

FOCUS

2022

magazine

POWERING UP!



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FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FAMILY SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PROGRAM

F  **OCUS**

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On June 14, Fort Valley State University President Dr. Paul Jones, met with U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to reaffirm and strengthen the ongoing relationship between the 1890 Land Grant Universities and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Learn more at bit.ly/usda-1890-partnership.

Photo courtesy of U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

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 AG.FVSU.EDU

did u know?

Fort Valley State University's Cooperative Extension Program offers a mobile exhibit called Life on the Farm. This exhibit travels around Georgia educating the public, particularly children, about where food comes from, farming practices and agriculture-related careers. Participants also learn how to properly treat animals. Thousands of Georgians have benefitted from this program, and so can your school, library, church or nonprofit organization.

Although Life on the Farm is not a petting zoo, participants can touch the animals, which may include a cow, a duck, and a lamb; chickens and goats are also showcased. The animals and crops such as cotton, peanuts and corn, are brought on location in a livestock trailer. The only things needed are a water hose hookup, and outdoor space for the exhibit to be setup.

LIFE ON THE FARM SUMMARY FOR 4-H ES-237

Below are the ES-237 State 4-H youth participant reporting category numbers for the Fort Valley State University's Cooperative Extension 4-H Program from October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021.

COUNTY AND GRADES

HOUSTON COUNTY	BIBB COUNTY
Kindergarten: 2,610	Kindergarten: 1,220
1st Grade: 380	1st Grade: 290
2nd Grade: 190	2nd Grade: 261
Total: 3,180	Total: 1,771

RACE AND ETHNICITY

Hispanic/Latino:	352
Black/African American:	2,901
White:	1,698

GENDER

Males:	2,128
Females:	2,423

YOUTH PARTICIPATING IN 4-H SPECIAL INTEREST/SHORT-TERM PROGRAMS:

4,951

Data provided by Woodie Hughes Jr, Assistant Extension Administrator State 4-H Program Leader

LIFE on the **FARM**
Bringing Agriculture to Communities



To schedule a visit, or for more information, contact: Fort Valley State University Cooperative Extension Program 478-825-6296

Using a microwave can be convenient and fun. It can also help to reduce time in the kitchen while creating tasty meals.



Kena Torbert, MS, CFCS, CNWE
Family Life Specialist

Here are a few tips for safely using a microwave:

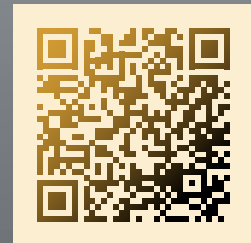
- ✓ A good rule of thumb is to know the microwave wattage. The power output of most microwaves falls between 600 to 1200 watts. Using a lower wattage microwave may take food a little longer to cook.
- ✓ Only use cookware that is specially manufactured for use in the microwave oven. Glass, ceramic containers, and all plastics that are safe to use are usually labeled for microwave oven use.
- ✓ Food heated or prepared in a microwave can be very hot, so be careful.
- ✓ Cover foods with a lid or a microwave-safe plastic wrap to hold in moisture and provide safe, even heating.
- ✓ Stir food or rearrange items, this helps redistribute the heat so foods cook more evenly.
- ✓ Allow food to go through a standing time, this allows food to complete the cooking process.
- ✓ Increased quantity of items in the microwave may increase cooking times.
- ✓ Heat ready-to-eat foods such as hot dogs, luncheon meats, fully cooked ham and leftovers until steaming hot.
- ✓ Clean microwave daily and consult the manufacturer's care manual for the best advice for the model of microwave oven. Generally, remove spatters and spills as they occur. Wipe with a soft cloth or clean paper towel dampened with warm water. For heavier soil, use baking soda, a mild soap or dishwashing liquid.

Recipes:

Scan the code with your phone's camera to view the recipe.

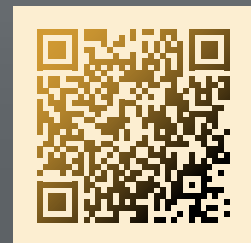
Microwave Baked Potato

<https://bit.ly/fvsuag-recipe-microwave-baked-potato>



Microwave Scrambled Eggs

<https://bit.ly/fvsuag-recipe-microwave-scrambled-eggs>



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspections Service and Kena Torbert, FVSU family life specialist.



PRESIDENT JONES BUILDS CAPACITY THROUGH NATIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLE

In 2022, Fort Valley State University President Dr. Paul Jones expanded his leadership role by accepting a new position that increases capacity for 1890 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Fort Valley State University.

In this Q&A, we will learn about his role and how his leadership will be beneficial to 19 institutions.

by ChaNaè Bradley

What is the Council of 1890 Officers, and what is your role?

“The council is one of the many councils that falls under the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU). The 1890 Council is made up of presidents and chancellors of the 19 1890 institutions. I’ve been an officer of the council for the last three years. I was vice chair last year, and this year I became chair. As chair of the 1890 Council, you serve on the Board of Directors for APLU. The chair and vice chair also serve as officers of the 1890 Foundation. With this comes a significant responsibility. As chair, I am even more engaged primarily at the federal level. APLU is one of the major national organizations in higher education. It is one of the key higher education advocacy groups. There are other councils under that umbrella that represent various parts of higher education, but the 1890 Council is the only one that is a system of higher education institutions (19 1890 Land-Grant Universities). The 1890 System is made up of 19 institutions in 18 states, and enroll more than 100,000 students, 2,100 faculty and staff, and has an economic impact of \$4.4 billion dollars to their communities.”

When did you begin serving in this capacity, how long is your appointment and what are some of the initiatives that you plan to implement during your term?

“My appointment began in 2022, and it will last for two years. In this role, I want to continue to build on the great work of my

predecessor, former chair Dr. Makola Abdullah, president of Virginia State University. He did great work in beginning to get us to operate more collectively as a system. Under his leadership, we were rebranded as 19 Strong, representing the collective 19 1890 Land-Grant Universities. We are better as a system than we are individually. In addition, we aim to expand our collaborative efforts with our federal partners and our partnerships with private industries. That's very important. Through the 1890 Foundation, we have developed partnerships with companies like Microsoft, Wal-Mart and Cargill, just to name a few. I think we need to broaden those relationships as we look for more opportunities for student engagement. That can be through internships or career opportunities. But we also aim to expand the 1890 capacity agenda so that it looks beyond agriculture.

Furthermore, as we approach the new Farm Bill, we will continue to work with our colleagues and advocacy groups to make sure we get the kind of support that we need. Through this bill, the FVSU 1890 Scholarships were born. We would like to continue working with Congressman David Scott who is working hard to make those permanent scholarships. Overall, we would like to say to the industry that you don't have to come looking for us; if you come to us as a system, we are the solution that you're looking for. We are very diverse, and we cover 18 states. Industries that are looking at expanding their initiatives, or growing their labor market, should come to the 1890 Council. Yes, we want FVSU to benefit, but when we work as a system, this gives us all a better chance of

benefitting from this important work. We're beginning to see some positive results of that."

How will FVSU benefit from your appointment, and how can the 19 1890 Land-Grant Universities benefit from you fulfilling this appointment?

"FVSU benefits from this role because we learn more. It gives us an opportunity to expand our networking and expand in the area of continuous improvement. I have become more engaged with College of Agriculture Dean Dr. Ralph Noble and Extension Administrator Dr. Mark Latimore, working to expand our work within the various agricultural commodities. Our focus has been great, the work that we've done across the state is absolutely incredible, but the state needs more. We have expanded our work with the U.S. Department of Agricultural Research Stations both in Byron and Dawson. We've received federal funding to support our work in pecans and peanuts. We also have the work that we're doing with the University of Georgia (UGA). We are beginning to look at other commodities as well. It's also given us an opportunity to remain engaged.

For example, we spent last year working on community projects. We received two out of the three grants we submitted. Because of the work of the advocacy group and Dr. Govind Kannan, vice president of Fort Valley State University's Economic Development and Land-Grant Affairs, we will receive \$3 million to support science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and the Cooperative Developmental Energy Program (CDEP). In addition, we received funding through Senator

Raphael Warnock and Congressman Sanford Bishop's office in the amount of \$700,000 for the community gardens in partnership with Albany State University. So, we are going to have one in Fort Valley, Macon and Albany. If we're not engaged, we won't hear about the opportunities that might avail themselves. The real beneficiary of all this work is our students and our community. That's important. Whether it's the research that we turn into outreach work through Extension or the teaching we do, all of this matters."

Discuss some of the future plans that you have for FVSU?

"I hope we continue to build capacity here. We are very hopeful that we might be taking the lead role in the Center for Emerging Technologies and be one of the next Centers of Excellence to operate. We are excited to hopefully open the Center of Agriculture, Innovation and Entrepreneurship soon. The technology piece becomes really important for us as an institution from a sustainability standpoint. We are also hopeful that we will be looking at sustainability in general. Now that we're partnering with Georgia Power, there is potential for us to look into academic programs in renewable energy or something related. Also, there is potential for us to expand our meat processing center so we can help more people in the community and possibly provide a poultry processing center and a degree with a poultry science emphasis through collaborations with the UGA. All of this is achievable and I wouldn't want to be doing this work anywhere else."





A GREEN Deal!

GEORGIA RESIDENTIAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY NETWORK






 Russell Boone Jr.

Fort Valley State University's Georgia Residential Energy Efficiency Network (GREEN) Project enhance the lives of Georgia residents within a 20-county service area. This is accomplished by educating Georgians on practices which promote energy conservation and efficiency.

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Billy Brown, GREEN Project energy educator, assist clients by teaching GO GREEN workshops, presenting GREEN exhibits at meetings and conferences and conducting energy audits. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, Brown has not been able to enter client's homes to conduct energy audits, but he has conducted GREEN Virtual Energy Efficiency Workshops.

Each GREEN energy workshop covers areas concerning home energy audits and assessments which include:

-  Air Sealing
-  Insulation
-  Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Systems
-  Windows
-  The use of energy efficient lighting and energy efficient appliances are also covered in these workshops.

Furthermore, since January 2021, Brown has distributed more than 34 energy kits. Each kit, worth more than \$250.00, contains the following:

- 💡 Compact florescent lightbulbs (CFLs) 13, 18 and 23 Watts. (Last 12,000 hours and saves money on energy bills).
- 💡 10 switch and 10 outlet gasket packs (Eliminates drafts, insulates and helps with energy conservation when used on exterior walls).
- 💡 Air deflectors (Used to direct air conditioned (AC) air upward or heated air downward to better blend with room temperatures).
- 💡 Energy Star programmable thermostat (Extremely energy efficient and can save consumers as much as 20-30 percent on heating and cooling costs).
- 💡 Low-flow showerhead (Saves water and automatically cuts a person's energy and utility bill).
- 💡 Toilet tank bank (A small rubber bag that is filled with water and placed inside on the back of the toilet. The toilet tank uses less water when flushing the toilet).

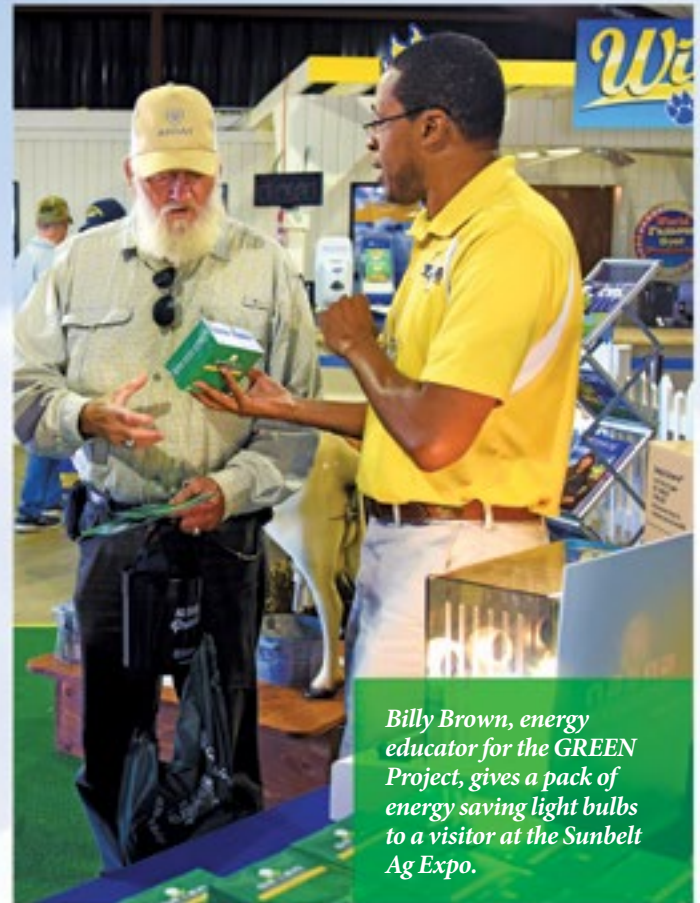
According to Brown, an individual could save anywhere from 10-25 percent in energy savings each month with proper insulation and changing the lighting in the home and/or with the use of the energy kits.

Brown also partners with the Middle Georgia Community Food Bank in Macon and Feeding the Valley Food Bank in Columbus. When those organizations distribute food, Brown sets up an exhibit where he passes out publications with information about the GREEN Project and light emitting diode (LED) lightbulbs.

Thanks to those exhibits, more than 5,274 residents in 30 counties have been reached due to the GREEN Project. With the distribution of the LED bulbs, these individuals have experienced more than \$1,582,200 in energy savings to their homes.



For more information about the GREEN Project, contact Brown at (478) 825-6368 (brownb@fvsu.edu).



Billy Brown, energy educator for the GREEN Project, gives a pack of energy saving light bulbs to a visitor at the Sunbelt Ag Expo.




As part of a partnership with local food banks, Brown passes out GREEN Project information and light emitting diode (LED) lightbulbs during food give-a-ways.

A man wearing a purple baseball cap with the Greek letters Omega Psi Phi and a blue denim jacket over a pink shirt is smiling and holding a large, vibrant green leafy vegetable, possibly a collard green. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and other people.

Lending a HELPING HAND

Extension client receives more than
30 years of assistance from
county agent.

 Russell Boone Jr.

Gregory Odom, along with his siblings and cousins, work a 101-acre farm near Montezuma, Georgia.

Fifty-one acres of land are dedicated to livestock production. The remaining 50-acres are dedicated to growing various row crops such as collard greens, mustard greens, kale, tomatoes, okra and a variety of peas.

“Basically, we put anything in the ground we can find a spot for,” Odom said with a laugh. “We have plenty of fruit trees around here along with our vineyard and pecan trees,” added the Macon County native.

Even though Odom is a Macon County native, he lives in Covington where he commutes twice a week to the farm. On each return trip to Covington, he takes produce back to sell to his clients.

For more than 30 years, Odom has enjoyed a working relationship with Fort Valley State University’s (FVSU) Cooperative Extension Program. Most of that time, he has worked with Ricky Waters, FVSU’s Extension agent for Macon County.

Odom said he really began closely collaborating with Waters on projects after his father, Timothy Odom Sr., passed more than 10 years ago.

Waters used the Odom farm as a model for educating youth on the latest cutting-edge technology. This includes how to produce food using a high tunnel hoop house. He has also invited other 1890 Land Grant Universities to tour the farming operation. Furthermore, the FVSU Extension agent continues to keep the Odom family abreast on services offered by various U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) agencies and farm programs that can be a benefit to their daily enterprise.

Odom, who is a third-generation farmer, has a modern irrigation system due to Waters’ help in providing proper information on securing a USDA loan. “To have the water for the row crops is a blessing. When we go through these



Gregory Odom, a Macon County farmer, (left) and FVSU Macon County Extension agent Ricky Waters, (right) pose with produce grown on the Odom family farm.

summer droughts and need water, we have water,” Odom said.

Additionally, Waters and Odom both elaborated on the importance of a positive rapport between Extension agent and client.

“It is extremely important to have good relationships with clients because things are constantly changing,” Waters said. The FVSU Extension agent added that rules, regulations and farming techniques are constantly evolving, and they have an impact on the farmer’s bottom line. “We try to keep them abreast on new technologies and make sure they’re informed on what’s going on,” Waters said.

Odom said he is thankful for his relationship with Waters and FVSU’s Cooperative Extension Program. “I really appreciate them looking out, and when something comes available and we can help, we’re always available. Anytime we can learn some new techniques and add more diversity to our farm, we’re open to that. Fort Valley State has been a big help” Odom said.

The Macon County farmer says he refers farmers to the resources provided by FVSU’s Extension Program. “I would tell them it’s a good service. For a lot of people who want to start farming in this area, I always refer them to Fort Valley’s Extension office so they can find out what options are available,” Odom said.



For more information about FVSU’s Cooperative Extension Program, call (478) 825-6296.



Joy Moten-Thomas (L), assistant administrator for community development and outreach for Fort Valley State University's Cooperative Extension, recently earned the Bonnie Teater Lifetime Achievement Award sponsored by the Southern Rural Development Center. Dr. John Greene, director of the Southern Rural Development Center presents her with a plaque.

Bonnie Teater
Community Development
Lifetime Achievement Award

Presented to
Joy Moten-Thomas
Fort Valley State University

In recognition of

Exceptional Work in the Design & Delivery
Of Innovative Extension Programs of
Regional & National Significance

SRDC

2022

Extension Community Development Administrator Earns Lifetime Achievement Award

 Russell Boone Jr.

Joy Moten-Thomas, assistant administrator for community development and outreach for FVSU Cooperative Extension, earned the Bonnie Teater Lifetime Achievement Award sponsored by the Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC).

The mission of the SRDC is to enhance the capabilities of more than 30 land grant institutions in its region to address issues involving rural development impacting the well-being of people and communities in the rural South.

Additionally, the honor, which comes with a monetary stipend, is awarded to an individual for superior lifetime work and important contributions in the Extension Community Development area.

Dr. Mark Latimore Jr., associate dean for Extension, nominated Moten-Thomas for the honor.

To be eligible for the award, the individual must be employed or retired in the last 12 months by one of 30 Land-Grant Universities in the SRDC region. They must also serve as an administrator, specialist or agent in the Extension community development area at the state, multi county or county level for at least 10 years. Finally, they must possess an

impressive portfolio of Extension related programs and publications.

“I am proud and honored to receive the 2022 Bonnie Teater award,” Moten Thomas said. “Very few people from the 1890 community have received this award, and I hope that I am able to inspire others to continue to take risks to benefit the audiences they serve. I have received numerous awards in my career, but this award will always be the one that I cherish the most,” the FVSU administrator said.

For 19 of her 25-years in the community and economic development field, Moten-Thomas has worked for FVSU’s Cooperative Extension Program. Some of her achievements include:

The creation of the University’s first homebuyer education program, HomeGrown in 2003.

Chairing the city of Fort Valley’s Mayor’s Housing and Community Development task force for 15 years which lead the city of Fort Valley chartering their own Rebuilding Together Fort Valley affiliate and the \$1.5 million streetscape project that led to the beautification of State University Drive.

Receiving designation as a Phase III Stronger Economies Together (SET) in 2012 which afforded rural

communities designated by USDA as Strikeforce counties in Regions 8, 9, 10 and 11 to focus on regional issues impacting their geographic area. She served as the project lead.

Providing leadership to the College of Agriculture’s Sheep and Goat Story exhibit at the Georgia National Fair in Perry since 2015.

Providing leadership to FVSU’s College of Agriculture Ham & Egg Legislative Breakfast. This serves as one of the university’s flagship events. In 2018, Moten-Thomas secured former Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Purdue and Senator David Purdue as program speakers for the event.

Serving as National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP) 1890 Representative representing 19 land grant institutions, along with serving at the Program Leaders Network (PLN) CRD Committee Chair (twice).

The award is named after Bonnie Teater, who worked for more than 30 years as a member of the SRDC staff. Teater is currently enjoying retirement in her home state of Kentucky. She served as an inspiration for the Center with her dedication and passion for rural development research of the region’s land grant universities Extension mission.





POWERING UP!



FVSU Extension plays a role in offering clean and renewable energy to middle Georgia residents.

Fort Valley State University is playing a role in bringing clean and renewable energy to residents of middle Georgia.

In collaboration with Georgia Power Company, a solar farm of more than 107 acres was built on FVSU's campus in 2021. The facility, one of the largest solar operations on a college campus in the United States, consists of more than 27,000 solar panels (400 watts each) that includes a connected sub-station built at a cost of more than \$9 million. FVSU did not incur any costs in the construction of the facility.

In addition to the solar farm, the solar farm consists of a model demonstration site dedicated for academic and research use. It will serve as a power source for energy-

dependent applications at the FVSU Sustainable Research Site.

More than 10.8 megawatts (10.8MW) of power can be generated by the farm to more than 3,000 homes in the middle Georgia area. FVSU will not receive any of this power. This is done with solar panels and the substation converting sunlight to electrical power through the utility power grid. Georgia Power Company will handle the day-to-day operation and management of the larger solar farm with FVSU maintaining control of the solar demonstration site.

“This solar project will expand FVSU's Cooperative Extension Program in Agricultural and Natural Resources (ANR) to include renewable energy,” said Dr. Cedric Ogden, FVSU professor of engineering technology



Dr. Cedric Ogden, (center) FVSU professor of engineering technology and Cooperative Extension engineer specialist, visits the FVSU Solar Farm site with Georgia Power employees and contractors from Infrastructure and Energy Alternatives (IEA) Inc.

This substation allows generated power to be fed to Georgia Power Company's utility electric grid providing power to thousands of middle Georgia customers. It is connected through an easement from the 10.8kV solar farm located at Fort Valley State University.



and Cooperative Extension engineer specialist. “It will also provide additional opportunities for FVSU and the Extension program in the areas of sustainability, climate change awareness and alternative energy,” Ogden said.

The FVSU Extension engineer said solar energy is carbon neutral and does not emit harmful emissions into the atmosphere. It also reduces dependency of finite resources of oil and coal.

In addition to making a major contribution towards the transition to clean energy, FVSU’s Extension Program is expected to reap huge dividends from the solar farm.

“FVSU’s Extension clientele will benefit from the solar farm as it will provide a working model for landowners as well as small and medium growers to follow. It will also provide them insight to alternative land development opportunities,” the FVSU professor said.

According to Ogden, the academic impact of the solar farm will be a sizeable one, especially for students in

the College of Agriculture and engineering technology majors.

“They will gain hands-on experience with the solar demonstration site by way of racking panel connection and installation of a model unit. This site will serve as a laboratory for students to adhere to the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) Monitoring System. It will also allow students to gain an understanding of how and to what extent solar production is affected by weather conditions, panel orientation and angles,” Ogden said.



For more information about the solar farm, contact Ogden at (478) 825-6290 (ogdenc@fvsu.edu).



**Extension Leader
Completes Food
Systems
Leadership
Institute
(FSLI).**



Woodie Hughes Jr., Fort Valley State University, assistant Extension administrator state 4-H program leader, recently completed the Association of Public Land-Grant Universities (APLU) Food Systems Leadership Institute (FSLI) Leadership Program. The two-year national leadership fellowship program focuses on 21st century global food systems.

Hughes was accepted for the fall 2019 Food Systems Leadership Institute (FSLI), an executive leadership development program for academia, industry and government. The FSLI enhances personal and professional development by emphasizing leadership competencies, skills for organizational change and a broad, interdisciplinary perspective of food systems. The FSLI experience prepares scholars for upper-level leadership roles in food system programs and to assume broader leadership responsibilities within their organizations.

During the FSLI program, scholars work with expert instructors, leadership development coaches and an upper-level mentor to help increase their leadership abilities. They meet with leaders of universities, political leaders, industry leaders and others who have advanced to the highest levels of leadership. Leadership theory is combined with practical experience, often in the context of food systems and higher education.

The FSLI is a two-year program. Year one includes intensive executive education-style residential learning sessions at three university locations.

Scholars perform assessments to increase their self-awareness of their leadership style, and the results are used to develop and implement a personal development plan, prepared with the assistance of a professional coach. Interactive distance learning is used between residential sessions. During year two, participants work, applying what they have learned to develop and carry out an individual leadership project. Additional information is available at www.fsl.org.

FSLI is dedicated to advancing and strengthening food systems by preparing a set of new leaders with the skills and knowledge necessary to invent and reinvent the food systems of the future. It is a program of APLU, with the initial funding provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. North Carolina State University is the host site with The Ohio State University and California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo being residential sites responsible for implementation of the program.

“I heard about the FSLI program while attending a National 4-H Extension Committee on Organization Policy (ECOP-4-H) Leadership Committee meeting from Dr. Marshall Stewart, vice chancellor of Extension and engagement at the University of Missouri,” Hughes said. Furthermore, he said Dr. L. Washington Lyons, retired former administrator of the 1890 Association of Extension Administrators (AEA), suggested he apply for the FSLI program while he was completing the LEAD 21 Leadership Program in 2015.

“After I was blessed to become a land-grant Lead 21 leadership graduate in 2015, I became interested in gaining additional higher education leadership professional development training and professional higher education leadership working experiences. This includes studying best higher education leadership practices and successful examples throughout the entire land-grant universities system in North America or APLU,” Hughes said.

Dr. Mark Latimore Jr., FVSU associate dean for Extension, and Stewart successfully nominated Hughes for the FSLI program in 2019. “I felt humbled, blessed and honored in becoming an FVSU employee who graduated from the APLU-FSLI and Lead 21 leadership programs as an FSLI Fellow for the first time in FVSU’s history,” the FVSU program leader said.

Additionally, Hughes said the opportunity to participate in the program would not be possible without God, the support of his family, Dr. Latimore and Dr. Ralph Noble, dean of the College of Agriculture, Family Sciences and Technology. “I would like to thank them for allowing me to participate in these leadership opportunities! I feel honored to have been selected to positively represent FVSU,” Hughes said.



Flint River Farms Resettlement Project

The Flint River Farms Resettlement Project was established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Resettlement Administration in 1937. The Project was one of many similar community resettlement projects organized throughout the South during the New Deal, allowing African-American farmers to purchase land and learn successful farm practices. A community center opened in 1938 which included school buildings and a vocational agriculture shop. Young people received a first-through eleventh-grade education while adults studied vocational agriculture and home economics. In 2003, sixteen of the original 106 families still owned land purchased through the Flint River Farms Resettlement Project.

Erected by the Georgia Historical Society, the Flint River Farms School

Community Gardens set to Begin Fall 2022

Agricultural community grant connects Fort Valley State University and Albany State University

by ChaNaë Bradley

Fort Valley State University and Albany State University are partnering to combat food deserts and chronic illnesses in southwest and middle Georgia.

To address this concern, both universities received approximately \$700,000 from a U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development grant called, Developing Healthy Communities by Eliminating Food Deserts in Rural Counties in Middle and Southwest Georgia. The collaborative agriculture community grant provides funds to establish community gardens in select locations. Funding will be used to establish

and maintain the gardens as well as provide training to youth and adults.

FVSU will develop two gardens. One will be located at Flint River Community Farms in Macon County. The second will be located on Fort Valley State University's campus. FVSU Extension personnel will manage the gardens on campus and assist with the gardens located in the Flint River Community. Students will also assist with gardening. Albany State University will partner with Pretoria Fields Collective, a farm that has land in Albany and Camilla.

“The goal of this project is to educate youth about healthy eating, the value

of farmers, and to learn the life-cycle of crops and how to grow your own food,” said Dr. Mark Latimore, associate dean for FVSU Cooperative Extension. The FVSU administrator said planting is scheduled to begin fall 2022.

The objective of the community grant is to eliminate food deserts by enabling community members to grow fresh fruits and vegetables on their own, engage them in outdoor physical activity through gardening and educate families about healthy lifestyles. Additional details are forthcoming.





From left to right-Dr. Mark Latimore Jr, associate dean of FVSU Extension, Ricky Waters, FVSU Macon County Extension agent, Dr. James Brown, professor of horticulture and interim program leader for FVSU Agriculture and Natural Resources and Sandy Melvin, secretary for the Flint River Farm School Preservation Society.

The Flint River Community in Macon County, Georgia, is one of the sites designated for the collaborative community garden project managed by Fort Valley State University and Albany State University. This site will be used to educate families about healthy lifestyles by teaching them how to grow fresh fruits and vegetables on their own. It will also engage local residents in outdoor physical activity through gardening. The second site in middle Georgia will be on FVSU's campus.

For more information about the project, contact FVSU Extension at 478-825-6296.

In The Field

SPOTLIGHT

Fort Valley State University's Cooperative Extension personnel educate clients through technical trainings on campus, and by attending outreach events to promote awareness of FVSU programming. Being in the field allows Extension to consistently serve as a resource for the state of Georgia. Check out the 2021 spotlights of Extension at work.



Employees of Fort Valley State University's Cooperative Extension program visited Savannah, Georgia, November 2021 to attend the Association of County Commissioners Georgia (ACCG) County Reconnect Conference. During this event they interacted with state elected officials and shared resources offered by FVSU.



WALB news anchor Jamie Worsley sits down with FVSU College of Agriculture dean Dr. Ralph Noble, and Extension administrator, Dr. Mark Latimore Jr., to discuss FVSU's 40 plus years of participation in the Sunbelt Ag Expo. They also shared scholarships and outreach opportunities. This interview took place October 2021. Check out the link to watch the clip.
<https://bit.ly/30WLyls>



Fort Valley State University's Cooperative Extension Program hosted the Hemp Production and Related Operations in Georgia workshop at the Agricultural Technology Conference Center (ATCC) November 2021. Some of the topics covered included Innovative Technology in the Hemp Industry and Cultivation of Hemp from Seed to Harvest. More than 30 people attended the event.



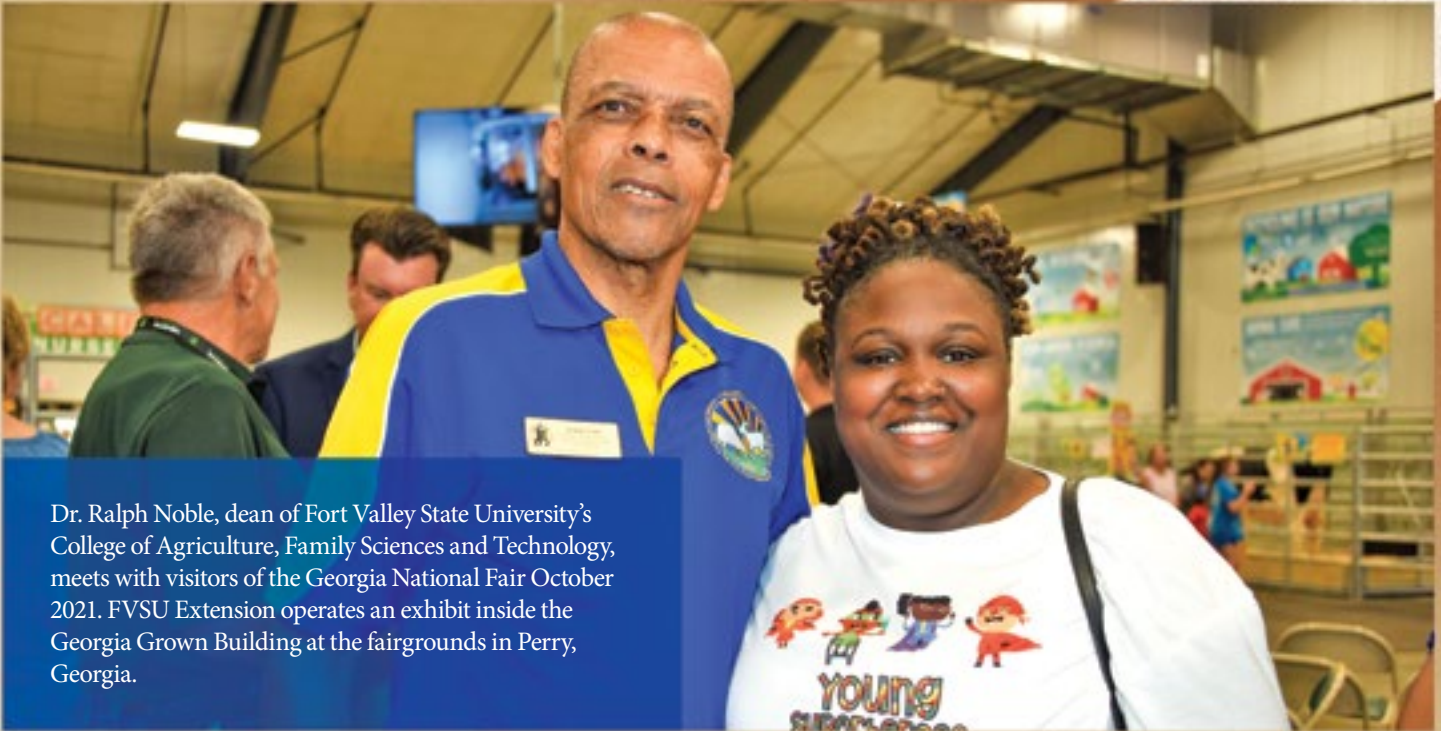
More than 35 clients received certificates for successfully completing the Implementing Risk Management Marketing Plans and Marketing program November 2021. The five-part series was co-sponsored by Fort Valley State University's Cooperative Program, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), Southern Extension Risk Management Education and the National Crop Insurance Services (NCIS).



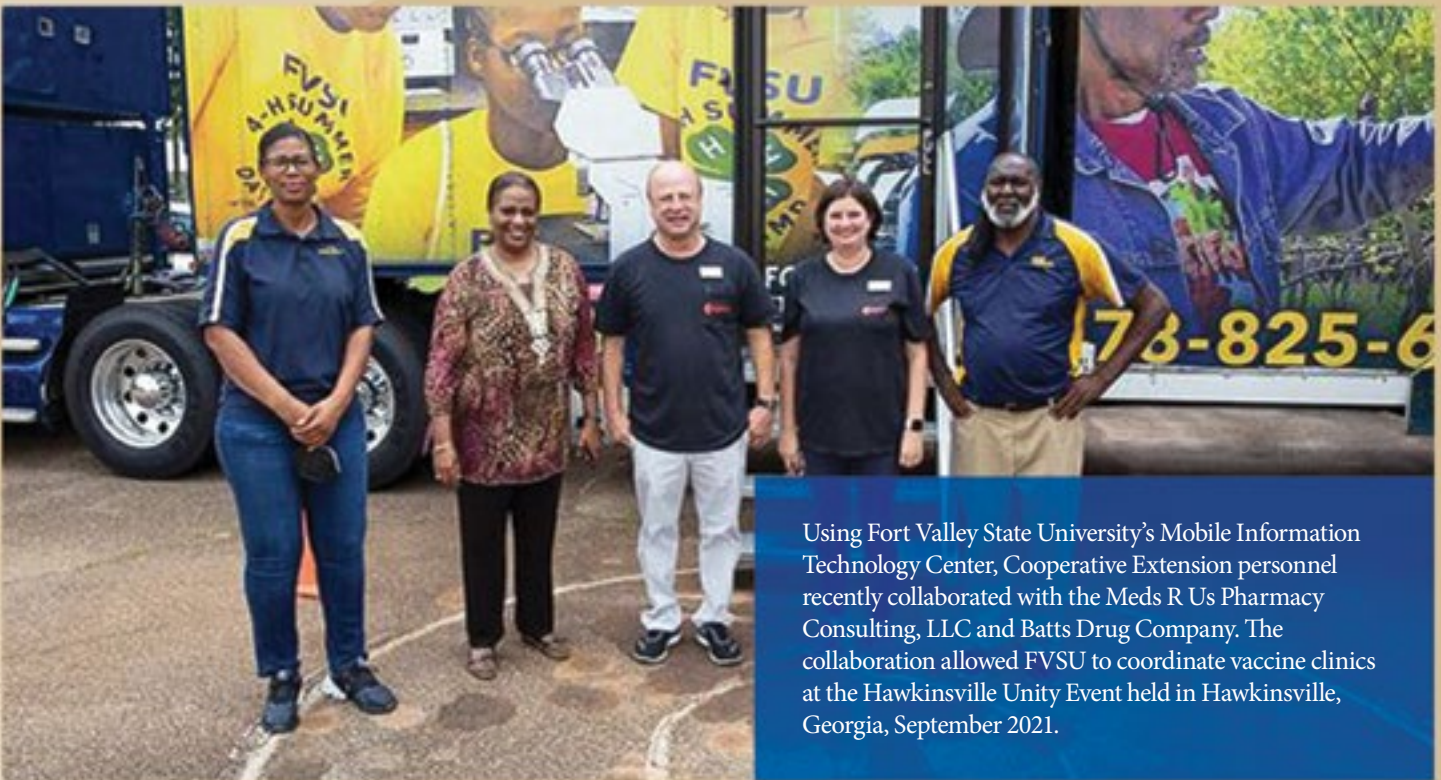
Fort Valley State University's Cooperative Extension program, Heart of Georgia Big Brothers Big Sisters and Jeffersonville City Councilwoman Debbie Hill, co-sponsored the 2021 Back-to-School Giveaway at the Twiggs County Extension Office in Jeffersonville. Students received free refreshments and polo shirts while parents picked up giveaways.



Fort Valley State University Extension personnel conducted the Sheep and Goat Workshop at FVSU's Meat Technology Center June 2021. Dr. Niki Whitley, animal science Extension specialist, discussed topics including forage/feed management, hands-on demonstrations of FAMACHA, hoof trimming and parasite control.



Dr. Ralph Noble, dean of Fort Valley State University's College of Agriculture, Family Sciences and Technology, meets with visitors of the Georgia National Fair October 2021. FVSU Extension operates an exhibit inside the Georgia Grown Building at the fairgrounds in Perry, Georgia.



Using Fort Valley State University's Mobile Information Technology Center, Cooperative Extension personnel recently collaborated with the Meds R Us Pharmacy Consulting, LLC and Batts Drug Company. The collaboration allowed FVSU to coordinate vaccine clinics at the Hawkinsville Unity Event held in Hawkinsville, Georgia, September 2021.

FVSU COOPERATIVE EXTENSION 2021 PROGRAMMATIC ACTIVITIES

Extension staff engaged in notable programmatic activities in 2021. Activities included the traditional Cooperative Extension programs along with COVID-19 related programming. These activities were delivered face-to-face or virtually.

Please note some activities were collaborative efforts by county staff and specialists to give the greatest coverage across the state. The following is a list of the titles of several programs.

- ⚙️ Marketing & Production of Beef Cattle
- ⚙️ Livestock Production and Marketing
- ⚙️ FVSU Extension Virtual Update: Disaster Programs And Risk Management Programs
- ⚙️ FSA - NRCS Updates
- ⚙️ Mental Health and Science of Vaccine Zoom Webinar
- ⚙️ FVSU Ag Update: Record Keeping with Production Decisions
- ⚙️ Risk Management Workshop

Visit our YouTube channel at <https://bit.ly/fvsuag-youtube> to watch recordings of several virtual Zoom video conferences and webinars listed above.



Chicken & CELERY Stir-Fry

Prep Time: 20 Minutes / Cook Time: 20 Minutes / Serves: 4

You will need:

- 1 Tablespoon of peanut oil or vegetable oil
- 1 Tablespoon of ginger, minced
- 1 Tablespoon of garlic, minced (2-3 cloves)
- 1 Tablespoon of fresh scallions (green onions) rinsed and minced
- 2 Cups of celery, rinsed and sliced
- 1 Cup of carrots, rinsed and peeled into very thin strips
- 1 Tablespoon of cornstarch
- 1 Cup of low sodium chicken broth
- 2 Tablespoons of rice vinegar
- 12 ounces of boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into thin strips
- 1 Tablespoon of lite soy sauce
- ½ Tablespoon of sesame oil (optional)
- 1 Tablespoon of sesame seeds, toasted (optional)

Directions:

1. Heat oil in a large wok or sauté pan. Add ginger, garlic and scallions. Stir fry briefly for about 30 seconds to 1 minute until cooked, but not brown.
2. Add celery and carrots. Continue to cook gently until the celery begins to soften.
3. In a bowl, mix cornstarch with chicken broth and add to the pan. Add rice vinegar and bring to a boil over high heat. Lower temperature to a gentle simmer.
4. Add chicken and stir continually for five to eight minutes.
5. Add soy sauce, sesame oil (optional), sesame seeds (optional) and mix gently.
6. Serve 1 cup of chicken stir-fry.



Sabrena Johnson
EFNEP Program Assistant

Preparing a quick and easy meal during the week is a big plus for a family. Sabrena Johnson, Fort Valley State University's Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS), Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) assistant for Peach County, helps to prepare a tasty meal that can be on the dinner table in less than an hour. The stir-fry can be enjoyed as a main dish or on a bed of brown rice with a side salad.

Serving size: 1 cup of chicken and vegetables

Each serving has:	
Calories	188
Total fat	7g
Saturated fat	2g
Cholesterol	51mg
Sodium	237mg
Total fiber	2g
Protein	22g
Carbohydrates	8g
Potassium	370mg

Source: Keep the Beat Recipes-Deliciously Healthy Dinners, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services-National Institute of Health, National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute

Meet Your Agent

IRWIN COUNTY

Stinson A. Troutman

County Extension Agent

Coverage Area: Ben Hill, Irwin, Coffee and Berrien Counties

Stinson A. Troutman is a 34-year veteran of Fort Valley State University's (FVSU) Cooperative Extension Program. He is a familiar face in Ben Hill, Irwin, Coffee and Berrien Counties. Troutman focuses on providing unbiased research-based education and technical assistance in agriculture and natural resources (ANR) to farmers and homeowners in his coverage area.

The FVSU Extension agent also provides individual assistance to his clients by seeking external funding.

Furthermore, Troutman collaborates with clients by informing them of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA), and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) farm programs. He also assists clients with programs associated with banking, farm management, marketing and financial analysis based on eligibility. These programs also make available technical assistance in the areas of pest management, soil and plant analysis.

An award-winning agent, Troutman holds numerous memberships in agricultural organizations such as the Future Farmers of America (FFA) and the Fort Valley State University Agricultural Management Volunteer Recruiting Unit. He also helped to conduct the Implementing Risk Management Marketing Plans and Strategies program. This is a five-part workshop series for small, beginning and limited resource farmers and ranchers in Georgia.

In addition, Troutman provides service in the following areas:

- Crop Insurance
- Forestry
- Forage Production
- Livestock
- Risk Management
- USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loans, and Disaster Assistance
- Farm Management
- Agricultural Marketing
- Record Keeping
- Enterprise analysis Livestock and Crop Budgets
- Assisting clients in preparing Cash Flow Projection
- USDA /NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Planning and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

For more information about programs offered in Ben Hill, Irwin, Coffee and Berrien Counties contact Troutman at:

107 W 4th Street
Ocilla, Georgia 31774
229-468-7409 / 478-235-8696 (mobile)
troutmans@fvsu.edu



Knowledge for Inspiring Lives!

WHAT IS EXTENSION?

The Cooperative Extension System is a nationwide educational network. Each U.S. state and territory has a state office at a land-grant university, such as Fort Valley State University, which has a network of regional offices.

Within these offices staff and experts are available to provide useful, practical and research-based information to agricultural producers, small business owners, youths and others in rural areas and communities of all sizes.

Stinson A. Troutman, based in Irwin County, is one of 16 county Extension agents and program assistants who work personally with residents in 30 counties throughout middle, east and south Georgia.

WHO DOES THE EXTENSION PROGRAM SERVE?

Extension has something for every Georgian, including limited-resource farmers. One-on-one assistance, agricultural events and workshops are available to address an array of issues facing clients. Services and expertise vary with each coverage area.

Extension is here to help Georgians with their challenges.

Clientele Include:

- Animal Producers
- Families
- Future and Current Homeowners
- Gardeners
- Limited-Resource Farmers
- Parents
- Seniors
- Youths

BEN HILL, BERRIEN, COFFEE, AND IRWIN COUNTIES

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HighLights

News & Notes From the
College of Ag @ FVSU

FARMERS LEARN TO ENHANCE BEEF PRODUCTION AND QUALITY DURING WORKSHOP

More than 63 farmers interested in beginning or improving their beef cattle production recently attended a workshop called, Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) Certification Training in Cobbtown, Georgia at the HKJ Ranch.

FVSU Cooperative Extension, AgriUnity, the Georgia Cattlemen's Association and the University of Georgia's (UGA) Extension Program personnel collaborated to conduct the training and provide presentations.

During the workshop, attendees learned several techniques about improving the quality of their cattle. This included proper transportation of livestock to market, feeding techniques and administration of medicines.

Handy Kennedy, one of the co-founders of AgriUnity and a presenter at the event, explained the importance of the workshop for minority farmers. "Basically, this will help them produce a better quality of beef," Kennedy said. Additionally, the farmer and rancher said that it is important to gain knowledge about

adding value to beef for producers and consumers. "When you can create anything of quality, you can ask a premiere price for your product," Kennedy said.

"Overall, it provided a lot of insight for us to see a live program and take part in it," said Amos Lawrence, a farmer from Taylor County. Lawrence participated in a hands-on demonstration by using equipment to deworm a cow. The Reynolds, Georgia resident said he and his family plan to start raising cattle in the near future.

Furthermore, Lawrence said the program will help him set up his farm as a business with actual meat production.

Dr. Ralph Noble, dean of FVSU's College of Agriculture, Family Sciences and Technology, also served as a presenter at the workshop. He said FVSU Cooperative Extension's presence at the event played a key role in providing assistance to potential beef cattle farmers.

"What we're trying to do from the campus is make a better connection with the community in this case with animal science and market options. We want to help our farmers who own livestock to prosper by getting better prices so they can stay on the farm. Some of them are losing land because they can't make enough money to keep it," Noble said.

Additionally, the FVSU administrator said that Georgia has a significant beef cattle industry that can be beneficial for small farmers with proper guidelines or by joining groups such as the Georgia Cattlemen's Association. "We're trying to work together as a group in order to market cattle as a cooperative or an alliance. The Beef Quality Assurance [training] is a way for farmers to get certified so there can be an agreement on a standard to raise cattle," Noble said.

Kennedy said that more workshops focused on improving beef cattle quality and production are planned for the future. He was also very pleased to collaborate with FVSU's and UGA's Extension Programs in conducting the workshop.

For more information about the BQA certification training, contact Kennedy at (770) 375-1655 or e-mail hkjrancho@gmail.com



EXTENSION SCHOLARSHIPS HELPS FARMERS ATTEND WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES



With help from Fort Valley State University and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), small farmers can now attend seminars focused on improving production and costs.

Some of these seminars include the Farmers Train-the-Trainer Conference, the Southeast Regional Fruit and Vegetable Conference, and the Georgia Cattlemen's Association Annual Conference. Farmers attending these events received scholarships through FVSU funded by the USDA's Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement (OPPE). This office develops and provides solutions for problems facing rural and underserved farmers and communities. This includes access to a variety educational resources and programs available through the USDA.

"FVSU Cooperative Extension Program's ability to offer educational scholarships for opportunities like this were based upon recent funding secured

by USDA's Office of Partnership and Public Engagement," said Joy-Moten Thomas, assistant Extension administrator for community development and outreach. "This affords us the opportunity to remove financial barriers that keep many farmers from participating in professional development trainings that are designed to benefit them. It's opportunities like this when farmers are able to see firsthand how we leverage our land grant status by investing back into them," Moten-Thomas said.

Thanks to a scholarship, Crawford County farmer Darlene Williams was able to attend the Southeast Regional Fruit and Vegetable Conference in Savannah. She said she was following news reports on available opportunities benefitting farmers but was unclear of what they entailed. Attending the conference helped address her concerns.

Additionally, the Crawford County farmer said she has never been able to receive the specialized training made available at the conference. She says having access to needed subject matter and its experts is a big help. "I love what I do, and I want to be the best I can be," Williams said.

Freddie Hagan Jr., a farmer from Statesboro, Georgia, also attended the Southeast Regional Fruit and Vegetable Conference in Savannah with assistance from a scholarship. He said small farmers such as

himself may not have the extra funds in their budgets to attend such events.

By attending the conference, Hagan said he had the chance to network with farmers of similar interests, talk to vendors and earn his Produce Safety Alliance Certification. "I may have not had the opportunity to do so without attending the conference," Hagan said. Scholarship recipient Alfred Greenlee, a farmer from Albany, Georgia, and a member of the Southern Farmers Collaborative Group, said the scholarship will allow him to attend the 60th Annual Convention of the Georgia Cattlemen's Association in Savannah, Georgia.

"It's a real privilege to be able to receive a scholarship, especially for small farmers. Sometimes, we have challenges in getting into some of the conferences that they have. But to be able to have Fort Valley State University pay for small and disadvantaged farmers to attend such conferences speaks volumes. It gives us a chance to see the latest in technology, learn the latest in science and have some sort of understanding of marketing our animals. I'm just so thankful that assistance of this magnitude exists," Greenlee said.

For more information about how FVSU's Cooperative Extension Program is helping Georgia's socially disadvantaged farmers, contact Joy Moten-Thomas at (478) 825-6954 (thomasb@fvsu.edu).

AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATORS APPOINTED TO INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLES

ChaNaë Bradley and Latasha Ford, staff members for Fort Valley State University's Agricultural Communications Department, received honors and leadership appointments within an international organization.



Bradley, senior communications specialist and Ford, research communications specialist, will serve on the board of directors for the Association for Communications Excellence (ACE). Bradley will serve as vice president and Ford will serve as director of member services.

ACE is an international association whose membership consists of faculty and staff representing land and sea-grant institutions in the U.S. and other nations. These include media professionals such as

writers, editors, webmasters, photographers, graphic designers, information technologists and others in the communications field.

"I was nominated by a committee, and I think it was based upon my involvement in the organization. I accepted the nomination because I thought it was a great opportunity," Bradley said.

Furthermore, the FVSU Extension employee said that coming from a smaller school, especially an 1890 Land-Grant institution, she felt that it would be a good chance for ACE to see the value she could add as a board member. "I wanted to represent our concerns and share our perspectives," she said.

As vice president, Bradley will move up the chain of command to serve as, president and past president. Ford will serve a three-year term in her role.

Both FVSU Extension employees consider themselves to be torchbearers when it comes to representing 1890 Land-Grant schools because in the organization's history, few board members represent 1890s. They hope that by participating in leadership roles in ACE,

they will inspire more members of 1890s as well as 1994 Land-Grant institutions to get involved in the organization.

In addition to leadership roles, Ford received two awards for writing during the 2022 ACE Conference held in Kansas City, Missouri. She received a gold award in the category Writing for a Targeted Audience for the story, Daring to Discover, Destined to Dominate

The research communications specialist also won a silver award in the category Writing within a Specialized Publication for the story Embracing Opportunities.

"I am honored to receive these awards not only personally, but because I am representing Fort Valley State University. The stories I won the awards for are highlighting two alumni who received degrees in agriculture and have earned great careers. These two individuals are also giving back to their communities," Ford said.

For more information about ACE, visit aceweb.org.

U.S. SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE JOINS ELECTED OFFICIALS AT FVSU TO ANNOUNCE DEBT RELIEF PLAN FOR SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED FARMERS

Georgia's socially disadvantaged farmers will soon benefit from a \$4 billion debt relief plan that supports minority farmers.

To announce this historic news, Sen. Rev. Raphael Warnock, Sen. Jon Ossoff, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and Congressman Sanford Bishop visited Fort Valley State University's Agricultural Technology Conference Center (ATCC) during summer 2021 to host an Agriculture Town Hall. The dignitaries first met with a small group of African American farmers for a roundtable discussion before kicking off the town hall meeting on the ATCC's lawn.

This visit emphasized Warnock's mission to be a vocal advocate for all Georgia farmers and his commitment to ensure the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is swiftly administering this critical relief in a way that is equitable and considers the input of Georgia farmers who have been left behind.

"Everything we are accomplishing in this Congress, know it is because of you," Warnock told the crowd of farmers. "The pandemic both illuminated and exacerbated longstanding disparities. We are here to announce that help is on the way. This is the beginning of the work we must continue."

Celebrating 126 years, FVSU President Dr. Paul Jones said the 1890 Land-Grant Institution was founded to help advance agriculture. "We want to be a focal point for advancing the work of our farmers. Unfortunately, some of our farmers have been left behind, but with efforts put forth by our Congress and the American Rescue Plan, we are going to work to make things even better," he reassured.

Vilsack declared that the American Rescue Plan authorizes approximately \$4 billion in debt relief as

necessary to pay up to 120 percent of outstanding loan balances for USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Direct and Guaranteed Farm Loans, as well as Farm Storage Facility Loans, to eligible socially disadvantaged farmers. These payments will be based on outstanding debt as of Jan. 1, 2021. USDA will directly pay off outstanding loans, with the additional 20 percent being issued as a direct payment intended to help recipients cover tax liabilities stemming from payment on their debts.

In addition to the \$4 billion, the American Rescue Plan authorizes and provides \$1.01 billion in funding for USDA to make significant investments for socially disadvantaged farmers, ranchers and forest landowners to begin the process of leveling the playing field. USDA can use these funds for a variety of purposes, including an equity commission, technical assistance, and grants and loans to improve land access and address heirs' property issues.

Another alternative includes supporting research, Extension and education at 1890s such as FVSU and other minority serving institutions. Also, funding could assist socially disadvantaged farmers, ranchers or forest landowners who are former USDA farm loan borrowers and suffered related adverse actions or past discrimination.

Vilsack noted USDA is working to solicit input from socially disadvantaged farmers, ranchers and forest landowners on how these funds should be spent.

Bishop said one of his main goals is securing funding for all rural America. "We are committed to using this platform of working with the Secretary of Agriculture, our senators and our members of the House and the Senate to make sure that rural America and rural Georgia have the resources to



enjoy the same quality of life as any place else in the United States," he said.

Ossoff praised Warnock's committed efforts to deliver the debt relief bill. "We have delivered over \$1 billion for HBCUs through the American Rescue Plan," he proclaimed. "We can confirm today that FVSU will receive \$11.9 million in direct support through the American Rescue Plan, which a full \$6 million will go directly to student aid."

Brothers Eddie and Walter Latimore, owners of Latimore's Farm in Byron, Georgia, attended the event to learn more about any assistance that could help them with their venture of progressing or expanding their farm. The family farm has been in business for more than 100 years, with the brothers taking over in 1982.

Eddie said in 2012, he experienced discrimination when attempting to obtain a loan through the USDA, which led to him going through an appeal process before finally receiving the loan.

He suggests that Congress consider providing relief to farmers who did not go through USDA for a loan. This concern was also expressed by another farmer in the crowd. Overall, Eddie said he is hopeful and appreciative of the senators and representatives' support.



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