

Did You Know?

Funding has been restored for the state's Nutrition Education Program to be conducted by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System in 2005.

The \$3 million NEP grant will place Extension educators in the food stamp offices working directly with food stamp recipients and applicants. Extension personnel will teach dietary guidelines, food safety and preparation, good shopping skills, and budgeting strategies.

In the past, the NEP program operated through schools with instruction designed for the children of limited-resource parents. Now the program must target only food stamp recipients and applicants.

Twenty-three full-time Extension nutrition educators at Auburn University will conduct the program in 46 rural Alabama counties. Extension educators at Alabama A&M University will serve the urban and metropolitan counties.

NEP is a partnership of USDA's Food and Nutrition Service and the Alabama Department of Human Resources.

*For expert advice
24 hours a day visit*

www.aces.edu

Moving Into Action

Extension Professionals Use Specialized Knowledge to Help People Overcome Challenges, Solve Problems

As Hurricane Ivan moved toward Alabama, Extension specialists and agents across the state moved into action to help farmers, timber owners and homeowners prepare for any destruction headed their way. In the aftermath, those same specialists and agents walked amidst the chaos and loss, helping the people they work with every day assess the damage and offering solutions to recovery.

Extension professionals are accustomed to helping Alabamians find solutions to the dilemmas they face in business and everyday life. Over the years they have been generalists who could find answers to a range of problems from a variety of circumstances. Hurricane Ivan became the extreme proving ground for the new regional

agent system adopted by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System to provide greater expertise to the people of Alabama.

People facing the extreme devastation from Ivan were able to benefit from the highly specialized training of the new regional agents now in place throughout the state, tapping into their expertise in areas such as agronomic crops; poultry; family and child development; community resource development; farm management; food safety; forestry and natural resource management; home grounds, gardens and home pests; youth development; and more.

The system works. In the weeks after Ivan, agents with specialized knowledge in pecan production have been helping South Alabama pecan growers whose orchards were severely damaged or destroyed. Landowners facing catastrophic loss of timber are benefiting from the training and research of forestry agents and specialists. Homeowners are finding aid from specialists in home horticulture and related areas. Environmental specialists are helping landowners and governments deal with the damage caused to property and public facilities and lands.

“Extension adopted the regional agent system because our clients are well educated and have very specific and sophisticated needs in the education they seek in this information age,” said Extension Interim Director Gaines Smith. *(Continued)*

“By utilizing our specialists and agents in the areas in which they are educated and trained, rather than as general agents, we are able to provide greater expertise that addresses the specific needs of our clients.”

Gaines Smith
Interim Director

What Extension is doing for you...

Agriculture

Extension entomology specialists are turning to precision farming methods such as GPS technology to conduct research into more effective ways to control insects that affect Alabama's pasturelands and crop yields. By mapping the locations and patterns of ground-based insects such as fire ants and white grubs, specialists hope to devise more selective and cost efficient insect control methods — methods based on the very soil where the insects live.

Forestry and Natural Resources

Loggers in Alabama are benefiting from the Professional Logging Management Course offered through Extension support of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. The course teaches loggers sound principles of sustainable forestry that include the protection of wildlife habitat, visual aesthetics, special sites, protection of water quality, soil productivity, best management practices and ways to work with landowners.

Community and Economic Development

Perry County's Sprott community is just one example of the successful partnership of Congressman Artur Davis and Extension to assist rural Black Belt communities with economic development. These efforts have benefited Sprott through enhanced

public facilities for increased water capabilities for the fire department, job readiness training to improve the workforce and new materials for a proposed learning resource center.

Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs

A team of students from Decatur's Austin High School were named the Ultimate Survivors in the recent 2004 State LifeSmarts competition sponsored by Extension's Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs unit and the National Consumer League. This unique educational game show competition teaches youth in grades 9 – 12 about consumer issues including credit, contracts, refunds, charitable contributions, food labels, food production and consumption.

Family and Individual Well-Being

Teams of Extension family and consumer science professionals recently conducted childhood obesity and diabetes workshops in Huntsville, Birmingham, Montgomery and Bay Minette to help more than 800 school food service workers better meet the needs of obese and diabetic children. With funding from the State Department of Education Child Nutrition Program, workshop training materials included a video, games and puppets as well as meal planning using the food guide pyramid and the plate method.

4-H and Youth Development

Alabama 4-H recently partnered with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to sponsor the Natural Resources Rendezvous at Brierfield Ironworks State Park in Shelby County to promote natural resources stewardship and recreational opportunities to Alabama youth. Hands-on interactive workshops led by state wildlife biologists and game wardens, Extension faculty, and 4-H volunteers taught youth about archery, shotguns, muzzle loading rifles, sport fishing, forestry, aquatic ecology and wildlife. Ward Burton of NASCAR fame represented the Ward Burton Wildlife Foundation as a special guest.

(Continued from page 1)

“By better utilizing our specialists and agents in the areas in which they are educated and trained, rather than as general agents, we are able to provide greater expertise that addresses the specific needs of our clients.”

Extension's regional agents work across several counties, with an office in each of the counties in their regions. The system allows each of the 67 counties to benefit from the expertise of our agents. It particularly benefits small, rural counties where funding for Extension is low and where the former single-county agents were few.

We hope you have enjoyed this issue of *Extension Update*. If you have questions or comments about the newsletter or need to correct your address, please contact Jodi Robinson by phone at 334-844-5691 or by e-mail at robinjh@auburn.edu. If you have questions concerning the Extension programs highlighted above, please contact the News and Public Affairs Unit of Extension Communications at 334-844-5677.

For expert advice 24 hours a day visit www.aces.edu



Your Experts for Life

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
STATE HEADQUARTERS
AUBURN UNIVERSITY, ALABAMA 36849-5612

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit #9
Auburn University, AL 36849

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Gaines Smith".
Gaines Smith, Extension Interim Director