FVSU Alum Inspires Students
Tax Time: Take it to the Bank
Grilling Tips

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Tackling Diabetes

College of Agriculture, Family Sciences and Technology • Cooperative Extension Program
Agricultural Technology Conference Center

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www.ag.fvsu.edu
MOOOOOVE OVER COW MILK, GOAT MILK'S GOT BENEFITS TOO

- Those who are lactose intolerant can usually drink goat milk because it contains a different sugar structure.
- Goat milk contains more nonprotein nitrogens, which have been shown to heal stomach ulcers.
- Goat milk also contains more quantities of other nutrients than cow milk.

MEAT LOVERS, CHEW ON THIS

✓ The total fat content of goat meat is generally less than 3.5 percent, which makes it leaner than beef, pork or lamb.
✓ Goat meat is very low in fat and high in protein and iron.

Goat meat is also known as “Chevon.”

Sources: Nutrition Data website, FVSU Goat Milk and Recipes publication and FVSU researchers.
Obesity has become... the number one health problem in our communities and in our nation. Obesity-related death has, or will shortly, overtake smoking-related death as the number one cause of early mortality in the U.S.

**GET THE FACTS**
Obese children are more likely to become obese adults. In Georgia:

- Only 1 in 5 - 20 percent - of high school students in Georgia consume five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily.
- Obesity-related hospitalizations of children in Georgia cost $2.1 million a year and continue to rise.
- Obese children are at increased risk for: hypertension, diabetes, asthma, sleep apnea and low self-esteem.

**TIPS**
Choosing a healthy lifestyle at an early age can literally be a matter of life and death for those already at risk. It may be challenging to make healthy lifestyle changes, but it will be well worth it in the long run.

- Help your child come up with positive reasons for choosing a healthy lifestyle.
- Consult his or her physician about making healthy lifestyle changes and follow the doctor's recommendations.
- Make appointments for your child to get routine checkups that include lab (blood) work before beginning an exercise routine. This will ensure safety and long-term success.
- Become informed with your child by researching together and coming to an understanding about the benefits of thinking positively, living a healthier lifestyle, eating fruits and vegetables, drinking water, breathing fresh air and exercising daily for at least 30 minutes three to five days a week.

*Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Obesity Prevention Foundation and the 2009 Georgia Data Summary.*

**STATS**

2/3 of Americans are OVERWEIGHT or OBESE.

1/3 of children are OVERWEIGHT or OBESE.

In addition to providing information such as these facts, Woodie Hughes Jr., interim 4-H program leader, addresses many issues affecting youths.

Contact:
Woodie Hughes Jr.
478-825-6219
hughesw@fvsu.edu
One man’s upbringing and love for agriculture is impacting students taking his class in a rural community.

“You can talk about how to grow things, but when they actually get out there and plant that seed, begin to see it root and grow, their eyes just light up,” said Vincent Cutts, referring to his students.

This agriculture educator in southwest Georgia teaches agriculture mechanics, horticulture, and nursery and landscaping classes. These electives require students to work in a 30 by 75-foot commercial greenhouse located next to the school.

“They maintain the greenhouse, all I do is supervise. They go in and water, fertilize, mix fertilizer and do some pesticide applications. The students organize the greenhouse and get the plants ready for sale. I don’t take the credit, I just tell them what to do,” Cutts said.

Some of the items planted in the greenhouse include tomatoes, peppers, squash, collards and turnips.

Many of the items growing in the greenhouse were grown on the 1,000-acre farm in Lee County where Cutts grew up. “We grew everything and it taught me the value of hard work,” Cutts said.

Willie Crawford, a Randolph Clay senior, said he enjoys Cutts’ classes. “You always have fun when he’s teaching you stuff,” said the 18-year-old. Crawford is a student in agriculture mechanics. In this class students learn how to make items
such as cabinets and baskets they give to nursing homes.

“I try to make my classes interesting and realistic. It’s important to learn landscaping so when you buy your own house you can do it yourself and save so much money,” Cutts said.

Although Cutts is acquainted with hard work and the outdoors, the third generation farmer had no desire to pursue agriculture beyond high school.

After attending an agriculture expo in Moultrie as a teenager, a recruiter from Fort Valley State University persuaded Cutts to pursue a degree in agriculture education. He completed that degree in 1995. Now, 17 years later, his students are developing an appreciation for agriculture.

Trey Wilson, a Randolph Clay senior, said he can see himself using the skills learned in agriculture mechanics and horticulture class. “I might start a landscaping business once I retire,” said the 17-year-old. “The more projects I do the better I get. I love it.”

Cutts said his students’ work is recognized on state and regional levels in the area of floral design, nursery and landscaping.

As a result, the 41-year-old father of three, encourages his students to continue and expand their knowledge base in agriculture beyond high school by attending Fort Valley State, his alma mater.

Crystal Thompson, a 2011 graduate of Randolph Clay, took Cutts’ advice. She is now a freshman at the university.

Thompson, 19, said Cutts exposed her to the many facets of agriculture and persuaded her to explore the field.

“Speaking with Mr. Cutts helped me discover agriculture economics. I want to be a food inspector when I graduate,” Thompson said. The Clay County native said she remembers Cutts energetic teaching style.

“He teaches in a way you can understand,” Thompson said. Although Thompson has yet to take major courses, she feels familiar with some concepts of agriculture because of her high school background.

Cutts said he wants his students to look at agriculture as the number one industry of choice. With a passion for agriculture that runs generations deep, he continues to share his love for agriculture by encouraging students to pursue agriculture at Fort Valley State.

For more information about gardening or crop production contact a local county extension agent in your area. See the map on page 23 for details.
Valerie Waller stretches before taking a walk. Since being diagnosed in 2007 with diabetes, she took on the challenge of exercising more and cooking healthier meals more regularly.
Blurred vision, fatigue, excessive thirst and frequent urination are symptoms that often go undiagnosed. Valerie Waller, a 53-year-old mother of three, ignored these symptoms for three weeks.

“I was driving home from work one evening and I could barely see anything. It was quite scary,” Waller said. She was also urinating frequently and complained of an unquenchable thirst.

After a visit to the doctor in 2007, Waller found out her symptoms were linked to a high blood sugar level, which was nearly 300 milligrams above the threshold considered to be diabetes. On May 25 of that year the Fort Valley native was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes.

“Why me?” was Waller’s initial reaction.

Waller is one of 25.8 million American adults and children suffering from diabetes, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

This condition is characterized by high blood glucose levels resulting from defects in the body’s ability to produce and/or use insulin. Insulin is a hormone that is needed to convert sugar, starches and other food into energy needed for daily life, according to the American Diabetes Association.

After learning about diabetes from her doctor, Waller faced the task of making a lifestyle change. She was given menus to follow with suggested daily caloric intakes.

“At first [there was] a lot of stuff I didn’t like. I was pretty much starving myself,” Waller said.

Sabrena Johnson, a Fort Valley State University Peach County program assistant who has known Waller for several years, decided to help her with the condition. Johnson said she knew Waller was afraid of the adjustments she needed to make, but with assistance and a little encouragement she knew her client could make the changes.

Johnson, who has worked for FVSU’s Cooperative Extension Program for five years, has seen improvements in similar clients who struggle with health issues.

“Her doctor told her she should take in 1,200 to 1,500 calories a day. I assured her that it wasn’t as hard as she thought it was,” Johnson said. The program assistant suggested Waller incorporate more vegetables, less carbohydrates and smaller serving sizes into her diet.
If you have diabetes or a health issue, there may be a county agent or program assistant who can assist you with health and wellness education. Contact the Family and Consumer Sciences program leader to see if there is someone available in your area.

Vivian Fluellen, Program Leader
Phone: 478-827-3012
Email: fluellev@fvsu.edu
Cabbage Meat Skillet Dish

Serves: 10  
Serving Size: 1 cup

**INGREDIENTS:**
- 1 pound of lean ground beef or ground turkey
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 (8 oz.) can tomato sauce, low sodium
- 1 ½ cups of water
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder (optional)
- ¼ teaspoon oregano (optional)
- 1 medium head cabbage, about 2 pounds, cut into strips
- 1 ½ cups cooked rice, medium grain white rice

**DIRECTIONS:**
1. Sauté meat and onions about 10 minutes. Drain excess fat.
2. Add tomato sauce, water and seasonings. Cover and simmer for about 10 minutes.
3. Add cabbage and rice.
4. Stir together, mixing well. Cover; continue to cook 18-20 minutes.

Source: University of Georgia’s Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program’s “Meals in Minutes.”
Success Defined
Summer program jumpstarts student’s endeavors

Keeona Lawrence, a senior at Fort Valley State University, is a former Team Success program student. She is graduating this May with honors.
The TEAM Success program really just opened the doors and guided me onto the path I am walking on today,” said the graduating senior.

Lawrence was in the first class of the TEAM – teaching, enlightening, achieving and mentoring – Success program, which exposes incoming college freshmen and high school upperclassmen to Fort Valley State’s educational programs in its College of Agriculture, Family Sciences and Technology.

Program activities are primarily centered around this Middle Georgia institution’s Cooperative Extension Program.

“Extension provides a variety of services to Georgians in many areas including family enrichment and health, agriculture, money management and youth development,” said Kena Torbert, TEAM Success coordinator. “It’s a component of FVSU that many people are unaware of, including the students accepted into our TEAM Success program. This is one reason why we provide this experience, to teach students more about the many opportunities offered through Extension.”

Although Lawrence’s mom and maternal grandmother majored in family and consumer sciences at the university, she was unaware of the many services Extension offered.

As a TEAM Success participant, the Marshallville native assisted Peach County Extension personnel with cooking lunch for senior citizens, educating
Instead of spending the summer at home or hanging out with friends, students can participate in a six-week program at Fort Valley State University that offers a $2,100 stipend.

Students assist Extension personnel with his/her job duties, which may include coordinating a summer camp, visiting farmers in the field or going to Fort Valley State for events.

Applications for the TEAM - teaching, enlightening, achieving and mentoring - Success Program will be accepted until April 13. Selected participants must be available from June 4 to July 13.

To be eligible:
Applicants must live in one of the counties where there is an FVSU Cooperative Extension Program agent or program assistant. Those areas include Bulloch, Crawford, Dougherty, Hancock, Houston, Irwin, Laurens, Macon, Marion, Peach, Talbot and Twiggs counties.

Team Up with Fort Valley State this summer

Applicants must:
- Write a one-page essay.
- Have at least a 2.0 cumulative grade point average.
- Be entering 11th or 12th grade, or be graduating from high school in 2012.
- Be committed to six uninterrupted weeks of full participation in their county.
- Have parent(s) or guardian(s) approval and support; parental consent is required.
- Be interested in a career related to family and consumer sciences, agriculture or a similar field.
- Be an American citizen.
- Be at least 16 years old by April 13, which is when the application is due.

Applications are due by April 13.

This program is sponsored by Fort Valley State University’s Cooperative Extension Program. For an application or more information, contact Kena Torbert, who oversees the program, at 478-825-6573 or torbertk@fvsu.edu.
Springtime means warm weather and longer days, and for many outdoor chefs it’s the time to dust off the old barbeque grill.

Before firing up that first charcoal briquette, there are some grilling tips designed to help everyone from the self proclaimed “grillmeister” to the novice first timer. This includes questions and answers that will debunk myths associated with barbeques and information to make the grilling experience an enjoyable one.

Kena Torbert, family life specialist at Fort Valley State University, offered her expertise on this matter.

**ARE THERE ANY HEALTH HAZARDS IN EATING GRILLED FOODS?**

No, but you may want to be mindful of those rib eyes that come off the grill looking like hockey pucks. It is suggested that you stay away from charred meats because, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, some studies suggest there may be a cancer risks related to eating food cooked by high heat, such as that on a grill.

Eating moderate amounts of un-charred meat cooked to an appropriate temperature does not pose a health problem.

Ways to prevent charring of grilled meats include:

- Selecting lean cuts of meat.
- Removing visible fat.
• Precooking meat in the microwave and immediately place meat on the grill to release juices that can drop on coals.

• Covering the grill with aluminum foil; punch holes between the grids to let juice drip out.

**WHAT’S THE BEST WAY TO MARINADE MEAT?**

There is nothing wrong with an overnight marinade, recipe or a “special sauce” that is a family secret, but you may be asking for trouble if it calls for sitting out all night at room temperature.

• Don’t use leftover marinade as a sauce on cooked meat (the marinade may contain bacteria that may contaminate cooked meat).

• Do marinate raw meats, fish and poultry in the refrigerator.

• Do set aside a portion of the marinade for dip or sauce before adding raw meat or poultry to the marinade.

• Do be sure to boil reused marinade to destroy any harmful bacteria if you plan to use it more than once on raw meat or poultry.

**DO YOU NEED TO BOIL MEATS BEFORE COOKING?**

You don’t have to, but there is a better, more flavorful alternative. You can try the following:

• Precooking food partially in the microwave, oven or stove to reduce grilling time. Although, you must ensure the food goes immediately on the preheated grill to complete the cooking process.

• Cooking foods to the appropriate minimum cooking temperature ensures destroying harmful bacteria. Use a food thermometer to be sure the food has reached the safe minimum internal temperature.

**Safe minimum internal temperatures:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Type</th>
<th>Temperature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole poultry</td>
<td>165 °F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry breasts</td>
<td>165 °F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground poultry</td>
<td>165 °F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground meats</td>
<td>160 °F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef, pork, lamb, and veal (steaks, roasts and chops)</td>
<td>145 °F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Cooking red meat or poultry fully; never partially grill it and finish cooking later, this opens the door for bacteria to increase.

**CAN YOU HAVE FLAVORFUL FOOD WITH LITTLE SODIUM?**

Yes, less salt does not mean bland, tasteless food. Here are some alternatives:

• Use fresh or dry herbs.

• Try low-sodium sauces and marinades.

• Limit use of salt in the marinade.

• Use onion or garlic powder, not salt.

• Add lemon juice or zest.
Is it possible to host a “healthy” cookout?

Yes, it’s still possible to have an enjoyable event and plenty of options without serving just salad. You can do the following:

• Offer whole-grain pasta salads.
• Serve only grilled meats and no fried foods.
• Provide vegetarian alternatives such as tofu or veggie burgers.
• Grill vegetables such as corn, squash, eggplant or asparagus.
• Grill peaches or pineapples, which add flavor and color to one’s plate.
• Serve kabobs with vegetables.

What are the sanitary practices for grilling foods?

• Clean your grill at every use with warm soapy water or follow manufacture’s instructions.
• Have plenty of clean utensils and serving dishes available.
• Be mindful not to cross contaminate raw food with cooked foods.
• Have fresh water available to keep surfaces and utensils tidy.
• Keep towelettes around to keep hands and surfaces clean.
• Keep foods at proper temperatures. With cold food:
  ▶ Keep meat refrigerated cold until use.
  ▶ Take out meat and place it on the grill immediately.
  ▶ Keep cooler out of direct sunlight.
  ▶ Pack perishables in one cooler and drinks in another to avoid cross contamination.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food Safety and Inspection Service

Grilled Chicken

Ingredients
4 boneless chicken breasts
2 cups Italian dressing

Preparation
In a large sealable plastic bag, or in a medium dish with lid, place chicken breasts (thawed) and cover with Italian dressing.

Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.

Place chicken on the grill (indoor or outdoor) and cook to appropriate temperature.

To check for doneness use a calibrated meat thermometer. The internal temperature of the chicken breast should reach 165 degrees F.

Source: University of Georgia’s Cooperative Extension Service

FVSU’s Family and Consumer Sciences Program aims to educate Georgians about healthy lifestyles through nutrition education and physical activity.

Extension provides healthy recipes to help clients make choices that may prevent diseases.
Tax time is a celebration for some workers expecting money from Uncle Sam. It’s often tempting to splurge at the stores or buy a big ticket item. At Fort Valley State University, Vivian Fluellen, program leader for family and consumer sciences, teaches students about filing taxes and leads workshops for Extension clients about saving money.

Here are Fluellen’s recommendations for anyone expecting a check this year.

1. Save first; put money aside in a savings account.
   “It’s suppose to be 10 percent, but even if you can save a little bit, that could be a big help,” Fluellen said.

2. Make plans and goals for your money before you receive it. Without making preparations, it can be harder to set money aside.

3. Decide what is a need versus what is a want when it comes to spending your money.

4. Learn how to prepare your taxes yourself to save money on paying a tax preparer to do them for you.

5. Use your refund to help pay off debt.
“What are your plans for this year’s tax return?”

Tax time is here and many people already have plans for their money. Several people polled shared how they will spend it.

**Adrienne Howard**  
Fort Valley, Ga.  
Custodian Supervisor  
Peach County Board of Commissioners  
“What I plan to do with it is find me a car. I need transportation, and to pay off some bills; and the rest of it I will probably put in my savings account. I’m going to pay for [my car] in cash. I’m going to see if I can find me a good used one. I hate having a car payment.”

**Will Scott**  
Warner Robins, Ga.  
Information Technology Professional  
Fort Valley State University  
“The first thing I’ll do is pay myself by saving some money. Number 2, I will pay off my daycare for a few months. Number 3, I will put some money in my children’s savings account and whatever is left I will pay toward bills. My wife and I don’t necessarily get a lot back, but we do the same routine every year. We don’t waste it.”

**Phyllis Hart**  
Fort Valley, Ga.  
Family Service Worker, Fort Valley Head Start  
Middle Georgia Community Action Agency  
“I plan on paying some bills off and saving a little if there’s some left; but mainly paying off bills so that I can save.”

**Morgan Smith**  
Manchester, Ga.  
Agricultural Education Sophomore  
Fort Valley State University  
“I plan on paying off my bills and putting the rest of it back into savings for next school year so I can pay for my books, gas; just anything I need for school.”
Hundreds of Georgia residents fill their plates with grits, eggs, biscuits and country-cured ham annually in Fort Valley State University’s C.W. Pettigrew Center. Not only do they receive a hot breakfast, but the floor is open for discussion on topics affecting Georgians.

The gathering is known as the annual Ham and Egg Breakfast, and this year will be a celebration of the event’s 30-year existence. In 1982 Dr. Glenwood Hill, then a program leader in FVSU’s Cooperative Extension Program, created the breakfast. He created it to provide a forum for state officials to share legislative updates and address residents’ concerns.

This year’s festivities will include a museum highlighting the history of the breakfast by showcasing artifacts.

The Ham and Egg Breakfast must be seen, felt, smelled, tasted and heard to be truly appreciated; its appeal is to all of the major senses, such as the nose with this cured ham on display at last year’s event.
Ham and Egg Breakfast

Tuesday, April 10, at 8 a.m.
Fort Valley State University
Pettigrew Center

Register by contacting:
E. Jean Willis
Phone: 478-825-6269
Email: willise@fvsu.edu

Commissioner Gary W. Black of the Georgia Department of Agriculture addresses a crowd at a past Ham and Egg Breakfast, where local, state and federal officials discuss issues impacting their constituents.

Fort Valley State University President Larry E. Rivers (left) examines a piece of ham with former extension agent Calvin Willis. In the past, ham and egg events became a teaching center, not only for local farmers, but also for agricultural officials throughout Georgia and the South.
The Life on the Farm mobile exhibit travels around Georgia educating the public, particularly children, about where food comes from, farming practices and agricultural-related careers. Participants also learn how to properly treat animals.

Millions 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 to your location in a livestock trailer. The only things needed are:

- Water hose hookup.
- Outdoor or indoor space for exhibit to be setup.

To schedule a visit*, or for more information, contact:

Fort Valley State University Cooperative Extension Program
478-825-6269 or 478-825-6966

*Visits are based on a first come, first served basis; at least one week is needed in advance to schedule an appointment.
Meet Your Agent
Laurens County and surrounding areas

Titus Andrews
County Extension Agent
Coverage Areas: Jeff Davis, Laurens, Toombs, Treutlen and Wheeler counties

Andrews enjoys showing farmers how to develop plans improve management practices and attain business and operation loans. In addition to his organizational skills, he is well versed in agronomy and soil sciences.

Services Provided: Assistance with developing farm plans for business loans and improving farm management practices.

For more information about programs offered in his area, contact Andrews.

Phone: 478-274-7701
E-mail: andrewst@fvsu.edu
P.O. Box 2114
Dublin, GA 31021

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.

Andrews, based in Laurens County, is one of 12 extension agents. There are also three program assistants at Fort Valley State who work personally with residents in nearly 30 counties they serve throughout middle, east and south Georgia.
Who Does the Extension Program Serve?

Extension has something for every Georgian. One-on-one assistance, agricultural events and workshops are available to address an array of issues facing clients.

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
Agriculture majors receive scholarships
Farm Credit Associations of Georgia are aiding more than farmers. Two Fort Valley State University students cut costs toward their college expenses by receiving $500 checks from the organization on Jan. 30 in the C.W. Pettigrew Center on FVSU’s campus.

Mike Stewart, relationship manager for AgSouth Farm Credit, presented Oneisha Gary, freshman agriculture economics major, her check. Jack Drew, CEO of AgGeorgia Farm Credit, awarded Dasia Harmon, a FVSU junior horticulture major, her funds.

The students plan to use the funds for books. Karla Martin, 1890 program manager for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Dr. James Brown, interim assistant dean for academic programs for FVSU’s College of Agriculture, Family Sciences and Technology, handpicked the students. Brown and Martin based their selection on students’ activities such as internships, participation in campus organizations and financial need.

-By ChaNaé Bradley

FFA honors administrator
“Good things come to those who wait,” is a cliché that’s been around for a long time, but for one Fort Valley State University administrator it hits the mark.

Dr. Mark Latimore Jr., interim assistant vice president for land-grant affairs at FVSU, is one of several individuals honored by the Future Farmers of America (FFA) Oct. 20, 2011, at its national convention in Indianapolis, Ind.

Latimore received the FFA’s Honorary American Degree, which is awarded to FFA members who have demonstrated the highest level of commitment to FFA and agricultural education. Chris Corzine, central region agricultural education director for the Georgia Department of Education made the nomination.

“To be nominated for and actually receive the award was very exciting,” Latimore said. “Benefiting students is always rewarding and fulfilling. But when other people recognize that you have made contributions to the growth of young people, and to be recognized through the FFA’s Honorary American Degree, that’s just super.”

Latimore has been affiliated with FFA since his junior year of high school.

This was the first FFA national convention Latimore attended, and he said he enjoyed it thoroughly. “Just to see all of the blue and gold jackets and the leadership skills that the students possess really makes you feel good to be part of the FFA,” Latimore said.

-Russell Boone Jr.

Styles elected to national society’s board
A national organization that addresses issues related to food distribution has tapped assistant professor Dr. Erika Styles as its newest board member. Her research conducted at Fort Valley State University focuses on how food marketing impacts individuals’ health. This topic ties into the efforts of the Food Distribution Research Society (FDRS), which elected her in November to become one of its six elected directors.

The Society, comprised of members from the government, industry, and academia, discusses current challenges faced by producers, wholesale distributors and retailers. It also provides a forum for knowledge sharing, encourages applied research, offers professional development and assists with food industry education and training.

During her three-year term, Styles will assist in establishing the overall policy for the society.

“As a junior professor I am extremely excited and honored the leadership of the FDRS believed in my abilities and quality of work to elect me to the board,” said Styles, who works in the Department of Agricultural Sciences/Agricultural Economics. “This appointment gives FVSU and the College of Agriculture exposure at the national level. More importantly, it also enhances my ability to network within industry, government and academia to create opportunities for our students and other professionals.”

-By Russell Boone Jr.
**Federal and state agencies provide funding to Fort Valley State**

Three grants totaling more than $230,000 have been awarded to Fort Valley State University through the efforts of Dr. Erika Styles, assistant professor of agricultural economics.

“I am ecstatic regarding my ability to secure different grants during my third year of employment,” Styles said. “I’m especially pleased that these funds will directly assist FVSU students with scholarships, professional development and employment opportunities.”

Styles also said the funds will help farmers who are assisted by the university’s College of Agriculture, Family Sciences and Technology. The grants received recently include the following:

**Fund Name: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) - U.S. Department of Agriculture Village Project**
**Purpose:** To Diversity the NRCS Workplace

**Amount:** $100,000

This four-year grant will provide about $18,000 to five students over a four-year period beginning next school year. Students in the College of Agriculture, Family Sciences and Technology majoring in agricultural economics and plant science are eligible for the scholarship. Recipients become eligible for permanent positions at NRCS. They are required to participate in professional conferences, paid summer internships and temporary work assignments.

**Fund Name: Quantifying the Market for Production of Organic Agriculture in Georgia - Georgia Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Program**
**Purpose:** To Assist Organic Farmers

**Amount:** $80,000

This three-year grant will fund a project that provides organic producers with the current and projected levels of demands for their products. Knowing these projections, and attending educational workshops led by experts, will teach farmers how to capitalize on market penetration and development and diversify their enterprises.

**Fund Name: Cultivating Sustainable and Organic Beginning Farmers and Ranchers in Georgia - U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture**
**Purpose:** To Assist New Farmers With Farm Planning

**Amount:** $54,230

Funding from this grant will be used to develop case studies of successful farmer and rancher operations and to assist new farmers with whole farm planning. The duration of this grant has yet to be determined.

For more information on these grants, contact Dr. Erika Styles at 478-827-3134 or stylese@fvsu.edu.

-Russell Boone Jr.