



Northwest Region Newsletter Nov. 2010 Edition

News/Events

Two LSU AgCenter agents sweep Mayor's Commission HERA Awards

Two LSU AgCenter agents swept three of the Shreveport Mayor's Commission HERA Awards Nov. 4.



Grace Peterson, assistant extension agent (FNP/horticulture), and Dianne Glasgow, family and child specialist, received the award, which stands for Helpful, Effective, Responsible Advocates. Peterson's was in the quality of life category and Glasgow's was in education.

Peterson was recognized for establishing community gardens

in low-income neighborhoods. She is a founding member of the Red River Coalition of Community Gardeners. She has worked with the Byrd High School 4-H program, Shreveport Public Assembly and Recreation, Community Renewal, YMCA and Master Gardeners.

Peterson said she was thankful the gardens were getting publicity.

Glasgow works with Volunteers for Youth Justice, writes a column on parenting in City Life and obtained a grant from the Children's Trust Fund for a project, Bonding with Baby through Books.

“I’m thankful that I’ve made an impact in people’s lives,” she said.

Bobbie Hodges was the third winner in the category of advocacy.

LSU AgCenter EFNEP Program teaches students to eat colorful fruits, veggies

While 2,000 students toured AgMagic at the State Fair, another 1,190 from Head Start and elementary schools saw an educational nutrition show hosted by the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program.

EFNEP is a nutrition education program designed to enhance the quality of a family’s health. It is delivered by the Family and Consumer Sciences division of the LSU AgCenter’s Cooperative Extension Service.

Cathryn Robinson, associate LSU AgCenter agent in Caddo and Bossier parishes, said this year’s program focused on “Eating the Rainbow.” The children assembled in the Louisiana State Exhibit Museum on the Fair Grounds to hear the messages on Oct. 27 and Nov. 3.

“If you don’t like one color you can eat from another,” Robinson said. She told the children she ate purple potatoes in Maine. “As you travel, you’ll see more variety, but you already know about this because you came to EFNEP.”

All of the presenters wore the color of the food they were talking about.

Robinson discussed vitamin A found in red fruits and vegetables. “If you are in a room when the lights go out and it’s dark, you saw shapes because you had lots of vitamin A,” she said. “It’s our seeing-in-the-dark vitamin.”

She named apples, cherries, cranberries, grapes, grapefruit, strawberries, raspberries, blood oranges, watermelon, red pepper, radishes, tomatoes, rhubarb and beets as examples of the red group.

“White foods are good for the heart and help balance body fluids,” said Jacqueline Jordan, LSU AgCenter nutrition educator. She listed white corn, onions, potatoes, mushrooms, bananas and cauliflower.

Linda Perry, LSU AgCenter nutrition educator, took the yellow and orange group. “Some of these you may not recognize,” she said, listing mangoes, persimmons, papayas, yellow beets, yellow watermelon and yellow beets.

“The purple and blue group is high in fiber,” said Grace Cawthorne, LSU AgCenter nutrition educator. She asked the children to repeat after her, “blackberries, blueberries, purple grapes, plums, raisins and purple carrots.”

“Green can help your wounds and cuts,” said Brenda Peek, LSU AgCenter nutrition educator. She named green beans, cucumbers, peas, broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, avocado and kiwi.

The team used music to teach the lessons to the tunes of “Skip to My Lou,” “Itsy Bitsy Spider” and “If You’re Happy and You Know It,” complete with stomping and turning around.

AgMagic answers question bugging student

AgMagic at the State Fair answered a question that has been bugging one Bossier City student for years.

“What happens if a bug gets into cotton?” asked Dallas Kaiser, 10.

“I’ve been holding that question since I was 4,” he said, adding that he was going to plant the cotton seed he collected at the exhibit.

Among events at AgMagic were seeing a mini cotton gin run, digging for vegetables, touching baby chickens, forming a forest and looking at insects under a microscope.

AgMagic is an interactive, visually stimulating educational experience for children and their families, said Karen Martin, 4-H regional coordinator for the LSU AgCenter.

AgMagic was open during normal fair hours and guided tours were conducted for 2,000 third-through sixth-graders Nov. 3-5 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Areas of concentration were crops, forestry, wildlife, horticulture, nutrition, entomology, animals and 4-H.

Cotton is grown in long rows down the field, said Jim Hayes, LSU AgCenter research associate.

He ran samples of cotton through a mini gin. “It used to take a long time to pull the seed out of the cotton,” Hayes said.

“It feels like fur,” said Latroy Pearman, a classmate of Dallas at Meadowview Elementary School.

“If insects feed on the reproductive parts of the cotton plant, the boll will not form and you won’t get as much cotton, so you have to spray for insects,” Hayes told Dallas.

Hayes explained that cotton is in clothes and dollar bills.

Ricky Kilpatrick, LSU AgCenter forester, showed the children how a forest gets thinned. The students stood on dots in rows with their arms extended. Kilpatrick said that if they

were crowded in a bedroom and one got sick, they'd all likely get sick. "It's the same with trees," he said. "The way we help trees is to cut some. They are going to become pulpwood, lumber or firewood."

Kilpatrick told the youth the No. 1 crop in Louisiana is trees.

Gary Stockton, LSU AgCenter agent, told the students poultry production is strong in Lincoln Parish. The children got to see chickens pecking the shell of eggs, trying to come out.

"There will be a quiz," said Stephanie Moreau, a third grade teacher at Platt Elementary. "We'll go back over this on the bus and I'll give copies to other teachers."



Teachers received lessons, activity sheets and posters to take back to the classroom.

Students spent 15 minutes at the insect exhibit that included moths and butterflies found in Louisiana, leaf-cutting ants, wasps and bees, bugs from the tropics, a termite nest and insects that attack pine trees.

One section of AgMagic included learning about nutrition.

"In order to have a healthy body when you're older, you have to start when you are young," said LaDonna Chreene, LSU AgCenter nutrition educator. She suggested choosing smaller sizes at the drive-through.

A wheelbarrow full of lard and sugar provided a visual on the amounts of fat and sugar consumed in one year if a child eats a hamburger, French fries and a soft drink each day. That translates to 50 pounds of fat and 65 pounds of sugar, Chreene said.

Children received a sticker to wear that depicted "Cut the Fat."

Sarah Sterling, LSU AgCenter research associate, showed the students what food looks like before it gets to the grocery store. They viewed planted cucumbers, squash, tomatoes, broccoli, greens and cabbage and saw the roots of carrots.

Thomas Talley, a Master Gardener, showed what is right and wrong to put in a compost pile. "Fertilizer is like vitamins for plants," he said. "You can buy it or make your own from scraps around your house."

Visitors finished their AgMagic experience by leaving their mark on the 4-H graffiti wall, playing 4-H hopscotch and seeing the petting zoo which housed goats, calves, pigs, sheep, poultry and rabbits.

Forest tax seminar set for Jan. 25

A forest tax seminar with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service tax experts will be held on Jan. 25.

The seminar will be broadcast from Baton Rouge to various LSU AgCenter distance education sites throughout the state, including the Red River Research Station. Details will be coming soon.

Rains prompt start of pecan harvest

Clusters of pecans stayed in trees longer than usual this year in Louisiana. Dry weather throughout summer and into fall kept them in place, according to Randy Sanderlin, coordinator of the LSU AgCenter Pecan Research and Extension Station at Shreveport.

Harvest was delayed across the Southeast, Sanderlin said. The AgCenter research station began harvesting Nov. 12 after a two-inch rain earlier that week.

“The crop is cooperating a little bit, and the situation is improving,” Sanderlin said. “Late-summer drought reduced kernel filling, so you can get poorer quality or lower size, weight or yield.”

Last year producers saw the opposite problem – too much rain during late summer and early fall also affected harvest.

Although it’s been a stressful year, Sanderlin predicts the quality will be good to excellent in 2010.

This is an off-year for pecans, which are alternate-bearing trees, but Sanderlin expects the state to produce about eight million pounds, which is average in a down year. The industry is still recovering from hurricanes in 2007 that caused extensive damage to trees across the state. Louisiana harvested about four million pounds of pecans in 2008 and nine million pounds in 2009.

Positive news for growers is an increase in exports to Asian countries, particularly China, according to LSU AgCenter pecan horticulturist Charles Graham.

“Five years ago they bought just two or three million pounds,” Graham said. “Last year they bought 80 million pounds, so they are becoming a major player in the industry.”

This led to an increase in prices in the middle of last season when prices generally drop. Graham said prices are strong again this year, and he expects the industry to grow in the coming years because of the increase in demand.

Outbreaks of salmonella in nut crops have raised concerns about food safety. Graham said the LSU AgCenter is working with growers to keep their crop from becoming contaminated.

“We talk with the growers about how to better clean their facilities and make sure their equipment is really good to go before harvest stops because in Louisiana we want to provide the safest product that we can to the consumer,” he said. “That’s our ultimate goal.”

Look for Louisiana pecans throughout the fall and winter.

GED bound teens receive life skills lessons

LSU AgCenter extension agents Elizabeth Lynn and Diane Uzzle are teaching a series of 12 classes at the Bienville Educational Center to help students get a jump on learning how to prepare themselves for the workforce and gain financial management skills.

The schedule for the classes and topics include:

Job Search Tips, Nov. 8

Understanding Your Paycheck, Nov. 9

Resume Tips, Nov. 15

Budgeting Tips, Nov. 16

Interview Tips, Nov. 29

Using and Abusing Credit, Nov. 30

Positive Work Habits, Dec. 6

Ways to Stay Sane, Dec. 7

Resolving Conflict On The Job, Dec. 13

Safety Habits, Dec. 14

Teamwork Tips To Get Things Done, Dec. 20

Life Goal Planning, Dec. 21

Each lesson includes a short video, worksheets and discussion topics with the youth. The videos mix expert interviews, on-the-job examples and well-organized tips that are easy to follow and apply. Building effective job skills is an important part of getting a job and keeping it in this highly competitive market.

Teens can jump right into the basics of everyday personal finance. From payroll deductions and budgeting steps to the WOW's of credit, and saving for a rainy day, these lessons make good use of the important financial topics. Easy to understand, important life skills, real life examples assist teens in learning to transition from living with parents to living on their own. As teens work on these lessons, they also get to work on math skills.

Pre/post assessments are administered to measure the knowledge gained by youth participating in these classes. The results will be calculated at the end of the series.

The cooperating relationship between the Bienville Parish School Board and the LSU AgCenter has created this life skills learning opportunity for teens in the parish working toward getting their High School Diploma for General Education Development Alternative Program.

Recycling perlite saves resources

A method that gives smaller greenhouse operations economical, eco-friendly alternatives that Dr. Hanna Hanna uses is the subject of an article published on EurekaAlert (www.eurekaalert.org) and the American Society for Horticultural Science website. Here is an excerpt.

Perlite, a processed volcanic mineral, is widely used as a component of soilless growing mixes. Lightweight, sterile, and easy to use, perlite is popular with greenhouse growers. But because salt and pathogen buildup can occur when perlite is reused, it must be replaced every year or two to minimize the risk of crop failure. The cost of disposing of old material and replacing it with new perlite can be significant and often prohibitive for smaller greenhouse operations. Hanna Y. Hanna, a researcher at Louisiana State University Agricultural Center's Red River Research Station, has developed a new method for recycling perlite that he says can save tomato growers a significant amount of money without reducing crop yield.

Hanna, who has done extensive previous research on perlite, says that using perlite to grow successive crops like tomatoes can be risky; it tends to compact and is subject to salt build-up and pest contamination during recycling. "Steam sterilization of used perlite before planting a new crop is recommended to safeguard against pathogen contamination, but this treatment requires the use of expensive steam generators," Hanna said.

In the August 2010 issue of HortTechnology Hanna reported on a new method he developed to accelerate the recycling of perlite. The experiments were conducted in a

greenhouse over three growing seasons to evaluate three different methods for perlite recycling and their effects on cost, desalination efficiency, and tomato yield.

Three recycling methods – “no stir/sift-then-disinfect,” “stir-then-disinfect,” and “sift-then-disinfect” - were put to the test for Hanna’s experiments. Each recycling method consisted of two components: the reconditioning action and the hot water treatment. During the experiments perlite recycled with the no stir/sift-then-disinfect method was not reconditioned before the hot water treatment. Instead, it was agitated with a nozzle mounted on a pressure washer wand during the hot water treatment. Perlite recycled with the stir-then-disinfect method was reconditioned first with an auger mounted on an electric drill, then treated with hot water. Perlite recycled with the sift-then-disinfect method was reconditioned first by sifting the perlite with a homemade apparatus, then treating with hot water.

“The results revealed that recycling perlite with the no stir/sift-then-disinfect method reduced labor input by 49% and 81% compared with the stir-then-disinfect and the sift-then-disinfect methods, respectively. The no stir/sift-then-disinfect method reduced recycling cost by 22% and 50% compared with the other two methods, respectively,” Hanna noted. Tomatoes grown in perlite recycled with any of the three methods produced similar marketable and cull yields and fruit weight.

The resulted showed that the no stir/sift-then-disinfect method is less time consuming, more economical, and has no negative impact on yield. The new method gives greenhouse tomato growers more cost-effective options for recycling perlite while saving valuable natural resources.

“The cost of renting of a hot water pressure washer and a few miscellaneous items can be the only out-of-pocket expense for using this method. Additionally, the method eliminates labor time and effort to remove old medium from the greenhouse, transport it to a land fill or a vacant field for disposal, and fill other bags with new perlite,” Hanna concluded.

Conservation stewardship program offers assistance

USDA’s Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) offers eligible forest landowners and managers an opportunity to receive financial and technical assistance to conserve and enhance soil, water, air and related natural resources on their land.

“I encourage all non-industrial private forest landowners and managers to apply for CSP—it is good for the land and for the forest producer,” said NRCS State Conservationist Kevin Norton. “Last year, approved forest landowners and managers received an average payment of \$13 per acre, per year, for five-year CSP contracts—enabling them to implement conservation practices that had a direct impact on local soil and water quality.”

Administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), CSP offers private non-industrial forest landowners and managers assistance to undertake new conservation activities or improve, maintain or manage existing conservation activities. The resulting conservation benefits include improvement of water and soil quality, wildlife habitat enhancement and implementation of conservation activities that address the effects of climate change.

An eligible CSP applicant must have a Farm Service Agency (FSA) farm and tract number to participate and be listed as the operator of the farm with FSA or be eligible for a waiver. CSP contracts are for five years and the enhancement(s) selected by the landowner or manager will be implemented during the contract period.

There are over 23 enhancements that a forest landowner or manager may choose from to enhance their woodlands. Selecting a combination of enhancements may increase potential ranking and dollars per acre/per year payment rates for eligible producers. Examples of possible enhancements include managing forest buffers along creeks, creating snags, preparing sites with high fuel loads for prescribed burning by fuel chipping, prescribed burning, conifer or hardwood crop tree release and establishing pollinator habitat on log sets, forest openings.

Approved beginning farmers or socially disadvantaged farmers who have at least 20 contiguous acres of eligible land may also apply. These farmers will be eligible for a minimum payment of \$1,000 per year for five years for implementing at least one CSP enhancement.

The Conservation Stewardship Program is not just for forest landowners and managers. Other eligible lands include cropland, grassland, prairie land, improved pastureland, rangeland and agricultural land under the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe.

Applications are accepted throughout the year; however, to be considered in the first sign-up/ranking period, applications must be received by Jan. 7. Contact your local NRCS field office to apply for CSP. A complete list of field offices can be found at: www.la.nrcs.usda.gov.

4-H

Work of love auctioned at fair

A work of love to honor a Jackson Parish 4-H'er was auctioned at the State Fair of Louisiana Junior Livestock Sale Oct. 27.

4-H'er Tyler Wayne Ledford, 17, of Eros was killed in an automobile accident July 31 in Marion. He was a senior at Quitman High School.

Ledford's friends in 4-H and FFA decided to give the proceeds from the sale of a cooker they built in a competition at the fair to help defray his burial costs. The cooker brought

\$7,000 at the auction and was the grand champion in the ag mechanics metal category at the show.

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The young FFA men included Kaleb Seymour, Nicholas Garcie, Blaine Cooper, Nathan Futrell and Tim White. Garcie, team leader, and Cooper are also in 4-H. Seymour and Cooper have memorial tattoos on their arms in honor of Ledford.

“It was their idea to help,” said Carol Garcie, Nicholas’ mother. Dan Stout, their ag teacher/FFA adviser, got the

approval of the Jackson Parish School Board to carry out the donation.

Andy Loftus of Keatchie, Shreveport Tractor in Shreveport, Leflett Cattle Co. in north Shreveport and Jim Towns of Sibley contributed \$7,000 at the auction. Encana Gas tagged on another \$500.

Ledford was a welding team member who attended the auction last year.

“He would be graduating with us this year,” said Nicholas Garcie.

“Five of us worked two weeks late after school to finish this,” he said.

Garcie was also the first place winner in the FFA proficiency area of agricultural fabrication and design for 2010.

“Tyler was a fun loving young man that could always put a smile on your face,” said Kim Cockerham, LSU AgCenter agent in Jackson Parish. “His peers respected him and loved him. Tyler will be greatly missed in Jackson Parish and at his school.”

Garcie said Ledford will be honored at an FFA banquet in May and his family will receive a cap and gown and diploma at graduation.

Ledford is survived by his parents, Kenny and Cherilyn McCurdy of Eros and Carolee and Tony Ledford of Ruston.

Caddo 4-H'er leads at Club Congress

In 2009, Club Congress alumnus Daniel McFarland submitted a video and application to be a member of the 2010 Club Congress Design Team.

Since he was selected, he has traveled to Atlanta for several planning meetings. He spent Nov. 24-30 at Club Congress.

On Friday at the airport, he was a part of the greeting team that welcomed 1,200 4-H'ers from the 50 states and gave the opening welcome at the first assembly. He also had the opportunity to sit next to Miss America at the Congress gala banquet.

He is the first Caddo 4-H'er to be chosen for the Design Team.

Caddo Parish recognized nationally for character education program

Caddo Parish Public Schools, winner of the Louisiana Promising Practices award, went on to win a national Promising Practices Award for recognition in social-emotional and character development.

This is the first year the LSU AgCenter has sponsored the state Promising Practices award program, said Katherine Pace, LSU AgCenter agent. The LSU AgCenter's outreach program, Louisiana 4-H, helps parents, educators and other caregivers build a culture of character and a climate of success in classrooms and communities across the state.

The Promising Practices awards program is administered by the Character Education Partnership (CEP) as part of its National Schools of Character awards program. Based in Washington, D.C., CEP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nonsectarian coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to helping schools develop people of good character for a just and compassionate society.

Winning practices include new and effective ways to help students solve conflicts, decrease bullying and take action in their schools and communities as well as programs to increase parental and community involvement.

Dr. Barzanna White, Caddo Parish School System representative, received a plaque during a recent Caddo Parish School Board meeting and she was recognized nationally at the 17th national CEP conference in San Francisco two weeks ago.

CEP awarded 196 schools and districts from across the United States, as well as Brazil, Mexico, Puerto Rico and Singapore, 228 awards for "Promising Practices" in character education.

CEP received a record 474 applications from 320 public and private schools and districts.

There were three other promising practices winners on the state level. They are Lake Forest Elementary Charter, Orleans Parish; L.J. Alleman Middle School, Lafayette Parish; and Haynesville Jr. High, Claiborne Parish.

An LSU AgCenter task force developed the Louisiana Schools of Character program under the National Schools of Character umbrella, which is part of CEP, Pace said.

Webster announces 4-H events

Events and opportunities through the Webster 4-H program included a paper clover sale from Nov. 5-13 with Tractor Supply.

Shoppers could purchase a paper clover for \$1 to support Webster 4-H.

The annual canned food drive continued through Nov. 18. 4-H clubs and the parish 4-H office collected canned goods and other non-perishable items for the community food bank at UCAP (United Christian Assistance Program). Junior Leader Club members met during the Thanksgiving holidays to sort, box and deliver the items to UCAP.

The Webster 4-H “Fast Flash” Photography Club is growing. 4-H’ers who are interested in learning how to take better pictures, enter contests and have fun taking photos are invited to the monthly meetings at the 4-H office in Minden. The club meets the first Tuesday of each month from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Celebrate Girls is another fast-growing after-school project club in 4-H. Girls in grades 5, 6, and 7 can attend the monthly meetings to make new friends, make nutritious snacks, create crafts and learn new skills. Activities focus on friendship, manners and personal growth and development. To sign up for the club, 4-H girls can contact the 4-H office.

4-H’ers will also be receiving their project books this month during club meetings. Project books are special workbooks on different subjects that youth are interested in, including sewing, woodworking, bicycle, pet care, nutrition and more.

New 4-H’ers in elementary school receive a “Discovering 4-H” introductory project book filled with lots of activities. 4-H members are encouraged to complete these booklets and turn them in during their April 4-H club meetings for recognition at awards night in May.

Four Caddo-Bossier 4-H’ers receive Discovering Tomorrow’s Leaders awards

Four of 16 students in Caddo and Bossier parishes receiving the Discovering Tomorrow’s Leaders awards over the past eight weeks were 4-H members.

Chesapeake Energy sponsored the program.

Each was honored at his school and the school received \$1,000 in needed equipment or supplies. All winners were recognized at a banquet on Nov. 9 where four received a personal laptop computer from a drawing.

The 16 were selected based on a wide range of activities including volunteerism with the 4-H Club and character development through the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, to name a few.

Nominations were accepted for the award via the general public through the news media. Nominees must have displayed outstanding leadership qualities within a volunteer organization as student leaders who go beyond the classroom.

Winners were selected from more than 265 nominations submitted by parents, teachers and officials with 4-H and Fellowship of Christian Athletes. The participation and number of nominations was the highest ever recorded for the Discovering Tomorrow's Leaders contest.

4-H winners were Levi Brown, Captain Shreve High School; Wendy Alderman, Haughton High School; Parker Bevel, Herndon Magnet School; and Chrishawna Jones, Plantation Park Elementary.

Brown volunteers at Allendale Friendship House and Earth Day, attends leadership camps and plays football. He re-started the 4-H club at Youree Drive Middle School and served as president.

Alderman is a 4-H Junior Leader and tutors math, English and music. She is a worship leader for her youth group.

Bevel also participates in an inner city outreach program and Jones wants to be a teacher.

LAE4-HA membership drive has been under way

The Louisiana Association of Extension 4-H Agents 2011 membership drive has been under way.

Membership in LAE4-HA offers extension agents the opportunity to grow both personally and professionally through association meetings and activities.

Dues for the year are \$80. Mail to Elizabeth Lynn, 2710 Maple St. Arcadia LA 71001.

