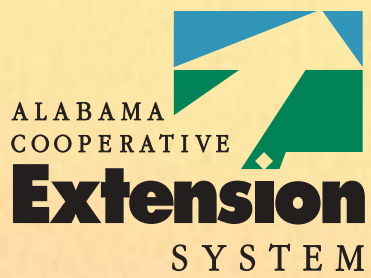




Your
Experts
for Life

Alabama Cooperative Extension System 2002 Annual Report



Your Experts for Life



A Word from the Director

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System is approaching its second century of helping the people of Alabama. The System, a joint outreach effort of the state's public land-grant universities, Alabama A & M University and Auburn University, is committed to providing education that allows citizens to make better decisions and to improve their lives.

The more than 900 members of our Extension System team have every right to be proud of their accomplishments over the past year. Under the deft guidance of Sam Fowler, Extension Associate Director for Rural and Traditional Programs, and Chinella Henderson, Extension Associate Director for Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs, our professionals have touched thousands of lives as they fulfilled Extension's mission of making the latest in university-based research available to all Alabamians.

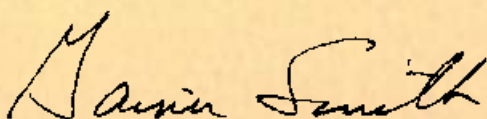
While program content has changed greatly over the years, one element has never changed—our focus on the individual. Our organization has never lost sight of the importance of helping individuals make positive changes in their lives. Program contents have expanded and program delivery methods have evolved since our beginning. But at the end of the day, Extension professionals will tell you the work is truly about the individuals who benefit.

This year, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System launched a new initiative to carry us into the future. Our strategic plan encompasses a vision of becoming a world-class organization to provide real-life solutions that improve the lives of all Alabamians. We want to be “Your Experts for Life.”

The stories that follow illustrate just how Extension is fulfilling our new slogan. You will see how Extension touches lives from the youngest to the oldest citizens of the state.

These success stories highlight how Extension professionals, whether working in a county or working at Alabama A & M or Auburn universities, are transforming lives.

I offer my appreciation to Alabama A & M University President John Gibson and Auburn University President William Walker for their enlightened leadership and steadfast support of Extension programs. With their continuing support and the industrious efforts of our professionals, Extension looks forward to a future filled with more of the success stories similar to those found in our 2002 annual report.



Gaines Smith, Interim Director

Our New Slogan:

“Your Experts for Life”

The word *expert* is defined as “a person with a high degree of skill in or knowledge of a certain subject.” The Alabama Cooperative Extension System is rich with skilled researchers and educators with valuable, expert information on a variety of life subjects. We want all Alabamians to know there is such a valuable life resource as Extension right here at home. Extension belongs to all Alabamians who need the very best answers to the tough questions about living in the 21st century. When you’re looking for answers, we want you, the citizen, to see us as “Your Experts for Life.”

Extension On-line: **Lifetime Expertise at Your Fingertips**

The Extension System’s web site, www.aces.edu, is your source for more than 18,000 pages of educational materials, including more than 1,000 publications, regularly updated news stories, other timely information, and much more. Special sections in 2002 included Health Notes, a series of articles that explore the latest advances in health and nutrition and their implications for consumers; the Environmental and Health Issues Pages, where visitors are acquainted with a wide array of topics relating to health and the environment; and the 4-H Center site, which won an international award in 2002. Streaming and downloadable digital video clips are also available on the Web site in RealVideo and QuickTime formats. Our nationally acclaimed publications also are available in two forms: one for printing and the other for on-line searching and viewing.

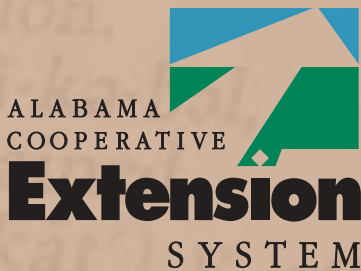
How to Reach Us

For information about programs, to volunteer, or just to ask a question, call or go by your county Extension office (see inside back cover).

To reach state headquarters, call 334-844-4444 (Auburn University) or 256-372-5710 (Alabama A&M University).

For information about charitable contributions, call Beth Lawrence, Assistant to the Director, Development, at 334-844-2247.

To place orders for publications, call 334-844-1592; or for videos or other media, call 334-844-5689.



Your Experts for Life



Agriculture

“I once thought the bigger you are, the better you are. But I learned it’s not how big you are but how well you manage what you have.”

Cliff Weedon

A former cotton producer who believes counseling by an Extension farm business economist enabled his family to save their century-old farm

Keeping Faith

Before her father's death in 1979, Ruth Ann Weedon was asked for a promise, a solemn promise that, come what may, she would do everything in her power to preserve her family's century-old Autauga County farm.

For a time, her prospects of honoring that pledge grew exceedingly dim.

As the farm crisis set in during the mid-1980s, Ruth Ann and her husband, Cliff, like tens of thousands of other farm families of that era, were swimming against a rising tide of steep interest rates and declining land values. The worst shock occurred when their lender informed them that they no longer would be financed unless they made drastic changes in their farming operation.

Frantically searching for a solution, they contacted Hal Pepper, a local Extension farm business economist.

Pepper introduced them to a record-keeping and analysis system available through the new Central Alabama Farm Analysis Association that helped them gain an accurate assessment of their farm's current and future profitability.

In time, the knowledge gained from this record system, coupled with Pepper's counseling, helped the Weedons come to terms with the bitter truth that saving the farm would involve selling part of it.

"It involved selling everything that wasn't contributing to their operation's profitability," Pepper recalls. "If there was large equipment or other assets they didn't need, they sold them and reduced debt."

Brood cows were sold. They also harvested and sold timber off the land and parted with 800 acres of river bottomland.

"I once thought the bigger you are, the better you are," Cliff recalls. "But I learned it's not how big you are but how well you manage what you have."

In time, the Weedons made one other crucial decision: getting out of farming entirely and converting their farm into a commercial hunting enterprise they run with oldest daughter Wendy. Using the same business management principles they acquired from Pepper, they are also running an equally successful food distributorship.

Twenty years since weathering one of the worst crises of their lives, the Weedons have their lives back. Even more important, they are honoring the pledge they made almost a quarter century ago to preserve a precious legacy for future generations.

A Charge to Keep

Ruth Weedon (left) and her husband, Cliff, credit Extension Farm Economist Hal Pepper with providing them with the financial management skills to save her family's 100-year-old farm. They eventually decided to get out of farming entirely and convert their land into a commercial hunting enterprise that, along with a successful food distributorship, they run with daughter Wendy (center).



Thinking Out of the Box

As farmers, the Glenns have always been innovators—or, to paraphrase the late playwright George Bernard Shaw, the sort of people “who dream of things that never were and ask, ‘Why not?’”

They grow corn and soybeans in a region devoted almost exclusively to cotton. They’ve also abandoned a one-size-fits-all approach to farming in favor of a new technique known as precision farming—perhaps more accurately described as farming by satellite.

Like most farmers, the Glenns—father Eugene and sons Don and Brian—know that surviving in an increasingly competitive global economy will involve cutting operating costs even further, a fact of life that first attracted them to precision farming.

Precision farming is a Space Age technology operated through a global positioning system comprised of 24 orbiting satellites. Using specially designed ground-based receivers with these satellites, they have compiled a staggering database on their cropland that includes detailed soil maps and yield histories.

Their success with the technique began almost a decade ago when they entered into an agreement with Extension. In return for allowing their farm to function as a huge precision-farming experiment, they received valuable technical assistance learning how to use the technology.

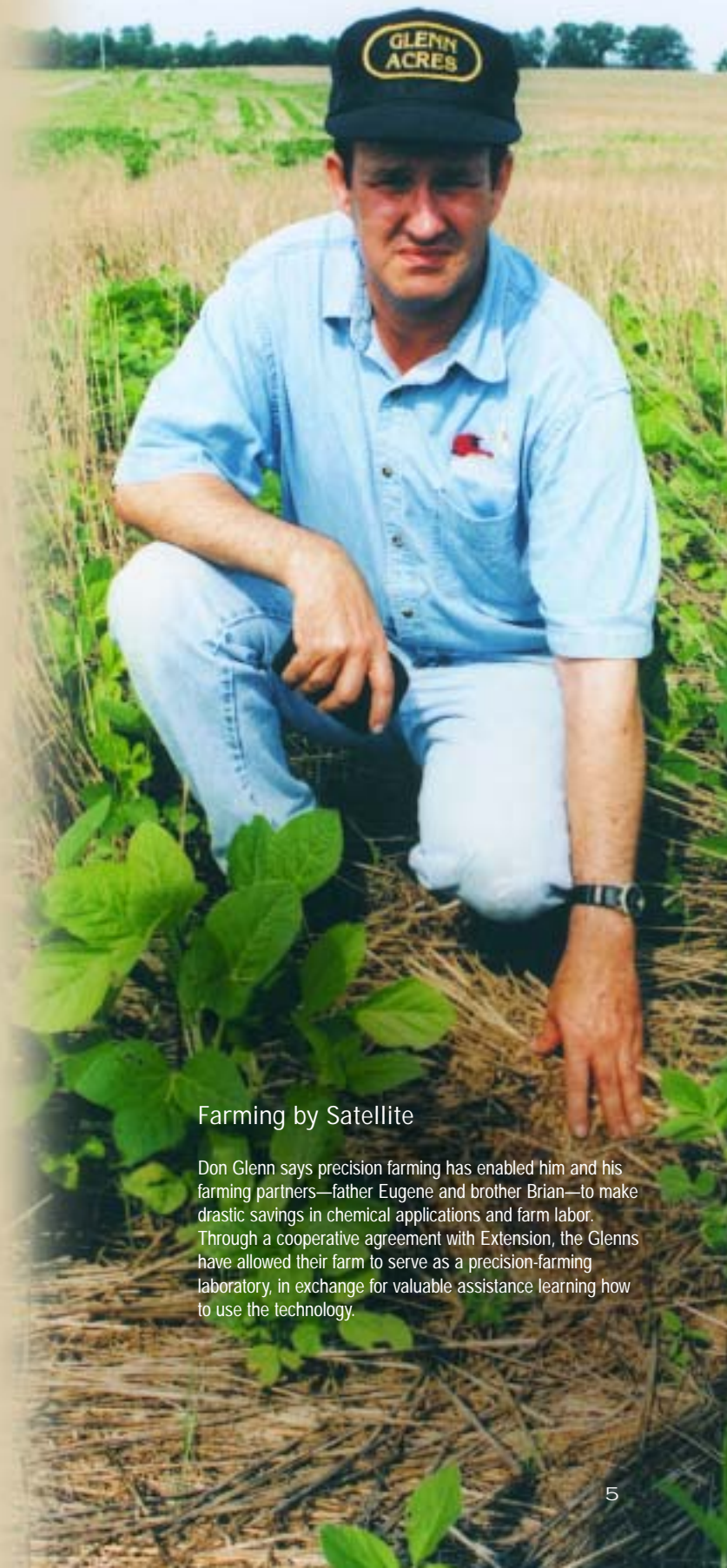
The Glenns have learned how to use their soil maps and yield data to apply common farm chemicals, such as fertilizer, lime, and especially nitrogen, far more efficiently.

“With precision farming, we can go in and put nitrogen where it’s needed,” says Don Glenn. “It not only cuts costs but is environmentally sound because we avoid applying nitrogen that will not be used by the plants and that eventually would leach into groundwater.”

And there’s the labor issue. Raising corn and soybeans in the Tennessee Valley is hard enough without the added challenge of finding and keeping farm labor. Fortunately for the Glenns, precision-farming techniques have allowed them to remain an exclusively family-operated farm.

“A cotton farm this size would probably have between eight and ten people on it,” says Paul Mask, coordinator of Extension’s precision-farming program. “But they’ve learned how to substitute technology for labor by becoming more efficient with every facet of their operation.

“All things considered, it’s easy to see why they are among the top one percent of all precision farmers in the nation.”



Farming by Satellite

Don Glenn says precision farming has enabled him and his farming partners—father Eugene and brother Brian—to make drastic savings in chemical applications and farm labor. Through a cooperative agreement with Extension, the Glenns have allowed their farm to serve as a precision-farming laboratory, in exchange for valuable assistance learning how to use the technology.

Taking the Plunge

For Baldwin County growers Joe Mullek and son Tim the time seemed right.

Under the 1996 Farm Bill, Congress had finally made it possible for peanut quotas to be transferred across county lines. That meant they could take the plunge and begin raising peanuts on their Gulf Coast farm, along with cotton and corn.

It seemed like a win/win situation for the Mulleks, who were confident the peanuts would thrive under the Gulf Coast's ample rainfall. Even so, a couple of Extension specialists, agronomist Dallas Hartzog and farm business economist Bob Lisec, offered help along the way—in one instance, critical help.

“Dallas visited once every few weeks and spent a lot of time going through fields and telling us what to do at key intervals—what weeds to look out for and when to spray,” Tim Mullek recalls.

Hartzog also helped the Mulleks overcome what turned out to be one of the only serious challenges associated with his switch to peanuts.

During planting, they had inoculated their peanuts—a routine practice to ensure the plants get enough nitrogen during the growing season.

Unfortunately, in their case, the inoculation failed—a problem they discovered in mid-July when the plants began turning yellow.

During a visit to the farm, Hartzog quickly diagnosed the problem and recommended they apply fertilizer to compensate for the loss.

“Without this fertilizer, we wouldn't have ended up with much of a crop,” Mullek recalls.

Mullek also credits Lisec with helping him understand the financial facts of peanut production.

“He helped me anticipate the costs that would be involved in peanut production by laying it all out on the table,” he recalls.

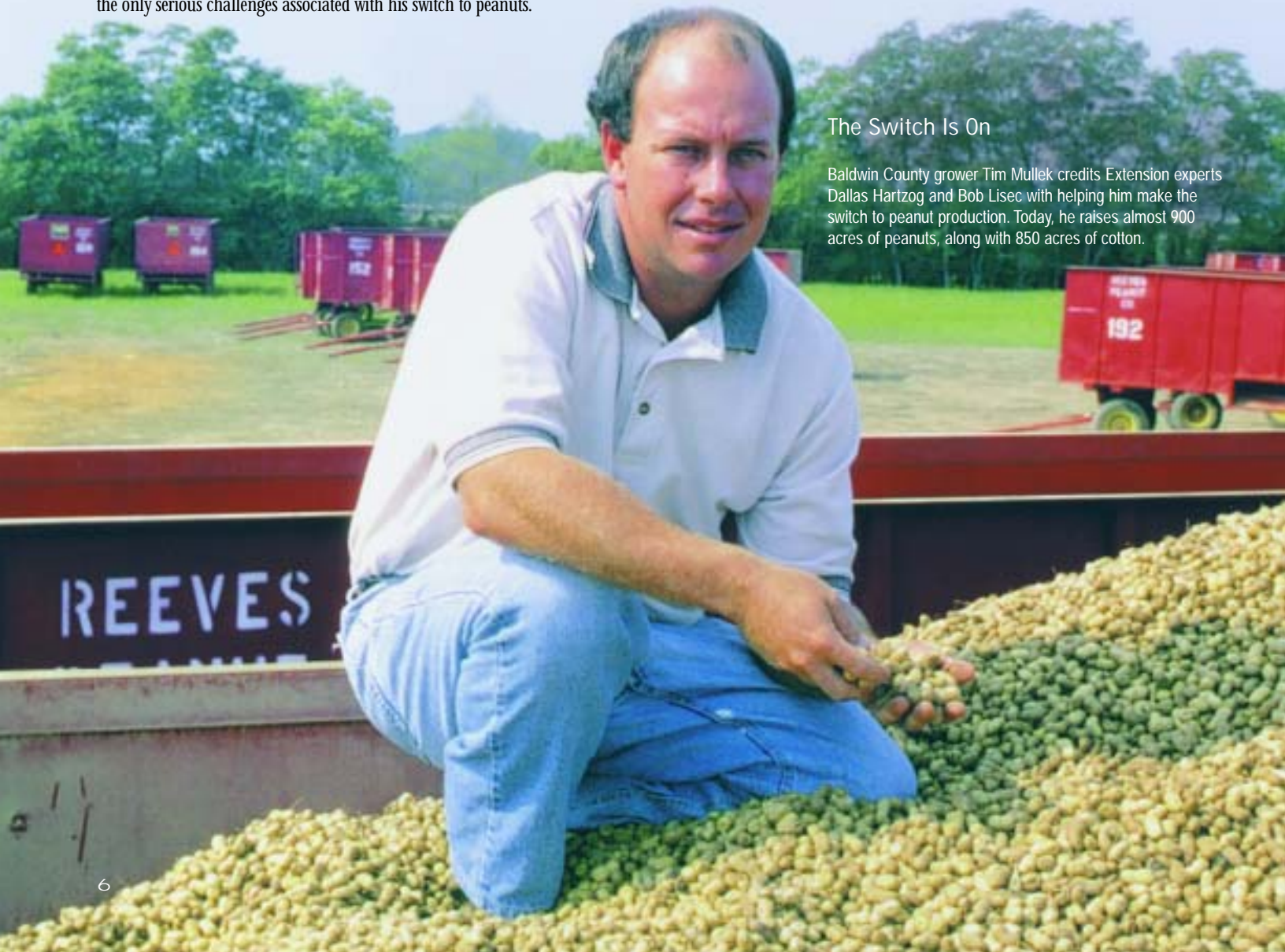
Once the Mulleks took the plunge into peanuts they never looked back. Today, they are farming almost 900 acres of peanuts, along with about 850 acres of cotton.

“It was a good decision, and I'm glad we did it,” Mullek says.

“It works well in rotation with cotton, and it's been good to us.”

The Switch Is On

Baldwin County grower Tim Mullek credits Extension experts Dallas Hartzog and Bob Lisec with helping him make the switch to peanut production. Today, he raises almost 900 acres of peanuts, along with 850 acres of cotton.



From the Field: Dispatches from Our Experts in Agriculture

Five years ago, cattle producers in West Alabama and East Mississippi had a vision of taking their region to the leading edge of beef cattle production. With this in mind, Extension worked with local Cattlemen's Associations in a 14-county area to form the Leading Edge group, which now provides state-of-the-art educational information to beef producers in the region.

The Cherokee County Extension Office sponsored a series of meetings prior to the last three growing seasons to help cotton producers make the transition to no-till production, a soil conservation practice. During this period, no-till cotton production levels in the county climbed from 2 percent to 95 percent.

Each January, peach growers from across the state and the Southeast attend the Extension-sponsored Chilton Area Peach Production meeting to learn about the latest advances in production marketing and farm management technology. More than 100 growers surveyed in 2002 reported an average 54 percent increase in yield/profitability on their farms thanks to knowledge gained from the meeting.

A team of Extension horticulturists developed a nationally recognized Web site that is a source of up-to-date information for home gardeners as well as professional greenhouse, nursery, and landscape operators.

A water quality information Web site was launched in 2002 to provide a comprehensive source of information about Alabama's water resources. The site features a large number of articles and other information about water quality and related issues.

The Pesticide Education Safety Program serves a critical safety role throughout Alabama, helping ensure that pesticides are applied in ways that are safe to humans, animals, and the environment. In 2002, more than 4,000 Alabamians passed exams and received pesticide applicator certification after attending Extension training sessions.

Villagers throughout Romania are learning how to adopt more environmentally friendly forest-management practices, thanks to the efforts of Extension's coordinator for international programs and his counterparts in Auburn University's College of Agriculture and School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences. Fourteen Romanian forestry specialists already have toured Alabama, observing a broad range of forest production systems. Extension specialists also have toured Romania, with the ultimate goal of safeguarding Romania's forests for future generations.

Extension animal scientists supervise three bull tests in Alabama. In 2002, more than 300 bulls were performance tested, providing beef producers interested in upgrading their herds with valuable genetic information about the bulls.

More than 30 training sessions were held to provide representatives of key public and private agencies, commodity groups, and related organizations with a working knowledge of fire ant biology and how fire ants can be managed through biological control methods and baits. The effort reached more than 4,000 people directly and an estimated 25,500 via radio.

An ongoing integrated pest management program used in pecan production has resulted in an average reduction of insecticide applications from 12 to fewer than five. The program is based on a strategy that protects natural predators of pest insects through targeted applications of low-impact insecticides.

An Extension agricultural economist helped organize and conduct several national "train the trainer" meetings attended by individuals responsible for educating farmers on the new Farm Bill. It is estimated the training ultimately will result in more than 100,000 producers and landowners receiving information about the Farm Bill.

Demonstrations of irrigation, weed control, and container production of Christmas trees were established to help producers in this specialized industry enhance production efficiency and quality, harvest a higher percentage of trees planted, and increase tree value.

Working to ensure that Alabama farmers become more effective leaders in the public arena, the Alabama Agriculture and Forestry LEADERS Program, with almost 200 alumni throughout the state, completed its seventh year in 2002. An impact study conducted last year revealed that about half of all LEADERS graduates have served in some public office since completion of the program.



Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs

*"I've found out how
complicated gardening
is. This program has
taught me a lot."*

Jessica Spencer
Ramsay High School botany student whose
class is benefiting from working with raised
vegetable beds constructed by local volunteers
with the Extension-sponsored Birmingham
Urban Gardening Society

Raising Vegetables and Practical Knowledge

Day after day, Hilma Orman and countless other high school teachers strive to ensure their students leave their classrooms with a practical understanding of science beyond textbook learning.

Fortunately for Orman, her job just got a little easier, thanks to the Extension-sponsored Birmingham Urban Garden Society (BUGS). BUGS board member Rev. Hughey Reynolds, a local United Methodist minister, coordinated the volunteers who recently built four raised gardening beds in the courtyard of Ramsay High School, the magnet school where Orman teaches.

“Our goal is to get teachers to use outdoor gardens to teach their science and math courses,” says Mark Mayeske, Jefferson County Extension agent, who coordinates the BUGS effort to assist schools.

That is precisely the idea Orman has in mind. She is using the beds as an outdoor laboratory for her botany students to help them understand the steps involved in planting and maintaining an organic garden.

After a careful study to identify vegetables best suited to Birmingham’s growing conditions, Orman’s students first draw on paper where they want to grow each crop. Then, they roll up their sleeves and go to work. As an added challenge, they

also make their own compost from kitchen scraps, newspapers, and earthworms.

Similar gardens have been established in 22 other schools. But this is just the beginning. Volunteers plan to enhance this effort with a series of teaching materials that science instructors can soon incorporate into their coursework.

BUGS organizers have worked closely with Spencer Horn, director of science for the Birmingham City School System, who, Mayeske says, “has been enthusiastic and has backed us all the way.”

Training sessions for Birmingham-area teachers also have been held, and four more that will provide continuing education credit have been slated during the next four months.

Meanwhile, Ramsay High School students credit the project with helping dispel many of the misconceptions associated with gardening.

“I’ve found out how complicated gardening is,” observes Jessica Spencer, one of Orman’s botany students. “Before you even plant the seeds, you’ve got to determine things like the soil’s acidity, what plants will grow where, and whether there is enough sunlight during the day.”

“The program has taught me a lot.”

Practical Learning

Raised garden beds, constructed by the Birmingham Urban Gardening Society, have enabled Ramsay High School science teacher Hilma Orman (left) to provide her botany students with a practical understanding of what is taught in the classroom. Orman’s students are raising their own produce and, as an added challenge, are learning how to make their own compost from kitchen scraps.



Planting Trees and Hopes

On an overcast morning in September, more than 150 Triana residents and guests from as far away as New Jersey gathered in Flamingo Park to celebrate their first Arbor Day. But they didn't mind the clouds. As far as they were concerned, the sun was shining all around.

With fewer than 500 residents, Triana was once a bustling, vibrant community. Then, in 1978, trace elements of PCB and DDT, two environmentally harmful substances, were detected in the local Wheeler Reservoir, where townspeople had fished and drawn water for years.

It was a devastating blow made worse by the loss of a beloved mayor who had worked tirelessly for the community. The community suffered during those years.

Marilyn Simpson Johnson, an Extension family welfare specialist based at Alabama A&M University in nearby Huntsville, had seen rapid urban growth undermine other at-risk urban communities. And while she realized that economic growth and revitalization were essential to Triana's future, she didn't want this to occur at the expense of community values and local traditions.

What was needed, she reasoned, was a spark—a project that would bring townspeople together to work toward the common goal of revitalizing the town while maintaining its character.

Working through Auburn University's School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, she helped organize a local tree board to spearhead revitalization of Flamingo Park. Trees are increasingly perceived as a valuable social

commodity in any community, especially those coping with problems such as teen drug abuse, domestic violence, and unemployment.

Another key player in the tree-planting initiative was Brenda Allen, an Extension specialist in urban forestry. Allen played a critical role in helping Triana secure a grant from the Alabama Urban and Community Forestry Association to launch the tree-planting initiative.

Extension also worked with the board and other public and private partners to undertake other restoration efforts.

A ripple effect followed as more townspeople became actively engaged in these efforts.

Today, the park and nearby wildlife refuge have been equipped with new playground equipment, picnic tables, and an outdoor learning pavilion. The USDA Forest Service also has been enlisted to teach Project Learning Tree materials to members of the local Boys and Girls Clubs and Triana Girls, Inc.

The Arbor Day celebration also marked another milestone for the town. Holding the celebration was the last requirement for obtaining eligibility as a Certified Tree City—another result of the tree board's tireless efforts.

Most important of all, it marked a new day for Triana. For, in addition to planting new trees, townspeople were planting new hopes and breathing new life into their community.

"All you have to do in Triana is plant a seed and we will nurture it and water it," observes Triana mayor Marvelene Freeman.

"This has been made possible through the efforts of a lot of local people, but the person who really got it going was Marilyn Johnson."



A New Day

Citizens of Triana kicked off the 2002 Arbor Day celebration with a tree planting in the newly restored Flamingo Park. The park and nearby wildlife refuge have been restored, thanks to an Extension-sponsored effort. Triana Mayor Marvelene Freeman (second from right) credits the effort with breathing new life and hope into the community.

Clean Hands—Healthy People: Germ City

We've sent astronauts to the moon and explored the deepest reaches of space with the Hubble Telescope, yet tens of millions of Americans have not mastered one of life's most basic tasks—hand washing, something we're supposed to learn by age four or even younger.

Studies show that of the 94 percent of people who claimed to wash their hands after using the restroom, only 68 percent actually did.

Hand washing is a key, but often overlooked, behavior that affects food safety, personal health, and disease prevention. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 79 million people in the United States become ill yearly as a result of food-related diseases, and approximately 5,000 people die. Poor hygiene is the greatest contributor to food-related outbreaks.

In an effort to tackle this problem, Extension specialists in five states were awarded a \$500,000 USDA grant to implement Germ City programs. Germ City is an interactive and science-based exhibit that increases awareness of the consequences of poor hand washing.

While a catchy tune is playing, children are asked to cover their hands

with a non-toxic, pretend germ lotion that glows under ultraviolet lights. A trip through the Germ City tunnel reflects the glow of the lotion indicating the presence of germs. Participants are then instructed to wash their hands thoroughly. During a second visit through the tunnel, areas that light up show germs left on the hands and illustrate the effectiveness of their hand washing skills. Children respond enthusiastically with comments such as, "Cool," "Neat-o," and "Can I go again?"

"At schools, teachers typically come out with it under their nails and on their wrists and fingers, while kids have it everywhere—their ears, noses, and even their clothes," Dr. Donnie Cook, Extension health and nutrition specialist, recalls with a chuckle.

The good news is that Germ City is teaching thousands of children a valuable lesson in good hygiene. During the past eight months, Germ City presentations have been conducted in 14 counties, reaching 7,200-plus participants of all ages.

Kindergarten and elementary teachers, in particular, have noticed a dramatic interest in hand washing among children who have participated.



Cleaner Living through Hand Washing

Donnie Cook (left), Extension health and nutrition specialist, and Parico Osby, Montgomery County Extension agent, flank Germ City, which is being used throughout Alabama to teach thousands of school children valuable lessons in good hygiene.

From the City: Reports From Our Experts in Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs

The Para Nuestros Amigos Latinos Web site extended the outreach of Extension's Urban Affairs unit to Spanish-speaking families and communities. The user-friendly Web site offers a wide variety of research-based information to the state's growing Hispanic population.

Lauderdale County's traveling health fair, coordinated by Extension in collaboration with the Partnership for a Tobacco Free Shoals, literally took the university to the people. More than 4,600 youth were involved in interactive learning to discourage tobacco usage.

The Plant an Extra Row program in Tuscaloosa County encourages gardeners to plant extra produce to donate at harvest time. Since April 2002, approximately 500 pounds of vegetables and fruits have been donated to the local Salvation Army and Community Soup Bowl.

The Successful Aging Initiative, a partnership agreement between the state Bureau of Geriatric Psychiatry and Extension's Urban Affairs unit, educated more than 250 seniors in Huntsville area faith-based communities on resource management, elder law, and health issues. Health screenings saved participants thousands of dollars.

A multi-state agreement between Extension's Urban Affairs unit and New Mexico State University led to the planning and implementation of an Education Fiesta in the Morgan County metro area. Extension agents in Morgan and Lawrence counties worked with supporting agencies and organizations to provide vital information and resources to more than 500 Latino/Hispanic residents.

Former Surgeon General David Satcher was the keynote speaker at the fourth Annual Food and Nutrition Summer Institute held at Alabama A&M University, marking the first time this event was hosted at a historically black university. The Urban Affairs unit and AAMU's Department of Family and Consumer Sciences hosted this event.

The Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP) provided support groups to grandparents raising grandchildren in North Alabama. The program has received funding through the Brookdale Foundation to expand services in 2003.

The Annual Family Conference has become an important avenue for addressing major issues of public concern such as domestic violence, parenting, work force preparation, nutrition, and health. Sponsored for the fourth year by Extension's Urban Affairs unit, the 2002 conference featured family life specialist Wallace Goddard as keynote speaker.

The Students Promoting Action: Community Education (SPACE) volunteer program orbited to Talladega, Mobile, and Jefferson counties to establish new sites for the student volunteer program. SPACE is being implemented at postsecondary institutions in Madison, Montgomery, and Limestone counties. It has generated more than 1,000 volunteers and 11,500 volunteer hours and has reached 36,000 adults and young people since its inception in 1992.

"We Treasure All Earth Resources" was the theme for the 2002 Groundwater Education Day in Houston County where more than 1,200 youth received hands-on training in ways to conserve and protect our water resources. Supporting organizations included the City of Dothan, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), water authorities, Alabama Department of Environmental Management, and school boards.

Breast cancer awareness education is a major focus of Extension programming. In partnership with the Alabama Department of Public Health, the American Cancer Society, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and local hospital and community groups, Extension has helped develop a wide array of breast cancer awareness materials, including brochures, a breast health calendar, and workshop teaching materials.

Supported by a USDA Food and Nutrition Service grant, the Urban Nutrition Education Program (UNEP) was launched in 2002 in Morgan, Lauderdale, Madison, and Calhoun counties to expand nutrition education services to seniors and inner-city families in Alabama.

Morgan County Extension agents worked with the Alabama Department of Corrections and Calhoun Community College to initiate a pilot program designed to rehabilitate inmates. Educational training that included a work force preparation series contributed to an improved recidivism rate from as much as 50 percent to 5 percent and substantial savings to the Alabama penal system.

A series of Youth Career Summits coordinated by agents and specialists in Houston, Madison, and Mobile counties educated more than 1,500 young women on nontraditional careers in technical fields. This was the second year of implementation for the summits that are designed to motivate young women to pursue high-wage, high-skill occupations.

Madison County 4-H volunteers and youth developed an early breast cancer detection program for African Americans, who, research has shown, are the most susceptible to the disease. More than 500 copies of breast cancer warning sign materials were provided in English and Spanish.



Forestry and Natural Resources

“Last year, we saw the most dramatic results of the work that had been done. Quail coveys were three times as much as they had been. Everyone was skeptical about it, so we invited 12 landowners around the area to take a look. It was a huge success.”

Cam Lanier III

A landowner who credits an Extension wildlife scientist with helping him greatly increase quail populations on his commercial hunting operation

Blind Faith

Cam Lanier IV was ready to take a leap into the dark.

He was intrigued with the phenomenal success Alabama Extension wildlife scientist Lee Stribling had in Georgia working with landowners to expand quail populations through habitat management. He and his father, Cam III, wanted to produce the same success on land they had purchased for wild quail hunting.

Stribling couldn't have been more pleased by Lanier's interest. For years, he had hoped someone in Alabama would take this leap.

Until Lanier stepped up to the plate, Stribling's approach had never been tried in the region. And, as many neighboring landowners were quick to point out, "Just 'cause it works in Georgia doesn't mean it will work in Alabama."

Even so, Lanier remained a true believer. For three years, he operated on blind faith, following the recommendations to the letter—actually "150 percent of everything we told him to do," as Stribling recalls.

Part of these recommendations involved clearing hardwoods, a strategy many neighboring landowners believed invited disaster.

"People would call me and say, 'You're taking food away from them!'" Lanier recalls with a smile. "They didn't realize that the trees we were taking out didn't produce acorns and were not a feed source."

Lanier also was advised to adopt practices promoting the growth of weeds that attract insects. Part of this involved periodic disking to discourage the growth of dense, mat-forming vegetation, which quail don't like, while enhancing the growth of weeds that quail prefer.

He also altered his prescribed burning techniques to preserve nesting areas.

Lanier's efforts were not in vain. By 2001, quail coveys had increased three-fold.

Based on this success, neighboring landowners, along with the Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, the Alabama Wildlife Federation, and others, have joined forces to establish and fund the Alabama Quail Project, a research and Extension effort aimed at further enhancing quail populations throughout Alabama.

It couldn't have come at a better time. Organizers are hopeful the project will heighten interest in recreational hunting, which has played a crucial role in supplementing farm income and enhancing rural land values in recent years.

Quail Cornucopia

Cam Lanier IV (left) and Lee Stribling, Extension wildlife scientist, inspect seed-bearing weeds that have been planted to attract quail. Lanier has noticed a three-fold increase in quail coveys on his land in the three years since he began following Stribling's recommendations.





Sizing It Up

Matthew Gilmore, a professional forester in Lamar County, believes much of his industry's future success will depend on how well it maintains its public image. He believes Extension-sponsored training programs, which help professional loggers maintain their professional certification, will be critical to this success.

Training at the Grassroots

Worldwide concerns about the logging industry's effects on the environment have prompted the industry to enhance professional requirements for loggers.

As Lamar County forester Matthew Gilmore sees it, there's no other way around it. Much of the industry's success in the future will depend on how well it maintains its public image, and that, he believes, is why professional requirements are essential.

"Either we police ourselves or some government agency will do it for us," says Gilmore, who says the last thing he or any logging professional wants is to fill out an official form every time he harvests timber.

Gilmore and other logging professionals don't mind the training associated with this professional certification or abiding by new rules. What they do mind is the time and expense associated with certification.

Long before professional certification programs were developed, Extension-sponsored logger training programs were already under way in several states, most notably Alabama. One of the hallmarks of this training has been convenience—making sure these sessions are held at convenient times and locations.

Even after major professional certification programs, such as the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, first got under way, organizers looked to Extension for help. And Extension forestry specialists, working through county Extension agents and local industry, remain an integral part of this process. Indeed, as the demand for training increases, Extension continues to keep pace by training and certifying new instructors who then can conduct logging training sessions on their own.

"Either through direct training or through facilitators, Extension continues to reach between 300 and 400 logging professionals each year," says Mathew Smidt, an Extension forestry specialist who coordinates logging training throughout the state.

Extension is also helping provide the six hours of continuing education credit loggers need to maintain their professional certification. In fact, Extension has contributed to about 15 percent of the 12,000 hours of continuing education accumulated annually by Alabama loggers.

"Feedback has been one of the key ingredients in the program's success," Smidt says. As he emphasizes, "We ask them what they want out of the training and listen to their concerns."



Spawning Fish and Learning

The Mouse That Roared

Tiny Florala High School has become a national leader in aquaculture education—thanks, in part, to support provided by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. Every year, for example, Extension aquaculturist Claude Reeves helps science teacher Donny Powell (left) and students at Florala High School with one of the toughest assignments of the school year: injecting hormones into the fish to induce spawning.

Several years ago, reading about the role fish production would play in feeding the world, Florala High School teacher John Harbuck came up with an idea—a very big idea, as it turned out.

“If aquaculture (fish production) is so vital to the world’s future,” Harbuck reasoned, “why not establish an aquaculture course at Florala High School?”

It was a tall order, for sure. But with assistance from the University of Alabama’s Program for Rural Services and Research, the program was funded and is now an integral part of science teaching at the school.

From the beginning, Extension aquaculturist Claude Reeves has played a vital role at the center, helping instructors plan the coursework and determine what types of fish to stock. He also has been on hand to help students tackle one of the toughest assignments of the school year: injecting hormones into the fish to induce spawning.

Today, thanks partly to Reeves’ efforts, tiny Florala High School, with fewer than 200 students, boasts a state-of-the-art aquaculture center—an ideal hands-on environment for teaching science that is the envy of high schools across America.

“Whenever you get kids involved in hands-on activity, they can see the results and see what they’re doing,” says science teacher Donny Powell, who assumed part of the responsibility for the center after Harbuck’s retirement. “It’s a much better way of teaching the material.”

It’s often not the star students who are helped most by the hands-on approach. As Harbuck and Powell have observed time after time, failing students are often transformed into “B” and even “A” students after working in the center.

Two students who passed through the program even credit the center with providing them with the inspiration to finish high school, Harbuck says.

Florala High School’s aquaculture center is one of about 25 school projects with which Reeves and other Extension aquaculturists are involved throughout the state. The cornerstone of these efforts is an intensive four-day course taught each summer at Gadsden State Community College. The course provides continuing education credit to high-school teachers who are working to establish similar aquacultural projects in their schools.

Green and Clean: Reports From Our Forestry and Natural Resource Experts

More than 600 urban and rural Alabamians received information about nuisance wildlife control through 20 locally conducted programs. This was complemented by a series of videotaped interviews with Extension experts who discussed rabies in wildlife populations, snake identification, and the risk to dove hunters from West Nile Virus.

The Master Tree Farmers program provided forestry management training via satellite to more than 400 landowners and professionals in 16 locations throughout the state. Training covered all aspects of forestry management, including silviculture, pest control, harvesting, and wildlife management.

A Web-based Virtual Forestry Tour was developed to provide landowners and the general public with a valuable training tool for forestry management. The project was made possible through funding by USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service and through the efforts of a collaborative partnership comprising Extension, Auburn University, and two other land-grant universities, working through the Sustainable Forestry Partnership.

Extension prepared an exemption aimed at securing the continued use of methyl bromide at forestry tree nurseries. Used as a fumigant, the chemical is considered an indispensable tool in nurseries in Alabama and eleven Southern states, which produce 80 percent of the nation's tree seedlings.

The Geneva County Extension Office worked with a coalition of agencies to develop a day camp to promote good environmental stewardship of water resources, involving almost 400 Geneva County fourth-graders. Sixteen teachers also went back to their schools with water quality reference materials.

Excellent fishing in the reservoir at Steelwood Plantation, a popular Gulf Coast resort, is partly due to the efforts of one Extension fisheries specialist who helped the resort control a serious overgrowth of aquatic weeds and trained their staff to effectively manage the lake. Now fishing in the reservoir is exceptional, with anglers catching largemouth bass routinely exceeding five pounds.

Trained volunteers with the Baldwin County Master Environmental Educators program, patterned after Extension's highly successful Master Gardener program, work with people from all walks of life to raise awareness about environmental issues. Each year, Environmental Educators coordinate more than 200 educational programs, reaching more than 400 adults and 7,000 young people.

Millions of gallons of water in the Upper Tallapoosa Watershed have been safeguarded, thanks to the efforts of two Randolph County Extension agents, who organized an oil recycling program. The project already is being used as a model in other counties to alert people about the importance of oil recycling.

Small Alabama timberland owners rarely have the privilege of top-notch management assistance during tree harvest time. With this in mind, Extension agents in Talladega and Shelby counties held a forest-management tour to provide 50 area landowners with training in forestry management practices.


About 30 Lamar County students and even a few of their teachers learned something about forestry management at a day camp sponsored by the Lamar County Extension Office. Known as Learning Essentials for Forestry (LEAF), the program was credited with inspiring 13 of these students to consider careers in forestry-related fields.

It marked the first time many Dale County students had ever visited a forest. Sponsored by the Dale County Extension Office, the Forestry Field Day gave fifth-grade students an up-close, personal look at how forestry products are used in everyday life and what must be done to maximize timberland production.

Permeable concrete may be one solution to reducing levels of storm water that eventually pollutes lakes, rivers, and streams. The City of Fairhope worked with the Coastal Alabama Clean Water Partnership, developed by the Auburn University Marine Extension and Research Center and Sherman International, to establish a storm water reduction demonstration project using permeable concrete.

The threat of methyl mercury to Gulf Coast residents was the subject of a forum organized by the Auburn University Marine Extension and Research Center and other sponsors. A highlight of the forum, which was attended by more than 300 people, was the first-ever joint appearance of two renowned researchers who offered different opinions about the risk to children born to mothers with elevated mercury levels.

In partnership with other agencies, the Auburn University Marine Extension and Research Center developed the highly successful Dog River Watershed Guardians, an educational outreach effort aimed at homeowners and construction sites within this Gulf Coast watershed. The program earned the praise of the World Wildlife Fund, which provided funding to expand the program into the remainder of Mobile and neighboring Baldwin County.

A photograph of a family of three—a man, a woman, and a young boy—running joyfully through a field of tall, golden grass. The man on the left is wearing a light green t-shirt and dark blue shorts. The woman on the right is wearing a light blue t-shirt and grey shorts. The boy in the center is wearing a blue button-down shirt and light-colored shorts. They are all smiling and holding hands, conveying a sense of happiness and family well-being.

*“Because someone took the
time, I feel responsible. I have
no choice but to give back.”*

Debra Glenn
A community activist who credits much of her
success in life to the inspiration she acquired
from an Extension nutrition agent

Family and Individual Well-Being

Empowerment and Gratitude

Ask Debra Glenn what inspires her, and she will sum it up in one word: gratitude.

It is an inspiration she acquired during childhood attending weekly Extension 4-H DOT (Diet's Our Thing) programs. Local Extension 4-H agent Helen Wilson conducted the programs at the Girl Scout House in the Birmingham housing project where Glenn grew up.

Looking back, Glenn is convinced that "Mrs. Wilson was one of the catalysts God provided to inspire me."

"She was very much a role model for me," she recalls. "Every week, she brought simple, affordable recipes that she taught the rest of us and that I'd take home and prepare for my mother and brothers.

"I never pictured myself preparing a recipe from scratch—measuring it, cooking it, and putting it on a plate or in a bowl so that people could eat it."

For Glenn, it opened the door to a lifetime of self-mastery and empowerment.

"It showed me I had potential and could serve in a leadership role," she recalls.

Others began noticing the change, and, eventually, she was entrusted with teaching 4-H DOT, Brownies, and Junior Scouts these recipes when Wilson was away.

This sense of empowerment only grew stronger through high school and college. With it came a feeling of gratitude and a desire to inspire others.

After completing a degree in elementary education at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, she served as a day care center operator, a counselor of hardcore juvenile delinquents, and a cottage counselor at a children's home.

Today, as an administrator with the Birmingham VA Medical Center, she supervises 37 employees—at a job grade only two short of the highest grade attainable in her career track.

In her free time, she works as a counselor at the Tuscaloosa County Youth Detention Center. She is also an ordained minister.


Glenn also serves as a Big Sister, mentoring girls from backgrounds similar to her own. One of the girls, Natasha Dean Bass, has since received her bachelor's degree from Birmingham-Southern College and is now completing her final year of law school.

"Because someone took the time, I feel responsible," Glenn says. "I have no choice but to give back."



Passing It On

The sense of empowerment Debra Glenn (left) gained through a 4-H DOT program inspired her with a lifelong desire to help others. She is pictured here with Natasha Dean Bass, a law student and one of several girls Glenn mentored as a Big Sister.



Work and Study

Stefanie Stovall credits an Extension-sponsored training program with helping her complete the journey from welfare to work. Now employed as a security guard, she uses her free time to study for her degree in computer information systems.

Strength for the Journey

The transition from welfare to work is often a long, difficult, even frightening journey.

No one knows this better than Cindy Prince, now a certified nursing assistant at a nursing home and rehabilitation center in Florence, who was able to complete the journey, thanks, in part, to an Extension-sponsored training program.

What many people such as Prince need, but often lack, is strength for the journey—help learning how to juggle work with other demands, such as caring for family, managing car payments, and preparing meals on a tight budget.

Four years ago, Lauderdale County Extension agent Lelia Wissert perceived this as a critical need in her community and worked with other public and private partners to develop a series of week-long seminars to enable clientele to acquire these skills.

What was once offered periodically is now provided monthly. More than 45 classes have been conducted since 1998, reaching more than 220 participants. At least half of the participants got jobs and kept them after completing the

training. The program is conducted through the JOBS program, operated by the Alabama Department of Human Resources and Adult Basic Education.

Prince, a graduate of the program, is now a junior working on a nursing degree from the University of North Alabama and has accomplished more than she ever thought possible.

“I tell people in similar situations that there is light at the end of the tunnel,” she says. “It hurts your pride going to a local church to ask for help paying a power bill or buying medicine. So instead of having to ask for help every few months, why not try to become self-sufficient?”

Another graduate of the program, Stefanie Stovall, now employed as a security guard at the Department of Human Resources, is completing her degree in computer information systems at North Alabama. She says the success she’s had with the program is proof that people can make the transition from welfare to work if they take the time to acquire these skills.

“There’s help out there, but if you don’t help yourself, no one else will,” Stovall observes. “Life’s really what you make of it.”

A More Efficient Nutrition Program

Alabama is leading a nationwide effort in merging the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in 31 counties with the Nutrition Education Program (NEP) in all 67 counties to strengthen nutrition education in the state. NEP focuses largely on a youth audience while EFNEP focuses on family and youth audiences. The newly merged program will be the Alabama Cooperative Extension Nutrition Education Program (ACENEPE), which will produce a more efficient program for the citizens of Alabama. The highly successful NEP reached 179,412 participants with 93 percent graduating in 2002. EFNEP enrolled 6,031 families with more than 19,000 members in 2002. More than 85 percent of the enrolled homemakers demonstrated improvement of total family diets.



ACENEPE

Alabama Cooperative Extension
Nutrition Education Program



At Home, At Work: Accounts From Our Experts in Family and Individual Well-Being

The Walker County Extension Office planned and implemented a series of thirteen programs to provide childcare workers with training in six different areas of competency mandated by new state requirements. The sessions were held in the evening to fit with the workers' busy schedules.

The Begin Education Early (BEE) program, begun in Wilcox County in 1997, remains the only home visitation parenting program aimed at school readiness and the prevention of child abuse and neglect. More than 90 percent of parents who have completed the program report they read more to their children, use alternative disciplinary methods, and communicate with their children more effectively.

Striking a healthy balance between thinness and good nutrition was the focus of a series of eight one-hour sessions provided by a Randolph County Extension agent to sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-graders at a local school. The girls were encouraged to write articles making other teens aware of eating disorders, one of which was quoted in an article on eating disorders featured in the local *Randolph Leader*.

Helping teens gain a clearer picture of what they want in life and how to get it is the goal of the Extension-sponsored Promoting Alabama Youth Development (PAYD). Of the more than 142 high-school youth throughout Montgomery County who have participated in the program, 89 percent reported gains in knowledge, with the strongest improvements in communications, problem anticipation, and creation of alternative solutions.

KidsCope is a Cullman County Extension-sponsored program designed for parents struggling to help children deal with emotional stresses associated with divorce. The biggest supporters of KidsCope are Cullman County's circuit court judges, who have credited the program with reducing the number of child custody and family-related cases.

Almost 300 children received glasses and an additional 437 were referred for professional evaluations, thanks to a Pickens County Extension-sponsored program. The program, made possible by an \$8,000 grant from Blue Cross/Blue Shield, also played a critical role helping 70 children obtain desperately needed health insurance through Medicaid, ALL-Kids, or the Caring program.


In partnership with Auburn University's Harrison School of Pharmacy, Extension developed an educational program to address one of Alabama's most serious health problems: asthma. A major focus of this project will be recruiting local pharmacists to provide their clients on-site asthma education, such as how to take asthma medication and use asthma-related equipment safely and efficiently.

Extension family life educators took part in a discussion of one of the newest areas of family life education—couples education—using one of the newest forms of communication, the online e-conference. Pioneered by an Alabama Extension family life specialist, along with a counterpart from Ohio, the approach provided a low-cost, flexible method for connecting family life educators with researchers considered to be on the cutting edge of this new field.

Addressing the serious risk of heart disease and other chronic illnesses associated with sedentary lifestyles, the Choctaw County Extension Office sponsored a Walk! Alabama effort that attracted almost 200 participants. Of the 23 teams participating, 11 exceeded the 850-mile goal of crisscrossing Alabama.

Financial Elder Abuse programs provided more than 700 residents in six counties—Calhoun, Baldwin, Houston, Montgomery, Monroe, and Talladega—with skills to better manage their legal and financial affairs and avoid financial scams.

Alabama Extension agents are forming coalitions with other public and private agents to provide local residents with up-to-date diabetes information. After participating in a statewide program, agents returned to their counties to train local nutritionists and dietitians on how to deliver diabetes cooking schools and how to assemble and use foot-care kits.



“Sometimes we tend to think of Extension as just dealing with farmers and landowners. But in this case, they showed us where to look for resources that we otherwise would not have known about.”

Jay Jaxon

Eufaula mayor who believes an Extension agent and specialist played a critical role helping his city make history by becoming Audubon International's first environmentally sustainable community

Community and Economic Development

Breathing Again

Dothan resident Ethel Adams was coughing herself to death, but she didn't know why.

She suspected it was her carpet, but she couldn't be sure. Like most elderly people, she was living on a fixed income and couldn't afford to have it tested.

Studies have shown older carpet sometimes harbors biological contaminants—bacteria, dust mites, mold spores, fungi, and pollen, among others—known to affect breathing.

Night after stifling night she spent coughing and gasping for breath. She complained about the problem to the management of her housing complex, but to no effect.

At one point, suspecting the problem stemmed from a clogged air return, she squeezed herself into a narrow crawl space to clean it out—and suffered a mild heart attack.

Desperate, she paid a visit to her local health department and finally got the help she desperately sought. They recommended she contact Houston County Extension agent Phillip Carter, known in the Wiregrass as an authority on indoor air-related problems.

After a close inspection, Carter came away convinced that the carpet was rife with substances that were contributing to Adams' breathing problems.

It was just the proof she needed to make the case that her carpet needed to be removed and replaced with tile.

Carter, on her behalf, contacted the regional office ultimately responsible for the operation of her apartment complex. After a visit by a representative, Adams finally got her wish: workers removed the carpet and replaced it with the tiles she had requested.

Shortly after the installation of the tile flooring, Adams began breathing without difficulty—something she had not known for more than two years.

She's got her life back as well as a newfound friend in Phillip Carter.

"God led me to him," Adams says. "If it hadn't been for him, I don't know what I would have done."



A New Tile Floor

Ethel Adams is grateful to Houston County agent Phillip Carter for persuading the management of her apartment complex to replace old carpeting in her apartment with tile. The carpet, she believes, contributed to breathing problems that left her gasping for breath for more than two years.



Looking Ahead

Eufaula Mayor Jay Jaxon describes Extension as an “asset and partner” throughout the city’s strategic planning process. Thanks to Extension and others involved in this process, Eufaula will soon make history by becoming Audubon International’s first sustainable community.

Critical Partner

When Eufaula citizens began work on their new strategic plan, they had no idea how revolutionary it would be.

Five years ago, as the plan evolved, planners decided to make environmental sustainability a cornerstone of their strategic plan and to include as many townspeople in the planning process as possible. With this approach, they wanted to ensure that future economic growth did not occur at the expense of citizens or their environment.

It had been tried before but only in commercially developed communities, seldom in incorporated towns such as Eufaula.

Fortunately, for Eufaula mayor Jay Jaxon and other planners, Barbour County Extension agent David Koon knew a thing or two about sustainability and how the resources of Auburn University could be enlisted to aid with this effort.

With Koon’s assistance, Eufaula enlisted the help of Tom Chesnutt, Extension tourism specialist, who spearheaded a partnership that included Eufaula, Audubon International, and Extension and that was assisted by a core group of Auburn University faculty members.

In time, faculty members from 14 disciplines were involved in this partnership.

Chesnutt, along with these faculty members, played a key role helping Jaxon and other planners identify tasks to include in the strategic plan. The Extension and Auburn University team offered nine different proposals for consideration; seven were eventually adopted. Jaxon also identified five other issues for which the team submitted proposals.

Jaxon was impressed with what he had seen—so impressed that he decided to work exclusively with the Extension/Auburn team.

Once the roles were clearly established, Extension transferred project leadership to Joe Summers, director of the university’s Economic Development Institute. Even so, Extension remained a strong partner throughout the process—an involvement, Jaxon believes, that was critical to the plan’s success.

“Sometimes we tend to think of Extension as just dealing with farmers and landowners. But in this case, they showed us where to look for resources that we otherwise would not have known about,” Jaxon says.

“In the 17 months it took for us to finish the plan, Extension was an asset and partner throughout.”

Thanks to the hard work of Extension and other partners involved in the project, Eufaula will soon make history by becoming Audubon International’s first sustainable community.

From the Town Square and Beyond: Reports From Our Experts in Community and Economic Development

A one-day workshop, conducted by the Extension-sponsored Alabama Sunrise Region, was held in Central Alabama to alert community leaders throughout the state about the value of Alabama tourism, a multibillion-dollar enterprise that comprises the state's largest industry. Community leaders were trained on how to recognize and market potential sources of tourism in their region.

Southeast Alabama Trails (SEATS), an 11-county tourism and retiree association (formerly LATARA) was formed by Extension and area Chambers of Commerce in 1992 to help Wiregrass communities develop and implement programs to increase tourism and retiree attraction. A membership-driven association funded by grants, SEATS offers numerous benefits, including listings on Web pages, member hospitality training, newsletters, cooperative advertising, seminars, and tours.

Almost eighty general science students at Lineville High School gained a better understanding of how geology contributes to radon risks, compliments of an Extension-sponsored school-enrichment program. Part of the program focused on showing students how to test for radon so they could conduct testing in their own homes.

Helping communities maintain or improve local health care facilities is the goal of a joint partnership between Extension and the Alabama Southern Rural Access Project, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The project's goal is to help 18 rural counties in southern Alabama expand their local health care infrastructure, a key component of their local economy.

The Colbert County Extension Office, along with Helen Keller Hospital, is working to make more parents of newborns aware of the potential risks of radon exposure. Colbert County was chosen to serve as the site for the Newborn Infant Pilot Program, made possible by a grant from the Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors.

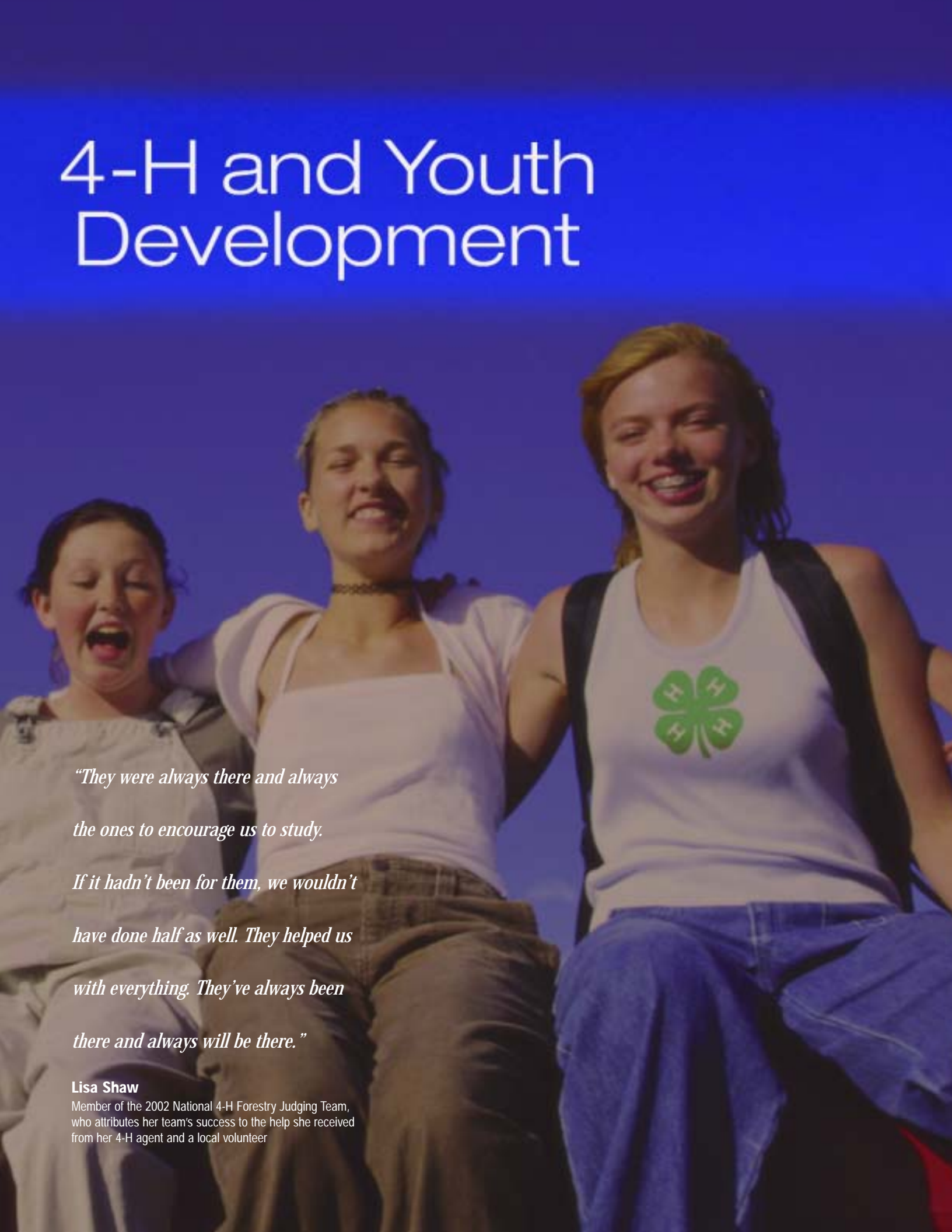
Several years ago, the Jackson County Extension Office developed leadership training to get more citizens "educated, networked, and involved" in their communities. With the completion of the tenth leadership class in 2002, more than 200 area citizens are now actively engaged in their communities.

Helping soon-to-be Habitat for Humanity residents become responsible homeowners was the focus of training provided by a Lee County Extension agent and an Extension specialist. New homeowners were shown how to manage mortgage payments and cope with other financial concerns.

A Pickens County Extension-sponsored career seminar introduced more than 130 Pickens County fifth-graders to the largest industry in their county: forestry. The program, sponsored with other partners, covered all aspects of forestry, including forestry soils, tree identification, forestry products, and wildlife.

Extension-sponsored indoor environmental health conferences have enabled more than 900 participants—nurses, social workers, public health employees, teachers, day care providers, and Extension professionals—to return to their towns and cities to develop community-wide initiatives to improve the indoor environments of local homes, schools, and businesses.

4-H and Youth Development



*“They were always there and always
the ones to encourage us to study.
If it hadn’t been for them, we wouldn’t
have done half as well. They helped us
with everything. They’ve always been
there and always will be there.”*

Lisa Shaw

Member of the 2002 National 4-H Forestry Judging Team,
who attributes her team’s success to the help she received
from her 4-H agent and a local volunteer

Seven and Still Counting

There's a saying: "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger."

The 2002 Tuscaloosa County 4-H Forestry Judging team is living proof of this fact. Not pulled wisdom teeth or laryngitis—not even a ruptured eardrum—stifled the team's spirit as it prepared to compete for the national championship, held in Weston, West Virginia, in August.

If anything, it just made them more determined to follow through with their appointed task: winning the team's seventh national forestry judging championship.

It was the culmination of months of grueling study for team members Brandon Ligon, Amy Farnsworth, Kate Greene, and Lisa Shaw. On top of mastering tree identification and measurement and using a compass for navigation, they also learned how to identify forest pests both by their physical appearance and the type of damage they cause in trees.

They also had to demonstrate how well they could evaluate and manage a forest based on the needs of the forest landowner.

As if this weren't challenging enough, they also mastered a bookshelf full of forestry manuals to compete in a knowledge bowl testing their skills in forestry and natural resources. Small wonder why preparation for forestry judging competition is equated with completing a college-level forestry course!

Part of the 2002 team's dogged determination to win despite all of the odds reflected an awareness of the legacy they represented.

Almost 20 years ago, with the same determination of the 2002 team, Tuscaloosa County Extension coordinator and team coach Wayne Ford set out to build a winning legacy comparable to that of another Tuscaloosa resident, the late Coach Paul "Bear" Bryant.

Ford's efforts have not been in vain. He is widely acknowledged as the father of 4-H forestry judging in Alabama—and for good reason: Alabama 4-H forestry judging teams have dominated national competition for most of the last generation.

This year's win marked Alabama's 12th national championship in the 4-H Forestry Judging team competition.

What began as a dream a generation ago has become one of the most successful competitive events in Alabama 4-H history—a legacy on which current and future generations will continue to build.

A Winning Legacy

Despite a string of bad luck, the 2002 Tuscaloosa 4-H Forestry Judging Team pursued the national championship with determination. Team members included (front row, left to right) Lisa Shaw, Kate Greene, and Amy Farnsworth and (back row, left to right) Wayne Ford, coach, and Brandon Ligon.



Business Smarts and Life Lessons

Ever since primary school, Ashley Easley had dreamed of becoming a majorette.

But becoming a majorette required lessons—\$20-a-week lessons.

So, beginning in the sixth grade, the Cleburne County girl worked with a 4-H Youth Entrepreneurship project to develop a business, a modest business, that would enable her to sell just enough jewelry to pay for her weekly lessons.

Her 4-H leader, Bridgette Groce, helped her with all the things required to become a successful young entrepreneur—learning how to get started, developing business cards, and getting a business license.

In a short time, she was hooked.

“Even after I completed the majorette lessons, I realized I enjoyed the business and wanted to keep it,” she recalls.

And keep it she did.

What began as a modest effort to finance majorette lessons grew far beyond anything Ashley or her mother, Vonda, had ever imagined.

“When I first started, I worked with simple things—plastic and stretchy stuff,” she remembers. “But over time, I started going to bead stores, where people introduced me to wires, glass beads, and more complex materials.”

In time, Ashley worked up a unique product line, one that people as far away as Atlanta wanted to buy.

It would be a heady experience for many teenagers, but for Ashley, it’s all in a day’s work.

“Lots of people call and tell me what they want, and I deliver it,” she says with an unmistakable air of entrepreneurial self-confidence.

In fact, the business, operated out of her family’s basement, has grown so big that she is now required to pay business taxes.

She’s even earned enough to hire one of her classmates as an employee.

The 14-year-old also has saved enough money to buy an ice-green Volkswagen Beetle when she turns 16—one that will bear her business logo, Ashley’s Accessories.

Now a cheerleader and band member, she’s also well on her way to attaining her ultimate goal of becoming a majorette when she turns 16.

But far more important than anything else are the business smarts and priceless lifetime lessons Ashley has learned along the way.

“It not only has taught me how to run a business but how important it is to treat your customers fairly,” she observes.

“And I’ve made lots of friends too.”

Born Businesswoman

Fourteen-year-old Ashley Easley started a modest jewelry business to pay for majorette lessons. But before long she was hooked. She’s proud of what she’s earned—and learned—as a businesswoman. And she has even made enough to buy an ice-green Volkswagen Beetle when she turns 16.



A Century of “Making the Best Better”

It started a century ago with Corn Clubs, formed by county agents to teach farm boys advanced methods of agricultural production, and Tomato Clubs, developed to instruct girls in proper methods of food preservation.

It was based on a simple premise. Young people—or so the agents reasoned—were often more receptive to change than their parents. And that’s often how it turned out. Boys pleaded with their fathers for a parcel of land to try a new farming technique. Then the fathers, in no time, bought into the new technique after watching their sons.

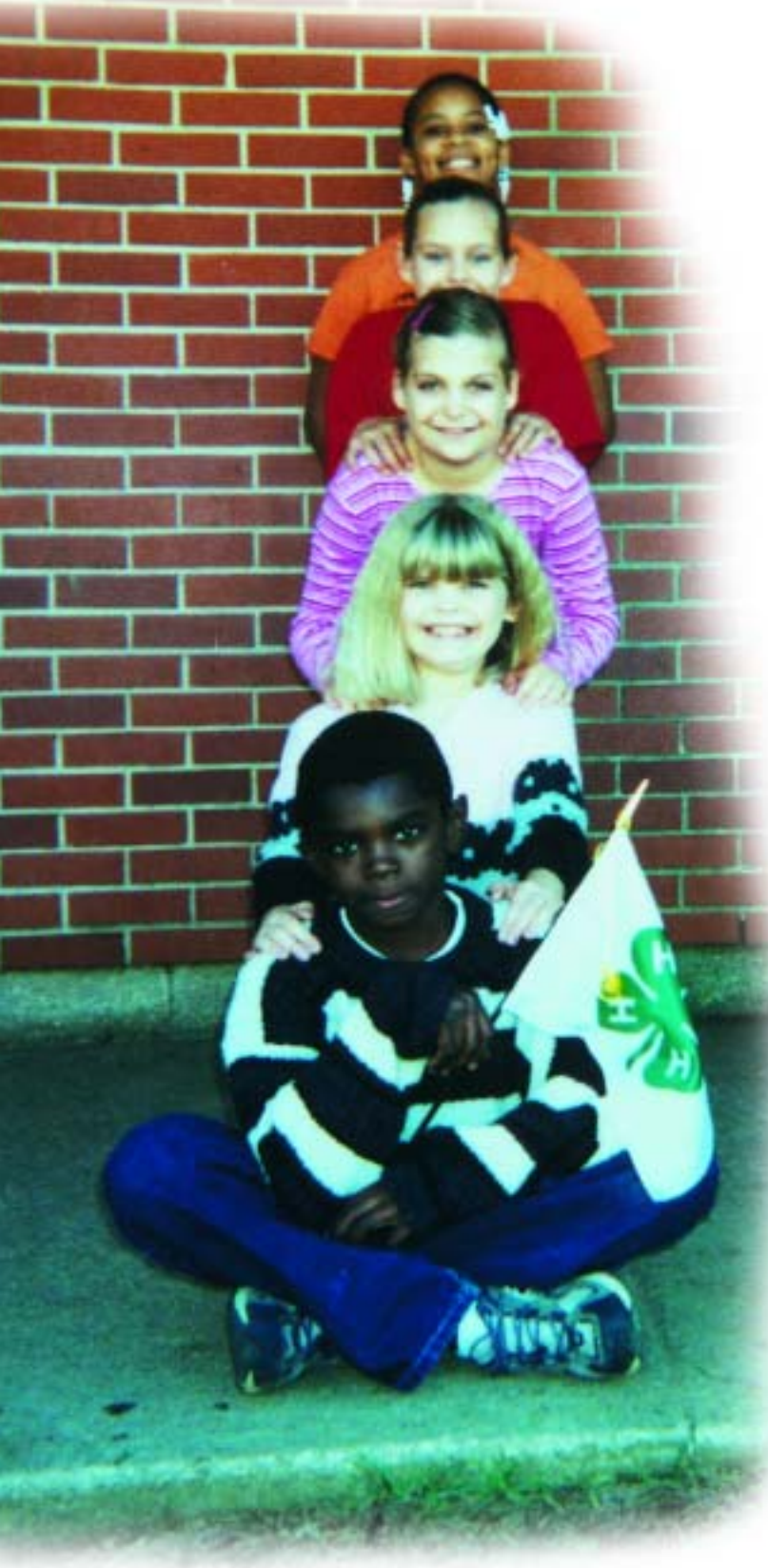
Soon, agents and youngsters alike realized they were onto something, something big. Several years later, these clubs acquired a symbol, a three-leaf clover representing head, heart, and hands—later gaining a fourth leaf representing hustle (later changed to health).

What would soon become one of the most successful graphic designs in history was combined with one of the most original ideas ever conceived. The result is 4-H, considered by many around the world to be the greatest youth movement in human history.

Having just celebrated its centennial in 2002, 4-H, with seven million members, remains the largest youth organization in the world. Orville Redenbacher, Johnny Carson, Morgan Freeman, and Alabama Senator Jeff Sessions are among the more than 45 million people who have participated in 4-H programs during their youth.

While the content of 4-H programs has changed radically in the last century, the core values have not. A century ago, 4-H helped a rising generation of young people, mostly rural youth, adjust to the challenges of an approaching industrial age. Today, it is helping young people meet the challenges of a post-industrial, information age with school enrichment and after-school programs and other “minds-on, hands-on” educational opportunities. But one thing has never changed: the emphasis on personal growth—learning how to become responsible, successful adults.

A century has passed and programs have changed, but the 4-H mission—“making the best better”—remains the same. In Alabama, where some 178,000 young people were reached through 4-H programming in 2002, agents and volunteers continue to build on this legacy, reaching youth everywhere with the skills they will need to succeed in a rapidly changing world.



Good Moves: Success Stories From Our Experts and Volunteers in 4-H and Youth Development

The Coosa County 4-H Wildlife Team, considered a national wildlife judging team powerhouse, won third place at the 2002 National Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Invitational. Coosa County, which earned its first national championship in 1989, holds two national, three reserve national, and seven state championships.

In collaboration with Space Camp, Alabama renewed its highly popular 4-H Missions in Space. Young people from five counties throughout Alabama participated in this program in 2002.

A new program, 4-H Sci-Tech Day Camp, was held in 2002 in collaboration with Auburn University's Colleges of Engineering and Business. Teams of young people worked together to learn about science principles and then collaborated to prepare a computer presentation on the subject.

A Lee County 4-H alumnus, now carrying a full load as an agricultural economics major at Auburn University, became the youngest person in Auburn University bull performance testing history to consign the top-performing bull.

Volunteers are an indispensable part of 4-H youth programming. One volunteer, for example, was instrumental in helping Lauderdale County 4-H Lamb Club junior and senior teams place first and third, respectively, in statewide competition.

For the fourth consecutive year, the National Wild Turkey Federation presented the Alabama Cooperative Extension System with \$5,000 to support its Alabama 4-H Shooting Sports Program. Roughly 3,500 Alabama youth are enrolled in one or more 4-H Shooting Sports disciplines.

Alabama 4-H held its highly acclaimed 4-H Environmental Stewardship Conference in March at the 4-H Youth Development Center in Columbiana. This year's conference involved an entirely new educational approach: Students not only were challenged to be good stewards but to defend their rights as environmental stakeholders in a mock public forum.

Four Alabama 4-H'ers went to the 2002 National Western Meats Judging Contest with a mission—to make perennial winners like Texas take notice. They accomplished their goal, winning the overall competition.

The Alabama State 4-H Horse Show celebrated its 30th birthday in 2002, a year underscored by heightened interest and the numbers of entries in the competition. More than 230 young people from 29 Alabama counties participated in the summer show, held at the Garrett Coliseum in Montgomery.

Ultrasound technology became an innovative part of the 4-H-sponsored Alabama Junior Beef Expo in 2002. Organizers of the competition believe the technology will be a valuable teaching tool in helping competitors understand the importance of maintaining animal carcass quality all the way "from pasture to plate."

An Alabama 4-H'er won a perfect score of 300 in meats identification at the recent National Western Meats Judging Contest held at Colorado State University. The last perfect score recorded at national competition several years ago was also earned by an Alabama 4-H'er.

Help Us Remain "Your Experts for Life"



As Americans mark the first centennial of 4-H, it is an appropriate time to reflect on the role 4-H and the Cooperative Extension System in general have played in the lives of five generations of Alabamians.

Chances are, either you or someone in your family has benefited from an Extension-sponsored program. Perhaps it was a great-grandfather who was able to save the family farm, thanks to assistance provided by a local Extension agent. Maybe it was an aunt or uncle who became the first college graduate in the family, inspired by taking part in 4-H youth development programs.

No other phrase better conveys the mission of Extension than the Alabama 4-H motto: "For Today and Tomorrow... Making the Best Better."

Even today, more than a century since the first Tuskegee farm demonstration wagon rolled down a dusty rural road, the core Extension mission of improving the lives of people of all ages and from all walks of life—farmers and agribusiness professionals, homeowners, business operators, young mothers, elders, and youth—has not changed. It is a commitment—a legacy—underscored in the lives of each of the individuals profiled in this year's report.

Pride in our century-old legacy, coupled with an unwavering optimism in our state's future, is what inspires us as we adapt to prepare new generations of Alabamians for the challenges of a new millennium.

Even so, like other federal- and state-assisted programs, we cannot continue meeting all these critical needs without your support. Tight budgetary restraints, both at the federal and state levels, continue to prevent Extension offices throughout the state from hiring youth, family, agricultural, and natural resource professionals in the numbers required to carry out programs in the most effective manner possible. Likewise, these restraints have prevented us from replacing many state and area Extension specialists who have retired or resigned to take jobs in other states.

But you can help!

Private support can be offered in many different ways. It can be offered to a specific program or county or can be designated to the Extension general fund to initiate new programs.

Options include gifts of cash, securities, real estate, memorial or tribute gifts, gifts in kind, and corporate matching gifts.

Other options may include planned or deferred gifts, including bequests by will or living trust, life income gifts, charitable lead trusts, gifts of life insurance, retirement plan gifts, and retained life estate gifts.

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System is supported by a qualified charitable organization that meets the standards and requirements of the Internal Revenue Code 501 C 3, meaning that all contributions are deductible for federal income tax purposes (subject to statutory limitations) and for federal estate and gift tax purposes.

For more information about charitable contributions, please contact Beth Lawrence, Assistant to the Director, Development, at 334-844-2247.

ALABAMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM COUNTY OFFICES

Autauga

2226 Hwy. 14 W, Suite E
Autaugaville 36003-2540
334-361-7273

Baldwin

302A Byrne Street
Bay Minette 36507
251-937-7176

Barbour

Courthouse, Room 105
P.O. Box 99
Clayton 36016
334-775-3284

Bibb

175 Davidson Dr., SW
Centreville 35042
205-926-3117

Blount

Frank J. Green Bldg.
415 Fifth Ave. E, Suite A
Oneonta 35121
205-274-2129

Bullock

132 N. Prairie Street
Union Springs 36089
334-738-2580

Butler

101 S. Conecuh Street
P.O. Box 338
Greenville 36037
334-382-5111

Calhoun

County Admin. Bldg.
1702 Noble Street
Suite 108
Anniston 36201
256-237-1621

Chambers

County Office Bldg.
Room 201
18 Alabama Ave. E
LaFayette 36862-2092
334-864-9373

Cherokee

102 Main Street
Room 303
Centre 35960-1532
256-927-3250

Chilton

504 1st Ave.
P.O. Box 30
Clanton 35046-0030
205-280-6268

Choctaw

218 S. Hamburg Ave.
Butler 36904
205-459-2133

Clarke

114 Court Street
P.O. Box 40
Grove Hill 36451
251-275-3121

Clay

93 County Road 31
P.O. Box 10
Ashland 36251
256-354-5976

Cleburne

72 Brockford Road
Suite A
Heflin 36264
256-463-2620

Coffee

Farm Center Complex
U.S. 84
5 County Complex
New Brockton 36351
334-894-5596

Colbert

Courthouse Basement
201 N. Main Street
Tuscumbia 35674
256-386-8570

Conecuh

David L. Burt Ag. Center
102 Liberty Street
Room 103
Evergreen 36401
251-578-2762

Coosa

County Courthouse
P.O. Box 247
Rockford 35136
256-377-4713

Covington

23952 Alabama Hwy. 55
Suite 4
P.O. Box 519
Andalusia 36420
334-222-1125

Crenshaw

Courthouse, 2nd Floor
Room 201
P.O. Box 71
Luverne 36049
334-335-6312

Cullman

402 Arnold Street, NE
County Office Bldg.
Suite G-1
Cullman 35055
256-737-9386

Dale

202 South Hwy. 123
Suite D
Ozark 36361
334-774-2329

Dallas

429 Lauderdale Street
P.O. Box 40
Selma 36702-0040
334-875-3200

DeKalb

111 Grand Ave. SW
Suite 105
Ft. Payne 35967-1991
256-845-8595

Elmore

Co. Ag. Center
340 Queen Ann Rd.
Wetumpka 36092
334-567-6301

Escambia

175 4-H Ag.Sci. Dr.
Suite D
Brewton 36426-8149
251-867-7760

Etowah

Co. Annex Bldg.
3200A W. Meighan Blvd.
Gadsden 35904
256-547-7936

Fayette

County Office Bldg.
650 McConnell Loop
Fayette 35555
205-932-8941

Franklin

Courthouse, Room 1
Jackson Street N
P.O. Box 820
Russellville 35653
256-332-8880

Geneva

Geneva Co. Farm Center
2765 E. State Hwy. 52
Hartford 36344
P.O. Box 159
Geneva 36340
334-684-2484

Greene

#1 Professional Court
Springfield Ave.
P.O. Box 228
Eutaw 35462
205-372-3401

Hale

Agricultural Extension Ctr.
701 Hall Street
Greensboro 36744
334-624-8710

Henry

101 N. Doswell Street
Suite F
Abbeville 36310-2105
334-585-6416

Houston

Farm Center Bldg.
1699 Ross Clark Cir.
Suite 4
Dothan 36301
334-794-4108

Jackson

27115 John T. Reed Pkwy.
Suite 2
P.O. Box 906
Scottsboro 35768
256-574-2143

Jefferson

County Extension Office
2121 Building
8th Ave. N, Suite 1700
Birmingham 35203-2387
205-325-5342

Lamar

281 Columbus Ave.
P.O. Box 567
Vernon 35592-0567
205-695-7139

Lauderdale

Courthouse Basement
Room 1
200 South Court Street
P.O. Box 773
Florence 35631
256-760-5860

Lawrence

County Ag. Center
13075 ALA-157, Suite 6
Moulton 35650
256-974-2464

Lee

County Ag. Center
Suite 4
600 S. 7th Street
Opelika 36801
334-749-3353

Limestone

Market Street Bldg.
1109 W. Market Street
Suite A
Athens 35611
256-232-5510

Lowndes

Courthouse Annex Bldg.
125 Tuskeena Street
Room 125
P.O. Box 456
Hayneville 36040
334-548-2315

Macon

207 N. Main Street
P.O. Box 830629
Tuskegee 36083-0629
334-727-0340

Madison

Charles Stone Ag. Center
819 Cook Ave.
Huntsville 35801
256-532-1578

Marengo

Co. Office Bldg.
101 N. Shiloh, Suite 100
Linden 36748
334-295-5959

Marion

Courthouse, Room 174
Military St. & Bexar Ave.
P.O. Box 400
Hamilton 35570-0400
205-921-3551

Marshall

424 Blount Ave.
Suite G21
Guntersville 35976-1132
256-582-2009

Mobile

Jon Archer Ag. Center
1070 Schillinger Rd. N
Mobile 36608-5298
251-574-8445

Monroe

USDA Service Center
334 Ag. Drive, Suite 104
P.O. Box 686
Monroeville 36461
251-575-3477

Montgomery

Courthouse Annex II
125 Washington Ave.
Montgomery 36104-4247
334-265-0233

Morgan

3120 Hwy. 36 W
Suite B
P.O. Box 98
Hartselle 35640
256-773-2549

Perry

208 W. Green Street
P.O. Drawer 540
Marion 36756
334-683-6888

Pickens

Service Center Bldg.
155 Reform Street
Room 300
P.O. Box 271
Carrollton 35447
205-367-8148

Pike

306 S. Three Notch Street
Troy 36081
334-566-0985

Randolph

1 Main Street South
Courthouse, 2nd Floor
P.O. Box 227
Wedowee 36278
256-357-2841

Russell

Courthouse Annex
508 14th Street
P.O. Drawer 1128
Phenix City 36868-1128
334-298-6845

St. Clair

1815 Cogswell Ave.
#103
Pell City 35125
205-338-9416

Shelby

Co. Ag. Building
54 Kelley Lane
P.O. Box 1606
Columbia 35051
205-669-6763

Sumter

24 Washington Street
2nd Floor
P.O. Drawer H
Livingston 35470
205-652-9501

Talladega

132 N. Court Street
Talladega 35160
256-362-6187

Tallapoosa

Courthouse Basement
125 N. Broadnax Street
Room 23
Dadeville 36853
256-825-1050

Tuscaloosa

2513 7th Street
Co. Courthouse Annex
Tuscaloosa 35401
205-349-4630

Walker

1501 N. Airport Road
Jasper 35504
205-221-3392

Washington

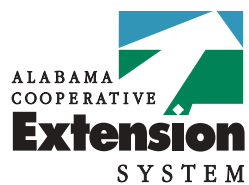
Frank Turner Hall
Court Square
P.O. Box 280
Chatom 36518
251-847-2295

Wilcox

Courthouse Annex
Suite 117
12 Water Street
Camden 36726
334-682-4289

Winston

Courthouse Annex
Courthouse Square
P.O. Box 69
Double Springs 35553
205-489-5376



Your Experts for Life

Trade and brand names in this publication are used for illustration purposes only.
No guarantee, endorsement, or discrimination among comparable products is intended or implied.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work in agriculture and home economics, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, and other related acts, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M University and Auburn University) offers educational programs, materials, and equal opportunity employment to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status, or disability.

April 2003, EX-36