

LOUISIANA Agriculture

Vol. 57, No. 2, Spring 2014
Published Since 1957

Assuring Our Future Through Scientific Research and Education



Happy 100th Birthday, Cooperative Extension Service

Editor's Note: This special issue of Louisiana Agriculture is one of the ways the LSU AgCenter is celebrating the 100th birthday of the Cooperative Extension Service in Louisiana. The articles in it call attention to some of the major programs that have helped shape the lives and livelihood of people in Louisiana. Following is a national perspective excerpted from "Cooperative Extension: A Century of Innovation," a commentary in the February 2014 issue of the Journal of Extension written by Frankie Gould, Communications Director, LSU AgCenter; Douglas Steele, AgriLife Extension Director, Texas A&M University; and William J. Woodrum, consultant with the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy.

May 8, 2014, was the day 100 years ago that the Smith-Lever Act was signed into law, creating the Cooperative Extension Service. The act was introduced by Sen. Hoke Smith of Georgia and Rep. A.F. Lever of South Carolina to expand the vocational, agricultural and home demonstration programs in rural America. The creation of outreach for a university supported by federal, state and local funding was a unique and innovative idea growing from the land-grant universities, which had been founded to provide practical higher education opportunities to common people.

The movement that led to the passage of the Smith-Lever Act can be traced back to the late 19th century and the work of such inspirational leaders as Seaman A. Knapp (1833-1911) and George Washington Carver (1864-1943). Knapp became famous for his work with introducing rice as an alternative crop in the South and for helping Southern farmers adapt to using a faster growing cotton crop to protect themselves from boll weevils. Carver was instrumental in teaching Southern farmers, particularly African-American farmers, about the advantages of alternative crops such as peanuts and sweet potatoes.

These two individuals and many other leaders realized that the knowledge being generated at the land-grant colleges needed a broader audience if it was truly going to influence the rural society of the day. They worked hard to expose farmers to the new technologies and techniques coming forth from agriculture schools by doing on-farm demonstrations, field trips and home visits to show the practical applications of this knowledge. Knapp used a mixture of federal and private funds to hire field agents and start on-farm demonstrations. The effect on agriculture production in this country was rapid and firmly established a trend that would eventually position the United States as one of the top agricultural economies in the world.

From these early agrarian roots, the extension movement quickly spread to other areas. The primary emphasis of extension programs in those first few decades included improving crops and animals, developing cooperative marketing, fighting diseases and pests, establishing community gardens, and responding to emergency relief needs of both war and depression.

This expansion of knowledge and meeting needs would set the tone for Cooperative Extension's first century. Milestones included the passage of the Sea Grant Act in 1966 and creation of the Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program in 1968. Cooperative Extension has excelled at its core mission of bringing the research-based knowledge of the land-grant universities to the people of our country.

While the centennial provides an opportunity to pause and review the tremendous accomplishments that Cooperative Extension can claim, it also provides an occasion to consider its place in contemporary society and lay the groundwork for another century of accomplishments.



Seaman A. Knapp
(1833-1911)



George Washington
Carver (1864-1943)

LOUISIANA Agriculture

EDITORIAL BOARD:

John S. Russin, Chairman
Linda Foster Benedict
Michael Blazier
Rick Bogren
Melissa Cater
Matt Fannin
Dustin Harrell
Claudia Husseneder
Kathy Kramer
Megan La Peyre
Donald Thompson

EDITOR: Linda Foster Benedict

ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Rick Bogren

DESIGNER: Kathy Kramer

PHOTO EDITOR: John Wozniak

CONTRIBUTORS: Tobie Blanchard, Janet Fox, Craig Gautreaux, Randy LaBauve, Elma Sue McCallum, Olivia McClure, Johnny Morgan, Karen Overstreet and Bruce Schultz

WEB DESIGN: Ronda Clark, Kathy Kramer and Megan Smith

Louisiana Agriculture is published quarterly by the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station. Subscriptions are free. You may also subscribe to a Web version of the magazine, which is available at www.LSUAgCenter.com. Please go to the "Louisiana Agriculture Magazine" site if you would like to receive an email notification when a new issue is online. If you would like to download the magazine to your e-reader, go to the magazine's website, choose the correct format, and follow the directions on your mobile device. For more information or to subscribe, please contact:

Linda Foster Benedict, Editor
Louisiana Agriculture
115 Knapp Hall
110 LSU Union Square
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
(225) 578-2263
lbenedict@agcenter.lsu.edu



www.LSUAgCenter.com

William B. Richardson, LSU Vice President for Agriculture
Louisiana State University Agricultural Center
Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station
Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service
LSU College of Agriculture

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

The mention of a pesticide or use of a trade name for any product is intended only as a report of research and does not constitute an endorsement or recommendation by the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station, nor does it imply that a mentioned product is superior to other products of a similar nature not mentioned. Uses of pesticides discussed here have not necessarily been approved by governmental regulatory agencies. Information on approved uses normally appears on the manufacturer's label.



LOUISIANA Agriculture



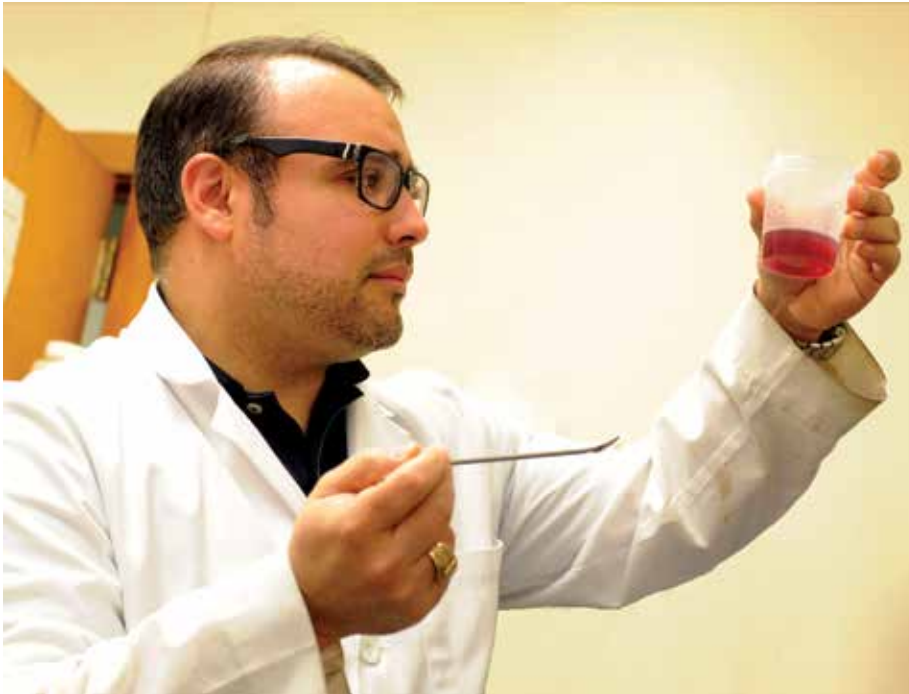
FEATURES

- 2 Happy 100th Birthday, Cooperative Extension Service**
- 8 Knapp lays the groundwork for Cooperative Extension**
Olivia McClure
- 9 11 Directors Lead Louisiana Extension**
Olivia McClure
- 11 Extension, Sea Grant agents prove their worth to seafood industry**
Bruce Schultz
- 14 Louisiana Leads the Nation with the Master Farmer Program**
Bruce Schultz
- 16 Demonstrations remain the core of extension programs**
Rick Bogren
- 17 Early agents use trains to bring education to rural areas**
Randy LaBauve
- 18 The Extraordinary Mary Mims**
Randy LaBauve
- 20 Extension in war on many fronts**
Randy LaBauve
- 21 Extension helps communities develop**
Rick Bogren
- 22 Extension Homemakers become community leaders**
Karen Overstreet
- 24 Producing leaders for Louisiana agriculture**
Rick Bogren
- 25 Williams spends 50 years in Extension**
Olivia McClure
- 26 County agent carries on legacy**
Tobie Blanchard
- 28 Integrated pest management springs forth after 1960**
Bruce Schultz
- 30 Small-scale landowners benefit from forestry extension**
Rick Bogren
- 32 Relief and recovery: Extension in times of crisis**
Tobie Blanchard
- 34 Helping People Raise Cattle for 100 Years**
Bruce Schultz
- 35 Ag Summary captures agriculture history for 35 years**
Olivia McClure
- 36 Teaching Nutrition: A Basic Goal of Extension**
Olivia McClure
- 38 Extension helps teach nutrition to low-income people**
Olivia McClure
- 40 4-H Begins in Louisiana**
Craig Gautreaux
- 42 Volunteers are the heart of 4-H**
Janet Fox
- 42 4-H Museum offers trip down memory lane**
Craig Gautreaux
- 43 Master Gardeners: One way extension moved to urban areas**
Johnny Morgan

DEPARTMENTS

- 4 AgCenter News**
- 6 College of Ag**
- 7 International Programs**

On the cover: This photo was taken during a reenactment of extension work in the 1930s for the video documentary project, "Agents of Change: The Story of Louisiana Cooperative Extension," produced by Randy LaBauve, associate communications specialist with LSU AgCenter Communications. Terry Jones, left, and Tommy Roy are members of the Red Stick Chapter Model A Ford Club. Photo by John Wozniak



LSU AgCenter food scientist Luis Espinoza helps tenants at the AgCenter's Food Incubator turn home recipes into products that can be marketed in grocery stores. Photo by Olivia McClure

Scientist turns home recipes into food products

Transforming home kitchen recipes into products that can be sold in stores involves science. Fortunately for LSU AgCenter Food Incubator tenants, food scientist Luis Espinoza is on hand to help them do everything from keeping better records to making a product all natural.

The Food Incubator offers tenants the equipment and expertise they need to develop unique food products and get them on store shelves.

Many tenants come to the incubator so they can make and sell larger quantities of their products. Doing so requires scaling up their recipes, but it's not as simple as increasing an amount from two tablespoons to 40, for example.

Before work begins in the kitchen, Espinoza reviews with tenants the process of making their products step by step. In addition to recipe directions, Espinoza and tenants cover topics such as how they keep records, quality control mechanisms, recall plans and how much their recipe yields. Knowing each of these things is crucial, Espinoza said, because even small details matter if changes need to be made.

Next, Espinoza takes tenants to the kitchen to show them how to use and care for the equipment. They also discuss personal safety and hygiene.

When tenants begin working in the incubator kitchen, they first make a test batch that Espinoza analyzes and asks questions about. Often, consistency is an issue.

For example, tenants unaccustomed to commercial food production may not know that temperatures and measurements must be followed precisely.

Espinoza helps tenants convert volume-based measurements to weight-based measurements. It is easy to lose count of tablespoons, for example, so it is better to measure ingredients by weight. It is sometimes a challenge to adapt, Espinoza said, but weighing ingredients ensures that recipes produce the same results every time.

Many trials are required when making significant changes to a product, such as making it all natural. Espinoza takes such a product to the lab and dissects it to identify potential replacements for certain preservatives and other ingredients that stores such as Whole Foods do not allow.

"Sometimes, the preservative that I intended to use is not compatible with one of the ingredients," Espinoza said. "That's when it becomes a little bit challenging because maybe that ingredient gives us a specific flavor note."

Tenants are involved every step of the way because they know their products and markets best. They are often curious and want to make their products better, Espinoza said, although some do not make any major changes to their recipes. For others, though, the incubator unlocks the door to innovation that improves the product's marketability and commercial success.

Olivia McClure

Researcher tries to make sugarcane resistant to brown rust disease

Brown rust fungus poses a serious threat to Louisiana's nearly \$1 billion sugarcane industry. Thanks to funding from the American Sugar Cane League, LSU AgCenter molecular biologist Niranjana Baisakh is studying DNA markers in sugarcane associated with resistance to the fungus. He hopes to help sugarcane breeders develop varieties that block the fungus at the molecular level.

The fungus, which creates orange to reddish brown lesions on sugarcane leaves, is spread by spores that blow through the wind. The lesions' damage prevents leaves from collecting enough light to effectively perform photosynthesis. Thus, the plant cannot produce sufficient energy to grow and be healthy.

Baisakh said the yield of nonresistant cane varieties can be reduced by 20 percent to 50 percent.

Scientists have been studying sugarcane resistance to brown rust fungus for more than 20 years, Baisakh said, but a gene called Bru1 is the only indicator of resistance located so far in sugarcane. The frequency of Bru1 in Louisiana sugarcane varieties is low, meaning it has not been used effectively as a means of breeding resistant varieties, he said.

However, there are some varieties that are resistant to the fungus that do not contain Bru1.

Baisakh's goal is to track DNA characteristics of fungus-resistant varieties to determine genetic components of resistance. Once resistance genes besides Bru1 are discovered, varieties containing them can be crossed with those with Bru1 to form "gene pyramids" that force the fungus to overcome multiple genes instead of one.

It is important to identify these alternate resistance genes because brown rust fungus often adapts to sugarcane varieties as acreages increase.

"If you have just one variety planted and it is resistant, then the fungus has the ability to adapt and overcome resistance because the fungus has no known alternative host," Baisakh said. "You can't depend on just one resistance gene."

Baisakh works closely in this effort with other AgCenter researchers – Jeff Hoy, Collins Kimbeng, Michael Pontif and Kenneth Gravois – and Anna Hale, a researcher with the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service Sugarcane Research Unit in Houma.

Olivia McClure

Louisiana wheat crop does well despite cold

Recent high winds could cause lodging problems for the state's 175,000 acres of wheat, but otherwise the crop is doing well after coming through a cold, wet early spring, according to LSU AgCenter wheat specialist Josh Lofton.

"Overall, it's fantastic," he said. "I haven't talked to any farmers who said they are disappointed with their crop."

Lofton said wheat in south and central Louisiana is further along, making it more vulnerable to falling over, or lodging, from high winds. But he said most of the wheat in those areas is planted on flat ground, and that makes harvest easier in contrast to the raised beds more commonly used in north Louisiana.

Disease pressure is the lightest in many years, he said. Fungicides are not allowed on wheat after flowering, but disease after that stage usually has minimal effects. "Right now it's a race between the disease and the wheat."

But wheat prices are good, ranging from \$5 to \$6 a bushel, he said. Some of that is because of a cold winter and political turmoil in Ukraine as well as a hard, late-winter freeze in the Great Plains.

Cold temperatures hit the Louisiana crop also, but the effects will be minor, Lofton told more than 100 people at a wheat and oat field day at the AgCenter Macon Ridge Research Station on April 16.

Lofton said the mid-April cold snap came at a vulnerable growth stage for wheat north of Alexandria and slowed the crop's growth. He said the late harvest will delay soybean planting on fields that are double cropped.

Of the estimated 175,000 acres planted,



Steve Harrison, LSU AgCenter wheat breeder, shows farmers and seed company representatives the different varieties being tested at the Macon Ridge Research Station. Harrison said the crop is progressing later than usual this year because of the cold, wet winter and fall. Photo by Bruce Schultz

Lofton expects the actual harvest will be in excess of 150,000 acres. "We probably lost quite a bit of the acres because of the temperature and moisture," he said.

He said the early-planted crop will be affected most by the overall winter and spring weather, but the recent cold front should only cause superficial damage to most fields. "For the most part, it wasn't as bad as it could have been."

LSU AgCenter wheat breeder Steve Harrison showed test plots of varieties and experimental lines of oats and wheat. He said the LSU AgCenter is one of only four universities to have an oat breeding program. The others are University of Florida, North Carolina State University and Texas A&M. The four universities work together under the Sungrains cooperative to develop new oat varieties

Some oat varieties are bred for deer

plots while others are intended for livestock feed or grain.

A new oat line, FL 7020 R6, could be released by the LSU AgCenter and the University of Florida for cattle forage, Harrison said. "This is a really exciting oat because of its excellent forage potential and resistance to rust."

Harrison showed several test plots of varieties and experimental lines. Farmers should adjust planting times according to maturity differences, he said. "The late varieties need to be planted a little early the early varieties need to be planted a little late."

Harrison said an LSU AgCenter variety sold as Terral LA841 has been a proven performer with good disease resistance for many years and has unique stripe rust resistance that is being studied by graduate students. **Bruce Schultz**



Girl Scouts learn about wetlands

Carol Franz, LSU AgCenter and Sea Grant agent, on the left, helps Marni Fullington, on the right, identify macroinvertebrates found in a pond at Shell's Robert (La.) Training and Conference Center. The learning station was one of four stations set up at the center to help young people learn about the importance of Louisiana's wetlands. This event was one of many held across Louisiana as part of the 4-H Youth Wetlands Education program. Fullington is a member of Girl Scout Troop 30010 in Mandeville. Photo by Craig Gautreaux

Schuster to lead fundraising for agriculture



Dinah Schuster. Photo by Olivia McClure

Dinah Schuster has been named senior director of development for agriculture at LSU. In this newly created LSU Foundation position, she will develop a comprehensive fundraising plan for the LSU AgCenter

and College of Agriculture.

Schuster, who is the former director of presidential initiatives at Montana State University, said her priorities include identifying synergies between the AgCenter and the college as well as areas of need among faculty.

"There are a lot of talented people doing extraordinary work at LSU," Schuster said. "Along with state appropriations, private charitable support will provide us with the necessary resources to achieve even greater things."

At her previous university, Schuster

launched and directed the Student Ambassador Program, a multiple-year professional internship for juniors and seniors interested in developing their leadership skills through the foundation's donor and alumni relations outreach activities.

Schuster wants to involve LSU students in her efforts because they are the beneficiaries of donors' generosity. They also remind potential supporters of their college experience, she said, which is key in fundraising for higher education.

Through enhanced philanthropic efforts, Schuster hopes to give more people a chance to be part of a coordinated plan to advance LSU and its agriculture programs. That is important, she said, because agriculture affects everyone. Providing students, faculty and staff with appropriate resources is essential to our future.

"I absolutely believe that we are transforming lives and making life better for people," she said. "There is no better investment than in our land-grant university because we create opportunities."

Olivia McClure

Poultry Judging Team sweeps competition

The LSU College of Agriculture Poultry Judging Team swept the competition at the USPOULTRY National Poultry Judging Contest April 2-4 on the LSU campus. LSU's team competed against nine other universities.

"The poultry judging courses and contests provide students with concrete, hands-on experience in assessing the quality of live birds and poultry market products such as carcasses and eggs," said Theresia Lavergne, LSU AgCenter poultry specialist, who organized and conducted the national intercollegiate contest.

Team awards included First Place Team Overall, First Place Team in Poultry

Production, First Place Team in Market Product Grading and Third Place Team in Breed Selection.

Individual awards included Overall High Individual, Nicholas Adams; Second Place High Individual, BJ McDill; 10th Place High Individual in Breed Selection, Jacob Moise; First Place High Individual in Market Product Grading, Nicholas Adams; and Second Place High Individual in Market Product Grading, BJ McDill.

Dennis Ingram, retired poultry science professor, trained and coached the judging team. The U.S. Poultry and Egg Association sponsored the contest. **Tobie Blanchard**



The LSU College of Agriculture Poultry Judging Team won several awards at the USPOULTRY National Poultry Judging contest. Team members include Jacob Moise, BJ McDill, Nicholas Adams, Dennis Ingram (coach), Daniel Moreno and Travis Delcambre (assistant coach). Photo by Johnny Morgan

Students learn food FUNDamentals

Baylor Meche was trying to make the perfect egg over easy. The LSU freshman was cooking for his classmates in Judy Myhand's Food FUNDamentals class in the LSU College of Agriculture's School of Nutrition and Food Sciences. The biology major and lone male in the class decided to sign up for Food FUNDamentals with a friend.

"I wanted something that could give me a useful life skill," Meche said "I've learned to cook things I never would have thought of and prepare foods in healthier ways that are really amazing."

Across the kitchen, Brooke Ford was using a cookie cutter to cut hearts out of slices of bread. She then put the bread in a warm skillet and cracked an egg in the heart-shaped hole.

"I took the class because I wanted to try something new and expand my taste buds," Ford, a freshman in nutrition, said.

Myhand's class is giving college students ideas, techniques and recipes that they have can work from to create healthy meals for themselves and their friends and families.

Abbey LeBoeuf, a freshman in nutrition, said she wants to eat more than just cereal and sandwiches.

"I want to learn how to cook things that are healthy for me," LeBoeuf said. In the class she has already learned how to make quick and easy dishes such as macaroni and cheese that is healthier than the boxed versions.

Each class centers on a different theme. The theme a week before Easter was eggs. The students prepared deviled eggs, eggs and avocado on toast, eggs baked in bell peppers and huevos rancheros among other dishes. The students get to enjoy their work at the end of each class.

Myhand said that by taking this class, the students will master different cooking techniques. She also arms them with the science behind cooking, food safety information and economical ways to shop for food.

Tobie Blanchard



Baylor Meche, a freshman in Judy Myhand's Food FUNDamentals class, learns to prepare eggs. Photo by Tobie Blanchard

International Programs

Panama official seeks stronger ties with business, agriculture

Panama's relationship with Louisiana could be key to economic and educational development in the Central American country, according to Mario Jaramillo, Panamanian ambassador to the United States.

Jaramillo visited LSU on April 15 to discuss higher education with administrators and Panamanian students. A 1969 graduate of LSU in business management, Jaramillo said increased cooperation with universities like LSU would help equip more Panamanians with internationally competitive skill sets as well as an understanding of how other countries do business.

Panama has undergone many changes in recent decades, Jaramillo said, which has placed new demands on the workforce.

"We are not only a country that has economic growth — we're also the highest in middle class growth," he said.

The opening of the Panama Canal in 1914 gave rise to a maritime sector that has grown significantly and attracted foreign

businesses to the country. As a result, young people are more internationally minded and more likely than their elders to speak English, Jaramillo said.

Still, he said, Panama needs to improve in two areas: business ethics and education, particularly in the English language. With more international companies moving into the area, Panama must be able to meet the world economy's standards to succeed, he said.

Louisiana and Panama have many things in common, such as issues with wetlands, which Jaramillo believes are areas for cooperation and learning.

LSU President F. King Alexander said the university used to have a stronger relationship with Panama and other Central American countries, but it has been in decline since the 1970s.

"We can either fight and resist this change that's inevitable, or we can open up doors and make it happen far more smoothly and prepare the next generation for a new-looking America," Alexander said.

Jaramillo said it is common for Panamanian undergraduates to study for two years at universities in Panama, then transfer to American universities to complete their degrees.

Improving recruitment of students from Central America to LSU is also important, said LSU Vice President for Agriculture Bill Richardson.

"These students are superb," Richardson said. "Nurturing our connections with countries like Panama allows us to recruit high-quality international students to LSU, where they have opportunities to study and work in unique environments, such as the LSU AgCenter's research stations."

Jose Brandao, a food science master's student from Panama, said it is important to enhance international linkages between universities. He earned his bachelor's degree from Zamorano Pan American Agricultural School in Honduras, which has many international students and frequently collaborates with the AgCenter. **Olivia McClure**

Zamorano scholars gain experience

After a semester studying and working with LSU AgCenter faculty, nine visiting scholars from Zamorano Pan American Agricultural School in Honduras are returning home with some valuable practical experience under their belts.

Zamorano, an undergraduate-only university, requires its students to complete professional internships. The AgCenter's visiting scholar program helps students fulfill requirements while giving them a chance to work with top-notch faculty on innovative projects in labs and research stations.

Food science student Franklin Bonilla worked in AgCenter food scientist Subramaniam Sathivel's food processing lab on a project to improve shelf life of shrimp and catfish using nanotechnology. He also visited local processing plants, which he said offered insight into how his food science skills can be used.

After graduation, Bonilla plans to pursue a master's degree at LSU, partly because of his experience as a visiting scholar.

"I like the food science area," he said. "This gave me good experience and opened more opportunities in my future."

Students also say they've benefitted from being exposed to Louisiana's unique culture and getting to improve their English.

The AgCenter's International Programs office has collaborated with Zamorano



Visiting students from Zamorano Pan American Agricultural School in Honduras are returning home after studying for a semester with LSU AgCenter faculty members. First row: International Programs assistant coordinator Susan Karimiha, Ivan Guevara, Martha Escoto, Ingrid Osorio, Marggie Quiroz, Alicia Bustamante. Second row: Emilio Gutierrez, Anna Borjas from EARTH University in Costa Rica, Hugo Anzueto, LSU Vice President for Agriculture Bill Richardson, Janny Mendoza, Franklin Bonilla. Photo by Olivia McClure

since the early 1990s and launched a visiting scholar program in 2005. Since then, the AgCenter has hosted about 60 scholars from Zamorano, said Susan Karimiha, assistant program coordinator for International Programs.

Scholars who come to LSU in the spring semester are fourth-year undergraduates who work in labs and take classes to finish their graduation requirements. There is also a 15-week summer scholar program aimed at preparing Zamorano alumni for grad school.

Zamorano does not offer graduate pro-

grams, but some of this semester's visiting scholars plan to return to LSU in the fall to begin graduate studies.

The relationship with Zamorano exemplifies the AgCenter's commitment to taking the mission of improving lives through research and education worldwide, according to Bill Richardson, LSU vice president for agriculture.

"This not only gives opportunities to students from other countries — it also benefits those here at home," Richardson said.

Olivia McClure

Knapp lays the groundwork for Cooperative Extension

Olivia McClure

Seaman Knapp's legacy goes far beyond the building named after him on LSU's campus. Through demonstration farms he set up in southwestern Louisiana, Knapp pioneered a system for teaching farmers about modern, research-based techniques, laying the groundwork for Cooperative Extension as it is known today.

Knapp was born in 1833 and grew up on his family's farm in New York. He studied liberal arts in college and became an instructor and administrator at the Fort Edward Collegiate Institute in New York. In 1866, Knapp moved to a farm in Iowa and worked as a pastor and head of the Iowa State School for the Blind.

Knapp suffered an injury and infection that bound him to a wheelchair for eight years. He spent his time reading and became absorbed by agricultural research. An educator at heart, Knapp was interested in how to best train farmers in modern, more effective techniques. In 1876, Knapp began writing articles and giving speeches about progressive methods he tested on his farm, where he raised sheep and pigs.

Knapp's work led him to Iowa State College of Agriculture in 1879, where he was a professor and set up the first demonstration farm. Inspired by the experiments conducted on the campus farm, Knapp pushed for a bill — later called the Hatch Act of 1887 — that provides federal dollars to create agricultural experiment stations at land-grant colleges.

In the mid-1880s, Knapp relocated to Louisiana. He bought 160 acres of land in southwestern Louisiana, where he founded the town of Vinton. Local farmers relied on traditional methods and tools, offering Knapp a laboratory to test his theories and modernize agriculture in the area. He introduced farmers to upland rice and encouraged them to use the more efficient techniques he developed.

However, many farmers were reluctant to change their

ways. Some of those who did struggled with their crops, became discouraged and moved away.

Knapp, a firm believer in agricultural demonstration, convinced some friends from Iowa to move to Louisiana, establish model farms and help local growers with problems they encountered in the fields. They became the first agriculture extension agents. The rice crop flourished and became the successful major crop it still is today in southwestern Louisiana.

Knapp took this model with him to Texas in the early 1900s, where the boll weevil was wreaking havoc on cotton. Through demonstration, he taught farmers how to protect their crop against the insects and introduced them to alternative crops such as corn and peas.

In 1909, Michigan Congressman James McLaughlin proposed a bill that would give states money to administer extension services like those Knapp modeled through land-grant colleges. There was no role for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in McLaughlin's bill, which caused debate and eventually the bill's failure. Knapp died two years later.

This was the Progressive Era, however, and just about every industry was looking for ways to modernize using scientific research.

Three years after Knapp's death, Sen. Hoke Smith of Georgia and Rep. Frank Lever of South Carolina introduced legislation that partnered the USDA with land-grant universities, creating the Cooperative Extension Service. The federal government appropriates funds matched by states to provide practical, research-based information on agriculture and home economics through county-level extension agents. The Smith-Lever Act became law on May 8, 1914.

Olivia McClure is a student worker in LSU AgCenter Communications.

Michael Hoke Smith (1855-1931)

Hoke Smith was born in Newton, N.C., and moved with his family to Georgia in 1872. A year later, he passed the bar exam and began practicing law in Atlanta. He served on the Fulton County and Georgia Democratic conventions, was president of the Atlanta Board of Education and owned the Atlanta Journal. In return for the newspaper's strong support of his 1892 campaign, Grover Cleveland appointed Smith secretary of the interior in 1893. He pushed for economic development in the South. In 1907, he was elected governor of Georgia, a position he used to establish Jim Crow laws and railroad reform. Soon after being reelected in 1911, Smith was selected to fill an unexpired term in the U.S. Senate. He was reelected to the Senate in 1914.



Asbury Francis "Frank" Lever (1875-1940)

Frank Lever was born near Springhill, S.C., and initially worked as a schoolteacher. From 1897 to 1901, he was Rep. J. William Stokes' private secretary in Washington, D.C. During that time, Lever attended law school at Georgetown University. In 1901, he was elected the South Carolina House of Representatives. Later that year, Stokes died and Lever was chosen to fill his term. He won several reelections and served in Congress until 1919. In 1913, he became chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture. After his time in Congress, Lever worked for the Federal Farm Loan Board, Federal Farm Board and Farm Credit Administration.



11 Directors Lead Louisiana Extension

Olivia McClure

William Rufus Dodson, 1914-1917

Dodson was born in 1867 and grew up in Belton, Texas. He held degrees from the University of Missouri and Harvard. He came to LSU as a botany



instructor. In 1904 he became director of the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station. In this position, he organized the first boys' corn clubs in Louisiana. From

1909 to 1928, he served as the first dean of the College of Agriculture. In 1914 when the Smith-Lever Act passed, he took on the duties of directing the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service. Until 1917, Dodson led all three divisions at agriculture at LSU — the College of Ag, the experiment station and extension. During World War I, he served on the National Agricultural Advisory Committee and led the Federal Food Production Campaign in the South. He moved to New Iberia, La., to work for the federal government in 1929. He returned to LSU in 1936. His obituary in the New Orleans Item says he stayed until retiring in 1938 but does not say what he did. The Times-Picayune says he returned and was dean of the college until 1944. He died in 1951. The Dodson Auditorium on LSU's campus is named after him.

William Robert Perkins, 1917-1928

Perkins was born in 1865 in Oktibbeha County, Miss. He attended Mississippi State College, now known as Mississippi State University, and worked as a chemist, agronomist and professor in Mississippi and South Carolina.



In 1915 he came to LSU to be an extension forage crop specialist. Two years later he became director of extension. When he left LSU in 1928, he returned to Mississippi to be assistant director of the South Mississippi Experiment Station. In 1930 he became director of Mississippi's agricultural experiment station. He died in 1939.

William Benjamin Mercier, 1928-1931

Mercier was born in 1868 in Summit, Miss. He graduated from Mississippi A & M College, today called Mississippi State University, in 1892. He worked three years as farm manager



of the Louisiana Experiment Station in Baton Rouge, then returned to Mississippi to operate a large farm. He became a county agent in Amite County

in 1909. Seaman Knapp recognized Mercier's hard work and secured him a job with Farmers Cooperative Demonstration Work in Washington, D.C., where he became a Southern regional agent. In 1923, W.R. Perkins asked Mercier to come to Louisiana to be his assistant director. Mercier became director when Perkins retired in 1928. In 1931 he became director emeritus and continued work on several agriculture research projects. He died in 1939.

John Wesley Bateman, 1931-1940

Bateman was born in 1884 in Washington Parish. He attended Louisiana State Normal College, today called Northwestern State University, and LSU. He taught elementary and high school and eventually worked for the Louisiana Department of Education. He also served as head of rural education at Louisiana State Normal College and was a county agent

in Natchitoches Parish. In 1931, he became director of extension at LSU.

At a 1940 meeting, the LSU Board of Supervisors discussed Gov. Sam Jones' criticism of extension. Jones was quoted in the Baton Rouge State-Times as saying there were "too many county agents standing around on [street] corners." Bateman



was out of town when this meeting took place. The morning he returned to campus, Acting LSU President Paul M. Hebert summoned him for a meeting, after which Bateman resigned. He was replaced by the assistant director, H.C. Sanders. Bateman died in 1969.

Harry Clayton Sanders, 1940-1961

Sanders was born in 1898 on a farm in Lincoln Parish. He studied agriculture at the Clemson Agricultural and Mechanical College in South Carolina.



He worked as an agriculture teacher in Georgia in 1920. He then moved to Louisiana to teach vocational agriculture. In 1923 he became a district extension agent

for northwestern Louisiana. In 1940 he became extension director and held that position for 21 years. He published a book about extension instruction techniques in 1972.

John Cox, 1961-1978

Cox was born in 1912 in Peach, Texas, and grew up in Caddo Parish, where he was a 4-H'er. He received bachelor's and master's degrees in horticulture from LSU. He was an agricultural agent for the St. Louis-San Francisco Railroad then served in

World War II. He began working in extension in 1945 and moved all the way up to the director position in 1961. In 1967 he initiated the Giant Step

Program, which strived to double the value of farming in Louisiana from \$1 billion to \$2 billion. After five years, the value had increased to only \$1.7 million, so he launched Giant Step II, which did a detailed study of every parish's agricultural potential and educational and technological needs. By the time he retired, agriculture was a \$4 billion industry in the state. He helped promote the farming of soybeans and crawfish when they were unpopular. He also worked with Steele Burden to establish the Rural Life Museum in Baton Rouge. Cox died in 2003.



Denver Loupe, 1978-1993

Loupe participated in 4-H and FFA as a boy. He attended Northwestern State University for a year then entered the U.S. Navy. He returned to Northwestern for two more years, then came to LSU and graduated with a degree in agriculture. He went on to



receive a master's degree and doctorate at LSU. He taught school for three years in Ascension Parish and then became an extension agent in St. James Parish. From 1954 to 1978

he was a sugarcane specialist. Early in his career as a specialist, he helped institute the sugarcane high yield program, which still exists today. He became plant science division leader and then director of extension in 1978.

Bruce Flint, 1993-1995

Flint grew up on a farm in northeastern Louisiana. He earned a bachelor's degree in agricultural economics from LSU then served four years in the U.S. Army. In 1956, he began his first exten-

sion job as an assistant county agent in Union Parish. While moving through the ranks of Extension, he received a master's degree in extension education from LSU and a doctorate in cooperative extension administration from the University of Wisconsin. In 1980, he became assistant director of extension and was responsible for personnel, business and fiscal matters. In 1988, he became director of the AgCenter's administrative services. One year later he was promoted to vice chancellor for administration. In 1993, Flint returned to extension as the director of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service and held that position until retiring in 1995.



Jack Bagent, 1995-2001

Bagent grew up on a farm in Rocky Mount, La., and participated in 4-H in elementary school. He received a bachelor's degree in



agronomy from Louisiana Tech University. He then came to LSU for a master's degree in entomology. He began working for the Louisiana Cooperative

Extension service in 1964 as an entomology specialist. In 1973 he became leader of the Environmental Sciences Division. He became director of extension in 1995. He was inducted into the National 4-H Hall of Fame in 2002.

Paul Coreil, 2001-2013

Coreil is from Ville Platte, La., and was a 4-H'er. He received his bachelor's degree in zoology from the University of Southwestern Louisiana, today called the



University of Louisiana at Lafayette, in 1976. Two years later he began working as a fishery and wildlife extension agent in Cameron and Calcasieu parishes. In 1984, he earned a master's degree in wildlife management from LSU, and in 1995, a doctorate in vocational education. In 1996 he became associate specialist for wetland and coastal resources. He became director of extension in 2001. He chaired the committee that developed eXtension.org, a nationwide online extension information system.

William B. Richardson, 2013—

After Coreil's retirement in 2013, the extension director duties were folded into the responsibilities of LSU Vice President for Agriculture William B. "Bill" Richardson. A native of Kennett, Mo., he earned bachelor's and mas-

ter's degrees from Arkansas State University and a doctorate from the University of Missouri, all in vocational education. He taught high school vocational agriculture.



From 1972 to 1984, he was a professor at Purdue University. He then moved to LSU to be the director of the School of Vocational Education. Two years later, he became associate dean of the College of Agriculture, and in 1992, he was named dean. He became chancellor of the AgCenter in 1997. In 2013, the LSU Board of Supervisors voted to consolidate the administrations of the AgCenter and College of Agriculture, and Richardson took on a dual role as vice president for agriculture and dean of the college.

Olivia McClure is a student worker in LSU AgCenter Communications.



Mark Shirley, LSU AgCenter and Louisiana Sea Grant fisheries agent, tests the salinity of water in a bayou in Vermilion Parish after Hurricane Rita in 2005. Shirley has worked closely with producers of a wide range of seafood, including alligators, crawfish, finfish, oysters, baitfish and catfish. Shirley started his career in 1984, 18 years after the fishery extension program began. Photo by Bruce Schultz

Extension, Sea Grant agents prove their worth to seafood industry

Bruce Schultz

The early fisheries agents hired by the LSU AgCenter and Louisiana Sea Grant recall that when they started working back in the 1970s, they had an unenviable challenge of proving themselves as government employees who wanted to help local fishing communities.

Alan Matherne, fisheries agent in Terrebonne Parish, started his career in 1981 in St. Bernard Parish. “When I hit the docks, they had no idea of what the AgCenter, Sea Grant or fisheries extension was.”

He said winning the confidence of the local community was the most difficult part of the job.

“I became friends with a lot of the fishing families,” Matherne said. “A lot of times I was just a shoulder to cry on because often there wasn’t a lot we could do to help with some problems.”

The fisheries extension effort was established through the efforts of the LSU AgCenter and the Louisiana Sea Grant after Congress passed the National Sea Grant College Program in 1966. It has the mission of enhancing the practical use and conservation of marine resources, and Cooperative Extension is the primary outreach provider.

Windell Curole was another of the first fisheries agents. Curole, now general manager of the South Lafourche Levee

District, said the job was rewarding. “When I worked for extension, I felt like I was working for my family. I thought about my grandfather and how nobody helped him,” he said.

Curole said his grandfather would have benefited from a fisheries agent to teach him “technical things they didn’t know before. All the way from the laws to new gear, new technology.”

Curole said he started reviewing bills under consideration by the Louisiana Legislature that would affect commercial fishing to inform the coastal industries what their senators and representatives would be deliberating. He then had to convince his stakeholders that his mission was not to regulate or to enforce laws.

“When I first got there, people didn’t want to talk with me,” he said. “But then they would call me every day when they realized we weren’t a risk, but an asset to people.”

But Mark Shirley, LSU AgCenter fisheries agent based in Vermilion Parish since 1984, learned that his clientele wouldn’t always understand his intentions. He recalled when turtle excluder devices were being first mandated by law, and he was explaining how they worked, a television station was filming the demonstration. “So I’m explaining this, and this shrimper works his way through the crowd, throws a bucket

of diesel on the net and sets it on fire. So I quickly let it go and kind of backed up and got out of the crowd.”

Shirley said he eventually convinced the shrimpers he was there to help them deal with the new regulations. He said he and the other fisheries agents have established a lasting relationship with the fishing community.

“They tend to depend on us. They know we’re going to give them factual information, nonbiased information,” he said.

Ted Falgout, now retired director of Port Fourchon, recalled his ability to speak Cajun French probably helped him get the job as fisheries agent in Lafourche, Terrebonne and St. Mary parishes where much of his clientele was less comfortable speaking English.

“So very few biologists were able to speak Cajun French. So I met with the district agent, Kermit Coulon, and we talked French,” Falgout said.



Thu Bui, LSU AgCenter fisheries agent in southwest Louisiana, interprets seafood experts’ advice for Vietnamese shrimpers attending a seafood workshop at Delcambre. Bui is from a Vietnamese family whose livelihood is strongly linked to the seafood industry, and her knowledge of the business and her language skills have made her an integral part of the LSU AgCenter and Louisiana Sea Grant’s outreach and extension programs since she started in her job in 2006. Photo by Bruce Schultz

Decades later, the language issue arose as the shrimp industry shifted to dominance by Vietnamese immigrants. Thu Bui, LSU AgCenter fisheries agent in southwest Louisiana, grew up in a Vietnamese household, and her father is a shrimper. Her knowledge of the fishing industry and her language ability helped bridge a gap with the extension effort when she came onboard in 2006.

“By me being a part of extension, I know that we’ve been able to cross some language barriers. During a meeting, Vietnamese fishermen will stand up and ask questions in their own language, and they will receive a response they can understand. A clear understanding of the materials presented has helped them to integrate into the larger fishing community.”



Crabs are processed at the Pontchartrain Blues facility in Slidell, La. The BP oil spill in 2010 caused regional seafood businesses to suffer immediate losses of 70-80 percent, and the LSU AgCenter has been working to build new markets for seafood products with value-added processing and promotion efforts, including sales at farmers markets. Photo by Frankie Gould

Matherne said not only has the demographic of shrimpers changed, the domestic shrimp market has been threatened by foreign farm-raised shrimp dumped on the American market, which has led to reduced prices.

Now the extension effort includes helping with a marketing strategy that emphasizes wild, American shrimp over foreign shrimp with lower quality, he said.

A seafood promotion and marketing project aimed at developing direct sales from fishers to customers is being expanded along the Louisiana coast, according to Thomas Hymel, AgCenter and Sea Grant agent. The Louisiana Direct Seafood project started as Delcambre Direct Seafood in 2010 at the Port of Delcambre as a joint effort of the LSU AgCenter and Louisiana Sea Grant, partnering with the Twin Parish Port Commission and Iberia Industrial Development Foundation.

With a \$560,000 grant from the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, the program is expanding into the New Orleans area and Lafourche and Terrebonne parishes. Also planned is expansion into the Cameron Parish coastal area.

The Louisiana Direct Seafood website, <http://louisiana-directseafood.com>, gives information on buying seafood directly as well as information for commercial fishers and others involved in direct marketing. The website has videos giving advice on using the program, marketing seafood, using social media, boat engine maintenance, seafood licensing and hiring foreign labor.

Fishers and seafood distributors post messages on the website when they will be coming to port and the products they have for sale. “This allows customers to contact fishermen and place an order for seafood before the boat returns to the dock,” Hymel said.

The Delcambre venture also developed a local brand offering hand-peeled and deveined frozen jumbo shrimp sold as Vermilion Bay Sweet Shrimp.

“We have businesses calling and asking for that,” he said.

"There is more demand than there is product, which is good."

The Louisiana Seafood Professionalism Program with training sessions in Houma, Delcambre and Cameron is the second year of a three-year, \$3.4 million outreach project for fishers, dock owners and processors. It is funded by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, a partner in the project.

"It's a world-class seafood education program unlike anywhere in the world," Hymel said.

The program includes seminars and workshops to show shrimpers and fishing boat owners how to make their rigs more efficient and how to comply with state and federal regulations.

"Those left in the seafood industry are survivors, and they are looking for new things to try," Hymel said.

Bui sees her role as a liaison between commercial fishing boat owners and regulatory agencies. "We're basically the boots on the ground. They feel they can trust us and come to us if there's an issue or something they don't understand."

Bui said shrimpers that were far away from the pollution of the Deepwater Horizon spill needed information on what areas were closed to trawling and how to file paperwork for compensation.

After hurricanes, she said, the extension emphasis was on disaster recovery, helping line up programs to assist with facilities and finances. "There were lots of programs that were able to assist the fishermen to get back on their feet."

Shirley said extension's role in the disaster recovery included a series of meetings to inform the fishing industry what assistance was available to many people who were out of work for months. "In a lot of cases our job as an extension agent is to kind of help coordinate some activities, find resources and put resources together."

Shirley said working in extension requires agents to respond to their stakeholders' needs. For example, alligator producers needed answers to many unanswered questions about raising the reptiles. "So I brought that to the university, and through cooperation with the industry and the AgCenter, we got a project together where we were able to build an alligator research facility."

This new facility is at the AgCenter Aquaculture Research Station in Baton Rouge.

Shirley said even with more technology available to help stakeholders, the personal contact with an extension agent is still going to be essential for producers to be successful.

"The computer can't look at someone's crawfish pond and tell what's going on. A computer can't meet with a fisher-



Brian LeBlanc, extension and Sea Grant agent, at right, led a team that developed the Clean Marina Program with the Louisiana Division of Natural Resources. LeBlanc is standing by a pump placed at a marina in Mandeville, La., to remove sewage waste from boats rather than having the boat operators discharge waste into the water. The photo is from 1995. Photo by John Wozniak



Working with alligator farmers to help their businesses become more profitable is one of the newest aquaculture extension efforts. The Louisiana alligator growers have contributed funding for a new alligator research facility at the Aquaculture Research Station in Baton Rouge. One of the first research projects is to determine the proper nutrition essential for skin quality. The researchers involved are Millie Williams, above, research associate, and Robert Reigh, director of the station. This photo was taken in September 2013. Photo by John Wozniak

man and notice that the measurements on his turtle excluder device are a couple of inches off. So that's where having a real person still available for clients to call and talk to and visit, that's the importance of keeping an extension service. We'll never be obsolete because we have eyes and ears, and we have the experience that we can see things a computer can't see."

Bruce Schultz is an assistant communications specialist with LSU AgCenter Communications.

Louisiana Leads the Nation with the Master Farmer Program

Bruce Schultz

The Louisiana Master Farmer Program started in response to the specter of federal regulations threatening to impose unworkable requirements on agricultural operations across the state.

Paul Coreil, retired LSU AgCenter vice chancellor for extension, said he recognized the need for such a program in the early 1990s when more federal regulations were looming.

“There were some pretty significant regulatory proposals for forestry and agriculture,” he recalled.

Some of the proposals would have imposed nonpoint-source pollution controls, restrictions on agricultural burning and possibly expanded the Endangered Species Act, which would have affected many Louisiana farms.

Coreil said the cornerstone of the Master Farmer Program is voluntary adoption of basic conservation measures, called best management practices, that farmers agree to follow.

“The whole idea was either one of voluntary compliance or letting someone come in from Washington and tell you what to do,” he said.

Coreil said as a model, he looked to the Master Logger Program established by the Louisiana Forestry Association in the early 1990s.

“I give them credit for giving us the motivation advancing the ideas of best management practices and stewardship,” he said.

... farmers were doing a lot of good things, and they weren't getting credit for it ...

Coreil said for many farmers the program includes practices they were already doing without any attention.

“We knew farmers were doing a lot of good things, and they weren't getting credit for it,” he said.

Most farmers were aware of their obligation to protect the environment, he said. The Louisiana Farm Bureau and the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry joined forces with the LSU AgCenter and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and they went to the Louisiana Legislature.

“We decided to develop a program with statutory validity,” he said.

A bill establishing the Master Farmer Program passed unanimously in both the Louisiana House and Senate in 2003. Under the law, certification by the Louisiana Master Farmer Program automatically designates that a producer is complying with state regulations.

After Louisiana enacted the program, other states came

calling to find out how to establish similar programs, Coreil said.

Now the program has expanded into environmental education for commodity-specific groups such as Master Cattle Producer and Kellogg's Certified Rice Grower. Work is underway to create a program for poultry producers.



Harvey Gonsoulin of Iberia Parish, center, was among the first to be certified as a Master Farmer. Left to right are Ernest Girouard and Donna Morgan, Master Farmer coordinators; Charles Stemmans, district conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service; and Carrie Castille, now with the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, who was one of the original AgCenter coordinators. Master Farmer participants who complete the Master Farmer training are certified. Under state law, they are presumed to be in compliance with all state regulations. Photo by Bruce Schultz

An added benefit of becoming involved in the Master Farmer Program comes from farmers learning about potential cost-share programs with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Coreil said.

... certification by the Louisiana Master Farmer Program automatically designates that a producer is complying with state regulations.

Coreil assigned Carrie Castille to develop the initial framework for the Master Farmer Program.

Castille recalled that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency had threatened to impose water quality standards on waterways used by rice farmers for irrigation, starting in the Mermentau River Basin. She said the LSU AgCenter organized educational meetings with rice-growing organi-

... the Master Farmer Program is even more relevant now than when it started ...

zations to let farmers know what steps that could be taken that might persuade the EPA that the industry was taking steps to improve water quality. Best management practices were stressed, although many producers had been implementing these practices on their farms for years, she said.

The EPA turned its attention elsewhere.

"I attribute a lot of that to the participation of the producers," Castille said.

Now the deputy assistant commissioner at LDAF, Castille continues working with the Master Farmer Program.

New issues have arisen, she said. These include fuel storage tank regulations, dust control and pesticide drift.

"I think today the Master Farmer Program is even more relevant now than when it started," Castille said.

She said environmental groups have more influence now, and the local food movement has drawn consumers' attention to how and where their food originates.

"People are paying more attention to environmental issues related to food safety and how food products are handled," Castille said.

Rogers Leonard, LSU AgCenter associate vice chancellor for plant and soil sciences, said the Master Farmer Program is continually fine-tuned to stay relevant with current issues.

"We have found one of the stumbling blocks for the educational program has been the time and opportunity to get through Phases I and II. We took the suggestions of our farmers and created a Master Farmer University," he said.



Farmer Kevin Berken of Jefferson Davis Parish, at left, and County Agent Eddie Eskew, now retired, talked about improvements being made on a rice field near Lake Arthur in 2004. Rice farmers have taken the initiative to undertake projects that maintain water quality. Often, water released from fields is lower in silt than what is found in area waterways. The LSU AgCenter started the Louisiana Master Farmer Program in response to the threat of possible federal regulations that could have restricted many agricultural practices. Photo by Bruce Schultz

Phase I of the program involves classroom instruction, and Phase II requires a tour of farm that has put into practice a conservation plan.

In the Master Farmer University program, these two phases have been streamlined into two days, with the first morning devoted to a general session to introduce best management practices that apply to most agricultural operations, and that afternoon, sessions are tailored for specific commodities.

"On the second day, participants tour local farms or research stations and view BMPs in action while discussing these practices with producers and scientists," Leonard said.

The third phase required for certification is development of a farm-specific conservation plan, which is guided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Certified Master Farmers are presumed to be in compliance with state soil and water regulations. To remain certified, the program requires six hours of continuing education annually.

To date, 197 farmers in Louisiana have attained the status of Master Farmer, according to Ernest Girouard, the statewide coordinator.



Stuart Gardner, kneeling at right, with the Natural Resource Conservation Service, talks about different forages that can be grown in Louisiana on the Vermilion Parish cattle operation of Craig Adam, at left. The Master Cattle Producer program includes instruction in conservation practices that enhance environmental stewardship, and NRCS is a partner in the program. Photo by Bruce Schultz

Bruce Schultz is an assistant communications specialist with LSU AgCenter Communications.

Demonstrations remain the core of extension programs

Rick Bogren

For more than 100 years agricultural agents have brought research results to Louisiana farmers through demonstration programs.

Seaman Knapp, a pioneer of the extension philosophy in the late 1800s and early 1900s in Louisiana and Texas, said, "Demonstration is more effective than preaching."

J.A. Evans was named Louisiana's first state agent for farm demonstration work in 1906. By 1909, he had organized demonstration farms in 44 parishes.

Demonstration programs got a boost in 1914 when Congress passed the Smith-Lever Act and established the Cooperative Extension Service through the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The act was passed "to aid in diffusing among the people of the U.S. useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture, home economics and rural energy, and encourage application of same."

Over the years demonstration programs evolved as the state's agriculture became more mechanized, adopted new management practices, embraced new plant varieties and hybrids, and moved through

the chemical age of fertilizers and a host of pesticides.

Now, the age of computers, digital photography, smart phones and global positioning systems have become the tools agents and specialists apply to their demonstration projects.

During the past 20 years, crop specialists have developed and refined the concept of verification trials that put research recommendations under scrutiny in farmers' fields.

Verification programs show farmers that small-plot research could be taken to the field and applied to farming operations, said LSU AgCenter soybean specialist Ronnie Levy. It demonstrates how the research recommendations can be applied to complete fields.

"The results show increases in production and profitability, which are part of management decisions," Levy said. "We've seen how following these practices has led to increases compared to parish averages and state averages."

Verification fields require a significant time commitment that includes weekly field visits by the specialist, the agent and the grower.

"Year after year, the program resulted in higher yields and increased profitability for the participants," Levy said.

The current soybean program focuses on variety trials in producers' fields to complement those on research stations. The fields are geographically dispersed, Levy said, and use the newest and highest-performing varieties provided by seed companies. They cover most maturity groups and most areas of the state.

"We help plant and harvest," Levy said of the AgCenter's role in the on-farm trials that include 17 to 20 varieties and are used to supplement research data from replicated trials on seven research stations.

"Yield stability is what we hope to find in varieties for Louisiana," he said. "We learn a lot about disease susceptibility and environmental issues that affect each variety's performance. The result is better information on soybean varieties."

Ultimately, the extension specialists want to help producers find the best products and practices that can help them be profitable.

"The No. 1 thing we would hear from farmers is 'it won't work on my farm,'" said LSU AgCenter rice specialist Johnny Saichuk.

The rice verification program, however, has helped dissuade this reluctance. Funded by the Louisiana Rice Research Board since the program began, Saichuk has had to turn away interested growers every year.

The verification program includes several components, Saichuk said.

- It increases grower confidence in research recommendations.
- It increases confidence of agents and specialists. "Sometimes we needed to be convinced the recommendations were good," Saichuk said.
- It develops an economic data base reflecting the cost of production.

An important aspect of extension demonstrations, Saichuk said, is helping growers learn. "We're not consultants," he said. "We're teachers."



Just as now, early extension agents used on-farm demonstrations to show producers the latest innovations coming from university research. Professor J.C. Miller, for whom Miller Hall on the LSU campus is named, discusses a demonstration plot at a horticultural field day at the LSU Hill Farm in 1948. LSU AgCenter photo archive

Rick Bogren is a professor and science writer in LSU AgCenter Communications.

Early agents use trains to bring education to rural areas

Randy LaBauve

In 1908, W.R. Dodson, director of the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station, purchased train tickets for farm boys to travel to Moreauville, La., for the state's first corn club meeting. These clubs (later called 4-H) were originally a concept of Seaman A. Knapp, an early agriculture educator. He wanted youth to teach improved agricultural practices to parents and adults. The success of boys' club work was the primary motivation behind Louisiana's initial use of "agricultural" trains in 1910. State Club Agent V.L. Roy, who was present at that first corn club meeting, began the demonstration tours to recruit more boys.

These rail-bound educational excursions were used off and on until the 1940s, bringing information to people in remote parts of the state. The trains had exhibit cars filled with the latest farming tools and technologies, as well as displays of model crops, fruits, vegetables and livestock. LSU Agricultural College faculty and selected members from several state agencies taught farmers the latest science-based agricultural developments, including information for preventing crop and animal disease. Home economics teachers taught from their "lecture cars" about food preservation, food safety, nutrition and health.

These steam-powered classrooms travelled more than 1,000 miles in the first year, 1910, reaching nearly 55,000 people. In the second year, 1911, the trains spent a full day at each destination. Every railroad company in Louisiana became involved in the effort. The distinguished team of presenters lived on the train for three months and had their own dining and sleeper cars. The railroad operators spared no expense, providing a full staff of porters and cooks to serve the travelling teachers.

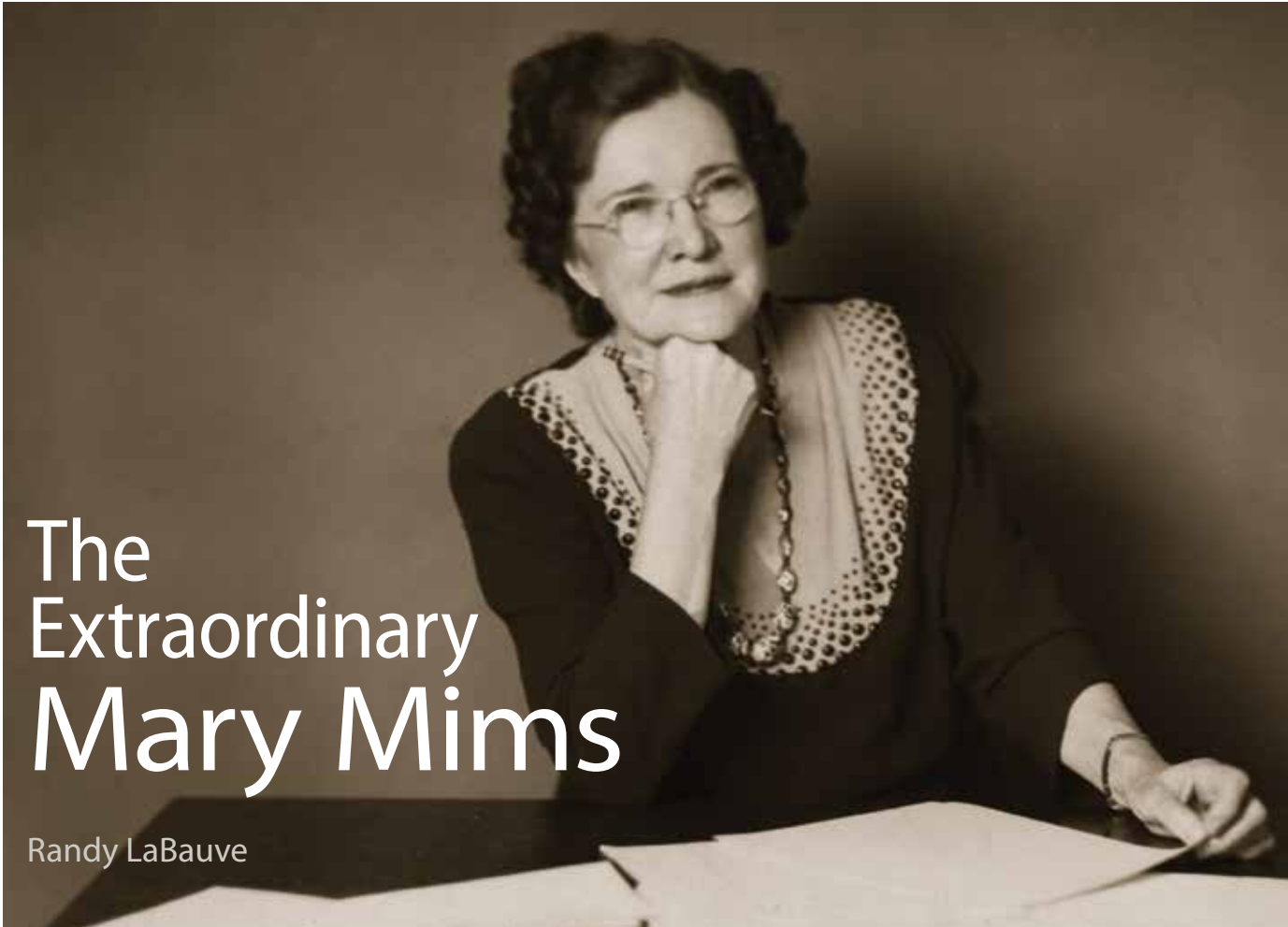
The agricultural demonstration trains were a cooperative effort among the State

Bureau of Agriculture, the Experiment Station and railroad companies statewide. According to extension historian Frederick W. Williamson, the idea of the agricultural train had already "originated in Northern and Eastern sections of the country, but in Louisiana at this time (1910) it was developed on a scale that transcended anything previously attempted anywhere."

Randy LaBauve is an associate communications specialist in LSU AgCenter Communications.



These photos from the LSU Hill Memorial Library are of the Southern Pacific Demonstration Train operated by LSU in 1910 and 1911. At the top is the "Corn and Hog Special." At right is the "Follow Up Car" for lectures. At left is a view inside the train. These rail-bound educational excursions were used until the 1940s.



The Extraordinary Mary Mims

Randy LaBauve

LSU AgCenter photo archive

LSU has recruited students and athletes who have eventually become famous, but few know about Mary Mims – a pioneering woman recruited by LSU Agricultural Extension in 1925 – who would become one of the world’s foremost community organizers. She was the leader of an innovative community organization movement in Louisiana that would change the state and serve as a model for the country in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s.

Mims started her career as a teacher in Bienville Parish and would later become the state’s first female principal before becoming parish superintendent of education.

Influential Bienville Parish leaders had voted down a special tax to build a much-needed school. Mims, who had led the effort to raise the money, was frustrated at the outcome and ready to quit teaching. According to her memoirs, she fought back the idea, saying to herself: “Mary Mims, turn the search light within and find your failure.”

As an alternate plan, she started a lecture course, asking the leading tax opponents – a farmer, doctor, blacksmith and dentist – to participate by sharing their personal stories of success with students. The prominent rural leaders were flattered by the invitation and won over by the experience. On the next attempt, the tax passed, and the school was built.

The LSU Agricultural Extension Division took notice of Mims’ influential accomplishments. After encouragement from the Louisiana Farm Bureau to start statewide commu-

nity organization work, the division hired Mary Mims as the state’s first extension sociologist in 1925.

“One senses the lack of any lift or pull by cooperative momentum,” Mims had said about unmotivated agricultural towns, villages and hamlets. “One sees the struggling church, the divided community, the poor school, the ineffective local organization.”

Mims viewed communities as the “seedbeds of democracy...the hope of the world...a vital part of the mighty machine we call government.”

She immediately started a rigorous itinerary – travelling regularly to parishes across the state. Her task was to use extension principles to develop and spread a program promoting the “economic, intellectual, civic, health and recreational life of the community.”

Mims also travelled to Denmark to study that nation’s successful plan of community work. Denmark had the lowest levels of illiteracy, poverty and crime of any country in the world at the time. Mims learned how to develop what the Danish called “folk schools” and brought the concept back to America. These informal gatherings encouraged culture, civility, character and principles of good citizenship. The events included group songs, literacy exercises and recreational activities for all ages. “Folk schools” became part of Mims’ overall program and were set up in many parishes.

Mims designed monthly meetings for each community.

People began setting definite annual goals, and leaders and committees designed an appropriate course of action for their respective communities.

Mims' efforts brought together farmers, home demonstration clubs, 4-H clubs, government agencies and private organizations in a cooperative relationship. People were encouraged to refurbish their homes, grow gardens and "beautify" public and private properties. Schools, libraries, churches and parks were built. Parades, fairs, orchestras and festivals were established.

In 1925, her first year of extension work, Mims helped revitalize 42 communities with her innovative programs. By the time Mims retired in 1952, she had spearheaded the establishment of nearly 1,000 new and improved communities – places like Calhoun in Ouachita Parish, Hico in Lincoln Parish, Evergreen in Avoyelles Parish, Hungarian Colony (now called Hungarian Settlement) in Livingston Parish and Cypress Knee in Lafayette Parish.

One highly symbolic location for Mims' community revitalization work was Iowa in Calcasieu Parish. This area was first established by agricultural innovator Seaman A. Knapp, considered by some as the father of agricultural extension work. Here, Knapp had encouraged Midwestern farmers to migrate south and use their wheat implements to attempt growing rice; hence, the Louisiana community's borrowed name from the Midwestern state.

Knapp had already died by the time Mims reached Iowa, La. Had they met, the two pioneers might have talked about similar visions of improving the lives of rural families. One common priority they shared was youth development.

Knapp had begun the idea of boys corn clubs and girls tomato and canning clubs, which would collectively sprout into 4-H. But Mims' work helped some children at an even earlier age. She initiated the establishment of a health clinic for babies, employing the services of two volunteer doctors.

Mims observed that in rural areas with no community programs, "bored youngsters gather on the streets at dark, hungering for excitement."

"Every community should have good wholesome recreation programs...and remember, recreation was not intended to wreck life, but to recreate life," she said. "There is no environment more vital to the life of the youth of the state than the community in which they live."

After World War II, she helped organize citizenship clubs for young people 18-30 years old. The clubs were designed to offer vocational advice, social values and awareness of civic responsibility and rural leadership.

"I beg of you," Mims said in a speech to young adults, "to go back to your communities, study their needs and do something about them."

Her book, *The Awakening Community*, which was published in 1932, launched her to national and international fame. The work, which features anecdotes, practical wisdom and concrete suggestions for building strong communities, became a model for community development for other states.

Mims was featured as a premier speaker at events in 48 states and was considered one of the greatest national orators of her day. She gave a speech alongside President Calvin Coolidge, travelled to personal conferences with national leaders and nobility in Europe and other parts of the world, and became one of the best known national advocates for community development.

Her objectives are being realized today as extension agents work with local and statewide organizations to combine their ideas and resources to establish parks, playgrounds, fitness trails, health fairs, technological literacy campaigns and other tools for improving the health and happiness of rural residents, while bringing them closer together.

Mary Mims was the original community organizer in Louisiana and one of the greatest innovators on the subject in

America. Her inspirational and pioneering accomplishments had a profound influence on rural welfare and awakening slumbering local communities.

"As a good citizen, everyone should be interested in the health and beauty of their community," Mims said. "Community work can save the country."

Randy LaBauve is an associate communications specialist with Communications.



Mary Mims, an extension agent in the 1920s through the 1940s, was one of the most outstanding agents in the history of Louisiana Cooperative Extension. She not only started community and leadership development work in Louisiana, but also provided a model for the rest of the nation on how extension outreach should be done. LSU AgCenter photo archive

Extension in war on many fronts

Randy LaBauve

During World War II, Louisiana Cooperative Extension played a major role in improving the homeland, while providing valuable support for the military. County agents managed federal farm labor programs, lining up workers to replace farmers who departed for combat. Agents started recruitment drives using press releases, radio broadcasts, pamphlets called “circular letters,” organized talks and home visits. The efforts ultimately placed nearly 80,000 workers onto short-handed farms. After the conflict, agents also managed prisoner of war labor programs.

Home demonstration agents worked with “Victory” neighborhood leaders to establish community canning centers and distribute pressure cookers, sealers and food dehydrators. Agents saturated newspapers and radio stations with helpful tips and encouragement. They taught nutrition and spearheaded legislation requiring vitamin and mineral enrichment of flour, bread and margarine.

Agents and 4-H’ers practically ran the “victory garden” program. Harvested crops helped feed rural and urban people, as well as soldiers. Louisiana Extension mailed out more than 100,000 “LSU victory pinches” – free packets of vegetable seeds developed at the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station. The statewide mail-outs included growing instructions. Agents also persuaded farmers to grow hybrid corns, which brought about a revolutionary wartime increase in production.

4-H’ers expanded their livestock club work by helping tend cattle at farms with too few workers. According to extension historian Frederick W. Williamson, “After the war, beef cattle and dairy pro-



4-H Club members from Mt. Olive in Union Parish contribute to the war effort by supporting the Red Cross Ambulance Fund Drive with its Eggs for Victory effort in 1943. 4-H members across the United States collected and sold eggs and donated money to purchase ambulances used by the Red Cross. LSU AgCenter photo archive



4-H member Harry Daniels Jr. celebrates V-E Day (Victory in Europe) by purchasing a \$1,000 bond as part of the 1945 War Bond drive. Presenting the bond is J.F. Rutledge, left, as H.B. Fairchild, county agent in West Feliciana Parish, looks on. LSU AgCenter photo archive



Scrap iron was collected during World War II. A representative of Safer Scrap materials in Baton Rouge, La., accepts a scrap metal delivery in 1942. LSU AgCenter photo archive

duction improved in numbers and grew proportionately more than any other state in the country.”

4-H youth sewed uniforms for soldiers and conducted colossal scrap metal drives. Club members also raised \$3.5 million in war bonds – enough to build a Liberty Ship, which were cargo ships built during World War II with donations. The Louisiana ship was named “Stanley W. Floyd” after a popular 4-H leader.

Extension agricultural engineers worked with farm machinery companies to conduct a series of statewide schools – demonstrating proper care and operation of new wartime technologies. These radical mechanical advances spurred greater efficiency in food production and provided some relief from labor shortages during and after the war. Ultimately, Louisiana Cooperative Extension efforts helped bring victory on many fronts.

Randy LaBauve is an associate communications specialist in LSU AgCenter Communications.



***Louisiana
Cooperative
Extension efforts
helped bring
victory on many
fronts.***

High school students often volunteered as farm labor. The Plaquemine High School football team volunteered to help cut sugarcane in 1943. LSU AgCenter photo archive

Extension helps communities develop

Rick Bogren

During a 15-year period, from 1994 to 2009, the LSU AgCenter conducted 29 classes in the Community Leadership and Economic Development program with more than 1,000 graduates. Partners included the Louisiana Department of Economic Development, the Association of Louisiana's Electric Cooperatives and the Louisiana Police Jury Association. Local chambers of commerce, economic development councils and local officials, along with other utility companies and businesses provided resources.

The program, known within the AgCenter as CLED, was designed to provide local volunteers with leadership skills they could use to improve their local economy and make their communities better places to live. Topics covered included communication, team building and the local history, demographics and the economics of the parish.

"The 10-week class was designed to teach leadership skills and provide an opportunity to put those skills to use," said Sanford Dooley, extension community development specialist, who retired in 2009. He conducted the program along with Karen Overstreet, who at that time was also a community development

specialist. She is currently the associate department head for 4-H and Youth Development.

"The program differed from others in that the emphasis was on community involvement rather than identified leaders," Overstreet said. "Anyone who lived in the community or parish and was willing to make the commitment was invited to participate."

***... designed to provide
local volunteers with
leadership skills they
could use to improve their
local economy and make
their communities better
places to live.***

During the program, the participants were to identify issues and then prioritize them. Finally, they would establish committees of six to seven participants for

each issue and develop plans to address them.

An evaluation of the program showed that more than a third of the participants went on to hold either elected or appointed positions in their communities. Other results included the following:

- Organizing a farmer's market.
- Adding a student to the local library board as a solution to the limited involvement of teenagers.
- Organizing a group to recruit industry to the parish.
- Starting a recycling program.
- Establishing a zoning commission.

In 2005, the program was presented the Excellence in Economic Development Best Practices Award by the International Economic Development Council.

Rick Bogren is a professor and science writer in LSU AgCenter Communications.

Extension Homemakers become community leaders

Karen Overstreet

Imagine life without cell phones, the internet or even electricity. You are responsible for sewing most of the family's clothes, raising and preserving their food and even making the mattresses the family sleeps on. Your mother and grandmother probably trained you well for your role as housewife, but there was no easy way to learn what to do if your batch of canned vegetables spoiled or you wanted camaraderie with others in similar situations. It was out of this rural environment that the Home Demonstration Clubs, later known as Extension Homemaker Clubs, emerged as a way to share research-based, practical information from the state land-grant university.

As early as 1905 special trains brought home economics teachers from Louisiana Polytechnic Institute to rural areas to give lectures on better practices in agriculture and homemaking. The need to support a system for teaching farm wives and girls the basic principles of homemaking was recognized by U.S. Rep. Frank Lever, one of the sponsors of the Smith-Lever Act, which created the Cooperative Extension Service.

Our efforts, heretofore, have been given in aid of the farm man, his horses, cattle, and hogs, but his wife and daughters have been neglected almost to the point of criminality. This bill provides the authority and the funds for inaugurating a system of teaching the farm wife and farm girl the elementary principles of homemaking and home management and your committee believes there is no more important work in the country than this.

– Congressman Lever, 1914

Two years before Extension's official beginning in 1914, women were gathering to share information. In 1912,

Elizabeth Price was hired in Lincoln Parish as the first home demonstration agent in Louisiana. From the beginning, clubs for women existed along with clubs for youth. The women were part of "Tomato Clubs" patterned after the "Corn Clubs" for youth. By 1916, there were 450 members in clubs for women in 12 parishes. East Baton Rouge organized the first parish council for these clubs in 1923. Their slogan adopted in 1928 was "A Kitchen Sink and Running Water in Every Home in East Baton Rouge Parish."

By 1931, there were 8,577 members in 369 clubs organized into 16 parish councils. Ellen LeNoir, the state home demonstration agent, met with council representatives, and the Louisiana State Home Demonstration Council was created on Aug. 11, 1931. In 1935, representatives from 12 states met to discuss creating a national council. LeNoir served as the chair of the constitution committee creating the national council. It was later determined that members should be rural homemakers, and extension agents would serve in an advisory capacity, thus creating the independent organization that it remains today. Today's organization continues to honor LeNoir's work by giving the Ellen LeNoir scholarship to a Louisiana graduate student majoring in family and consumer sciences or agriculture.

In 1961, the Pelican State Homemakers Council was organized with clubs serving primarily African-American home demonstration club members. The Pelican Council and the Louisiana State Home Demonstration Council merged in 1966. Louisiana changed its name in 1972 to Louisiana Extension Homemakers Council to follow the national organization, which had changed its name in 1964. Today, the Louisiana council is no longer affiliated with a national organization and goes by the name Louisiana Volunteers for Family & Community Inc., which better reflects its work. It



LSU AgCenter photo archive



LSU AgCenter photo archive

is still an independent organization but maintains its strong ties with the Extension Service.

Topics addressed by the home demonstration clubs reflected issues of the day and gave homemakers the opportunity to develop leadership skills. In the 1940s, club members joined war efforts by tending victory gardens, rolling bandages and making mattresses from surplus cotton or Spanish moss. The state council bought its first war bond for \$100 in 1942.



LSU AgCenter photo archive

Food and nutrition was a major topic from the beginning. The name Tomato Club was a result of addressing a major issue – how to save tomatoes for winter use. In addition to fruits and vegetables, meats were often canned. Some canning was done with tin cans, which required a special device to safely seal the cans. In many parishes canning centers were organized by the home demonstration agent and club members and supported by school boards or local government. Home pressure cookers were often purchased by the clubs and circulated among members. Egg Circles were popular as a way for women to learn how to raise chickens for their meat and eggs. Surplus eggs were sold, and the “egg money” provided much needed income for running the household. During the Depression and times of war rationing, the clubs provided both an educational and a support system. Hot lunches for school children were another project tackled by the club members.

Electricity was slow coming to rural areas. Working with extension and rural electric cooperatives, club members learned to appreciate and tame the “monster in the wall” and were instrumental in its acceptance. By the 1970s the energy focus was on conservation. The goal was for club leaders to reach at least 50,000 residents, and they exceeded that goal by reaching 75,000 people. A follow-up program to reach second-graders involved members dressing up as ENERJEAN, the energy clown. More than 250 ENERJEANs reached 80 percent of the state’s second-graders and 275,000 others at fairs and other events.

In the early 2000s during a serious outbreak of West Nile virus, the volunteers were asked to reach people over the age

of 50 with information as part of the Fight the Bite campaign. Members presented programs in community centers, Sunday school classes, various club meetings, senior living centers and any place seniors gathered. In addition, materials were included with meals delivered to senior citizens.

International interests have always been a part of the work. The Coke-a-Month program started in 1949 to bring a European home economist to Louisiana for a year. Half the time was to be spent visiting in members’ homes to learn about American life and democracy and half studying at LSU. Each club member was to donate the price of a Coke each month to fund the program. Four home economists – one each from Germany, France, The Netherlands and Norway – participated in the program. The remaining funds were put into savings for a scholarship fund. International teas, exchange programs, donations for water wells and numerous other programs continue today.

Leadership for women was an objective from the beginning. In the early 1990s the W.K. Kellogg Foundation awarded the Louisiana Council \$50,000 to support a Family Community Leadership Program (FCL). These leadership skills were used for other public activities including support for extension work and the 4-H program. Members in Vermilion and Acadia parishes helped support a tax for extension facilities, which were two of the first parishes to do so. Members have served in the Louisiana Legislature, on local police juries and school boards, as well as numerous other local boards.

Mini colleges have become popular in recent times as a way to explore new topics. Mini colleges have been held to study coastal issues, the forestry industry and nutrition. Legislative Day is held every other year to learn more about state government.

Throughout its history the organization that started as home demonstration clubs has always worked to improve lives of rural families. A few examples include:

- The first project of the Livingston Parish Council in 1937 was to set up a circulating library. Members donated books and magazines, and the council added to the collection as funds permitted. In 1947, the Lafourche Parish group was asked by the Louisiana State Library to establish branch libraries in Raceland, Larose, Cut Off and Golden Meadow. Many other parish homemaker councils worked to establish local libraries or bookmobiles. After Hurricane Katrina members collected cookbooks to create a lending library in St. Bernard Parish.
- Following hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the volunteers organized the Measure of Friendship program to collect measuring cups, spoons, tape measures and rulers.
- One of the earliest projects was the effort to provide hot lunches in schools. In some communities members actually cooked soups for the students or brought in food. Members were instrumental in seeing that lunchrooms were included when schools were built.

Karen Overstreet is the associate department head for 4-H and Youth Development.



The first director of the LSU AgCenter's Leadership Development Program was Robert Soileau, second from right. Left to right in this photo from 1993 are Claudia Fowler, science content coordinator with Louisiana Public Broadcasting; Robert Barham, class participant then and now director of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries; Buddy Roemer, former governor of Louisiana and a speaker for the leadership class; and Rosalie Bivin, former extension administrator. Photo by John Wozniak



Henry Harrison, LSU AgCenter county agent in Washington Parish, Jess Barr of Monroe, Mark Marionneaux of Zachary, and Willie Danos of Iowa look at some of the fresh fruits and vegetables at an open-air wholesale market in Beijing. They were members of the Agricultural Leadership Development Program directed by Mike Futrell in 2006. Photo by Bobby Soileau

Producing leaders for Louisiana agriculture

Rick Bogren

In the mid-1980s, Pete deGravelles of the American Sugar Cane League approached Rouse Caffey, then chancellor of the LSU AgCenter, with the idea of an agricultural leadership program. By January 1988, Robert Soileau was hired as the first director, and the first two-year course with 32 participants began.

Since then, the program has graduated 13 classes and 371 new ag leaders.

"They represent all parts of our state and numerous professions," said current director Bobby Soileau, who is the son of the first director and took over the program in 2008.

The program includes seminars, tours, personal skills improvement and meetings with Louisiana business and government leaders. In addition, the program broadens the participants' perspective with trips to Washington, D.C., California and an international tour.

When the first class was nearing the end, state budget cuts threatened to suspend the program.

"We were basically told the program was over by the administration," said David Fields, a member of the first class. "But the entire class said that wasn't going to happen. We raised enough money so another group could have a class."

Since then, endowments and other private support have allowed the pro-

gram to continue. Funds from the Chalkley Family Endowed Chair and the H. Rouse Caffey LSU Agricultural Leadership Program have provided financial stability.

Other support includes financial and in-kind contributions from the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation, Louisiana Forestry Foundation, the American Sugar Cane League and the Agricultural Leaders of Louisiana, the alumni association for Ag Leadership.

"Those endowments have allowed us to keep the program fee at a lower level," Soileau said.

Three other individuals have led the program – Jim Fowler, 1997-2000; Ken Roberts, 2000-2002; and Mike Futrell, 2002-2008.

Soileau said the program seeks to develop leaders as effective communicators who understand global opportunities and who strive to improve their enterprises and communities.

"I've had the pleasure of being in a number of leadership programs," said Jim Simon, manager of the American Sugar Cane League and a graduate of Class VII. "The Agricultural Leadership Development Program is by far the most thorough and professional."

Rick Bogren is a professor and science writer in LSU AgCenter Communications.



The Ag Leadership program regularly includes a foreign trip for each two-year class. This group toured China in 2006 under the leadership of program director Mike Futrell, who is the man in the center with tan pants, a black jacket and his head touching the letter C in the background. Photo by Bobby Soileau

Williams spends 50 years in Extension

Olivia McClure

Leodrey Williams, chancellor of the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center, has worked in extension for nearly 50 years — half of extension's entire existence.

His career began with a job title that became illegal six weeks after he was hired: assistant county agent for work with Negroes in Richland Parish. As civil rights reforms took effect, the Department of Justice ordered extension to change those titles.

It was 1965, just a year after the Civil Rights Act passed. Although his work was occasionally disrupted by civil rights marches and rallies, Williams was an energetic one-man band, providing residents with information on everything from science to youth development to horticulture.

As activists promoted social changes that were resisted in the South, Williams met farmers who were reluctant to change their methods and did not always appreciate visits from county agents.

Williams once stopped by a farm owned by a man who said he didn't need any help — in fact, he claimed to teach county agents things they didn't know. Williams believed him upon seeing his beautiful garden.

... Williams led the effort to merge the Cooperative State Research Service and Cooperative Extension System into one entity — the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service.

"I said, 'I'd like to see everybody with a garden like this. I can't help you, but I can get you to help me to have everybody have a garden like this,'" Williams said. "That put him in a supporting role. He knew more about gardening, and he could help his neighbors."

Getting people involved mattered because skeptical farmers could better learn from one another, Williams said. As an agent, he said it was important to draw on people's knowledge and use it to help in the big picture.

All extension work in Louisiana originally took place through LSU. In 1971, Southern University set up its own extension office, where Williams was hired as an agriculture specialist. The only other employees at the time were the extension

coordinator and two secretaries. The small team worked together to recruit staff and develop programs.

Williams became the extension director in 1980 and began gaining national recognition. In the early 1990s, he co-chaired a task force that examined ways to ensure the "upward mobility of extension," Williams said, which was a monumental effort.

One major issue was funding — at the time, participation in certain programs was limited to land-grant universities formed by the 1862 Morrill Act. This excluded institutions created by the 1890 Morrill Act, many of which are historically black colleges and universities. No one wanted to give up funding to help the other group, Williams said, so the task force established funding baselines that applied to all extension programs.

Another recommendation the task force made was to designate an ombudsman to carry out their reforms. The national director asked Williams to fill that position. He was not sure he wanted the job because he would have to move to Washington, D.C.

"I started thinking, I've served on many task forces and committees where

nothing happened after they did their work," Williams said. "Now they're trying to implement something and I've helped give leadership to this, and I'm refusing to do it."

He agreed to take the job.

Four months later, the national director retired and Williams took over. Now in charge of funding extension programs at the U.S.'s 104 land-grant universities, Williams found himself in the middle of a national conversation about reorganizing government.

As the U.S. Department of Agriculture downsized, Williams led the effort to merge the Cooperative State Research Service and Cooperative Extension System into one entity — the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service.



Leodrey Williams. Photo by Olivia McClure

Williams returned as Southern's extension director in 1995. Soon after, he joined the 9/9/99 Club — a group of agriculture and extension professionals who aimed to retire on Sept. 9, 1999, that included former LSU AgCenter Vice Chancellor Jack Bagent. Bagent retired in 2001, the same year Williams was asked to lead the newly formed Southern University Ag Center.

Today, Williams jokes that he is the best chancellor the Southern University Ag Center has ever seen — a justifiable statement, he explained, because he is the only one so far.

As chancellor, Williams has focused on developing the campus as a positive force in Louisiana and the agriculture community. Williams, who was inducted to the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame in 1996, said it is easy to stay busy if one is willing to learn from people and find ways to use knowledge to benefit everyone.

To Williams, that is what extension is all about.

"It's about people," he said. "No matter what you do, whether it's in community development, if it's in small business development, it's enhancing the socioeconomic quality of life for people. You have more people now than you had 100 years ago. As long as there are people, there will be a need for extension."

Olivia McClure is a student worker in LSU AgCenter Communications.



LSU AgCenter county agent Mike Hebert works with youngsters showing cattle at the LSU AgCenter Livestock Show. Hebert has been a county agent for 36 years and is carrying on a tradition that started 100 years ago. Photo by Tobie Blanchard

County agent carries on legacy

Tobie Blanchard

Surrounded by 4-H'ers and show cattle, LSU AgCenter county agent Mike Hebert directed youngsters and their animals moving in and out of the LSU AgCenter's Livestock Show ring. Hebert was there to help the judging run smoothly and to keep the cows in line.

Hebert has been a county agent for 36 years, spending most of his career in Lafourche Parish, but the model he is working from dates back to the late 1800s.

"I'm still doing a lot of the same things my predecessors did," Hebert said. "They had advisory meetings. They had field days. They had grower meetings. We're still doing that. It still works."

The early incarnation of extension agents covered a region, but it was soon determined that the county, or parish in Louisiana, should be the unit covered. In 1907, two agents were appointed to county work, one in Minden and another in Grand Lake. These were among the first county agents in America.

The first agents had to travel treacherous roads to get to far-flung farms in rural areas. H.C. Sanders, a county agent in Bienville Parish in the 1920s and a former extension director, wrote in his book, "Memoirs of a County Agent," of busted tires, cars stuck in muddy embankments and the hours it would take to get across a parish.

Today travel is quick and easy, but county agents have to navigate rapidly changing technology.

"Technology is happening so fast," Hebert said. "The way we farmed cane 15 years ago is almost completely different than the way we farm cane today, so that is challenging to be able to stay on top of that so I can relate it to the producers."

But Hebert said technology makes his job easier in many ways.

Before smartphones and email, it could take days or months for farmers to get problems diagnosed. Now information moves in minutes.

"Farmers can take pictures on their phones, so we don't always have to go out to their house. They can email it to us, and if we don't know the answer, we can forward it to a specialist and sometimes in 30 minutes have the answer for them."

While Hebert has new devices to help him better do his job, the way it is done dates back to the birth of extension. The demonstration is one of the first tools extension agents employed to improve farming practices.

Sanders wrote that demonstrations started with cotton, but they "soon realized this could work in other crops, and the demonstration idea spread rapidly."

Hebert said the demonstration method has lasted because seeing is believing.

Extension agents have been helping Louisiana thrive for 100 years. They have always been educators improving the way food and fiber are produced. But today their reach goes beyond the farm, helping people eat healthier, garden better, recover from disasters, build stronger homes, improve finances and live well.

"If I do a ryegrass variety demonstration, you can see the performance of each variety," Hebert said. "It is not left up to anybody's interpretation. They see it," he said.

Hebert has seen farmers adopt practices because they witnessed results from demonstrations.

He also said he has encountered farmers resistant to changes because they are doing what worked for their parents and grandparents.

"The only way to get these people to change is if you can get their neighbors and friends to change," he said.

A characteristic of the county agent 100 years ago that Hebert said is still necessary today is the ability to be flexible. He said many days do not go as intended.

"It's hard because you can have a day planned, but people come in and you need to help them out, so you do that."

County agents must be aware that that person's problem is the most important thing in her or her life at the moment.

Working with youth has also been a long tradition with county agents. According to Sanders, it was administrative policy in Louisiana that all personnel had to assist with 4-H club work. That policy remained for decades.

Hebert started as a 4-H agent in St. Landry Parish and continued 4-H work in Lafourche.

"There are a lot of 4-H members that I still see today that are in jobs they got as a result of some of their experiences in

4-H." He also sees former club members that now have their children in 4-H.

The county agent, guided by unique extension philosophies, was and in many ways still is the agricultural leader in his parish. Farmers can get information from many sources, but the county agent remains the trusted source.

"We work with all ag commodities in the parish, so when someone has a question about agriculture, the first person they usually go to is the county agent," Hebert said.

Extension agents have been helping Louisiana thrive for 100 years. They have always been educators improving the way food and fiber are produced. But today their reach goes beyond the farm, helping people eat healthier, garden better, recover from disasters, build stronger homes, improve finances and live well.

"I spend a lot of time working with non-ag clientele," Hebert said.

Hebert, like the agents that went before him, lives in the community he works. He is invested in his parish.

"It is more than just a producer-extension agent relationship. I'm friends with a lot of them, so I want to do everything humanly possible to help them succeed."

Tobie Blanchard is an associate communications specialist, LSU AgCenter Communications.



County Agent Irvin J. Heath, at right, shows how to evaluate a dairy calf in Harelson, La. Year unknown. LSU AgCenter photo archive



Aerial application of DDT circa 1930s. LSU AgCenter photo archive

Integrated pest management springs forth after 1960

Bruce Schultz

In her 1960 book “Silent Spring,” Rachel Carson shook agriculture to its core with a stinging indictment of heavy pesticide use and its effects on the environment. But that book may have actually helped farmers in the long run, according to Rogers Leonard, LSU AgCenter vice chancellor for plant and soil sciences.

“One outcome from that book was the concept of integrated pest management,” Leonard said.

Leonard said the book’s overall message — that farmers were relying heavily on pesticides as a single control tactic to solve their pest problems — persuaded scientists to look at opportunities for pest management in a broader spectrum and reduce overall pesticide use.

“Integrated pest management strategies use a variety of control measures in a holistic system,” Leonard said. “Pesticides can still be an important component in the system, but with an enhanced understanding of the interactions for the cropping system and pest and other management techniques.”

The IPM approach generally combines several tactics such as cultural practices, physical methods, host plant resistance, biological control agents, chemical control and regulatory

actions. Cultural practices, such as planting date, variety selection and proper fertilizer use, can often help prevent problems with weeds, diseases and insects. Physical methods work to prevent the pests from infesting the host. Traps, barriers or vacuuming can be used as physical controls.

Plant resistance to pests may include nonpreference or avoidance of the host plant, tolerance in the presence of the pest or having chemicals produced in the plant that negatively affect the pest. Biological control of pests relies on the use of predators, parasites and diseases in a targeted way to suppress pest populations.

Regulatory action refers to government policies that attempt to reduce pest infestations through inspections, quarantines and destruction of infested material. Managed chemical control is used to supplement many of these other practices.

The IPM philosophy requires regular monitoring of a crop and the pest. It also requires clearly defined action thresholds for determining when a farmer should use herbicides, fungicides or insecticides, rather than spraying on a schedule or when a pest is found, regardless of the population or severity.

The IPM approach combines several tactics such as cultural practices, physical methods, host plant resistance, biological control agents, chemical control and regulatory actions.

Leonard said he has realized that many farmers have been using IPM practices because the techniques have become habits, without realizing the true, original reasons.

"We've gone through a generation or more of farmers, and they've been applying IPM techniques for 30 or 40 years," he said.

Long before Carson's book, many farmers were using various components of IPM before the practices had been included in a named strategy. For example, plowing a field before planting has long been a way of controlling weeds as much as it is a seedbed preparation, Leonard said, and eliminating weeds early often rids a field of prime habitat for insects harmful to a crop.

After World War II, the United States saw a heavy adoption of pesticides in agriculture because of the development of inexpensive, broad-spectrum and effective products such as DDT. With these tools, farmers could spray pesticides upon the first sighting of a pest without regard to pest population or the nontarget effects in the environment.

LSU AgCenter plant pathologist Clayton Hollier recalled that the late Mary Grodner, LSU AgCenter pesticide coordinator, often referred to "the judicious use of pesticides."

The IPM philosophy requires regular monitoring of a crop and the pest.

"The 'judicious use' is a perfect phrase," Hollier said.

Before spraying a field, other measures should be used including variety selection for resistance, date of planting and using a recommended seeding rate, Hollier said. Once the crop is established, regular scouting for insects and disease is essential.

Using too much fertilizer can foster disease development. Hollier recalled a field in Vermilion Parish years ago where a



Rogers Leonard, LSU AgCenter associate vice chancellor for plant and soil sciences, examines corn plants for insects. An entomologist, Leonard was a leader in developing integrated pest management programs for Louisiana crops. Photo Johnny Morgan

Consistent use of the same chemical will foster resistance to a chemical. Persistent use of herbicides with the same mode of action has created populations of resistant weeds.

pilot applied twice the fertilizer rate on the perimeter, leaving a well-defined strip of blast-infested rice.

Weeds also harbor disease pathogens, he said, and simply mowing the edges of a field can help control disease and insects.

"If you look at the particulars of a lot of pathogens, the hosts often are weeds," he said.

Hollier said IPM is a balanced approach.

"You don't want to rely on any one thing," he said.

Consistent use of the same chemical will foster resistance to a chemical. Persistent use of herbicides with the same mode of action has created populations of resistant weeds.

"Many farmers chose not to vary products due to differences in costs," Hollier said.

Leonard said control of the boll weevil was a prime example of the potential of IPM. Effective control of this cotton pest usually required multiple applications of insecticides. Even when using effective sampling strategies and action thresholds as prescribed in IPM to initiate treatments, the frequency of sprays was often excessive.

However, eradication of the boll weevil began in North Carolina where farmers used the cultural practice of destroying cotton stalks after harvest to remove overwintering habitat for the insect, Leonard said. Traps were used to monitor the presence of boll weevils.

These practices were used throughout the South, and the boll weevil now has been confined to an area in Texas along the Rio Grande Valley. Many cotton farmers today never had to deal with boll weevil infestations in cotton fields, Leonard said.

Johnny Saichuk, LSU AgCenter rice specialist, said simple practices such as planting early are an important part of IPM.

"You combine every tool you have and resort to the pesticide as a last measure," Saichuk said.

Flooding rice fields is primarily a weed-control measure, but delaying when the flood is applied can help control the rice water weevil.

Scouting fields and using insect population thresholds before spraying is now considered sound crop management. Controlling weeds in a crop is a given for the highest yield, but even weed control on the edge of a field can reduce insect problems, Saichuk said.

Bruce Schultz is an assistant communications specialist with LSU AgCenter Communications.

Small-scale landowners benefit from forestry extension

Rick Bogren

Forestry management has a long heritage in the United States, and the earliest focus of extension in Louisiana was on regenerating forestlands.

The 1920s was a period when the South had been logged over and not replanted. “For the most part, what came back was whatever naturally seeded back in, which can be unpredictable,” said LSU AgCenter forestry specialist Michael Blazier. “And with the very large clearcuts of the day, there often wasn’t much left to provide that seeding.”

Extension forestry came into its own in 1926, developing the concept of forestry as an agricultural activity. At that time, more than half of the land in Louisiana was in forest. Much had been badly treated by continual burning and clearcutting without remediation. Landowners as a rule had little practical knowledge of appropriate forestry practices.

Early extension specialists set up a program for instructing county agents in forest conservation methods developed by the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station. This involved management practices in cultivation, fire protection, selective harvesting and marketing.

In the 1800s in Louisiana, much forestland was logged and then converted to cotton production. But cotton wasn’t a rotational crop, so production eventually tailed off and didn’t give good yields. And because north Louisiana is hilly, cotton farming practices led to runoff and erosion.

Even today, some forests still show evidence of erosion from cotton if you know what you’re looking for, Blazier said. Reforestation led to the return of a more-natural ecosystem of pine and hardwood forests, and the housing boom after World War II created a strong demand for timber.

During the mid-1950s farm commodity surpluses were increasing, and net farm income was declining. The U.S. Department of Agriculture administration was philosophically opposed to production control through either acreage allotments or marketing quotas. But Congress and the administration did agree on an alternative – voluntary land

retirement through acreage rental payments to farmers.

The Soil Bank had multiple purposes – reducing production of basic crops, maintaining farm income and conserving soil. In Louisiana, Soil Bank cost-share programs drove the conversion from farmland to reforestation. In many cases, the decision was easy because the north Louisiana hills didn’t lend themselves to mechanized farming.

“We’re now in the third and fourth generations of planted

Early extension specialists set up a program for instructing county agents in forest conservation methods developed by the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station . . . management practices in cultivation, fire protection, selective harvesting and marketing.

forests when you consider a 30-year lifespan from planting to harvest and the reforestation programs starting in the 1940s,” Blazier said.

The 1970s and 1980s saw the move from mechanical weed control and burning to chemical control of weedy vegetation to restore forests. As herbicides went through the developmental phase, extension provided information to practicing foresters.

The dominant landowner in Louisiana is still the small, nonindustrial private landowner, Blazier said. Though they are not in the full-time forest business, they still want to learn about thinning schedules and how to generate income between initial planting and final harvest of a stand.

They’re interested in harvesting, cost-share programs



Extension forestry agent conducts a forestry demonstration in Washington Parish, 1949. LSU AgCenter photo archive



Farm worker dips fence posts into a solution of creosote to protect them from insects and rot. LSU AgCenter photo archive



A forestry extension camp in the 1920s. LSU AgCenter photo archive

and managing reestablishment. AgCenter area agents conduct forums to as many as 300 landowners at a time. Ricky Kilpatrick reaches landowners from Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma as well as Louisiana, for example.

Extension professionals can be looked on as investment advisors, helping landowners make the most of their investments, Blazier said. “In addition to giving information ourselves, we provide information on how to get good resources, such as tax advisors and consultants.”

Components of forestry extension today include information on reforestation nonindustrial lands and outreach devoted to how best to navigate the intricacies of tax issues. The Southern regional extension forestry program provides webinars, and the system used by extension and the Natural Resources Conservation Service is wide-reaching, Blazier said.

Forestry extension specialists and agents are the “boots on the ground” who answer specific questions from landowners and homeowners.



Michael Blazier, forestry researcher and extension specialist, gave a presentation at a field day at the AgCenter Hill Farm Research Station in 2012 on the advantages of having a forest stand that mixes pine, sweet gum and red oak trees. Photo by Bruce Schultz

Forestry extension specialists and agents are the “boots on the ground” who answer specific questions from landowners and homeowners.

“We used to do more service work – mark timber, visit landowners, that sort of thing,” said area forestry agent Steve Hotard, who has more than 30 years’ experience. “Now we do more forums, email, newsletters.”

Most landowners don’t live on the land but generally in urban areas and even out of state, Hotard said. He works with landowners whose holdings range from about 40 acres to 200 acres. He also deals more in urban forestry, answering questions about tree problems from homeowners and commercial businesses.

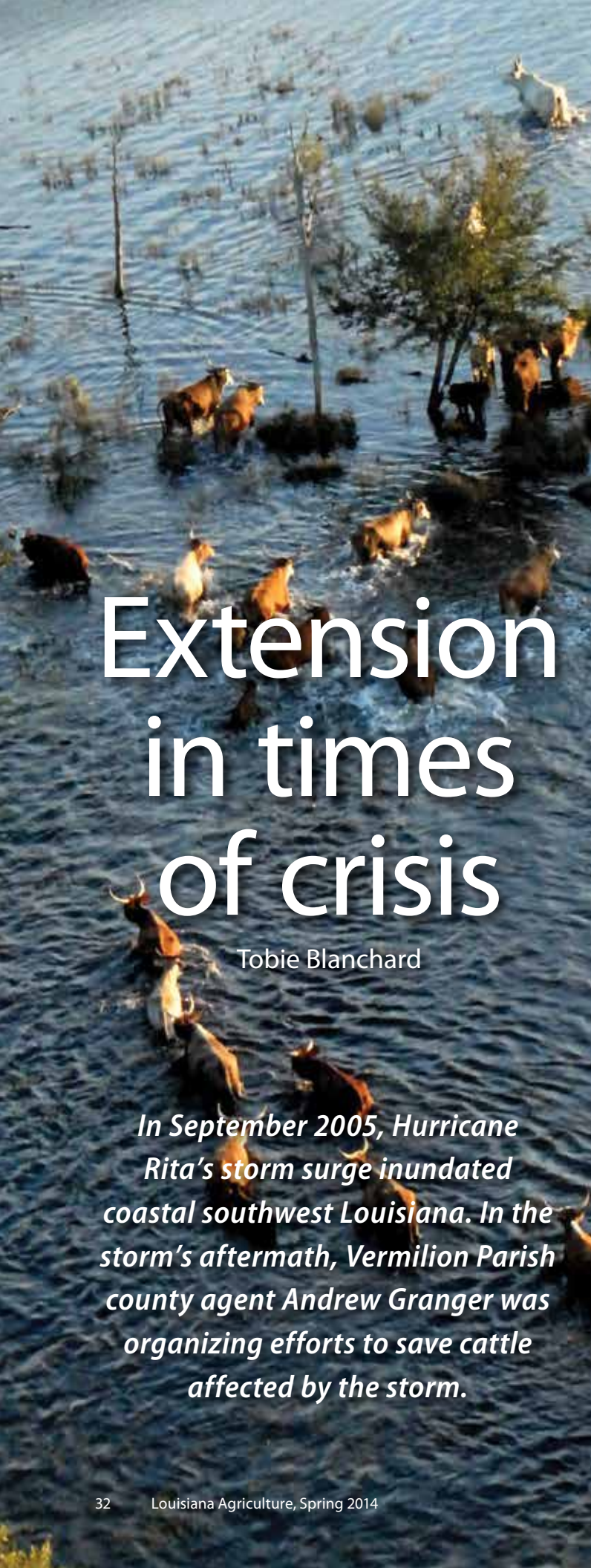
“The most satisfying part is to get to know landowners and actually see them apply what they’ve learned,” Hotard said. “Forestry isn’t all that easy. It’s a long-term endeavor and sometimes it’s hard to see the results.”

From initial planting to any financial return takes 10 to 12 years, he said. “But it’s a good investment.”

Extension foresters now reach a larger audience with more communication tools, and landowners have become more aware of the opportunities they have with their holdings.

“We reach more people now,” Hotard said. “Extension forestry used to be less known than it is now.”

Rick Bogren is a professor and science writer in LSU AgCenter Communications.



Extension in times of crisis

Tobie Blanchard

In September 2005, Hurricane Rita's storm surge inundated coastal southwest Louisiana. In the storm's aftermath, Vermilion Parish county agent Andrew Granger was organizing efforts to save cattle affected by the storm.

In September 2005, Hurricane Rita's storm surge inundated coastal southwest Louisiana. In the storm's aftermath, Vermilion Parish county agent Andrew Granger was organizing efforts to save cattle affected by the storm.

"Andrew should have been hauling furniture out his house and putting it on the roof or something, but he was out there helping us. Helping the community to try to get them out of the water," said Johnny Boudreaux, a rice and cattle producer in Vermilion.

"After seeing the destruction, seeing the cattle loose, and just talking to the people – the depression and despair they felt – it was my commodity, and it was my people, and we had to do something about it," Granger said.

Granger and other agents in the Vermilion extension office took in hay donations from neighboring states and helped distribute them to producers. They helped round up displaced cattle and brought water and feed to stranded livestock. They got out information about mold remediation and cleaning homes after a flood. They helped fishers find ways to recover vessels or get back into the water.

This is what extension does in times of crisis.

Extension has been helping Louisiana recover from disasters since World War I. During the lean years of the war, extension and 4-H workers helped people become more self-sufficient through gardening and canning.

Extension is recognized as the national authority in food preservation practices. Beth Reames, a retired nutritionist and food safety expert with the LSU AgCenter, said agents helped people learn canning techniques for putting up food for the winter.

"Safe food practices, preparation methods, all of these the home demonstration agents were able to provide to people who were not able to get this information otherwise," Reames said.

Fredrick Williamson wrote in "Origin and Growth of Agricultural Extension in Louisiana" that at the time of World War I, health issues assumed a large place in extension work. Agents gave instruction on healthy diets, sanitation and control of mosquitoes and flies in homes.

In 1927, swollen rivers flooded 3 million acres of land – most of it land under cultivation. Crops and livestock were destroyed. Thirty-one parishes were affected by the Great Flood of 1927. No other agency had the network in place to provide statewide help like extension did. This event tested and helped shape extension's disaster relief efforts.

Williamson said extension helped with evacuations, salvaging property and livestock and organizing refugee camps. Agents in unaffected parishes collected food and clothing for refugees and feed for livestock. Agents also held food and nutrition classes at refugee camps.

After the flood waters receded, extension helped with replanting crops and rehabilitation of homes.

Williamson also cites extension efforts during the flood and the Great Depression that followed, which helped avert what could have been mass starvation.

Cattle move through flood waters searching for higher ground after Hurricane Rita in 2005. Photo by Bruce Schultz

Home demonstration efforts were once again called into action during World War II. Louisiana 4-H'ers helped grow Victory Gardens to supply food.

During modern disasters like hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, extension continued to play a major role in assisting people with disaster relief and recovery.

Agents across the state mobilized after Hurricane Katrina, organizing recovery efforts and helping at shelters. Agents were responsible for compiling damage estimates for each parish, which is crucial for national relief funding. The protocols that worked during Katrina were used again during hurricanes Rita, which struck a month later, and again in Gustav and Ike, both in 2008.

"They've particularly been a good resource during the hurricanes," said Abbeville rice farmer David LaCour. "We had over 1,000 acres of rice ground go under a storm surge of salt water, and the AgCenter was particularly helpful with determining salt tolerances for rice varieties. They were a valuable resource in helping us determine when it would be good to go back into the fields."

... the Great Flood of 1927.

No other agency had the network in place to provide statewide help like extension did. This event tested and helped shape extension's disaster relief efforts.

Extension agents also work to get things back to normal following a disaster. Students were out of school after hurricanes Katrina and Rita, but 4-H tried to keep them in a routine. Agents held youth programs for evacuees at shelters. 4-H clubs got back together as quickly as they could.

"I think it really helped the kids because they had activities they could take part in and kind of get back to a regular form of life," said Kirk Soileau, an administrator in Vermilion Parish schools.

In 2010, Louisiana's fishers were in turmoil from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Thu Bui, a fisheries agent in St. Mary Parish was instrumental in working with the fishing community, particularly the Vietnamese fishers, to understand the regulations and closures.

"There was a lot of information that needed to get out in a manner that was fast and for the fisherman to understand because there were closures that occurred almost daily once or twice a day," she said.

In Vermilion Parish, fisheries agent Mark Shirley was organizing meetings to help fishers get answers. Shirley has helped his community recover from storms and the spill.

"The disaster recovery things we did after Rita or Ike or even the BP oil spill, we did that because we live here," said



A hurricane task force meets on the Gulf Coast in 2009 to review what happened following hurricanes Gustav and Ike in 2008. Photo by Bruce Schultz



A raised home in Cameron Parish was undamaged by the floodwaters of Hurricane Ike in 2008. Photo by Bruce Schultz

Mark Shirley. "It's not because of some higher directive from Baton Rouge or Washington, D.C., or somewhere. We all live in this community."

That is the strength of the extension service – a network of agents based in parishes working to help their communities thrive and survive. And in coastal areas where storms seem more frequent, extension is helping communities recover more quickly.

"We're not going to abandon our coastal community. We have too many resources," Shirley said. "So we have to learn to live with storms and disasters, and we're doing that."

Tobie Blanchard is an associate communications specialist, LSU AgCenter Communications.

Helping People Raise Cattle for 100 Years

Bruce Schultz

Back in the day, maybe even just a few years ago, it was common for most farms to have at least a few head of cattle.

Paul Coreil, retired LSU AgCenter vice chancellor for extension, recalled that on farms similar to the one where he grew up in Evangeline Parish, rice farmers routinely kept cattle to rotate pasture with rice fields.

“Cattle production was big on the prairies,” he said. “The cattle industry in the southwest Louisiana prairies goes back into the 1800s.”

Most of the cattle in the early days had a strong Brahman influence because of the breed’s ability to withstand heat and insect pressure. Coreil said Texas Longhorn also could be found in many herds.

Big changes have taken place since those days.

“We have more part-time cattle owners than ever,” said Keith Fontenot, LSU AgCenter county agent in Evangeline Parish.

In the past, full-time farmers with rice would have cattle to supplement their other crops, but now many rural residents have hobby farms with 50 head of cattle or less.

At the same time, cattle owners have become more sophisticated and knowledgeable.

“They are much more aware of what’s out there, and they are asking more questions. Our producers have more access to information on the internet and in magazines,” Fontenot said.

Often, he said, questions are asked to verify what they have read or heard.

Cattle owners now time their calving to occur within a specific time frame, Fontenot said. “You have cattle producers with a breeding season instead of a bull on cows year round.”

That enables calves to be marketed in a group within the ideal weight of 500-600 pounds.

Instead of taking their chances at the sale barn, cattle producers are contracting with buyers and some are even using video auctions.



Louisiana county agents would tour regional cattle herds in an effort to find cattle best suited to Louisiana. The description of this photo reads “Rambler” Imp. Brahman bull – Palacios, Texas, 1931. LSU AgCenter photo archive



J. Meaux with his 4-H club calf in 1937. LSU AgCenter photo archive



A judge reviews dairy conformation at a livestock short course. Photo by J.G. Ewing & Sons, Baton Rouge



Harry Daniels Jr. from West Feliciana Parish with his 4-H club calves in 1937. LSU AgCenter photo archive

Fontenot said cattle owners are more aware of improving forage with fertilizer and weed control, and they are more likely to use soil testing.

Andrew Granger, LSU AgCenter county agent in Vermilion Parish, agreed that cattle owners have become more sophisticated with breeding seasons and a marketing strategy.

He said some of his work of communicating with his clientele can be done by social media and email.



A rancher on horseback sprays a herd of beef cattle with pesticides in Iberville Parish in 1947. LSU AgCenter photo archive

“But you’ve still got to do the work eyeball-to-eyeball.”

Granger said many of the parish’s rural residents still raise cattle but no longer raise rice or other row crops. He said he has seen an increase in the number of cattle in the parish.

One thing that hasn’t changed is the dependence on the Brahman breed. “Probably 98 percent of our cows have some Brahma,” he said.

The LSU AgCenter’s educational assistance for cattle producers is in the process of being strengthened, according to Phil Elzer, associate vice chancellor for animal science. Five regional specialists coordinate extension and research programs.

Elzer said the regional concept allows for customization to accommodate the differences in production practices across the state. To carry out the expansion, two cattle researchers, Ryon Walker at the Hill Farm Research Station in Homer (Northwest) and Guillermo Scaglia at the Iberia Research Station in Jeanerette (Southwest) are working with three extension agents, Vince Deshotel in St. Landry Parish (Central), Jason Holmes in Union Parish (Northeast) and Kenny Sharpe in Livingston Parish (Southwest).

Bruce Schultz is an assistant communications specialist with LSU AgCenter Communications.

Ag Summary captures agriculture history for 35 years

Olivia McClure

Every year, the LSU AgCenter publishes “Louisiana Summary of Agriculture and Natural Resources,” which tabulates the value of agricultural commodities produced in Louisiana. A unique resource, the summary has captured the history of Louisiana agriculture for the past 35 years and provides researchers, extension agents and farmers the information they need to make decisions.

“It’s the only resource for concrete information that gives a clear understanding of the contribution agriculture makes to Louisiana’s economy,” said AgCenter economist John Westra.

The first Ag Summary was printed in 1979, using data from 1978. Since then, cotton, rice and soybean acreage have decreased in favor of corn, which has become more profitable, Westra said. Louisiana’s dairy industry has declined while the poultry industry has grown. Forestry has remained the No. 1 agricultural commodity over the years.

Extension agents in each of Louisiana’s 64 parishes begin compiling data in the fall by contacting local producers. Those numbers are entered into an online database, which is verified by Westra, AgCenter state commodity specialists and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Farm gate price information comes from a variety of sources, with the goal of getting the most local prices possible.

Westra said the data-gathering process helps agents become more familiar with the agriculture sector in their respective parishes and puts them in touch with farmers. Building those relationships is important, he said, because producers need to know whom to contact if they need assistance.

K-12 classrooms also use Ag Summary data to learn about agriculture, which is an important part of Louisiana history, Westra said. Many schools use the pocket-sized Highlights of Agriculture booklet, which includes key facts and figures from Ag Summary along with maps and photos.

The Ag Summary also helps the AgCenter and government agencies determine how to allocate resources, including disaster relief funds.

Only a few states have a resource as detailed as the Ag Summary, Westra said, and the USDA does not keep track of every commodity produced in individual states. Some commodities, such as crawfish, have a significant economic impact in Louisiana but nowhere else, so the USDA does not collect data on their production or sales.

The Ag Summary, on the other hand, keeps track of every agricultural commodity commercially produced in Louisiana. In 2013, Louisiana agriculture was worth \$11.8 billion, making it one of the top three industries in the state.

“It helps highlight the diversity of agricultural production in Louisiana,” Westra said. “That’s an advantage. Many states went from having a diverse range of crops to just a few crops. Louisiana’s agriculture sector has become increasingly diverse, which means we can weather natural disasters and economic storms better.”

Olivia McClure is a student worker in LSU AgCenter Communications.

Teaching Nutrition: A Basic Goal of Extension

Olivia McClure

In a state home to diverse flavors as well as a history of poverty, many Louisianans struggle to make healthy, affordable eating choices. Because agriculture's foremost goal is to feed people, nutrition has always been a central part of the LSU AgCenter's extension efforts.

In the early days of extension work, home demonstration agents, later extension home economists, taught homemakers how to safely preserve food, which was often grown on their small family farms. For many rural residents, these agents were the sole source of nutrition information.

"There was no mass media," said retired LSU AgCenter nutrition specialist Beth Reames. "It was the extension agents who helped homemakers can food safely, prepare foods healthfully and prevent foodborne illnesses."

Farming became a less common way of life as America urbanized in the mid-20th century. Nutrition specialists, an increasing number of whom were registered dietitians, began focusing less on food preservation and safety and more on healthy cooking methods and consumer choices. Exercise and dieting became hot topics as obesity and diabetes affected a growing percentage of Americans.

At the same time, technology was evolving in ways that made it easier for extension agents to reach people and vice versa.

Reames, who began working at the AgCenter in 1983 and retired in 2013, said agents used to spend a lot of time on the road, going from place to place to give presentations. They would "load up the car with brochures and go," visiting schools, community organizations and extension offices across Louisiana.

"Sometimes you'd go around and see your name in lights or on the high school marquee — 'welcome Dr. Beth Reames' or whoever it was — because you were really looked at as a celebrity," Reames said.

As PowerPoint presentations replaced flipcharts and easels, extension agents had to learn to use computers. Email, and later, social media provided a faster link to people who needed information.

Technology empowered agents to create their own fact-sheets and other materials. It also enabled them to complete training sessions remotely through videoconferencing, saving time they once spent traveling.

Donna Montgomery, who was a nutrition specialist from 1972 to 2002, took advantage of television and radio to help extension reach the masses. She created a monthly TV spot with food buying tips that promoted Louisiana products.

Montgomery dedicated much of her time to writing publications and lesson plans that county agents used for classes



AgCenter nutritionist Donna Montgomery prepares for a food preparation demonstration in 1992. Photo by Catherine Arnold



Students grade a selection of canned fruits and vegetables in the 1940s. LSU AgCenter photo archive

It was the extension agents who helped homemakers can food safely, prepare foods healthfully and prevent foodborne illnesses.



The aim of the Smart Bodies program, which was launched in 2005, is to teach nutrition to school-age children with the goal of obesity prevention. A significant part of the program is the Body Walk exhibit, which travels around the state and is set up in school gymnasiums. Children walk through nine different parts of the body and learn what happens to the food they eat. So far, the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation has contributed more than \$3 million to the program. In the above photo, taken in 2007, are four members of the staff involved with the Smart Bodies program. They are, left to right, John Albarado, extension assistant; Ellen Murphy, now retired, who was the associate director of the School of Human Ecology; Denise Holston-West, who was the director of Smart Bodies and still is; and Michael Zanovec, research associate. Milestones of the program include reaching 50 schools per year and 30,000 children with the Body Walk exhibit per year. Since March 2005, more than 450 elementary schools have implemented Smart Bodies, and nearly 400,000 children and adults have experienced the Body Walk. Photo by Mark Claesgens

on topics such as osteoporosis, lowering cholesterol and food safety at fairs and festivals. Food labels changed significantly during Montgomery's career, and extension helped people learn how to read them to make better decisions and understand marketing techniques.

"Learning to purchase foods not just to save money, but to make wise choices is important for all income levels," Montgomery said.

Montgomery, who was a 4-H'er growing up and a 4-H agent for eight years before becoming a nutrition specialist, also worked with 4-H agents to develop lessons and short programs. She said one of her favorite parts of her job was working with extension specialists in various areas such as horticulture and beef to make sure information was accurate and easy to understand.

Providing that information would be impossible, however, without people who believe in extension and its power to improve lives.

"I liked seeing how people are helped, and I really enjoyed working with 4-H and seeing the growth of children through the years," Montgomery said. "Extension is a family. Most people that I know in extension came and retired in extension. Not many people left."

One hundred years after extension was born, that family continues to grow and touch lives every day.

"It's a valuable organization that people can depend on, and I think that is the key to extension's success," Reames said. "People do realize the value of the information they get from the extension service."

Olivia McClure is a student worker in LSU AgCenter Communications.

Extension helps teach nutrition to low-income people

Olivia McClure

Good nutrition is key to living a happy, healthy life. For the 903,000 low-income Louisiana residents who get help paying for food through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), however, knowing how to make good eating choices on a limited budget can be difficult.

SNAP-Ed nutrition educators have been working to change that since 1988, when Cooperative Extension faculty in Wisconsin partnered with the state SNAP agency and the federal government to launch nutrition outreach programs for low-income people.

Today, SNAP-Ed is conducted nationwide. In most states, land-grant universities contract with state SNAP agencies to provide educational programs to people who are eligible for SNAP. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service reimburses up to half of states' SNAP-Ed costs.

Marquetta Reynolds, East Baton Rouge Parish nutrition educator, said SNAP-Ed teaches children and adults about the MyPlate food groups, hand washing, nutrition labels and exercise. Adults also learn about eating health on a budget and on the go.

"I feel that the community really, really needs this information," Reynolds said.

Reynolds said most participants enter SNAP-Ed unaware of things like their sodium intake or what leads to certain health issues. Often, these people simply do not have the resources to know those things, she said.

"People just don't understand what they're doing to their bodies when they eat a lot of these foods," Reynolds said.

After completing lessons, Reynolds said participants sometimes tell her they started paying attention to nutrition labels or lost a couple of pounds by exercising more. Children in the program enjoy telling Reynolds about new fruits and vegetables they are trying.

Seeing that progress is extremely rewarding, Reynolds said, because SNAP-Ed participants represent an audience truly in need of nutrition information. Thanks to SNAP-Ed, they not only improve their own health, but also that of their family and friends by setting a better example.

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is a similar effort designed to help low-income families with children and low-income youth eat and live healthier. EFNEP started in 1968 and launched in Louisiana in 1969. It is conducted through the Cooperative Extension Service nationwide.

Heli Roy, LSU AgCenter EFNEP coordinator, said EFNEP must constantly evolve to keep up with changing dietary guidelines and research. The latest major change was in 2010, when MyPlate replaced what was called the "food pyramid." This pyramid ranked foods that should be eaten most – breads, cereals, fruits and vegetables – at the bottom and least – fats, sugars and oils – at the top.



Southern University Agricultural Center nutrition educator Marquetta Anderson, left, discusses healthful portions at a SNAP-Ed workshop at a nursing home in 2013. Anderson helped participants choose healthful meals and to have some fun in the process. Photo by Johnny Morgan



AgCenter nutritionist Beth Reames, second from left, conducts an Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program training session in 1992. Photo by John Wozniak



In the late 1990s and the early 2000s, 4-H offered an agriculture awareness activity for local Baton Rouge schools in the Mini Farm building during the week of the State Livestock Show, which at that time was held in Parker Coliseum on the LSU campus. The State Livestock Show has since moved to the Lamar-Dixon facility in Gonzales, La. This ag awareness event for school children was a precursor to the current AgMagic activity, which is held annually in Parker Coliseum and has been since 2004. During this same week, AgCenter nutritionists held wellness activities for local preschool groups in Nelson Memorial, where this photo was taken in 2001. Photo by John Wozniak

Over the years, EFNEP teaching has become more active and client-centered, Roy said. Food demonstrations are an important part of lessons because they show participants affordable ways to prepare foods they may be unfamiliar with. EFNEP educators also provide and demonstrate healthy recipes.

The educators are paraprofessionals who are recruited from the community and trained in nutrition. This is a highly successful approach, Roy said, because participants are more likely to actually make positive health choices if they are learning about them from someone in their community.

In Louisiana, about 40 paraprofessionals teach EFNEP classes in 11 urban parishes.

"This is one of the programs that really goes into the communities and teaches these individuals in poverty how to eat well and improve their lives," Roy said. "If we lost it, our numbers in terms of heart disease, hypertension, diabetes and obesity would be even higher."

EFNEP enrolls participants for one year. Graduates of the program sometimes become EFNEP volunteers because they liked it so much, Roy said.

Gina E. Eubanks, LSU AgCenter associate vice chancellor and program leader for nutrition and food sciences, said EFNEP and SNAP-Ed are valuable programs because they reach an audience that does not always have access to nutrition education. The goal is to help people create and sustain positive changes in their behavior.

Food is a choice that people make each and every day, Eubanks said, so it is important to make sure everyone has information that empowers them to make good choices. If they understand the benefits of eating healthy, they are more likely to do so.

"Extension is founded on educating the population on a better way of life," Eubanks said. "A better way of life includes the whole picture. It's not just telling them how to farm better, but how to eat better — and not only how to eat better, but how to save money on the food they eat."

Olivia McClure is a student worker in LSU AgCenter Communications.

4-H Begins in Louisiana

Craig Gautreaux



4-H, the nation's largest youth organization, had a humble beginning in the corn fields of central Louisiana and was a part of the vision of agricultural pioneer, Seaman A. Knapp, credited with helping to engineer the beginnings of both 4-H and the Cooperative Extension Service.

Knapp was a firm believer in agriculture demonstration. He felt that if you could show proven farming methods, farmers would be more likely to adopt them. Knapp also believed that young people would be more accepting of new ways to grow crops. If he could get young people to use these new techniques and be successful, Knapp would have an easier time convincing their parents.

The foundation for today's 4-H clubs can be traced back to Knapp's corn clubs, the first of which was established in 1908 in Moreauville, La. V.L. Roy, school superintendent for Avoyelles Parish, is credited with starting the first club. According to the late C.J. Naquin, state 4-H leader from 1978-1989, more than 250 boys attended the first meeting.



4-H member R.V. Mize from St. Joseph shows off the results of his corn varieties test in 1947. LSU AgCenter photo archive

By 1911, corn clubs were found across the state as well as cotton and pig clubs. Young women became involved in canning and sewing clubs. Knapp's vision was being fulfilled.

This demonstration work with youth proved to the adults that this educational technique worked, which was the foundation of the establishment of the Cooperative Extension Service in 1914.

The following year, 1915, was a milestone for Louisiana 4-H – the development of 4-H Short Course, which has since evolved into 4-H University. The idea was to bring the youth

together for a few days once a year for an educational experience on the LSU campus.

During its early years, the main purpose of Short Course was to interest young men and women in attending LSU and seeing what the campus had to offer along with some information on agriculture, according to Naquin. Gradually, more competitive events were added.

In 2013, more than 1,400 young people from across the state participated in 4-H University, also known as 4-H U. During the event, statewide officers are elected and winners of contests are announced.

4-H's summer camping program began back in the early 1920s and was at one time at seven locations across the state. Today, Camp Grant Walker serves as host for the program. It is named after Rufus Walker, who was responsible for acquiring the land, and the parish that it resides in, Grant.

As society became more urban, leaders of 4-H realized that the club could no longer offer educational programming based solely on crop and livestock production or canning clubs. In fact, a majority of today's members live in urban areas.

"It slowly evolved, and we added things such as photography, automotive and eventually dog care," said Norma Roberts, state 4-H leader from 1989-1993, and the nation's first female state 4-H leader.



A 4-H Short Course dairy foods demonstration team. LSU AgCenter photo archive

One feature that remains the same but makes Louisiana 4-H unique is the role the organization plays in schools across the state. Many 4-H clubs hold their meetings in and during regular school hours. School systems recognize the educational value of 4-H.

According to Mark Tassin, associate vice chancellor for 4-H and youth programs, approximately 200,000 youth participate in 4-H programs across the state, and more than 42 percent of those participating are members of minority groups.

“We continue to be a national leader primarily because of our close association with schools and the diversity of our programming,” he said. The connection with our schools affords us the opportunity to reach youth who otherwise would not have that chance.”

Today’s 4-H is much different from the corn club meetings held in Avoyelles Parish. The organization has responded to a changing populace and has incorporated innovative technology such as computers and robotics. But one thing that remains the same is teaching today’s young people how to be responsible and productive citizens.

Craig Gautreaux is a communications specialist with LSU AgCenter Communications.



Attendees from Louisiana at the first National 4-H Club Camp in Washington, D.C., in 1927. Delegates slept in tents on the National Mall in front of the U.S. Department of Agriculture building. Held annually, except for several years during World War II, the camp eventually moved from the mall and became the National 4-H Conference. Since 1959, the conference has been held at the National 4-H Youth Conference Center in Chevy Chase, Md. LSU AgCenter photo archive



A 4-H member tends a World War II victory garden. LSU AgCenter photo archive



Louisiana 4-H'ers become autograph seekers when a Louisiana senator and the dean of the LSU College of Agriculture visit them during National 4-H Club Camp in Washington, D.C. Pictured from left to right around Sen. John R. Overton (seated) are Dewell Gandy, Claiborne Parish; Sen. Allen H. Ellender; Mariana Bordelon, Avoyelles Parish; M.M. LaCroix, assistant 4-H Club leader; Theron Price, Rapides Parish; Dean J. G. Lee; and Geraldine Williams, Rapides Parish. LSU AgCenter photo archive



Frank Fox, left, and Percy Mayeaux stand with the Moreauville corn club/4-H marker. They were charter members of the original 1908 Louisiana corn club, according to Carlos Mayeaux of the Avoyelles Tourist Commission. LSU AgCenter photo archive

Volunteers are the heart of 4-H

Janet Fox

Volunteers are vital to Cooperative Extension and to 4-H. They have been integral to the development, delivery and success of programs since beginning. Extension professionals engage volunteers by involving them in a variety of roles that provides leadership and support to programs and events.

In Louisiana, nearly 7,500 4-H volunteers assist in the delivery of 4-H programs to approximately 240,000 youth annually. In 2012-2013, 4-H volunteers gave more than \$7.1 million worth of service to the Louisiana 4-H Youth Development program.

Louisiana 4-H Master Volunteer Fran Castille from Tangipahoa Parish shared her motivation for volunteering. "I have been a 4-H volunteer for the past 29 years and was a 4-H'er for eight years. My family says that I bleed green. Words cannot describe what it is like to watch my kids receive blue ribbons at 4-H University or represent Louisiana 4-H at the local, state and national levels and know that I have something to do with their success. I feel like I receive more from the kids than I can ever give them."

Though volunteers are essential assets to extension programming, many volunteers discover the reciprocal nature of volunteering. National 4-H Hall of Fame recipient Ann Keene of Madison Parish shared her 4-H volunteer experience. "Being a 4-H volunteer leader, I had the opportunity to assist youth in recognizing the qualities within themselves that would enable them to grow and become leaders of the future, while using the projects and activities at the heart of the 4-H program. In being that caring adult working with young people, I was forced to dig deep within myself and develop skills that I did not know I possessed so that I, too, grew!"

Janet Fox is associate director of 4-H and Youth Development.

4-H Museum offers trip down memory lane

Craig Gautreaux

Located in Mansura just up the road from the birthplace of 4-H in Louisiana in Moreauville, the Louisiana 4-H Museum offers visitors a unique perspective of the role 4-H has played in people's lives for more than 100 years.

Visitors can see the evolution of 4-H through the many exhibits on display. Old project books help illustrate how in the early days the primary focus was on livestock and cooking. Other exhibits show how 4-H has changed to meet the needs of the today's students

with an emphasis on science, engineering and technology.

It is also the home of the Louisiana 4-H Hall of Fame, which recognizes those individuals who have made significant contributions to the success and continuance of 4-H in the state. So far, 172 people have been honored.

According to Esther Boe, an Avoyelles Parish 4-H agent who helps administer the museum, visiting the museum is "a trip down memory lane." A collection of photographs chronicling the construction of 4-H Camp Grant Walker is popular, Boe said. "A lot of people's most vivid memories are related to their time at camp," she said.

Boe said the museum has also served as a resource for those families who were active in 4-H. She indicated it is not uncommon for individuals to seek out pictures or memorabilia of long-lost relatives from their days as a 4-H participant, volunteer or agent.

Another prominent feature is the 27-foot diorama that tells the story from the humble beginnings of 4-H to the era of mechanized agriculture and how 4-H grew from 300 boys to an organization that now serves more than 200,000 youth every year statewide.

The museum is housed in the Avoyelles Parish extension office and is open on normal business days from 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. It is a self-guided tour, and there is no admission fee.



This ribbon from the 1948 Livestock Show reads "13th Annual LSU Livestock Show, Junior Division, Baton Rouge, La., March 27-April 2, 1948, Champion, Baby Beef Dept."



This 1943 4-H Banner is one of thousands of items donated to the Louisiana 4-H Museum in Mansura, La.

Craig Gautreaux is a communications specialist with LSU AgCenter Communications.



Twelve new members of the 4-H Hall of Fame were installed May 10, 2014, bringing the total number to 172, at the Louisiana 4-H Museum in Mansura. The inductees are, left to right, front row, Madge Borne of Jefferson Parish, Randy Stutes of Vermilion Parish, Carolyn Lang of Winn Parish, James "Jake" Abadie of Iberia Parish, Terril Faul, State 4-H Office; Pete Miranda of Iberville Parish; back row, left to right, Sue Butler of Concordia Parish, Karen Broussard of Vermilion Parish for her late husband Johnny Broussard; Ann Langlinais of Vermilion Parish, Lynn Farrar of Caddo Parish, Judia Lacombe of Acadia Parish and Sandra Brumley of Caddo Parish. Photo by Bruce Schultz

Master Gardeners: One way extension moved to urban areas

Johnny Morgan

In the early part of the 20th century, the majority of Americans lived on the farm, and many made their living from what their farms produced. In those early days, the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service was known as an organization that worked with farmers and farm families.

Extension provided the agent who helped the farmer produce his crops and the farm wife preserve fruits and vegetables. The 4-H agent was the teacher outside of school for farm children.

adopted statewide in 1997, and now it is offered in 23 parishes with volunteer participation in 46 parishes.”

Currently, there are more than 2,000 active Louisiana Master Gardeners that serve many roles in helping county extension agents deliver educational consumer horticultural programs and information.

AgCenter horticulturist Steve Hotard, whose responsibilities include the Master Gardener program in Ouachita Parish, said he experienced the move toward more urban respon-

Linda Vinsanau, a Master Gardener in Orleans and Jefferson parishes, said knowledge of extension was common for people when she was growing up in rural Louisiana back in the 1940s.

“My dad was a truck farmer,” Vinsanau said. “He grew both spring and winter crops, and he would bring the produce to the French Market in New Orleans.”

She said her dad depended heavily on extension agents for knowledge to conduct his business.

Vinsanau said the county agent would have seminars for the farmers based on what they were growing or what they were doing.

“Master Gardeners came at a very good time in my life because it was right after Katrina,” she said. “I was in a very heavily devastated area where we lost everything. So I needed a new purpose in life. Master Gardeners really gave that to me.”

Johnny Morgan is a communications specialist with LSU AgCenter Communications.



Regina Bracy, director of the LSU AgCenter Southeast Region and also a horticulturist, conducts a tour for Master Gardeners at the Hammond Research Station in Hammond, La., as part of their state convention in 2008. Photo by Johnny Morgan

But as time passed and people began to move from the farm to urban and suburban areas, it also became necessary for the Cooperative Extension Service to adjust to the change and to revamp programs.

One of the most noticeable programs in the urban setting has been the Master Gardener program.

Bobby Fletcher, LSU AgCenter assistant director for urban programs, said the Louisiana Master Gardener program has been in place in urban areas since 1994.

“The first chapter was organized in East Baton Rouge Parish as a means to extend research-based information to home gardeners,” Fletcher said. “It was

sibilities after working 20 years as an area forestry agent.

“In 2008, I accepted the position of horticulture and forestry area agent in Ouachita Parish,” Hotard said. “Before this time, most of my contacts were landowners with properties in rural areas and the forest industry.

“Demand on my time increased dramatically with office calls, office visits and requests for home visits,” Hotard said. “Mass media demands also increased.”

Some citizens with a connection to agriculture during their early years have found their way back to the Cooperative Extension Service as Master Gardener volunteers.



Inside:

Fisheries agents in the 1970s worked hard to earn the trust of local fishing communities. See page 11

Louisiana led the nation with its Master Farmer Program, which is dedicated to conservation. See page 14

Early extension agents rode "agricultural" trains around the state to bring knowledge to rural communities. See page 17

The founder of community development programs in Louisiana was an extraordinary woman named Mary Mims. See page 18

An integrated pest management strategy in farming has boosted the profitability of agriculture. See page 28



LSU AgCenter
128 Knapp Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BATON ROUGE, LA
PERMIT NO. 374



The LSU AgCenter celebrates 100 years of the Cooperative Extension System. Our Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, as part of that system, has helped Louisianians grow in knowledge that has improved their lives in countless ways since 1914.

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE



CHANGING LIVES

for
100 Years

Celebrate with us as we mark the 100th anniversary of the Smith-Lever Act, which established the Cooperative Extension Service in the Land-grant University System. And join us as we look forward to our next hundred years of innovating, educating and improving lives.



LSUAgCenter.com . Extension100Years.net