



1890 EXTENSION

Transforming

Lives



Why It Matters?

The dynamic work of Cooperative Extension at the 1890 Land-grant Universities is changing lives and connecting people to vital information.

Extension professionals have the unique responsibility of translating federal and state dollars into educational outreach that advances the well-being of their states' diverse audiences, particularly those with limited social and economic resources. They provide services in five key areas: nutrition and health; economic prosperity; youths, families and communities; environmental stewardship; and small-scale farming.

Each year, 19 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the southern region of the United States share research-based information with limited-resource families, businesses and communities to empower them to reach their goals. These 1890 Land-grant Universities shape a brighter future for their communities through their Cooperative

Extension programs by improving the profitability and sustainability of small-scale farm businesses and providing families with the information they need to make healthy lifestyle choices.

How?

Extension specialists, agents, staff and volunteers engage with communities at the local level to hear their concerns and provide them with actionable solutions. These 1890 professionals are in the field constantly testing new formats to deliver information like virtual forums and interactive digital learning programs to augment traditional in-person farm, home, business and school visits. They forge partnerships with other trusted local agencies and organizations to extend their capabilities. Additionally, they test, measure and listen to learn what works best for the people they serve.

With any challenge, Cooperative Extension's mission remains steadfast – to ensure communities have the information they need to stay safe, healthy and prosper. The 2021-22 powerful impacts contained in this booklet demonstrate Extension's commitment to finding real solutions to meet communities' most urgent needs.



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Economic Prosperity and Well-Being of Rural and Urban Underserved Communities

In Kentucky, Cooperative Extension agents at **Kentucky State University** are empowering the Hispanic community in Louisville. Grupo de Mujeres (the women's club) is a monthly meeting, where Spanish-speaking women can gather to learn and feel like family. Run by Eastern Area Community Ministries and KSU's bilingual community resource development agent, the

group offers life-skills development, financial education and empowerment for women and their families. At Grupo de Mujeres, which is conducted in Spanish, members learn a variety of financial literacy topics such as starting a bank account and budgeting.

▼ **Kentucky State University's bilingual community resource development agent helps lead a women's group.**





One of the group members never had a bank account before. As a result of completing the financial literacy program, the individual opened a bank account and now knows how to fill out checks, as well as use money orders and credit and debit cards to pay for their bills. This person is also working on developing short-term and long-term plans to purchase a home.

At **Prairie View A&M University**, the Community Economic Development (CED) Unit is using a \$25,000 grant to partner with mortgage loan company Freddie Mac for the Financial Capability and Homeownership Education Initiative. As part of the initiative, the CED Unit informed the community about the benefits of

▲ **Community members gather for the Waller County Homeownership program in Texas.**

owning a home, increased buyers' financial capability, educated borrowers on available down payment assistance programs and provided a rent-to-ownership timeline illustrating steps to homeownership.

As a result, Extension staff conducted 25 housing-related workshops, reaching 1,082 consumers and referring 210 consumers to lenders for housing financing options. Because the CED Unit exceeded its expectations, Freddie Mac doubled its funding to \$50,000 in support of homeownership education in 2023.

Nutrition, Health and Wellness of Individuals, Families and Communities

The **Delaware State University** Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) educates individuals and families in Kent County, Delaware, on how to make informed decisions about wise food choices, safety and budgeting. Working with the peer support and resource center, Brandywine Counseling & Community Services Inc. (BCCS), participants not only learned basic nutrition but also how to make healthy snack choices and achieve the goal of consuming five fruits and vegetables each day. In addition, clients learned the importance of physical exercise.

In 2022, EFNEP held five BCCS adult sessions once a week over a six-week period. Each session enrolled 25 to 30 participants. Based on evaluation results, the adults decreased their consumption of refined grains, fats and sugars. They also increased their fruit, vegetable and water intake and exercise habits by more than 90% before exiting the program.

The United Way of Anderson County in South Carolina revealed that 65% of local adult residents are either



▲ **EFNEP program assistant for South Carolina State 1890 Upstate Region begins the supermarket tour with shopping the perimeter of a store to access fresh vegetables and fruit.**

overweight or obese and that at least 18% of the county's residents lack health coverage. This presents a problem as insurance rates continue to increase. Additionally,

the National Institute of Aging emphasized that making smart food choices and maintaining a healthy diet links directly to decreased obesity-related diseases such as diabetes and hypertension in aging adults.

To combat obesity and other health issues, **South Carolina State University** 1890 Research & Extension's Upstate Region Family Life, Nutrition and Health Program operates the Comparing Food Options Across the Community project. The program provides senior residents of the Anderson Housing Authority with nutrition education to help families adopt healthier food choices and budget-friendly techniques to use when shopping. Results show that 100% of the participants learned the importance of reading food labels, being healthy, reducing salt intake, buying fresh fruits and vegetables, having a balanced diet and selecting healthier fat options.

The American Heart Association recommends that consumers eat no more than 2,300 milligrams of salt daily, while adults limit sodium intake to 1,500 milligrams daily. Unfortunately, Americans consume more than 3,400 milligrams of sodium daily with 70% coming from eating packaged, prepared and restaurant food. Reducing salt intake to 1,000 milligrams daily is

enough to improve blood pressure and heart health.

To combat this problem, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) experts at the **University of Arkansas Pine Bluff** taught seniors at St. John Alexander Tower's apartment complex how to prepare healthy meals using herbs and spices to season food. They also learned how to control food portions and the importance of physical activity. As a result, one resident successfully reported, "By not using salt, I went from taking two blood pressure medications a day to one and lost 30 pounds as well."

▼ **University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff SNAP-Ed Program associate assists senior participants with preparing a healthy recipe.**



Youths, Families and Communities' Resilience and Sustainability

Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) continues to be a national 4-H program thrust. Alabama Extension at **Alabama A&M University** encourages young people to not only engage in 4-H STEM activities and school subjects but to also pursue STEM careers. In 2022, 3,028 youths from 31 school districts participated in Virtual STEM Day. Using the engineering design process, the young people created catapults to accurately and consistently launch a projectile into a target or as far as possible.

The STEM Day activities incentivized the youths to exercise team building, problem-solving and reasoning skills that are vital to many STEM pursuits. As a result, these STEM activities demonstrate that 4-H teams can positively impact and inspire underserved youths who will be among the next generation of scientists and technology experts.

The **Alcorn State University** 4-H Program conducted three two-day 4-H STEM Challenge Programs called Explorers of the Deep. The challenge focused on three

ocean exploration activities – Ocean Robot Test Tank, Ocean Expedition and Ocean Communicator – for elementary, middle and high school students in southwest Mississippi. As a result, 960 participants developed inquiry, observational and critical thinking skills to make discoveries and develop their STEM identities.

Of the 960 youths participating in the STEM program, 79% developed a new interest in STEM fields and careers. In addition, 65% were less intimidated by science and technology, as well as eagerly engaged in subsequent events and activities. At most major universities, a two-day STEM program costs approximately \$560 per camper. The youths participating in ASU's 4-H STEM events and activities saved a total of \$60,900.

Fort Valley State University is empowering Georgia's underserved youths and families through its Healthy Habits 4-H Village Community Garden Outdoor Research Laboratory of Learning Program. The community garden, located in Sylvester, Georgia (a



poverty-stricken rural community of less than 6,200 residents), has fed more than 10,000 people fresh produce from 2014 to 2023 at no cost. Sponsored by the Walmart Foundation, the program provides quality healthy living education to community members.

As a result, 100% of youths have acquired new 4-H Healthy Habits Nutrition Education knowledge related to healthy living. In addition, 88% reported eating two or more vegetables weekly, 98% reported eating less fried foods per month due to their increased knowledge

▲ **Fort Valley State University's family life specialist demonstrates the benefits of healthy eating to Worth County Middle School students.**

of the benefits of drinking more water daily and 52% reported they lost weight by exercising for five or more minutes a day over the duration of the program due to their increased knowledge of physical fitness benefits. The 4-H Healthy Living mentor consultant emphasized, "The program bridges art and agriculture to create the largest art sculpture in the world that feeds people."

Environment, Natural Resources and Renewable Energy

The Cooperative Extension and Outreach Programs at **Langston University** partners with tribal and municipal governments and other minority communities to demonstrate the use of goats to control unwanted vegetation. Their goat program uses these animals for areas that are hard to manage or have been neglected over the years. Communities also explore sustainable control measures with low harmful effects on the environment.

In 2022, the program received matching funds ranging from \$2,000 to \$2,500 to support these efforts. As a result, goats eradicated briars, giant ragweed, common ragweed and sumac vegetation while limiting the encroachment of Eastern red cedar. These efforts were also successful in reducing harmful environmental impacts and recycling nutrients back into the soil.

Goats clearing unwanted briars from pastureland in Oklahoma. ▶



Agricultural Profitability and Sustainability of Small-Scale Farms

At **Lincoln University**, the Innovative Small Farm Outreach Program (ISFOP) was established to help Missouri's small farmers and ranchers, especially those who are socially disadvantaged and underserved. This program helps farmers to improve farm efficiency and to sustain soil and natural resources.

In 2022, ISFOP staff reached their core clients — 210 families of diverse racial, ethnic and farming experience backgrounds. As a result of this training, 19 collaborating farm families reported a combined gross farm income of \$194,700 during the year, averaging \$10,247 per farm. In addition, 14 farmers received a total of \$149,080 from various U.S. Department of Agriculture programs.

Plasticulture production can increase yield and extend the growing season. Small farm owners in North Carolina could benefit from this production method to increase yield and profit; however, plasticulture equipment is expensive and beyond the reach of many. To make plasticulture production more accessible, **North Carolina A&T State University** Extension created the



▲ **Farmers gather to learn how to grow their own profitable crop of mushrooms using straw, woodchips and mushroom inoculant at a hands-on learning workshop in Missouri.**



• Extension professional at North Carolina A&T State University demonstrates how to lay plastic to begin the plasticulture production method.

Plasticulture Rental/Cash Back Program, providing equipment to farmers for rent for \$25 per day. Extension agents offer technical assistance on the equipment to small farmers in their counties to enhance plasticulture operations.

Agents assisted 151 small farmers in 2021 and 113 in 2022. The educational and technical interventions provided by small farm agents in Duplin and Sampson counties helped six limited-resource small farmers avoid \$17,767 of debt. The farmers increased their yield and earned a combined gross income of \$45,290 by growing specialty crops on 6 acres of black plastic.

In 2022, the **Southern University and A&M College** Small Farmer Academy held its first two cohorts, educating nontraditional students about farm processes. Participants were small farmers with limited resources who were guided through the process of becoming more successful agricultural entrepreneurs.

These cohorts were given unique forms of training that enabled them to make better decisions for their farm or agricultural operations while also equipping them with the necessary skills and expertise to assume positions of leadership in the agricultural community. More than

60% of the participants in the program identified as female and were over the age of 50. Slightly less than 40% of the participants identified as male and were over the age of 55. As a result of the program, participants maintain a successful harvest from the local garden project at the Scotlandville CDC Garden, harvesting produce such as collard greens, green onions and chives.

▼ **Southern University's agriculture and natural resources agent and garden specialist works on the Scotlandville CDC Garden Project.**



Most small-scale cow calf beef producers in Black Belt and surrounding counties are having a difficult time producing quality beef cattle for market. Twice yearly, **Tuskegee University** Cooperative Extension Program and the School of Veterinary Medicine provide a series of hands-on small-scale beef cattle herd health management demonstrations.

As a result, 18 livestock producers established or renovated approximately 300 acres of forages. Three beef producers purchased performance tested bulls to improve herd genetics and market calf's quality. In addition, performance tested bulls helped beef producers improve calf crop percentages, weaning and market weights. Calf crop percentages improved on average from 82% to 91% and weaning weights improved by 160 pounds; markets improved by 30 pounds on average. These results include producers from neighboring states (Georgia and Mississippi) and Mexico with participation by Extension professionals from **Fort Valley State University** and **Alcorn State University**.

University of Maryland Eastern Shore Extension's Supporting Small Minority Growers program empowered 67 limited-resource and socially disadvantaged producers, mostly Asian Americans in

Maryland, through urban gardening and community orchards. The producers increased their technical and economic efficiency substantially. They lowered production costs and mitigated production, financial and marketing risks by harvesting rainwater, making compost, introducing a two-tier vegetable production system, increasing crop biodiversity and marketing fresh specialty and ethnic products.

As a result, 90% reported a 20% increase in intake of fresh daily meals and a \$14,200 economic benefit. Of the growers, 35 planted a dwarf variety of apple trees in their backyards in Delmarva, and eight small-scale community orchards were established in three Lower Shore counties. Also, an acre high-density orchard in Crisfield serves as a peer-to-peer learning site for beginning apple growers.

Through a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, **Virginia State University** researchers designed and built a Mobile Processing Unit (MPU) to enhance marketing opportunities for Virginia's small ruminant producers. In 2021, VSU's MPU certification program was launched with the model of training producers to be their butchers. As certified butchers, farmers can apply for a grant of inspection and lease

the MPU from VSU. In 2022, 23 additional participants were trained for a total of 43 MPU-certified graduates. Five more graduates also started the process of obtaining individual grants of inspection, and four MPU-certified participants came together to lease the unit and process the animals from two farms. In total, 18 animals were processed under USDA inspection on the MPU in 2022, while an additional 50 were processed under custom slaughter.

Producers utilizing the MPU in 2022 estimated that they saved between \$2,501-\$5,000 each in processing costs (\$5,002-\$10,000 in total savings). Also, 85% of those participants planning to lease the MPU in 2023 estimate that they will save between \$2,501-\$5,000, while 15% estimate saving \$5,001-\$10,000 annually by processing their animals.

The 2022 Virginia State University Mobile Processing Unit cohort. ▶



▶ **Farmers collaborate to sell their Asian vegetables during a spring festival in Maryland.**



These impacts are just a few examples of the many ways 1890 Cooperative Extension programs are making a positive difference in their state every year. To learn more, visit www.1890aea.org or email communications@1890aea.org to subscribe to the monthly Extension Today newsletter.

1890 Land-grant Universities

- Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University
- Alcorn State University
- Central State University
- Delaware State University
- Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University
- Fort Valley State University
- Kentucky State University
- Langston University
- Lincoln University
- North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University
- Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical University
- South Carolina State University
- Southern University and Agricultural and Mechanical College
- Tennessee State University
- Tuskegee University
- University of Arkansas Pine Bluff
- University of Maryland Eastern Shore
- Virginia State University
- West Virginia State University



The 1890 Cooperative Extension System assists diverse audiences, with emphasis on those who have limited social and economic resources, to improve the quality of life and vitality of individuals and communities through transformational engagement and outreach education.

"The 1890 Foundation applauds the work of the Association of Extension Administrators (AEA) and the legions of 1890 Extension colleagues throughout the 19-member universities in the 1890 land-grant community. Since the 1890 Universities Foundation's inception six years ago, we are proud to have joined forces with AEA to support key Extension initiatives that are making a difference in the communities we serve. Excite COVID immunization outreach and supplemental private sector funding for Extension-related projects through 1890 Centers of Excellence are examples of programs and projects we have collaborated on with AEA. The work of AEA distinguishes the 1890 Land-grant Universities throughout our 133-year history of advancing agricultural research, Extension and teaching to produce outcomes that enhance the quality of life in the communities served by our 19 Strong 1890 Universities."

- Dr. Mort Neufville
President & CEO of the 1890 Universities Foundation

