The Alabama Cooperative Extension System engages a broad range of Alabamians in a conversation about the significant issues facing the state at this point in our history and the opportunities for positive change. From these conversations, six strategic program initiatives have been identified to guide Extension’s issue-based educational programs that acknowledge and address the current changes in the way citizens think, live, and function in their daily lives, families, communities, and businesses.

1. **Health and Wellness**
   - **Objectives**
     - Improve the health of Alabamians, with special emphasis on combating obesity and encouraging physical activity, nutrition education, and health literacy
     - Empower families to improve health and well-being
     - Increase access to and consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables
   - **Outcomes**
     - Healthier lifestyles and a reversal of the obesity trend, increased health advocacy; improved health behaviors that affect state health expenditures; decreased disparities in the population; advancement of policies that affect health and wellness; development of a statewide coalition for health and wellness

2. **Workforce Development**
   - **Objectives**
     - Improve workforce awareness, knowledge, and skills with emphasis on entrepreneurship and broadband adoption
     - Build stakeholder connections and networks
     - Foster citizen engagement in education, workforce development, and entrepreneurship
   - **Outcomes**
     - Elevated workforce knowledge and skills; increased number of entrepreneurs; expanded use of broadband technology; reduced high school dropout rates and increased number of students in technical career tracks and dual enrollment programs; engaged stakeholder participation in workforce development

3. **Safe and Secure Food Supply**
   - **Objectives**
     - Educate consumers in all aspects of food safety
     - Educate food processors in food safety principles and practices
     - Provide a Good Agricultural Practices course and HACCP training
     - Help communities provide citizens with an adequate, affordable, food supply
     - Help citizens effectively manage food dollars
   - **Outcomes**
     - Increased vigilance by consumers, processors, and producers to reduce foodborne illness; increased consumer awareness of how food is produced; improved animal welfare; greater consumer confidence in a safe, secure food supply; more locally produced food; increased access to affordable food in communities with food deserts
Financial Literacy

The decline of the overall median income, high unemployment, community disasters, the mortgage foreclosure crisis, and other financial challenges have caused Alabamians to take a closer look at their financial resources and their need to better understand financial matters.

- Increase the financial literacy of youth and adults
- Improve Alabamians’ ability to handle opportunities and manage resources
- Promote competent protection of assets and personal identity
- Improve the financial well-being of all Alabamians, with a focus on limited-resource families and individuals

Outcomes

Reduced debt; increased number of individuals, families, and communities prepared to respond to financial challenges at all stages of life; increased wealth and improved economic conditions; expanded and improved business enterprises; decreased stress; improved financial health for Alabamians

Sustainable Agricultural and Forestry Systems

Global food production is expected to fall short of population growth over the next 25 years. As national and global food demand increases, improvements in technology and the adaptation of production systems will be essential to sustain Alabama’s economy, communities and environment. The need to meet the nation’s demand for forest products and fuel as well as for clean water, recreation, and wildlife habitat will require profitable, sustainable production systems.

- Increase adoption of sustainable production practices for food, feed, fiber, and biofuel
- Promote safe, quality products and animal welfare
- Expand marketing options and increase consumer understanding of practices needed to provide food, feed, fiber, and fuel
- Encourage beginning and small-farm enterprises to develop new and niche products

Outcomes

Improved economic and environmental conditions for new-land-use enterprises; expanded markets for producers; improved production of food, feed, fiber, and fuel that benefits the environment and preserves natural resources; enlightened consumer understanding of food production practices; improved animal welfare

Environmental Stewardship

The State of Alabama has some of the most diverse landscapes in the United States that provide habitat for the nation’s highest number of aquatic species and among the highest number of land species. Forest and agricultural products; outdoor tourism and recreation; and access to ample, clean water drive a significant sector of the state’s economy. For the future, Alabama has the potential to become a leader in growing biomass for biofuels and other biorenewables.

- Expand knowledge of sustainability concepts and increase awareness of how local actions affect the environment
- Increase citizen empowerment to lead local sustainability efforts
- Advance solutions for complex environmental problems and increase citizen advocacy
- Encourage personal responsibility for the environment

Outcomes

Expanded citizen environmental stewardship; added innovative solutions for environmental problems; improved environmental advocacy; more career opportunities related to environmental stewardship; added revenue attributed to environmental sustainability; increased use of alternative, renewable sources of energy

Contacts

Dr. Paul W. Brown
Extension Associate Director
Auburn University
(334) 844-5546
pbrown@aces.edu

Dr. Celvia Stovall
Extension Associate Director
Alabama A&M University
(256) 372-8648
ces0038@aces.edu