geography.

Headwaters' distribution mechanism is entirely digital and includes regional email listservs, the Chesapeake Network listserv, the UMD Extension website, the team's website, the Maryland Sea Grant website, Twitter, and an Extension Facebook page.

Team members include: Eric Buehl, Jennifer Dindinger, Amanda Rocker, Jacqueline Takacs (NACAA member), Krisztian Varsa (ed).

PERSONAL COLUMN



NATIONAL WINNER

Butzler*, T.M.¹

¹ Extension Educator, Horticulture/Integrated Pest Management, Penn State Cooperative Extension – Clinton County Office, Mill Hall, Pennsylvania 17751

I have a column, in Lock Haven’s The Express, under the standing line “Keeping It Green”. I always submit several photographs, that I have taken, with the written column to add a visual component to attract the reader to the column. I let it up to the editor to determine which ones they want to show. My information is submitted via The Express’s virtual newsroom; therefore, it never prepared with letterhead. At times, I try to keep the writing light and a bit humorous but always with the goal that information is being disseminated to the reader. This style of writing was used in the June 27th column on trampoline gardening where I talked about using old trampoline covers as a mulching material. On the May 30th column, I had the readers try to distinguish the difference between poison-ivy and Virginia creeper. I gave the newspaper two suggestions on how to showcase the pictures and they went with the idea of placing pictures on different pages and having the readers try to distinguish the difference between the two after reading the column. I submitted a picture to go onto the paper’s front page to tease the reader to the main article located on another page. A Nikon D3100 was used for submitted pictures. The Express has a daily circulation over 10,000. Small town and rural central Pennsylvania affords me the opportunity to interact with readers on a regular basis and I receive many positive comments on the column.

PROGRAM PROMOTIONAL PIECE

NATIONAL WINNER

Maginot, J.*¹, Meux, Chris*²

¹ Program Associate - Urban Storm Water Education, , Fayetteville, AR, 72704

² Graphic Designer, UACES, Little Rock, AR, 72204

UpStream Art, a project of the University of Arkansas

Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service, is an educational program which uses art to communicate the function and importance of storm drains. UpStream Art gives artists the opportunity to express themselves with semi-permanent public art in the form of a small-scale outdoor storm drain mural. The purpose of the project is to draw attention to the usually discreet concrete and iron infrastructure with the hope that people stop and think about where the water flows after it enters a storm drain and what possible pollutants that water might contain.

We needed a promotional item for the project that would also work as an educational tool when we decided to create a calendar that would be visually appealing yet educational. Each month discusses an issue with stormwater management and gives a Best Management Practice to help mitigate this problem. The educational material is couples with a mural from our project and a picture of the watershed in which that particular drain flows into.

A total of 1200 calendars were printed and distributed to local mayors, city councils, planning departments, watershed organizations, educational institutions, art galleries, community organizations, and local chambers of commerce. They were also used as door prizes and table “swag” at events. The calendars were so well received that I have seen them hanging across the two county area they were distributed and even had one chamber of commerce insists on receiving a storm drain mural for the 2015 year!

PUBLICATION



NATIONAL WINNER

Boyd, J.W.*¹, Griffin, B.*²

¹ Extension Specialist, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, Little Rock, AR, 72203

² Cea-StaffChair, , Clarksville, AR, 72830

Properly applied weed control is one of the most cost effective management practices available to pasture farmers. Many weed control practices are cheap when compared to other pasture improvement methods.

Pest identification is a major component of integrated pest

management (IPM). This publication was developed for forage producers to properly identify the weed pests, apply the proper herbicide at the right rate and proper growth stage. The publication was distributed to 423 producers at 7 county forage meetings. Based on surveys conducted at forage meetings, producers feel that color pictures in a publication is the best tool for proper weed identification. The publication contains 65 of the most common weeds in Arkansas forage.

Griffin and Dr. Boyd have conducted hundreds of forage weed control research demonstrations for over 20 years, and the results of the demonstrations provides the recommendations presented in the publication. The publication also contains information on application methods, equipment and additives.

PUBLISHED PHOTO & CAPTION



NATIONAL WINNER

Laura Siegle

Extension Agent
Virginia Cooperative Extension
Amelia County

Farm stories posted on the Central Virginia Ag Spotlight blog feature photographs from agricultural operations to reinforce the educational information in each article and to portray farm life or farm practices. The Amelia County agent authors the articles and performs the photography for each. Photos are edited, arranged in the blog layout, and captioned appropriately. The agent uses a Canon Rebel T3 DSLR to take these photographs. The January 9, 2015 blog story featured Maple Dell Farm, a dairy. The intent of the story was to share information about common dairy cattle management practices with readers and discuss the chores and activities that take place on one particular farm. Consumers frequently express questions and concerns regarding dairy farm management but rarely have opportunities to visit farms, so exploring farm practices through stories and photos is one means for sharing information about the industry. This photograph and the

other photos in the article provide an explanation of how calves and cows are managed to ensure welfare, comfort, and good health. The link to the photo and story was shared via a county Extension newsletter and Facebook. It was «liked» at least 58 times and «shared» 21 times within the week it was posted. As a result of social media sharing, the blog where the photo appears received 668 pageviews during the first week after the Maple Dell Farm story was posted. The article, photograph, and original caption can be viewed online at <http://blogs.ext.vt.edu/central-virginia-ag-spotlight/2015/01/09/meet-maple-dell-farm/>.

VIDEO PRESENTATION



NATIONAL WINNER

Parrish, M.J.*¹, Robbins, H.E.*²

¹ Senior Extension Agent, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Dinwiddie, VA, 23841

² Associate 4H Extension Agent, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Dinwiddie, VA, 23841

In 2014 Extension offices across Virginia celebrated the 100 year anniversary of the passage of the Smith Lever Act and beginning of the Extension program. This video concept was developed to highlight Virginia's First Farm Demonstration Program, the "Corn Club," that started in 1909 with boys from Dinwiddie and Chesterfield Counties. The video was used during anniversary receptions, club events, and production meetings to educate our clientele about the early history of Extension in Dinwiddie, Virginia. The video was distributed through thumb drives, DVDs, Facebook and YouTube to clientele, volunteers, Extension Leadership Council members, VCE Agents and Specialists for their use during celebration activities. With the assistance of our Summer Intern and a few of our agriculture volunteers and 4H members, we were able to re-enact the day-to-day activities of the first Corn Club. The filming was done with a Canon Vixia HF R20 High Definition Camera and an Audio Technical ATR6550 Shot Gun Microphone with wind/noise cover. The video software was Adobe Premiere Elements 9 operated on a Dell Vostro 360 computer with 4GB of memory. This video is on YouTube

at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0x7VT2gh_Zc. Alternately, users can word search YouTube with “Dinwidie Corn Club.” As of February 26, 2015 the site had over 261 views. Many views have been for group presentations.

WEB SITE



NATIONAL WINNER

Infante-Casella, M.*¹, Jack Rabin*², Richard VanVranken*³

¹ COUNTY AGENT, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, RUTGERS NEW JERSEY AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION COOPERATIVE EXTENSION, Clayton, NJ, 08312

² Director of Rutgers Agricultural Research Centers, Rutgers NJAES Cooperative Extension, New Brunswick, NJ, 08901

³ Agricultural Agent, Rutgers NJAES Cooperative Extension, Mays Landing, NJ, 08330

The website and blog titled, Sustaining Farming on the Urban Fringe, <http://sustainable-farming.rutgers.edu/> is a team effort among 2 Rutgers NJAES Cooperative Extension, Agricultural Agents, Michelle Infante-Casella and Richard VanVranken and Jack Rabin, Director of Rutgers Agricultural Research Centers. Michelle Infante-Casella, is also SARE State Coordinator for the Profession Development Program in NJ and utilizes resources from the program to maintain this website and blog. The main audience for the website and blog is farmers. However, data from Google Analytics shows the page views to come from others like agricultural service providers, extension educators, government officials and the general public. From March 1, 2014 until March 1, 2015 there were 22,898 page views, with a 4-year total of 91,445 view since inception. To date there are 115 articles posted related to applied agricultural research and evidence-based topics related to sustainable agriculture. One of the more popular sections on the site is titled “Farm Calls”. These articles deal with day-to-day questions Agricultural Agents receive from farmer clientele. The basis for creating this section of articles is that other farmers may have the same questions and may benefit from the discussions or answers shared

by Agricultural Agents. Sustaining Farming on the Urban Fringe, <http://sustainable-farming.rutgers.edu/> is an excellent tool to disseminate extension-based and real-world sustainable agriculture information in the State of New Jersey where agriculture is on the “urban fringe”.

NACAA/SARE FELLOWS

NATIONAL WINNERS

Troy M Salzer
Extension Educator, Carlton County

Crystal Stewart
Regional Agriculture Specialist
Cornell University
Capital District Vegetable and Small Fruit

JJ Jones
Area Agricultural Economics Specialist
Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
Southeast Area

Stacey Bealmear-Jones
Associate Extension Agent
The University of Arizona
Yuma

**CHECK OUT OUR
WEB SITE**
<http://nacaa.com>
**For the latest news &
information regarding
NACAA meetings,
membership database
updates, award
submissions/recognition,
NACAA Supporters and
the list goes
on....and on...and on!**

2015 Achievement Award Winners

North Central Region

Illinois - Angie Peltier
Indiana - Anna Morrow
Indiana - Michael J. O'Donnell
Iowa - Jennifer Bentley
Kansas - Michelle Buchanan
Kansas - Jamie Hancock
Michigan - Adam J. Kantrovich
Minnesota - Jill L. Sackett
Missouri - Joni Harper
Nebraska - Elizabeth Killinger
North Dakota - Joel Lemer
Ohio - Mike Gastier
Ohio - Nanette L. Neal
South Dakota - Adele Hart
Wisconsin - Mark Hagedorn

Northeast Region

Maryland - Jessica L. Flores
New Hampshire - Kelly McAdam
New Jersey - Pat Rector
New York - Matthew LeRoux
Pennsylvania - Nicole Carutis
West Virginia - Alexandria Straight

Southern Region

Alabama - Bethany A. O'Rear
Arkansas - Jesse Bocksnick
Arkansas - Amy Heck
Arkansas - Kami Marsh, MS.
Florida - Jim DeValerio
Florida - Gary K England
Florida - Norma Samuel, Ph.D.
Georgia - Brenda L. Jackson
Georgia - Tim Smith
Kentucky - Ty Back
Kentucky - Mary Mccarty
Kentucky - Brandon Sears
Louisiana - Mariah Bock Simoneaux
Louisiana - Raghuvinder Singh
Mississippi - Ty Jones
Mississippi - Tracy Robertson
North Carolina - Mark Blevins
North Carolina - Andrew Burlingham
North Carolina - Will Strader
North Carolina - Amanda Taylor
Oklahoma - Keegan Varner
South Carolina - Millie Davenport
Tennessee - Adam M Hopkins

Tennessee - Steven Michael Huff
Tennessee - Justin Stefanski
Texas - Tyler Fitzgerald
Texas - Fred M Hall
Texas - Shane Jennings
Texas - Janet Laminack
Texas - Aaron Low
Virginia - Kevin Camm

West Region

Alaska - Steve Seefeldt
Arizona - Kurt D. Nolte
Colorado - Karen Crumbaker
Idaho - Lauren Ashley Hunter
Montana - Rachel Endecott
New Mexico - Jeffrey L. Anderson
Oregon - Luisa Santamaria
Utah - Allan Sulser
Washington - Donald A. Llewellyn
Wyoming - Mae Smith

2015 Distinguished Service Award Winners

North Central Region

Illinois - Jennifer Fishburn
Indiana - Jeff Burbrink
Indiana - Bill Rice
Iowa - Jerry W. Chizek
Kansas - Cheri D Nelsen
Michigan - Steven Scott Poindexter
Minnesota - Lizabeth Stahl
Missouri - Wayne Flanary
Nebraska - John C. Fech
North Dakota - Steve Sagaser
Ohio - Brad Bergefurd
Ohio - Chris L. Bruynis, PhD
South Dakota - Robin Salverson
Wisconsin - Greg Blonde

Northeast Region

Maryland - Herbert E. Reed
New Jersey - Jenny Carleo
New York - Susan Elizabeth Pezzolla
Pennsylvania - Amber Yutz
West Virginia - Debra Friend

Southern Region

Alabama - Lisa A. Kriese-Anderson
Alabama - Michael D. Reeves
Arkansas - Daniel J. Griffin
Arkansas - Cindy Ham
Arkansas - Rick Wimberley
Florida - Leslie Baucum
Florida - Lawrence Figart
Florida - Elena M Toro
Georgia - M Brent Allen
Georgia - Jeff Cook
Georgia - Jake Price
Kentucky - Douglas W. Shepherd
Kentucky - Robert A. Smith
Louisiana - Ronald Levy
Mississippi - Donna Beliech
Mississippi - James W. "Jimbo" Burkhalter
North Carolina - Darrell Blackwelder
North Carolina - Eileen A. Coite
North Carolina - Richard Craig Ellison
Oklahoma - Max Galloway
South Carolina - Paul S Thompson
Tennessee - Jeffrey Lannom

Tennessee - Mitchell Mote
Tennessee - Rebekah Norman
Texas - Matt Bochat
Texas - Ralph S Davis
Texas - Leonard Haynes
Texas - Dale Wayne Rankin
Virginia - Watson Lawrence
Virginia - Scott Reiter

West Region

Arizona - Randall Norton
Colorado - Kurt Jones
Montana - Ken Nelson
New Mexico - Tracy Drummond
Oregon - Steve Renquist
Utah - Boyd Kitchen
Washington - Michael R. Bush
Wyoming - Bridger Feuz

JCEP Professional of the Year Awarded

Dr. Elizabeth (Betsy) Greene, Professor and Extension Equine Specialist in the Animal and Veterinary Science Department at the University of Vermont, was honored with the Joint Council of Extension Professionals – Professional of the Year Award (POY) at the recent NACAA AM/PIC.

During the presentation – Greene was recognized as an innovative educator, willing collaborator and critical thinker. Greene was also recognized for her ability to forge partnerships among groups such as University of Vermont Extension, Vermont Farm Bureau, Vermont Agriculture

Agency and the eXtension HorseQuest Community of Practice. As an Extension Professional for more than 20 years, Greene has effectively garnered financial resources to find solutions to problems, amassing more than \$2 million in grant and gift support for field-based research and Extension programming.



AGRICULTURE AWARENESS & APPRECIATION AWARD



NATIONAL WINNER

WARREN COUNTY AGRICULTURE AWARENESS

Coles, J.*¹

¹ County Extension Agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources, UK Cooperative Extension Service, Bowling Green, KY, 42101

The Warren County Agriculture Advisory Council identified agriculture awareness the number one program priority. As the population gets further removed from the farm, it is essential to teach agriculture awareness to ensure the general population understands the importance of agriculture and is more likely to support agricultural endeavors. The ag council and extension agent outlined goals, which include: 1) to increase media exposure through at least a monthly presence on one media outlet featuring agriculture events, promotions, and agriculture education, 2) increase attendance at agriculture awareness events, 3) get more farmers involved in the planning and implementation of ag awareness promotions and events 4) increase awareness of farm to table connections with promotion of local food and farmers over the next two years.

Agriculture awareness through media exposure included the agriculture agent hosting a 30 minute weekly radio show, a daily 30 minute television program on a local cable channel, a 5 minute daily television segment on the ABC affiliate and being a guest on a 5-8 minute monthly television segment on local network affiliates. An agriculture awareness breakfast and a farm to table local foods campaign enhanced the ag awareness effort.

All of these components have contributed to an increase in agriculture awareness with the general public and targeted youth. Featured farmers have realized a 10-30% increased sales because of media campaigns. With consistent work toward sharing agriculture's story, I am confident that we will continue to make great strides in promoting the importance of agriculture.

EXCELLENCE IN 4-H PROGRAMMING



NATIONAL WINNER

NEBRASKA EXTENSION SPECIAL GARDEN PROJECT 2015

Killinger, E.M.*¹

¹ Extension Educator, Nebraska Extension Hall County, Grand Island, NE, 68801

The Nebraska Extension Special Garden Project originated as a way for youth from across the entire state to gain an interest in gardening, try growing new and unusual vegetables and flowers, obtain the education necessary to be a successful beginning gardener, and learn about the wide range of plant-science related careers. This state-wide, hands-on experience allows youth to try growing different plants with their families while gaining life skills. The project focuses on a different flower or vegetable each year. The plant is selected for a unique characteristic that is slightly different than normal. A four-page educational newsletter covers fun plant facts, history, planting basics, growing methods, plant care, common disease and insect problems, harvest and storage tips, plant science-related careers and county fair exhibiting tips and additional ways youth could exhibit is also included. A paper evaluation/link to an online evaluation accompanied the seeds and newsletter.

Over the past five years the Nebraska Extension Special Garden Project has distributed over 7,265 packets of seeds and educational materials to youth in 85 of the 93 counties across Nebraska. Youth learned important skills and gardening practices including weed identification, irrigation frequency, and insect control. They also planned how they could improve practices the following season including amending the soil and utilizing mulch for weed control.

Whether it is learning how to plant tiny amaranth seeds or how to keep weeds down in the garden, the Nebraska Extension Special Garden Project is teaching youth about gardening, one seed at a time.

SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE CROP PRODUCTION



NATIONAL WINNER

FEEDING OUT THE ECONOMIC LOSS!

McAvoy, C.E.*¹, Steed, Shawn*²

¹ Multi-County Commercial Horticulture Agent, University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, Bushnell, FL, 33513

² Multi-County Ornamental Horticulture Agent, University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, Seffner, FL, 33584

Nursery crop production's biggest expense is weed control either through the use of chemical herbicides or intensive hand labor. Two commercial horticulture agents teamed up to develop a comprehensive and hands-on program on the following topics: weed identification, proper calibration of granular and liquid herbicide application, and a demonstration of herbicide efficacy on common container weeds. The objectives of the three workshops were to increase knowledge on herbicide effectiveness on common nursery weeds and change behavior through calibration of equipment. Three hands-on workshops were held in the West Central Florida region that included herbicide/weed demonstration plots. The programs attracted 177 attendees over 2 years. Post-evaluations of clientele (n=70) determined that 94% will save money from using the knowledge gained on pre-emergent herbicide trials and herbicide calibration with an estimated \$1627.60 per attendee per year. The result of this programming enabled nursery crop producers to save money in material and labor costs, and reduce herbicide loss to the environment through the use of proper calibration techniques.

SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE FARM AND RANCH FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT



NATIONAL WINNER

FARM TRANSITION AND ESTATE PLANNING: CREATE YOUR FARM LEGACY

Hachfeld, G.A.*¹, Bau, David B.*², Holcomb, Charles R.*³, Ford, Hannon, T.*⁴, Pluto, Lisa K.*⁵

¹, UM Extension Service, Mankato, MN, 56001

² Extension Educator, UM Extension Service, Worthington, MN, 56187

³ Extension Educator, University of Minnesota Extension, Marshall, MN, 56258

⁴ Attorney at Law, Ford Law Office, Windom, MN, 56101

⁵ Attorney at Law, Pluto Legal, PLLC, Tyler, MN, 56178

Farm Transition & Estate Planning: Create Your Farm Legacy is an interactive workshop targeted at farm and ranch families, addressing financial and legal risk. Key educational objectives are an increase in knowledge and understanding of individual, family, business and retirement goals; intergenerational communications; tax issues; business entities and transition strategies; treatment of heirs; personal estate planning; and long-term health care planning issues. Increased knowledge of these topics enables farm and ranch families to develop and implement a business transition and personal estate plan. Program delivery is by face-to-face workshops with participants receiving a 260 page reference workbook. Workshop activities include discussion and completion of various worksheets. A set of twenty-nine information sheets related to business transition, estate planning and financial management are also available online at www.extension.umn.edu/agriculture/business. Workshop outcomes are measured by way of a post-meeting evaluation. Ten year cumulative data shows over ninety percent of the 5,787 participants attending, self-reported an increase in knowledge of the key educational points. To measure impacts, a follow-up evaluation was sent to participants six months following each workshop. This evaluation was to measure what action participants took regarding their new knowledge and what, if any, financial impact resulted from

their actions. Ten year accumulative data shows participants did act on their new knowledge resulting in self-reported financial impact of \$463.8 million. These participants have protected their business by having implemented an orderly process for the transition of their farm/ranch and non-farm/ranch assets to the next generation.

**SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE
FARM HEALTH & SAFETY**



NATIONAL WINNER

MAINE AGRABILITY

Carlson, L.B.*1

¹ Maine AgrAbility Coordinator, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Farmington, ME, 04938

There are an estimated 5,700 agricultural workers in Maine with disabilities. The Maine AgrAbility program provides education and informational services for farmers and farm workers with disabilities to help improve their quality of life. In 2013, Maine AgrAbility made 1,386 direct contacts at agricultural events, distributed 2,185 brochures, 480 “Arthritis and Agriculture” pamphlets, and 179 rack cards about health and safety topics through these events. The program also provides farmers with disabilities direct consultative services and technical assistance to increase the likelihood that they could continue to farm successfully. For example, making recommendations such as modifying or adapting the agricultural operation, buildings, equipment, and/or tools. This is completed through individual on-farm assessments and OT evaluations, resulting assessment reports and follow-up conversations. Participants reported ways that the assessment and suggested changes helped them to decrease physical pain, stress and strain was through modifications to equipment, the work or home environment and farm operation processes (i.e., ‘chores’). Maine AgrAbility participants reported positive changes that occurred as a result of services but often attributed the changes to a number of different factors: change in farmer behaviors, change in equipment, change in environment. The most commonly reported outcomes were increased knowledge and increased accessibility.

**SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE
LANDSCAPE HORTICULTURE**

NATIONAL WINNER

PROGRAM: THE GREEN INDUSTRIES BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Rainey, D.P.*1, Momol, E.A.*2, Trenholm, L.E.*3, Bain, C.J.*4, Wichman, T.A.*5, Bossart, J.M.*6, Marvin, J.W.*7, Ylisastigui, P.P.*8, Jacques, M.E.*2, Lewis, C.E.*10, Thomas, M.A.*11, Rivera, H.G.*12, McLeroy, C.A.*13, Snyder, M.S.*14, Scheinkman, M.M.*15, Chavez, A.E.*16, Asuaje, C.A.*17

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² Director: Florida Friendly-Landscaping(TM) Program, University of Florida/IFAS, Gainesville, FL, 32611

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¹³ GI-BMP Regional Coordinator, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, St. Augustine, FL, 32092

¹⁴ GI-BMP Regional Coordinator, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Naples, FL, 34113

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Florida’s wet climate and distinctive geology provide a wealth of water resources, but these are at risk for increasing degradation as the state’s population steadily rises. Fertilizer

and pesticide runoff from farms and suburban and urban landscapes causes more than 60 percent of nonpoint source pollution. To better control potential pollutants from suburban and urban sources, Green Industries Best Management Practices (GI-BMP) training targets landscaping professionals who apply fertilizers and pesticides on a daily basis. Administered under the UF/IFAS Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ (FFL) Program, in partnership with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), GI-BMP training comprises six learning modules, all covered in a one-day session, that address efficient water and fertilizer use, integrated pest management (IPM), and lawn and landscape cultural practices. More than 400 certified instructors, consisting of Extension Agents, industry and government agency representatives, and other volunteers, provide in-person classes at Extension offices and other locations around the state. These instructors have provided more than 1,430 training classes in English, Spanish and Creole since 2009. Training is also available online and through DVD. This statewide UF/IFAS Extension program enhances water quality awareness by delivering science-based information, skills, and tools to address potential nonpoint source pollution related to landscape business practices. Coupled with education and regulatory requirements, effective education and professional certification for those in commercial fertilization and landscape management may yield significant improvements in surface and groundwater systems by reducing nonpoint source pollution.

SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION



NATIONAL WINNER

BEST MILKING PRACTICES- “ON FARM” CULTURING

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¹ Extension Educator, Penn State University, Huntingdon, PA, 16652

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Mastitis is an inflammation of the mammary gland and is prevalent in dairy herds around the world. Mastitis can be caused by a wide range of bacterial pathogens. Clinical mastitis is one of the most costly diseases affecting the dairy industry, with recent estimates suggesting each case associated with a \$231-\$289 loss. Producers suffer economic loss through reduced production, discarded milk, veterinarian

services, culling cows, and treatment use. Mastitis is associated with the most frequent antibiotic use in dairy cows. One study found that milk discarded due to antibiotic treatment could exceed \$100 per cow per year. Antibiotics are frequently used to treat clinical mastitis, however often times antibiotics are either ineffective or not needed to treat the disease. Producers that use unnecessary antibiotics lose profit due to discarded milk and can contribute to antibiotic resistance. Due to this problem, dairy producers need to be more aware of what they are treating. This will help them make better treatment decisions in turn making the farm more sustainable. Penn State Dairy Extension Educators obtained a NE SARE partnership grant to work with eight producers across the state of Pennsylvania to implement the use of “on-farm” milk culturing. Educators also presented information through field days, producer meetings and hands on workshops. As a result of these programs, 75% of participants have decreased antibiotic use as well as increase profits on their farm.

SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE FORESTRY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

NATIONAL WINNER

2015 SFE MAPLE GRADING SCHOOL

Hopkins, K.M.*¹, Marckres, H.*²

¹ EXTENSION EDUCATOR, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Skowhegan, ME, 04976

² Chief of Consumer Protections, Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets, Montpelier, VT, 05620



Maple syrup production has traditionally been viewed as a seasonal utilitarian commodity but is increasingly being produced and marketed as a gourmet food item. Value-added food products offer opportunities for higher operation profit levels as long as emphasis is placed on the purity and natural quality to achieve the price differential between commodity pricing and gourmet food pricing. Increasingly, challenges to this purity and quality are threatening price differentials. Confusion results from rapid industry expansion and varying state and provincial regulations for grading syrup. Ideas for a grading school and associated supplemental materials were refined from producer groups, syrup packers and regulatory agencies to create a broader understanding and application of maple grading and quality assurance practices. The grading school uses current research and problem solving in realistic situations. Participants receive research-based information on grading, equipment calibration, food safety and best management practices. The program requires that participants use equipment for hands-on exercises to

illustrate best practices. An activity-based pretest establishes a baseline of knowledge and an activity-based posttest provides an immediate feedback loop for participants to show knowledge gain. Follow-up contact with producers has provided long-term impacts and input for refining the school experience and preparing additional learning materials that emphasize grading and quality best management topics.

SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE



(SARE)

NATIONAL WINNER - NORTH CENTRAL REGION

HIGH TUNNEL WORKSHOP FOR HOME GARDENERS AND COMMERCIAL GROWERS

Weinmann, T.*1

¹ Cass County Extension Horticulturalist, Fargo, ND, 58108

A high tunnel workshop was set up in Casselton, ND. The training was held in March and clientele interested in high tunnel produce production were targeted. Topics covered included:

- Basics of high tunnel production
- Pushing the profit pencil with high tunnels
- Current and upcoming crops for high tunnels
- Vegetable crops in high tunnels
- Hidden costs and environmental setup situations
- Irrigation and fertigation
- Pick your own raspberries
- Raised beds and children (by Todd Weinmann)
- Horticulture trials
- Climate change and regional implications
- NRCS EQIP Program

Impacts

The 101 clientele that attended from Minnesota, Wisconsin, and North Dakota; of these, 92 responded to an evaluation at the end of the event.

- 73% indicated a new insight and felt inspired into action
- 50% indicated that they would increase their business profitability by at least \$500 from attending this workshop.

- 100% indicated that they learned something new, that they did not know before, about high tunnels.
- 69% said that they would apply for the NRCS EQIP Program if they qualified.

A follow-up survey at six months was administered. Of 86 respondents, 63% incorporated something from the workshop into their business/operation that they would not have done if they had not attended and 94% indicated that they would recommend this workshop to others. SARE covered the costs of some of the speakers.

NATIONAL WINNER - NORTHEAST REGION

THE RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION - AGRITOURISM WORKING GROUP

Infante-Casella, M.*1, Schilling, B.*2, Bamka, W.*3, Rabin, J.*4, Komar, S.*5, Chase, L.*6, Brzozowski, R.*7, Wolinski, Laurie*8, VanVranken, R.*9, Hlubik, W.*10

¹ County Agent, Associate Professor, Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station Cooperative Extension, Clayton, NJ, 08312

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³ Agricultural Agent, Rutgers NJAES, Westampton, NJ, 08060

⁴ Director of Agricultural Research Centers, Rutgers NJAES, New Brunswick, NJ, 08901

⁵ Agricultural Agent, Rutgers NJAES, Newton, NJ, 07860

⁶ Associate Professor, University of Vermont, Brattleboro, VT, 05301

⁷ Agriculture Extension Educator, University of Maine, Orono, ME, 04469

⁸ Director, Northeast Center for Risk Management, University of Delaware, Newark, DE, 19716

⁹ Agricultural Agent, Rutgers NJAES, Mays Landing, NJ, 08330

¹⁰ Agricultural Agent, Rutgers NJAES, North Brunswick, NJ, 08902

The Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Agritourism Working Group <http://sustainable-farming.rutgers.edu/agritourism-in-new-jersey/> started 4 years ago, with the goal of conducting research, developing curriculum, and providing outreach for on-farm direct marketing clientele. The leadership team received 3 USDA grants (2 SARE grants and 1 Specialty Crop grant) totaling \$195,221 to develop educational materials, conduct farmer and service provider training, and to implement on-farm analysis for visitor safety and risk management. Materials developed with funding from a SARE grant, Award No. ENE11-121, can be found at <http://agritourism.rutgers.edu/training/>. The site received 3,454 visits in 2014, with unique visitors from 4 other countries. The materials were utilized by 3 other states (Maine, Vermont and Delaware) at educational events, as specified by the grant. The 4 states total educated 874 participants via webinars, in-class lectures and workshops with these materials. A website and blog was also developed with regularly updated information related to sustainable agriculture topics at <http://sustainable-farming.rutgers.edu/>. This site and blog is also supported by SARE State Professional Development Program funding and had 22,898 page visits in 2014. In 2013, the Rutgers team developed curriculum for a new undergraduate 3-credit course 11:015:315 Direct

Farm Marketing and Agritourism that is now a required course for the Agriculture and Food Systems major. Additionally, a statewide tourism website for agriculture, <http://VisitNJFarms.org>, was created and is maintained by the team. This promotional page had 41,505 page views from September 2014 to December 2014. Lastly, a comprehensive report <http://sustainable-farming.rutgers.edu/collaborative-projects-2015-sustainable-agriculture-rutgers-nesare/> was sent to 4,100 stakeholders, administrators and legislators to highlight sustainable agriculture programming.

NATIONAL WINNER - SOUTHERN REGION

PRECISION AGRICULTURE ONLINE EXTENSION COURSE

Hall, M.H.*¹

¹ Extension Specialist, Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Belle Mina, AL, 35615



With crop production costs at record highs, producers must get the most out of every bag of seed, every jug of crop protection product and every tank of fuel. It is essential that farmers adopt Precision Agriculture technology to get the highest return out of the money spent to make a crop.

Educational Objectives

To teach farmers how to incorporate precision agriculture into their farming operations.

Program Activities

The course consists of these nine lessons.

Introduction

Yield Monitoring

Yield Mapping

Site Specific Management

Soil Fertility

Understanding the basics of GPS/GNSS

GPS/GNSS

Guidance Systems

Variable Rate Technology

Automatic Section Control Technology

Teaching Methods

A nine-lesson eXtension online course was developed. Each lesson has a handout, a video presentation, and a test.

Results

6,299 students have participated. They are from the U.S., Costa Rica, Colombia, South Africa, Australia, Rwanda, Russia, India, Canada, Cayman Islands, Portugal, Zimbabwe, Greece, United Kingdom, Argentina, Thailand, Malaysia and Brazil.

Impact Statement

After completing the course, students estimate fuel savings

of 3.4 gallons per acre and a 13.57% reduction in fertilizer and crop protection chemicals.

Evaluation

Students must fill out the course evaluation before they receive their certificate for taking the course. Comments include:

- It was great that someone was able to take on this project. Thanks for making this course available to anyone willing to take the time and learn. It was great.

SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE YOUNG BEGINNING SMALL FARMER/RANCHER



NATIONAL WINNER

YOUNG BEEF PRODUCERS LEARN SUSTAINABILITY

Cheely, T.*¹

¹ County Extension Coordinator, University of Georgia, Warrenton, GA, 30828

The purpose of this program was to offer young beef producers their own unique beef programming thereby giving them the knowledge and hands-on experience to decide whether they will make beef cattle part of their future agricultural enterprise. This was accomplished by forming a young beef producers group that included 18 producers between the ages of 11 and 18. I guided these producers through writing farm plans to obtain Farm Service Agency Youth Loans, obtaining starter herds, keeping records, making sound decisions based on economics and herd development. I had a monthly program included an educational program, a group discussion on progress and a question and answer session. This group was started three years ago. It began with twelve; three of these have since graduated from high school. Two, sold their herds and used the money for college. The other applied for and got a first time farmer loan from the Farm Service Agency, expanded his operation and is a full time farmer. Along with six new producers, all have all marketed their first calves, made their first yearly loan payment, retained heifers to build their herd and have enough money to operate through another cycle. Their brood cows are all rebred and future plans are in place. The remaining nine have marketed two sets of calves, made their loan payments and are well on their way to owning a profitable cow herd. These young producers are building their operations from the ground up.

Why Does That Group of People Look Familiar?

We have all walked into a neighborhood restaurant or coffee shop and noticed a group of people enjoying their conversation with friends. Quite often we seem to ask ourselves the question of what brings them together on a regular basis.

You might walk into a similar establishment in West Central Wisconsin and find a group of people who worked together for over 20 years. Those same people worked in neighboring counties and made lasting friendships as they worked for Cooperative Extension as team members and collaborators.

They were active NACAA members throughout their

careers and most of them are NACAA Life Members today. They worked together to conduct the NACAA AMPIC in Green Bay and many of them have served their profession in many different ways from committee work, serving as state, regional or national officers and representing their peers doing work relating to faculty governance.

This group of eight professionals retired with over 220 years of service and are still active in their communities helping others year around through community involvement that started years ago and continues today.

The group has a lot in common in that they all grew up on farms in Iowa and Wisconsin. They attended colleges in



Left to right clockwise: Arden Hardie, Randy Knapp, Greg Andrews - ANRE Liaison and Wannabe retiree, Mahlon Peterson, Jim Faust, Ken Bolton

the same states and they worked related jobs before coming to UW Extension from feed sales to high school agriculture teachers to working in laboratories.

As agents they worked together on many multi-county projects as well as team programs statewide learning to appreciate their fellow agents and their abilities. They all have developed close relationships with producers and others in their communities.

In retirement, some have continued to work for other agencies or agricultural organizations helping the agricultural community. When we get together we talk about our families, our life experiences and what is going on in our lives and we laugh a lot.

Our group looks familiar to a lot of people because we have been seen on television, have been heard on the radio and have worked with thousands of people over the years in various capacities.

Our group has been meeting monthly for over a year now. The size of the group has varied from two to seven and we have some folks who worked in other parts of the state who join us when they are in the area visiting their family

members. One of our members moved to the area after his wife began working for a local clinic and he worked from home to finish his career. A member of our group wintered last year in Florida, but joined us by telephone for four months.

Special thanks to our members including Randy Knapp, Ken Bolton, Bob Cropp, Jim Faust, Nolan Anderson, Arden Hardie, Don Drost and Mahlon Peterson.

When you see that group in your favorite restaurant or coffee shop it might be a group of retired ag agents who enjoy seeing each other on a regular basis and enjoy their time together.

We think the idea might work for your group of retirees as well!

Mahlon Peterson, NACAA Life Member from Eau Claire, Wisconsin

REFLECTIONS OF SIOUX FALLS, 2015!



My 2015 NACAA Experience

Attending the NACAA Conference in Sioux Falls, South Dakota was the best professional development conference that I have ever attended. This conference provided educational seminars that were relevant to today's emerging issues in agriculture and other environmental areas. During these workshops, the presenters were eager to respond to all questions and concerns related to the topics and conversations; that is what made the workshops so special. The agenda provided topics that fit an array of backgrounds and training for any person who provides educational information to the public. In short, the conference was all about learning and leading by example. Leadership is critical in an organization like NACAA, which is well recognized globally.

Before I applied for the diversity scholarship, the NACAA was known for supporting extension professionals for over 100 years. The organization has a very strong background in networking and is always effective in providing good and supporting information. Furthermore, training and recognizing their member's hard work is only another way that this organization keeps its legacy going strong. Participating in the local state meeting has always been a long time dream of mine, that's why I strive to support this effort. When I received the application from another extension professional encouraging me to apply for the diversity scholarship, I was very excited because I saw this as an opportunity to come and interact with other professionals that have long-time experience with extension and the professionalism to present timely research from their university. I was delighted to be a part of an organization that can allow extension agents to grow and develop professionally. Working for extension is the best career opportunity that I have ever embarked upon, and joining this organization will increase my overall development through educational sessions and training to become a more effective educator.

The Conference

My experience at this conference was amazing and well worth the time and effort of coming and being a part of an organization that is growing and developing with the changes in agriculture. The movement with this organization as time and issues change is allowing all members to be active and current on these potential changes. Having the Ag research and scientific breakthroughs presented at the workshops, is just another way to keep the audience engaged and informed. That's why being a part of this organization is so important for the next generation of professionals. There were so many sessions to attend and learn from, the speakers and the information that they provided was very important.

The Professional Development Tours

All of the professional development tours were Great!! We loaded a trailways bus that took us to various small scale farms and facilities where the farmers shared their successes. Each farm family and group of workers greeted us with a friendly hand shake and a warm smile to let us know that they appreciated

us for coming to their establishments. Some of the families shared their history of the farm and others shared their new business startup plan of operation. We took a tour of their farms on the tour wagon provided for us that was pulled with a tractor. This was a way to get a first-hand look at what was happening and the best management practices being implemented based on the Extension Agent's recommendations.

Each farm was different, some didn't have tour wagons, but others had nice graveled rock pathways with signs for directions. The families really put in a lot of hard work just to show their appreciation of our visit. All of the tours were very organized and well planned. Also the poster sessions were a great way to view projects that were implemented across the United States, and to interact with the person who was presenting the work.

The Entertainment

During the conference, the entertainment was like nothing I have ever seen before at any conference. The BRULÉ performance was beautiful and full of inspiration to everyone including the military veterans that they honored for their service. This was a performance that I will remember for a life time. The 4-Hers also hit the performance mark with their talents and enthusiasm. Their presentation was very powerful and amazing as well. Learning from Manny Scott's life history gave me a sense of hope and understanding that I can do better in life by surrounding myself with positive and productive people who strive to make something out of life by making the right choices to do good. His inspiration touched a lot of people in a positive way. The decoration of the state cakes was another eye catcher. It was amazing to see how teamwork can come together to show what a state has to offer.

In conclusion, by attending this conference, I saw teamwork, dedication and something found rarely in the world; unity. All of the people who I meet always had a kind word to say and a warm smile. The professional development training was truly outstanding and well planned. Attending the first timer's attendee luncheon made all of the difference in the world because we were paired with a mentor who helped us with any problem that was an issue and assisted in giving some feedback and history about the organization. I truly enjoyed this professional development conference and it has changed the way I see agriculture in my life. I would like to thank Mr. Anthony Tuggle, Henry Dorough, Scott Hawbaker and the committee who made it possible for me to have an opportunity to develop professionally by representing Extension in a positive way.



Marcus Garner
Urban Regional Extension Agent II
Alabama Cooperative Extension System

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2016
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