

SEMI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

Avoyelles Parish LSU AgCenter

Vol.1 Issue 2 Spring 2024

UPCOMING EVENTS

Bacon and Eggs 4-H
Cooking Workshop July 26

Junior Leader Retreat July 30 -
31

Avoyelles/Rapides
Parish Fall Planting July 30
Sugarcane Meeting

2024 4-H Hall of Fame
Induction Aug 10

CenLa Master
Gardener Program Aug -
Nov

4-H Culinary Club Sept -
April

Ag Magic CenLa Nov 20 -
21



The LSU AgCenter and LSU provide equal opportunities in programs and employment.

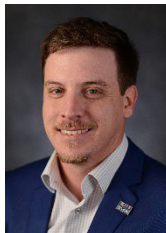


2024 Avoyelles Parish Livestock Ambassadors

Educate. Innovate. Improve Lives.

The LSU AgCenter is dedicated to providing innovative research, information and education to improve people's lives. Working in a statewide network of parish extension offices, research stations and academic departments, the LSU AgCenter helps Louisiana citizens make the best use of natural resources, protect the environment, enhance agricultural enterprises, and develop human and community resources. In Avoyelles, we possess a profoundly unique and distinct culture that is deeply rooted in agriculture and the connected industries that come along with it. The Avoyelles Parish LSU AgCenter remains committed to preserving this tradition by offering supportive programming that educates, innovates, and improves agriculture production, youth development, and nutrition.

Our Team:



Justin Dufour
ANR Agent
Parish Chair



Ann Soileau
4-H Agent



Amy Andrus
4-H Agent

Area Agents:

Jennifer Duhon - Nutrition
Molly Lyles - Horticulture
Brittany Zaunbrecher - Livestock
Robbie Hutchins - Forestry/Wildlife

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[AvoyellesParish4H](#)

[LSUAgCenterAvoyelles](#)

Avoyelles Parish Jr. Livestock Show



2024 Supreme Beef Champion



2024 Poultry Show

Each year in January Avoyelles 4-H hosts its annual livestock show. This past year's 2-day livestock show began Friday, January 19th and wrapped up Saturday, January 20th with a live radio broadcast and a live auction. This is a local fun family event for all to come out and enjoy. This year's parish show consisted of approximately 46 youth participants and just under 200 animals across 6 different species from dairy cows to rabbits and everything in between.

Our youth exhibitors work year-round with their animals to prepare them for this event. Participating in a livestock project yields many benefits to youth such as responsibility, dedication, skillset development, and livestock education. These attributes are all demonstrated at our parish show.

Prior to the parish livestock show, while the youth and the animals are preparing for their day in the ring, Ms. Ann Soileau begins her preparations. The planning, scheduling, and execution begins around September but not without the help of many volunteers and the yearly appointed livestock ambassadors.

Avoyelles 4-H Parish Livestock Show is not just about the animals, although to most, they are the highlight of the show. The exhibitors are not only judged on their ability to lead and control the animals within the ring; they are also tested outside of the ring. The exhibitor is evaluated on their knowledge of their species. These rigorous exams consist of feed ID, animal care, subgroup ID, animal naming, and much more.

Not only do these exhibitors walk away from these projects with gained knowledge they can win greatly. These awards range from Premier Exhibitor Livestock jackets to Supreme Champion Buckles, to ribbons, and cash prizes.

At the end of our Avoyelles 4-H Livestock Show these exhibitors are well prepared to move on to compete at the district, and state level.



2024 Rabbit Show



2024 Dairy Show



2024 Sheep Show

Nutrition Outreach



Youth participating at Food Challenge Event

4-H and FCS continue a partnership for Healthy Living with our Teen Chef Culinary Club. Members focused on different cultures in the early months of 2024. We then transitioned into Food Challenge training and had 5 teams compete in the 2024 Statewide 4-H Food Challenge in April. Two of our high school students grew so much in their culinary experience that they decided to compete in 4-H University's Next Food Star Challenge. The group was provided recipes, nutrient analysis, speaking points and practices to enhance their skills for the competition. 4-H provides several culinary experiences for the summer months. One of our very own Teen Chefs will be featured in a Build a Healthy Meal video. She was chosen to work with Nutrition Agent, Jennifer Duhon to film kid friendly air fryer recipes. The video will be shared in the next couple of weeks. Nutrition programs continued to partner with Avoyelles Charter School Food and Nutrition class with monthly lessons and planned a health fair for the school. And our Move Bunkie Forward partnership allows us to provide youth culinary classes throughout the year. Adult work: We provided senior adult healthy living classes with Tunica Biloxi Tribe which included meals in a mug and physical activity for older adults. More classes are in the works. Learning labs were planned for the Spring and more are planned for the fall to provide mini lessons on topics such as Food Preservation, Kitchen Hacks, One-pot healthy meals and more. The LEAFCS state conference was held in Avoyelles Parish in April. More than 30 Nutrition and Community Health agents from across the state attended and learned about agriculture economics and healthy community development of the parish. A Food Preservation workshop took place in April and several Avoyelles Parish residents attended.



Avoyelles Parish youth appearing in Teen Chef promo video with nutrition agent Jennifer Duhon



Avoyelles Parish adults participate in food preservation workshop

Clubs, Clinics, and Camps

Achievement Day



Tractor driving skill-a-thon

This year, Avoyelles Parish 4-H held their annual Achievement Day at Marksville Elementary School. This is the final contest day of the 4-H year, along with an awards program. This event provides the opportunity for youth to showcase their hard work and put into practice the hands-on and decision-making skills they have learned throughout the year. Members in grades 4th-12th grades are able to compete in skill-a-thons, such as First Aid, Consumer Decision Making, Tractor Driving, and Fish Identification. Other opportunities to compete were demonstrations, a talent show, visual arts, and public speaking.

Youth also chose from a variety of educational stations to learn new skills between their competitions. Some examples of the educational stations were: How to care for a rabbit, managing honeybee hives, and composting 101. Over 50 members participated in this year's Achievement Day. In addition to the youth that attended, we had club leaders and adult volunteers who helped manage the events of the day. First places winners from the 30 different categories were rewarded with a free movie, drink and popcorn at the Paragon Cinema.

Hunters Education



Youth completing shooting portion of hunter's education

On January 13 and 14, 2024, twenty-four Louisiana residents successfully completed a 10-hour Hunter's Education Course at the Avoyelles Parish 4-H Office in Mansura. Mr. Ronald Coco led the course and was assisted by the Avoyelles 4-H Shooting Sports Ambassadors. Avoyelles Delta Waterfowl sponsored the event. According to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the goal of the course is to "prevent hunting incidents and ensure the future of hunting by teaching hunters about their responsibilities and roles in conservation." The youth and adults who participated in the course completed classroom coursework, live-fire exercises, and a written test. For 4-H members who are enrolled in Shooting Sports, this class fulfills one of their two requirements for competition. This year's Regional Shoot took place in Shreveport and Grand Cane on March 15th – 24th, while the State Shoot was held April 12 – 24, 2024.

Food Challenge Cont.'d



1 of 5 Avoyelles Parish Food Challenge teams

Teams went into this competition without knowing what the mystery ingredient was and they had to think quickly to prepare a dish that highlighted the main ingredient with a time limit of 40 minutes. Besides their mystery ingredient, which was catfish this year, they were also given a budget to purchase additional ingredients from the food pantry. While team members were preparing their dish, judges were walking around to score food safety skills, teamwork, and the team's ability to manage time and resources. After the cooking portion of the competition, youth then presented their dish to a panel of judges and gave a timed presentation that covered the nutritional value of the dish, along with cost analysis, and then they answered questions presented by the judges. This was a great learning experience for our Avoyelles Parish youth. We plan to continue to grow our Culinary Club and expand on our youth's knowledge of culinary skills.

Shooting Sports



2024 Avoyelles Parish Shooting Sports Ambassadors



2024 Regional Shoot



2024 Regional Shoot

Any 4-H member in grades 4th-12th is eligible to participate in our Shooting Sports program. For the 2023-2024 school year, the Avoyelles Parish 4-H Shooting Sports program had 52 members enrolled. These members meet weekly, with adult volunteer instructors, to learn firearm safety and to practice their shooting skills. Volunteer instructors teach youth how to properly handle equipment, maintain equipment and shoot in the following areas: Air Rifle, Smallbore Rifle, Shotgun, BB gun, and Archery. Members must participate in a minimum of 8 hours in order to compete at the regional, state, and national levels.

In addition, members who are 10 years and older must earn their hunter's safety certification. For the 2023 Regional Shoot, Avoyelles Parish had 23 members competing and 5 of those members qualified to compete at the State level. Those five members were: Zachary Reynaud with air rifle, Aiden Reynaud with air rifle, Kirsten Shallington with air rifle, Freya Veade with archery, and Marlee Mayeux with small bore rifle.

Besides the adult volunteers, who are regularly giving their Sunday afternoons to the shooting sports program, the youth also have guidance and mentorship from the Shooting Sports Ambassadors. Members who are in grades 7 and up and have been active in the program for at least 2 years qualify to apply for ambassadorship. Interested youth complete a written application and submit it to the board for review. Selected ambassadors must commit to attending weekly practices, assisting with set up and take down at practice, aiding instructors and other participants, and promoting the Shooting Sports program in the community. The Avoyelles Parish Shooting Sports Ambassadors for the current year are: Ethan LeBlanc, Mitchell Hubbard, Marlee Mayeux, Zachary Reynaud, and Kirsten Shallington.

Fishing Clinic



Fish Identification



Kayak Exercise



Boater Safety

May 28, 2024, began Avoyelles 4-H third annual three-day fishing clinic. This event was held at Central Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex in Grand Cote. The youth that attend learn from many experts. Although the weather was not at its best it did not prevent the youth from fishing, catching, and learning. Through this three-day event the attending youth began their mornings fishing from the well-stocked pond. Each day the attending youth experienced new and exciting activities, all focused on educating the youth about Louisiana wildlife. Mr. Gannon Malone with National Wildlife Refuge educated the youth on wood ducks. Mrs. Adriane Bercegeary, Youth Wetlands Coordinator with LSU 4-H Youth Development brought kayaks from LSU Campus for the youth to learn water safety.

Each youth received a life vest that was sized for them. Mrs. Stacy Blomquist with Kisatchie National Forest presented lessons from Project Learning Tree, Caitlin Joubert also with Kisatchie National Forest educated the youth on water quality through lessons from Project Wet and Wild. Carrie Salyers with Wildlife and Fisheries talk lessons on the whooping cranes and the Louisiana Black Bear. Mrs. Alvera McMillan with Sea Grant led lessons on ageing fish through the Otoliths of the fish and fish prints. Mr. Brett Wehrle, the project leader with Central Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge, led a hike and educated the youth on native and invasive wildlife. In addition to many other firsthand activities led by Ms. Ann Soileau, Mr. Ronald Coco, high school 4-H youth and parent volunteers each attending youth received a life vest, smores forks, small camping lanterns, and a drawing for fishing poles each day. 4-H is about learning by doing. This three-day fishing clinic is just that.



Wildlife Education

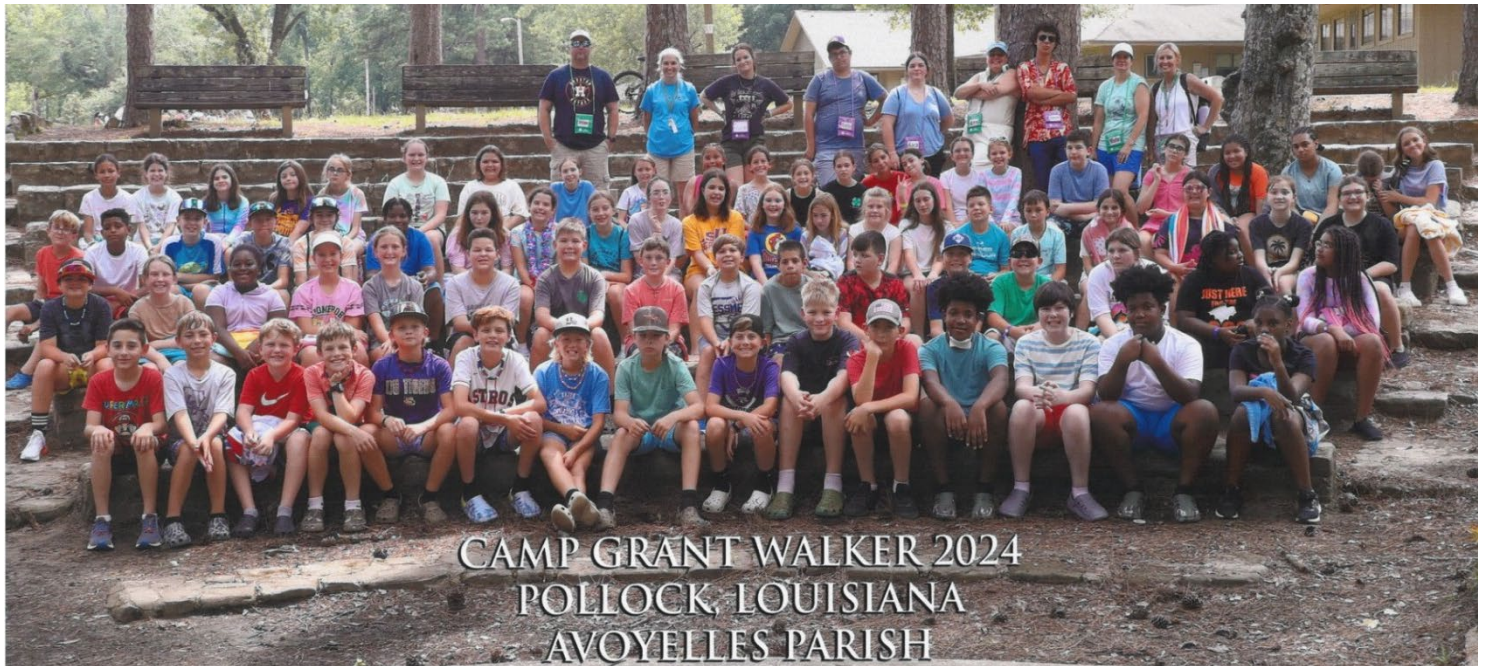


Water Quality Lesson



Fishing!

4-H Camp



On the afternoon of June 10, 2024, Avoyelles Parish 4-H agents, volunteers, teen counselors, and 77 4-H members headed to Pollock, Louisiana for four days and three nights at Camp Grant Walker. For many families in Avoyelles Parish, Camp Grant Walker represents a tradition that spans generations. Parents who once attended the camp themselves now eagerly send their children, knowing the positive impact it had on their own lives.

Upon arriving at camp, youth settled into their cabins before taking a swim test, choosing educational tracks, and participating in activities to get to know some of the other 357 4-H members in attendance. Youth had the following options as their educational focus for the duration of their stay: Food & Fitness; Science, Engineering, and Technology; Outdoor Adventures, The Artist Within, Gardening, Wetlands & Wildlife, and Water Safety.

The camp's facilities provided ample opportunities for recreation and relaxation as well. With access to a swimming pool, sports field, dance pavilion and a fishing pond, campers had plenty of chances to unwind and connect with nature. Evenings were spent gathered around the Greek theater, sharing stories from the day and singing songs that forged bonds of friendship.

Kara Hubbard, one of our teen counselors said, "Camp is the dream of summer. Watching the kids make new friends reminded me of when I was a camper. I like being a counselor because I can help the kids out and watch them have fun."

For Avoyelles Parish 4-H, Camp Grant Walker remains a cornerstone of youth development, shaping the leaders of tomorrow through its blend of education, exploration, and unforgettable experiences.



Outdoor Educational Track at 4-H Camp



Paddleboarding during free time



Nightly camp assembly

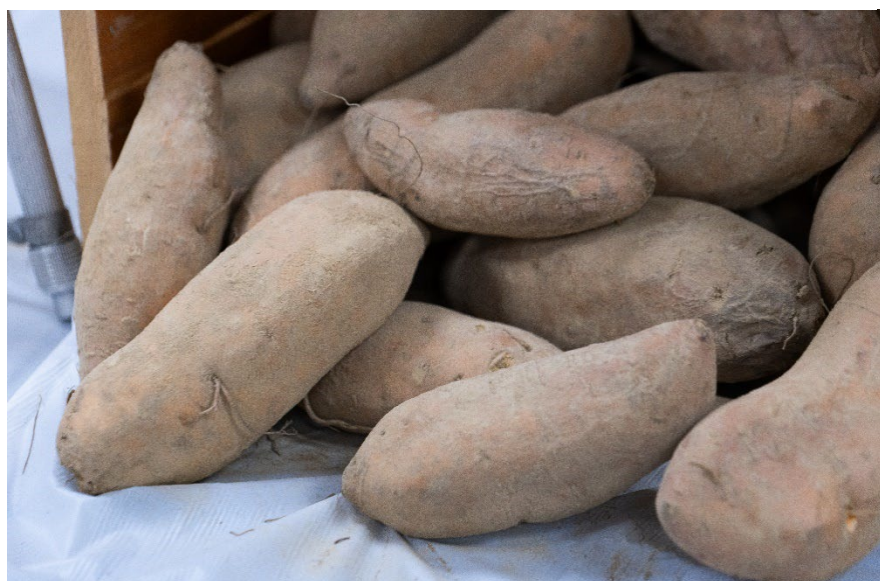
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Avoyelles Sweet Potato

Olivia McClure, LSU AgCenter (6/25/2024)



LSU AgCenter Sweet Potato Specialist Cole Gregorie, left, and sweet potato breeder Don La Bonte stand with a display at the unveiling of the new Avoyelles sweet potato variety on June 20 at the AgCenter Avoyelles Parish office. Photo by Olivia McClure/LSU AgCenter



The LSU AgCenter's new Avoyelles sweet potato variety features a lighter-colored skin and a creamy texture. It's an early-maturing variety that offers root knot nematode resistance. Photo by Olivia McClure/LSU AgCenter

as 18-100. "That's why Avoyelles struck us as a good name," he said, "because it's really in this region that we discovered it had something special about it." The process of developing, testing and releasing a new variety takes several years. It all begins in about a dozen nurseries across Louisiana, where La Bonte and his colleagues in the breeding program cross sweet potato plants.

"We induce flowering through stressing the plants. We then collect true seeds. They're just like a little morning glory seed," explained AgCenter sweet potato specialist [Cole Gregorie](#). Sweet potatoes are a relative of morning glories; both plants have vines, heart-shaped leaves and purplish flowers. About 30,000 to 40,000 seeds are planted annually at the AgCenter [Sweet Potato Research Station](#) in Franklin Parish. Those that perform well move on to additional rounds of testing in the field. About 300 are eventually selected for storage evaluations. "When you hear 18-100, which was what Avoyelles was formerly known as, that's because it was the 100th selection in 2018," Gregorie said. Later stages of testing involve trials on private farms.

"Of that initial 300 that we selected, probably three to five each year get to see this," Gregorie said. "At the end of the day, out of 30,000

It can be harvested up to 30 days sooner than other sweet potatoes. It is a high yielder and tastes great, though its skin is a shade lighter than the sweet potatoes many Louisianans are accustomed to.

It's the LSU AgCenter's newest sweet potato variety, Avoyelles — named for the parish where scientists initially saw its potential and a parish that has played a central role in the state's sweet potato industry for decades. The variety was officially released June 20 at a ceremony at the Avoyelles Parish extension office, where local farmers gathered to hear about the latest developments in the AgCenter sweet potato breeding program, which is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. Avoyelles can be harvested about 90 days after planting — considerably sooner than the 110 to 120 days required by other varieties.

"That's something the industry growers have asked for," said AgCenter sweet potato breeder [Don La Bonte](#). "The value is this time of year — when you start getting into July and August when you're running

out of product for the retail and processing sectors — here's something you can harvest without losing a lot of yield and be able to service your customers."

An early-maturing variety also holds potential for late plantings, La Bonte said. If farmers are delayed in starting their crops, they could turn to the faster-growing Avoyelles and still be able to harvest on time.

The lighter-skinned Avoyelles offers strong yields on par with previously released AgCenter varieties such as Beauregard and Orleans, which are industry mainstays. But it is resistant to the root-knot nematode — a desirable trait that the older varieties lack. It also has a pleasant, creamy texture, making it a "good-eating potato," La Bonte said.

He first took notice of Avoyelles a couple of years ago when he was testing potential new sweet potato varieties. As La Bonte dug up trial plots at the Ricky Juneau and James Deshotel farms in Avoyelles Parish, he was impressed by the sheer volume of potatoes produced by Avoyelles, then known simply



Tara Smith, director of the LSU AgCenter Sweet Potato Research Station and the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, speaks during an event unveiling the new Avoyelles sweet potato variety June 20 at the AgCenter Avoyelles Parish office. Photo by Olivia McClure/LSU AgCenter

parish has seen a reduction in sweet potato acres over the years, it continues to contribute meaningfully to a statewide industry that annually adds more than \$85 million to the economy. “Our industry has certainly gone through a lot of change and adversity due to many reasons,” Smith said. “But our industry has realized many successes on the backs of the producers that are in this room.” She and Gregorie both invited producers to attend the [upcoming annual field day](#) at the Sweet Potato Research Station on Aug. 29, noting this year marks 75 years since the facility and its breeding program were founded. In 1949, horticulturist Julian C. Miller established the station, where he made early strides in developing orange-fleshed sweet potato varieties that grow well in Louisiana.

seeds, we may release a variety every five to seven years. So it’s not a 1-in-a-million shot that a plant comes along and becomes a new variety, but it’s about a 1-in-200,000 shot. It’s a lot of seeds, a lot of evaluation, a lot of culled lines that happen to get to this point.”

La Bonte said farmers’ cooperation is critical to the development of varieties, allowing him and his team to subject potential new releases to a wide range of environmental conditions. “If we have this in seven or eight locations, not only are we getting a judgment on weather,” he said. “Some places get flooded; some get drought. We also have different soil types and different cultural practices.” He thanked those in the audience for their help in evaluating Avoyelles. “You’re busy planting, you’ve got crews you’re working, you’re just swamped with work,” he told the farmers. “But you find time to get us where we need to be, help us plant, and then at harvest you do the same thing. I’m just in awe of your willingness to help us out.”

[Tara Smith](#), director of the Sweet Potato Research Station and the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, said Avoyelles Parish holds an important place in the Louisiana sweet potato industry. Though the

Winter Ag Production Meetings



Producers listen to updates at the 2024 Avoyelles Parish Sugarcane Production Meeting held in Bunkie

production. Two other PPA recertification meetings were held in Mansura for those who could not attend the prior production meetings.

Production meetings serve as an important event for ag producers in Avoyelles and surrounding areas. In 2024, a total of 3 meetings were held in Avoyelles that provided research updates in a variety of crops.

Furthermore, these meetings serve as a place for producers and AgCenter faculty to network and grow their relationships. Lunch is provided and sponsored by several industry partners who also join the meeting to converse. In January, Justin Dufour hosted the annual Avoyelles Parish Soybean and Feed Grain Production Meeting in Mansura. In February, Dufour hosted the Rapides and Avoyelles Parish Sugarcane Production Meeting in Bunkie followed by the Avoyelles and Rapides Parish Rice Production Clinic in Mansura, a few weeks later. Additionally, these meetings serve as a recertification opportunity for producers that have a Private Pesticide Applicator’s

(PPA) card that allows them to purchase and apply restricted use pesticides, which are vital to crop

Molly's Minute – Horticulture Update



Molly Lyles demonstrating potting techniques during workshop



Molly Lyles checking red potato crop at RCL Correctional Facility

With summer in full swing, there have been many phone calls and site visits regarding various plants and pests in the garden. Avoyelles has many avid gardeners who grow vegetables and fruits. Many of the calls I received from Avoyelles in the spring were pruning fruit trees and spraying for pests. The best way to be prepared for critical timing of these applications and cultivation practices is to have a plan written down and, in a calendar, so that you know when it is the right time to prune and spray for certain pests. There are many resources to help you plan this out and I would be happy to discuss your specific crops.

This summer, the nutrition agent and I teamed up to provide a lesson at the Move Bunkie Forward Kids Camp. At this camp, kids discussed nutrition and growing cucumbers. They received a grow bag and a cucumber plant to take home, and watch grow. The CenLa Master Gardener Group, which has many Avoyelles members, meets monthly at the Rapides Extension office and has various projects and volunteer opportunities. The next class will begin August 1st and last for 14 weeks. Plans to have an Edible Plants workshop at Moncla nursery in July will be advertised soon. One of the main issues discussed at our yearly advisory meeting was pesticide education for home gardeners. A workshop is being developed to address this.

Additionally, Justin Dufour and I met with officials from the Raymond C. Laborde Correctional Facility to discuss options and strategies to enhance their vegetable operation. The facility utilizes several acres of the grounds to produce vegetables that will be served directly to the inmates housed. The initial meeting developed the interest to meet on a more consistent basis to provide consultation on their farm operations moving forward. We are looking forward to the partnership.

Consider Soil Testing

Brittany Zaunbrecher, LSU AgCenter (05/2024)

If you've submitted a soil sample in the last month or two to the LSU Soil Testing & Plant Analysis Lab, you may have noticed they're taking a little longer than usual to process samples and send your results. The lab has been extremely busy with lots of samples coming in (which is a good thing, since it means people are testing their soil), and they are doing their best to process them in a timely manner. It may take up to 3 weeks at this time to get your results, so taking samples a bit earlier than you need is better when getting those submitted. Make sure to include your email on the submission form so you will get the results faster, and your parish Extension Agent will get the email as well. The form doesn't have your contact information on it, so be sure to give us a call if you need help interpreting your results. If you're used to seeing the USPS Priority Mailboxes that include the submission form and sample bags, those are in the process

Field/Sample Identification <i>Used to reference samples</i>	Crops (To be grown 3 max/sample) See Back of Sheet for Crop List	Check If Soil Type Is Alluvial *	Check If Crop Will Be Irrigated
_____	_____	☐	☐
_____	_____	☐	☐
_____	_____	☐	☐
_____	_____	☐	☐
_____	_____	☐	☐

Please use additional sheets for more samples.

of being phased out. The lab is now sending out paper bags to collect your samples. You'll then mail the bag, submission form, and check or money order all together in a box and send to the lab. I'll have some pictures and explanations on the next page to show you.

After you fill out your contact information at the top of the submission form, you get to the field above. You can send in more than 5 samples by using another sheet if you need to, but you have 5 provided on each form. You can use anything you like as a sample identification, just make sure to keep it below 13 characters. The sample id on the form should also be written in the blank provided on the bag. On the back page of the sheet, a list of crops is provided. Your sample can be tested for up to 3 different crops. Different crops will have different optimum levels, so it's important you include the crop for the most accurate recommendations based on your results. For bermudagrass for example, make sure to differentiate between where it's used. Most likely, you would be using it for pasture, so be sure to include that. If you want to use the same pasture to plant ryegrass in the fall, you can write ryegrass, or ryegrass with clover.

Element (Mehlich3)	Value	Bermuda (past)	Ryegrass
pH (1:1 Water)	6.14	Optimum	Optimum
Phosphorus, ppm	31.70	Medium	Medium
Potassium, ppm	145.69	Medium	Medium
Calcium, ppm	1,318.39	Very High	Very High
Magnesium, ppm	398.02	Very High	Very High
Sodium, ppm	178.57	Optimum	Optimum
Sulfur, ppm	15.43	Medium	Medium
Copper, ppm	2.48	High	High
Zinc, ppm	13.50	High	High

<u>Crop</u>	<u>Form</u>	<u>Units: lb/Acre</u>	<u>Nitrogen</u>	<u>Phosphate</u>	<u>Potash</u>
bermuda (pasture)	est. hyb. ber.		80-120	80	80
bermuda (pasture)	establish comm.		80-120	90	90
bermuda (pasture)	grazing		100-200	60	80
bermuda (pasture)	hay comm.		200-300	60	120
bermuda (pasture)	hay hyb. ber.		300-400	80	200
For fertilizer timing and methods of application please see (http://www.stpal.lsu.edu/recsheets/P-210.rtf)					
<u>Crop</u>	<u>Form</u>	<u>Units: lb/Acre</u>	<u>Nitrogen</u>	<u>Phosphate</u>	<u>Potash</u>
ryegrass	grazing		90-200	60	60
For fertilizer timing and methods of application please see (http://www.stpal.lsu.edu/recsheets/P-260.rtf)					

On the left, here's an example of what a test result looks like with both Bermuda (pasture) and ryegrass as the selected crops. On the right, these are your fertilizer recommendations for each crop. If your pH value were to be considered low, you'd also see a recommended lime amount, usually 1 ton per acre, possibly 2 or 3 tons if the pH is extremely low. The recommendations for Bermuda break down each possible use of bermudagrass, both hybrid and seeded varieties, and whether its for establishing, grazing, or hay production. There is also a recommendation sheet linked in the email you receive, or your Extension Agent can provide you with the information sheet if for some reason the link doesn't work. This information sheet will tell you when and how to split up your fertilizer applications and when it's best to apply fertilizer. If you're unsure, please reach out to your local Extension Office for help!

General Outreach

LSU AgCenter Radio Spot



Starting the week of July 1, 2024, the Avoyelles Parish LSU AgCenter will have a weekly radio segment that will air every Wednesday morning. The radio spot will offer the opportunity to update stakeholders on all of our programming and important information pertaining to agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, and nutrition and community health. Additionally, it will give 4-H youth the platform to improve communication abilities and develop key skills regarding media relations.

Overall Advisory Leadership Council

Location: Avoyelles Parish AgCenter – 8592 HWY 1, Suite 1, Mansura, LA 71350 Date: Thursday, February 29, 2024 Time: 5:30PM – 7:30PM Those in attendance: Justin Dufour, Amy Andrus, Ann Soileau, Jennfier Duhon, Vince Deshotel, Brittany Zaunbrecher, Robbie Hutchins, Molly Lyles (LSU AgCenter), Jessica Kotz (Southern AgCenter), Dr. Jay Callegari (APSB), Sherriff David Dauzat (APSO), Mayor Kenneth Pickett (Mansura), Mr. Allen Thomas (APPJ), Ms. Chasity Cole (ASDD), Ms. Vanessa Lucas (4-H Volunteer), Mrs. Suzie Causey (4-H Volunteer), Dalton Causey (4-H Youth), Mrs. Jennie Pennington (4-H Volunteer), Dayton Pennington (4-H Youth), Mrs. Melissa Shallington (4-H Volunteer), Mr. Matthew Shallington (4-H Volunteer), Mr. Jason Gauthier (Producer), Mrs. Monique Mayeux (APCS Club Leader), Mr. Adam Lemoine (Producer/Farm Bureau), Mr. Chris Lacour (GreenPoint Ag) Mr. John Laborde (Producer/Cattlemen), Mr. Rob Ferguson (Nutrien Ag Solutions), Mrs. Nicole Lee (CLAHEC), Mr. Derek Dauzat (Producer/Farm Bureau), Mrs. Carolyn Bordelon (4-H Volunteer/Foundation President), Mr. Lance Roblin (Producer/Farm Bureau),

Justin Dufour called the Avoyelles Parish ALC meeting to begin at 5:32PM. He then led off with the Pledge of Allegiance. Following everyone being seated, Justin Dufour thanked everyone for their participation and support, then made a power point presentation that briefly detailed the University Organizational Chart and LSU AgCenter Organizational Chart, followed by a brief overview of the 3 extension program areas: ANR, 4-H, and FCS/NCH. Justin Dufour then shared the economic impact agriculture had on Avoyelles Parish. Furthermore, Justin Dufour briefly explained the importance of 4-H Youth Development and how Louisiana 4-H was started here in Avoyelles Parish. The last slide featured a message that encouraged interaction and leadership related to the purpose of this meeting. The program then transitioned to the next agenda item, which featured every agent that has programmatic responsibilities in Avoyelles introducing themselves and briefly elaborating on the work they do. Speakers included: Ann Soileau and Amy Andrus (4-H Agents), Jennifer Duhon (FCS Agent/Program Coordinator), Jessica Kotz (Nutrition Aid), Brittany Zaunbrecher (Livestock Agent), Molly Lyles (Horticulture Agent), Robbie Hutchins (Forestry and Wildlife Agent), Vince Deshotel (ANR Program Coordinator), and lastly Justin Dufour (Agronomy Agent/Parish Chair). Dinner was served (Blessing by Mayor Kenneth Pickett).

Following dinner, breakout sessions were arranged for participants to choose which program areas they would like to offer support and guidance: ANR (small break room), 4-H (large conference room), and FCS/NCH (4-H Museum). The following notes and items were recorded:

Agriculture and Natural Resources • General: Drainage, Deer and Feral Hog Damage, and Ag Awareness • Horticulture: Residential weed and pest control/product education, factsheets to address relevant issues, urbanization (educating residents that aren't/haven't been exposed to agricultural operations and practices) • Forestry/Wildlife: Food plot education, Wildlife Field Day/Symposium • Livestock: Nutrition education, field day that appeals to smaller operations in grazing, marketing, processing, feeding program, Master Cattlemen Program • Agronomy: Variety trials, biological product evaluations, deer repellent trials, continuation of the Farming for the Future or an equivalent

4-H Youth Development • Ideas to get more Cloverbuds involved: stick horse rodeo, cookie contest for clover buds only at commodity cookery, clover bud category for pet show and pumpkin decorating contest. • Need for more parental involvement: possibly invite parents to participate in workshops with their child. • Need to reach a wider audience: suggestion made to rotate the location of workshops, have the same workshop at multiple locations throughout the parish. • Get the whole parish involved with a community garden. This would also teach life skills. Food grown could be used for service projects to feed the needy and also used in cooking workshops. • Need to reach teens/older youth. They need life/adult skills (resume writing, interview skills, balance a checkbook, addressing an envelope, public speaking). Have a DARE officer talk to teens, maybe at a Junior Leader meeting, about alcohol, drugs, teen pregnancy. • Teens don't want small craft workshops. Have Ag Tour days in lieu of workshops (similar to Junior Ag Leadership). They need Ag awareness. Host an Ag Day at our parish barn, maybe bring in a petting zoo for the younger ones. Teach teens how to drive a tractor and back up a trailer. Host a citizenship day for teens to learn about how our legal system works (visit courthouse, parish jail, tax assessor's office, etc.).

Family and Consumer Science/Nutrition and Community Health • Schools in Avoyelles parish. It was noted that Southern is not in any of the schools currently. They really want to see an elementary focus addressing things, such as exercise, hydration, and less energy drinks. • Life skills with Culinary and Nutrition aspects • Specific disease management, such as diabetes and hypertension, and suggestions of partnering with the hospitals in Avoyelles Parish.

OVERALL NEEDS: Ag Literacy and Awareness, Farm to Table Healthy Living, Applicable Skillset Development.



For more information, contact your local LSU AgCenter Office

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