

# FOCUS

MAGAZINE 2024

## ROLLING *Into* WELLNESS

New mobile unit used to promote health  
and wellness in rural communities



FORT VALLEY  
STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

# Mobile Health Unit



# CONTENTS



## 4 ACHIEVING AND ADVANCING THROUGH ACE

Agricultural communicators earn awards and leadership positions from a national organization.



## 6 GOT A PLANT PROBLEM? ASK THE GOOD DOCTOR!

Farmers, gardeners and anyone with a green thumb can turn to Fort Valley State University's (FVSU) Dr. James E. Brown, for advice about how to grow their plants or produce.

## 8 BUILDING A BRIDGE

National Black Growers Council connects with Fort Valley to offer field day.



## 11 A CERTIFIED SUCCESS

## 13 WRITE THE VISION

Outreach program teaches youths critical thinking, enhances creative skills.





# 16

## COVER STORY: ROLLING INTO WELLNESS

New mobile unit used to promote health and wellness in rural communities.



# 22

## GROUNDBREAKING POTENTIAL

Fort Valley State University breaks ground on new vegetable processing facility.



# 20

## FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY 4-H PROGRAM TO RECEIVE \$475,000 IN FEDERAL FUNDING



## SECTIONS

Did You Know? .....	<b>2</b>
AgVice .....	<b>3</b>
In the Field Spotlight .....	<b>24</b>
Recipe .....	<b>28</b>
Meet Your County Agent/Program Assistant	<b>30</b>
News & Notes .....	<b>32</b>

The Focus magazine is published by the Fort Valley State University College of Agriculture, Family Sciences and Technology. Information published herein is for educational purposes in the furtherance of the University's Land-Grant mission in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Materials contained in this publication may be reprinted for further educational use provided the meaning is not altered and proper credit is given to the College of Agriculture, Family Sciences and Technology at Fort Valley State University.

## FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

### COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FAMILY SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY

**Dr. Keith Howard**

*Dean, College of Agriculture, Family Sciences and Technology*

### COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PROGRAM

**Dr. Mark Latimore Jr.**

*Associate Dean for Extension*

**Terrence Wolfork**

*Assistant Administrator of Communications, Conferencing and Technology*

### AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

**Marquinta Gonzalez**

*Director*

**ChaNaè Bradley**

*Senior Communications Specialist*

**Russell Boone Jr.**

*Public Information Editor/Writer*

**Latasha Ford**

*Research Communications Manager*

**Ervin Williams**

*Video Specialist*

**Rebecca Miller**

*Photojournalist*

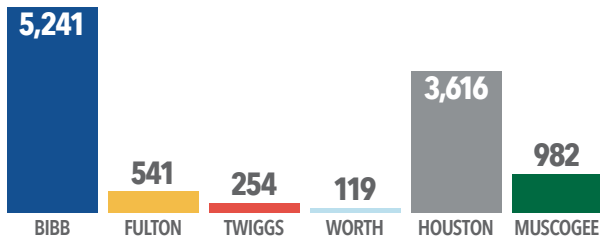
**Jeff Brothers**

*Graphic Designer*

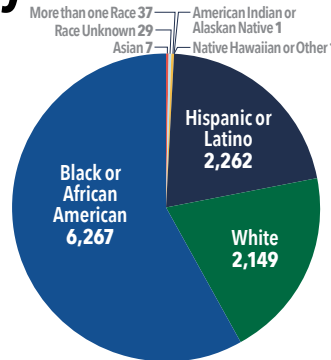
# DID YOU KNOW?

From 2023-2024, Fort Valley State University's 4-H Program reached 10,753 participants in six counties throughout Georgia with programming in areas such as mentoring, special interests and school enrichment programs.

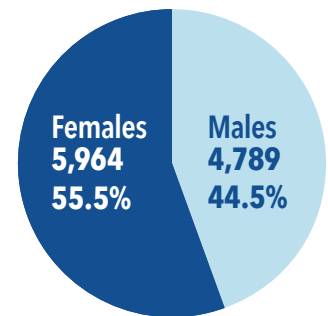
## By County



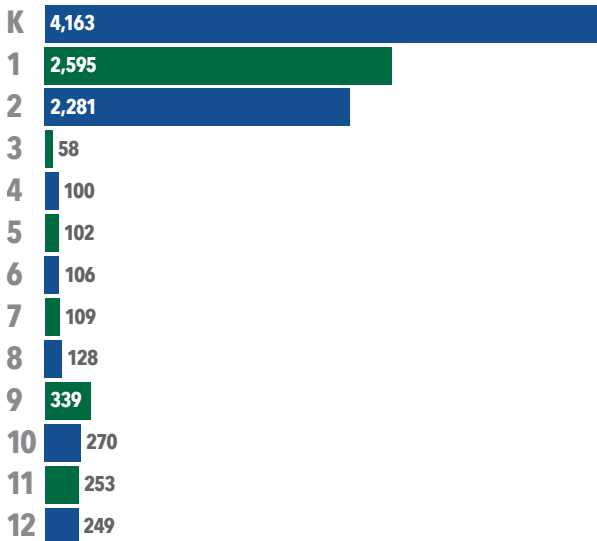
## By Race/Ethnicity



## By Gender



## By Grade



Youth participating in Individual Study/Mentoring/Family Learning Programs **65**

Youth participating in 4-H Special Interest/Short-Term Programs **10,434**

Youth participating in School Enrichment Programs **254**

**Total Youth Participants : 10,753**

For more information, contact:

**Woodie Hughes Jr**

4-H Program Assistant Extension Administrator, 1890  
Region State 4-H Program Leader, ECOP 4-H Leadership  
Committee Representative

[hughesw@fvsu.edu](mailto:hughesw@fvsu.edu)

478-235-8961



# AGVICE

## Climate Smart Cattle Production

Georgia beef cattle farms, including farms owned by minority producers, are often in the small to medium size category. Educating these farmers regarding climate smart agriculture is important for the environment, but it is also good for farm profitability. For example, improving reproductive, feed, and growth efficiency through managing health and parasites, genetic selection (buying good bulls, selecting good females), and proper forage and soil management, are methods to improve beef cattle farm environmental and economic sustainability. These practices help to improve profits while reducing greenhouse gas production from unproductive or slow growing animals. It also increases carbon in soils and forages.

Below are best practices for improving production efficiencies, reproductive feed and growth.

**Timely culling:** Open (not pregnant) females and females with slower growing calves eat forage that more productive females or calves could eat. This costs more money and produces more greenhouse gas with little to no resulting beef.

**Choosing better bulls:** Choose bulls based on genetic data and records. A poor bull choice can be costly in the long run with slower growing, less muscled offspring. The issue is compounded if replacement heifers sired by the male are kept. Slower growth or less muscling in cattle means more greenhouse gas emissions for the same (or less) beef produced, and reduced farm profit.

**Managing animal health:** Vaccinating and deworming or managing pastures to avoid

parasitic worms should be on the top of the list for climate smart and economically sound production practices. Unhealthy, sick, or wormy animals grow slower or die. In addition, they waste the forage they are eating because they do not convert it to meat, milk, or calves. This results in the same negative environmental and economic impacts discussed in the previous bullets.

**Managing nutrition/forage:** Managing forages and soils supports carbon status. Overstocking and over grazing pastures is damaging to forage health and the long-term growth of forage and productivity of the animals grazing. Overgrazing reduces carbon sequestration capacity in the forages (which is bad for

the environment) and results in the slower growth of calves (bad for the environment and farm profits).

**Managing soil pH:** Liming to a proper pH of 6-6.5 results in the plants being able to use the fertilizer applied; if the pH is lower than 6, fertilizer is wasted, and greenhouse gases are produced. This reduces plant carbon status (which is bad) and costs money.



For more  
information contact:

**Dr. Niki Whitley**  
*FVSU Animal Science Specialist*

**whitleyn@fvsu.edu**  
**478-825-6577**

# ACHIEVING AND ADVANCING THROUGH ACE

Agricultural communicators earn awards and leadership positions from a national organization

by RUSSELL BOONE JR.

Communication professionals from Fort Valley State University's (FVSU) Agricultural Communications Department earned several honors from the Association for Communications Excellence (ACE) in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Life and Human Sciences.

ACE is a national organization composed of professionals practicing all facets of communications such as writing, graphic design, marketing and social media. The organization provides a chance for professional development and networking for individuals involved in promoting knowledge about agriculture, natural resources, and life and human sciences.



The organization held its annual conference in Salt Lake City, Utah June 23-25. Russell Boone Jr., ChaNaè Bradley, Jeff Brothers and Latasha Ford earned five awards for writing and publications.

Bradley, senior communications specialist, along with Ford, research communications manager, Boone, public information editor and writer, and Brothers, graphic designer, won a gold award for Magazines and Periodicals for the 2023 Focus Magazine. The quartet also won a bronze award in Publications for Diverse Audiences for the 2023 agComplish Magazine.

Individually, Ford won two silver awards. The first in Technology Education for the Writer's Playground Program with FVSU colleague Dr. Yolanda Surrency. The second came in Newsletters for Extension Today, 1890 Land Grant Communicators.

Boone earned a bronze award for Writing Within a Specialized

(From left to right): Russell Boone Jr., ChaNaè Bradley, Latasha Ford and Rebecca Miller pose with awards presented during the 2024 Association for Communication Excellence (ACE) Critique and Awards Banquet in Salt Lake City, Utah.



ChaNaè Bradley, Fort Valley State University's senior communications specialist, receives the gavel from outgoing president Tobie Blanchard during the 2024 ACE Business Meeting.

Publication for the story  
Maintaining the Operation.

Marquinta Gonzalez, director of FVSU's Agricultural Communications Department, said having staff members earn awards and leadership roles in a national organization is a testament to their dedication and professionalism.

"It's not surprising that these individuals earned awards and are acquiring leadership positions in ACE. They take pride in producing quality work and representing FVSU well on a national level," she said.

In addition to winning awards for their work, Bradley and Ford, who both serve on the ACE Board of Directors, will hold leadership roles in ACE for the next few years.

Bradley is the incoming ACE president for 2025. She shared her plans for the organization during the conference.

"One of my main goals is to increase 1890 and 1994 membership to reflect the entire land grant university system," Bradley said. "It is important to see representation from our historically Black colleges as



well as our tribal colleges and universities."

In addition, she is presently working with the board in developing a certification program for evaluating communications scheduled to launch in 2025. Likewise, Bradley is working alongside ACE development officers in pursuing resources and partnerships that will enhance its stability and broaden its capabilities.

Furthermore, she wants to use information from the ACE retiree focus groups to make strategic decisions for the future and increase ACE's social media engagement throughout the year.

ACE's newest leader is looking forward to the challenge.

"Anytime you take on something new with major responsibilities there is always a level of nervousness, excitement and anxiety. But I believe in God and know that I've been equipped to handle what's been given

and will do my best to serve the organization well," Bradley said.

Ford will serve as incoming vice-president for 2025, president-elect for 2026 and president of ACE in 2027.

"It is a pleasure to serve with my FVSU colleague, ChaNaè Bradley, on the ACE board as she leads our organization. As for receiving the president's gavel in 2027, I am a tad nervous but super excited about the opportunity. It's never too early to start planning and I've already begun putting ideas down on paper which include reaching out to members willing to step into leadership roles. I'd like to thank our members who elected me as vice president to eventually sit in the president's seat," Ford said.

She added, "I appreciate their trust in my abilities. I am thrilled to see ACE thrive as the years progress because of the dedication of our outstanding membership."



# GOT A PLANT PROBLEM? ASK THE GOOD DOCTOR!

Farmers, gardeners and anyone with a green thumb can turn to Fort Valley State University's (FVSU) Dr. James E. Brown, for advice about how to grow their plants or produce.

Brown, a 1970 graduate of then Fort Valley State College (agronomy), is currently a professor. He also serves as interim program leader for FVSU's Cooperative Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) unit. In this role he works extensively with organic, or chemical free farming. He helps manage an 18-acre organic plot on the FVSU farm where fruits such as blueberries and muscadines are grown. Sheep, goats and cattle are also being raised organically on the section.

A native of Dixie, Georgia, Brown is a veteran of the U.S. Army, retiring with the rank of major. He is also an ordained minister in the Baptist Church.

The Fort Valley State professor answered a few questions about his undergraduate days at Fort Valley State and his love of horticulture.



***What Year did you start working at FVSU?***  
2009

***What are your main responsibilities as interim program leader?***

My responsibilities are to serve in a leadership role for agents and specialists in the Cooperative Extension program.

***What inspired you to major in agronomy?***

I didn't know what to major in, so my friends who were going to major in agronomy inspired me to join them.

***Were you raised on a farm? If yes, how many acres was it and what crops were grown and what animals were raised?***

We had a 300-acre farm where my father raised cattle and hogs.

***Did you participate in any extracurricular activities as an FVSU student?***

I was a member of the Agronomy Club where I served as president for a year.

***Prior to returning to your alma mater to teach, where were some of the places you worked?***

Tuskegee University (1983-85) as a horticultural specialist, Cooperative Extension Service





Dr. James Brown, (far right) and staff members from SODEXO, Fort Valley State University's food service provider, inspect blueberries grown on FVSU's campus farm.



Dr. Brown explains how to plant, grow and harvest plants to students, farmers and ranchers during a workshop held at FVSU.

and Auburn University (1991-2009) as associate professor, Department of Horticulture.

**What teaching techniques did you use at Tuskegee and Auburn have you applied to your classes at FVSU?**

I try to use questions targeted at the students that are realistic. This allows them to apply day-to-day experiences to their work.

**How does it feel to pass down knowledge to students who have a keen interest in the field of horticulture and or agriculture?**

It is very satisfying because they have a passion for it. I want them to master the purpose of the course and apply those principles in traditional and organic gardening.

**During your tenure at FVSU, you've written several publications focusing on gardening. Why do you enjoy writing about the activity?**

The key is getting into your passion. My main passion is teaching and research. When you work in those areas, you develop a joy. Students recognize the fact you have an interest, and that makes them more relaxed and interested in learning

**You have organized several workshops dealing with Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) certification for small farmers. Why is this important?**

It is written in the regulations that in the near future, farmers who grow produce for sale to the public will be required to be GAP certified. Periodically,

people become ill with food poisoning due to contamination problems. One way to remedy this is to keep wild animals away from the produce and make sure workers practice proper sanitary procedures. It is vital that farmers achieve GAP certification to sell their products.

**What do you enjoy most about your job?**

I enjoy working with faculty and staff members here at Fort Valley State University. Most of all, I enjoy teaching students and imparting knowledge of agriculture to county agents, farmers and anyone interested in receiving knowledge relative to my area of responsibility.



# BUILDING A BRIDGE

National Black Growers Council connects with Fort Valley to offer field day



by RUSSELL BOONE JR. AND CHANAÈ BRADLEY

Fort Valley State University's Cooperative Extension Program recently collaborated with the National Black Growers Council (NBGC) for Model Farm Field Day. The event included a field trip to James Farms in Montezuma, Georgia, and presentations at the Georgia Agricenter in Perry, Georgia.

The mission of the NBGC is to assist Black farmers, particularly those involved with row crops,

in improving their productivity, sustainability and efficiency.

Dr. Loston Rowe, interim executive director for the NBGC, said that farmers get a chance to collaborate with Land-Grant Universities (LGU), especially 1890 LGU's like FVSU, to conduct research on their farms and view new technologies.

"The big thing about the grower's council is that we're interested in making sure our farmers get a

Attendees of the National Black Growers Council (NBGC) Model Farm Field Day take a tour of James Farms in Montezuma, Georgia.

chance to see new technologies and innovations in agriculture," he said.

Furthermore, Rowe said when farmers partner with LGU's and the NBGC in research and outreach efforts, they receive access to previously inaccessible technologies. They also get a chance to meet and network with



fellow Black farmers sharing similar concerns.

“Sustainability is in our mission, and that means long-term viability for Black farmers, so we have a lot of discussions that are beyond just production. We talk about how to market their crops in a more effective way, some of the legalities of managing their land, whether its estate planning or heirs’ property,” Rowe said.

Warren James, owner of James Farms in Montezuma, Georgia, said the program was a rousing success. He said he was very appreciative of FVSU’s Extension’s presence at the field day, and was pleased with the number of young people present at the event.

“I am grateful that Fort Valley State is nearby and always willing to participate in any capacity to assist,” James said. He said it is a great resource to have an ongoing and continuous working relationship with a Land-grant University. He suggests fellow NBGC members connect with LGU’s in their respective states.

James added that having a great bond with a LGU allows students to observe what it takes to run a farming operation. He also added that field day events organized by the NBGC provide an avenue to bring younger farmers into the profession.

“A special event like this is a good example of cultivating an



Warren James, owner of James Farms in Montezuma, Georgia, discusses the inner workings of his operation with field day attendees.



interest in the field of farming and creating working relationships with partners in the chemical, seed, fertilizer and equipment industries. There are a wide range of people to meet and network with at an activity like this,” he said.

James said he’s attended many meetings but is concerned about the lack of participation from younger people. “I’m 60 years old, myself, but I’m considered a young farmer in the arena. I heard our average age for us is 68,” James said.

Dr. Mark Latimore Jr., associate dean for FVSU Cooperative Extension, said he was impressed with the number of students that attended from FVSU, Tennessee State University and Tuskegee University. In addition, students from Macon County High School also attended the event.

“It’s important for students to see agriculture from a professional perspective. At this event students were able to have conversations with successful Black farmers and learn about the challenges they face, as well as the value of research that is designed to increase production and crop yields,” Latimore said.



“ **It’s important for students to see agriculture from a professional perspective... students were able to have conversations with successful Black farmers and learn about the challenges they face, as well as the value of research.**

- Dr. Mark Latimore Jr., associate dean for FVSU Cooperative Extension



Dr. Mohammed Ibrahim, agricultural economics professor and associate dean for academics for Fort Valley State University’s College of Agriculture, Family Sciences and Technology conversates with students attending the field day.

For more information about the NBGC, visit <https://bit.ly/3TscSAT>



# A CERTIFIED SUCCESS

by RUSSELL BOONE JR.

Carrying the torch may best describe the farming career of Dr. Darlene Williams.

Williams owns Roberts Vinyard, a muscadine farm located in Byron, Georgia. More than 20 years ago, she began planting and harvesting crops with her late husband, James.

“Muscadines were my husband’s hobby. He was the visionary, but he passed away. Now, I’m carrying on the vision,” Williams said.

For the past four years, the 55-year-old has managed the vineyard on her own.

However, in 2021, Williams found out that to remain in business, the U.S. Department Agriculture (USDA) and the state of Georgia required that she pass a Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) audit.

GAP audits are a voluntary process that certifies that fruits and vegetables are safely produced, handled, packaged and stored in a manner that minimizes the development of hazardous

microbes which cause food borne illnesses.

Williams was at a loss as to how to acquire the GAP certification process. She knew that Fort Valley State University’s (FVSU) Cooperative Extension program could provide some guidance, so she turned to former FVSU Extension employee Joy Moten-Thomas for advice.

Moten-Thomas told her about the FVSU program made possible through a grant secured from the USDA’s Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement (OPPE). The grant made it possible for socially disadvantaged farmers such as Williams to cover the cost of fees needed to acquire GAP certification.

John E. Simmons, who serves as a GAP consultant for FVSU Cooperative Extension, advised Williams through her certification process. Some of Simmons' duties as a consultant include conducting workshops, speaking to farmers on what is needed to pass GAP certification, and producing safety manuals and GAP documentation.

Once manuals and documents are completed, Simmons helps farmers secure an inspector to conduct the GAP audit on their property.

Simmons said that GAP certification appointments are arranged when the farmer has product for the inspector to witness their actual picking, packing and shipping procedures. "That can range year-round if they have produce to harvest."

To receive GAP certification through FVSU Extension, a farmer may contact Dr. Mark Latimore, FVSU associate dean for Extension, or Dr. James Brown, program leader for agriculture and natural resources (ANR). One of them will contact Simmons and inform him of their request.

"If a farmer meets me at a workshop, I give them my e-mail address and my cell phone where they can call me directly. I will then try to make a physical visit to the farm to see their operation and walk through their basic

harvesting process," Simmons said.

The GAP consultant also stated he and the farmer will set up a date to work through the book, create the documents and set up a date and time for the GAP auditor to conduct the certification.


"The audit was a pleasant and informative experience. I was glad to have completed the process and have the muscadines certified. It has been a bonus for the business," Williams said.

Additionally, she also said she'll recommend to any farmer needing GAP certification to go through FVSU's Cooperative Extension program. "It's one certification that is worth it,"

Furthermore, the Peach County farmer said that with GAP certification, her business has thrived and achieved a historical milestone.

"When customer and other companies know that you are certified, it makes it much easier to sell muscadines. It lets the public know that you have taken your product to the next level," she said.

"I am honored to have the first USDA Good Agriculture Practice certified vineyard in the state of Georgia that's owned and operated by a Black female," Williams exclaimed.

 **When customers and other companies know that you are certified, it makes it much easier to sell... It lets the public know that you have taken your product to the next level.**

- Dr. Darlene Williams,  
Owner of Roberts Vinyard

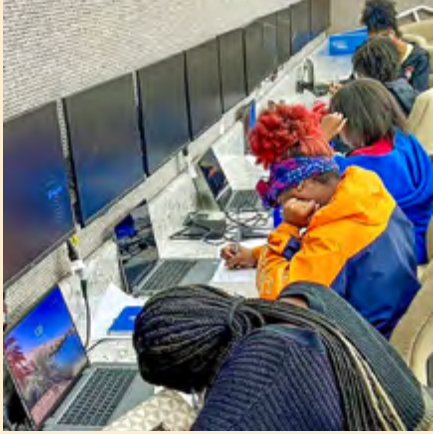
In addition to being a farmer, Williams is also a spa owner and a health and wellness coach. She is proud to be a member of the farming community and has encouraging words for other females willing to take up the profession.

"Go for it! Growing your own produce is rewarding!"



**For more information about obtaining GAP certification through FVSU, contact the FVSU Extension Office at (478) 825-6296. Simmons can be reached at (678) 643-7018 or e-mail at [sa\\_associates@bellsouth.net](mailto:sa_associates@bellsouth.net).**





# WRITE THE VISION

## Outreach program teaches youths critical thinking, enhances creative skills

by CHANAÈ BRADLEY

Writer's Playground was a childhood vision designed to promote creativity, critical thinking and technology use in underserved communities. This rigorous outreach program is offered through Fort Valley State University's (FVSU) Cooperative Extension Program.

Writer's Playground was piloted in Ashburn, Georgia, in 2022 and returned in 2023. The program was first offered on Fort Valley State University's campus in 2024. The program will continue to be offered in Ashburn in the fall and Fort Valley in the summer. Students who participated in the program were selected based on specific criteria. The target audience is students in grades 9-12 interested in improving their critical thinking and communication skills.

For five sessions, students are exposed to the arts through poetry, short stories, videos, TedTalks and other forms

of creative expression. The curriculum requires students to think critically, conduct research, be creative and present.

Latasha Ford, FVSU research communications manager, and Dr. Yolanda Surrency, technology curriculum specialist, combined their talents and experiences to develop this unique program.

Ford, the visionary behind Writer's Playground, connected her passion for writing and a desire to return to her hometown and mentor youths in writing and the arts.

Surrency remembers her limited access to resources that inhibited her development of critical and creative thinking, and how it impacted her life personally and professionally. Her awareness of limited resources in rural communities is one reason she is invested in Writer's Playground as a co-creator and educator.

"The program allows students to embrace their identity and gain a deep appreciation for who they are by analyzing diverse works," Surrency said.

In addition, Ford said the program complements learning in the classroom.

"Through our program, we expose students to all facets of communications and the arts. We allow them to search diverse writings and encourage them to use their imagination and pursue their passions," Ford said.

"During orientation, we provide students and their parents with a brief look at the curriculum so they know this is a rigorous program, but they will have fun," Ford added.

For example, participants of Writer's Playground are asked to look at a photo and write a poem in only a few minutes.

Ford said in addition to analyzing creative works, the students

“ It was an outstanding program. The educators were exceptional, and it was a wonderful opportunity for these students.

- Ronna Martinez, parent of program participant Ella Martinez

Dr. Yolanda Surrency, Fort Valley State University's technology curriculum specialist, conducts a workshop with participants of Writer's Playground.



work on writing mechanics, sentence structuring, researching credible sources online and public speaking.

“The depth of analysis that is required is rigorous. We encourage students to go beyond surface-level responses. Students are provided opportunities to present their creative writings, which builds their confidence when speaking among their peers for their final presentation,” Surrency said.

Student participant Ella Martinez said she thought it was a great way to spend a week of her summer.

The Peach County High School sophomore learned about the program from her high school counselor. She applied and was accepted.

“I had so many takeaways. I think it was a great program,” she said.

Some of those takeaways included creating a healthy learning environment, respecting the opinions of others and exhibiting kindness. Ella also expressed her gratitude for the laptop she received after completing the program.

“It was so generous of them. I use it for school, and it was such a wonderful way to wrap up the program,” Ella said.

Ronna Martinez said her daughter, Ella, had an enriching experience. “It was an outstanding program. The educators were exceptional, and it was a wonderful opportunity for these students,” Martinez said.

Additionally, participant Jada Poteau said her teacher knew she liked writing and informed her about the program.

“I wanted to try something new, get out of my comfort zone and

learn more about poetry,” said the Turner County High School (TCHS) senior. Poteau said through this experience, she was introduced to the works of Maya Angelou and had an opportunity to practice public speaking.

“I really enjoyed the instruction, making friends and learning more about the writing field,” Poteau said.

In addition to positive participant experiences, Writer's Playground has received recognition beyond the communities it's served.

In 2023, Ford and Surrency received the First Place Professional Poster Award from the National Association of Extension Program and Staff Development Professionals. The Association for Communication Excellence (ACE) in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Life and Human Sciences also awarded Ford and Surrency a bronze award



(Left to right) Surrency and Ford pose during a poster presentation at the 2023 National Association of Extension Program and Staff Development (NAEPSD) Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah. During this conference they received the first place poster award.

in the Technology Education category for Writer’s Playground.

Likewise, in 2023, Ford and Surrency received a \$1,500 grant from the Southern Rural Development Center. Furthermore, in 2024, ACE awarded Ford and Surrency the silver award in the Technology Education category.

Beyond the awards, educators Ford and Surrency said they gained valuable feedback from the students.

“It gives me goosebumps. I get emotional at every closing ceremony. These young people have taught me to be a better educator,” Ford said. “Dr. Surrency and I are proud of what they have accomplished.”

Moreover, Surrency said she and Ford are always honored to witness the development of each

student’s confidence as they present their final creative work.

“It confirms that we are using our talents and doing what we should be,” Surrency said.

She and Ford give credit to FVSU’s Cooperative Extension leadership for supporting and providing resources to include the Mobile Information Technology Center and to the communities they serve. Through the support of FVSU Cooperative Extension leadership and the Turner County School District, each student who has participated in the program received laptops for their dedication to their education.

Thus far, the program has been offered in Turner and Peach

counties. Ford and Surrency traveled to south Georgia with the Mobile Information Technology Center to educate Ashburn students inside the mobile classroom equipped with computer stations. Students in Fort Valley met at FVSU’s Agricultural Technology Conference Center and had an opportunity to engage in the university’s off-campus Fab Lab, a digital fabrication lab.

Jason Clark, principal of TCHS, said he is always looking for opportunities to expose students to postsecondary institutions.

“I was impressed by the professionalism of Latasha Ford and Dr. Surrency and how they communicated with our students and their parents,” Clark said. He hopes to continue the relationship established with FVSU with the goal of having graduates of TCHS attend the historically Black university. Moreover, Clark said he is thankful that an alumna of TCHS reached back to assist her community.

In the future, Ford and Surrency expect to bring more students to FVSU’s campus to participate in Writer’s Playground.



For more information about Writer’s Playground, contact Ford at (478) 825-4307 or [fordl@fvsu.edu](mailto:fordl@fvsu.edu). Also, contact Surrency at (478) 825-6706 or [surrency@fvsu.edu](mailto:surrency@fvsu.edu).



# ROLLING *into* WELLNESS

New mobile unit used to promote health and wellness in rural communities





 RUSSELL BOONE JR.

**Fort Valley State  
University (FVSU)  
Cooperative  
Extension can now  
promote health  
and wellness  
to residents of  
Georgia and  
beyond with its  
new mobile unit.**



The FVSU Extension's Mobile Health Unit (MHU) officially opened for use on March 16, 2024. The unit serves as a rolling kitchen, classroom and laboratory. When expanded, the 53-foot-long trailer converts into a 40-foot-wide three-room facility.

“The purpose of the mobile health unit is to provide health and nutrition services to rural communities, especially those that are underserved and unserved,” said Terrence Wolfork, FVSU assistant administrator for communications, conferencing and technology.

Housed in the unit is a kitchen, refrigerator and a meeting room that can hold at least 20 people.

Activities that can be conducted in the unit include cooking demonstrations, health and nutrition classes, immunizations and blood pressure checkups. It also contains wireless internet, video screens and computer terminals.

“The Mobile Health Unit is part of a facility grant that includes the Family Development Child Care Center completed in 2016,” said Dr. Mark Latimore Jr., associate dean for Extension. The grant funded a project that included the construction of an on-campus teaching facility for teaching a variety of subjects including food safety, childcare and nutrition.



In addition to the on-campus facility, the grant funded the development of a mobile unit to teach some of those same subjects utilizing outreach programs, to targeted communities.

Latimore added that targeted communities are counties covered by FVSU's Cooperative Extension Program. “But just like our other mobile unit (the Mobile Information Technology Center), if a request is made by a community not in our service area, it will be available. Our purpose is to provide assistance to whatever community needs it,” the FVSU administrator said.

“We are super excited about our new Mobile Health Unit,” said Kena Torbert, family life specialist. She said the MHU now provides all FVSU Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) agents and Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) program assistants with the ability to perform remote on-site

seminars and demonstrations.

The FVSU specialist said that the unit will allow FACS to collaborate in exhibitions with other Extension areas such as Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) and the Life on the Farm animal display.

FVSU's department of nursing will also use the unit to conduct immunizations, health screenings and blood pressure checkups.

“It is a great opportunity to reach underserved populations and provide needed services. We are fortunate to have access to the Mobile Health Unit as a means of outreach and it shows the dedication FVSU has to the community,” said Dr. Lawanda Greene, chair, of the FVSU

**Dr. Mark Latimore Jr., associate dean for Fort Valley State University Cooperative Extension and Terrence Wolfork, assistant administrator for communications, conferencing and technology, discuss details of the Mobile Health Unit with U.S. Rep. Sanford Bishop.**





(Above) The Mobile Health Unit has several features including a working kitchen and video monitors.

(Below) The Mobile Health Unit sports a classroom or meeting area that can hold up to 20 people.

Department of Nursing. “Nursing students will gain exposure to working in rural areas and see the importance of primary prevention in healthcare.”

Presently, nursing students can check blood sugars, weight,

temperature, pulse and oxygen levels.

Furthermore, the nursing director said that education is the key to understanding disease and treatment.

“We can provide health education on topics such as specific health conditions, medications, nutrition, exercise, mental health and disease prevention. This will empower clients to make informed decisions.” She

emphasized that the Department of Nursing and its students will not be diagnosing or treating clients and only providing educational information.

Greene added services could expand based on the needs of the population and the nursing department’s access to needed resources.

“For example, if a community wanted to offer flu shots, then the vaccinations would need to be provided in order for us to offer that service,” Greene said.

For clinical courses, no more than 10 nursing students will travel with the unit. “This is keeping in line with the Georgia Board of Nursing rules on the number of students in clinicals. If we are doing a community event, the students will be staggered with times in efforts to follow and keep protocols,” Greene said.

Additionally, the unit can be requested for a site visit by the public, community-based organizations, health-based facilities or government organizations. It will be available year-round except for the last two weeks in December and the first two weeks in January.



To request the unit, contact:  
**Terrence Wolfork**  
 (478) 825-6053/wolforkt@fvsu.edu

# FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY 4-H PROGRAM TO RECEIVE \$475,000 IN FEDERAL FUNDING

by [RUSSELL BOONE JR.](#)

Fort Valley State University's (FVSU) Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development Program recently received federal funding to inform students about educational and career opportunities in agriculture.

Six historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), including FVSU, are collaborating on a project funded by an \$8 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI). AFRI is part of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture's (NIFA) Youth Innovators Empowering Agriculture Across America (YEA) program. The grant's title is "The USDA-AFRI 1890 4-H Youth Innovators Empowering Agriculture Across America (YEA) Grant Program."

The grant project is an 1890 Region Multi-State 4-H Program

Leaders Collaborative Partnership Grant.

Other participating institutions are Alcorn State University (ASU), Kentucky State University (KSU), Lincoln University of Missouri (LU), North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (N.C. A&T) and Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical University (PVAMU).

Like FVSU, each of the participating institutions have Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development Programs and are members of the 1890 Land-grant University system.

The 1890 region is made up of HBCUs receiving land-grant status under the Second Morrill Act of 1890.

FVSU's 4-H Youth Development Program will receive \$475,000 of the grant for the next five years beginning with \$75,000 this year



**Woodie Hughes Jr., Fort Valley State University's assistant Extension administrator 4-H leader, serves as co-principal investigator for an \$8 million grant. This grant is a collaboration of six Historically Black Colleges and Universities.**

and \$100,000 annually for the next four years.

Furthermore, the participating schools are also members of the Association of Public Land-grant Universities (APLU) 1890 region. APLU's membership is composed of land-grant universities in all 50

U.S. states, its territories, Canada and Mexico.

This is the first time that six schools from the APLU's 1890 region have collaborated on an \$8 million grant focusing on 4-H programs.

Woodie Hughes Jr., assistant Extension administrator 4-H leader for FVSU's Cooperative Extension Program, said the funds will be used to provide numerous activities associated with the 4-H Youth Development Program.

This includes sponsoring 1890 4-H Program Residential Summer Camps at fellow 1890 universities and covering air and ground transportation costs of students to 4-H events. Funds will also provide educational supplies needed for 4-H Positive Youth Development programs involving agriculture and science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

Additionally, Hughes serves as a co-principal investigator for the project. "It is a true blessing to serve as a co-principal investigator on this 1890 region multi-state grant project. This is part of a nationwide investment by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to teach youths about agricultural career opportunities and I am thankful for this opportunity," Hughes said.

Dr. Misty Blue-Terry, N.C. A&T's assistant Extension

administrator for youths, families and communities, is the grant's principal investigator.

"This is a major accomplishment for the 4-H programs in the 1890 region. The outcomes and impacts of this project have the potential to change and enhance the national 4-H program in so many ways," she said.

"Students selected for the program will have opportunities in five main areas. They will have the opportunity to serve on a national advisory board to support the development of culturally relevant, experiential learning programs for youths of color; receive 4-H positive youth development mentoring for skills including leadership, mental health, critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork and civic engagement; attend leadership institutes, hold internships and be involved with 4-H STEM engagement; and they will receive professional development opportunities. Over the course of the five-year cycle, the program will have a projected direct impact on 3,485 youths and 2,140 adults," Blue-Terry said.

Hughes also elaborated on the grant's impact concerning FVSU's 4-H Youth Development Program.

"The USDA-AFRI 1890 4-H YEA project will afford hundreds of underserved, underrepresented vulnerable 4-H youths a 21st century, 4-H college and career outreach education. These

learning opportunities will help them have lifelong success in society and professionally," he said.

FVSU's 4-H leader said applying teamwork and using numerous resources such as grant writing can go a long way in helping develop today's youths.

"The FVSU 4-H Youth Development Program has always played an active role in reaching as many youths as possible. This is one of our main programmatic goals, but this is only made possible by using internal and external collaborations with fellow colleagues and stakeholders working together. Funded grants afford our 4-H students' opportunities that wouldn't be possible without those funds," he said.

Hughes added FVSU's 4-H Youth Development Program will continue to play an active role in seeking collaborations with other land-grant universities on grant projects. This also applies to local, state and federal agencies, private and public industries, and community organizations.



For more information about the FVSU Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development Program, contact Hughes at (478) 825-6296 or [hughesw@fvsu.edu](mailto:hughesw@fvsu.edu).



# GROUNDBREAKING POTENTIAL

## Fort Valley State University breaks ground on new vegetable processing facility

by CHANAÈ BRADLEY

Excitement filled the air during the groundbreaking of a new Fort Valley State University (FVSU) facility designed to assist farmers and students in vegetable production practices through demonstrations, workshops and seminars.

More than 40 elected officials, Cooperative Extension personnel and local farmers attended the morning ceremony, celebrating the beginning of construction for the FVSU Cold Vegetable Processing Facility.

Chase Gregory, architect for Studio 8 Architects, said the

5,520-square-foot single story building is designed to house industrial vegetable processing equipment.

“This equipment is for shelling, washing, grading, chopping or slicing, rinsing and then packaging fresh vegetables received from area farmers. The packaged produce can then be stored refrigerated or frozen until it can be received by the farmer or transported to market. This equipment will be able to handle large quantities of produce in an efficient and safe manner - all in an air conditioned and well

lighted facility,” Gregory said. It is scheduled to be constructed by spring 2025.

Dr. Mark Latimore Jr., associate dean for FVSU’s Cooperative Extension Program, said this is an opportunity to expand the horizons of Cooperative Extension services.

“Fort Valley can use this facility to help growers increase their profit base and their marketing outlets. We can take it a step further and help farmers identify diseases and improve fertilization practices. There is a lot that can benefit growers,” Latimore said.



Moreover, the Extension administrator shared FVSU's commitment to helping farmers become certified with Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), adding value to their produce in preparation for grocers.

"All that helps in making the farmer successful," Latimore said. In addition to helping farmers, Latimore also discussed the benefit the facility will bring to FVSU students.

"This will provide hands-on experience for our students. We have a lot of students who want to farm so this will allow them to see the entire process, such as indoor growing and marketing their produce. Bottom line, we want to build student preparation for the agricultural workforce and help the small farmer become profitable by helping them grow value-added products," Latimore said.

Likewise, FVSU President Dr. Paul Jones said this new facility will be a tremendous asset.

"Fort Valley State is uniquely positioned to support the No. 1 industry in the state in so many ways. To have a meat processing facility and this cold vegetable processing facility, along with the innovation we are doing around emerging technologies, that is a game changer for farmers and limited-resource businesses who don't have access to this kind of



training, technology and support," Jones said.

Rep. Sanford D. Bishop Jr., of Georgia's 2nd Congressional District, agreed with Jones and Latimore. He added that this facility will increase the agricultural capacity of this area by allowing farmers to offer the highest quality, safest and the most affordable food and fiber anywhere in the industrialized world.

Bishop has been helpful to this effort by advocating for land-grant universities at the federal level. For the past four fiscal years, Bishop has been instrumental in securing \$21.5 million for the 1890s Facilities Grant Program. The new facility is funded through that project.

Georgia farmer Amos Lawrence said he looks forward to using this facility once it is built. The 74-year-old row crop farmer said he plans to bring his produce to the facility for processing, washing, packaging and labeling.

**A replica of Fort Valley State University's Cold Vegetable Processing Facility scheduled to open by spring 2025.**

"Small farmers don't have the facilities to do this properly. A lot of us small farmers are not quite there yet, and we need to be in order to pass GAP," Lawrence said.

The Reynolds, Georgia, native, who farms less than 25 acres of collards, corn, okra, watermelon and peaches, said he's been receiving assistance from FVSU Extension for years. The small farmer said this facility will provide an opportunity to help small farmers like him improve their practices and make a profit.



**For more information about the FVSU Cold Vegetable Processing Facility, call (478) 825-6296.**

# IN THE FIELD SPOTLIGHT

Fort Valley State University's Cooperative Extension personnel educate clients through technical trainings on campus, media services and by hosting outreach events. Being "In the Field" allows Extension to consistently serve as a resource for the state of Georgia. The following events and projects took place from January 2024 - August 2024.



## Extension participates in Sherrod Institute's Annual Farm Field Day

Fort Valley State University's Cooperative Extension Program participated in the Sherrod Institute's Annual Farm Field Day in Albany, Georgia. Sites showcasing Extension's work with crops, beef cattle and technology were on display. U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack presented the keynote address. Other speakers included Dr. Penny Brown Reynolds, USDA acting assistant secretary for Civil Rights, and Dr. Jewel H. Bronaugh, president and CEO of the 1890 Universities Foundation.

## FVSU College of Ag travels to D.C. to engage elected officials

A team of Fort Valley State University representatives with the Council for Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching (CARET)/Board on Agriculture Assembly (BAA) spent time on Capitol Hill engaging Georgia dignitaries to "invest in capacity for impact and innovation." They visited with Sen. Raphael Warnock and the staff of Sen. Jon Ossoff, Rep. Austin Scott and Rep. Rick Allen. FVSU faculty and staff also visited with alumnus James Jackson of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.



## Extension program educates senior citizens with technology use

Dr. Yolanda Surrency, technology curriculum specialist with Fort Valley State University's Cooperative Extension, partnered with the

Fort Valley Senior Center to offer senior adults the first digital literacy skills curriculum to grow the digital competency of their community.





## Fort Valley State University's Extension hosts the 42nd Ham and Egg Breakfast



**F**ort Valley State University's (FVSU) Cooperative Extension Program hosted the 42nd Ham and Egg Legislative Breakfast on Wednesday, April 24th, at the C.W. Pettigrew Farm and Community Life Center on campus. Approximately 134 people attended the event, including elected officials, alumni, Extension employees, and farmers. The event began with a southern-style breakfast and networking. In addition, Georgia State Rep. Patty Stinson served as the mistress of ceremony, and Rep. Sanford D. Bishop Jr., of Georgia's 2nd

Congressional District, was the featured speaker. Congressman Bishop discussed several topics, including the 2024 Agriculture Appropriations, the 2024 Farm Bill, the 1890 Scholars Program, and other policies and programs that impact Georgia farmers. The breakfast ended with closing remarks from Dr. Mark Latimore, Jr., Fort Valley State University's associate dean for Extension, and a stage reading by the FVSU Department of Arts and Communications and Social Task Force. The reading honored the original Ham and Egg Show.



## Extension collaborates with wholesaler, farmers

**F**ort Valley State University Cooperative Extension collaborated with The Common Market Southeast for their First Annual Town Hall Meeting. Farmers, ranchers and other agricultural professionals from across Georgia listened and discussed topics ranging from acquiring funding to achieving Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification. More than 40 people attended the event.



## County agent connects with peanut farmers from Gambia

**J**oshua Dawson, Fort Valley State University Extension agent for Lowndes County, met with farmers from Gambia. The farmers met with Dawson and members from University of Georgia's Cooperative Extension to learn about peanut production.

## Extension on display during South Georgia outreach program in Moultrie



**F**ort Valley State University's Cooperative Extension Program was on display in Moultrie, Georgia, at the inaugural Patricia A. Scott Memorial Community Outreach Program. Residents participated in several activities including seminars, cooking demonstrations and making smoothies on a smoothie bike. Attendees were also treated to the debut of FVSU Extension's Mobile Health Unit.

# IN THE FIELD SPOTLIGHT



## College of Agriculture and Cooperative Extension celebrate Women's History Month with tribute

**F**or the month of March, Fort Valley State University's Agricultural Communications Department developed a tribute series released on the website and social media sites called, Telling HerStories. The tribute created in honor of Women's History Month, chronicled the careers of retired women leaders from the College of Agriculture, Family Sciences and Technology, as well as the Cooperative Extension Program. Every Wednesday feature stories were released on the FVSU College of Agriculture website and social media sites, Facebook and X (formerly Twitter). The women featured included retired FVSU Extension Administrator Dr. Carol Ann Johnson, retired FVSU Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Dorothy Conteh, retired FVSU 4-H Career Development Program Leader, Faye Singh, and Dr. Vivian Fluellen, retired chair of FVSU's Department of Family and Consumer Sciences.

## County agent hosts spring Walk-a-thon in Twiggs County



**R**esidents of Jeffersonville, Georgia, got their "move on" by taking part in the 2024 Twiggs County Spring Walk-A-Thon. The event, sponsored by Fort Valley State University's Cooperative Extension Program, drew more than 50 participants. Terralon Chaney, Fort Valley State University's family and consumer sciences agent for Twiggs County, coordinated the event. Participants also received health and wellness information along with seeds for planting.



## Cooperative Extension personnel attend the Association of County Commissioner Georgia Conference in Savannah

**F**ort Valley State University Cooperative Extension Program was represented at the 2024 Association County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) Conference in Savannah. The

team met with many county officials to discuss the various Extension programs that impact communities across Georgia, including the new Mobile Health Unit.



## Extension and Peach County Health Department host farmers' market

**F**ort Valley State University's (FVSU) Cooperative Extension Program collaborated with the Peach County Health Department and Women Infant and Children (WIC) office and the Farmers Market Nutrition Program to host a farmer's market on July 25. The market took place in the parking lot of the Family Development & Quality Childcare Center Complex on campus. Attendees were able to receive fresh fruits and vegetables,

learn health and wellness information and make a smoothie on a smoothie bike. The four-hour event was open to the public. Some of the locally grown produce was free, while some was available for purchase. Items available included peaches, plums, cucumbers, okra, watermelon, peppers, tomatoes, sweet potatoes and onions. Members from the community and campus attended the event.



## Extension shares info during Juneteenth celebration

**F**ort Valley State University's Cooperative Extension Program, represented by the Georgia Residential Energy Efficiency Network (GREEN) Project, participated in the Juneteenth Celebration at the Flint River Farm School Park in Macon County, Georgia. Billy Brown, GREEN Project energy educator, provided brochures and free energy saving light bulbs to enquiring residents.



## 4-H participants travel to D.C. for the 2024 National 4-H Conference

**W**oodie Hughes Jr., assistant Extension administrator state 4-H program leader, and Kyra Holmes, agriculture instructor at George Washington Carver High School in Columbus, Georgia, accompanied students to the 2024 National 4-H Conference in Washington, D.C. They participate in FVSU's 4-H Youth Development Program. 4-H students from across the United States and its territories attended the conference. U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack welcomed all participants.



# RECIPE

---





Sabrina Johnson, Fort Valley State University's Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS), Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) agent for Peach County, demonstrates that in less than an hour, a family can enjoy a tasty dish.

## YOU WILL NEED

- ½ pound of ground turkey
- 14.5 oz can of diced tomatoes
- 15 ounce can of corn, no salt added, drained
- ½ teaspoon of black pepper
- 1 package of Ramen noodles

## DIRECTIONS

1. In a large skillet, brown ground turkey.
2. Drain off grease into an empty container.
3. Add can of tomatoes with juice to skillet.
4. Add drained corn to skillet.
5. Add Italian seasoning and pepper to skillet.
6. Crumble package of Ramen noodles. Remove seasoning packet and add noodles to skillet.
7. Cover and simmer for about 10 minutes or until noodles are tender and the liquid is absorbed.
8. Makes four one cup servings.

## NUTRITIONAL FACTS

**Serving Size:** 1 cup  
**Servings per recipe:** 4  
**Amount per serving:**  
Calories 250  
Calories from fat 72

Total Fat	8g
Saturated Fat	1g
Trans Fat	0.0g
Cholesterol	40mg
Sodium	220mg
Total Carbohydrates	29g
Dietary fiber	3g
Sugars	7g
Protein	15g

Source: *Meals in Minutes, 4th Edition (2015)*, Department of Foods and Nutrition, University of Georgia.



# MEET YOUR PROGRAM ASSISTANT

Dooly & Crisp Counties





**R**esidents of Dooly and Crisp Counties can count on the experiences of Rolanda Willingham to help them prepare healthy, affordable meals for their families.

For five years, Willingham has served as an Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP) program assistant for Fort Valley State University's (FVSU) Cooperative Extension Program.

Additionally, the EFNEP program assistant teaches residents of Dooly and Crisp Counties how to prepare nutritious meals, food budgeting and food safety techniques. She also performs culinary giveaways and food demonstrations. Each of her classes lasts eight weeks and meets for 90-minutes once a week.

During the classes clients learn the following strategies:

- Saving money on food
- Planning quick and easy meals for the family
- Preparing delicious and nutritious recipes
- Keeping food safe to eat
- Making healthy food choices
- Handwashing and sanitation
- Preparing easy and healthy snacks

Willingham holds memberships in the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS), the Georgia Nutritional Council (GNC), the Georgia Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (GAFCS), the Georgia Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (GEAFCS) and the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS).



FORT VALLEY  
STATE UNIVERSITY

EXTENSION



**For more information about EFNEP programs in Dooly and Crisp counties, contact Willingham at:**

**1001 E Pine St.  
Vienna, GA 31092  
(478) 952-3860  
rolanda.willingham@fvsu.edu**

### **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.

Alicia Montgomery, based in Macon 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

# NEWS & NOTES

## Fort Valley State University's Extension assists residents impacted by Hurricane Helene



Residents of south Georgia impacted by Hurricane Helene were able to receive some relief through Fort Valley State University's (FVSU) Cooperative Extension.

FVSU's Mobile Information Technology Center, (MITC) a high-tech computer classroom housed in a 72-foot semi-trailer, equipped with twenty individual training stations and an on-board 35-kilowatt generator, traveled to Lowndes County to help residents of Hahira.

Residents were able to gain Internet access to complete work projects and plan for cleanup and seek assistance from state and federal agencies.

Joshua Dawson, FVSU Extension agent for Lowndes County, said he knew that Lowndes needed resources due to power outages.

"With widespread power outages, people still needed to work and contact others. Having this available to the community and the surrounding areas has been vital to local businesses and people who need some relief," Dawson said.

Jennifer Price, director of Main Street for the city of Hahira, expressed relief when she found out that FVSU Extension could aid the community. She said that after contacting Dawson, in two hours, the MITC arrived and was up and running in Hahira.

## Fort Valley State Extension conducts agricultural training



Farmers, ranchers and food distributors seeking information about Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) certification recently attended a seminar sponsored by Fort Valley State University's (FVSU) Cooperative Extension program. More than 15 attendees learned the importance of passing a GAP audit.

GAP audits are a voluntary process that certifies that fruits and vegetables are safely produced, handled, packaged and stored in a manner that minimizes the development of hazardous microbes which cause food borne illnesses.

Farmers, food distributors and other representatives from various food cooperatives also conducted presentations.

"We have these seminars so that growers will be certified when state and federal laws go into effect," said Dr. James E. Brown, professor and program leader for FVSU's Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) program.

Additionally, Brown said the laws, which will soon go into effect, are designed to protect consumers from possible diseases and illnesses.

This was the second of two seminars scheduled on the FVSU campus. Brown added that should a farmer want to participate in the GAP certification process through FVSU, they must contact Simmons or the Cooperative Extension office.

Carolyn Lawrence, along with her husband Amos, operate Lawrence Farm in Reynolds, Georgia. She said that the workshop was enjoyable and very informative.

Furthermore, she said that going forward, they are looking to expand their business and the information will be helpful as they look to improve yields with products and produce.

The next GAP training seminar will be held July 10 at FVSU's Agricultural Technology Conference Center (ATCC) at 8:30 a.m.

For more information about GAP certification through FVSU Cooperative Extension, call (478) 825-6269 or email Dr. Brown at brownj01@fvsu.edu.

## Fort Valley State's 4-H Program receives grant from local foundation



The Oconee Electric Membership Corporation (EMC) Foundation recently awarded Fort Valley State University's (FVSU) Twiggs County 4-H Program \$4,600.

The award is provided through the All Operation Round Up Grant. It is administered through the Oconee EMC Foundation Inc. The Board of Directors of Oconee EMC appoints seven trustees who are responsible for investigating and evaluating applications for assistance and making the decisions about the disbursement of funds. Phillip Petway, FVSU 4-H agent for Twiggs County completed and submitted the grant application.

"Funds from this grant will be used to cover a variety of expenses including camp scholarships, travel to 4-H District Project Achievement, leadership and judging competitions and 4-H youth conferences and workshops," Petway said.

Furthermore, Petway said that FVSU Twiggs County 4-H'ers from grades four through 12 can actively participate in club work with assistance from the grant. "This will allow us to successfully complete the 4-H mission of assisting youth in acquiring knowledge, developing life skills and forming attitudes that

will help them become productive members of society," he said.

FVSU's Twiggs County 4-H Program is part of the Fort Valley State University Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development Program.

Woodie Hughes Jr. assistant Extension administrator, 4-H program leader, shared how this funding is an opportunity for FVSU's 4-H Youth Development Program.

"Congratulations to Mr. Petway for successfully receiving grant funding. Fort Valley State University's Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development Program is looking forward to the impact the grant will have in assisting and preparing young people with the skills and abilities to be ready for work and life," Hughes said.

For more information about FVSU's Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development Program, contact Petway ([petwayp@fvsu.edu](mailto:petwayp@fvsu.edu)) or Hughes ([hughesw@fvsu.edu](mailto:hughesw@fvsu.edu)), at (478) 825-6296.

## Farm to dining hall project underway with Sodexo, FVSU Extension



Fort Valley State University's (FVSU) Cooperative Extension Program and Sodexo, the food service provider for FVSU, are collaborating on a farm to dining hall

project. Beginning with blueberries, SODEXO will purchase some fruits and vegetables grown on the university's 8-acre sustainable farm and garden.

"The project began earlier this year with the purchase of blueberries," said Dr. James Brown, interim program leader for FVSU's Cooperative Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) unit.

Besides blueberries, FVSU Extension will also provide other produce such as eggplants, tomatoes, bell peppers, watermelons, various types of greens (turnip, collard, mustard, kale) and radishes.

The farm to dining hall project began when Sodexo staff members approached Dr. Mark Latimore Jr., associate dean for Extension, and inquired about the possibility of purchasing produce to be used in FVSU's dining facilities.

This is the first time that FVSU Extension has collaborated or connected with a food service provider.

Sodexo is a global leader in sustainable food. The company employs nearly 104,000 employees across the U.S. and 430,000 globally.





COLLEGE of  
AGRICULTURE,  
FAMILY SCIENCES  
and TECHNOLOGY

**AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS**  
**P.O. BOX 4061**  
**FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**FORT VALLEY, GEORGIA 31030-4313**  
**AG.FVSU.EDU**



**FVSU offers  
Neighbor Waivers!**  
Qualified students from  
Alabama, Florida, South  
Carolina and Tennessee pay  
in-state tuition. Find out more  
and apply today at [fvsu.edu](http://fvsu.edu).

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal and, where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.) If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities and wish to file either an EEO or program complaint please contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish). Persons with disabilities who wish to file a program complaint, please see information above on how to contact us by mail directly or by email. If you require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) please contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work, based on the passage of the Food & Agricultural Act of 1977 on September 29, 1977, and in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Mark Latimore Jr., Associate Dean for Extension for the College of Agriculture, Family Sciences and Technology, Fort Valley State University, a State and Land-Grant Institution, University System of Georgia. Fort Valley State University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award baccalaureate and master's degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Fort Valley State University. Fort Valley State University is an affirmative action, equal opportunity institution and does not discriminate against applicants, students or employees on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability or marital or veteran status.