

SEMI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

Avoyelles Parish LSU AgCenter

Vol.3 Issue 1 Fall 2025

UPCOMING EVENTS

Avoyelles/Rapides Rice Feb. 4
Production Clinic

Central District Feb. 4 - 6
Livestock how

State Livestock Feb. 14 -
Show 21

Tri-Parish Shooting Feb. 22
Competition

Regional Shooting Mar. 8-
Sports Competition 15

State Shooting Sports Apr. 10-
Competition 19

WOW Fishing Clinic May 27-
28

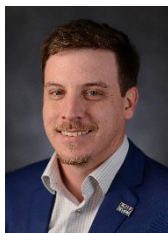


Junior Division Beef Exhibitors Competing in Annual Parish Livestock Show

Innovate. Educate. 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



Karen Burlew
4-H Agent

Area Agents:

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

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Avoyelles Parish 4-H Bids Fairwell to Parish Barn at Annual Livestock Show



Supreme Champion Dairy:
Dayton Pennington with HannaBelle
Sponsored by Farm Bureau



Supreme Champion Sheep:
AnneMaria Galland with her Commercial Ewe
Sponsored by Kerry's



Supreme Champion Goat:
Elizabeth Tassin with her Nubian Doe
Sponsored by GreenPoint Ag



Supreme Champion Bull:
Millie Moreau with Water Oak Ironside
Sponsored by Detel



Supreme Champion Heifer:
Millie Moreau with Queen Millie
Sponsored by Lacombe Farms



Best of Show Rabbit:
Elyvia Laborde with her American Fuzzy Lop
Sponsored by Lacombe Farms

On January 16th and 17th, 36 Avoyelles Parish exhibitors gathered to showcase over 150 animals at the annual Avoyelles Parish 4-H Junior Livestock Show. Youth demonstrated their project and abilities as the animals and exhibitors were judged on appearance, breed characteristics, and showmanship quality. Furthermore, the premiere exhibitor participants were evaluated on their knowledge through a formal exam featuring questions about the animals they were showing. Appreciation is expressed to all sponsors, families, and volunteers that made this year's show a great success!

The Avoyelles Parish Barn has been home to several decades of livestock shows and this year's marked the last. Earlier this Winter, the Avoyelles Parish School Board along with State Representative Daryl Deshotel announced the construction of a new livestock barn as part of the Avoyelles Career Education Center project. We will hold fond memories of the old barn but are excited for the future facility that will better serve our youth exhibitors!



Best of Show Poultry:
Lane Gauthier with his Plymouth Rock Pullet



Dairy Senior Showmanship:
Clara Deloach



Goat Junior Showmanship:
Elizabeth Tassin



Sheep Junior Showmanship:
Jett Jeansonne



Goat Senior Showmanship:
Andrew Dauzat



Swine Senior Showmanship:
Dalton Causey



Beef Senior Showmanship:
Mac Ferguson



Beef Intermediate Showmanship:
Pierce Ferguson



Beef Junior Showmanship:
Josie Wilkes



Champion Standard Poultry:
Courtney Juneau with her Australorps Pullet

Premier Exhibitor Winners:

Dairy Senior: Dayton Pennington

Sheep Junior: Jett Jeansonne

Goat Senior: Andrew Dauzat

Goat Junior: Elizabeth Tassin

Swine Senior: Dalton Causey

Beef Senior: Mac Ferguson

Beef Intermediate: Pierce Ferguson

Beef Junior: Millie Moreau

Rabbit Senior: Elisa LaBorde

Rabbit Intermediate: Madison Brantley

Rabbit Junior: Adelisa Musso

Poultry Senior: Dalton Causey

Poultry Intermediate: Courtney Juneau

Poultry Junior: Lane Gauthier

Understanding the Updated Dietary Guidelines



Nutrition Agent, Jennifer Duhon, MS, RDN, LDN

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030 that came out January 6, reflect a major shift in how national nutrition advice is communicated. For the first time, the guidelines place strong emphasis on eating minimally processed, whole foods and reducing intake of ultra processed products and added sugars. The long-standing recommendation to keep saturated fat under 10% of daily calories remains, but the new guidelines acknowledge that full fat dairy can fit into a balanced eating pattern when consumed mindfully.

A New Visual: The Upside-Down Pyramid

The traditional MyPlate icon has been replaced with an inverted food pyramid, highlighting:

- Proteins
- Dairy
- Healthy fats
- Vegetables
- Fruits

Grains appear with less emphasis, and highly processed items are visually separated. MyPlate may still be a helpful tool for teaching children or for simple visual guidance. These updated visuals matter because they influence far more than individual eating choices. They help shape:

- School nutrition programs
- Federal food assistance
- How food manufacturers design and market products

In short, the guidelines influence the broader food and nutrition landscape across the country.

“Real Food” Becomes the Priority

A central theme of the 2025–2030 guidelines is choosing foods that are close to their natural form. Highly processed items—often high in refined carbohydrates, added sugars, sodium, and synthetic ingredients—are discouraged.

Examples of whole, minimally processed foods include:

- Fruits and vegetables
- Eggs, meat, poultry, seafood
- Beans, lentils, nuts, seeds
- Whole grains
- Dairy (including full fat varieties)
- Simple oils like olive or avocado oil

Everyday tip: Look for short, simple ingredient lists—foods your grandparents would recognize.

Increased Protein Recommendations

Most adults are now encouraged to consume 1.2–1.6 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight. For someone weighing 150 pounds, that equates to roughly 82–109 grams of protein daily. Higher protein intake supports muscle maintenance, healthy aging, and overall longevity.

Fiber Remains Essential

While grains are less central in the new pyramid, fiber intake still matters. The ongoing message remains: aim to fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables.

Recommended daily fiber intake:

- Women: ~25 grams
- Men: ~35 grams

Fiber supports gut health, assists in eliminating toxins, and promotes regular digestion.

A Stronger Warning on Added Sugars

The guidelines clearly state:

- No amount of added sugar is recommended.
- Sugary beverages and packaged sweet or salty snacks should be minimized.
- Artificial sweeteners are not suggested as a long term weight management strategy.

Dairy Fat: What the Research Shows

While saturated fat limits remain, the updated guidelines allow room for whole fat dairy, reflecting research suggesting that fermented dairy products (such as yogurt, kefir, and certain cheeses) may impact heart health differently than foods like butter. The natural structure, fermentation, and nutrient composition of these foods may play a role in how the body processes them.

This doesn't mean unlimited portions—balance and moderation are still key.

Better whole fat dairy options include:

- Plain whole milk yogurt
- Kefir
- Cottage cheese
- Natural cheeses

Use butter sparingly and choose oils such as olive or avocado oil for cooking.

Strategies for Including Whole Fat Dairy Within Saturated Fat Limits

Strategy 1: Treat Saturated Fat Like a Daily Budget

On a 2,000 calorie diet, the 10% guideline equals roughly 22 grams per day.

Approximate saturated fat amounts:

- 1 cup whole milk → 4.5 g
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup whole milk yogurt → 4 g
- 1 oz cheddar → 6 g
- 1 tbsp butter → 7 g

Knowing these values helps with planning.

Strategy 2: Choose Fermented Dairy

Yogurt, kefir, and natural cheeses are encouraged due to their unique nutritional profiles. Use butter less often and rely more on heart healthy oils.

Strategy 3: Balance the Rest of Your Plate

Pair whole fat dairy with:

- Seafood
- Skinless poultry
- Beans and legumes
- Nuts and seeds
- Fruits and vegetables
- Whole grains
- Healthy oils

While we are still awaiting more guidance on how to transition from MyPlate to the Upside-down pyramid, the basics remain the same. Choose whole foods with minimal processing as much as possible and stay active daily.

Clubs, Clinics, and Camps

Avoyelles Junior Master Gardener Club Explores Seed Planting and Garden Care



Jr. Master Gardeners with Plant Projects

The Avoyelles Junior Master Gardener Club enjoyed an engaging and educational evening focused on hands-on gardening skills. Members learned how to start plants from seed using seed starters, gaining a better understanding of how proper care at the earliest stages supports healthy plant growth.

During the session, the young gardeners planted turnip seeds in their garden beds and took time to water their strawberry plants and cabbage seeds, reinforcing the importance of consistent care and attention in maintaining a thriving garden.

The event provided a meaningful opportunity for youth to deepen their knowledge of horticulture while actively participating in the upkeep of their club garden. It was a productive and enjoyable night of learning, teamwork, and growing together.

Avoyelles Homeschoolers Complete Successful Service Project at Unity Park



Homeschool 4-H Club Member Painting Activity Walk

In November 2025, the Avoyelles Homeschoolers Club carried out a successful service project at Unity Park in Cottonport, bringing creativity and community spirit to the local recreation area. Club members worked together to paint a series of colorful and engaging sidewalk stencils, including marching ants, exercise prompts, and playful paw prints designed to encourage movement, exploration, and fun for park visitors of all ages. Adding to the educational value of the day, volunteer parent Mr. Kyle led a hands-on fruit and vegetable washing demonstration. His lesson highlighted the importance of proper food handling and healthy habits, giving youth practical skills they can use at home and share within their families.

The project not only brightened the pathways of Unity Park but also strengthened teamwork, creativity, and community involvement among participating homeschoolers. It stands as a wonderful example of youth contributing positively to their local environment.

Jr. Leader Club Welcomes Louisiana FFA Executive Secretary



State FFA Executive Secretary Giving Presentation

At the November Jr. Leader Club meeting, members had the special opportunity to hear from Summer Anderson, Executive Secretary of Louisiana FFA. Anderson spoke about the shared mission of both FFA and 4-H, emphasizing how the two organizations work hand-in-hand to support the growth, leadership development, and success of youth across Louisiana.

Her message highlighted the value of collaboration between these long-standing youth programs and inspired members to stay engaged, seek leadership opportunities, and continue building the skills that will help them thrive in their communities.

It was an informative and motivating evening for all who attended.

State 4-H President Visits Cottonport Elementary



State 4-H President Visiting Cottonport Elementary

Cottonport Elementary's 4-H club received a special visit during their recent meeting from Louisiana State 4-H President, Dayton Pennington. Pennington spent time speaking with students about his personal 4-H journey, sharing how the program has shaped his leadership skills, broadened his experiences, and helped him "find his spark."

His message encouraged members to explore the many opportunities 4-H offers and to discover their own passions through active participation. The visit left students inspired and excited about their future within the organization.

Central Region Junior Ag Leader Club Team Honored with Bivin Award at 2025 Louisiana Land Grant Summit



Awards Winners at Annual Louisiana Land Grant Summit

At the 2025 Louisiana Land Grant Summit in Baton Rouge, the prestigious Bivin Award (Rosalie Bivin 4-H Youth Development Faculty Award) was presented to Mrs. Esther Boe, Mrs. Kim Deville, Mrs. Brooke LaFargue, and Mrs. Ann Soileau. The award was given by Dr. Matt Lee in recognition of the team's outstanding hard work and dedication to the Central Region Junior Ag Leader Club. Their efforts reflect a strong commitment to meaningful youth development, hands-on learning, and impactful community engagement.

The Bivin Award is a distinguished LSU AgCenter honor that recognizes 4-H faculty who excel in delivering high-quality, service-learning-based youth programs. Recipients demonstrate excellence in program planning, educational impact, and the creation of positive, development-focused experiences for young people.

This year's honorees exemplify what the Bivin Award represents—exceptional leadership, innovation, and unwavering dedication to Louisiana's youth.

Fall and Winter Workshops



Ag Lesson



Leaf Painting



Culinary Lesson



Wetlands Lesson

Avoyelles 4-H kicked off their fall break with a lively Fall into Fun Workshop, where members spent the day exploring a variety of hands-on activities including painting fall leaves, dissecting owl pellets, gardening, cooking seasonal desserts, making light-up wands, and sewing festive pumpkins. The workshop was filled with creativity, learning, and excitement, and it wouldn't have been possible without the hard work and enthusiasm of our Jr. Leaders, who generously volunteered their time to teach and guide their fellow 4-H'ers.



Sewing Lesson



Snowman Craft



Baking Lesson

Before the winter holiday break, several Avoyelles 4-H members gathered for a fun and educational Winter Wonderland Workshop, enjoying a day filled with creativity, skill-building, and seasonal excitement. Participants rotated through a variety of hands-on stations where they branded leather, baked cookies, crafted snowmen, and designed their own festive stockings. In addition to the arts and crafts, members also explored the outdoors through activities focused on wildlife education, gaining insight into local species and their winter adaptations. Rounding out the experience, youth learned how to make homemade butter, giving them a tasty and interactive look into basic food science.

The workshop provided a memorable blend of learning and holiday cheer, offering 4-H'ers the chance to try new skills, express their creativity, and connect with one another in a supportive, engaging environment.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Deer Repellent Trial



Deer in Soybean Field

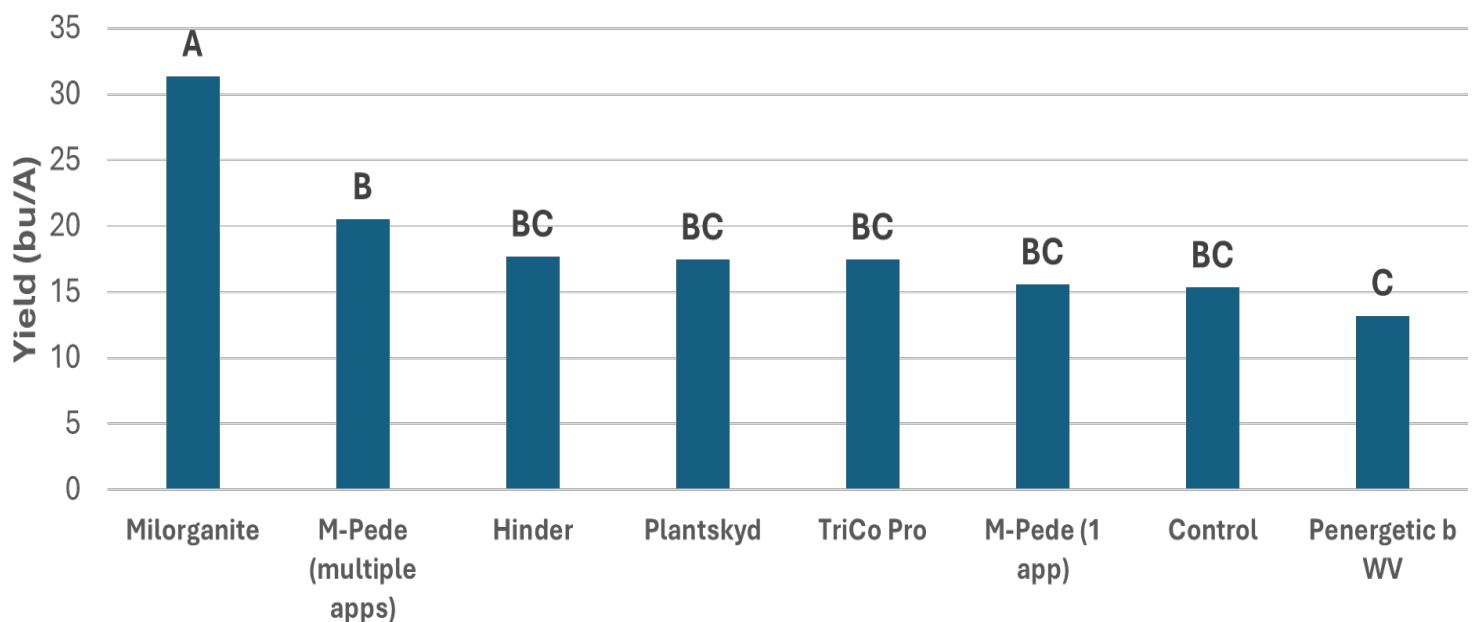
During the 2025 production year, a deer repellent trial was implemented in Avoyelles Parish under the direction of Dr. David Moseley, State Soybean Specialist, Dr. Lucas Stamper, State Wildlife Specialist, and Justin Dufour, Area Agronomy Agent. The idea stemmed from advisory meeting feedback from area producers that suggested evaluating the efficacy of multiple commercial products available on the market that claim to combat yield inducing damage to crops.

The trial was the only one of its kind in Louisiana and featured replication throughout the Southeastern United States. Six products were evaluated, along with a control plot and an additional application, per the label, of an existing product, following strategic planning and treatment. Appreciation is expressed to John-Thomas Laborde for volunteering his time, land, and equipment to make this trial a success.



Soybeans Treated with Repellent (Left). Soybeans Untreated (Right).

Preliminary findings suggest efficacy of one product, however, a multi-year study will be needed to determine accuracy and cost-effectiveness. Furthermore, the rate at which said product was applied, was not a heavily research area prior to the implementation, therefore, decreasing the amount at which the product can be utilized, can provide a more realistic option for producers to contemplate. Additionally, there are several more products that need to be evaluated. Deer damage remains a constant battle for soybean producers bordering heavily forested areas and if the market continues to be unfavorable, every lost soybean plant in a field will cause financial strain on farmers.



LSU AgCenter Radio Spot



As a reminder, the Avoyelles Parish LSU AgCenter has a weekly radio segment that airs every Wednesday morning. The radio spot offers 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 gives 4-H youth the platform to improve communication abilities and develop key skills regarding media relations. We want to extend our appreciation to Mr. Todd Laborde, owner of the radio station, and his staff for allowing us to reach our clientele.

Future Horticulture Seminars

Avoyelles Parish 2026 Lawn and Garden Talks



Join us for after-lunch coffee and tea as we discuss various lawn and garden topics. These sessions are designed to help gardeners of all experience levels learn seasonal strategies and improve their growing success. Bring your questions and enjoy a relaxed, informative hour with fellow garden enthusiasts!

Location: 8592 LA-1, Mansura, LA 71350

Time: 1 PM – 2 PM

June 26 – Winter Squash

August 19 – Garden Planning Tools

October 7 – Strawberries



To register call (318) 964-2245 or scan QR code

Hay Contest Winner and A New, Old Invasive Species



Area Livestock Agent Brittany Zaunbrecher

Congratulations to Mr. Richard Dupuy of Avoyelles Parish for being recognized at the Louisiana Forage Conference as the Overall Winner in the State Fair of Louisiana Hay Contest with his Perennial Peanut Hay. His winning sample had 16.69% Crude Protein and Relative Forage Quality Value of 197. The hay contest takes place each year and entries are due by August 1. Producers can work with their Extension Agent to test their hay through LSU's Forage testing lab and get entered for the 2026 contest if interested. Reach out to Brittany Zaunbrecher at bzaunbrecher@agcenter.lsu.edu for more information about the contest.

On December 3, the LSU AgCenter hosted an Invasive Pest Workshop, highlighting invasive pests in Louisiana's crops and livestock. A big topic in recent months in the cattle industry has been the New World Screwworm. The New World Screwworm is a parasitic fly native to the Western Hemisphere. It lays eggs in the living tissue of fresh wounds in warm-blooded animals. The larvae (maggots) feed on the host's flesh, causing severe wounds and often death if untreated.

The pest was eradicated in the U.S. in the 1960s. Since then, it occasionally reemerges and has resurfaced in Central America and Mexico. They are controlled only through the release of sterile males, known as the sterile insect technique (SIT). This approach, along with regular active surveillance and livestock inspections, has proven highly successful. As of May 2025, renewed attention to this parasite is crucial, as it may pose future risks to livestock and wildlife.

The name screwworm refers to the feeding behavior exhibited by the maggots as they burrow (screw) into the wound. These maggots and their feeding cause extensive damage by tearing at the hosts' tissue with sharp mouth hooks. The wound will become larger and deeper as more and more eggs hatch and larvae feed on the living tissue. This results in serious and often deadly damage to the animal if not discovered and treated.

Continual and regular monitoring and evaluation of all livestock are important for herd and flock biosecurity and health considerations. Producers should be alert for possible signs associated with potential infestation including:

- Foul-smelling wounds with visible maggots
- Animals biting or licking at wounds
- Lesions in navels, ears, dehorning or branding sites
- Unusual restlessness or lethargy



New World Screwworm Larva

In the New World screwworm, the larval stage is responsible for inflicting significant injury and economic loss. These larvae inhabit the wounds of living animals, where they cause extensive tissue damage. Mature larvae can reach 17 mm in length (2/3 of an inch) and have spines that protrude from the body and wrap around in a spiral giving them the name screwworm. Official identification of larvae is based largely on the presence or absence of dual internal breathing tubes. Confirmation of the fly identity can be determined only by a trained individual.

Adult New World screwworms are metallic blue blow flies with three distinct stripes that run down the top (thorax) of the fly just behind the head with large orange eyes. This fly resembles the closely related secondary screwworm, which is also a metallic blue blow fly with three distinct stripes, but the stripes all begin at the same point behind the head. Adult secondary screwworms do not deposit eggs on living animals, and their larvae do not infest them. Therefore, they do not pose a threat to animal health.

Screwworm infestations occur in Jamaica, Cuba and across South America. Increasing detections of this fly north of its containment barrier, the Darien Gap in Panama, were noted in 2023. Typical insecticide suppression of the New World screwworm is less effective than with other insect pests due to its wide host range and occurrence on wildlife.



New World Screwworm Adult Blow Fly

On December 4, the US Food and Drug Administration conditionally approved a drug for prevention and treatment of New World Screwworm larval infestations. Exzolt Cattle-CA1 is a topical solution made by Merck Animal Health and can be used in beef cattle 2 months old or older and replacement dairy heifers less than 20 months of age. Exzolt Cattle-CA1 is eligible for conditional approval because it is intended to prevent and treat serious or life-threatening diseases in cattle, it addresses unmet animal health needs, and demonstrating effectiveness of the drug requires complex or particularly difficult studies. Exzolt Cattle-CA1 received expedited review through a priority zoonotic animal drug (PZAD) designation, an authority provided to the FDA under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

To prevent unsafe drug residues in meat from treated cattle and ensure human food safety, the slaughter withdrawal period for Exzolt Cattle-CA1 is 98 days. This product is not for use in lactating dairy cattle, dairy calves, veal calves, or bulls at least 1 year old that are intended for breeding.

Exzolt Cattle-CA1 topical solution is available by prescription only and dispensed in 250 mL, 1L and 5L bottles. The single-use, ready-to-use product is applied directly to the hair and skin in a narrow strip extending along the top of a bovine's back from between the shoulder blades to the base of the tail (withers to tailhead along the dorsal midline).

Antiparasitic drugs such as Exzolt Cattle-CA1 should be used only when medically necessary, in accordance with the product labeling, and as part of a comprehensive parasite management strategy.

The USDA also has a dedicated website, screwworm.gov for all the latest information on the current status and what you need to know as producers, veterinarians, pet owners, etc.

2026 Crop Production Meetings Announced



2026 LSU AgCenter Crop Production Meetings

Avoyelles, Grant, and Rapides Parishes

Avoyelles Soybean and Feed Grain Meeting

January 20, 2026 8:00AM – 11:45AM
Avoyelles Parish LSU AgCenter
8592 HWY 1 Mansura, LA 71350

Avoyelles/Rapides Rice Production Clinic

February 4, 2026 8:30AM – 12:00PM
Avoyelles Parish LSU AgCenter
8592 HWY 1 Mansura, LA 71350

CenLA Crops and Cattle Forum

February 10, 2026 8:00AM – 11:45AM
State Evacuation Shelter
8125 HWY 71 Alexandria, LA 71302

Avoyelles/Rapides Sugarcane Meeting

February 19, 2026 8:30AM – 12:00PM
Haas Auditorium
208 Pershing Ave. Bunkie, LA 71322





For more information, contact your local LSU AgCenter Office

Avoyelles Parish LSU AgCenter | 8592 HWY 1, Suite 1 | Mansura, Louisiana 71350 | Phone: 318-964-2245 | Fax: 318-964-2259
Office Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

For the latest research-based information on just about anything, visit our website:

LSUAgCenter.com

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