

Southern Administrative Heads Updates and Highlights
Winter Meeting, February 2025

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Clemson University College of Agriculture, Forestry & Life Sciences

Southern Administrative Heads Section Meeting

Update - July 2024 – February 2025

Leadership

- Following a national search in the spring of 2024, Dr. Matt Holt was selected to become dean of Clemson's College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Life Sciences (CAFLS) on September 2, 2024. Dr. Holt joined Clemson from Virginia Tech University, where he was 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/>
- CAFLS has begun a new strategic planning process for the college with a consultant company, Emergent Method.
- 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 and began in this position in August 2024. Dr. Kyle Barrett is serving as Interim Chair, and a search for a new chair is ongoing.
- The search for an Executive Director of Clemson's Wood Utilization & Design Institute (WU+DI) is in its final stages.
- The Edisto Research & Education Center selected Dr. John Andrae as Director.
- The South Carolina Water Resources Center is finalizing the search for a new Executive Director.
- Dr. Charles Rosenkrans retired as Department Chair of the Department of Animal and Veterinary Sciences department, and a search for a new chair is underway.
- Dr. Remesh Jeganathan from Auburn University has been selected as the new Department Chair 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 approximately 85,000 sq. ft. mass timber structure, including teaching and research labs, offices, classrooms, and collaboration spaces. Completion is expected in Fall 2026.
- A new Poultry Science Center is under construction.
- CAFLS sister college, the new College of Veterinary Medicine broke ground in Fall 2024 and is expected to open in the Fall of 2026 with its first class of 80 students.

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.
- An economic report of CAFLS shows a nearly 4:1 return on investment in CAFLS

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

January 6, 2025

Division Leadership

- Nicholas Frank, Dean of our College of Veterinary Medicine, has added Alicia Olivier as Associate Dean for Administration.
- Extension Director Angus Catchot has added Beth Baker as an Assistant Director for Conservation Stewardship to his leadership team.

Points of Pride

- This past 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. Reports will follow in 2025.
- The MSU Forest and Wildlife Research Center has acquired 14,071 acres of coastal forestland to establish the Wolf River Coastal Forest Research and Education Center protecting a vital coastal area in perpetuity.
- A strategic collaboration between Nancy Link and the MSU College of Veterinary Medicine will facilitate the construction of a state-of-the-art research facility and the recruitment of top faculty to advance pioneering research in the prevention and treatment of laminitis, a painful hoof disease that can lead to euthanasia for affected horses.
- The MSU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences recently planted the first seeds on its new experiential student farm.
- The MSU College of Veterinary Medicine is expanding clinical facilities to keep the Magnolia State at the forefront of excellence in animal care, as it establishes the Center for Rural Veterinary Practice to address the shortage of veterinary services in Mississippi and throughout rural America.
- Mississippi State is partnering with John Deere through a master research agreement, establishing a framework for the university's Agricultural Autonomy Institute to help develop technology to automate critical steps in the production of cotton and other crops.
- A current international partnership between Mississippi State University and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, or FAO, is strengthening the collaboration between these two institutions to help grow digital capabilities for sustainable agricultural practices globally.
- The Mississippi Lumber Manufacturers Association has established the Mississippi Lumber Manufacturers Association Endowed Professorship in Innovative Wood Construction and Design at MSU. The endowment—housed in the College of Forest Resources' Department of Sustainable Bioproducts, with a joint appointment in the College of Architecture, Art and Design's School of Architecture—aims to drive

innovation in mass timber manufacturing, construction and design, with a research emphasis on sustainable wood construction, strength and durability.

- Mississippi State University is fueling the future of food science with the establishment of the Reed Family Endowed Professorship and the university's newly created Food Science Innovation Hub within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station.
- Mississippi State University is pioneering a partnership with a leading U.S.-based drone manufacturer to innovate groundbreaking UAS technology. The MSU Agricultural Autonomy Institute and Hyllo, a Texas-based drone manufacturer, are leading the way in researching the emerging technology of agricultural spray drones.
- In a 2024 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 first two scholarship winners have been chosen to receive full in-state tuition and fees for four years at the MSU College of Veterinary Medicine for committing 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 . The center is being created to bring efforts to address the shortage of veterinary services in rural areas under one umbrella and expand current programs.

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 and Director of the Food Science Innovation Hub at MSU. He also received the American Meat Science Association Distinguished Research Award for his application of science to solve food industry challenges.
- Daryl Jones has been named the recipient of the 2024 National Excellence in Extension Award for an Individual. The award is given annually by the Cooperative Extension System's Extension Committee on Organization and Policy and the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Jones is the first recipient of the award from MSU.
- Peter Allen, professor and researcher in the Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, received Mississippi State University's highest honor for a university scientist: the 2024 MSU Ralph E. Powe Research Excellence Award.
- Sandra Correa, assistant professor in Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture, is serving on the U.N. Environment Programme's Multidisciplinary Expert Scientific Advisory Group.
- Margaret Khaita, professor in the College of Veterinary Medicine Epidemiology unit serves on the Global One Health High-Level Expert Panel.
- Mark Lawrence, director of the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Fish is the Vice Chair of the Feed the Future Innovation Lab Council.

Frank Owens, an associate professor in the Mississippi State Department of Sustainable Bioproducts, is the new president of the Forest Products Society, a premier international wood products organization.

College Enrollment and Instruction

Fall 2024 enrollment increased in all three colleges with 2,544 students in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; 653 in the College of Forest Resources; and College of Veterinary Medicine enrollment increased to 581. 2024 totaled enrollment - 3,778 – a record.

New Construction

Present construction includes remodeling Ballew Hall (formerly the Animal Science Building) for a CALS/MAFES administrative building. A grand opening is planned for the spring. Dorman Hall has been taken offline for a \$44 million remodeling project.

We received an additional \$18 million to begin construction of a large animal addition to our vet school.

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.



2024 Southern Administrative Heads Updates and Highlights

- **We're #1** – N.C. A&T is the nation's top producer of African-American graduates in agriculture and related sciences bachelor's degrees for a seventh year, and fourth in master's degrees, according to *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*.
- **\$45 million in overall grant funding** – with a focus on next-generation agricultural technology with an eye toward its potential to help the underserved and minority producers – “Where Science Meets Society”
- **Urban and Community Food Complex** – Our \$15 million building at the N.C. A&T State University Farm, linking Food and Nutritional Science, Animal Science and Agribusiness curriculums with community food entrepreneurship, is set to open this year.
- **Ag Day Scholar** – Our partnership with Syngenta resulted in a successful Ag Day at Truist Stadium and a \$2,500 scholarship for animal sciences major Nina Story.
- **AI/Analytics Software Platform** – Partnering with the SAS Institute and funded by a \$1 million appropriation from the General Assembly, we are using analytical software and AI to make research data more meaningful to farmers.
- **1,153 Students and Growing** – Fall 2024 enrollment included 999 undergraduate, 43 Ph.D. and 111 master's degree students, maintaining our position as the largest College of Agriculture among all 1890 Land-Grant Institutions.
- **Graduate Programs in Dietetics and Gerontology** – approved by accrediting agencies, the first cohort will begin in fall 2025.
- **More than 200 scholars** – Deserving students across all CAES departments have received more than \$500,000 in scholarship funding.
- **Astronaut Scholarship** – Breyana Robinson, an animal sciences major, was named one of three Astronaut Scholars, a prestigious award created by Mercury 7 astronauts. N.C. A&T is the first HBCU to have more than one scholar in an application cycle.
- **Family & Consumer Sciences #6 in Nation** – N.C. A&T ranks sixth in producing African-American bachelor's degree graduates in food, nutrition, child development and fashion merchandising.
- **Five Stars for Seven Years** – N.C. A&T's Child Development Lab earned a perfect rating for a record seventh year.



- **Urban Region Launch in Cooperative Extension** – Increasing access to fresh, locally grown food, improving community health and well-being, and adding green space to urban areas are just a few of this project's goals!
- **Landscape Architecture program** – designed an educational nature trail project for Toyota North Carolina; installed a landscape at the Palmer Memorial Institute N.C. Historic Site; and is helping to revitalize the historic Benbow Park neighborhood.
- **Chocolate Research** – Researcher Roberta da Silva will offer a class in the science of chocolate using a USDA grant. This is the first academic course about chocolate at an HBCU and will help food science students find jobs in the confectionary industry.
- **“Upcycled” Fashions Go Viral** – Fashion merchandising student [Collin Semien](#) “went viral” on social media for his sustainable, “upcycled” designs created from deconstructing and rebuilding existing clothing and shoes!

The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences is focused on future-proofing the food supply, emphasizing workforce development, innovation for resilience, and advocacy for agriculture and life sciences. We deeply value our partnerships with Farm Bureau, the N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Sciences, NC Grange, commodity and industry groups, and colleges and universities across North Carolina.

ADMINISTRATION

- Nine CALS faculty received NC State Goodnight Early Career Innovator Awards, representing 36% of all recipients.
- The CALS Advisory Board for Strategic Excellence and Well-being has acted on 14 initial recommendations to enhance faculty, staff and student success.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS



- Enrollment grew by 10% across 2-years, 4-year and graduate programs, despite caps.
- NC State undergraduate applications are up 14% to more than 52,000 to be one of 6,000 first-year students.
- Enrollment Management is collaborating with CALS to admit more students into high-demand majors and expand partnerships with community colleges to increase transfer applications.
- A new marketing initiative encourages rural students to apply to CALS and NC State.
- \$2.4 million in 2024-25 scholarships supports 722 students through 432 unique funds.
- Entomologist Clyde Sorenson is NC State's nominee for the UNC System Board of Governors Award for Excellence in Teaching.

EXTENSION



- The search for a new associate dean and NC State Extension director is underway.
- NC Extension supports ongoing supply distribution and recovery efforts for both people and animals in western North Carolina. The NC Extension disaster website has received 1.6 million views from 640,000 users since Hurricane Helene.
- Through the NC Plant Sciences Initiative Extension Agent Network, scientists and agents pilot field technologies and accelerate their use on North Carolina farms.

PHILANTHROPY



- \$58 million in new gifts and endowments in FY24.
- NC State led the 2024 Day of Giving with \$6.7 million raised, 1,803 gifts – a 31% increase from FY23.
- NC Agricultural Foundation assets have grown to \$240 million.

RESEARCH



- \$6.6 million in industry-sponsored research funded.
- The Genome Editing Center and Roberts and Mikhail Endowed Distinguished Chair launched to support future-proof food and agriculture.
- The Integrative Sciences Initiative and Woodson Hall will bring together interdisciplinary scholars to address human, animal and plant health challenges.

Oklahoma State University
Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources
Institutional Updates, Southern Administrative Heads
January 7, 2025

Personnel

- Dr. Jim Ansley, department head of Natural Resource Ecology and Management, announced his plans to retire. A national search for the next NREM head is underway.
- Dr. Mohammad Arif has been hired as the next Director of the Institute for Biosecurity & Microbial Forensics and will begin August 2025.

Facilities

- Construction of and move into “new” Ag Hall is complete and several grand openings were held in fall 2024. The 190,000 square foot facility houses 6 academic departments, classrooms, student-facing administrative and support functions, and modern teaching and research laboratories.
- Architectural and construction planning has begun for a new Agronomy Discovery Center at the Agronomy Research Station in Stillwater.
- The facilities for the Institute for Agricultural Biosciences (OSU-IAB) in Ardmore are being closed and programs and personnel are moving to Stillwater.

Programs and Activities

- A strategic plan for OSU Agriculture was released in 2025.
- A statewide Extension needs assessment for Oklahoma was completed in fall 2024 and results were released in 2025.
- The OSU ExtensionBot, trained on Extension Facts Sheets, was released:
<https://extension.okstate.edu/extensionbot/>

Highlights

- Record undergraduate enrollment (2,995 students) for the Ferguson College of Agriculture in Fall 2024.
- Graduate enrollment (433 students) increased for the fifth consecutive year.
- Two faculty, Jayson Lusk and Scott Senseman, were named fellows of the American Association of the Advancement of Science

FROM ROOT TO FRUIT:

NOURISHING HEALTHIER, MORE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES, AND CULTIVATING STUDENTS AS LEADERS ACROSS TEXAS AND BEYOND

As we embark on an exciting time of transformation and growth in every area (counties, programs, people served, enrollment, curricula, discoveries, and publications), we are reminded that mother nature is ever present, most recently in the form of Winter Storm Enzo.

Resilience amid Extreme Weather: With a population of over 7 million, the greater Houston area is not accustomed to snow, ice, or below-freezing conditions, and we had more than our share this week, disrupting dorm move-in and the start of the semester. One more in the long line of hurricanes, tornadoes, and extreme weather events. As always, our farm crew, extension agents, other staff as well as faculty (many of whom are affected themselves) are resilient and, as they have done many times previously, rise up to the occasion to keep our farm and other facilities safe and running, pivot to virtual classes if needed, but also assist underserved communities as and when they are called upon. A reminder that extreme climate conditions 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 as well as our land grant institutions, agency partners, and community stakeholders.

Strategic Planning and New Programs: we are in the process of updating our new 5-year College Strategic Plan to align with the [PVAMU 2035 Journey to Eminence](#). In addition, we are in the process of developing our new 5-year NIFA Plan of Work, adding new focus areas such as smart agriculture, diet-related disease prevention and mitigation, artificial intelligence, climate resilience, and much more, adding to a holistic life-cycle based, more robust portfolio of land grant programs. We are set to launch our newest degree program this Spring, an M.S. in Nutritional Sciences. We are also exploring a new Ph.D. program, an equine studies program, as well as targeted programs such as Agletics (at the intersection of agriculture and athletics) and Foodscaping (the innovative concept of integrating edible plants into ornamental landscaping, transforming plant beds into sources of fresh, organically grown produce on campus), part of our emphasis on promoting more healthy outcomes for our students and communities.

Fostering Excellence and Community Impact: by cultivating a culture of excellence from “root to fruit” encompassing food, nutritional, water, energy, and climate security targeted to low-income and underserved audiences, we are strategically positioned to nourish healthier, more sustainable communities, and cultivate student leaders across Texas and beyond. More details on these and other programs are available at: <https://www.pvamu.edu/cfnr/> (as you will see, we are applying AI for web searches through a “chat-bot” at the lower right corner of the screen)!



DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION

University of Arkansas System

University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture
February 2025 SRAHS Meeting Update

EXTENSION

- On October 29, 2024, Greene County officially opened the doors on their new CES office. The facility was built with over \$4 million in support from the county government.
- Dr. Shane Gadberry began serving as Assistant VP – Agriculture and Natural Resources effective January 2, 2025.
- Mr. J.J. Jones started his position as District Director – Delta District on January 6, 2025. Mr. Jones is president-elect of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents.
- We have created three new Associate District Director positions to assist with district administration. These were filled effective January 2: Pia Woods, Delta District; Kris Boulton, Ouachita District; and Brad Runsick, Ozark District. All three are former county agents and staff chairs with years of experience.
- Dr. Taylor Klass has been hired as an Instructor and Extension Specialist in the Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology. A recent graduate of Ohio State University with a PhD in Plant Pathology, Dr. Klass will oversee the Arkansas Plant Health Clinic in Fayetteville.
- Assistant Professor—Nutrition EFNEP/SNAP position has been filled by Dr. Teresa Henson starting January 16, 2025. Dr. Henson has been an Instructor in the Family and Consumer Sciences department with UA-CES since March 2024. Prior to that, she was the EFNEP/SNAP Program Outreach Coordinator for the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff.
- The Assistant Professor and Research Agronomist position has been filled in the Department of Crop, Soil, and Environmental Sciences (CSES). Justin Chlapelka will be located at the Northeast Rice Research and Extension Center (NERREC) in Harrisburg.
- Bio and Ag Engineering recently concluded interviews for an assistant professor in Post-Harvest Processing located at the Northeast Rice Research and Extension Center. An offer is pending.
- We currently have the following faculty positions open in Extension:
 - Assistant Professor and Extension Soil Fertility Specialist in Crop, Soil, and Environmental Sciences; located at the Northeast Rice Research and Extension Center, and
 - Assistant Professor and Extension Wastewater and Nutrient Management Specialist in Biological and Agricultural Engineering.

RESEARCH

Leadership

- Dr. Paul Delaune was named department head for Crop, Soil and Environmental Sciences effective November 25, 2024, <https://aaes.uada.edu/news/delaune/>



DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION

University of Arkansas System

- Dr. Lanier Nalley was named department head for Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness effective October 7, 2024, <https://aaes.uada.edu/news/nalley-aeab/>

Research

- Research Awards for FY 25 are \$23.4M, ahead of FY2024 awards for the same period. Research on Histomonosis, a deadly turkey disease, led by Dr. Danielle Graham was awarded a \$3.2M FDA Grant. <https://aaes.uada.edu/news/histomonosis-turkey-research/>.
- Margaret Worthington was bestowed the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers <https://aaes.uada.edu/news/worthington-presidential-award/>
- Jason Norsworthy, Distinguished Professor was honored with the Rice Industry Award by USA Rice <https://aaes.uada.edu/news/norsworthy-rice-industry-award/>
- Sami Dridi, professor of poultry science, was recognized with the American Feed Industry Association Poultry Nutrition Research Award and the National Chicken Council Broiler Research Award <https://aaes.uada.edu/news/dridi-honored-by-poultry-science-association/>. Gisela Erf was named Fellow of the Poultry Science Association. <https://aaes.uada.edu/news/erf-named-fellow-of-poultry-science-association/>

Facilities

- The 30,000 sqft Northeast Rice Research and Extension Center headquarters building was dedicated on August 30 2024. <https://aaes.uada.edu/news/nerrec-grand-opening/>
- Design of a new 70,000 sqft food science research center continues. Estimated costs of the facility is \$55M and construction should start in June 2025 (Completion date in Spring 2027)

ACADEMICS

- Dr. Lona Robertson, Associate Dean of Bumpers College, announced her plans to retire in May 2025. An internal search was conducted in late 2024 and an incoming Associate Dean will be announced in early 2025.
- There have been several staffing changes in the college. Daniela Kidd joined us as Chief of Staff and Jeffie Thomas joined as Chief Budget Officer. We are currently searching for an academic recruiter.
- The University of Arkansas, Fayetteville recently completed a classification and compensation study and implemented salary programs in FY25 and FY26 based on benchmarking data from peer institutions and regional employers.
- The University of Arkansas System is converting to Workday Student system wide. A few community colleges have already converted. The Fayetteville campus is in the process of converting to Workday student with a planned rollout in March 2025. Enrollment for the fall 2025 semester will be in Workday Student.

J. Scott Angle

Senior Vice President, University of Florida, IFAS

jangle@ufl.edu

Leadership:

- UF President Ben Sasse announced his resignation effective July 31, 2024 due to family health reasons. Former President Kent Fuchs is serving as Interim President and a Presidential Search Committee has been formed.
- Scott Angle returned to IFAS as Senior Vice President in September, 2024 after serving as UF Provost for 14 months. Joe Glover returned from the University of Arizona to become the UF Interim Provost.
- Kati Migliaccio was named as the Dean of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences in January, 2025 following a national search. Dr. Migliaccio was the Chair of the UF/IFAS Agricultural and Biological Engineering Department from 2018-2024.
- Rob Gilbert returned to his role as Dean for Research, and is now also Executive Director for Academic Affairs. He supervises UF/IFAS department chairs and REC directors in this position.

Budget:

- Current total budget for IFAS is nearly \$500M per year. NSF HERD has ranked UF#1 for agriculture and natural resource spending for the last 6 years.
- 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.
- The FL legislature has identified “rural renaissance” as a theme for the coming session, and UF/IFAS is partnering with the FL Department of Commerce to identify Ag Tech projects to boost the rural economy of the state.
- University Research initiatives were funded in January 2025 for a total of \$3.25M for UF/IFAS. Initiative areas included Health Extension, Food as Medicine, Ecological Forecasting, New Technology Adoption, Global Health, and Medical Entomology.

Other topics:

- Total dollar amount of submitted proposals from IFAS faculty has increased from \$559M in 2021 to \$801M in 2024. We have seen a decline in proposals < \$50K, and an increase in proposals <\$1M from 110 to 190 over the same time period. This may be due in part to inflation, however we have invested in research administrator staff and instituted a “Golden Gator” award for PIs and RAs receiving awards > \$1M which has been well received.

- The UF Board of Trustees approved in December, 2024 a \$24M purchase of a more advanced version of the UF HiPerGator supercomputer. The new system will include an NVIDIA AI enterprise software platform and will make UF one of the first higher education institutions in the nation to own such a machine.
- UF/IFAS is integrating AI more broadly into all of our mission areas and functions. This includes seed funding for AI research projects by our faculty, adding AI into our curriculum, and using AI/BI platforms for Extension reporting.
- We have hired faculty for a new Crop Transformation Center to advance crop improvement technologies using precision agriculture and plant transformation and gene editing to accelerate genetic gains. The first target will be creating citrus varieties that can tolerate or even resist citrus greening. Once solved, the CTC will examine many other crops beyond citrus.
- The FL legislature has invested \$20M over the last 4 years with UF/IFAS on nutrient management projects aimed at redefining fertilizer application rates for the entire state. New rates for tomatoes, potatoes, citrus and an array of crops are being developed.
- We have submitted state budget requests to hire more Extension state and regional specialized agents in the coming year to address critical needs in agricultural resilience and workforce development across Florida. Expected outcomes of this project are to: Increase agricultural sustainability and resilience, expand youth workforce readiness and career exploration, foster economic growth through food entrepreneurship, improve disaster preparedness and recovery education, and provide measurable ROI through documented community impact metrics.
- Our undergraduate enrollment has declined slightly over the last few years. We are examining the causes and sources of the declines. Graduate enrollment continues to increase.



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

Leadership Updates:

- Dr. Michael Toews has been selected as our next Associate Dean for Extension. He will begin in this position on April 1, 2025. Arch Smith has served as Interim Associate Dean for Extension during our search – he will return to retirement in April 2025.
- Dr. Sonia Altizer has been selected as our next Department Head for Entomology. She will begin in this position on May 1, 2025.
- Dr. George Vellidis has been selected as the permanent director of the Institute for Integrative Precision Agriculture (IIPA). IIPA currently has over 70 faculty members.
- We are currently hiring for these leadership positions: Department Head for Plant Pathology and Department Head for Agricultural and Applied Economics.

Hurricane Helene:

- In total, Hurricane Helene will cost Georgia's economy at least \$5.5 billion in agricultural and timber loss.
- CAES worked with the UGA Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, the Office of Gov. Brian P. Kemp, the Georgia Department of Agriculture and the Georgia Forestry Commission to develop a comprehensive report being used for federal and state support.

CAES Academics:

- For fall 2024, CAES had an enrollment of 1,496 undergraduates and 752 graduate students.
- Six CAES students spent 12 weeks and conducted nearly 3,000 hours of policy work in Washington, D.C. as part of our Congressional Agriculture Fellowship.

CAES Research:

- Our research funding was as follows: \$65.7M in expenditures, \$77.1M in awards, and \$64.5M in federal funding.

CAES Communications and Marketing:

- We published our third edition of [*The Almanac*](#), our award-winning annual publication.
- Our team has won a number of awards over the last year, including the Public Relations Society of America's Georgia Phoenix Award for the 2023 *Almanac* and the Georgia Award of Excellence for our podcast, *Cultivating Curiosity*.

CAES Alumni Relations:

- CAES had two honorees in the UGA 40 Under 40, Chris Chammoun (BSA '08) & Tiffany Woods (BSES '08, MS '11).
- Four CAES alumni were celebrated during the University of Georgia's Bulldog 100 which ranks the top 100 fastest-growing organizations owned or led by UGA alumni
 - o Three Tree Coffee Roasters, Philip Klayman (BSA '11)
 - o Chad Weesner Insurance Agency, Chad Weesner (BSA '95)
 - o Good Dog Veterinary Care, Patrick Singletary (BSA '12)
 - o TeXga Farms, Caroline Lewallen (BSA '11)

University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture Highlights Southern Region Administrative Heads Section (AHS) Meeting — February 2025

UT AgResearch

Global Impact

- UTIA turfgrass scientists, in collaboration with partners from Michigan State University, have been making great strides in developing/testing the perfect pitches for the FIFA World Cup 26™ to be held in North America (16 game stadia and 48 practice stadia throughout US, Mexico, and Canada). Following a FIFA Pitch Research Field Day at UT/UTIA in April that attracted about 300 attendees, another joint field day focusing on outdoor fields was held at MSU in October.
- The 33rd Milan No-till Field Day, held at the AgResearch and Education Center in Milan on July 25th, welcomed 1,257 visitors from 44 Tennessee counties, 12 states (AL, AR, IL, KY, LA, MS, MO, OK, SC, TN, TX, and WV), as well as visitors from seven countries (Algeria, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Morocco, Zambia, and Austria).

Infrastructure and Equipment Upgrades That Are/Will Be Transformative

- As of December 2024, 43 pieces of field research equipment have been acquired with the ARP funds, 6 between August and December 2024. Most of them have been put in operation and are already positively impacting the efficiency and scope of field research and data collection.
- Designing of the next-gen smart broiler research farm at the Middle Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center in Spring Hill is ongoing. This modern facility consists of four commercial-scale broiler houses, a research laboratory building, 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.
- Designing of a state-of-the-art 15,000-square foot Center for Protein Innovation (CPI) is ongoing. The CPI will be located at the East Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center – Blount Unit, just south of Knoxville campus. The facility will be used for training workforce, 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 spring of 2025.

Updates and New Initiatives

- The UT-Oak Ridge Innovation Institute (UT-ORII) Convergent Research Initiative (CRI) on Circular Bioeconomy Systems (CBS), a \$20 million investment, is in the process of hiring research scientists and PhD graduate students. 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 low-energy and low-carbon-intensity circular agriculture, manufacturing, packaging, and construction.
- Progress continues in hiring tenure-track faculty for the two UTIA-led cluster hires initiatives, namely, Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry and Bioinformatics. As of December 2024, four faculty have been hired.
- Grasslands Partnership Project funded by USDA Climate Smart Commodities Partnership program. Awarded in September 2023, this 9-state, 28-partner project focuses on improving management of Tall Fescue Belt pastures. This region is home to some 40% of the nation's beef cattle operations. As of December (2024), these \$36.3 million (\$30.15 million from USDA) integrated projects has enrolled nearly 200 cattle producers

from across the region to implement targeted practices on more than 700 individual pastures. Extension professionals from 11 services are working with these producers to implement these practices on their farms. In addition, a multi-faceted study is being implemented at UTIA's Northeast AgResearch and Education Center to evaluate a host of impacts associated with these pasture management practices.

- Nearly 5,500 acres of land containing valuable natural resources (forestry, wildlife habitats, wetland, tree orchard) for research and education at the Ames AgResearch and Education Center has been reserved through a federal grant and state funding support. This unique resource will be administered by the Tennessee Division of Forestry in partnership with UT AgResearch for conducting continued research and education programs for the benefits of forestry industry, wildlife enterprise, and workforce training in Tennessee and beyond.
- Sheep Grazing Research – Northeast Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center. During fall 2023, UTIA acquired a new flock of 95 Katahdin sheep as part of a new research initiative to expand the Institute's footprint in pasture-based agriculture. Two research projects were initiated in spring 2024 at NETREC as a part of this USDA-NRCS funded effort. One project focuses on reducing persistent parasite loads that can reduce animal welfare and productivity through use of a tall-growing forage grass, big bluestem. The second focuses on use of switchgrass, a forage that may have some adverse effects on small ruminants. Both forages have the potential to provide low-cost forage while enhancing soil carbon stocks and improving soil health.
- Crop viability determination in post-flood deposited soils along the Nolichucky River in east Tennessee. The devastating floods along the Nolichucky River left a significant impact on regional farmland, depositing various types of sediment and potentially affecting crop viability. A team of UT Extension and UT AgResearch scientists launched a study that aims to assess germination and early growth of economically and culturally valuable crops in soil conditions reflective of post-flood sediment mixtures. This project aims to understand how these unique soil conditions influence crop growth, ultimately guiding reclamation efforts and supporting the resilience of the local agricultural industry.

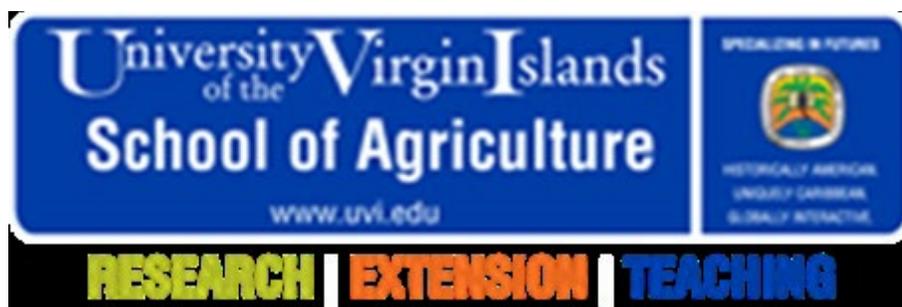
UT Extension

- UT Martin hosted the Annual Mid-South Ag Finance Conference Wednesday, August 7th. The conference featured nationally recognized speakers: Dr. Dave Kohl, Richard Brock, Dr. Brian Briggeman, and Eric Snodgrass. The agenda and additional details can be found at: <https://www.utm.edu/visit-ut-martin/mid-south-agricultural-finance-conference.php>
- George McDonald, owner of Catesa Farms in Smith County, was named the 2024 Tennessee Farmer of the Year by UT Extension. The Tennessee Farmer of the Year is chosen after a detailed and rigorous application process coordinated by University of Tennessee Extension and the Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation. George was also a member of the Tennessee Extension Advisory Council from 2022-2024.
- The Tennessee Extension Association of Administrative Professionals (TEAAP) is excited to announce that we had 155 attendees from 6 different states attend the National Conference for The Extension Research Support Staff Association (TERSSA) September 10-13 at Dolly's Heartsong Resort and Lodge. This is the first national conference that the state association has hosted.
- Tennessee Agriculture and Forestry Leadership Program – The Tennessee Agriculture and Forestry Leadership Program (TAFLP) provides leadership and networking opportunities for farmers, foresters and the agriculture community. This is an 18-month program that connects cohort participants with others in the agriculture and forestry industry, and includes tours of farms, forests and businesses. Participants will attend leadership development sessions to enhance communication, leadership, critical thinking, entrepreneurial and strategic planning skills. Details about the program and a link to the nomination form are available at: tiny.utk.edu/taflp.
- Within hours of reports of damage from Hurricane Helene, many UT Extension specialists, agents, and leaders, with the help of Marketing & Communications staff, put together a list of resources to assist those affected by the hurricane. Many small communities were heavily impacted and in need of immediate assistance. County Extension offices statewide were leaders in sharing this information, collecting and delivering supplies, and lending a hand where needed. <https://utextension.tennessee.edu/flood-related-resources/>

- 4-H Youth enrollment has 151,449 students. The largest delegation in the country.
- UT Extension has had over 4 million contacts for 2024.
- University of Tennessee Extension and partners [Agricenter International](#) and [Tennessee Wildlife Federation](#) have received a \$15.9 million grant from USDA's NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program to advance conservation practices in West Tennessee. While the 21-county region is rich in cropland and forestland, major new manufacturing facilities and subsequent urbanization and population growth are increasing pressure on its natural resources. [UT Extension Partners on \\$15.9 Million Grant to Advance Conservation Practices | Institute News](#)

UT Herbert College of Agriculture

- [Dave White](#) has been chosen as the permanent dean of the Herbert College of Agriculture. He served in the interim role for the past two years where he has overseen unprecedented growth in enrollment and programming for the college. He is no stranger to UTIA having previously served five years as the associate dean of research for UT AgResearch.
- Fall 2024 enrollment hit a record high with 2022 total students including which included 343 graduate students and 1701 undergraduates. Highest enrolled majors being Animal Science, Construction Science and Management and Wildlife and Fisheries.
 - Fall 2025 enrollment is looking to increase, as applications to the college are on the rise, currently trending 23% higher than in 2024 as more students recognize the opportunities afforded through careers in agricultural sciences and natural resources.
- Currently revamping and relaunching the Next Chapter program in partnership with UT Extension, the department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communications, Tennessee 4-H and UTK Enrollment Management
- The Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications (ALEC), in the Herbert College of Agriculture will begin offering a new Ph.D. program and will have its first students Fall 2025. The program was approved by the University of Tennessee Board of Trustees in October 2024, and it will become the first of its kind in Tennessee.
- In 2024, 69 students in the Herbert College of Agriculture studied abroad on official UTK Faculty-Directed and Semester programs across 25 different countries. An additional 20 undergraduate students and 19 graduate students participated in international research or experiential learning programs abroad.
- Herbert developed a new undergraduate research program titled Herbert Experiential Research Opportunities (HERO) in 2024 and awarded 16 grants (6 during summer session and 10 during Fall) to faculty to mentor undergraduates in their laboratories.
- Herbert and UT Advancement launched the inaugural Herbert College of Agriculture Young Alumni Council in 2024. The Council is composed of alumni who have graduated from the College in the past 10 years and will help shape our future through communicating our programs externally, advising leadership on opportunities and making recommendations on matters that impact the College.



Institutional Highlights

August 2024-January 2025

I. Academic and scholarship Programs

On Friday, January 17, 2025, the School of Agriculture and the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College from the British Virgin Islands signed an Articulation Agreement to establish 2+2 programs that will create a pathway to Bachelor of Science degrees in Agricultural Business, Agroecology, Animal Science, Aquaponics, and Horticulture. The Agreement was signed by UVI President, Dr. Safiya George, H. Lavity Stoutt Community College President, Dr. Richard Georges; UVI Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Kendra Harris; Dean and Director of UVI School of Agriculture, Dr. Usman Adamu; and Dr. Ronald Bruton, Vice President of Academics, H. Lavity Stoutt Community College.

Special Recognition Award at the 57th Caribbean Food Crops Society July 2024, Dominican Republic for outstanding poster and presentation titled: *Alternative non-destructive color-scanning for sweetness in sweetcorn* by **Henry O. Awika, Southwell Johnson, Philbert Millan, and Donna Gonzalez.**

Dr. **Carollyn Boykins-Winrow**, Associate Professor – Animal Science and Internship Coordinator, placed nine students for 10 weeks Internships in various offices and agencies in the region. On St. Croix: **Manal Abed** - Office of Dr. Bethany Bradford, DVM; **Edna Alfred** and **Keturah Nelson** – USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS); **Sumayah Bryan** – RT Park; **Eduardo Febres** and **Nickhai Schuster** – University of Puerto Mayaguez; **SaVaughan John-Baptiste** – Agricultural Experiment Station Agronomy Program; **Zavira Wilson** – Hawaii Ulu Cooperative; and **Alexander Schrodt** with Dr. **Larken Root** – SOA Assistant Professor – Aquaculture

II. Leadership and Personnel Changes

The new President of the University of the Virgin Islands, Dr. Safiya George began her tenure on August 1, 2025. Dr. George is the sixth president and first alumna to lead the institution.

A search for a new Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs is also in progress. Five finalists for the position have been identified by the search committee and interviews will start on January 27, 2025.

Dr. **Andrea Ríos** joined the School of Agriculture Agricultural Experiment Station as Research Assistant Professor and Program Leader of Animal Science. Dr. Rios completed a PhD from the University of Arizona studying heat-stress in livestock. She originates from Puerto Rico.

III. **Community Focused Activities**

In October 2024, AES Horticulture Program offered proposal writing technical assistance to St. Croix Science Teachers Association for a \$6,000 grant from the Judith Towle Environmental Studies Fund managed by the VI Community Foundation. The grant request has been successful and awarded this November.

Farm-to-Table Conducted a Farm-to-Table workshop on November 8, 2024, on how to use locally grown leafy vegetables and fruits to prepare healthy meals. Sixty-five participants learned meal-prep ideas for healthy eating and time management, how to make a variety of tasty and healthy smoothies and how to prepare a vegetarian stir-fry. and talked about the nutritional components of pumpkin, zucchini, and mushrooms.

How to grow in small spaces A presentation was done in the UVI School of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Services Demonstration Garden on how to grow effectively with a limited amount of space. Participants learned what intercropping is and how to do it. They explored the different containers that can be used to plant crops. They also discussed compost basics, and which crops grow better based on the time of the year.

Millner Bowsky Elementary School's "Harvest Festival" The Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) program with the Family and Consumer Science program took part in the Millner Bowsky Elementary School's "Harvest Festival". The ANR program conducted a presentation on ways they could plant crops even if they did not have a yard. The students, teachers, and parents were very interested in learning how to grow crops without any yard space. Some of the techniques shown were growing vertically in shipping pallets on their porch and attaching planting containers to an outside wall. The staff also discussed the variety of career paths in agriculture and informed them of the current academic programs at the UVI School of Agriculture. At the same festival, Ms. Willie taught the children how to make healthy smoothies, which they enjoyed.

Family and Consumer Sciences Cooperative Extension Services

The University of the Virgin Islands Family and Consumer Sciences Cooperative Extension Services EFNEP program is actively engaging the community through several initiatives in November 2024. The initiatives are focusing on educational outreach by

visiting local schools. These visits aim to enhance students' knowledge about nutrition, financial literacy, and sustainable living practices.

Schools that we have visited in the month of November were:

- Lockart Elementary School (25)
- Ulla F. Muller Elementary School (25)
- Yvonne Bowsky Elementary School (60)
- Seventh Day Adventist School (40)
- Pearl B. Larsen (75)
- Ricardo Richards (75)
- Eulalie Rivera Elementary (75)
- Alfredo Andrews (75)

Total Students: 450

Additionally, the program participated in the Department of Agriculture's Local Fair, November 23-24, 2024, on St. Thomas. This event provides an excellent platform for connecting with the community, showcasing our programs, and promoting local agriculture. The UVI SOA Cooperative Extension Services offers workshops, demonstrations, and resources to support healthy living and economic development, emphasizing their role in improving the quality of life in the Virgin Islands families through education.

On November 24, 2024, the 4-H health ambassadors program conducted one of their annual community service initiatives 'Raise for Cans' at The Market supermarket. 4-H health ambassadors were at the entrance of The Market to solicit shoppers to donate food items. All the items collected will be used to create 25 Thanksgiving baskets that will be given to deserving families. The baskets will be distributed on Tuesday, November 26, 2024.

The Cooperative Extension Service conducted MS Excel Workshops from November 12 - 15, 2024 and November 19 - 21, 2024 from 5:00 p.m. – 7:00pm. MS Excel is a very useful application when creating budgets, analyzing data, and for several other useful mathematical calculations. Participants learned how to enter data, select cells, format cells using MS Excel functions, insert formulas, and create charts. Thirteen individuals participated in the Beginners and the Intermediate MS Excel workshops.

The Expanded Foods and Nutrition Program (EFNEP) interacted with 423 youth (182 St. Croix and 241 St. Thomas) in our Summer Program, other summer programs, and other activities including: 4-H Health Ambassadors; V.I. Department of Education; Helping Children Work (Estate Grove Place); V.I. Department of Agriculture; Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

The Pesticide Safety Education Program conducted training and administered Certified Pesticide Applicator license examinations. Clients were trained in 2 Categories: Agriculture Plant Pests and Ornamental and Turf Management. All-day trainings (7-hour class) were conducted and Certified Pesticide Applicator license examinations were

administered for clients to receive certified pesticide applicators licenses for the USVI, through Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR).

Dr. Larken Root, Aquaculture/Aquaponics faculty held several meetings with various stakeholders in the community including the aquaponics producer Fredrick Miller of Fredrick Miller Farms. He attended two conferences including the annual Aquaponics Association meeting in Dallas, TX where many connections were made with people involved in aquaculture and ad connections with the UVI Agricultural Experiment Station.

Dr. Carollyn Boykins-Winrow, Advisor, Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences, UVI Chapter facilitated meetings for election of new officers and new membership drive.

The Family and Consumer Science Program conducted two Holiday Baking Workshops on each campus where participants prepared and baked the islands' traditional "Black Cake" and "Sweet Bread". There were over 40 participants attended the classes across the two islands.

Students from the Seventh-day Adventist School on St. Thomas have been engaged in learning sewing skills and techniques through the Cooperative Extension Services. This program is designed to empower students with practical skills that can contribute to personal and professional development.

IV. Faculty and Student Achievements

Dreves, Amy J., Wanda Almodovar, and **Santiago, Lamani.** (UVI student – illustrator). (July 16, 2024). *4D FARMING FOR SUCCESS – US Virgin Islands*. CFCS conference. Dominican Republic. Poster Presentation. Received the best poster presentation of the conference!

Hill, Raquel (Univ. of FL doctoral candidate, UVI alumna, SOA 2024 Summer Intern and **Dreves, Amy J.** (July 11, 2024). *TAKE A CLOSER LOOK: HANDS-ON, WALK-IN PLANT PROBLEM DIAGNOSTIC CLINIC*. Dreves' Farmers First IPM Talk 4 - 2024 series. Location: US Virgin Islands.

Jackson, Adeana. (May-August 2024). Prepared specialized insect displays for dragonflies, true bugs, grasshoppers, and monarchs of the USVI.

John-Baptiste, SaVaughna D., Hensley, David A., and Pichardo, Nicholas. (July 16, 2024). *Allelopathic effects of Leucaena leucocephala litter on germination and growth of four crop plants in the Virgin Islands*. 57th Caribbean Food Crops Society. Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.

Henry O Awika and **Yvonilyn Lawrence** (2024). *Deep learning of leaf and flower spectra to predict the dominant interior and exterior colors of watermelon fruit*. Agronomy Society

of America/Crop Science Society of America/Soil Science Society of America, Nov. 10-13,2024, San Antonio, Texas.

Henry O Awika, Johnson Southwell, Millan Philbert, **Markeymah Cargile**, Naseem McIntosh and Donna Gonzalez (2024). *Blue wavelengths may offer an alternative non-destructive color-scanning based quantitation for dissolved solids in sweetcorn*. Agronomy Society of America/Crop Science Society of America/Soil Science Society of America, Nov. 10-13,2024, San Antonio, Texas.

Henry O Awika, **Naseem McIntosh**, Johnson Southwell, Jessica Ewer, Lawrence Yvonilyn, Gonzalez Donna, and Markeymah Cargile (2024). *Determining how colored shade houses affect the ambient temperature and influence fruit development and sweetness in watermelon (Citrullus lanatus)*. Agronomy Society of America/Crop Science Society of America/Soil Science Society of America, Nov. 10-13,2024, San Antonio, Texas.

V. Proposals

Root, Larken T., Roberts, Shanta (November 25,2024) A grant was submitted to the NOAA Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Competition titled: *Promoting aquaculture production by identifying community preferences for commercially viable seafood products in the US Virgin Islands* totalling \$356,480.00 for two years.

Andrea Rios. Correlation between ewe vaginal temperature during pregnancy and offspring compensatory growth on St. Croix lambs exposed to maternal heat stress. National Sheep Industry Improvement. Proposal submitted for \$29,000. Pending Approval

Hensley, David. "Developing a water-storage assessment tool for small agricultural ponds in the U.S. Virgin Islands." United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service. \$156,506. 3 years.

Administrative

- Dr. Mario Ferruzzi started as Dean of the [College of Agriculture and Life Sciences](#) on October 15, 2024
- Ms. Patricia Wooten appointed as CALS Division Director for Human Resources

Leadership Searches

- Head, Department Agricultural and Applied Economics (coming Spring 2025)
- Director, School of Plant and Environmental Sciences (coming spring 2025)

CALS Research

- [Research](#) awards up to \$161 million with research expenditures up 11% to \$60.4M in 2024.
- Research needs assessment of the Commonwealth was completed in 2024 to understand stakeholder needs.
- \$705k in CALS Integrated Seed Grants and \$1.52 million in Pratt Foundation support for research in animal nutrition awarded.

Research Facilities:

- First step of facility wide improvement of [Agricultural Research and Extension Centers](#) (AREC) across Virginia has begun with planning underway for upgrades to Eastern Shore AREC in Painter, VA.
- New Hampton Roads AREC [greenhouse](#) complete as a collaboration with Old Dominion University to house their orchid collection.

CALS Global

Global Agricultural Productivity Initiative

- [2024 GAP Report](#) launched October 3, 2024, at the National Press Club in Washington, DC.

USDA Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities

- \$80 million [Alliance to Advance Climate-Smart Agriculture](#) grant funded by the USDA and led by Virginia Tech CALS, has passed the one-year mark.
- To date, greater than 1,300 farms encompassing 202,000 acres have been engaged and the project has [distributed ~\\$10M in payments to producers](#).

CALS Academic Programs

2024 Admissions

- 3932 Applications (27.4% increase)
- 60.8% Offered Rate
- 869 Enrolled (10% increase from 2023-24)

2024 Enrollment

- Total CALS: 3605 students
- Undergraduate enrollment continues to be steady (2962 students) with VT enrollment capped.
- Graduate student enrollment at 643 students.

2023-24 Graduates

- 54 Associate, 701 Bachelors,
- 130 Masters, 47 Doctoral

Scholarships

- CALS awarded > \$1,00,000 in scholarships in 2024 to more than 500 students.
- 7 John Lee Pratt research-based awards to highly qualified CALS seniors with potential to pursue graduate studies in animal nutrition.
- New \$1,000,000 endowment to support internship programs.

CALS Extension

- Dr. Cathy Sutphin, Associate Director for Families, Youth, and Health, retired on January 1, 2025.
- Dr. Kathy Hosig appointed as Initiative Leader for Health and Families for Virginia Cooperative Extension.
- Jeremy Johnson appointed as Director for Youth Programs.
- Several new positions were established for Extension. Field marketing coordinators were hired to work within districts to support communication needs and be part of the CALS marketing and communication team within CALS Advancement.
- For FY 2024 local governments provided \$11,970,451 in faculty/staff salary/fringe, \$902,158 in rent or space, and \$1,114,005 for operational support.



CALS Extension & Hurricane Helene Response

- Hurricane Helene caused significant damage to operations, homes, and infrastructure in over 20 southwest Virginia communities. [Virginia Cooperative Extension](#) promptly created a [resource page](#) for those affected, while ANR agents collaborated with state agencies to assess both immediate and projected losses, which were estimated at approximately [\\$630 million](#).
- ANR agent Amy Byington quickly launched the Southwest Virginia Agricultural Relief Program, connecting [farmers in need](#) with [donors](#) providing hay, feed, fencing, water, volunteer assistance, and other essentials.
- The program is a partnership between Extension and the Virginia Cattlemen's Association, Virginia Farm Bureau, Virginia Agribusiness Council, and Farm Credit of the Virginias. As the program coordinator, Byington ensures that donations and supplies are directed to areas of the greatest need.
- Similar partnerships and initiatives continue to support producers in their time of need.