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**Southern University
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Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center, an entity of the Southern System, Leodrey Williams, Chancellor, Ralph Slaughter, System President, Myron K. Lawson, Chairman, Board of Supervisors. It is issued in furtherance of the Cooperative Extension Work Act of December 1971, and the Agricultural Research Program, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. All educational programs conducted by the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center are provided to all persons regardless of race, national origin, or disability.

Ag Center Career Development Event Successful

Every February, during National Future Farmers of America Week, the State FFA Officers embark on a whirlwind tour through Louisiana.

They visit FFA chapters, businesses, government agencies, and organizations to spread the FFA message and inform people of the amazing things FFA is accomplishing. Stops of the 2008 tour included several high schools and universities, prominent among them were Southern University and the Southern University Ag Center. The state tour leads into the career development events.

On Tuesday, April 3, Louisiana high school students convened at the M.A. Edmond Livestock Arena and Meat Technology Laboratory for the Area IV, FFA Career Development Event.

Each year, the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center is privileged to host the Area IV, Career Development Event, coordinated by Willie J. Rawls, Ph.D., associate research director, and William Augustine, research associate. The CDE brings together 1,300 students from 51 high schools and 14 surrounding parishes, not including teachers and parents who provide assistance each year.

The CDE consists of ten judging contests in livestock, beef, floriculture, dairy cattle, welding, small engine, meats, nursery and landscaping, dairy products, and poultry. This event develops students' leadership ability, provides them with the opportunity to visit an 1890 land-grant institution and enlightens them on careers that impact Louisiana agriculture.

Excerpts of contests during the FFA Career Development Event



The Louisiana State FFA Officer Team visits Southern University

Excerpts of activities during the FFA Career Development Event

Annual State and Regional Horse Show and Rodeo Huge Success

The 38th Annual State and Regional Horse Show and Rodeo attracted more than 300 young and old horse ranchers, riders, and ropers. Activities in the event included gated horse show, ranch style rodeo, youth stick horse competitions and great food and entertainment on April 4-5.

Trailriders from as far as Texas, Mississippi, and North Louisiana traveled to the M.A. Edmond Arena to kick off the two-day event.

An authentic horse corale leaving from the Southern University F.G. Clark Activity Center arrived at the arena with a parade of different horse riding associations. First place was awarded to the Bayou State Riders, second place to the Box L Riders, and third place to the Cherokee Riders.

The night brought a best-dressed cowboy and cowgirl contest with entertainment provided by a team of disc jockeys. Contestants vied for a tiara and scepter. Evelyn Jackson of Jackson was named the best-dressed cowgirls and John Barters of Natchitoches won best-dressed for cowboys. The joint youth division winners were Ana Leah Smith and Catilyn Johnson.

Saturday activities included: Halter and Western Pleasure horse performance, horse seminar “Your Horse And You”, youth rodeo events, DeCuir’s Roping Club, trailride, parade of breeds, gaited horse show, O. K. Rodeo Production, and a dance.



Pictures depict some of the participants in the trail ride



An authentic horse corale leaving from the Southern University F.G. Clark Activity Center arrived at the arena with a parade of different horse riding associations.



SU Ag Center Holds Procurement Conference for Small Businesses

More than 450 participants attended the 4th Annual “Connecting Businesses to Contracts Procurement Conference” for business-to-business match-making opportunities, on March 18.

The conference brought together potential and existing contractors, entrepreneurs, and representatives from government agencies, providing an opportunity for small businesses to meet contracting officers and purchasing agents.

Attendees received information on sources of assistance, the process of registering and obtaining licensing, methods of financing, and securing contracts. They learned strategies to sell products and services to private industry and federal, state, and local government.

The concurrent breakout sessions included: obtaining bonds, knowledge about surety brokers, selling successfully to the government, contract licensing requirements for contractors, and the five key elements to get customers. The conference provided a great exchange among more than 450 participants, 35 exhibitors and presenters and at least 40 associates and service providers.

Representatives from the United States Small Business Administration were available to dis-

cuss SBA programs, guarantees, certification process, bonds and surety, GO Loans, and disaster loans.

The Louisiana State Contractor Licensing Department provided answers to questions from existing contractors and individuals who want to become licensed.

Mrs. Ann Duplessis, state senator, district two of New Orleans gave the luncheon keynote address.

The Southern University Ag Center also took the opportunity to present plaques of special recognition for outstanding and exemplary service providers to the Center over the years. Recipients included Adell Brown, vice chancellor for administration and finance, Brenda Birkett, former vice chancellor for academic affairs, SUBR, and Eual Hall, business specialist, Center for Rural and Small Business Development.

The conference was sponsored by the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center, Center for Rural and Small Business Development, Louisiana Small Business Development Centers in Baton Rouge and Lafayette, U. S. Small Business Administration, Louisiana Procurement Technical Assistance Center, and the Southern University College of Business.



Activities at the procurement conference included: networking sessions, luncheon, recognitions, breakout sessions and presentations.

SU Ag Center Scientist Gives Keynote Address

Owusu Bandele, Ph.D., horticulture professor, delivered a keynote address at the opening plenary session of the 20th Anniversary of the National USDA/Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Conference. The presentation, "Advancing the Frontier of Sustainable Agriculture in Universities: How Far We Have Come, A Vision of the Future," highlighted the contributions that Southern University and the other 1890 land-grant universities have made in sustainable agriculture across the southern region. The conference was attended by more than 800 participants.

Bandele also made a poster presentation at the USDA/SARE conference. His presentation, "Use of Cover Crops and Soil Solarization in Sustainable Vegetable Production Systems," highlighted research at the Southern University horticultural farm and on the farms of cooperating farmers. The poster was dedicated to the memory of Matthew Byrd Jr. a cooperating farmer who died before the project was completed.



Owusu Bandele, PhD, professor of horticulture

SU Ag Center Program Lauded in Small Farm Digest

Willonese Tillman-Adams, Goat Farmer, White Springs, Florida, and graduate of 2007 class of the Southern University Small Farmers Agricultural Leadership Training Institute speaks out in an article titled "Agriculture, Its Risks and Me" in the Spring 2008 issue of the *Small Farmer Digest*. In the article Willonese states:

I became an agricultural professional after retirement from a career in education. It was really serendipity. ... However, it was not until we participated in an agricultural leadership training program at the Small Farmers Agricultural Leadership Training Institute at Southern University, in Baton Rouge, LA, that I discovered there were

risks in this occupation, and that I had little knowledge of them.

Being a part of the first Small Farmers Agricultural Leadership Training Institute was the best thing to happen to me since I became a farmer. Dr. Dawn Mellion-Patin, the institute's director, provided an outstanding 2-year program that enlightened, enriched, and empowered!

To read more, visit <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/newsroom/newsroom.html>

Ag Institute Graduate: 2008 Small Farmer of the Year

Mary James, CEO of Dogwood Nursery Farms was one of the pioneer graduates of the Southern University Ag Center Small Farmer Agricultural Leadership Institute class of 2007, under the guidance of Dr. Dawn Mellion-Patin, extension specialist, agriculture.

Nelson and Mary James, a couple with a penchant for pastured pigs and chickens, as well as specialty crops, were the 2008 Gilmer L. and Clara Y. Dudley Small Farmers of the Year. The couple was honored with the award, April 2, at the Small Farmers Recognition Luncheon as part of the 22nd Annual Small Farms Week, celebrated at N.C. A&T State University.

The James were lauded for enthusiastically delving into niche markets, for their community outreach and for their willingness to try new techniques and approaches on their 20 acres of Dogwood Nursery Farm.

The intrepid duo was also recognized for, among other things, their creative and innovative farm-production methods, including pastured poultry, pesticide-free production and the design of their own mobile chicken tractor, which helps chickens roost and feed, while the land is simultaneously

being fertilized by chicken droppings. Extension staff worked with the James on those farm enterprises, as well as with their ventures growing mushrooms on logs, developing a farm website and joining farm-market organizations.

“When a person loves what they do, it shows,” says Mary James who, with her husband, founded N.C. Willing Workers, the cooperative that helps other limited-resource farmers navigate sustainable agriculture and marketing practices.

Both are retired from other full-time, off-farm jobs: Nelson from carpentry and Mary from teaching. The couple farmed the entire span of their other jobs, having taught their six children and now their five grandchildren along the way.

The Gilmer L. and Clara Y. Dudley Small Farmer of the Year Award, named on behalf of the late parents of Dudley Products entrepreneur and A&T graduate Joe Dudley, is presented each year to a farmer or farmers who exemplify the best of small-scale agriculture, defined as land that produces \$250,000 or less annually in gross income.

To read more, visit <http://www.ag.ncat.edu/agedispatch/>

The Small Farmer Agricultural Leadership Institute is a USDA/CSREES funded project.

Pictured are: Candice Wright (left), Frank Taylor (keynote speaker at NCA&T Small Farmer Luncheon), and Mary James, NCAT 2008 Small Farmer of the Year. All three are Ag Leadership Institute graduates.



Southern University Dairy Team Wins Silver Award

Students from the Southern University A&M won a Silver placing in the Seventh Annual North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge (NAIDC) held April 4-5, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, with 31 teams from the United States and one team from Canada competing.

The team from Southern University consisted of: Felton DeRouen II, Jamie N. Victorian, Karryne J. Humphrey, and Nellie Chre Benton. Eugene Runles, dairy manager, SU Ag Center, coached the team.

NAIDC is an innovative two-day competition for students representing dairy science programs at North American universities. It enables students to apply theory and learning to a real-world dairy, while working as part of a four-person team.

Day One of NAIDC began with each team receiving information about a working dairy, including production and farm management data. After an in-person inspection of one of four designated dairies, participants interviewed the herd managers. Then, each team developed a farm analysis and presentation materials, including recommenda-

tions for nutrition, reproduction, milking procedures, animal health, housing and financial management.

Day Two was presentation day. Team members presented recommendations to the herd owners and a panel of expert judges, and then fielded questions from the judges. Presentations were evaluated based on the analysis and recommendations. The evening concluded with a reception and awards banquet.

The North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge was established as a management contest to incorporate all phases of a specific dairy business. It strives to incorporate a higher-learning atmosphere with practical application to help prepare students for careers in the dairy industry.

Supported financially through generous donations by agribusinesses and coordinated by a volunteer board of directors, the first NAIDC was held in April 2002.

To read more, visit: www.dairychallenge.org



Southern University team:
Front row—Karryne J. Humphrey, Jamie N. Victorian.
Back row—Nellie Chre Benton, Felton DeRouen II, and Eugene Runles (team coach).

Southwest Center for Rural Initiatives Provides Tax Assistance

The Southwest Center for Rural Initiatives opened its doors to reach out to parish residents needing assistance in filing income tax papers in order to receive the economic stimulus payment.

From April 1 - 15, assistance was available from 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Monday through Friday. Starting April 15, the schedule will change to **Wednesdays** only, 9 a.m.-3 p.m and will continue through Oct. 15 which is the deadline for filing a tax return to receive the stimulus payment.

"We want to help only recipients of Social Security (excluding SSDI), railroad retirement and veterans' disability and death benefits as their sole source of income walk through their IRS form 1040A," said LaVonya Malveaux, director of the Southwest Center. After speaking with representatives from U.S. Rep. Charles Boustany's office, the Opelousas Public Library, Continuous Links, and the St. Landry Parish Community Action Agency who are already providing similar assistance and report an overwhelming volume of requests,

Malveaux said she and her staff were compelled to get involved.

Individuals needing to complete the IRS Form 1040A should bring: a picture ID, social security card, form 1099-SSA for 2007 Social Security benefits received and-or proof of railroad retirement or veterans' disability and death benefits. "We are unable to assist individuals with any W-2s or earned income as the Southwest Center is not a tax service provider," Malveaux said.

The Southwest Center for Rural Initiatives is a satellite entity of the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center. Its mission is to promote socioeconomic development within a 10-parish region.

To read more, visit the Daily World at: <http://www.dailyworld.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2008803300306&template=printart>



Up Coming Event

Date	Event	Location
April 26	Economic Smart Fair Contact: Southwest Center for Rural Initiatives at (337) 943-2410	Martin Luther King Center, 868 Alton Locks, Ville Platte, LA

Morehouse Parish Marches on

Southern University Ag Center and Morehouse Parish Black Farmers held their annual growers' meeting February 22. Participants included Delta Junior High school students, home gardeners, row crop farmers, and local cattlemen.

During the meeting, Morehouse Parish assistant county agent Odis Hill explored the future of the farmer group, sought input and answered questions. Dawn Mellion-Patin, PhD, SU Ag Center agriculture specialist was also on hand to address the students on the importance of getting a good education, setting attainable goals and opportunities available in the field of agriculture. Other speakers addressed the group on various issues including soybean industry, gardening, lawn care, tree pruning and fertilizing. A follow-up meeting is in the planning stage.

The crime statistics of minority boys particularly in Morehouse Parish prompted Odis Hill, assistant county agent to convene a meeting on February 27 of successful men from diverse backgrounds to tackle the issue by discussing how they made it to their present positions. The target audience was middle school students.

According to a Morehouse Parish Sheriff Officer, of the 1,000 people incarcerated in the parish, 900 are black. The speakers emphasized hard work and academic excellence as the main cause for their success. They also shared the benefits of being respectful to parents, teachers, and the law with the students. Reverend Ronal Williams of the Ollie Grove Baptist Church was among the speakers at the event.

The *Bastrop Daily Enterprise* covered the special assembly for male students at Delta Middle High, February 28. The article entitled "Male students at Delta get the message" focused on the amount of time and hard work involved in deterring boys from a life of crime and violence. Timely intervention was the backdrop of the assembly.

The *Bastrop Daily Enterprise* carried the gathering of the black farmers in the lifestyle section of the newspaper, March 13. The article entitled "Black Farmers Meet" was submitted by Odis Hill and focused on raising awareness of various aspects of the agriculture industry and implications for youth and adults.

To read more about these articles, visit <http://bastropenterprise.com>

Ag Center Faculty Council formed

Owusu Bandele, Ph.D., Sebhatu Gebrelul, Ph.D., Keydron Guinn, Ph.D., Terrence Marshall, and Dawn Mellion-Patin, Ph.D., were elected by SU Ag Center faculty to serve on the newly established SU Ag Center Faculty Council. Bandele will serve as chairman of the council.

Faculty and Staff Accomplishments and Activities

Ag Center employee honored:

Justin Egbe, research associate, was recently recognized at the employee service awards luncheon, March 10, as part of the SU System Founders' Day celebration. The event which took place at the Smith-Brown Memorial Union on the Baton Rouge campus recognized employees for 20, 30, and 40 years of service to the System. Egbe was recognized for 20 years of service.



Justin Egbe (left) poses with Chancellor Leodrey Williams at the luncheon

Sarah Sims, extension aide, Madison Parish:

Engaged in:

- 1st Thursday meeting
- 4-H Youth Centennial planning meeting
- Apartment Complexes-Nutrition Family Resource Management
- CDC Economic Advancement Meeting
- Chancellor's meeting in Rayville
- Council On Aging Quilting Classes Nutrition Health
- Council On Aging meeting
- Family Services - Health Unit
- Farmers Market
- Farmers Market Meeting
- Home visits
- Louisiana Delta 65 meeting
- Madison School-Base Health and Fitness
- Nutrition Training Delta Headstart Nutrition
- Southern University Annual State Livestock Show
- Tallulah Beautification Meeting
- Teddy Bear Festival Planning Meeting
- Tree Planting Restoration Project
- Vegetable Garden Workshop
- Youth Advocate Advisory
- Youth Educational Service after school program
- Youth Garden Project
- Youth Livestock Project

Faculty and Staff Accomplishments and Activities contd.

Glenn Dixon, agent, East and West Carroll parishes:

- Conducted a meeting on “Avoiding Calving Problems” during which 10 beginning producers received instructions to help them through their first calving season. Members of the Parishes for Farm Prosperity Organization received five bred Angus heifers via Heifer International. These heifers will produce a crop of calves that will help members increase their economic wellbeing.
- Served as superintendent of the rabbit show at the Northeast Louisiana District Livestock Show in Delhi. Northeast Louisiana youth received instructions on how to properly care for meat rabbits.
- Co-authored articles for the *CRD Quarterly Newsletter*. This publication serves a rural community as economic development resource to community leaders and organizations. The CRD newsletter has a circulation of 1199.
- Collaborated with Dr. Ann Wells, a veterinarian and author of respected goat publications, to provide valuable information and training to local producers. More than 16 goat producers gained knowledge of goat nutrition requirements, parasite management, and other best management practices.
- Attended a breakfast with area school districts hosted by University partners in Rural Community College Initiative. Attendees were made aware of the many educational programs available to individuals and families in East and West Carroll parishes.
- Developed a brochure of educational programs provided by the Southern University Ag Center as a member of the Rural Community College Initiative. The group is utilizing “YouTube” as a means of informing youth and non-traditional students about the education opportunities available to them in Northeast Louisiana.
- Taught 22 local producers the importance of completing and returning the agricultural census form.
- Familiarized more than 55 youth and their families with the educational programs of the Southern University Ag Center. These youth and their families are now aware of other programs in addition to 4-H.
- Trained 25 farm workers in Worker Protection Standards (WPS); 25 were re-certified in WPS; 33 producers were re-certified as private pesticide applicators; and 10 received training for taking the private pesticide applicator certification exam.



Leadership Plenty workshop



Recertification workshop



Rural Community College Initiative

Faculty and Staff Accomplishments and Activities contd.

Chris Robichaux, Ph.D., St. Martin/Iberia Parish agent conducted the following educational programs:

- Assisted with the Southern University Beef Breeding and Steer Show
- Set up two educational displays for the SU State Livestock Show
- Participated in a Greenhouse Tomato Short Course sponsored by Mississippi State University.
- Trained 113 Iberia Parish farmers and workers in safe use of pesticides
- Conducted “New Ornamental Plants for Louisiana Landscape Workshop”
- Implemented two result demonstrations with commercial vegetable producers
- Provided horticultural tips on a local Radio Program
- Provided horticultural technical assistance to the city of New Iberia personnel
- Provided weekly horticultural tips for St. Martin Parish Newspaper

Gloria D. London, director, and Eual Hall, business specialist, Center for Rural and Small Business Development:

- Conducted “Project Succeed: Entrepreneurial Training” in collaboration with Urban Restoration and Enhancement Corporation, SU Center for Social Research, Urban Entrepreneur Partnership Gulf Coast, The Red Shoes, and Louisiana Economic Development Corporation, on March 3. Approximately 44 individuals completed the training.
- Hosted “Small Business Expo” for those participating in the Project Succeed Entrepreneurial Training on March 10.

- Organized an Economic Smart Fair in conjunction with the Southwest Center for Rural Initiatives, March 15, at the LA Technical College, T.H. Harris Campus in Opelousas, LA.
- Organized the 4th Annual Connecting Businesses with Contracts Procurement Conference, March 18, at the Smith Brown Memorial Union. More than 454 individuals attended.

James Mahomes, Facilities Manager:

- Attended a Louisiana State Citizen Conference sponsored by the Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness, February 20-23.

The Livestock Show office organized the second annual “Keep Your Horse Healthy Day,” March 15.

Renita Marshall, DVM, director of Livestock Show office:

- Attended the 1890 CSREES Grantsmanship workshop in Memphis, TN, on March 9-11.
- Attended Tuskegee University School of Veterinary Medicine 43rd Annual Veterinary Symposium, on March 28-30.
- Provided vaccinations and coggins exams for 50 horses at the second annual “Keep Your Horse Healthy Day,” on March 15.

Faculty and Staff Accomplishments and Activities contd.

Terrence Marshall, East Baton Rouge Parish County Agent:

- Conducted a parish-wide pesticide re-certification meeting and workshop for local residents, March 27, at the Greenwell Springs Regional Library. The certification process enables participants to become private pesticide applicators. Thirty-two homeowners and farmers were trained and recertified according to EPA and Worker Protection Standards in the safe use of pesticides.
- Collaborated with the Harvey Reed, Executive Director of the LA. Federation of Cooperatives and Christy Monroe of the SU Ag Center in conducting a National Agricultural Statistical Service (NASS) workshop for local farmers and agricultural producers. The event drew more than 30 producers to enhance their knowledge about cooperatives and the importance of completing and returning the 2008 Census of Agriculture questionnaire. The workshop was held April 2 at the Chaneyville Community Center in Zachary. The result of this census could have major implications on the new USDA Farm Bill.
- Participated in the Louisiana Calf-to-Carcass Professional Improvement Tour, March 30-April 2. The tour consisted of 35 Louisiana beef producers, county agents, and Louisiana Department of Agriculture personnel. The team visited the Hitch Feedlot in Guymon, Oklahoma to compare the performance of Louisiana cattle to the industry standards. Other tour sites included the U.S. Postal Training Center, Page PBR Bucking Bull Ranch, Express Limousine & Angus Ranch, White Ethanol Plant, the Outback Steakhouse processing plant, and the Fort Worth Stockyards in Texas.



Marshall at pesticide re-certification workshop



Marshall at calf-to-carcass tour

New Employees

The SU Ag Center has added two members to the new Communities of Color Network:

Mario Johnson, regional coordinator, tobacco-free educational outreach program, Community of Color Network. His major responsibility is to coordinate tobacco-free educational outreach programs and activities throughout the southern region.

The Norfolk, Virginia native holds a master's degree in psychology/social work from the University of Georgia and a bachelor's of arts in history education with a minor in music education from Norfolk State University in Virginia. He comes from the Oliver and Associates Counseling Services, Baton Rouge, where his responsibilities included managing group sessions, conducting primary and secondary assessments, counseling at-risk youth, and formulating treatment plans.



Johnson

Linda Early Brown, southern regional state coordinator, tobacco-free living educational outreach program, Communities of Color Network. Her major responsibility is to coordinate tobacco-free educational outreach programs and activities throughout the southern region.

The Alexandria, Louisiana native holds a master's degree in secondary education with emphasis in administration and supervision and a bachelor's degree in business education from Southern University. She comes from Reflections Books & Gifts, Inc., a local bookstore, in Baton Rouge where she served as CEO. Her responsibilities included managing the day-to-day operations and fiscal aspects of the business. Prior to that, Brown worked for the East Baton Rouge Parish School System as a Business Education teacher and a facilitator of educational services.



Brown