

# Southern Administrative Heads Updates and Highlights

## Summer Meeting July 2024

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## **Clemson University College of Agriculture, Forestry & Life Sciences**

Southern Administrative Heads Section Meeting

*February 2024 – July 2024 Update*

### **Leadership**

- Following a national search in the spring, Dr. Matt Holt was selected to become dean of CAFLS on September 1, 2024. Dr. Holt is joining Clemson from Virginia Tech University, where he is head of the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics. Additional information about the hire can be found here: <https://news.clemson.edu/matthew-holt-named-dean-of-clemsons-college-of-agriculture-forestry-and-life-sciences/>
- Dr. Greg Yarrow's position as interim dean of CAFLS will conclude on August 31, 2024.
- Dr. Todd Petty, chair of Clemson's Department of Forestry and Environmental Conservation, was selected as dean of the University of Georgia's Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources. A search for a new chair will begin in the fall.
- Dr. Emily Huff of Michigan State University was selected to lead the Wood Utilization & Design Institute (WU+DI).
- The Edisto Research & Education Center selected Dr. John Andrae as Director.
- The South Carolina Water Resources Center is actively searching for a new Executive Director.
- Dr. Matt Hersom has been named Acting Chair of the Department of Animal and Veterinary Sciences department with the upcoming retirement of Dr. Charles Rosenkrans.
- Currently interviewing department chair candidates for the Department of Food, Nutrition, and Packaging Sciences.

### **Facilities**

- We broke ground on a new home for forestry and environmental conservation. It will be an approx. 85,000 sq ft mass timber structure including teaching and research labs, offices, classrooms, and collaboration spaces.
- A new Poultry Science Center is under construction.

### **Finances**

- Clemson continues to refine drivers and metrics associated with a transition to a revenue-based budget model. The roll-out of this model (July 2026) will coincide with the newly selected enterprise resource planning software—Workday.
- Upcoming Teconomy report expected to show a nearly 4:1 return on investment in CAFLS

### **Bragging Points**

- 3,429 undergraduate applications to CAFLS for fall 2024

- Two Fulbright Scholars (Wildlife & Fisheries BS, Agriculture PhD students)
- Three graduates of LEAD21 program
- Ag+Art Tour expanded to 177 locations across the state, connecting farms, markets, and local artisans
- Three new peach varieties resistant to bacterial spot patented (Dr. Ksenija Gasic)



**CENTRAL**  
STATE UNIVERSITY

**Division of  
Research and Economic Development  
and 1890 Land-Grant Programs**

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### **Southern Administrative Heads Updates and Highlights: Central State University**

- Dr. Morakinyo A.O. Kuti resumed as the 10<sup>th</sup> President of Central State University on July 01, 2024
- Dr. Amy Hobbs Harris serves as the interim Provost of Vice President of Academic Affairs
- Dr. Jose U. Toledo will start as the VP of Research and Economic Development and Director L-G on August 01, 2024

### **Research Update:**

- The Agricultural Research and Development Program (ARDP), the research division of the land grant program at Central State University, continued its research efforts on the following critical issues during the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 aligned with the USDA Strategic Goals. The research plans focus on four critical issues related to (i) Plant and Animal Systems, (ii) Food Nutrition and Health Systems (FNH); (iii) Natural Resources and Environmental Systems, and (iv) Advanced Technologies and Commercialization Systems.
- Hired an Assistant Director of Research and Demonstration Complex (Onboard on August 15, 2024)

### **Funding update:**

- USDA/NIFA, Evans-Allen funds to support agriculture research at the 1890 Land-Grant institutions
  - o CSU funding: FY24 \$46,692,411 (until July 2024) (Land-Grant External Funding \$32,945,937)

### **Extension update**

- To increase capacity and meet the needs of Ohio communities, Central State Extension will be adding educators throughout Ohio. The hires will almost double the number of educators in the field to provide programs in the 42 counties targeted by CSU Extension. Educators will be hired in the four program areas of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Community and Economic Development, Family and Consumer Sciences, and 4-H Youth Development.
- The Beginning Farmer Program with CSU Extension has developed seven incubator farm sites with local farmers to help aspiring farmers gain practical experience along with classroom teaching. The classes include production taught by ANR educators and farm business management taught by CED educators.



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- The 4-H Youth Development has started an Urban Farmer Youth Initiative with seven sites where youth are learning to grow and market food products. The youth grow gardens throughout the summer and with the help of a local cannery, create value-added products. Entrepreneurship is taught with the youth as they learn to market what they have created.
- CSU Extension has a Mobile Health Education Unit that brings health education to urban and rural communities. The unit is staffed with local health organizations to provide screenings and FCS educators provide information on upcoming educational classes.

**Infrastructure update:**

- **Research Facility**
- Core/Shell:
- Expected construction completion - December 2024
  
- 10k Build-Out:
  - Prior Approval for Construction – Request to be sent to NIFA
  
- 30k Build-Out:
  - Funding TBD
  
- **Storage Facility**
  - Prior Approval for Construction – submitted and currently awaiting NIFA approval

## Highlights of the Louisiana State University AgCenter & College of Agriculture Southern Administrative Heads Section Meeting - Summer 2024:

### Updates:

- **Legislative session** was successful. We received **\$6 million in 1x funds** that will mostly be put towards in campus equipment and instrumentation to support research, teaching and related programming.
- Additionally, there is approximately **\$85 million dollars** in ongoing authorizations for capital improvements. Thanks to the legislature, we have money at various stages of the pipeline to continue incrementally renovating facilities so we can deliver world class science and extension programming to our clients.
- Educational Contacts Reached – **1,209,499 for FY 24**, which has increased by over 1/4 of a million over the last 2 years.
- Approximately **120,000 Louisiana youth** participating in 4-H and FFA by the end of the program year, an increase from 107,000 in FY23.

### National Titles:

- **Louisiana 4-H** are the **2024 National Shooting Sports Team Champions**. This is their fourth national championship in the past five events.
- **The LSU College of Ag MANRRS** (Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences) **team** won the **National Quiz Bowl Championship** in Chicago.

### Highlights:

- We are building out our **precision/digital agriculture team** – focusing on uses of drone technology and artificial intelligence for improved farm level decision-making. Three offers have been made to potential team members and hopefully we will add one to two more.
- At the Sugar station, a **new quantitative geneticist position** was created to support the breeding program. This research position will look at the data from previous varieties to implement new methodologies from the molecular program to make new varieties more successful and efficient. This will help Louisiana continue to be the top producer of sugarcane in the U.S.
- A new sweet potato variety was released on June 20th – **Avoyelles**, is named for the parish where scientists initially saw its potential. It can be harvested up to 30 days sooner than other sweet potatoes. It is a high yielder, lighter in color, and tastes great.

**LSU Ranks in the  
TOP 15  
In Agricultural Sciences**

**LSU AgCenter Has  
\$88.7 Million  
In Research Expenditures**

**\$40 Million  
Grants and Awards**

**Commodity Board Research Grants  
Rice \$1.26 Million  
Soybean and Grain \$1.48 Million  
Sugarcane \$1.3 Million**



**4( MILLION  
REACHED through  
ELECTRONIC CONTACTS**

### LSU College of Agriculture 2024 Statistics:

**LSU**  
College of  
Agriculture

- 1,106 undergraduate students
- 311 graduate students
- 110 Pre-Agriculture Students in the University College Center for Advising and Counseling (UCAC)
- 296 first-year students in the Freshman Year Center (UCFY) declared a major within the College of Ag
- 33% of student population are HUG (Historically Under-Represented Undergraduates)

### Quick Facts:

- 1 COA student was honored in LSU's 2024 Tiger Twelve
- 11 students awarded \$51K in Undergraduate Research Grants in 23-24.
- 324 undergraduate students graduated in 2023-24.

**Mississippi State University**  
**Division of Agriculture, Forestry & Veterinary Medicine Update**

**July 17, 2024**

**Division Leadership**

- Nicholas Frank, Dean of our College of Veterinary Medicine, has added Alicia Olivier as interim Associate Dean for Administration.
- Angus Catchot was named Extension Director on November 1, 2023 and is filling out his leadership team with Trent Irby as Associate Director for ANR and Teresa Gammill as Associate Director for FCS.
- Darrin Dodds is serving as Associate Director for the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station.
- Sheri Worthy is the new head of the School of Human Sciences and comes to us from the University of Georgia.

**Points of Pride**

- MSU and Arizona State University will co-host a conference in Washington D.C., “The Intersection of Agriculture and Competitive Statecraft.” It is becoming increasingly obvious that we live in a world where agricultural, national interests, and strategic partnerships matter enormously. This event will explore the reality and the potential for more well-informed national policy.
- This summer we joined major agricultural and forestry interest groups to kick off Vision 2030, an exercise to define initiatives for the ag and forestry industries in Mississippi. Some of the initial projects include an initiative to focus on cross-laminated timber, identify specialty crop opportunities, and to form a team of scientists to educate our ag community on artificial intelligence.
- In August, Rob Bertram, Chief Scientist for USAID Bureau for Resilience, Environment and Food Security, will join us on campus to celebrate the success of the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Fish and the global impact of Mississippi State University.
- In a unanimous vote, the state legislature passed House Bill 1210, establishing the Dr. Elton Mac Huddleston Rural Veterinarian Scholarship Program in memory of the late former House member and veterinarian. The scholarship will provide funds for two students each year to receive full in-state tuition and fees for four years at the MSU College of Veterinary Medicine if they commit to practicing in a rural area of Mississippi for four years after graduation.
- The MS Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning recently approved the College of Veterinary Medicine’s proposal for a Center for Rural Veterinary Practice (CRVP). The CRVP is being created to bring efforts to address the shortage of veterinary services in rural areas under one umbrella and expand current programs.

- The latest North American Veterinary Licensing Examination (NAVLE) interim report shows the pass rate for MSU College of Veterinary Medicine senior DVM students taking the exam for the first time was 93%, compared to the national average of 80%.

## Our People

- Alex Thomasson, professor and head of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, was elected to the International Academy of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering.
- Wes Schilling, a food scientist, has been named a Giles Distinguished Professor at MSU. He also received the American Meat Science Association Distinguished Research Award for his application of science to solve food industry challenges.
- Cory Gallo, Landscape Architecture professor, Assistant Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and Assistant Director of MAFES, has been elected to the American Society of Landscape Architects' Council of Fellows.
- The North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture is honoring Aswathy Rai, assistant teaching professor in the Department of Biochemistry, Molecular Biology, Entomology and Plant Pathology, with the NACTA Educator Award, and O.P. McCubbins, associate professor in the School of Human Sciences, with the Excellence in Teaching and Learning with Technology Award.
- Mark Lawrence and Lorin Harvey have been [selected to serve on national boards that provide insight and advice to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and Congress.](#) Lawrence, director of the university's Global Center for Aquatic Health and Food Security and the U.S. Agency for International Development-funded Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Fish, has been reappointed to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education and Economics Advisory Board (NAREEE). Harvey, assistant professor in Plant and Soil Sciences stationed at the MAFES Pontotoc Ridge-Flatwoods Branch Experiment Station, has been appointed to the specialty crop subcommittee of the NAREEE Advisory Board.

## College Enrollment and Instruction

Fall 2023 enrollment remained steady with 2,461 students in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; 617 in the College of Forest Resources; and College of Veterinary Medicine enrollment increased to 564. 2023 total: 3,642. Fall 2024 enrollment is looking to increase.

## New Construction

Present construction includes remodeling Ballew Hall (formerly the Animal Science Building) for a CALS/MAFES administrative building. This project should be completed this fall.

We received an additional \$13 million to cover increased construction costs to remodel Dorman Hall for Plant and Soil Sciences.

## State Funding



Our separately funded units received increases of 3.1 to 7.1% from the Mississippi Legislature. We also received \$18 million for Vet School Large Animal addition and \$1 million for deer research facilities. Our units made merit-based pay raises averaging 2.5% and additional funding for additional retirement system cost.

## ADMINISTRATION

### New Senior Associate Dean Named

Dr. Megan Jacob is a microbiologist and former faculty member in the College of Veterinary Medicine.

### Dean's Advisory Board for Strategic Excellence and Well-being Launched

Distributed model with 25 representatives.

## RESEARCH



**\$121 million** in new grants/contracts  
\$106 million last year

### Hiring for Artificial Intelligence Faculty Cluster

- Plant sciences position filled
- Two positions posting soon in Food-Animal and Agricultural Communications, Outreach, and Extension

### \$30M Bezos Center for Sustainable Protein

Focus on both plant-based protein and culture-based protein in collaboration with the College of Engineering.

## PHILANTHROPY



- **>\$58 million in gifts and endowments** in FY24
- Second-largest gift ever
- \$3.6 million raised specifically to support graduate students
- Named 12 new William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professors in April 2024

## INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMS

### Food Animal Initiative

- Platforms include healthy animals and safe food, sustainability, digital animal agriculture, protein innovation, and animal agriculture communications.
- This multidisciplinary initiative focuses on both research and workforce development in the food animal industry.

## EXTENSION



**Dr. Rich Bonanno** accepted a position as executive director for the Association of Southern Region Extension Directors (ASRED). A national search for associate dean and director of NC State Extension and vice provost for Outreach and Engagement will begin in early fall.

County Operations renewed MOUs for all 100 counties and the Eastern Band of Cherokee. An MOU with N.C. A&T State University is near signing.

County Government support for NC Extension peaked at \$85.5 million in FY24, providing salary and programming support, and over \$42 million in new or renovated county Extension offices.

## ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

### Associate Dean for Academic Programs Chosen

Dr. David Crouse, a soil scientist, is the former associate department head in Crop and Soil Sciences.

### Graduate Student Support Increasing

CALS secured \$3.3 million in new gifts and commitments in FY24.



### CALS Undergraduate Enrollment Rose ~10%

- Two-year Agricultural Institute programs: 281 students (+45 students)
- Four-year programs: 2,918 students (+228 students)
- CALS grew with NC State enrollment largely capped (43,000 applications this year for 6,000 first-year spots).

### \$1.8 Million in Scholarships Awarded to 600+ Students



## 2024 Southern Administrative Heads Updates and Highlights

- **\$45.8 million in overall grant funding** - we've increased our external funding by 14% in fiscal year 2023
- **Urban and Community Food Complex** – we've broken ground on a new, \$15 million building at the N.C. A&T State University Farm, linking Food and Nutritional Science, Animal Science and Agrobusiness curriculums with community food entrepreneurship
- **\$18.1 million USDA NextGen Grant** – N.C. A&T is leading an \$18.1 million USDA NextGen Workforce award called “System Approach to Promote Learning and Innovation for the Next Generations (SAPLINGS.) The grant will bring professionals and leaders in food, agriculture, natural resources, and human sciences together with students K-12 and beyond to interest and encourage their study of the many aspects of agriculture.
- **AI/Analytics Software Platform** - The N.C. General Assembly allocated \$1 million for N.C. A&T to acquire an analytical software and AI platform, in partnership with the SAS Institute. The platform will be available across research, Cooperative Extension and academic areas.
- **1,105 Students and Growing** - Fall 2023 enrollment included 132 graduate students and 973 undergraduates for a combined total of 1105 enrolled students - maintaining our position as the largest College of Agriculture among the 1890 Land-Grant Institutions.
- **Accelerated Bachelor/Master's Programs** - Approved for the Agricultural Education, Animal Science, and Agricultural and Environmental Systems programs, and the Agribusiness and Food Industry Management and Sustainable Land and Food Systems concentrations, to begin in Fall 2024, allowing students to complete their Bachelor's and Master's degrees in the same field in five years. Applications for the program will begin in Spring 2024.
- **Graduate Program in Dietetics** – the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) approved this concentration as part of N.C A&T's Food and Nutritional Sciences program, to begin in Fall 2024.
- **\$700,000 in Scholarships** - Deserving students across all CAES departments have received \$700,000 in scholarship funding.
- **USDA Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities Program** – Researchers in the college have been awarded \$550 thousand over five years (starting in 2022) to provides technical assistance to more than 1,000 U.S. cotton farmers across the U.S.
- **Environmental Justice Project** - The Environmental Justice program area priority within USDA NIFA has awarded nearly \$1M to Chyi-Lyi Liang, Ph.D., of Cooperative Extension at N.C. A&T, to lead a team in identifying strategies to evaluate the effectiveness of public investments in underserved communities.
- **“Emerging N.C. Pork Leaders”** - Five undergraduate students from the N.C. A&T Swine Group were accepted in the first cohort of the North Carolina Pork program, where they are able to interact with swine scientists, industry leaders, and executives.
- **Landscape Architecture program** – this program continued its Fountain Lecture Series with U.C. – Berkeley and MacArthur Genius Grant Recipient Walter Hood '81; won first place in an international competition to design a memorial at the historic Scanlonville site; continued its “Diversity by Design” initiative, which has raised \$292,000 since 1981 The program also went through a successful reaccreditation process in 2023.
- **Fashion Merchandising and Design program** - seniors participated in New York Fashion Week for the first time.



#### Leadership:

- Dr. Shane Robinson was named department head for Agricultural Education, Communications and Leadership effective June 1, 2024. Dr. Rob Terry stepped down from the department head role and remains on our faculty.
- Dr. Jim Ansley, Natural Resource Ecology and Management department head announced his intention to retire. A national search for the next NREM head will soon commence.

#### Facilities:

- Construction of “new” Ag Hall is complete and move-in is underway. The \$115 million, 190,000 square foot facility houses 6 academic departments, classrooms, student-facing administrative and support functions, and modern teaching and research laboratories.
- The Oklahoma State Legislature allocated \$6 million to invest in facilities improvements for the Food and Agricultural Products Center (FAPC) and an additional re-occurring \$1 million in personnel for FAPC.
- We are embarking on phase 1 of upgrades to our Agronomy Research Station in Stillwater, Oklahoma, home of the Wheat Improvement Team.

#### Budget:

- The Oklahoma State Legislature allocated funds to support a 10% raise in salaries of all county-based Extension staff.

#### Highlights:

- A 30% increase in sponsored research expenditures from FY23 to FY24.
- A 180% increase in philanthropic giving to OSU Agriculture from FY23 to FY24.
- Centralization of financial staffing and functions was completed after an 18-month transition and change management process.
- Centralization of information technology staffing and support was completed after a 12-month transition process.
- OSU Agriculture is engaged in a strategic positioning process which should be complete this summer.
- Oklahoma State University ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in the US in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings and ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in the US on Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger) in 2024.



NOURISHING HEALTHIER, MORE SUSTAINABLE  
UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES, AND CULTIVATING  
STUDENT LEADERS ACROSS TEXAS AND BEYOND

As we embark on an exciting time of transformation and growth in every area (counties, programs, and people served, enrollment and curricula, research and publications), we are reminded yet again that mother nature is ever present, most recently in the form of Hurricane Beryl. With a direct hit to Houston, the fourth largest city in the country, not only did it cause severe damage and disruption in and around our service area but recovery will continue to preoccupy us for the foreseeable future. As always, our extension agents, other staff and faculty (many of whom were affected themselves), are resilient and, as they have done so many times previously, will rise up to the occasion to assist underserved communities recover from the second storm in just two months. A reminder that extreme climate conditions and climate change pose continuing threats to our food, energy, water, and health security which, as it turns out are among our signature programs in the College, where we partner with those across the university, the system, as well as our fellow land grant institutions.

With our robust portfolio of land grant programs, human, financial, physical and technological capital, we as a College are well positioned to be at the forefront of strategies to mitigate such threats. Indeed, as society has recognized the growing importance of a robust food supply chain and food security, so also is society recognizing the increasing importance of food safety, integrity, climate-smart agriculture, ecosystem resilience and above all, the notion that food is health. With the addition of new staff, faculty and academic programs such as MS degrees in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences as well as Nutritional Sciences, new initiatives such as *Agletics* (which was featured in the most recent ARD newsletter), and a growing arsenal of artificial intelligence apps / virtual reality tools, we are well on our way to reinforcing that *Excellence Lives Here*, the new tag line of the university.

By continuing to foster a culture of excellence in **Food, nutritional, water, energy, and climate security** targeted to low-income and underserved audiences, we are better strategically positioned to nourish healthier, more sustainable underserved communities, and cultivate student leaders across Texas and beyond. For details on these and other programs and initiatives, please visit us on campus or take a virtual tour at: <https://www.pvamu.edu/cafnr/>

**University of Arkansas, Division of Agriculture**  
**Deacue Fields, Vice President for Agriculture**

**EXTENSION**

- Four new faculty members started employment since February – Dr. Teresa Henson, Instructor-Family & Consumer Sciences; Dr. Jonathan Kubesch, Assistant Professor-Forages; Dr. Carrie Stark, Instructor-4-H & Youth Development; and Dr. Zachary Treadway, Assistant Professor-Cotton and Peanuts Specialist.
- Dr. Stacey McCullough, Assistant VP and Program Leader for Community, Professional, and Economic Development was recently awarded the 2024 Bonnie Teater Lifetime Achievement Award from the Southern Rural Development Center.
- Dr. Tom Barber is serving as Interim Associate VP – Agriculture and Natural Resources while the search is underway to permanently fill the position. Finalist interviews are scheduled for August/September.
- Dr. Sherry Beaty-Sullivan accepted the position of District Director – Ozark District effective May 1, 2024. A search is currently underway for District Director – Delta District.
- The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service joins the ranks of just a handful of Extension programs leading a U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) University Center - [Center for Rural Resilience and Workforce Development \(uada.edu\)](https://uada.edu/center-for-rural-resilience-and-workforce-development).
- Extension grants awarded Fiscal 2024 totaled \$38.7 million – up from \$22.2 in FY 23 and more than double the FY22 total of \$16.7.

**RESEARCH**

- Research expenditures for the Agricultural Experimentation topped \$83M for FY 2023 while new awards for FY 2024 exceeded \$35M, both being new records.
- National searches for department heads for agricultural economics and agribusiness and crop, soil and environmental sciences are nearing completion.  
<https://aaes.uada.edu/news/nalley-roberts-appointed/>
- Arkansas Leads \$7.1 M National Effort to improve disease resistance in table grapes. The grant is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture Specialty Crop Research Initiative to develop Vitis x Muscadinia wide hybrids for Enhanced Disease Resistance and Quality.

**University of Arkansas, Division of Agriculture**  
**Deacue Fields, Vice President for Agriculture**

- The Arkansas Food Innovation Center at the Market Center of the Ozarks, also known as AFIC@MCO, is a food processing center part of the Division of Agriculture's food science department. It will operate out of the Market Center of the Ozarks, a 45,000-square-foot local food facility in downtown Springdale built with support from the Walton Family Foundation as part of the Northwest Arkansas Food Systems initiative. The facility is set to open in October 2024. <https://aaes.uada.edu/news/afic-at-mco-director/>
- The construction of the 30,000sqft headquarters building at the new Northeast Rice Research and Extension Center at Harrisburg AR is set to open in August 2024. Building dedication will be August 30<sup>th</sup> 2024. Faculty searches for staffing of the Center are underway.
- Design for a new Food Science Research Center is underway with an anticipated budget of \$35M and a completion date of 2026.

**ACADEMICS**

- Bumpers College graduated 273 students in the spring semester and 71 additional students should graduate this summer.
- Bumpers College continues to grow, and we are expecting an increase in new Freshmen as compared to 2023 – 2024.
- Dr. Lisa Wood retired as Assistant Dean of Bumpers College in June. The position is currently vacant, and options are being evaluated.
- The University of Arkansas System has implemented common course numbering that will be used by all institutions in the system. Workday Student will be adopted on the Fayetteville campus during the 2024 – 2025 academic year.

## University of Florida, IFAS

Rob Gilbert

Interim Senior Vice President, ragilber@ufl.edu

### Leadership:

- UF President Ben Sasse announced his resignation effective July 31, 2024 due to family health reasons. Former President Kent Fuchs will serve as Interim President.
- John Davis was named Interim Dean of Research and Director of the Florida Agricultural Experiment Station as of January 2024. Dr. Davis had served as the Senior Associate Dean for Research for UF/IFAS.
- College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Dean Elaine Turner is stepping down as Dean of the college in January 2025. [A national search is underway.](#)
- We welcomed Dr. Shannon Horrillo as our new Associate Dean for UF/IFAS Extension Families, Youth and Communities in March. Dr. Horrillo comes to UF/IFAS from USDA-NIFA, where she served as the Director of the Division of Nutrition in the Institute of Food Safety and Nutrition.

### Budget:

- Current total budget for IFAS is nearly \$500M per year. NSF HERD ranks UF#1 for agriculture and natural resource spending.
- Florida state recurring dollars to UF have grown from \$380M in 2015 to \$720M in 2024. Our request for the second half of funding for the \$30M Center for Applied AI in Agriculture at the Gulf Coast Research and Education Center was approved by the legislature.
- A strategic funding initiative from President Sasse was initiated in Fall, 2023. UF/IFAS had 4 projects funded: crop transformation center, connecting students with cultivated and natural spaces to promote wellness, using business intelligence to modernize Extension through AI, and an innovation hub for urban pest management.
- More than \$2M was secured for 4-H Camp Cherry Lake facility project, including \$900K in state funding approved June 2024 through efforts of 4-H Foundation volunteers.

### Other topics:

- Refereed journal articles published by IFAS faculty have increased from 1389 in 2015 to 1815 in 2023. We are tracking “gold standard” publications that represent articles our faculty publish with our graduate students, and those have increased from 290 to 419 over the same time period.
- Total credentials awarded (degrees, minors and certificates) in the college have increased from 1581 in 2007 to 2586 in 2023.



## University of Florida, IFAS

- Total enrollment is stable at ~6600 students (Fall 2023); (3900 undergraduate; 2300 graduate; 400 non-degree seeking; ~1000 of these graduate students are in fully online, self-funded programs).
- Our AI initiative continues, with a recent visit from Oregon State University on how to launch a similar initiative there. Faculty are highly engaged in teaching courses with AI content. In CALS, 18 unique AI-tagged courses were offered between summer and fall 2023 with 492 students enrolled. In Spring 2024 CALS offered 23 AI courses with 910 students enrolled.
- We are leading a three-year pilot of AG-NGINE, a national name exchange to facilitate graduate program recruiting. In year two, 47 colleges of agriculture and related sciences are participating, up from 25 in year one.
- Extension increased its number of direct contacts by 1.99 million from 2022 - 2023 and helped created approximately 16k new jobs for the state. Direct support from our county partnerships continues to increase.
- UF/IFAS Extension is currently implementing a new Extension reporting system called "PEARS", short for Program Evaluation and Reporting System. The goal of this system is to support Extension faculty and staff with a web-based data-management system that allows users to efficiently manage Extension program data and demonstrate the community impact of the individual Extension staff, faculty and program efforts. PEARS offers features that allow for detailed tracking of various activities. Currently, UF/IFAS Extension is preparing to introduce over fifty program leaders to PEARS for state program development and intends to solicit volunteers to participate in the launch of a 100-person pilot kickoff in January 2025.



## UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

### College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

#### **Leadership Updates:**

- We are currently hiring for these leadership positions: Associate Dean for Extension, Department Head for Entomology, and Department Head for Plant Pathology.
- In the near future, we are planning to start Department Head for Agricultural and Applied Economics.

#### **CAES Academics:**

- This spring, CAES awarded 257 bachelor's degrees, 51 Master's degrees, and 30 Doctoral degrees. To support student success, we awarded \$738,450 in scholarships as both merit-based scholarships and experiential learning support during 2023-24. For 2024-25, we have offered support to 342 students totaling \$590,000.
- We have hired Jaky Childers as our next Director of Student Recruitment – Jaky began working on July 1 and will lead all CAES recruitment efforts, in addition to managing our CAES Student Ambassador Team.
- On April 30, we celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our UGA Tifton undergraduate teaching program.

#### **CAES Research:**

- We increased total grant expenditures 1.7% to \$58.3M, increased competitive federal grant expenditures 1% to \$47.5M, and increased new federal awards 1% to \$69.8M.
- CAES has filled two positions to address the emerging area of controlled environment agriculture (CEA) that are located on the Griffin campus. The two faculty members will focus on plant breeding and entomology aspects of CEA and require greenhouse facilities to initiate research.
- CAES has recruited 13 faculty members across our nine departments to address precision agriculture and artificial intelligence applications for agriculture.
- CAES recently announced our partnership with Grand Farm, a leading innovator in agricultural technology, to build the University of Georgia Grand Farm, a working innovation farm located in Perry, Georgia.

#### **UGA Extension:**

- Arch Smith is currently serving as Interim Associate Dean for Extension while we continue our national search to fill the position vacated upon Laura Perry Johnson's retirement this past May.
- Tim Coolong is currently serving as Interim Assistant Dean for Extension following the retirement of Mark McCann this past April.
- The Extension Behavioral Health Team BHT has completed its first official year. We have trained over 250 community members and Extension staff in mental health literacy curricula, offered an additional 6 behavioral-health related trainings to Extension staff, held 13 behavioral health-related conferences and events, and provided stress management training at 32 Extension Production meetings.

## University of Kentucky, Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and the Environment

Nancy Cox, vice President for Land Grant Engagement and Dean

### Philanthropy

- The college received a historic gift from the Gatton Family Foundation in the amount of \$100 million.
- Two Gatton Foundation endowed chairs were recently named: Dr. Alison Gustafson who leads the Food as Health Alliance and Dr. Tiffany Messer, an associate professor of biosystems and agricultural engineering.

### Land-grant Engagement

- The college is preparing its second annual Engagement Academy in September 2024 for faculty and staff to learn more about engaged scholarship and how they can develop cross-campus/community programs.
- Nine land-grant engagement awards were extended in 2024; investing more than \$180,000 in creative, multi-disciplinary projects with collaborators from academic disciplines, Extension and the community.

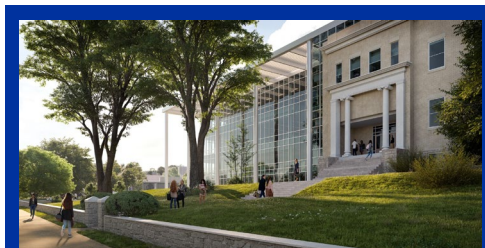
### Facilities - \$530 million, 468,000 square feet of new capital investment

**Scovell Hall** – The \$70 million, 92,000 square foot project returns to the college to its historic home with a comprehensive renovation and expansion of the facility. The facility will house several academic programs (Dietetics/ Human Nutrition, Human Environmental Sciences), college administration, new classrooms, dining, a 4,000 square foot teaching kitchen and student success/life space.

**Martin-Gatton Agriculture Sciences Center** – The \$60 million, 70,000 square foot project will add new classrooms and student life space to the college's campus. The facility will include new dining options, space for student organizations and clubs, UK Ag Equine Programs, Center for Student Success, a burgeoning companion animal program made possible by the Gatton Foundation and 15 new classrooms.

**Agricultural Research Complex** – The more than \$280 million, 190,000 square foot project is central to the college's research enterprise. The new facility will include nine teaching labs, a 250-seat auditorium, new headhouse and greenhouse complex, soil analysis lab, 63 research labs, necropsy and vivarium, plant diagnostic lab, and space for offices, meetings, and industry.

**Meat and Food Workforce Development Center** – The \$90 million, 64,000 square foot project will provide state-of-the-art space to train the next generation of meat processors, add value to the agriculture value chain, improve workforce health and safety and ensure a safe and plentiful food supply. The facility includes space for the Food as Health Alliance, Food Systems Innovation Center, demonstration kitchen and food safety center.



**USDA-ARS Laboratory** – The \$65 million, 40,000 square foot project will be home to seven UK labs and six USDA-ARS Forage Animal Production Research Unit labs. The facility will include a new headhouse and new greenhouse complex.





## UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EASTERN SHORE

### SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURAL AND NATURAL SCIENCES

#### UPDATE FOR S-AHS MEETING JULY 2024

##### **Academic Program Developments**

In December 2023 and January 2024 respectively, the University System of Maryland Board of Regents and the Maryland Higher Education Commission approved a proposal by the University of Maryland Eastern Shore to establish a new Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Program within a new School of Veterinary Medicine (<https://wwwcp.umes.edu/pr/umes-vet-school-will-be-a-first-for-maryland-and-public-hbcus/>). In July 2024, the Council of Education of the American Veterinary Medicine Association (AVMA) visited UMES for a consultative site visit. On July 1, UMES appointed Dr. Stanley Robertson as the first permanent dean of the new school. Most recently, he served as a professor and associate dean of clinical relations at the University of Arizona College of Veterinary Medicine in Oro Valley, Arizona (<https://wwwcp.umes.edu/pr/umes-hires-first-permanent-dean-for-school-of-veterinary-medicine/>). The new Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Program, will be the first stand-alone program of its kind in the Maryland, Washington DC and Delaware region. It will also be the second such program at an HBCU.

The School of Agricultural and Natural Sciences launched several new programs. A Bachelor of Science in Fashion Merchandising and Design, (<https://www.wmdt.com/2022/12/university-system-of-maryland-approves-new-graduate-and-undergrad-majors-at-umes/>) and a new online Master of Science in Human Ecology with tracks in: Child Development, Clinical Nutrition, Nutrition and Wellness, Family and Consumer Sciences, and Fashion Merchandising (<https://wwwcp.umes.edu/he/master-of-science-m-s-in-human-ecology/>).

##### **Capital Projects**

At the end of July, 2024, construction will commence in earnest on a new Agricultural Research and Education Center. The 25,231-square-foot agricultural facility will include specialized research laboratories along with traditional classrooms, conference rooms and faculty offices. The design also includes offices and support space for agricultural extension services, including six greenhouses comprising 7,500 square feet (<https://wwwcp.umes.edu/sans/sans-monthly-digest/umes-breaks-ground-on-agricultural-research-building/>).

##### **Global Engagement**

UMES coordinates the 1890 Center of Excellence in Global Food Security and Defense which brings together all the nineteen 1890 land grant universities. The Centers activities are currently focused in Africa, Caribbean, and Central and South America. The Center is funded by USDA NIFA (<https://wwwcp.umes.edu/sans/ncoe/cegsfd/>).

##### **UMES - SANS Digest for the Latest Updates**

Please read our monthly digest here and subscribe to receive news from SANS:  
<https://mailchi.mp/umes.edu/june-2024-sans-digest-17973288?e=ed3514baf1>

## University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture Highlights Southern Region CARET/Administrative Heads Section (AHS) Meeting — July 2024

### Leadership Additions/Changes

- Paul Plummer was named the dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM). Dr. Plummer comes from Iowa State University and will begin on July 22, 2024.
- Ashley Stokes resigned from Dean of Extension in April 2024. She is now serving in the College of Veterinary Medicine as a Large Animal Extension Specialist for CVM. Justin Rhinehart has been named the interim dean and the search to name the permanent dean will begin in September.
- The search for the dean of the Herbert College of Agriculture is underway. It is anticipated that the permanent dean will be named by the end of 2024.
- The search for a new associate vice chancellor for business and finance is in progress.

### Infrastructure and Equipment Upgrades That Are/Will Be Transformative

- As of July 2024, 104 pieces of field research equipment have been acquired with the ARP fund, 39 during the period of January – July 2024. Most of them have been placed in operation and already positively impacting the efficiency and scope of field research and data collection.
- Groundbreaking of the next-gen smart broiler research facility at the Middle Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center in Spring Hill took place in May 2024. This modern facility consists of four commercial-scale broiler houses, a research laboratory, and relevant auxiliary components. The facility will be used to conduct problem-solving research, training of future workforce, and demonstration of technologies for broiler industry producers and allied industries in Tennessee and beyond.
- Planning continues to construct a state-of-the-art 15,000-square foot Center for Protein Innovation (CPI) that will be located at the East Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center – Blount Unit, near Knoxville campus. The facility will be used for workforce training, student experiential learning, and cutting-edge research related to meat processing, meat quality and safety, and meat products development. Groundbreaking is expected to take place in the fall of 2024.
- The \$100-million Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Building opened in June 2024 on the Knoxville campus. A ribbon cutting ceremony will take place on September 13, 2024.
- Lone Oaks Farm celebrated the groundbreaking of their new 4-H STEM buildings last week. Set to begin construction by the end of the summer, the buildings will feature state-of-the-art educational facilities to provide advanced learning opportunities for youth year-round.

### Global Impact

- In April UTIA turfgrass scientists, in collaboration with partners from Michigan State University, hosted the FIFA Pitch Research Field Day at the University of Tennessee that attracted nearly 300 attendees from FIFA Headquarters and the 2026 World Cup hosting cities in North America. FIFA leaders inspected the 4,000-square foot turf research and development facility (located at the East Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center – Plant Science Unit) and met with the teams who are working to create the perfect pitches for the FIFA World Cup 26™.
- In June, the Beef Improvement Federation Symposium and Convention (BIF) was held on the UTIA campus, following last year's event in Calgary. With more than 500 attendees from across the country as well as other countries, it was the largest in the last two decades. This was the first conference held in the new Agriculture and Natural Resources Building on campus. The convention is considered the premier event in beef cattle genetic selection because it brings together academia, breed associations, and industry leaders to help set new standards and best management practices for the beef cattle sector.

- Herbert College of Agriculture observed a record number of faculty-directed and undergraduate participation study abroad programs and is launching a new 1<sup>st</sup> year study abroad experience for freshman.

### Updates and Strategic Initiatives

- In February 2024, the Center for Renewable Carbon (CRC) of UTIA (led by Dr. Niki Labbe), in collaboration with Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL, led by Dr. Erin Webb), was awarded \$20 million by the University of Tennessee – Oak Ridge Research Institute (UT-ORII) to establish and carry out a convergent research initiative (CRI) on circular bioeconomy system (CBS). The CBS-CRI will hire 20 scientists (10 for UT and 10 for ORNL) and 25 PhD graduate students. The CBS-CRI team is partnering with two crucial Tennessee industries of auto manufacturing and agriculture/forestry to create a circular bioeconomy systems testbed. In particular, the team aims to use emerging science to produce materials from sustainable carbon sources, pioneering the shift toward lower-energy and lower-carbon-intensity circular agriculture, and manufacturing.
- Progress is being made in hiring faculty for the two UTIA-led cluster hires initiatives, namely, Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry and Bioinformatics. As of July 2024, four faculty have been hired.
- UTIA completed the strategic planning process this spring. The plan is currently being produced and will go before the UT Board of Trustees for approval in October 2024.
- UT Extension reported over 8.2 million contacts in 2023.
- The Herbert College of Agriculture had the largest number of applications ever and has experienced a 14% growth in student enrollment over the past 4 years. The three largest majors are Animal Science, Construction Science and Management, and Wildlife and Fisheries.
- The Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication major received approval from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) to start a PhD program in the department. We will welcome our first PhD cohort in 2025.
- Herbert College of Agriculture awarded a record number of academic scholarships (> \$1.2 million dollars) to deserving undergraduate and graduate students.
- New academic programs in Outdoor Recreation and Parks Management (School of Natural Resources) and Agricultural Bioinformatics (Entomology and Plant Pathology) are currently being developed within the College.
- Herbert College of Agriculture launched a new undergraduate research program to provide impactful opportunities for our students to engage with our research faculty (Herbert Experiential Research Opportunities, HERO).
- Herbert College of Agriculture in conjunction with UT Extension launched an innovative program that allows senior level 4-H students to apply for college credit (4-H for Credit). Currently approved projects represent coursework in the departments of Animal Science and Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communications with plans to expand to other programs.



**RESEARCH || TEACHING || EXTENSION**

**Highlights**  
**February-July 2024 (Summer Edition)**

**Grants**

**Dreves, Amy J.** (January 22, 2024). Awarded EPA eXtension PSEFMF grant titled, *Wood Boring Destroyers in the Home and Trees – Pocket Guide*, totaling \$18,171.

**Dreves, Amy J.** (February 13, 2024). A grant subcontract was submitted with University of Puerto Rico for FY2024 USDA-NIFA CPPM, Extension Implementation Program (EIP) grant titled, *Territories United: IPM programs for USVI and PR*, totaling \$87,000. *Awaiting award.*

**Dreves, Amy J.** and other VI/PR stakeholders (e.g., Forest Health and Protect for PR and USVI, USDA Forest service, NRCS, VIDA, Consultant). (May 10, 2024). *Rapid Preliminary Health Survey, Monitoring, and Inventory of Roystonea Palms on St. Croix* grant. \$50,000. *Awaiting submission.*

**Hensley, D. A.** Awarded *Assessing arsenic and soil salinization risk of Sargassum used in crop growth, agricultural compost, and upland waste piles in the US Virgin Islands* grant. Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension. \$29,990. 1 year.

Brantley, E., **Guannel, G.**, **Hensley, D. A.**, Knappenberger, T., Vogel, J., Zamora, R. 2024. *Ghuts, Grit, and Gills: Synthesis of Hydrologic, Water Quality, and Ecosystem Data for Climate Adaptation Planning*. United States Geological Survey Southeast Climate Adaptation Science Center. \$150,000. 1 year (subaward).

An agreement was signed by the United States Department of Agriculture/Natural Resources Conservation Service and University of the Virgin Islands School of Agriculture on March 2024 to further develop the agricultural and conservation recruitment programs between the School of Agriculture and United States Department of Agriculture/Natural Resource Conservation Service. Financial support in the amount of \$354,916.80 was awarded for two years to the development of the agricultural and conservation recruitment programs between these two entities.

**Student Focused Activities**

**Dr. Henry Awika** had three student research trainees (**Markeymah Cargile**, **Brycen White** and **Yvonilyn Lawrence**) who actively participated in the establishment, preparation, and demonstrations of the Horticulture/Aquaponics Program's hydroponic and shade-house experimental exhibits at the VI AgriFest 2024.



**David Hensley** and **Dr. Carollyn Boykins-Winrow** served as STEM Fair judges at Good Hope Country Day School Science Technology and Engineering Fair, April 3, 2024.

### **Community Focused Activities**

**David Hensley** conducted five hiking tours (along with Olasee Davis) which focused on watersheds and runoff flow at Estate Adventure Trail, VI Agrifest, February 2024.

**David Hensley** participated with a display at the 31<sup>st</sup> annual St. Croix Environmental Association Eco-Fair on watersheds and soil and water research, in conjunction with the Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources, April 19, 2024.

The School of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service participated in the 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Agriculture and Food Fair of the U.S. Virgin Islands, AgriFest 2024, with the theme "Agriculture: Our future and so much more in 2024". The event, held on February 17-19, 2024, was jointly organized by the Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture and the University of the Virgin Islands School of Agriculture; approximately 26,800 fairgoers attended.

Natural, cultural, historical, environmental and coastal marine resources educational tours were conducted at Wills Bay, Sweet Bottom Bay, and Prosperity Estate (public); Sandy Point National Wildlife Refuge (public); Ham's Bluff historic lighthouse (Juanita Gardine 7<sup>th</sup> graders – students, teachers and parents); Cane Garden Bay - French Billy Pond (St. Croix Education Complex biology class - students, teachers, and parents); Estate Adventure Nature Trail (Good Hope/Country Day School students); Fort Frederik and Fort Christianvaern (University of the Virgin Islands and Mayaguez cadets unite inaugural joint training exercise).

The School of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service participated in the 2024 Eco-Fair (Earth Day celebration). Presentations were made to over four hundred students from eight schools along with homeschoolers. The Earth Day activities took place at the St. George Village Botanical Garden where students learned about the earth's natural resources and the importance of managing them.

Another Earth Day activity was a presentation at the Diageo USVI - Captain Morgan Rum Distillery on how to maintain office/indoor and outdoor plants.

A Farm Safety Workshop focusing on Using Personal Protective Equipment was conducted in St. Thomas. The presentations provided information about How, What, Why and When to use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment for specific jobs - demonstrating how to protect the respiratory, ocular and auditor receptors. Attendees included professionals/workers in agriculture and other related fields.

In partnership the University of the Virgin Islands Small Business Development Center Agriculture Business Center, United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency, and United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, informational sessions were conducted on Farm Service Agency Loan Programs, and Natural Resources Conservation Service Programs and Application Process.

## **Presentations**

**Henry, Awika O. & Lawrence, Yvonilyn.** (April 6 – 9, 2024). *Machine-learning of leaf-derived vegetation indices to predict water content in carrot roots*. Agriculture Research Directors Research Symposium. Nashville, TN.

**Hodge, Isaiah; Imhotep Charles and Zimmerman, Thomas W.** (April 6 – 9, 2024). *Predicting harvest date for Hibiscus sabdariffa*. Agriculture Research Directors Research Symposium. Nashville, TN.

**Hodge, Isaiah and Zimmerman, Thomas W.** (February 2 – 4, 2024). *Using Hibiscus sabdariffa's Floral Bud length to Determine Harvest Date*. Southern Association of Agriculture Science. Atlanta, GA.

**Nieboer, Samantha, Dahl-Smith, Sarah and Durand, Torhera.** (March 16, 2024). *Food Access and Equity Through a Cultural Lens*. IGNITE by 4-H Conference. Washington DC.

**Joseph, Samuel and Zimmerman, Thomas W.** (February 24 – March 2, 2024). *Effects of flower bud pruning on Jicama production in the Caribbean*. All African Horticulture Conference, Marrakech, Morocco.

**Zimmerman, Thomas W.** (February 24 – March 2, 2024). *"MIDNITE": Combining Caribbean and African Hibiscus sabdariffa*. All African Horticulture Conference, Marrakech, Morocco.

**Davis, Kenneth Olasee.** (March 18, 2024) *Natural, Historical, Cultural, and Marine Resources of the Great Pond*. Radio station 101.3 FM talk show interview with the Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources, Coastal Zone Management Division.

**Dreves, Amy J.** (January 13-14, 2024). *Farming for Success*. The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Bordeaux Farmers Rastafari Agriculture and Culture Vegan Food Fair. St. Thomas.

**Dreves, Amy J.** (April 10, 2024). *BUGS*. UVI Inclusive Childcare Lab & Diagnostic Center, University of the Virgin Islands, Albert A. Sheen Campus on St. Croix.

**Dreves, Amy J.** (April 17, 2024). *Respect the Invertebrates in our community*. Caribbean Center for Boys and Girls, Frederiksted, St. Croix.

**Dreves, Amy J.** (April 26, 2024). *The Good, Bad, and the UGLY*. St. Croix Environmental Association (SEA) 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Eco-Fair at the Botanical Gardens, St. Croix.

**Dreves, Amy J.** (March-April. 2023). University of the Virgin Islands' *Pesticide Safety Education Program (PSEP)* trainings (7-hour class); and examinations). Thirty-two clients took pesticide safety examinations (21 CORE Pesticide Safety; and 3 Categories: 7 ROW, 3 IISH, 1 Public Health (PH)) to receive a certified pesticide applicators licenses through the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) for USVI. One Recertification course was offered to three participants renewing their applicator license after 4 years on March 7; Twenty-three clients attended the CORE Pesticide Safety course on March 14; Thirteen clients attended Right of Way-Weed Management (ROW) course on March 28; 4 clients attended the Structural Health Pest course (IISH) on April 11; and two clients are expected to attend the Public Health (PH) course held on April 25.

## **Publications**

**Dreves, Amy J.** (February 2024). *Common Natural Enemies of Plant Pests in the U.S. Virgin Islands – our VI SUPER HEROS!* **Santiago, Lamani** (University of the Virgin Islands undergraduate student – Illustrator). 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Agriculture and Food Fair of the U.S. Virgin Islands (Bulletin #36).

**Dreves, Amy J.** (March 2024). *Day and Night Pollinators of the US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.* University of the Virgin Islands, School of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service; Extension Bulletin UVI-SOA-CES-IPM # 000P2. **Santiago, Lamani** (University of the Virgin Islands undergraduate student – Illustrator).

**Dreves, Amy J.** (April 2024). *Integrated Pest Management.* University of the Virgin Islands, School of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service; Extension Poster UVI-SOA-CES-IPM # 000P3; **Santiago, Lamani** (University of the Virgin Islands undergraduate student – Illustrator).

**Joseph, Samuel and Zimmerman, Thomas W.** (2024). *Deflowering Jicama for faster production.* VI AgriFest Bulletin 2024. Pp 55-56.

**Richards, Jr., Daryl, Dreves, Amy and Zimmerman, Thomas W.** (2024). *Rotenone: An Organic Pesticide produced by Jicama.* VI AgriFest Bulletin 2024. Pp 53-54.

## **Other achievements/activities**

Participation and presentations in college and career fairs (St. Croix Central High School, St. Croix Educational Complex High School, St. Croix Career and Technical Education Center, UVI Career and Recruitment Fair) attracted 133 students as part of the School of Agriculture’s recruitment/promotional efforts. Additionally, over 100 students benefited from recruitment visits to schools in St. Croix (Lew Muckle Elementary School, St. Croix Career and Technical Education Center, John Woodson Junior and High School and Seventh Day Adventist School), where School of Agriculture degree programs and careers were provided.

**Dr. Carollyn Boykins-Winrow** and **Ms. Denise Lake** were chaperones for six School of Agriculture students at the 38<sup>th</sup> National Meeting (March 20 – 23, 2024) of the Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS) in Chicago, Illinois. Additionally, **Dr. Boykins-Winrow** and **Dr. Larken Root** accompanied five School of Agriculture students at the Association of 1890 Research Directors 21<sup>st</sup> Biennial Research Symposium in Nashville, TN on April 6 – 9, 2024.

The School of Agriculture Agricultural Experiment Station partnered with The St Croix Educational Complex to host four senior-year student on a four-month long internship in the Horticulture/Aquaponics Program under the *Jobs for American Graduates* (JAG-Virgin Islands) program. The Horticulture/Aquaponics Program staff mentored the students, under the leadership of **Dr. Awika**, on modern methods of plant health diagnostics, data entry and production experimental setups. Two of the four students have since agreed to join UVI, one under the ROTC program.

The 4-H/Family and Consumer Sciences Program of the School of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service mentored teen 4-H Ambassadors in developing and implementing “Grow It ‘n Done,” a Lead to Change Project designed to address food security by engaging five (5) communities in building demonstration box gardens to promote growing fresh vegetables to improve health and decrease food costs.

## Virginia Tech Updates for SR-AHS Meeting (July 2024)

### **New Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences:**

Following Alan Grant's announcement of his plan to retire in late 2024, a national search was initiated to recruit a new dean for the college. Mario Ferruzzi (currently at University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences) has been recruited as the next dean and will begin his new appointment at Virginia Tech on October 15, 2024.

### **Other Leadership Transitions in the College:**

Matt Holt (head of the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics) has been appointed Clemson University's new Dean of the College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Life Sciences effective September 1, 2024. George Davis (professor and associate department head) will be serving as the interim department head until a new department head is appointed.

Mike Evans (director of the School of Plant and Environmental Sciences) has stepped back to the faculty to focus on his scholarly research and education programs. Ben Tracy (professor and associate director of SPES) was appointed interim director on July 1, 2024.

Dwayne Edwards (head of the Department of Biological Systems Engineering) was appointed interim Commandant for the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets effective July 1, 2024. Dwayne is continuing his role as BSE department head.

### **Academic Enrollment:**

Although the number of undergraduate applications to Virginia Tech has continued to increase significantly in recent years (currently >50,000 applications for fall 2024 first year class), the growth in undergraduate student enrollment has been limited due to infrastructure capacity (currently near 31,000 undergraduate students). Consequently, undergraduate enrollment in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (nearly 3,000) has been fairly steady over the past several years. There are plans for increasing student housing capacity, so that enrollment can grow. Graduate student enrollment in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences has grown to approximately 660 graduate students.

### **State Budget:**

The Virginia General Assembly approved the 2024-26 biennial budget during the 2024 Special Session, which was subsequently signed by Governor Youngkin on May 13, 2024. The budget was favorable to higher education which also included a 3.0% Compensation Program for State employees, which allowed the University to provide salary increases for faculty, staff, and graduate students.

### **Capital Projects:**

Many new capital projects have been underway at Virginia Tech, including the construction of the new Innovation Campus in Alexandria, VA (<https://www.vt.edu/innovationcampus/index.html>). The Innovation Campus will initially have four research areas of focus - Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning, Quantum Architecture and Software Development, Intelligent Interfaces, and Next Gen Wireless – and several marquee faculty searches to expand capabilities in these areas are in their final stages.

Virginia Tech's and the Commonwealth's investments in new capital projects also showcases the university's commitment to boost Virginia's agriculture and food industries. The most recent major capital project completed this past year in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences was a multi-year project to upgrade, renovate, and replace livestock and poultry facilities (campus farm sites). Improvements have included a new swine research and education complex, new and renovated cattle research and education facilities, new broiler and turkey research and education facilities, and new equine facilities.

A new undergraduate science laboratory building is opening this fall. It will provide significant teaching laboratory space for several colleges, including the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The Department of Food Science and Technology, Department of Biochemistry, and School of Animal Sciences will all be utilizing space in the new building.

A major capital upgrade to the War Memorial Hall is near completion and will provide significant upgraded space to CALS' Department of Human Nutrition, Foods, and Exercise. The building is home to Recreational Sports gym facilities, but is also used by the School of Education and the Department of Human Nutrition, Foods, and Exercise.

Among the capital projects in the Virginia 2024-26 biennial budget is construction authorization for the Center Woods Improvements (facilities that serve the Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation) and also planning authorization for capital improvements to the Eastern Shore Agriculture Research and Extension Center (AREC), which is the first step of a system-wide project to improve all of the ARECs.

**USDA Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities Grant:**

An \$80 million grant from the United States Department of Agriculture led by Virginia Tech CALS and involving Virginia, Arkansas, Minnesota, and North Dakota officially began last fall. The grant (largest in Virginia Tech's history) is funding a pilot program that incentivizes producers to implement climate-smart practices on farms of all sizes and commodities. The three-year pilot program will test the feasibility of rolling out a similar program on a national scale.