

2003 Annual Report



Telling Extension's Stories

This year we have a new look. Instead of the magazine format you have seen in previous years, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System's 2003 Annual Report is a 2004 calendar. Each month highlights one significant achievement from the past year. These stories represent hundreds of other programs that touch the lives of thousands of Alabamians every day.

Program content has expanded and delivery methods have evolved since our beginnings in the early 20th century, but our mission has remained constant—to bring the latest in land-grant university research to the people. The System, a joint outreach effort of the state's public land-grant universities, Alabama A&M University and Auburn University, has never lost sight of the importance of helping individuals make positive changes in their lives.

Extension professionals have been teachers, mentors, and partners to the citizens of Alabama every day for almost 100 years. We will be with you every day in 2004 and in the coming years as well.

The System Administrative Team

Gaines Smith, Interim Director

Virginia Caples, 1890 Administrator and Provost and
Vice President for Academic Affairs

Samuel Fowler, Associate Director, Rural and Traditional Programs

Chinella Henderson, Associate Director, Urban Affairs
and New Nontraditional Programs

Barbara Duncan, Associate Director, Human Resources

Thomas Elliott, Chief Financial Officer



A view of the Alabama A&M University campus



Samford Hall, Auburn University

Our Legacy

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System story officially began in the early 20th century, but our roots stretch back to the American Civil War. In 1862, when Congress passed a law granting land to each state to establish agricultural and mechanical institutions of higher learning, one of America's unique contributions to higher education, the land-grant university system, was born. In 1890, Congress passed a similar law granting land to institutions educating Black citizens.

In the late 1800s, educators at what is now Tuskegee University began practicing an innovative form of outreach education. They used a mule-drawn wagon as a "school on wheels" to teach people in rural areas better ways to grow crops and feed their families. It was a simple but revolutionary idea that later inspired Congress to pass the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, which made it possible for states to establish statewide Cooperative Extension programs through their land-grant universities. This was the culmination of the dream first envisioned in 1862.

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System was formally created in 1995 when Alabama became the first state to combine the Extension programs from its different land-grant universities into one unified statewide system. The Alabama system is comprised of Alabama A&M and Auburn universities' Extension programs, with Tuskegee University working as a vital partner.

The educational programs of Extension have developed over the years to reflect the cutting edge nature of the research being developed by Alabama's land-grant universities. The outreach efforts have expanded tremendously through partnerships with hundreds of organizations, from local to international groups.

Extension provides education every day, reaching hundreds of thousands of Alabamians in the subject areas of Agriculture; Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs; Forestry and Natural Resources; Family and Individual Well-Being; Community and Economic Development; and 4-H and Youth Development. More than 800 Extension professionals work in offices across the state and in each of the 67 counties to deliver this research and knowledge from the land-grant universities and the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Stations.



Your Experts for Life

Your Experts for Life

An 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 in experts—skilled researchers and educators with a wealth of knowledge about subjects related to better living. Extension professionals are Your Experts for Life, trained to provide you and your loved ones with solutions to the challenges facing all of us in the 21st century.

Extension Online: Lifetime Expertise at Your Fingertips

Much of our expertise is now available merely by logging on to one of the most comprehensive Extension sources on the World Wide Web—www.aces.edu. There you will find more than 18,000 pages of educational materials, including more than 1,000 publications, regularly updated news stories, other timely information, and much more.

Streaming and downloadable digital video clips covering an array of topics are available in several formats.

Our nationally acclaimed publications are available in two forms: one for printing and the other for online searching and viewing.

Articles on our front Web page have led to national coverage in *The Washington Times* and *Farm Press Daily*.

How to Reach Us

For more information about our programs, to serve as an Extension volunteer, or just to ask a question, call or visit one of our 67 county Extension offices listed on the back cover or in your local telephone directory.

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

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

To place orders for publications, call (334) 844-1592.

Visit us online: www.aces.edu.



Healthier Children Through Research

Childhood obesity is an epidemic in the United States.

An estimated one in five children between the ages of 6 and 17 is overweight. Millions of these children face a higher risk of developing obesity-related disorders, such as diabetes and heart disease, much earlier in life.

Nowhere is the problem more acute than in rural areas of the Black Belt region of central and western Alabama, where a number of factors besides poor nutrition are contributing to the increasing problem of obesity.

To get a clearer picture of this problem and its causes, effects, and possible solutions, Dr. Jean Weese, an Alabama Cooperative Extension System food scientist, along with other researchers with Auburn University's School of Human Sciences, conducted a study involving more than 400 fourth- and fifth-graders in Bullock, Macon, and Wilcox counties.

The data Weese collected from the study paints a grim picture.

A third of all Black Belt children are overweight or in danger of becoming overweight. Type II diabetes, also known as adult-onset diabetes and once unheard of among adolescents, is now being diagnosed in children as young as two.

The study's findings reinforce what researchers have suspected all along: the solution to obesity involves far more than changing bad eating habits.

Weese and the other researchers also discovered that inadequate exercise was as much a factor as poor nutrition in causing obesity. Many in the Black Belt simply lack the opportunity for exercise that is taken for granted in more affluent regions of the state.

"There's no incentive to walk up the street for a visit with a neighbor because, due to the economic and population decline that has occurred within the region during the last few decades, people often live far apart," Weese said.

Safety is another major concern.

"Many parents, especially in housing projects, simply don't feel it's safe to allow their kids to play outside. So for many of these kids, the rule is to come home, lock the door, and sit until the parent comes home. About all there is left to do is to watch TV and eat snack food."

The study and many others to follow will help researchers fine tune educational efforts already under way.





January

2004

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	December S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	February S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29		1 New Year's Day	2	3
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18	19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	20	21	22	23	24
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Empowering New Homeowners

Habitat for Humanity founder Millard Fuller pledged to replace substandard housing with new, affordable homes within the next 20 years. Extension personnel in North Alabama are taking that pledge even further with an extra layer of commitment.

They are working to ensure the homes are also safe—free of potentially deadly radon gas. They also help prime the occupants of these new homes for the challenges of home ownership.

In June 2003, Extension joined several other public and private partners to install radon mitigation devices in all 35 homes at Habitat's Jimmy Carter Work Project in Anniston.

The American Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists, the Southern Regional Radon Training Center at Auburn University, Radalink, Radon Control, Inc., RadonAway, and Fantech covered the entire cost of installing the mitigation devices.

"We're working with volunteers from every sector involved in radon mitigation, testing, and education—making sure all of these homes are radon resistant," said Sabrina Lyle, the Extension radon education technician who spearheaded the effort.

Extension agents in Calhoun and Cleburne counties are also working to make sure these new occupants are well-equipped for the demands of home ownership. Cleburne County Extension Agent Debby Mathews teaches a five-week money management course tailored to new Habitat owners, while Calhoun County Agent Isaac Chappell has provided both money management training and one-on-one financial counseling.

"Some of [the new homeowners] have had serious credit problems starting out, so it's really important that we do a good job educating," said Mathews. "As homeowners, they're on their own and can no longer rely on landlords for maintenance and repairs.

"They're taught to be very careful about budgeting expenses for emergency situations and repairs—those unexpected expenses. For many, it's a new concept."

Additional financial training has been provided by Calhoun County Extension Agents Marchale Burton and Ruth Sarro, who teach a Master Shopper course.

So far, the training seems to have paid off for the new occupants.

"They have been able to keep their expenses under control," Mathews said. "No one has had a mortgage foreclosed through this Habitat chapter. And we're talking about 80 houses."





February

2004

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2 Groundhog Day	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12 Lincoln's Birthday	13	14 Valentine's Day
15	16 Presidents' Day	17	18	19	20	21
22 Washington's Birthday	23	24 Fat Tuesday Mardi Gras	25 Ash Wednesday	26	27	28
29					January S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	March S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

Growing Old Successfully

America has more senior citizens than ever before. Within the last century, the number of seniors has doubled three times and is expected to double again by the middle of this century.

With these expanding numbers comes a greater demand for programs to meet senior needs—demands already reflected in the growing number of programs addressing home care, law, health, and financial security for senior citizens.

In an effort to reach limited-resource citizens, their families, and other caregivers, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System's Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs unit developed the Successful Aging Initiative. The initiative, which started two years ago, seeks to address the health, financial, and legal issues associated with aging and dementia.

In the fall of 2003, the initiative held programs in Huntsville and Birmingham, drawing more than 325 and 350 people respectively. Attendees chose from an array of 26 sessions on legal issues, finance, and senior lifestyles.

"Ten percent of Alabamians over the age of 65 and almost one-half of people over age 85 are dealing with dementia," said Kevin Crenshaw, Extension's legal consultant and Successful Aging Initiative coordinator. "But seniors and their caregivers need this information to improve seniors' health, security, and quality of life, whether dementia is an issue or not."

Dr. Richard Powers, director of the Alabama Bureau of Geriatric Psychiatry and a key Successful Aging Initiative partner, provides crucial support with the Alzheimer's disease and dementia education component of the initiative, Crenshaw said.

Dr. Bernice Wilson, Extension resource management specialist, and Rosalie Lane, Extension community development specialist, also assist with the training.

Responses have been positive and reflect a growing need among the public for more education about issues related to aging.

"I have a better understanding of dementia," said G.B. Todd of Huntsville, a participant at a recent program. "Our seniors need this kind of training, and I would like more."

The initiative continues to expand, with programs in Montgomery and Mobile planned for 2004.



March

2004

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 <small>Purim</small>	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17 <small>St. Patrick's Day</small>	18	19	20 <small>First Day of Spring</small>
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28	29	30	31		February S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29	April S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

Meeting the Challenges of Seedling Production

The forestry products industry is increasingly looking to the South for most of its raw materials—not surprising considering the region produces 80 percent of all trees planted in the United States.

Specialized tree nurseries are a critical link in this chain. Before trees are transferred to plantations where they mature and are eventually harvested, they start out as seedlings in nurseries. These nurseries supply more than a billion pines and hardwood trees each year.

Nurseries depend on a number of products to treat troublesome weeds, diseases, and pests that otherwise would undermine the seedlings' healthy growth. It is a critical need that requires constant research and training on the nursery producer's behalf—a need that Extension Forester Dr. Ken McNabb is working hard to fill. McNabb manages the Auburn Nursery Co-op, a research and technology transfer cooperative that serves more than 20 nursery producers in 11 Southern states.

In 2003, the co-op played a key role in ensuring that a weed control product deemed critical to the industry not be reclassified with a more restricted label. This change would have translated into higher operating costs for producers.

The Environmental Protection Agency's decision to restrict use of this chemical was based on a study of apple orchards in Oregon. But as the co-op soon discovered, the findings of the study simply did not apply to forestry nursery conditions.

“We got word of the change and were able to provide research showing that use of the chemical on seedlings did not pose a danger to the environment,” McNabb said.

The co-op also works in other ways to improve nursery seedling production. It serves a proactive role in identifying new chemical products that may prove cost effective for producers.

Under McNabb's leadership, the co-op also has spearheaded efforts to extend the use of methyl bromide, a key product among nursery producers that is scheduled for eventual phase-out.

Throughout the year the co-op sponsors several short courses and meetings to help equip nursery producers to keep pace with the increasing demand for nursery-grown seedlings.

As McNabb stressed, the “future of sustainable forest productivity is high-quality, cost-effective seedling production.”

Extension is committed to ensuring the region's seedling producers are primed to meet this challenge.



April

2004

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4	5	6	7	8 <small>All Fools' Day</small>	9	10
<small>Palm Sunday</small> <small>Daylight Saving Time begins</small>		<small>Passover</small>			<small>Good Friday</small>	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
<small>Easter</small>		<small>Jefferson's Birthday</small>				
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
			<small>Administrative Professionals' Day</small>	<small>Earth Day</small>		
25	26	27	28	29	30	

A Fountain of Water Quality Knowledge

Water—most of us take it as much for granted as the air we breathe. But if the drought of 2000 taught us one lesson, it is that water must be as carefully managed as any other resource.

With this in mind, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System's water quality team created one of the nation's most comprehensive sources of water quality information.

The site, www.aces.edu/waterquality, serves as the primary Web-based source of water quality information for Alabama residents.

"Some people think Extension deals only with agricultural issues," said Dr. James Hairston, an Extension water quality scientist and coordinator of the Alabama Water Quality program. "Agriculture is a major focus of Extension programming. But drinking water quality affects all Americans no matter what their background."

Hairston, one of the land-grant university system's leading experts in drinking water as it relates to human health, provided primary leadership for development of the site. He was one of three state water quality coordinators who assisted with the development of the national drinking water site, www.usawaterquality.org.

Information on the Alabama Water Quality program is organized under eight sections and a general information category, all of which are further divided into more than 100 subtopics.

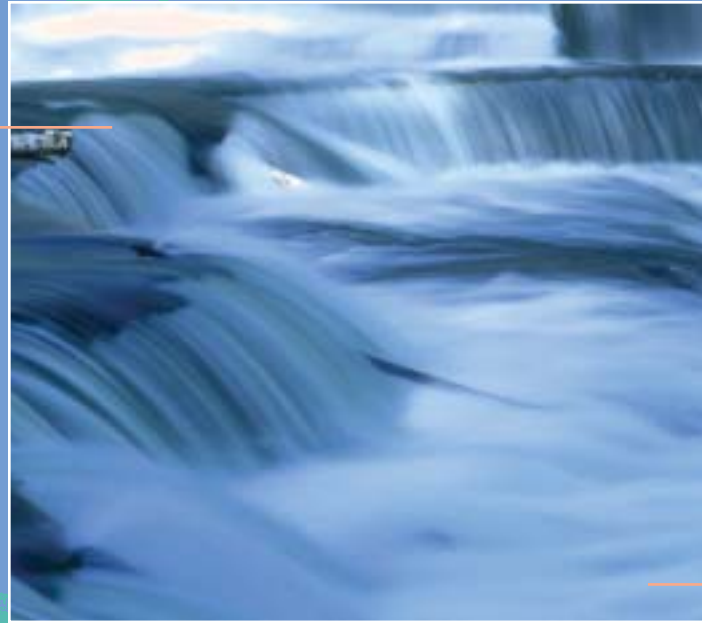
One of the most popular sections of the site is a database of frequently asked questions providing more than 2,300 entries on numerous water quality-related topics. Each section of the site also is equipped with a refined key word search.

In addition to drinking water, the Alabama Water Quality program site carries information about environmental restoration, volunteer citizen water quality monitoring, and animal waste management.

The Alabama water quality team also has developed the nation's largest online glossary of water quality-related terms—everything from abandoned well rights to zebra mussels.

The site is more than a convenient source for consumers. Scholars from several countries already have used information from the site for presentations at several international conferences.

"I don't know of one municipal drinking water Web site in the country where you can get this kind of information," said Lisa McKinley, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Extension liaison for Region 4. "Any question you may have, you can answer it immediately by visiting the Alabama Web site."



May

2004

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30	Victoria Day (Canada) 31					
	Memorial Day (Observed)					

A Helping Hand for Farms and Small Communities

Agri-tourism—for many small Alabama communities, it's their one shot at economic development.

Very few communities will ever have the chance to land a Honda or Mercedes plant or, for that matter, even a smaller company. But many abound in farms—small farms, large farms, farms that specialize in crops such as strawberries or pumpkins, and farms that grow cotton or peanuts.

And there are plenty of people from all walks of life who would like to visit these farms for a sample of rural life.

“Tourism and farming, which each generate about \$6 billion in income each year in Alabama, are a natural match,” said Dr. Tom Chesnutt, an Alabama Cooperative Extension System community development specialist. “But it’s also a way for rural communities to develop a resource that they can advertise.”

Working with four other public and private partners, Extension is spearheading a statewide effort to capitalize on this valuable resource. The players are the Alabama Farmers Federation, the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries, and the Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel.

Their first goal is to develop a statewide Alabama Agri-Tourism Trail—an exhaustive inventory of agri-tourism sites in Alabama.

Information about these sites will be posted on the new Alabama Agri-Tourism Trail Web site, www.AlabamaAgriTourism.com.

Extension is also working with its partners to carry out an extensive marketing effort on behalf of these sites.

Farmers and their communities already are profiting from agri-tourism projects. As Chesnutt is the first to point out, the concept behind these projects can be very simple.

“They can be as simple as on-site sales of farm-grown commodities,” Chesnutt said. “Some have started ‘u-pick’ operations where visitors can go and pick their own strawberries or blueberries. Others have established corn or hay mazes, which are great for school tours.”

For now, Extension will focus on existing operations. But this is only the beginning of what organizers hope will become a much more ambitious program.

“Down the road, we hope to be providing a series of workshops, publications, and other outreach efforts so that those who are not yet involved in agri-tourism will have the tools to start their own operations.”



June

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Coping With Cogongrass

It's been called the weed from hell. While scientists are the first to concede that it's impossible to send the weed back to the place from which it fictitiously sprang, they are looking for ways to cut this troublesome weed down to size by containing its spread along Alabama's Gulf Coast.

Since its accidental introduction into the state almost a half century ago, cogongrass—which, contrary to popular opinion, actually comes from Asia rather than the infernal regions—has caused nothing but trouble for people living and working along the Gulf Coast.

This is especially true for forestland owners who often must spend as much as \$200 an acre to beat back cogongrass before they can even think about planting new pine seedlings. Otherwise, young seedlings, particularly longleaf seedlings, will not grow into healthy pines.

On a six-acre research site in Theodore, Extension Weed Scientist Dr. Mike Patterson and his doctoral student, Wilson Faircloth, are working with USDA Weed Ecologist Dr. Jim Miller to develop better ways to manage cogongrass.

Currently, landowners have only two chemicals to control cogongrass. These chemicals have to be applied before the seedlings are planted, which means there is very little landowners can do later if the grass begins overtaking the seedlings.

That leaves researchers with the challenge of finding methods to contain the grass's spread as the pine seedlings take root.

One method involves mechanical site preparation before planting.

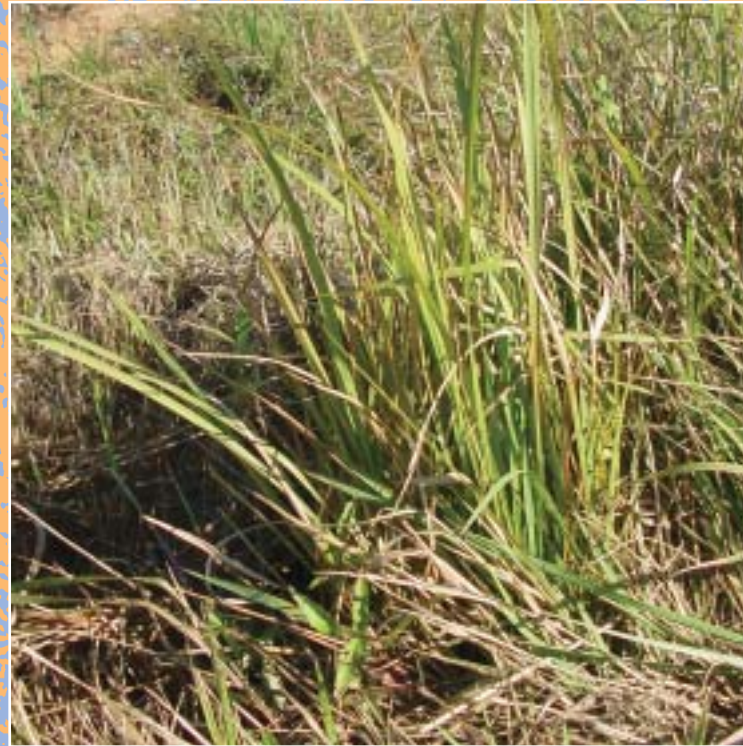
"We use a fire plow, which throws the cogongrass over to the side and creates a 3-foot wide trench in which the seedlings can be planted," Patterson said. Removing the cogongrass's biomass reduces its ability to take root again in the disturbed area.

Another site preparation method involves spraying the cogongrass with herbicides in the fall while the weeds are still green. This is followed by pine planting in the winter. Some experts believe this to be the most effective approach because it depletes the weed's carbohydrate food sources it otherwise would use for growth the following spring.

Initial results show both approaches could provide foresters with some relief.

Cogongrass also is a bane for state and county highway departments, especially the latter, which lack the funds to deal with the weeds effectively.

With funding provided by the Alabama Department of Transportation, Patterson and Faircloth are also exploring the interaction between mowing frequency and herbicide application as it relates to the management of cogongrass.



July

2004

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
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Independence Day						
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Parents' Day						

More Feathers in Their Caps

To the victors belong the spoils, and the spoils of two national championships once again go to Alabama, thanks to the hard work of two 4-H teams.

In one of the closest competitions on record, a team composed of Tuscaloosa County 4-H'ers Lisa Shaw, Kate Greene, Amy Farnsworth, and Traci Beams squeaked past Virginia with only a fraction of a point to win the 2003 4-H Wildlife Habitat Invitational in Las Cruces, N.M. They also posted the top four individual scores.

This marks the fourth time a Tuscaloosa team coached by Wayne Ford, Tuscaloosa County Extension coordinator, has competed successfully for a national championship. Ford has also coached seven national 4-H forestry judging championships. In fact, three of the members of the current wildlife judging team belonged to the 2002 National Forestry Judging championship team.

Competing in national 4-H wildlife habitat evaluation requires an intense effort. Team members must learn how to manage a habitat for various wildlife species. They also must evaluate a habitat based on aerial photographs and provide an oral defense of this evaluation.

At about the same time the Tuscaloosa County team was enjoying its victory, the Coosa County 4-H forestry judging team secured top place at the 24th Annual 4-H Forestry Judging Invitational in Weston, W.V., more than half a continent away.

Team members Amanda Luker, Brittany Brown, Emily Vines, and Holly Cordner enjoyed a 53-point margin over second place Pennsylvania and nearly 100 points over third place West Virginia. They also dominated individual scoring throughout the event.

No other state in the nation has been able to match Alabama, which has amassed 12 national championships in the 20-year history of forestry judging competition.

Alabama teams have won the national forestry championship in eight of the last nine years, Vines said. This is the sixth consecutive year Coosa County teams have competed for either a forestry or wildlife judging national title. All of these teams placed among the top three states. Three of these teams secured national championships, one a reserve national championship.

National championships are nothing new to three team members—Cordner, Luker, and Vines—who served on the national wildlife judging team in 2001.

Their team coach, Coosa County Extension Agent Roger Vines, has coached numerous national champion teams in his 20-year career with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.





August

2004

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 <small>Friendship Day</small>	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31			July S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	September S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

Reaching Alabama's Newcomers

From shopping malls to playgrounds, the gentle, lilting sounds of Spanish are being heard more and more in Alabama. This is not surprising considering that Hispanics now comprise the fastest growing minority in our state and nation.

Almost 33 million Hispanics now live in the United States—12 percent of the total U.S. population. Census data also shows more than 75,000 Hispanics live in Alabama.

Since more than 90 percent of Alabama's Hispanics live in metropolitan areas, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System's Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs unit has developed several educational efforts to reach this growing population.

Extension's Spanish Programming Team launched a Spanish-only Web site just two years ago that already has attracted regional and national attention. The site links to more than 1,200 research-based Spanish publications from an array of professional and educational sources. Family-related issues, education, health, and legal concerns are among the many topics addressed. The site was developed through the efforts of the Spanish programming team consisting of Extension Animal Scientist Dr. Julio Correa and Extension Communications Specialist Jean Hall Dwyer. Juana Macias, Extension urban agent, also provided valuable assistance.

The site has quickly developed into a valuable resource for service providers throughout the state and nation.

Extension also publishes *Metro News*, an online bilingual publication.

Under the leadership of Dr. Bernice Wilson, Extension resource management specialist, and Marilyn Johnson, Extension family welfare specialist, Extension has also sponsored the Education Fiesta attracting more than 600 people. Spanish speakers from several federal, state, and local agencies were on hand to discuss common concerns of Hispanic residents.

Through its Diversity and Multicultural Affairs program, Extension is working to acquaint Alabama residents with the culture and traditions of their Hispanic neighbors.

Building on these successes, Extension's next step will be conducting a promotional campaign customized to every urban center in the state. Extension also will be working closely with the Alabama Hispanic Association on a project aimed at increasing graduation rates among Hispanics by increasing parental involvement.





September

2004

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
5	6 <i>Labor Day</i>	7	8	9	10	11 <i>Patriot Day</i>
12 <i>Grandparents' Day</i>	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22 <i>First Day of Autumn</i>	23	24 <i>Native American Day</i>	25
26	27	28	29	30	August S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	October S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

Helping a Young Industry Stay Afloat

Just three years ago, David Teichert-Coddington, known by friends and co-workers as TC, was earning a steady income as an Alabama Cooperative Extension System fisheries specialist.

But he was convinced there was a future in shrimp farming—saltwater shrimp farming, in this case, using water pumped from an ancient saltwater reservoir in western Alabama. At least one grower, inspired by his vision, took the plunge and began raising shrimp.

In time, TC decided to practice what he preached. He left his job with Extension and moved to western Alabama to begin farming.

With the drop in prices for shrimp following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, TC wonders whether he and the other growers will ever show a profit raising saltwater shrimp. Nevertheless, he still believes he can appeal to a niche market of consumers who demand an environmentally friendly product.

Environmentally friendly farming, in fact, is the hallmark of TC's operation. He uses neither herbicides nor pesticides to grow his shrimp and is convinced this alone will draw more and more consumers to his product.

The biggest challenge remains educating consumers.

"The folks that buy a lot of shrimp now are a lot more conscious of price than quality," said Greg Whitis, an Extension fisheries specialist based near TC's operation. "We have to find a way to stress that the appeal of this product is that it is ecologically friendly."

Whitis is helping find that way by spearheading the marketing effort. He serves as treasurer/secretary of the shrimp growers' professional association. He also helped TC and other growers overcome their biggest challenge yet—dealing with the shrimp's unusually high mortality rates under western Alabama growing conditions, especially during molting season when the crustaceans are particularly vulnerable.

Whitis worked closely with Dr. Claude Boyd, Auburn University fisheries professor, to find ways to reduce these stress levels. They ultimately discovered that the problem stemmed from inadequate levels of potassium in the water. Whitis and Boyd also assisted local growers in a series of trial-and-error attempts to determine what levels of potassium worked best. Once they got it right, growers began noticing a marked difference in yields.

While TC is the first to concede the saltwater shrimp industry faces an uphill climb, he believes Extension has a vital part to play in the new industry's future.





October

2004

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			September S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	November S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11 Columbus Day (Observed)	12	13	14	15	16
17 United Nations Day	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 Halloween 31 Daylight Saving Time ends	25	26	27	28	29	30

A Critical Link in the Chain

For the children of military parents, life is not without its share of stress. Most military children can count on living in a community for only a few years before their families are reassigned to another part of the country, if not the world.

With the global war on terrorism still raging, there is often the added stress that follows when one or both parents are deployed in an active war zone.

4-H has become a vital link for many of these children, especially here in Alabama, where overseas deployment has been high. Alabama 4-H is working closely with the U.S. Army Child and Youth Services and the U.S. Air Force Family Member Programs to ensure this link will remain unbroken during the time these young people spend in Alabama.

Based on feedback from children surveyed at military bases, 4-H also has developed outreach programs in science and technology, visual and performing arts, citizenship, and photography. But the most important goal remains ensuring that all 4-H'ers at Alabama military bases are actively enrolled in 4-H programs at both the state and local levels.

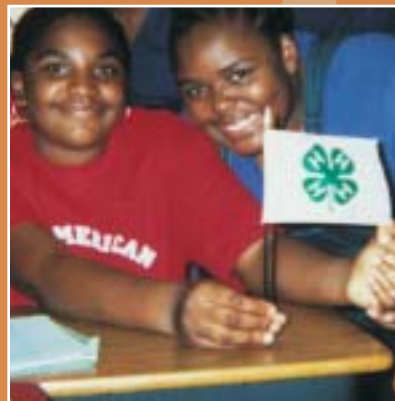
“From the very beginning, the focus has been on meeting the needs of military and young people and sometimes filling the void that an absent parent would otherwise fill,” said Chuck Hill, Alabama Cooperative Extension System 4-H youth development specialist, who has been involved with the design team and training of Army staff throughout the Southeast.

The growing partnership between Alabama 4-H and the Army is a perfect match.

“The Army really is interested in strengthening partnerships between the local office and base,” said Dr. Molly Gregg, Extension 4-H youth development specialist. “And for their part, they have a lot to bring to the local 4-H programs in terms of community clubs and centers on base—resources that work really well with our local programs.”

Alabama 4-H already has established working partnerships with Army Child and Youth Services personnel at Fort Rucker near Dothan and Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville. Plans are under way to establish a similar program at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery.




USDA, the parent organization of Extension and 4-H, has also made a firm commitment to establish 4-H Clubs on installations worldwide to provide stability and a welcoming, consistent environment for young people.





November

2004

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2 <small>Election Day</small>	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11 <small>Veterans' Day</small>	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 <small>Thanksgiving Day</small>	26	27
28	29	30			October S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	December S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

Working as One for Healthier Alabamians

“I just wanted to let you know that because of your efforts, my picky little eater, Katie, is eating foods she otherwise wouldn’t touch,” wrote a parent. “Like so many children, she once had an aversion to all things green. Now she’s eating green apples and English peas.”

Another parent, a once shy, quiet young mother named Ernestine, now is regularly preparing nutritious meals for her family thanks to the confidence she gained attending an Extension-sponsored Eating Right Is Basic cooking class at her local health department.

These are only two examples of the thousands of lives touched by the Alabama Cooperative Extension Nutrition Education Program (ACENEP), a combination of what had previously been two successful nutrition education programs.

Begun 40 years ago as a pilot project in Alabama, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) sought to change the eating habits of low-income Americans, who often received inadequate nutrition. Two decades later, Congress allocated money to support an educational program targeted to food stamp recipients. The Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program, known in Alabama as the Nutrition Education Program (NEP), was born.

Both programs now work as one in Alabama. ACENEP educators are confident this merger will ensure that larger numbers of eligible clientele are reached with Extension programs.

A good example is the NEP outreach effort in Alabama schools.

“We have a lot of children in our schools that meet NEP criteria but who previously couldn’t be reached by trained personnel,” said Sondra Parmer, ACENEP project manager. “We just didn’t have the labor force to do it.

“Before the merger, we had only one educator in an entire county. Now we have more personnel in the state to reach school children. We have been able to expand our base, which has been a very positive thing.”

The increasing numbers of Alabamians reached through EFNEP and NEP programs already reflect the positive changes resulting from this new approach.

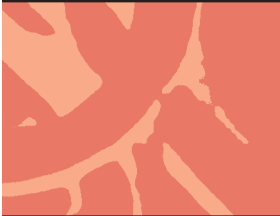

EFNEP enrolled more than 7,400 families with more than 18,650 members in 2003. More than 90 percent of enrolled homemakers demonstrated improved family diets.

NEP helped more than 305,000 people through direct instruction in 2003 and reached millions of others through exhibits, TV public service announcements, and billboards.



December

2004

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	<p>November</p> <p>S M T W T F S</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6</p> <p>7 8 9 10 11 12 13</p> <p>14 15 16 17 18 19 20</p> <p>21 22 23 24 25 26 27</p> <p>28 29 30</p>	<p>January</p> <p>S M T W T F S</p> <p>1</p> <p>2 3 4 5 6 7 8</p> <p>9 10 11 12 13 14 15</p> <p>16 17 18 19 20 21 22</p> <p>23 24 25 26 27 28 29</p> <p>30 31</p>	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 Hanukkah	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 Kwanzaa begins	27	28 First Day of Winter	29	30	31	<p>Christmas</p> 

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