

**SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND EXTENSION CENTER**



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CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

Presented to:

Board of Supervisors

Southern University and A & M College System

"Linking Citizens of Louisiana with Opportunities for Success"

SEPTEMBER 2012

Number 243-70

SU Ag Center Offers Food Safety Training in Armenia

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Curtis Chisley, SU Ag Center Meat Specialist, and Orlando Phelps, Training Officer USDA, AMS undertook a food safety training trip to Armenia under the USDA Technical Assistance Project, July 16-27, 2012. The training team met with Mr. Levon Gyulkhasyan, Agricultural Specialist, USDA, Caucasus Agricultural Development Initiative and Sergey Chakhmakhchyan, Animal Health and Food Safety Coordinator, CARD Food and Safety Project and discussed the importance of food safety in meeting the quality needs of consumers.

This project is a partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture, the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center, and Southern University in the United States and the Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development in Armenia.



L-r: Chisley, Levon, Phelps



Chisley, left, conducts training



Chisley lectures trainees

In Armenia, farmers do not pool their resources to reduce cost but generally work individually because of past conditions under Russia. Also, there is a general lack of trust among cooperative members; therefore farmers have difficulty paying dues to the cooperatives. And they do not use extension programs to assist farmers at the local level.

The goal of the training mission was to demonstrate the impact that training will have on moving the country to a consistent food safety program by improving the sanitation and handling of meat. The majority of the meat is still produced by “backyard” vendors. It was reported that at one time, 10 companies in Armenia were using the HACCP concept but this number is now down to zero due to the cost associated with maintaining HACCP requirements. Discussion included the farm credit program, and the number of farmers and processors who are taking advantage of the loan program.

The Armenian Government is working toward developing quality control standards and enforcing them. However, this was not achieved over the period of the project as expected.

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Armenia training continued

Until a consistent system is put in place, the livestock and meat industry may continue to pose a risk to the public through live animal diseases and meat consumption in the country. CARD has purchased and moved into a new facility, and increased the staff number to over 40. It has received a grant from DOD to

help eradicate Brucellosis and also hired several veterinarians to administer the new Animal Health program. The new facility includes an organic store to expose Armenians to certified organic products and equipment supply store to help farmers and processors acquire material locally.

Note: CARD is Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development; CADI is Caucasus Agricultural Development Initiative; DOD is Department of Defense (DOD); and HACCP is Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Points.

SU Ag Center Professor Emeritus Part of Haiti Micro-Enterprise Success Story

In Haiti, where the unemployment rate is estimated at 40.6% and much of the country is food insecure, empowering rural farmers to develop their own small agro-enterprises is a win-win approach. Haitians can create their own job opportunities rather than waiting for them to be created, while also filling gaps in the agricultural markets and improving food security.

Makouti was established in 2004 for this reason. It supports more than 1,000 producers of a wide-variety of agricultural products. Partners of the Americas' Farmer-to-Farmer Program, funded by USAID, sends US specialists to Haiti to provide guidance and technical training. The agribusiness was born through the vision of Haitian producers coupled with

the guidance of these specialists. Rabbit production is an example of one type of micro-enterprise promoted by this project. Rabbit production is an ideal activity for Haitian farmers since it is less feed-intensive than other types of animal production. Rabbits are easy to manage by anyone and do not require much space; the reproduction cycle is short; and rabbit meat is higher in protein than other meats.

The project has been so successful that recently the joint Makouti and Farmer-to-Farmer project in Haiti was entered into an online competition on the World Bank Jobs Knowledge Platform, which aims to collect and share practices for job-creation and entrepreneurship project with the possibility of winning a cash prize.

Dr. James McNitt, professor emeritus, has contributed immensely to this project. He is highly excited about the impact of the project.

"I was one of the first rabbit "NGO experts" to work on the rabbit project during my four 2-week trips in the early 2000s," said McNitt.

The main objective of the Haiti Micro-enterprise Project is to promote rural small business development through capacity building of micro-entrepreneurs. This is achieved through an innovative collaboration with the Haitian cooperative agribusiness, Makouti Agro Enterprise.

View a video of the project at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTBzAlow9qc>.

To read the full story, visit [Job Knowledge](#).

CRSBD Provides Training for Rural Communities

On July 31, the E-Learning Rural Mobile Training and Development Center (E-Learning Center) in the Center for Rural and Small Business Development (CRSBD) at the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center held business development training on the 'Major Steps for Starting a Business,' in Wilson, Louisiana, at the Second Baptist Church of Wilson. The training which was initially scheduled to be held inside the E-Learning Center, had to be moved inside the Church due to the large number of participants.

August 4, CRSBD staff members Wilbert Harris and LaKeeshia Giddens provided an introduction to technology, starting a business and home ownership assistance training to the adults attending the 2nd Annual Back to School Explosion on Saturday, at the Zion Travelers Baptist Church in New Roads, La. The event was sponsored by the Pointe Coupee Community Resource Center, Inc. and the CRSBD's participation was part of a partnership between the CRSBD and members of the Building Opportunities through Leadership Development (BOLD). Mr. Harris conducted the introduction to technology at the Church and was assisted by Dr. Kenyetta Nelson-Smith, SU Ag Center Assistant Specialist of

CRSBD staff members LaKeeshia Giddens and Wilbert Harris welcomed and introduced participants to the E-Learning Center. Outreach Specialist Eual Hall conducted the training of the major steps of starting a business. The participants and pastor of the church were very appreciative to receive the information and requested that the staff come back in the future to conduct more business development training sessions for the rural community.

Community and Economic Development.

Ms. Giddens conducted the introduction to starting a business and home ownership assistance training in the E-Learning Rural Mobile Training and Development Center at the new church building. The training participants expressed their appreciation for the assistance to the citizens of Pointe Coupee Parish and requested additional training sessions. The CRSBD will work with the Pointe Coupee Community Resource Center, Inc., other community organizations and leaders and BOLD participants to bring more business development and technology trainings to rural parishes.



Wilbert Harris, left, addresses class



Participants inside the Mobile Training Center at "Back to School" event

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CRSBD training

On August 13, CRSBD staff members Eual Hall and LaKeeshia Giddens spoke to the Town of Independence City Council about the services available through the Center for Rural and Small Business Development and its E-Learning Center during the town hall meeting. The council welcomed the CRSBD's offer to conduct business development training in the Town of Independence and thanked the Southern University Ag Center for having an interest in assisting the rural community.

August 21, the CRSBD hosted a Home Ownership Seminar in the Roseland Town Hall in Roseland, Louisiana. United States Department of Agriculture-Rural Development Single Family Housing Specialist, Wanda Holmes and USDA Area Director Mack McCranery were also available to address seminar attendees about the USDA's 502 Home Buying and 504 Home Loan and Grant programs. CRSBD Business Development Outreach Specialist Eual Hall answered questions that at-

On August 23 the CRSBD held a Non-Profit Organization Start-Up Workshop at Magee's Temple Church of God in Christ in Franklinton, Louisiana. The workshop, which was conducted by CRSBD E-Learning Center Program Director, LaKeeshia Giddens, provided participants with information, forms and applications needed to legally establish a non-profit and 501 (C)3 organization in the state



Ms. Giddens and Mr. Hall address city council

The E-Learning Center was also on hand for individuals to tour and receive information on how to

tendees asked about the application process and qualifications for both programs. The seminar met with an overwhelming response and many of the attendees expressed their gratitude to the CRSBD for educating the community on home buying assistance available for low-income and elderly individuals. The CRSBD will return to the Town of Roseland on September 20 to assist individuals who have problems completing the pre-application.

of Louisiana. CRSBD Business Outreach Specialist Eual Hall provided information on the Center for Rural and Small Business Development and the E-Learning Center. The attendees expressed their appreciation for having the E-Learning Center conduct the non-profit training in their community.

start a business as well as the forms and applications to legally start a business. Attendees also received information on the USDA's housing assistance programs and the SBA's Small Business Resource Magazine. The event was covered in the August 15 edition of the *Daily Star Newspaper*. CRSBD plans to hold more business development training sessions in Independence in the coming months.



Mr. Hall answers questions from event participants



Hall and Giddens interact with group

CoC Network Educates, Empowers Constituents across the State

Regardless of Louisiana's hot and humid temperatures during the summer months, regional coordinators with the SU Ag Center's Communities of Color Network (CoC) were busy educating, empowering and equipping constituents on the dangers of tobacco use and how to seize control over this killer. The month of August was no exception. Numerous tobacco educational awareness activities were conducted in various regions throughout the state to impact lives and promote healthier, tobacco-free communities of color.

In Baton Rouge, **Frankie Poland** participated in the Youth Summer Camp held at True Light Baptist Church and conducted a presentation on Secondhand Smoke. The youth learned about the dangers of this issue through Poland's in-

Shawntell Lewis-Harrell was in the midst of the event of the summer at the Coughlin-Saunders Performance Arts Center in Downtown Alexandria. As hundreds attended the Marantha Seventh Day Adventist Church's Xtreme Praise Anniversary Celebration, Harrell setup an educational booth display illustrating the harmful effects of tobacco usage and secondhand smoke exposure. In addition to showcasing various visuals, Harrell disseminated tobacco education to various ages in hopes of

Shirley Simon joined the faculty at Southern University, New Orleans in welcoming students to the campus during Freshman Orientation. During her activity, Simon was able to reach a large number of students, many of whom admitted their nicotine addiction and willingness to quit smoking as a result of information shared via an educational awareness booth display.

teractive delivery and group discussions. As a reminder of what was learned and a small token of appreciation, CoC Network t-shirts were distributed to those who were actively engaged in the session.

empowering attendees through tobacco education that could result in saving numerous lives. The church is a participating entity of the 100% Tobacco-Free Church Initiative – an initiative geared toward implementing tobacco-free policies in faith-based organization within African-American communities.

Simon crossed paths with a member of the campus media, Laron Mathieu, Editor-in-Chief of the *Observer* Newspaper, who shared positive feedback and reviews from countless students praising the efforts of CoC Network in their lives.

Following that activity, attendees were encouraged to view various visuals illustrating the effects and consequences of secondhand smoke exposure.



Xtreme Praise participants pose at CoC display booth

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Communities of Color

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Urina F. Holt brought tobacco education awareness to students with the Southern University, Shreveport's Upward Bound Program in DeSoto Parish. Holt engaged youth in a discussion surrounding the health hazards caused by tobacco usage, as well as, potential dangers of secondhand smoke exposure, which many admitted they are currently being exposed to within their surroundings. As a method of encouraging participation and assessing their knowledge, attendees completed a questionnaire that solicited feedback on this topic. Statistics and data were shared concerning the overwhelming negative impact of tobacco, particularly in the African-American community, and how Big Tobacco strategically markets and advertises to communities of color. As a result of the session, students were

better equipped to share knowledge obtained with their peers, community, familiar surroundings, and family members.

LaTonya Owens was welcomed as a part of the Back-to-School Bash at Wright Elementary School in Tallulah. Surprisingly, many students, faculty, staff and parents were unaware of various illnesses and diseases caused by tobacco usage such as rheumatoid arthritis, halitosis, osteoporosis and atherosclerosis.

However, most were informed about common health issues including cardiovascular deterioration resulting from a heart attack, lung cancer and brain damage caused by a stroke. As they entered the facility, attendees received tobacco educational literature, shared personal stories with

Owens about how their lives or those of loved ones were negatively impacted by tobacco use. Many were able to discover possible life-saving information concerning this preventable killer.



Back to school participants visit CoC display booth

FACULTY AND STAFF ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES



Dr. Zhu Ning, Professor, Urban Forestry, served as a speaker and presented a paper titled

“Assess Impacts of Elevated CO₂ on Physiological Processes of Selected Urban Trees and Shrubs” at the International Society of Arboriculture Annual Conference in Portland, Oregon. At the conference, Ning also served as a

moderator for a session on “New Technologies in Tree Risk Assessment.”

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 18-22: National Small Farm Conference. Memphis, Tennessee. For further detail, please contact Dr. Dawn Mellion-Patin at 225-771-3532.

September 25: Second Chance training, 1pm – 3pm at the East Baton Rouge Parish Prison. For further details, please contact Tiffany Franklin at (225) 771-2775 or tiffany_franklin@suagcenter.com

October 2, 9, 16, 23, 30: Second Chance training, 1pm – 3pm at the East Baton Rouge Parish Prison. For further details, please contact Tiffany Franklin at (225) 771-2775 or tiffany_franklin@suagcenter.com

October 24 – 27: Session 5 Small Farmer Ag Leadership Institute, South Carolina State University, Orangeburg, SC. Contact Dawn Mellion-Patin at 225-771-3532.

December 1 – 5: Session 6 Small Farmer Ag Leadership Institute, PAWC / Tuskegee, AL, Contact Dawn Mellion-Patin at 225-771-3532.