

110th Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference

National Association of
County Agricultural Agents

***Achievement Award
Hall of Fame Award
Distinguished Service Award***

June 29 - July 2, 2025
Billings, Montana



2025

RECOGNITION AND AWARDS

COMMITTEE

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National Association of County Agricultural Agents 2024 — 2025

OFFICERS

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President-Elect	JJ Jones	Arkansas
Vice-President	Connie Strunk	South Dakota
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Northeast Region	Nick Polanin	New Jersey
Southern Region	Paula Burke	Georgia
Southern Region	Sherri Sanders	Arkansas
Western Region	Aaron Esser	Washington

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Northeast Region	Andrew Kness	Maryland
Southern Region	Jennifer Pelham	Florida
Southern Region	Lonnie Jenschke	Texas
Western Region	Betsy Greene	Arizona

National Association of County Agricultural Agents Committee Chairs

2024-2025

Association Policy.....	Cynthia Gregg
Life Member.....	Steven Munk
Program Recognition Council.....	Joni Ross Harper
Communications.....	Brittany Council-Morton
Search For Excellence.....	Linda McClanahan
Research & Education Posters.....	Brian Haller
Public Relations. & Ag Awareness	Terrell Davis
Recognition & Awards.....	Ed Lentz
Scholarship.....	Stephen Hadcock
Extension Development Council.....	Colt Knight
Agricultural Issues.....	David Marrison
Early Career Development.....	Ashley Wright
Leadership & Administrative Skills	Amanda Douridas
Teaching & Educational Technologies.....	David Yates
Professional Improvement Council.....	Brian Beer
4-H & Youth.....	Heather Jennings
Agriculture Economics and Community Development.....	Blake Carter
Agronomy & Pest Management.....	Michael Rethwisch
Animal Science.....	Kyle Sanders
Horticulture & Turfgrass.....	Cyndi Lauderdale
Natural Resources/Aquaculture.....	Jody Gale
Sustainable Agriculture.....	Heather Schlessner

2024 - 2025

RECOGNITION AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

Ed Lentz

Ohio

National Chair

NORTHEAST REGION

Alexandria Smith, Vice Chair
West Virginia

State Chairs:

- Laurie Wolinski- Delaware
- Colt Knight- Maine
- Virginia Rosenkranz - Maryland
- Carl Majewski - New Hampshire
- Nicholas Polanin- New Jersey
- Daniel Welch - New York
- Don Seifrit- Pennsylvania
- Greg Hamons/Joshua Peplowski - West Virginia

SOUTHERN REGION

Jennifer Caraway, Vice Chair
Arkansas

State Chairs:

- Jimmy Smitherman - Alabama
- Rachel Bearden- Arkansas
- Cindy Sanders - Florida
- Jay Porter - Georgia
- Jessica Hopkins - Kentucky
- Mariah Simoneaux - Louisiana
- James Shannon - Mississippi
- Nelson Brownlee - North Carolina
- Amy Hagerman - Oklahoma
- Jeff Fellers - South Carolina
- Shana Los - Tennessee
- Zachary Davis - Texas
- Adam Downing- Virginia

WESTERN REGION

Victoria Xiong, Vice Chair
Utah

State Chairs:

- Darren Snyder - Alaska
- Ashley Wright- Arizona
- Michael Rethwisch - California
- Kali Benson - Colorado
- Ronald Patterson - Idaho
- Marley Voll - Montana
- Carol Bishop- Nevada
- Patrick Kircher - New Mexico
- Brooke Edmunds- Oregon
- Matt Palmer - Utah
- Donald Llewellyn - Washington
- Donna Hoffman - Wyoming

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

Cade Rensink, Vice Chair
Kansas

State Chairs:

- Bruce Black - Illinois
- Lais McCartney - Indiana
- Ron Lenth - Iowa
- Rachel Brooke- Kansas
- Cheyenne Sloan- Michigan
- Dianne Dewitte - Minnesota
- Patrick Davis - Missouri
- Ronald Seymour- Nebraska
- Craig Askim - North Dakota
- Nic Baumer - Ohio
- Madalyn Shires - South Dakota
- Kaitlyn Davis - Wisconsin

ANNUAL DSA BANQUET MENU

Doubletree

Salad (ranch or italian), 8 oz Filet topped with red wine sauce,
garlic green beans, roasted potatoes, dessert (3 layer strawberry cake)
rolls & butter, ice tea, lemonade

Northern

Caesar salad, Filet Mignon with Seasonal Vegetables and Sauce Diane,
salted caramel chocolate tart

Tuesday, July 1, 2025

NACAA DSA BANQUET PROGRAM

Presiding Scott Jensen, President

Invocation.....Sawyer Fannesbeck (ID)

Introductions:

NACAA Board and Special GuestsScott Jensen, President
Past Officers and Life MembersCynthia Gregg, Chair,
Policy Committee

Dinner

Recognition Program:

Distinguished Services &
Hall of Fame AwardsEd Lentz, Chair,
Recognition & Awards Committee

Special Recognition..... Cynthia Gregg, Chair,
Policy Committee

Invitation to Denver, Colorado.....Kurt Jones
2026 AM/PIC Chair

Happy Faces Video

Installation of President and Past PresidentKeith Mickler,
Past President

Passing of the Gavel Scott Jensen, President

AdjournJJ Jones, President-Elect

87th ANNIVERSARY

This is the eighty-seventh year that the Distinguished Service Awards have been presented by the National Association of County Agricultural Agents. The first time was in 1938 at the annual meeting in Chicago when twenty-two members were honored. Tonight, an additional sixty-nine distinguished colleagues are being recognized, joining a very distinguished group of 7,771 NACAA members that have been so honored in the past.

CONGRATULATIONS HONOREES

The Recognition and Awards Committee of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents Association takes great pride in presenting the year's Distinguished Service Award Recipients. This Annual Banquet is prepared in their honor.

The honorees who will be recognized tonight are representatives of the top two percent of the membership of NACAA as chosen by their peers and the Directors of Extension of the various states. They represent a careful search by the members of each State Recognition and Awards Committee, each of the State Associations of County Agricultural Agents and the coordination of these efforts by the Regional and National Committee members.

Please share the pride of these committees by noting the accomplishments of each honoree as indicated by his/her citation. These NACAA recipients represent the wonderful work that is being carried out across the nation by the membership of the association. Our humble congratulations to each honoree.

County Agents Receiving the DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

From The National Association of
County Agricultural Agents
2025

Winners are listed by regions and states.

WESTERN REGION - CALIFORNIA

David Haviland - 22 Years

David's crucial research in development of sustainable pest management practices for crops such as almonds, pistachios and grapes has provided growers with effective responses to invasive pests, improved reliance on biological control, and increased adoption of environmentally-safe techniques such as mating disruption. His extension efforts, including more than 500 publications and over 800 invited presentations have led to industry-wide impacts that are expansive. He recently served the Entomological Society of America as Pacific Branch President.



WESTERN REGION - COLORADO

Travis Taylor - 15 Years



Travis Taylor has served CSU Extension as Golden Plains Area Livestock Specialist since 2019. Previously, he served as the Lincoln County Director, after working at the University of Wyoming. Travis continues to serve agricultural producers across Colorado, as a Trainer for Colorado Beef Quality Assurance, Superintendent for the Colorado State Fair, and the National Western Wool show. Travis co-produces the Pasture to Profit podcast, designed to inform producers of industry updates and current production practices.

WESTERN REGION - IDAHO

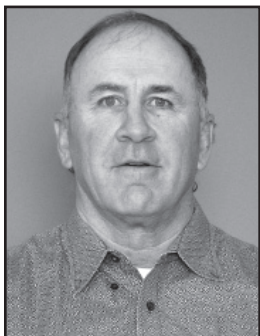
Doug Finkelburg - 12 Years

Doug Finkelburg is an Area Extension Educator in north central Idaho providing continuing education opportunities for dryland production agriculture. Finkelburg played an integral role in creating a regional "Pacific Northwest Herbicide Resistance Initiative" which annually directs USDA funds to three USDA-ARS units and three land grant universities creating collaborative opportunities to address this pressing production issue. He is also the lead Extension faculty for a \$55 million USDA Climate Smart Commodities grant in Idaho.



WESTERN REGION - MONTANA

Marc King - 30 Years



Marc is the Sweet Grass County Extension Agent in Big Timber, Montana. Marc started with MSU Extension in 1993. Sweet Grass County Extension is a single agent county, so the agent handles all aspects of extension including 4-H, agriculture, community development and FCS programming.

WESTERN REGION - NEW MEXICO

Jason Lamb - 19 Years

Jason Lamb has been an Agriculture Agent for New Mexico State Cooperative Extension Service for 19 years and has served the past eleven in Quay County. He has worked in single agent counties and understands the challenges of providing all program areas to a rural clientele. Jason has worked in a variety of programming areas in his career and most recently has had great success with the Beginning Farmer Program.



WESTERN REGION - OREGON

Sergio Arispe - 11 Years



Sergio has served OSU Extension in Malheur County since 2014, leading impactful education and research programs for livestock producers. He coordinates Oregon's Beef Quality Assurance and Secure Beef and Dairy Supply programs, offering training statewide and across the Western U.S. A dedicated member of the Oregon Agricultural Extension Association, Sergio has held leadership roles at both state and national levels. His work exemplifies excellence in outreach, technical skills, professional development, and service.

WESTERN REGION - UTAH

Michael Caron - 11 Years

Michael Caron has been researching the suitability of hardy wine and table grape cultivars for Utah's climate for ten years. More recently, he has been working on market research and consumer demand determination for grapes in Utah as a commercial crop. Specialty crop growers and hobby farmers seek ways to diversify their product sales. He has also worked to validate wine grape evapotranspiration models to determine their suitability in Utah's cold, arid, high-elevation desert environment.



WESTERN REGION - WASHINGTON

Linda McLean - 16 Years



Linda McLean has been with WSU Extension for 16 years as an educator focused on youth, food sovereignty, and agriculture. As an enrolled member of the Colville Confederated Tribes, Linda is passionate about providing knowledge to Indigenous people, 4-H youth development, and food and livestock production. Through science-based meetings and workshops for both adults and youth on a variety of topics, she places great value in developing partnerships which align with the Extension mission.

WESTERN REGION - WYOMING

Jeremiah Vardiman - 10 Years

Jeremiah Vardiman received the Distinguished Service Award in recognition of his dedicated service and excellence for the past 10 years with the University of Wyoming Extension. Over the past decade, Vardiman has been active with applied research projects and impactful Extension programs that have contributed to advancing Wyoming's agriculture. His commitment to professional development, collaboration, and delivering results to the stakeholders and clientele of Wyoming are distinguishable.



NORTH CENTRAL REGION - ILLINOIS

Ken Johnson - 11 Years



Ken Johnson is a shining example of Extension excellence. During his career with Illinois Extension Ken has led the charge to share his passion for entomology and horticulture with the communities he serves and the entire state of Illinois. Through needs assessments and evaluations, Johnson has focused his programs and writings on the topics needed most and the new and emerging topics such as the plight of pollinators. Johnson exemplifies the values of Extension/NACAA.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION - INDIANA

Danielle Walker - 12 Years

Danielle Walker has served as the Purdue Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator in Washington County since 2012. A respected leader and collaborator, she has advanced Indiana's beef industry through programs like the Indiana Beef Evaluation Program, Indiana Master Cattleman, and Breeding Soundness Evaluation Clinics. Danielle's innovative outreach efforts in livestock production, and commitment to empowering women and farm families through education exemplify excellence in Extension and have made a lasting impact across her community.



NORTH CENTRAL REGION - IOWA

Jennifer Bentley - 15 Years



She is distinguished in service to Extension and her farm and agri-business clientele. Jennifer is held in high esteem by colleagues and Administration for high-quality programming; facilitative teaching ability; professional demeanor; empathetic communication skills; and sensitive personality. Her teaching contains highly research-based information and effective demonstrated practices, along with teaching methods beyond PowerPoint presentation. Over 20 invited presentations to industry and over 50 publications attest to her professional and scientific excellence the last 15 years.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION - KANSAS

Shannon Blocker - 22 Years

Shannon Blocker has been an extension agent for 22 years. She used an unmanned aerial system to test remote identification of sericea lespedeza and for other uses. She helped 4-H members use it for their practical application projects. Shannon's consultation on Farm Bill program choices made an \$865,350 difference in 2019. She developed soil fertility worksheets and curriculum on blue-green algae in livestock water. Shannon works with Master Gardeners and teaches soils for basic training.



NORTH CENTRAL REGION - KANSAS

Krista Harding - 25 Years



Krista Harding has provided leadership in agricultural and horticultural programming thru K-State Research & Extension for 25 years. Krista began her career as an agricultural agent in Neosho county, working closely with producers as well as the 4-H program. She transitioned to a district horticulture agent for eleven years. Krista is currently the Director for the Southwind Extension District where she serves as the local administrative leader, overseeing the extension programming efforts across four counties.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION - MICHIGAN

Benjamin Phillips - 11 Years

Benjamin Phillips holds a BS in fisheries & wildlife, a MS in Entomology and has been with Michigan State University Extension for 11.5 years. As a Vegetable Specialist based at the Southwest Michigan Research and Extension Center, he serves commercial field and greenhouse vegetable growers who target fresh, wholesale, and processing markets. MAEA has selected Ben as the 2025 Distinguished Service Award winner to recognize both his innovative vegetable programming and past service as President.



NORTH CENTRAL REGION - MINNESOTA

Emily Krekelberg - 12 Years



Emily started with University of Minnesota Extension in 2013 as a county educator in Central Minnesota focusing on dairy production. In 2020, her passion for farm safety led her to her role as a Farm Safety and Health Educator working statewide to implement Youth Tractor Safety Training, farm safety seminars, suicide prevention classes, and more. Emily is also proud to serve as a co-lead for the Ag for All Conference for LGBTQIA+ agriculturalists in Minnesota.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION - MISSOURI

Charles Ellis - 33 Years

Charles Ellis has been an MU Extension Agricultural Engineering Field Specialist for over 33 years. His programming includes precision farming practices, no-till crop production systems, livestock production, and cover crop management and strategies as a member of the Midwest Cover Crop Council. He serves as an Executive board member on the Midwest Cover Crop Council and assists in developing educational resources. Also, he works with crop producers participating in the Missouri Strip Trial program.



NORTH CENTRAL REGION - NEBRASKA

David Lott - 23 Years



David Lott is the horticulture educator in North Platte since 2010 and a NACAA member for 23 years. David contributed to grants valued over \$225,000 on vegetable research. He authored 11 NebGuides, a peer reviewed journal article and 14 regional and national presentations. He reached over 1.3 million mass and social media contacts. Programming has released conservation of 904,538 gallons of water, and 21,889 pounds of pesticide. He also served as NCEA and ESP President.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION - NORTH DAKOTA

Brian Zimprich - 18 Years

I have served as the Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent for Ransom County, ND for 20 years. During this time, I have conducted programs for area farmers and ranchers focused around soil health, and beef cattle production. In addition to my responsibilities as the Agriculture Agent, we have a very active county 4-H program and I serve as a co-chair to our state wide 4-H Animal Science Committee.



NORTH CENTRAL REGION - OHIO

Nanette Neal - 13 Years



Since 2011, Nanette has been an Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator in Clermont County. She leads programs focused on farm management, women in agriculture, beginning and small farms, and horticulture education. Nanette co-founded the Ohio Women in Agriculture Team, which offers vital risk management education and resources. She has held leadership roles in Ohio NACAA and Ohio JCEP, serving as president of both. Her work has impacted hundreds, supporting agriculture and community development throughout Ohio.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION - OHIO

Eric Richer - 13 Years

Eric Richer is an associate professor and farm management field specialist with OSU Extension. His work includes farm business analysis, enterprise budgeting, beginning farmer planning, and value-added enterprise analysis. He launched OSU's Farm On Financial Management Course which helps beginning farmers better understand key financial and risk management strategies. As a 10-year county educator, he conducted over 45 on farm research projects, led a malting barley peer group, and taught farm management and agronomy classes.



NORTH CENTRAL REGION - OHIO

Beth Scheckelhoff - 19 Years



Beth Scheckelhoff is an Assistant Professor and Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator in Putnam County. She provides resources and support to specialty crop and green industry producers, conducts on-farm agronomic research, teaches produce safety and good agricultural practices, and works with homeowners and Master Gardener Volunteers to address horticultural needs. She is a co-leader of the Ohio Women in Agriculture Team, President of the Conservation Tillage and Technology Conference, and President of Ohio ANREP.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION - WISCONSIN

Heather Schlessor - 12 Years

Heather Schlessor works closely with dairy producers to conduct educational programs and research. Heather focuses on farm stress, succession, cattle reproduction, and calf care. Heather has published articles on her work and has presented at several national meetings. Heather's research efforts resulted in her successfully achieving the rank of full professor in 2024. Heather is active in the state and national association as State President and the National Chair of the Sustainable Agriculture Committee.



NORTHEAST REGION - CONNECTICUT

Jacqueline Kowalski - 13 Years



Jacqueline Kowalski is the University of Connecticut's urban agriculture Extension Educator. She developed and coordinates the UConn Urban Farmer Training Program, an annual 8-month course to grow future urban farmers. Jacqueline has secured significant funding to advance conservation and urban agriculture equity and create pathways for urban farmland tenure. She also serves as the chair for the Northeast Region National Urban Extension Leaders network, working with other Northeast extension professionals to advance urban extension.

NORTHEAST REGION - MAINE

Kate Garland - 14 Years

Kate Garland is a horticultural extension professional in Maine, specializing in the Master Gardener Volunteer program, school and community gardens, and food security. She transitioned Master Gardener training to an online format, revitalized a demonstration garden for schoolchildren, and has edited the Maine Home Garden News for over 10 years. Kate also co-coordinates Maine Harvest for Hunger, mobilizing volunteers to grow, glean, and distribute fresh produce to food security agencies across the state.



NORTHEAST REGION - MARYLAND

Jonathan Moyle - 11 Years



Jon Moyle, Extension Poultry Specialist. Research includes reproductive management, behavior in broiler breeders, improving organic and free-range poultry production, finding natural compounds to prevent and control disease. Educates through classes, on farm research to help growers improve production, sustainability, bird well-being. Assists growers to comply with and understand government regulations. Committed to help growers improve nutrient management, farm management, and biosecurity. Worked on 35 international projects

through Farmer-to-Farmer, other organizations assisting farmers throughout the world.

NORTHEAST REGION - NEW JERSEY

Amy Rowe - 14 Years

Amy Rowe has worked in Extension for 14 years as a dual-county agent specializing in environmental issues and sustainability in northern New Jersey. She has brought in more than \$3 million in external funding for her projects, with a new focus on reducing food waste. She is a coordinator for both the Rutgers Environmental Stewards and Rutgers Master Gardener programs, while also mentoring pre-tenure faculty across extension.



NORTHEAST REGION - NEW YORK

Elizabeth Higgins - 18 Years



Elizabeth (Liz) Higgins, a regional Ag Business Management/Production Economics Specialist with the CCE Eastern NY Commercial Horticulture Program, serves specialty crop farmers across 17 counties in Eastern New York. Her focus is tree fruit, vegetable, berry, and grape farms. She also works with the Cornell Ag Workforce Development Program, providing training programs and extension outreach in human resource management for commercial fruit and vegetable farms. Her expertise is valued by the growers across her region.

NORTHEAST REGION - PENNSYLVANIA

Nicole Thompson - 12 Years

Nicole Santangelo Thompson is an Agronomy Educator in Potter County, Pennsylvania. Programs she has helped develop are derived from the interface of crops and livestock, a testament to the region. She conducts pesticide education and field crops programs across an eight-county area. Her most notable program successes include participation with the NIFA Water4Agriculture multistate project, creation of the Ag 101: Introduction to Agriculture online course and serving as the Pennsylvania State SARE Coordinator.



NORTHEAST REGION - WEST VIRGINIA

John Murray - 19 Years



John Murray is an Extension Agent with West Virginia University and is located in Taylor County. His programming in recent years has focused on youth agriculture, feeder calf marketing, grazing management, and homeowner horticulture. As the only Agent in Taylor County, he has also been responsible for leading the 4-H program within the county since 2017 including volunteer recruitment and training, 4-H Camp, and project work.

SOUTHERN REGION - ALABAMA

Gavin Mauldin - 11 Years

Serving as Coffee County Extension Coordinator, Gavin promotes agricultural education through community and backyard gardening projects, serving on the Farm-City committee, and assisting the Coffee County 4-H livestock judging team. Gavin began his career as County Extension Coordinator in nearby Geneva County. Regionally, he serves as a steering committee member for the Wiregrass Cotton Expo, an annual production meeting and vendor tradeshow for cotton producers in Southeast Alabama.



SOUTHERN REGION - ALABAMA

Kristen Roberson - 18 Years



Kristen has served many roles during her 18-year Extension career and is a current County Coordinator. She has successfully resurrected one of the largest youth livestock programs in the state that had become extinct. A pair of 4-H volunteers instilled in her a love for Agriculture as a teenager. She strives to do the same for the youth she works with, and has a tremendous passion for being an advocate for local farmers and producers.

SOUTHERN REGION - ALABAMA

David West - 31 Years

David West is a County Extension Coordinator in Calhoun County, Alabama. He launched the Master Gardener program there and developed the National Tree Trust Tree Amigos Nursery Program at Coosa Valley Youth Services, which has thrived for 30 years. Dr. West has served as President of the Alabama Urban Forestry Association and Legacy, Partners in Environmental Education. He has served as Alabama Arbor Day Coordinator for the AUFA for 27 years.



SOUTHERN REGION - ARKANSAS

Lance Blythe - 16 Years



Lance Blythe serves as the Staff Chair for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service in Greene County. Lance received his BSA and MSA from Arkansas State University. The majority of Lance's program in Greene County for several years focused on the 4-H program and developing young leaders. In his current position he has grown the livestock and forages program to better assist producers.

SOUTHERN REGION - ARKANSAS

Jan Yingling - 14 Years

Jan Yingling has served Extension for 14 years as a County Extension Agent and plant pathology program technician. She is passionate about teaching others skills and knowledge needed to enhance their lives and well-being. Her professional goal is to advocate for the future of agriculture and increase ag awareness across all of Arkansas.



SOUTHERN REGION - FLORIDA

Mark Mauldin - 11 Years



Mark Mauldin is the Agriculture and Natural Resource Agent in Washington County, focused on cattle and crop producers, and pesticide applicators. He has become known for his expertise in weed management. In addition, he is a dynamic speaker, providing practical information in a way that is very relatable to farmers and ranchers. He has also become known for his teaching through the written word in articles written for trade journals and as a blog author.

SOUTHERN REGION - FLORIDA

Nicholas Simmons - 12 Years

Nick has served as the County Extension Director for UF/IFAS Extension in Escambia County Florida since 2016. He is recognized for his educational programs focusing on building sustainable and productive livestock operations in Escambia County. Nick's programs have helped producers decrease input costs while improving the viability and profitability of their land and animals. He has received multiple awards for his work. Nick has served as an officer for FACAA and Committee Chair for NACAA.



SOUTHERN REGION - FLORIDA

Kalan Taylor - 11 Years



Kalan Taylor is a County Extension Director and Natural Resources agent and has established herself as a leader in agriculture and natural resources through diverse programming for producers and youth. She has shared her expertise at numerous state and national conferences and has received several prestigious awards at local, state, regional, and national levels, recognizing her contributions to Extension.

SOUTHERN REGION - GEORGIA

Joel Burnsed - 11 Years

Joel Burnsed is the Oconee and Walton County Extension Coordinator and Agriculture Agent. During his career, Burnsed has allocated almost \$3 million in funding for Extension facilities and programs. Burnsed has been integral in developing the local Master Gardener program. In 2014, the program was nonexistent. Recently, the Master Gardeners recorded over 4,300 hours, and the program has trained over 100 volunteers. Additionally, Burnsed assisted with an international radon mitigation research project.



SOUTHERN REGION - GEORGIA

Nathan Eason - 11 Years



Nathan Eason serves as the White County, Georgia Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent. Eason's programming focus is his involvement within the Georgia grape vineyard and winery industry by assisting in research trials and conducting regional programming. He serves as the chair-elect for the American Society for Enology and Viticulture-Eastern Section. Eason has played a significant role in watershed conservation leading him to secure significant funding for his local farmers to implement on-farm conservation practices.

SOUTHERN REGION - GEORGIA

Raymond Fitzpatrick - 10 Years

Raymond Fitzpatrick, the UGA Extension Agent in Franklin County, has played a crucial role in addressing livestock issues through his dedicated programming and research efforts. Key commodities in the area include poultry and beef cattle, where he focuses on improving productivity and sustainability. His initiatives, aim to enhance livestock health and ultimately boost profitability for local farmers.



SOUTHERN REGION - GEORGIA

Tripp Williams - 12 Years



Tripp Williams, a UGA Extension Agent, effectively serves his community through impactful programs and strong leadership. His site visit program demonstrates high client satisfaction, with 89% reporting learning new information and implementing changes. He has secured significant funding, developed innovative programs like LIFT, and built strong collaborations. His outreach efforts have reached millions, trained hundreds of volunteers, and garnered numerous awards, demonstrating a commitment to excellence in agricultural and horticultural education.

SOUTHERN REGION - KENTUCKY

Corinne Belton - 13 Years

Corinne Belton has served as the Shelby County ANR Agent since 2012, where she has focused on maintaining the traditional agriculture education base while expanding programming which targets the growing small farm and new-to-farming clientele. Corinne has worked extensively with program council and community leaders to provide innovative educational opportunities for farmers and land-owners, as well as to educate the general public about the county's rich agricultural history and importance to the local economy.



SOUTHERN REGION - KENTUCKY

Levi Berg - 11 Years



Being community service minded, Levi Berg is currently serving on or acting as an advisor over 30 different agricultural or community-centered boards such as cattlemen's, youth livestock, and emergency management in KY. In addition to being a county advocate, Levi has emphasized on providing research-based education about livestock production, forage management, direct marketing, and soil conservation best management practices. Through community engagement and education, Levi has reached thousands of residents in two different KY counties.

SOUTHERN REGION - KENTUCKY

James (Jay) Stone - 28 Years

Jay Stone spent his extension career in Western Kentucky serving as an Agricultural and Natural Resources Agent. His areas of responsibility have been beef and dairy production, grain and tobacco production, and commercial vegetable production. In addition to his programming responsibilities, Jay has dedicated much of his time to community development activities, including recruitment and retention of Ag industry businesses, developing renewable energy sources, and fundraising for numerous projects.



SOUTHERN REGION - LOUISIANA

Lee Faulk - 14 Years



Lee Faulk serves as an Associate Extension Agent with the LSU AgCenter focusing on beef cattle and forage production in the Northwest Region while also serving as the Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Coordinator for the Northwest Region and Parish Chair in Claiborne Parish. Lee completed a B.S. in Agricultural Business from Louisiana Tech University and a M.S. in Animal Science from Louisiana State University.

SOUTHERN REGION - MISSISSIPPI

Jim McAdory - 25 Years

Jim McAdory has served as an Extension Agent in Winston County and for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. Mr. McAdory produces a live Extension-based radio program. Mr. McAdory also serves clientele in forestry, livestock production, beekeeping, home and commercial horticulture, athletic turf, and hay production. He takes great pride in the Extension Service mission, and frequently will explain Extension to people like this: "Extension's product is education, but our business is people."



SOUTHERN REGION - MISSISSIPPI

Jessica Sibley - 13 Years



Jessica Sibley has served in the DeSoto and Wayne County Extension Offices. Ms. Sibley reaches diverse clientele through Extension efforts involving agriculture, natural resources, community resource development and 4-H youth development. Her high work ethic, professionalism, motivation, collaboration, and ethical standards help her deliver scientific based knowledge to the communities she serves. Whether working with 4-H youth or local producers, she works tirelessly to make the best better.

SOUTHERN REGION - MISSISSIPPI

Lurlinda Soignier - 24 Years

Lurlinda Soignier has served 24 years as a Mississippi State University Extension 4-H Agent with emphasis on agriculture and natural resources. Lurlinda has led the county 4-H Livestock, Horse, Shooting Sports, and Fishing Clubs while working with local schools to implement enrichment programs focusing on financial literacy and community government. She works with her county's Homemaker Volunteers and serves as the County Coordinator for the Hinds County Extension Office.



SOUTHERN REGION - NORTH CAROLINA

April Bowman - 26 Years



April Bowman started as a Livestock Extension Agent in Stokes County in May 2024. Before that, she served as an Extension Agent in Forsyth County, with 25% Livestock duties. As a Livestock Extension Agent, she provides leadership and plans, implements, and evaluates programs to help producers in all phases of livestock production and forages. Stokes County also has a strong youth livestock program, which is a passion of April's, having grown up in the industry.

SOUTHERN REGION - NORTH CAROLINA

John Cothren - 14 Years

John C. Cothren of Wilkes County, NC, has dedicated over 26 years to agriculture education and advocacy. After teaching high school agriculture for 12 years, he transitioned to the NC Cooperative Extension Service, where he has served 14 years as Director, Livestock and Crops Agent. A passionate leader with strong work ethic, John is a champion for agriculture. He is highly respected and a pillar in his community, inspiring others through his dedication and example.



SOUTHERN REGION - NORTH CAROLINA

Colby Griffin - 11.4 Years



Colby joined NC Cooperative Extension as a Horticulture Agent in 2013. During Colby's tenure he has made strides in networking with stakeholders and clientele building a strong rapport with growers. His responsibilities include providing educational programming for commercial and consumer horticulture and green industry professionals. Colby is a dedicated worker, a team player, and is willing to assist others when needed. Clientele count on him for the knowledge and assistance he provides daily.

SOUTHERN REGION - NORTH CAROLINA

Melissa Huffman - 21 Years

Melissa Huffman is being recognized for the Distinguished Service to Agriculture in Extension field crop and livestock programming. County residents and industry leaders recognize her as an expert. Melissa provides programs based on relevant information to the changing needs of her clientele. She is an invaluable employee willing to go above and beyond to help others. Her enthusiasm and work ethic are evident, thus distinguishing her as an invaluable member of North Carolina State Extension.



SOUTHERN REGION - OKLAHOMA

Earl Ward - 12 Years



Earl has been employed by OSU Extension since 2013, serving as the NE Area Livestock Specialist. He assists his county educators with presentations and programs as well coordinating and teaching at the OSU Cow/Calf Boot Camps. Earl has served OAEAA in many capacities and was honored to serve as President in 2021-2022. He continues to serve the association through coordinating professional development opportunities and is a committee member of the NACAA Animal Science Committee.

SOUTHERN REGION - PUERTO RICO

José Ramos - 20 Years

José E. Ramos has served University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez, Agricultural Extension Service since 2004. He provides education to coffee producers and since 2009 has been an instructor for the pesticide certification program. He is member of the group of agricultural agents specialized in the production of high-quality coffee. He serves as coordinator of the quality competition the Golden Cup of Puerto Rico. In addition, Ramos has co-authored two practical guides for coffee production.



SOUTHERN REGION - SOUTH CAROLINA

William Hardee - 12 Years



Hardee has served Clemson Extension since 2013 as an associate and/or agent. He works in the northeastern region of South Carolina as the extension tobacco specialist, an area agronomy agent, and county coordinator. While serving this area he has provided quality agronomic programming, grower support and research plots for his producers. His research and programming in flue-cured tobacco has provided valuable information for tobacco growers and industry representatives, both locally and regionally.

SOUTHERN REGION - SOUTH CAROLINA

Derrick Phinney - 12 Years

I provide programmatic leadership, guidance, and support for Extension's forestry, wildlife, and water resources units. Coordinated and/or co-coordinated the development and delivery of 13 statewide programs/courses, such as Be Well Informed, Master Tree Farmer, and Woodland Series. Notable achievements include securing over \$15 million in grants and MOUs to support capacity building. I am a dedicated individual helping to advance natural resource stewardship, sustainable practices, and impactful community education across South Carolina and the Southeast.



SOUTHERN REGION - SOUTH CAROLINA

Barbara H Smith - 10 Years



Barbara is a consumer horticulture agent with the Home and Garden Information Center, answering statewide telephone calls and emails from SC residents. In the past ten years, Barbara has answered over 21,000+ calls and 15,000+ emails. She writes for the HGIC website and provides a weekly photo blog. Her photos are available for agents to use in publications and presentations. She is on the HGIC review team, editing publications for the website.

SOUTHERN REGION - TENNESSEE

Shannon DeWitt - 15 Years

Shannon DeWitt has worked for University of Tennessee as an Extension Agent educating adults and 4-H Youth in agriculture for 15 years. She conducts educational programs in beef cattle, forages, poultry, gardening, fruit trees, small ruminant, and swine. Shannon wrote grants and played a major role in the creation of the Union County Farmers Market. In partnership with Tractor Supply, she led efforts to raise over \$50,000 for youth attending 4-H camp.



SOUTHERN REGION - TENNESSEE

Blake Ramsey - 16 Years



Blake Ramsey has served as the Extension Agent and County Director in Hawkins County the past 10 years. He has served over 16 years total, with 6 years in 4-H Youth Development. His programming focus is livestock and forages. During the past 5 years, there has been an economic impact of approximately \$3,500,000 to producers who have participated in his programs.

SOUTHERN REGION - TENNESSEE

Celeste Scott - 10 Years

Celeste is a horticulture specialist in West Tennessee with ten years of experience as a county agent. She teaches over 50 classes yearly on topics ranging from IPM and plant selection to sustainable landscapes. She has collaborated on statewide programming for home food production, beginner gardeners, TN Smart Yards, and the Tennessee Extension Master Gardener program. Celeste has authored five publications on landscape plant selection and has contributed to others through co-writing and reviewing.



SOUTHERN REGION - TEXAS

Chadd Caperton - 15 Years



Chad's 15-year career started in East Texas in Jasper County working with local landowners focused primarily on timber management, cattle & wildlife. From there he transferred to Madison County serving as the only agent centered on 4-H Youth development, cattle, & forage. Recently, Chad transferred to Brazos County which is a more urbanized county where he has established a new set of skills focused on small livestock operations, and new landowner developments.

SOUTHERN REGION - TEXAS

Zachary Davis - 16 Years

Zach Davis has been with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service since 2009 and has been a county agent in Denton County since 2018. He coordinates with multiple agriculture producer groups and specialists to plan and implement comprehensive Extension educational efforts including demonstrations, and educational programs. Denton County is a thriving agricultural county and includes a great blend of rural and urban agriculture. Zach provides educational leadership to hundreds of landowners within the county.



SOUTHERN REGION - TEXAS

Justin Gilliam - 24 Years

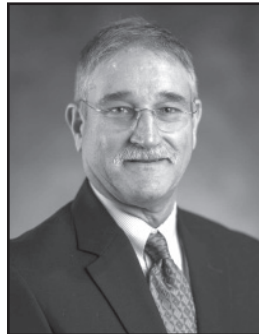


Justin started with Texas AgriLife Extension in 2001 in Milam County. He has since served in Throckmorton, Archer and Hardeman Counties. Justin is passionate about the Beef, Wheat and Wildlife Industries as well as youth programming. Some Major Highlights include being a part of the Multi State Red River Crops Conference, annual county forage conference, and taking 5 different teams to National Competition and helping to obtain over 1 Million in Scholarships for 4-H youth

SOUTHERN REGION - TEXAS

Bobby McCool - 12 Years

Bobby McCool has served San Patricio County for 12 years as the Ag and Natural Resource Agent. Row crop profitability has been the major programming area, but other educational efforts directed toward grain sorghum, corn, cotton, livestock and forage production, result demonstrations, weed and brush management continue to be important program issues. Bobby enjoys and is blessed to be working with the many producers and facets of agriculture in San Patricio County.



SOUTHERN REGION - TEXAS

Jo Smith - 12 Years



Jo Smith has served as the Ag and Natural Resource Agent for Houston County with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service since 2012. She educates the public on agriculture and leads the Houston County 4-H program. Jo collaborates with local producers and businesses to offer quality beef and forage education while assisting youth with their livestock projects, promoting agricultural development and youth involvement in the community.

SOUTHERN REGION - TEXAS

Amber Walden - 15 Years

Started her career in El Paso County as the 4-H & Youth Development Agent-CEP then moved into the Agrilife Extension Service 4-H & Youth Development Agent in El Paso County. Leaving El Paso County Amber moved to Culberson County as the Agriculture & Natural Resource Agent. She then stepped into the role of 4-H & Youth Development Program Specialist for District VI. Amber is currently the Ag & Natural Resources Agent in Hudspeth County.



SOUTHERN REGION - VIRGINIA

Adria Bordas - 23 Years



Since 2001 Adria Bordas has led a diverse program in one of the nation's most populous counties. As the Ag Agent in Fairfax County, she leads 2 Master Gardener programs and delivers impactful programs for the green industry. Adria works with the nursery and landscape industry to address water quality, nutrient issues, and pest management. Adria is a recognized leader and has elevated the notoriety of Extension's relevance and impact in urban areas.

SOUTHERN REGION - VIRGINIA

Jennifer Ligon - 15 Years

Livestock is the focus of Jennifer Ligon's Buckingham Extension Program. She has worked tirelessly on Beef Quality Assurance, Low Stress Cattle Handling, Virginia quality Assurance Marketing Program, Virginia Women in Agriculture programs, and more. She has strived to assist producers increase their profitability and productivity. She is respected by her clientele as well as colleagues. She strives to deliver high quality educational programs and has won awards including her Beef Quality Assurance work.



NACAA Hall of Fame Award

The NACAA Recognition and Awards Committee is proud to present these four recipients with the NACAA Hall of Fame Award. The Hall of Fame Award recognizes one member or life member from each NACAA region. Each state can nominate one individual. Based on a 500 word summary and three letters of support, the state nominees are evaluated on their Extension programming, state and national association activities and humanitarian efforts beyond the normal call of duty.

Our thanks to Pipeline Ag Safety Alliance for sponsorship of the NACAA Hall of Fame Awards



2025
Western Region
Hall of Fame Award
Ron Cunningham
Wyoming
38 Years - Retired



Ron Cunningham began working as an Extension agent with the University of Wyoming in 1977 and retired in 2015. During this time, Ron made a profound impact on the clientele in Fremont County, his colleagues, and everyone around him.

Ron has been awarded countless awards and honors over the years at every level (county, state, national). As a life-member of NACAA and our state association WACAA, he was awarded the Career Achievement Award in 1981. He then went on to win the Distinguished Service Award in 1986 and was Wyoming's Outstanding Educator of the Year in 2011. Throughout his career, he was also recognized several times for his outstanding abilities winning the Jim Dubree Excellence in Extension Award in 1998 (highest honor in UW Extension) and the Meritorious 4-H Award in 2003. Finally, in 2023 following his retirement from Extension, Ron was inducted into the Wyoming Cowboy Hall of Fame.

During Ron's Extension career, he was always the epitome of a leader and organizer of educational events. He served as the president of the Wyoming Association of County Agriculture Agents multiple times (1982-1984 and 2001-2004). He also led major organizing efforts and initiative teams for Agriculture and Natural Resources programming across Wyoming unlike any other person in UW Extension's history. Many of the major events that he organized are still ongoing today. Major programs such as the Fremont County Farm and Ranch Days, Cattle Artificial Insemination schools, and the Lander Valley Garden Expo were started during Ron's tenure and continue to be some of the absolute best annual Extension programs offered in Wyoming today!

Ron has always been a valued member of his community and has continued to be involved in a variety of youth development efforts. Ron has especially excelled in using meats judging and livestock 4-H projects as a tool to help multiple generations of youth realize their full potential. Also, Ron has always been committed to maintaining the Fremont County Youth Camp and keeping summer camp opportunities available to youth. Ron continues to have an everlasting positive influence on futures of nearly every young person that he meets. His commitment and dedication to helping people has never wavered. Even nowadays, Ron is an active and valued 4-H volunteer. He is currently the board Director of the Fremont County Youth Camp and member of the Wyoming Animal Damage Management Board.

Having Ron inducted into the NACAA Hall of Fame makes us all in Wyoming very proud! He is the perfect person to receive this great honor.

DSA Awarded: 1986

2025
North Central Region
Hall of Fame Award
Stan Moore
Michigan
32 Years - Retired



Stan Moore's gentle, patient, humble leadership has been proven effective locally, statewide and nationally, both professionally and personally. He is effective because of his approach and the respect he affords others.

His service as President (2011) of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents (NACAA), President (2012) of the Board of the Joint Council of Extension Professionals (JCEP) and NACAA Policy Chair (2017-19) only highlights his lifetime of service within NACAA, Michigan Association of Extension Agents (MAEA) and within his role as a Sr. Extension Educator with Michigan State University. In retirement, Stan continues to serve the association through his involvement with the NACAA Foundation as Trustee. He has been recognized in 2021 by the Michigan State University President with the Distinguished Academic Staff Award. He is a 2008 NACAA Distinguished Service Award (DSA) honoree.

Through his work with employees and employers, he helped many agricultural employers navigate changing employment rules and grow in their ability to effectively lead and develop employees. His research has been published and cited in peer reviewed journals and he is often invited to speak at major conferences, most recently at the 2021 Ag Labor Forum of the National Council of Agricultural Employers and at the 2021 MILK Business conference.

As a Farm Management Educator, Moore worked to help farm families better understand their business through farm financial analysis. Sitting together at kitchen tables, in farm offices or in Zoom meetings, he taught and counseled as he analyzed. He developed a monthly Zoom users group of farmers across the state interested in improving their skill of farm financial record keeping. One farmer said of Stan: (he) “has been an exceptional leader in MSU Extension. He is committed to helping farmers and always demonstrates his ability and desire to go above and beyond.”

Mentoring others is a large part of how Stan develops people. In 2021 he underwent a series of professional development training to become an approved coach with the Great Lakes Leadership Academy Fellowship Program.

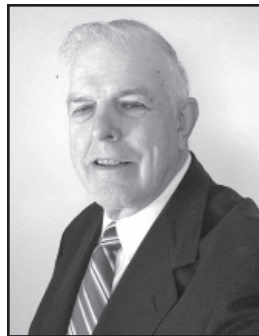
Stan is a positive force in his rural Michigan Community. He served as chair of the Antrim County Petoskey Stone Festival, an annual weekend festival that draws thousands in celebration of a unique fossil stone found along the Lake Michigan coast. He also served on the Antrim County Planning Commission for 23 years.

Stan is active in his church, serving as a board member and member of the missions committee. He also serves in the community as a member of the board of Good Samaritan Family Services, a nonprofit organization that meets real needs of families. Serving as HR director since 2014 and chair from 2021-2024, Stan led the organization as it grew to serve over 2,000 clients per month, with a budget of almost \$700,000 annually.

Through education, coaching, and servant leadership, Stan Moore meets the needs of individuals and families, on farms and in the community. He has led and continues to lead through faithful service, and he encourages individuals to become better and meet their goals.

DSA Awarded: 2008

**2025
Northeast Region
Hall of Fame Award
Glenn F. Rogers
Vermont
35 Years - Retired**



Glenn Rogers, (Extension Professor Emeritus) promoted knowledge, success, and the love of agriculture to all he encounters in the agriculture industry. Glenn was raised on the family farm in Westford, Vermont introducing him to his passion and dedication to the agriculture industry. The farm motivated him to work hard, learn more, have a passion and dedication to the Ag industry. He earned a B.S. in Animal Science/Vocational Technical

Education (1973), a M.S. in Animal Science (1975), and took additional graduate courses in Ag Economics from UVM.

From 1975-1982 Glenn was a County Agriculture Agent in Grafton County NH. He worked in agronomy, horticulture, and dairy. He attended New England Ag Extension conferences and attended his first NACAA conference. The NACAA conferences soon became an integral part of Glenn's continued education for himself, his family, and those he served. He moved to UVM Extension serving many roles including Water Quality agent, County Agricultural Agent, Regional Dairy Specialist, Regional Farm Business Management Specialist achieving the rank of Extension Professor at the University of Vermont.

Glenn also served his country from 1971-1992 in the 134th Fighter Squadron as a Command Post technician, Air Operations Specialist, Administration supervisor, and a member of the NCO Council and NCOIC.

In 1990 U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy requested his assistance on the composition of the 1990 Farm Bill. He was granted a leave of absence, and the opportunity would also expand his comprehension and experience about varying philosophies, backgrounds, disciplines, and agriculture diversity of our nation. This contributed to his growth and mentorship in the agriculture industry.

Spreading knowledge was important to Glenn and he did so through publishing many articles in newsletters, newspapers, the NACAA Magazine, the American Agriculturist and communicating on local TV and Radio outlets.

He was member/Treasurer of Joint Council of Extension Professionals and on the policy committee. Glenn was a member of Vermont Association of Ag Agents, Northeast Association of County Agricultural Agents, and National Association of County Agricultural Agents. Serving as NACAA Regional Vice Director, Regional Director, Vice President, President Elect, President, Past President, Policy Chair, Education Foundation (VP/Secretary and Treasurer), Vice Chair and chair NACAA Public Relations Ag Policy committee, and vice chair of NACAA Life Member committee.

After retiring from UVM Extension he continued to learn and share his expertise while working with the Yankee Farm Credit on Ag taxation, working with the UVM Income Tax School, and the UVM Extension Maple Grants.

Glenn also served his community through serving on boards including: Champlain Valley Exposition Board of Directors, Chittenden County Sugar Makers as Board Member -Treasurer, VHCB Ag advisory Committee, VT Land Trust ag advisor, Essex Technical Center Ag Advisory Board, Vermont Farm Show where he was a board member, floor manager/assistant manager, secretary and then a treasurer, a member and secretary of the Brookside Cemetery and then the Westford Cemetery Commission. He continues to be an active member of the Westford Historical Society spearheading the grants and building/establishment of it's current location and it's many educational programs.

DSA Awarded: 1987

**2025
Southern Region
Hall of Fame Award
Robert Hochmuth
Florida
43 Years - Active**



Robert (Bob) C. Hochmuth grew up on a vegetable farm on Maryland's eastern shore. After earning degrees in Agricultural and Extension Education and Entomology from the University of Maryland, Bob began his career in 1982 as a county agent with University of Delaware Cooperative Extension. Since 1988 he has worked for University of Florida IFAS Extension as a multi-county agent, regional specialized agent, and center director. Bob's 43-year career stands out for his expertise in specialty crops, impactful educational programs, exemplary leadership and mentorship, and unwavering support for the agricultural community.

A lifelong advocate for the watermelon industry, Bob has guided Florida growers in improving water, nutrient, pest and disease management, including conversion to plastic mulch and drip irrigation systems on about 6000 watermelon acres. To support the adoption of best management practices, Bob has used innovative blue-dye demonstrations to show soil water movement, provided petiole-sap testing services, and led on-farm trials of soil-moisture sensors, controlled-release fertilizer, and paper mulch. In 2009, Bob founded the Suwannee Valley Watermelon Institute, an annual program fostering education and collaboration among farmers, industry, and Extension.

As state co-leader of Small Farms and Alternative Enterprise programs from 2005 to 2017, Bob organized six statewide conferences attended by more than 2300 individuals from 60 Florida counties, 35 states, and 6 countries. He launched the Small Farms Academy (SFA) featuring hands-on interactive workshops, such as the Starting a Successful Hydroponic Business short course. Between 2010 and 2024, the SFA created 45 new programs in 24 locations serving a total of 3360 attendees. Bob's contributions to the profession include authoring or co-authoring 47 refereed journal articles and serving as PI or co-PI on grants totaling \$15 million.

Since 2014, Bob has served as center director or assistant center director of the North Florida Research and Education Center – Suwannee Valley, overseeing expansions in programs, personnel, and facilities. Bob inspires others with his can-do attitude, humor, and team building. A servant leader, Bob generously credits the contributions of others, nominates colleagues for awards, and actively seeks opportunities to support their personal and professional growth. In 2013, he earned the first-ever UF/IFAS Extension Mentor of the Year Award.

Bob has been a member of NACAA since 1982. He served as chair on four committees for the 2004 AM/PIC and as fundraising chair for AM/PIC in 2022. He was FACAA president

in 2001 and Florida Association of Extension Professionals board chair in 2002 and has served on scores of state committees. Bob is a national winner of seven NACAA awards.

Bob is active with several ag associations and community organizations. He received the first Extension Professional of the Year Award from the Florida Farm Bureau and the Trailblazer of the Year Award from the Suwannee Chamber of Commerce. Also known in the community as "Coach Bob," he served as a youth soccer and high school soccer coach for 20 years. Bob Hochmuth's distinguished career embodies NACAA core values of professional excellence, support for Extension colleagues, and public service.

DSA Awarded: 2003

2025

ACHIEVEMENT AWARD HONOREES

It is with great pride that the Recognition and Awards Committee of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents salutes the Achievement Award Honorees for 2025. The recipients of this award have less than ten years of service in the Cooperative Extension Service. They have been selected by their peers and are being recognized for excellence in their field of professionalism. Each state can select up to two percent of their association's membership for this award. The year's sixty-seven recipients join 2,623 Achievement Award winners who have been recognized since this program began.

Please share the pride of the Recognition and Awards Committee by noting the accomplishments of each honoree as indicated by her or his citation. NACAA is exceptionally pleased to recognize their achievements.

ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

BREAKFAST AND PROGRAM SPONSOR



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ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS RECOGNITION BREAKFAST

Tuesday, July 1, 2025

MENU

Eggs, breakfast potatoes, bacon or
sausage, pastries and coffee station

PROGRAM

Welcome Ed Lentz
Chair, NACAA Recognition & Awards Committee

Thought of the Day.....Victoria Xiong
Western Region Committee Vice Chair

Presentation of Awards Ed Lentz
(Assisted by Vice Chairs; President Scott Jensen)



WESTERN REGION - ARIZONA

Ashley Hall - 8 Years



Ashley Hall serves livestock producers in Gila and Pinal Counties and provides Vegetation/GIS Data System (VGS) training across the western US. One of her major programs is the national award-winning Reading the Range program which is recognized as a premier monitoring program in Arizona and throughout the West. Her impactful outreach includes organizing livestock and rangeland workshops and fostering youth agriculture education, exemplifying her dedication to advancing sustainable rangeland management and community engagement.

WESTERN REGION - CALIFORNIA

Tracy Schohr - 8 Years

Since 2017, Tracy Schohr has served as the Livestock and Natural Resources Advisor for Butte, Plumas and Sierra Counties focusing sustainable livestock production. Her program accomplishments include: 1) Creating the Ag Pass Program, a state-wide model for livestock disaster preparedness to catastrophic wildfires; 2) Facilitating research demonstrating rancher water quality stewardship, leading to regulatory changes; and 3) Creating annual cattle health webinar series with 1,186 participants. Her program activities have wide-reaching economic and ecological impacts.



WESTERN REGION - COLORADO

Christine Schinzel - 8 Years



Christine Schinzel has served Lincoln County through Colorado State University Extension since 2016, supporting programming in 4-H, Livestock, Farm Safety, Health, and Agriculture Business Management. Originally from Wyoming, Christine brings enrichment and opportunities to multiple counties across the region. She has served as the Colorado County Agent Association as treasurer since 2020.

WESTERN REGION - IDAHO

Grant Loomis - 5 Years



Grant started his position in Blaine County in October 2019. He has worked with teams to provide programming on integrated pest management (IPM), farm succession, and farm technology integration. As the secretary and treasurer of the local Idaho NACAA chapter, he provides leadership on a state level. In 2023 awarded national publication winner for the curriculum board game “Pest Friends” by NACAA.

WESTERN REGION - MONTANA

Kari Lewis - 9 Years

Since May, 2014, Kari Lewis has served Glacier County clientele with agriculture, 4-H and community development programming. Career highlights have included hosting the annual Montana’s Next Generation Conference which attracts 200+ producers for production ag and succession planning, working on new 4-H beef curriculum, and developing youth leaders through 4-H.



WESTERN REGION - NEW MEXICO

Savannah Daniels - 5 Years



Savannah Graves - Daniels has worked for Hidalgo County Extension for five years as the County Agent serving in Agriculture, Family and Consumer Science, 4-H, and Community Development. Working in a single agent county can be extremely challenging and yet very rewarding. She is an integral part of the community and finds great satisfaction in making a difference in the lives of her clientele through impactful programming.

WESTERN REGION - OREGON

Christy Tanner - 7 Years

Christy serves the southern Willamette Valley with innovative research and education in field crops. She addresses producer needs with deep expertise, covering topics from irrigation to drone-based vole monitoring. Certified as a remote pilot, she integrates aerial imaging into pest management. A leader in the Oregon Agricultural Extension Association, Christy served as President and continues to support professional development. Her work exemplifies scientific rigor, responsiveness, and dedication to Oregon’s agricultural community.



WESTERN REGION - UTAH

Kalen Taylor - 5 Years



Kalen began his career in extension in Millard County, Utah and has been there since September of 2020. Kalen works on programs in agriculture and natural resources. In 2021, he helped pilot “Mustang Camp” a youth education program about wild horses and range management. The program has since been funded by the Bureau of Land Management for expansion. Kalen is skilled at making meaningful connections for good relationships with other agencies and local producers.

WESTERN REGION - WYOMING

McKenna Julian - 5 Years

McKenna became part of UW Extension in 2019, focusing on agriculture and livestock production. She played a key role in launching the UW Extension Sheep Task Force, a program aimed at connecting specialists, educators, and Wyoming sheep producers through hands-on education. Her other contributions include involvement with the UW Beef Task Force, creating an internal mentoring program for agricultural educators, and assisting western Wyoming producers with livestock and ranch management practices.



NORTH CENTRAL REGION - ILLINOIS

Bruce Black - 9 Years



Illinois Extension's Bruce J. Black uses his horticultural food background to address food access and food insecurity in the counties he serves and Illinois. Black focuses on teaching youth and adults how to grow produce for their families and communities using community gardens, backyards, or small spaces such as patios. Whether leading programs or building educational partnerships, Black's passion for Horticulture focuses on the science and the art of using plants to improve people's lives.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION - INDIANA

Lais McCartney - 4.5 Years

Lais McCartney exemplifies excellence as an Extension educator, combining technical expertise, innovative teaching, and a commitment to inclusivity. With four and half years of service, Lais has advanced agricultural education through creative programs like the 'Land Access and Succession' workshop, innovative volunteer training, and strategic partnerships. Her leadership as Indiana SARE Coordinator has driven a 372% increase in grants, securing \$1.54 million in 2024. Lais's impactful work fosters equity, sustainability, and community empowerment statewide.



NORTH CENTRAL REGION - IOWA

Tim Christensen - 6 Years



Has served Iowans as a Farm Management Specialist for 6 Years. During this time, he has delivered programs on Land Leasing, Grain Marketing, Farm Succession Planning, Livestock Marketing and Market outlook along with many other programs. He has served on the IAEA leadership board for 2 years and is the current president. He has also been a leader in development and presenting Mental Health programing in the rural communities in Iowa.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION - KANSAS

Cassie Thiessen - 7 Years

Cassie has served as the Horticulture Agent for the Post Rock District since 2017. She is passionate about people, plants, and education. Her programming focuses on community beautification, homeowner gardening, and youth enrichment. Cassie collaborates with community organizations to bring horticulture literacy to the counties of Osborne, Smith, Jewell, Mitchell, and Lincoln. Cassie graduated from K-State University with a Bachelor's of Science in Agriculture and a Master's of Science in Adult Learning and Leadership.



NORTH CENTRAL REGION - KANSAS

Wendie Powell - 9 Years



Wendie Powell, a dedicated agricultural extension agent with nine years of service to the NACAA, exemplifies excellence in agricultural education and community engagement. Her achievements include national recognition in livestock production, leadership roles in professional organizations, and innovative programming that fosters sustainable animal agriculture and rural development. Wendie's impactful efforts, such as the annual hay meadow field day partnership, highlight her commitment to improving rural livelihoods through education, collaboration, and innovation.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION - MINNESOTA

Dana Lynn Adams - 9 Years

Dana Adams began her career with Purdue Extension, serving Vigo County residents as the ANR Educator. In November 2020, she pivoted to be the Local Extension Livestock Educator in Stearns, Benton, Morrison, and Sherburne Counties with the University of Minnesota Extension. She hosts field days, Farmer Night Out programs, farm transition workshops, and works with farm teams supporting livestock producers. The engagements she enjoyed the most include Annie's Project and her Dairy Advisory Committee.



NORTH CENTRAL REGION - MISSOURI

Justin Keay - 6 Years



Justin has served as a Field Specialist in Horticulture with MU Extension since 2018. His work focuses on educating specialty crop producers through one-on-one assistance, webinars, workshops, field days, newsletters, podcasts, and YouTube videos. Justin established the Missouri Produce Growers Video Newsletter in 2020, a centralized communication hub used to share MU Extension events, grant opportunities, and educational information in video and text format. Justin is a leader in education on organic cropping systems management.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION - NEBRASKA

Leslie Johnson - 3 Years

Leslie serves as an Animal Manure Management Extension Educator. She engages producers during annual Land Application Training workshops (422 participants to date) and other manure programming across Nebraska. She maintains the online manure course (177 participants to date), authors publications, and regularly publishes at manure.unl.edu. She serves on multiple regional and national team/boards, including the Livestock and Poultry Environmental Learning Community and the Soil Health Nexus. She is known for her hands-on teaching techniques.



NORTH CENTRAL REGION - NORTH DAKOTA

Ron Haugen - 6 Years



Ron has been with North Dakota State University Extension as a Farm Management Specialist in a full-time capacity for six years. He works in a variety of farm management areas including crop budgeting, farm programs and farm taxes. He enjoys working with Extension agents in the field. He likes answering their farm management questions and conducting programs together. He enjoys working with producers to improve their operations and the future of agriculture.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION - OHIO

Carri Jagger - 9 Years

Carri Jagger has served Ohio State University Extension - Morrow County in Agriculture and Natural Resources since 2015. She specializes in Small Farm programming and serves as co-chair of the Small Farm Team, helping coordinate events statewide and delivering programs locally. Other focuses include horticulture, produce, maple syrup, and forage production. Carri strives to keep her clientele engaged with the latest research and updates for their systems.



NORTH CENTRAL REGION - OHIO

Stephanie Karhoff - 6 Years



Stephanie Karhoff has worked for Ohio State University Extension since 2019, first as an Agricultural and Natural Resources Extension Educator in Williams County and now serving as an Assistant Professor and Field Specialist. Her applied research and Extension program focuses on integrated pest management, agronomic crop production, and nutrient management. She also serves as co-leader of the OSU Agronomic Crops Team and is a Certified Crop Adviser.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION - OHIO

Clifton Martin - 9 Years

Clifton Martin has worked for Ohio State University Extension since 2015, starting as an Extension Educator, Agriculture and Natural Resources, in Muskingum County. Clifton specializes in production agriculture, consumer horticulture, and farm management by providing local leadership in agronomic programs, on-farm research, livestock education, farm management, pesticide safety, and master gardener programming.



NORTH CENTRAL REGION - SOUTH DAKOTA

Kristine Lang - 4 Years



Kristine Lang is a South Dakota State University Assistant Professor and Extension Consumer Horticulture Specialist. Lang leads research and outreach for high tunnel management, suitable cut flowers for South Dakota, and integration of cover crops and tillage reduction practices for vegetable production. She is a former co-leader of the South Dakota Local Foods Coalition, and a current board member for the SD SARE Advisory Board and Practical Farmers of Iowa.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION - WISCONSIN

Kim Kester - 7 Years

Kim works for the University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension as the Regional Livestock Educator for Grant, Green, Iowa, and Lafayette Counties. Her programming focuses on beef cow-calf operations, specifically genetic improvement, heifer development, and heat abatement. She also supports programming in small ruminant parasite management and poultry flock management. Kim previously served as the Agriculture & Natural Resources Agent in Lanier and Clinch Counties for University of Georgia Extension.



NORTHEAST REGION - CONNECTICUT

Jennifer Cushman - 9 Years



Jen Cushman has served as the county 4-H Extension Educator since 2015. Under her leadership the 4-H program has grown to almost 16,000 youth with over 1,700 volunteers in Hartford County. She provides regional leadership to the New England 4-H Goat Committee which organizes the annual 4-H program at The Big E. Jen has developed numerous Ag Literacy, teacher professional development and volunteer programs to support 4-H program and workforce development, primarily in agricultural fields.

NORTHEAST REGION - MAINE

Nicholas Rowley - 8 Years

Nick Rowley, Sustainable Agriculture Professional at the University of Maine Cooperative Extension. His work focuses on soil health in vegetable and forage production systems. Nick is recognized as a Compost Expert/Crop Advisor and member of the Maine Compost Team. He has been deployed to manage large scale mortalities through composting due to HPAI. Nick is currently working on a national project in conjunction with the USDA to train Compost Subject Matter Experts.



NORTHEAST REGION - MARYLAND

Erika Crowl - 7 Years



Covering agronomy, pasture management and equine production, she offers 3 pasture walks per year, grazing school in the fall, collaborates statewide online winter horse seminars. Helped develop Ag 101 course for USDA agencies helping new hires understand modern agriculture. Editor for County Agriculture Newsletter for over 800 county residents and the Maryland Equine Blog. Works with Preakness Sunrise tours, Maryland State Fair Racing Tours giving background information and history of the Equine Industry in Maryland.

NORTHEAST REGION - NEW JERSEY

Belinda Chester - 8 Years

Belinda Chester has served RCE, Atlantic County for eight years as a civic-grounded horticulturalist, volunteer manager, educator, and program developer. Her contributions include streamlining the RCE Master Composting Program to accommodate a hybrid curriculum and co-creating the Rutgers Garden Education Series. She co-authored a journal publication, assisted RCE community agendas, and presented at national, international, and local conferences. She's published 105 articles in local and statewide publications and is actively involved in related professional organizations.



NORTHEAST REGION - NEW YORK

Amy Barkely - 5 Years



Amy is the livestock and beginning farm specialist with the Southwest New York Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Program (SWNYDLFC). In her role, she works with on-campus faculty and agricultural educators in five counties in western New York to bring timely, research-based programming and consultations to farmers. She connects new farmers to resources; organizes on-farm trainings including pasture walks, FAMACHA trainings, and Beef Quality Assurance trainings; and supports research on livestock and grazing management practices.

NORTHEAST REGION - PENNSYLVANIA

Genevieve Christ - 9 Years

Genevieve is an Agricultural Conservation Educator with the Penn State Extension Center for Ag Conservation Assistance Training. She works directly with conservation professionals, farmers, and landowners providing education and guidance on ag conservation best management practices. Additionally, Genevieve has recently served as the PACAA state president and takes an interest in ensuring others' success in their professional career.



NORTHEAST REGION - WEST VIRGINIA

Jody Carpenter - 7 Years



Carpenter began his career with NC Cooperative Extension, and later transitioned to West Virginia University Extension in 2018. His major programming focus is forage livestock systems, soil fertility, local foods and horticulture as well as a strong support for 4-H and youth agriculture. With a strong focus on soil science and youth development, Agent Carpenter has coached four Barbour County teams to the National Land & Homesite Evaluation Contest and produced four National Championships.

SOUTHERN REGION - ALABAMA

Rebecca Catalena - 8 Years

Rebecca is a Regional Agent covering eight counties in southwest Alabama. She offers certification-based food safety training for the food service industry, home producers under the Alabama Cottage Food Law, and Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) for produce farmers. Additionally, she provides professional development training for School Nutrition Staff. Through a collaborative approach with the Home Grounds Alabama Extension team, she also trains home food preservers Alabama



SOUTHERN REGION - ALABAMA

Abby Peters - 5 Years



Abby developed and implemented educational programs in Pike County, addressing local needs. As part of the Pike County Farm-City Committee, she identified a gap in community resources and launched the "Get Involved Pike County" initiative in 2024. This resource mapping project helps citizens access government programs, healthcare, housing, education, and more. In August 2024, she hosted a community fair with over 400 attendees, impacting local agriculture, youth development, and community well-being.

SOUTHERN REGION - ALABAMA

Kerry Steedley - 4 Years

In 2020, Kerry joined Alabama Extension's Forestry, Wildlife, and Natural Resources team. Her initiative of a public needs assessment has led to a better understanding of Alabamian's interests and challenges related to Extension programming. Through trials with non-traditional forms of advertisement, Kerry has shown leadership and success in reaching new audiences. From timber management to wildlife habitat improvement, Kerry welcomes the opportunities to share best practices, create partnerships, and think creatively on land management issues.



SOUTHERN REGION - ARKANSAS

Cody Salmon - 6 Years



Cody Salmon began his career as a County Extension Agent in Boone County in 2019. Cody first served as a 4-H Agent and has now moved to the Agriculture Agent and Staff Chair in Boone County. His responsibilities include educating producers in livestock, forages, home and commercial horticulture, and Master Gardeners. He helps educate 4-H youth with agriculture and outdoor skills programs. He also works with local community members to further strengthen Boone County.

SOUTHERN REGION - ARKANSAS

Jesse Taylor - 8 Years

Jesse grew up on a burley tobacco farm in Tennessee. He received his Bachelor's from Tennessee Tech in 2003 and his Masters in 2005. His career began as a high school agriculture instructor and continued for over 12 years until 2016, when he became the Agriculture Extension Agent of Franklin County Arkansas. He is currently the staff chair in Johnson County, where his focus is upon commercial and residential horticulture, forages, weed and pest control.



SOUTHERN REGION - FLORIDA

Laura Bennett - 9 Years



Laura Bennett has excelled in livestock and forage production, agricultural awareness, and innovative outreach, securing \$11,000 in grants and \$84,000 in in-kind support. Her programs include creating curriculum guides for beginning ranchers and launching awareness campaigns reaching thousands. A multiple NACAA finalist and regional award winner, including Agricultural Awareness (2024), Laura's leadership shines through extensive service on national and state committees, advancing recognition, abstract evaluation, and animal science, exemplifying her commitment to Extension excellence.

SOUTHERN REGION - FLORIDA

Hannah Eason - 9 Years

Hannah (Wooten) Eason is a UF/IFAS Extension leader in urban agriculture, hydroponics, and sustainable practices. She has educated over 2,000 individuals, developed innovative curricula, and fostered impactful community partnerships. As a Senior GI-BMP Instructor and advocate for integrated pest management, she has secured over \$79,000 in grants and delivered \$803,000 in program impact. Recognized with national awards, Hannah's visionary efforts advance agricultural sustainability and strengthen Florida's urban food systems.



SOUTHERN REGION - FLORIDA

Caitlin Justesen - 7 Years



In the past 7 years Caitlin has taught over 150 group teaching events and developed over 295 creative works, with 10 awards for creative works & program excellence. Caitlin has generated \$112,327 in monetary and in-kind contributions for her programming. She has presented at 14 state and national conferences for FACAA/NACAA in addition to being a virtual conference facilitator for 2 years. Caitlin heavily supports FACAA by serving as district director and involvement in committees.

SOUTHERN REGION - GEORGIA

Shanna Reynolds - 5 Years

Shanna Reynolds serves as the Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent in Oglethorpe County where programming efforts focus on livestock, forages, and youth livestock exhibition. Shanna co-founded the Georgia Club Goat Producers Association (GCGPA), a non-profit organization designed to promote Georgia bred show goats. She was instrumental in the addition of new Georgia Born and Bred divisions to state goat shows. GCGPA has awarded over \$50,000 in premiums and prizes to Georgia 4-H and FFA members.



SOUTHERN REGION - GEORGIA

Colby Royal - 9 Years



Colby Royal serves as the Agriculture and Natural Resources agent for Telfair County. His innovative program TIMBER (Telfair Implementing Measurable Best-practices Expanding Resources) has captivated more than 200 stakeholders to improve their property by engaging in forestry practices such as planting pines, management and forestry economics. Royal has been featured Nationally on RFDTV and Farm Monitor. He was also featured Statewide on GPB, Fox 24, ABC 16 and Youtube for a total of five segments.

SOUTHERN REGION - KENTUCKY

Matthew Futrell - 8 Years

Matt started his career in Extension as a 4-H Agent for Youth Development and transitioned into Agriculture and Natural Resources in Christian County. Matt has served on numerous committees with KACAA as a regional delegate and chair of the 4-H committee. He works to help host trainings for both agents and producers in Kentucky and neighboring states. It is his goal to keep producers profitable and bring innovation to the farm.



SOUTHERN REGION - KENTUCKY

Jessica Hopkins - 8 Years



Jessica Hopkins has been the Harrison County Horticulture Extension Agent since 2016. She strives to make an impact through programs and community-focused initiatives. Programs have been offered in many areas, including vegetable gardening, fruit production, and sustainable horticulture. In addition to programs, Jessica has aided clientele with disease and insect diagnosis, supporting home and commercial growers, and the farmers' market. An advocate for youth education, she started the first Harrison County 4-H Horticulture Club.

SOUTHERN REGION - KENTUCKY

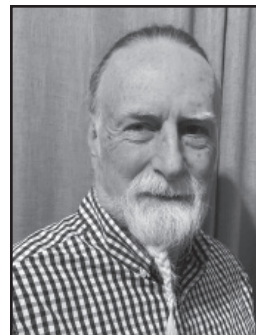
Katie Hughes - 9 Years

Since 2016, Katie has worked to provide numerous educational opportunities for the clientele in the community she serves. Katie has offered programs such as grain and farm business management/production, forage management/production, livestock production/management, women in agriculture programs, home and commercial horticulture, community gardens and Ag in the Classroom for local Pre-K Schools. Katie regularly works with ANR, 4-H, FCS Agents, Extension Specialists and local leaders to provide educational opportunities for all clientele.



SOUTHERN REGION - LOUISIANA

Joe Willis - 7 Years



Joe Willis serves as the LSU AgCenter Horticulture Extension Agent for Orleans Parish. Joe earned a B.S. from NCSU and a Ph.D. in Plant Pathology from UC Riverside. Joe serves the Greater New Orleans area residents with programs that include the Spring Garden Show, Fall Garden Festival, Online Gardening Classes, Master Gardener Coordinator, Monthly Hort Segments on Regional TV, Monthly Articles in the GNO Gardening Newsletter, and regular Horticulture Workshops and Trainings.

SOUTHERN REGION - MISSISSIPPI

Sandra Havard - 8 Years

Sandra Havard serves Warren County as the Agriculture/Natural Resources Agent for Mississippi State University Extension. She began her Extension career at the Mississippi 4-H Museum where she taught youth and adults about the importance of agriculture. In Warren County, Ms. Havard teaches a diverse set of programs related to gardening, sustainability and disaster preparedness. She is also advisor to the Warren County Master Gardeners, Warren County Forestry Association and Warren County Cattlemen's Association.



SOUTHERN REGION - MISSISSIPPI

Cody Mills - 3 Years



Cody Mills has served both Oktibbeha County and Webster Counties for the previous three years as an Extension Agent for the Mississippi State University Extension Service. Mr. Mills reaches a diverse cross-section of clients through Extension efforts involving livestock, forages, forestry, lawn and gardens, houseplants, insect pests, plant/tree diseases, and weed control. Mr. Mills considers it an honor to serve the citizens of both Oktibbeha County and Webster County.

SOUTHERN REGION - MISSISSIPPI

Michael Pruden - 4 Years

Michael Pruden has served the previous four years as an Extension Agent for Mississippi State University Extension in Coahoma and now Grenada County where he assists clients in Agriculture & Natural Resources, Community Resource Development, and 4-H Youth Development. Michael strives to meet his diverse clientele through Extension efforts in livestock production, row crop production, soil irrigation and conservation management, horticulture, and forestry.



SOUTHERN REGION - NORTH CAROLINA

Tommy Batts - 7 Years



Tommy started his career with NC Cooperative Extension (NCCE) in August of 2017, as the Commercial Horticulture Agent for Wilson County. Since then, he has met with all manner of clientele. His responsibilities include providing programming for commercial horticulture growers, beekeeping, cotton, and peanuts. Tommy is a hard worker, team player, and helpful person by nature, always looking for ways to help. Clients count on his knowledge and helpfulness to make the best decisions possible.

SOUTHERN REGION - NORTH CAROLINA

Beth Burchell - 9 Years

Beth Burchell began her career with NC Cooperative Extension in April of 2016 as a Livestock agent, and has served as County Extension Director and Livestock Agent since January of 2021. Each day Beth uses her passion for agriculture to serve her community, striving to ensure the organization's mission is being accomplished, whether it is through large, visible programs, or through the smaller, quieter assistance that will grow into greater impacts.



SOUTHERN REGION - NORTH CAROLINA

Laura Elmore - 8 Years



Laura has been the Iredell County Livestock and Field Crops Agent since August 2016. Her accomplishments include planning and implementing numerous programs across her livestock and field crops responsibilities, including helping to establish the Piedmont Small Ruminant Association with Rowan County Extension, working alongside the Iredell County Cattlemen's Association, and working with youth livestock educational programs, contests, and livestock shows across the region.

SOUTHERN REGION - NORTH CAROLINA

Anthony Growe - 7 Years

Anthony Growe has demonstrated dedication as an Agriculture Extension Agent in Richmond County and previously, Cumberland County. After moving home to Richmond County in 2019, he took on livestock management and animal waste responsibilities. Over his seven-year career, Anthony has assessed the needs of North Carolina farmers and developed programs to address the ever-changing agriculture issues that farmers face on a daily basis.



SOUTHERN REGION - NORTH CAROLINA

Ashley Robbins - 6 Years



Ashley Robbins is a Dairy Area Specialized Agent covering entire state of North Carolina. She is housed in the North Central District and is a vital resource for agents and farmers in the areas of cattle artificial insemination, farm worker training, animal welfare and dairy youth events. She has a strong work ethic with a passion for reaching traditional and non-traditional audiences in the state of North Carolina.

SOUTHERN REGION - OKLAHOMA

Melissa Koesler - 9 Years

Melissa Koesler has been the Garvin County agricultural educator for nine years. She continuously assesses community needs and delivers diverse programs, from livestock to crops to horticulture. Specializing in production agriculture, Melissa has graduated over 50 producers through the Master Cattleman's Program. Her dedication extends to more urban communities through programs like Backyard Farming, promoting healthy living, conservation, and food production. Melissa's impactful agricultural education has made her a trusted resource in Garvin County.



SOUTHERN REGION - SOUTH CAROLINA

Robert Last - 4 Years



Rob Last is a commercial horticulture agent with Clemson Extension, serving multiple counties in the Midlands region of the state. Rob is a dedicated public servant offering help and advice to diverse growers. He enjoys working one-on-one in the field and collaborating with extension researchers and associates on field trials, educational programming, or colleagues on issues they observe. Rob has been the State Chair of the Research and Education Posters for the SCACAA since 2022.

SOUTHERN REGION - SOUTH CAROLINA

Charlotte Maxwell - 9 Years

Charlotte's Cooperative Extension service began in 2015 in Virginia, where she served as an Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent for 4 years. For the past 5 years, she has served as an Area Agribusiness Agent with Clemson Cooperative Extension. Throughout her career, Charlotte has created successful programming for Annie's Project, women in agriculture, beginning farmers, and risk management education programs. Charlotte is the SCACAA Ag Issues Chair in the current NACAA Leadership Academy cohort.



SOUTHERN REGION - SOUTH CAROLINA

Stephanie Turner - 4 Years



As the Horticulture Agent and Master Gardener Coordinator for Greenwood County, Stephanie provides horticulture education for consumers and commercial clients in her home county and beyond. She maximizes her impact by educating and engaging Master Gardeners and nonprofit and government partners. Clients rely on her for one-on-one consultations, informative publications, engaging symposiums, and professional certification programs. She enjoys making new connections and developing relationships within her community, across Extension teams, across her state, and beyond.

SOUTHERN REGION - TENNESSEE

Ryan Brown - 6 Years

Ryan has served in Jefferson County, where beef cattle & forage production are the cornerstones of the agricultural community in Jefferson County, TN. Since 2020, 129 producers have completed their Master Beef Certification to become eligible for the Tennessee Ag Enhancement Program. Other events such as field days and on-farm demonstrations have helped producers adopt new broadleaf weed management strategies and utilizing warm-season annual forages to enhance summer grazing. Local beef & forage programs have an economic impact over \$250,000 annually.



SOUTHERN REGION - TENNESSEE

Amy Dunlap - 3 Years



Amy Dunlap serves as an ANR Agent for Davidson County, with a focus on horticulture. Her programming efforts empower new audiences to farm and garden in urban spaces. She partnered on a national project to engage urban residents in container gardening trials. Additionally, she co-authored a statewide publication series on small space food production. While serving as a Master Gardener coordinator, both volunteer retention and engagement increased. Volunteer financial value equated to \$165,581.65.

SOUTHERN REGION - TENNESSEE

Haley Treadway - 3 Years

Haley serves as the agriculture agent providing programming in the areas of horticulture and agriculture. By meeting the needs of urban and rural stakeholders, she offers diversified opportunities with statewide programs like Master Gardener and Master Beef, while providing county-based programs such as the Chattanooga Landscape Short Course and Backyard Poultry Workshop. Haley co-authored, 'Welcome Home, Tennessee' winning a UTIA publication award. She is a national winner of the NACAA Communications Award for online content.



SOUTHERN REGION - TEXAS

Laramie Kettler - 6 Years



Laramie Kettler has been employed by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension for 6 years serving the people of Colorado County as the Agriculture and Natural Resource agent who also manages the 4-H Livestock Program. In her tenure in Colorado County she has had the opportunity to work in many areas of agriculture including beef cattle production, row crop production, rice farming, pond management, tree health, gardening and horticulture, and new landownership.

SOUTHERN REGION - TEXAS

Christine Lansford - 5 Years

Christy Lansford has served as McMullen County Extension Agent for 5 years. Lansford has brought Extension programming to life in the rural county, growing the 4-H enrollment by more than 300 percent, expanding the volunteer base exponentially, and completing multiple range research demonstrations. She is engrained in the community at numerous levels, including a large community development project. Additionally, Lansford has procured cash and in-kind donations to the program worth more than \$2 million!



SOUTHERN REGION - TEXAS

Angie Nors - 9 Years



Angie Nors started her career as the County Extension Agent for 4-H Youth Development in 2015 in Hill County. She received her B.S. degree from Tarleton State University and her M.E. degree from Lamar University. Angie's programs target 4-H youth development, science of agriculture, livestock projects, and water education programming. She utilizes numerous volunteer groups and committees that aid in program development, organization, and implementation.

SOUTHERN REGION - TEXAS

Katie Pace - 5 Years

Katie Pace has been the Agricultural & Natural Resource agent in Hardin County for the last five years. Being a single agent, Pace has extremely diverse programming efforts, ranging from programs for youth and adults alike. Her largest programming efforts fall in the Natural Resource Education area, where she has certified 441 individuals to gain their Texas Hunter Education Certification, and received a Search for Excellence Award.



SOUTHERN REGION - TEXAS

Cassidy Smolik - 6 Years



Cassidy Smolik began her Extension career in 2019 as an Assistant County Extension Agent. She now serves as the Brazoria County 4-H and Youth Development Agent. Her programs target leadership, veterinary science, robotics, livestock, and more. With a goal of reaching 575 4-H members in her county in 2025, she collaborates closely with dedicated volunteer groups to develop and coordinate impactful programs. She currently serves as the District 9 Secretary for TAE-4HYDP.

SOUTHERN REGION - TEXAS

Callie Zoeller - 6 Years

Callie Zoeller has served as the Titus County Extension Agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources since 2019. Her major programming areas include beef and forage production, as well as 4-H agriculture and natural resource projects. She also oversees more than 60 Master Gardener volunteers who provide community education on home horticulture. Additionally, Zoeller has served as a TCAAA District 4 Director and is currently the District 4 TCAAA Treasurer and Animal Industry Committee Representative.



SOUTHERN REGION - VIRGINIA

Edward Olsen - 9 Years



Ed Olsen is a teacher and leader. With a background in teaching, Ed became the Ag Agent for Henrico County in 2016. In this largely urban county, that surrounds the State Capital, Ed managed a thriving Master Gardener program for eight years. In 2024, Ed assumed the roles of the Extension Specialist for Consumer Horticulture and the Master Gardener Program Director where he leads statewide horticulture and Virginia's large Master Gardener.

SOUTHERN REGION - VIRGINIA

Morgan Paulette - 9 Years

As the Agriculture & Natural Resources Agent in Pulaski County, Morgan Paulette strives to meet the needs of agricultural producers and youth through evidence-based programming. With a focus on livestock, forages, and farm management, Morgan delivers relevant programs aimed at improving profitability. Working alongside colleagues and industry partners, Morgan provides value-added marketing opportunities for cattle producers through the Virginia Quality Assurance program. His dedication to improving people's lives is reflected throughout his work.



