

Southern University
Agricultural Research and Extension Center
Chancellor's report

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Linking Citizens of Louisiana with Opportunities for Success

SMALL FARMER CONFERENCE BRINGS PARTICIPANTS TO SU AG CENTER

Small farmers from across the state gathered at the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center from March 17-19 for the 6th annual Louisiana Small Farmer Conference.

The three-day conference, themed “Ownership and Growth of Louisiana’s Small Family Farms,” was designed to educate, provide expanded awareness of educational opportunities, USDA programs and services and other resources to help small farmers stay in business.

The event was the ideal venue for new and beginning farmers, small and urban farmers, agricultural business owners, community leaders, backyard gardeners and community based organizations.

The Opening Session was presided over by Dawn Mellion-Patin, Ph.D., Conference organizer. The keynote address was given by Vernon L. Jones, Ph.D., Administrator of the Cooperative Extension Program at Langston University and SU alum.

The conference covered the topics of: *Soil Health: Key to Successful Farming*, demonstrated by Stuart Gardner, Rangeland Management Specialist and Brandon Waltman, Resource Soil Scientist, Natural Resources Conservation Service. *Keeping the Farm in the Family*, presented by Allison J. Sabine, Attorney at WAFB news video is available at <http://bit.ly/22s5oyG>.

Law, Sabine Law Firm, LLC. *Financing and Protecting Your Small Farm*, presented by Terrick Boley, Farm Loan Manager, Tangipahoa FSA Office and Reginal Ellis, County Executive Director, East Feliciana FSA Office, Farm Service Agency.

Other topics covered were: *Managing the Farm as a Business*; *Opportunities for Market Gardeners*; *Best Management Practices for a Beef Cattle Operation*; and *Mitigating Agricultural Risk on Your Farm*.

The conference included concurrent and networking sessions; a panel discussion with USDA agencies; the Louisiana Living Legend Banquet, which honors individuals who have made significant contributions to Southern University in the areas of Agriculture, Family and Consumer Sciences, and ended with the first session of the 2016 class of the Louisiana Small Farmer Agricultural Leadership Institute.

“We experienced unprecedented success as 140 people attended the conference, which was featured in the Metro Section of The Advocate (front page on Friday); the CBS, NBC and ABC local affiliates covered the conference and interviewed attendees and 15 new eager farmers are excited about beginning this leadership journey with us,” said Dawn Mellion-Patin, Ph.D., Agricultural Specialist and event coordinator.

Dr. Patin can be reached at 225-771-2242 or via e-mail at dawn_mellion@suagcenter.com.



L-r: Drs. Eubanks, Strain, Jones, and Mellion-Patin on National Ag Day



NRCS demonstrates soil health via rain runoff



Louisiana living legends, l-r: Holiday, Mcgee stands in for Fields, and Jones



Dr. Brown interacts with participant Wilbert Jones



Conference participants interact with vendors



Networking session



London, left, and Eubanks present a plaque to Alvinette Teal, panelist (center).

On March 22nd, the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center and its Center for Rural and Small Business Development (CRSBD) along with other partners, United States Small Business Administration (SBA), Louisiana Economic Development (LED), Louisiana Small Business Development Center, Goodwork Network and Louisiana Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) held the 12th Annual “Connecting Businesses with Contracts” Procurement Conference.

This event convened more than 400 participants which included contractors, non-profit organizations, small business owners, exhibitors, and other individuals who were able to network, receive educational training that enhanced their business knowledge, acquired pointers on how to position themselves to obtain private business and governmental contracts, as well as, guidance regarding improving their economic status which will propel them to the next level.

Several workshops were conducted during the conference; namely, Tax Reduction Strategies,

Protecting Business Assets and 6 Figure Retirement Planning, a Procurement Panel Discussion on Understanding State Purchasing Procedures, “Now what? Increasing the Potential of Success for your Business,” Obtaining and Keeping Your Contractor’s License, How the Bank Reviews Assets and Your Financial Statements and Making Your Decisions Based on Financial Statements.

The conference concluded with a luncheon in the Cotillion Ballroom highlighting three successful businesses via a panel discussion: Carousel Medicaid Equipment, LLC; Jesco Environmental and Geotechnical Services, Inc. and Ponchatrain Partners, LLC.

Dr. Adell Brown, Jr., Interim Chancellor of the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center; Dr. Gina E. Eubanks, Vice Chancellor of Extension; and Ms. Gloria D. London, Director of the Center for Rural and Small Business Development were on hand to bring greetings to conference participants.

For additional information about the SU Ag Center’s Center for Rural and Small Business Development, visit www.crsbd.com or call 225.771.2242.

The SU Ag Center joined the country in celebrating National Ag Day (NAD) on March 15. The theme for this year's NAD was "Stewards of a Healthy Planet." Youth and adults across Louisiana were engaged in agricultural activities throughout the day at various schools and community events.

As agriculture professionals, we are Stewards of a Healthy Planet—a future for people, animals and nature.

A statement from USDA Ag Secretary Vilsack on NAD is available at <http://1.usa.gov/1QXUnxD>. Louisiana Ag Commissioner Mike Strain was interviewed on the significance of National Ag Day, and the video is available on YouTube at <http://bit.ly/1VuMjpV>.

In Baton Rouge, the SU Lab School's seventh graders were among those who participated in the 2016 National Ag Day event hosted by the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center. Activities centered on composting for a healthier soil and environment.

The Southwest Center for Rural Initiatives joined the celebration in St. Landry Parish.



EBR Parish



Iberia Parish



St. Landry Parish

Mike Guidry of the St. Landry Parish-Opelousas Recycling Center facilitated enrichment on the importance of recycling to students in the Youth Educational Support After-School Program. Participants gained knowledge on their roles and responsibilities to maintain and care for our planet, while also learning about the many ways recycled materials are utilized in sustainable agriculture.

"From making compost to learning that they can make money from recycling goods (cans, bottles, etc.), the students really enjoyed learning about recycling on National Ag Day," said event organizer, Krystle J. Washington.

Many students also committed to begin recycling and encouraging others in their households and communities to do the same. To view pictures from the event, visit #SUAGDay2016 on Instagram or Facebook. Iberia Parish also took part in the event.

The National Ag Day Committee at SU Ag Center comprised of Renita Woods Marshall, Kenyetta Nelson-Smith, Tiffany Franklin, LaKeeshia Lusk, Janana Snowden, Mila Berhane, Stephanie Elwood, De'Shoin York, Chris Chappell, and Marlin Ford.

KICKING BUTTS AT THE STATE CAPITOL

Kick Butts Day (KBD) is a national day of activism that encourages youth to stand out, speak up and seize control against Big Tobacco. On March 16, Communities of Color Network (CoC) Regional Coordinators, Hendrix Broussard, Frankie Poland, LaTonya Owens and Urina Holt participated in the Kick Butts Day activities at the Louisiana State Capitol sponsored by the Louisiana Campaign for Tobacco-Free Living. About 250 students, teachers, youth leaders and health advocates participated in the event. CoC staff provided demonstrations to attendees regarding the damage that smoking does to the body, answered questions regarding the dangers of



L-r: Regional Coordinators, Broussard, Poland, Owens and Holt at KBD event



Kick Butts Day participants at the Capitol

tobacco use and assisted in other areas to make this a successful event. In addition to this, statewide, CoC coordinators conducted individual KBD activities within their parish jurisdictions at churches, schools, and civic organizations.

SU AG AGENTS ASSIST FARMERS WITH FLOODED STRAWBERRY FIELDS

Farmers in Tangipahoa Parish had major concerns after the recent flood. The 19 inches of record-breaking rain that fell in the Florida Parishes left many strawberry growers with unmarketable crops. What had been shaping up to be a decent season has quickly turned into a bad situation heading into the annual Ponchatoula Strawberry Festival. The most recent flood that occurred can reduce yields and even kill plants, but usually will not result in the contamination of produce with human pathogens. Berry crops can tolerate a great deal of flooding when they are dormant, but when actively growing in spring, flooding for any length of time can be detrimental.

In this area, growers need several rain-free days so the soils can drain and draw in air to stimulate root growth. Once the plant's roots get adequate oxygen they will begin to grow and absorb the nutrients present in the soil. Many plant diseases, such as Phytophthora and Botrytis, will be much worse following flooding rains. Producers should closely monitor crops and manage these diseases.

Phytophthora spores are spread under flooded conditions, so chemical treatment will be needed to manage susceptible crops.



Farm before flood



Farm after flood

A local produce farm lost its early spring and summer crops of Top Pick Purple hull peas, snap beans, and horticultural beans. The farm's five acres of strawberries were also affected after the heavy rainfall. Another producer, Mendez farm located in Independence, LA lost about 95% of its

8,000 berry plants. The disaster has caused a huge delay of spring garden preparation. The Tangipahoa River pushed the gravel pit off the banks and affected areas along old US 51 and Hwy 51. Area producers are hoping they can plant their summer crops. The biggest concerns for area farmers is the Ponchatoula Strawberry Festival scheduled for April. No matter how carefully a grower prepares the field, the size of the harvest will be determined in large part by the weather. Ideal growing conditions for strawberries include cool nights and warm, sunny days, weather that falls short of this may quickly and irreversibly damage the crop.

SU AG CENTER PARTNERS WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES TO DONATE EASTER BASKETS TO NURSING HOME

Many in South Louisiana celebrated the Easter weekend by attending church services and spending time with their loved ones. The SU Ag Center partnered with Missy Radio, Addictive Strands, the Outstanding Mature Girlz Organization (OMG), Jessica Cain, and Cumulus Media to add to this heavily celebrated tradition. On Saturday, March 26, SU Ag Center's Assistant Area Agent, Nicolette Gordon delivered Easter baskets to the St. Helena Parish Nursing Home. Eight baskets were sponsored by local businesses on behalf of OMG Club Members Chriterra Brumfield, Kyla Bryant, Symone Bryer, Shanika Holmes, Allanee Janeau, Kenneadei Lee, and Ariel Scott. These young ladies adopted grandparents at the nursing home last year to fulfill their community service commitment as members of the club.

"If I'm ever placed in a nursing home, I want people to come and bring things like this to me,"



Mr. Eric Sullivan holds his Easter basket from O.M.G. Club

said Montrell Fagget, Owner of Addictive Strands. "I want people to come and just see about me."

The baskets were filled with Palmers Lotion, Vaseline, Hand Sanitizer, Aloe Vera Socks, Crystal Globes, WXOK cups, and Gospel CD's from various artists. "The baskets were just the right size for their aged, but wise hands," said Gordon.

Easter concluded the holiday visits to the St. Helena Parish Nursing Home for the Adopt-A-GP (grandparent) Community Service Initiative, but the SU Ag Center is gearing up for the 2016-2017 school year!

For more information on how you can partner to enhance our Adopt-A-GP! Community Service Initiative, contact Nicolette Gordon in the Tangipahoa Parish Extension Office at 985.748.9381, or in the St. Helena Parish Extension Office at 225.222.4136.

SU AG CENTER RECOGNIZED AT SYSTEM SERVICE AWARDS CEREMONY

Southern University's 136th Founders' Day was celebrated on March 9, 2016. The first African-American woman to travel into space, Dr. Mae Jemison, was the keynote speaker for a combination Community Prayer Brunch and Convocation in observation of the event.

The main program in a series of events held throughout the day in honor of the annual recognition themed, "Southern University: Continuing the Journey, Surpassing Boundaries," was held at the F.G. Clark Activity Center.



Dr. Udoh, left, and Dr. Brown

The celebration culminated in the employee service awards dinner honoring individuals who have served 20, 30 and 40 years at the university.

Among the honorees were members of the SU Ag Center with a combined total of 110 years of dedicated service. Honored were: Interim Chancellor Adell Brown, Jr. with 40 years of service; Oscar Udoh, Coordinator for Planning and Evaluation with 30 years; and Sarah Sims, Extension Agent, Madison Parish also with 40 years. Congratulations for a job well done!



Sims

DR. BROWN SPEAKS ABOUT AGRICULTURE AND THE LAND GRANT PROGRAM



SU Ag Center's interim Chancellor Dr. Adell Brown, Jr. spoke on the *Outlook on Agriculture Radio Broadcast* to discuss the history, state, and impact of the land-grant

mission. You can listen to the whole interview by visiting <https://goo.gl/VSGwnR>

DR. GINA EUBANKS APPOINTED TO BREADA BOARD



Southern University Ag Center's Vice Chancellor for Extension Gina E. Eubanks was appointed to the board of the Big River Economic & Agricultural Development Alliance

(BREADA) during one of the organization's recent board meetings.

BREADA began in 1996 when Chris Campany recruited a group of farmers to start Baton Rouge's first farmers market as part of his Master's thesis at Louisiana State University. From that group, the Red Stick Farmers Market was created and the first farmers market was held the same year. BREADA also received its 501 © 3 non-profit organization status in 1996 and began working to increase economic opportunities for small farmers.

BREADA entered into a partnership with the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and the State of Louisiana to open the Main Street Market, which serves as an incubator for small businesses. To date, the organization has established a mobile farmers market that provides access to fresh fruits and vegetables to limited access neighborhoods and a kids club that teaches healthy lifestyles to children.

BREADA has a mission of, "building healthy and strong local food systems; increasing the sustainability of independent local farmers, fishers and food producers; and to foster stewardship of land and community through public markets."

As a member of the board, Eubanks and the other 15 board members will oversee the policies implemented by the organization to assist small farmers and promote the idea of purchasing locally grown food.

Eubanks has been employed with the Southern University System since the 1990s when she joined the faculty as Coordinator of Family and Consumer Sciences. She would continue to rise through the ranks to be named Vice Chancellor for Extension at the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center in 2002.

In May of 2013, Eubanks was named Associate Vice Chancellor and Program Leader for Nutrition and Food Sciences at the Louisiana State University AgCenter. She currently serves in a dual appointment at both the SU and LSU Ag Centers.

Prior to her employment at Southern, Eubanks taught at Alcorn State University, Oklahoma State University and Virginia Tech.

She received a B.S. degree in clothing and textiles from Southern University in 1977. Eubanks earned an M.S. degree in clothing and textiles merchandising in 1978 and a Ph.D. in home economics in 1987, both degrees are from Oklahoma State University.

LINDA BATISTE APPOINTED TO SACSCOC SPECIAL COMMITTEE



Director of Finance at the SU Agricultural Research and Extension Center Linda Batiste was recently appointed to serve on a Special Committee with the Southern

Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

Her first assignment is to review Virginia State University's first monitoring report in April 2016. The committee's primary responsibility to the institution and the commission is to determine whether the institution is in compliance with the relevant standards as related to the fifth year interim report addressing compliance standards.

PUBLICATION:

DR. KAMRAN ABDOLLAHI, Program Leader and Graduate Director of Urban Forestry co-authored three refereed journal research articles with LSU Bioenergy collaborators.



Dr. Abdollahi

The research work was partially funded through the United States Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA). Dr. Kamran Abdollahi, Dr. Dorin Boldor of LSU and his research team have been collaborating for more than five years to improve the capacity of SU and Louisiana in Bioenergy and Biofuel research and education.

Charles Henkel, Pranjali D. Muley, Kamran K. Abdollahi, and Dorin Boldor. Pyrolysis of energy cane bagasse and invasive Chinese tallow tree (*Triadica sebifera* L.) biomass in an inductively heated reactor. 2016. *Energy Conversion and Management Journal*. 2016. Vol. 109. Pages. 175-183.

Pranjali D. Muley, Kamran K. Abdollahi, and Dorin Boldor. Pyrolysis and Catalytic Upgrading of Pinewood Sawdust Using an Induction Heating Reactor. 2015. *Energy & Fuels Journal*. 2015. Vol. 29: Issue.11: Pages. 7375-7385.

Pranjali, D. Muley, Charles Henkel, Kamran K. Abdollahi, Cosmin Marculescu, and Dorin Boldor. A critical comparison of pyrolysis of cellulose, lignin, and pine sawdust using an induction heating reactor. *Energy Conversion and Management Journal*. 117 (2016) 273-280.

A multidisciplinary research project was developed by Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center and the Louisiana State University Agricultural Research and Extension Center in collaboration with the USDA Forest Service, Southern Region to address the critical needs to develop scalable, cost-saving biofuels and associated processing technologies from sustainable, alternative, non-food feedstocks (urban wood-waste and energy cane biomass).

The importance of this project stems from several factors: 1. utilization of wood-waste and non-food feedstocks for biofuel and bioenergy production; 2. utilization of low-cost processing methods which will effectively increase biofuels competitiveness; 3. environmental and economic impact of non-food plants that grow on marginal, non-agricultural land. The successful project outcomes are: (a) benefiting the agricultural community by encouraging sustainable diversification of agricultural production in LA and Southern USA; (b) help develop rural and urban areas by promoting economic diversification and growth emphasizing bio-based energy and products technologies; (c) developing and strengthening R&D programs via enhanced collaboration and coordination of bio-energy research efforts; (d) developing cost saving, scalable, technologies for biofuel feedstock processing; (e) accelerating the technology transfer process from research to commercialization using existing agreements with industry partners; and (f) benefiting the people of the US through development, distribution, and implementation of bio-based energy technologies, therefore promoting energy independence.

The project also provided support and funding for several SU Urban Forestry graduate students. Dr. S.P. Davis completed his dissertation work in 2015. A comparative compositional study of lignocellulosic urban forest biomass by neutral/acid detergent fiber analysis by Davis, S.P., Jr., Southern University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 2015, 96 pages; 10002299. In UMI/ProQuest. 2015. Dissertation Advisor: Dr. Kamran Abdollahi.

FATEMEH MALEKIAN, Nutrition Professor



presented a webinar to the American Assn. of Family & Consumer Sciences on the Cooperative Extension's health and wellness framework.

This webinar was presented nationally as a part of national

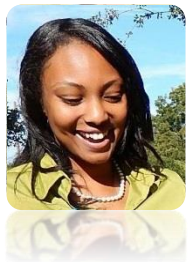
Health Literacy working group efforts.

The file has can be accessed at <http://bit.ly/1SudqyL>

JAMES MCNITT, Professor Emeritus, has published



an article entitled "ALTERNATIVE AND ENRICHED HOUSING SYSTEMS FOR BREEDING DOES: A REVIEW" available online at <http://bit.ly/1MbKxIw>.



KRYSTAL STEWART, SU Ag Center Assistant Extension Agent for Orleans Parish, appeared on WBOK 1230 a.m.'s Community Bulletin Board Radio Show on March 22 to talk about the youth services that the Center provides in Orleans Parish.

During the 30 minute show, Stewart discussed the history and mission of the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center, as well as, the Y.E.S. After School, Career Development, and Etiquette Programs, 4-H Clubs, and Community Gardening projects that are held throughout the parish.

Stewart also provided listeners which information on the recently held 4-H Public Speaking Contest and National Ag Day events. She further shared information on the upcoming Youth and Family Expo and the "Creating Healthy Enjoyable Foods" (C.H.E.F.) Summer Cooking Camps.

For additional information about the SU Ag Center's youth programs in Orleans Parish contact, Krystal Stewart at 504.658.2900.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

April 30: Small ruminant field day at LSU Vet School in Baton Rouge. Contact Dr. Renita Marshall at 225-771-0252.

June 16-18: Family and Youth Expo at SU Ag Center in Baton Rouge. Contact Dr. Wanda Burke at 225-771-5184.