

ALABAMA A&M UNIVERSITY
ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY, MS
DELAWARE STATE UNIVERSITY
FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY



FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY, GA
KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY
LANGSTON UNIVERSITY, OK
LINCOLN UNIVERSITY, MO

1890 *Land-Grant Institutions*

NORTH CAROLINA A&T STATE UNIVERSITY
PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY, TX
SOUTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY
SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AND A&M COLLEGE, LA
TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY, AL

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT PINE BLUFF
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EASTERN SHORE
VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY
WEST VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY

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THE ECONOMY IS CHANGING. There are signs that things are improving and others that point to an economy that's stagnant. Whatever you like to believe, one thing remains certain, in these times of uncertainty people want organizations that can help them improve their present condition. They want a trusted resource for unbiased information. They want a place to go where they know they will not just get information, but get hands-on instruction. They need an organization like Cooperative Extension. That's right, Cooperative Extension. Yes, we still do some of the same things we've always done, but we are so much more than our history. From working to make sure that young people have appropriate leadership training sessions to helping farmers move into alternative farm enterprises to making sure families are making smart financial and nutrition decisions, Cooperative Extension is here to help. Cooperative Extension is programs that work for people.

All of Cooperative Extension has programs designed to help people solve the problems they are facing, but the 1890 land-grant institutions have a special mission and mandate. We work with people who need us the most. Many of them have limited personal or family assets, limited opportunities or they come from communities that have limited resources. None of this matters to us. Our job is to meet people where they are and move them along to the next level. When aquaculture farmers in Arkansas wanted information on how to make sure that the fish they were moving to market were disease free, they came to Cooperative Extension. When families in Texas were looking for a place that would help with diabetes prevention and care, they came to Cooperative Extension and as a result of the 300 people that participated in diabetes education, most of them now include at

least 30 minutes of exercise in their daily routines, and many of them are also being weaned off diabetes medications and reducing the number of crisis episodes.

And when the call went out for a science project for the 4-H National Youth Science Day, staff from North Carolina stepped up with an experiment. That same project was conducted in 258 locations around the world, but more important in many communities where doing a science project isn't considered fun or exciting. Who knows, one of those children might one day find the cure to some costly, debilitating disease. And it all started with Cooperative Extension.

This is only a small sample of the work we do every day in Cooperative Extension. This document outlines some of that work, but there is so much more. Call any of the 1890s. They can tell you in great detail about all the work they are doing; work designed to help people. This is what we do as land-grant universities.

Times may have changed. Delivery methods may be a little different, but we are still in the business of offering programs that work for people. This is what we do in Cooperative Extension - offer programs that work for people.

Dr. Gina Eubanks, Chair, Association of Extension Administrators
Vice Chancellor of Extension, Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center

Dr. Albert Essel, AEA Immediate Past Chair
Associate Dean for Extension, Delaware State University

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



LEADERSHIP



Recent youth development research indicates a need to provide opportunities for young people that increase their leadership skills. These opportunities build on their assets with the intent of strengthening their leadership capabilities. Creating opportunities to engage young people in leadership roles is a priority of the 1890 land-grant system.

■ To combat the problems of low self-esteem, high dropout rates, teen pregnancy and juvenile delinquency in San Antonio, Texas, **Prairie View A&M University** uses the Teen Leadership Connection curriculum in 4-H clubs to help young people establish a sense of self-assurance and motivation to better their lives. Teachers and 4-H club managers have prepared participants for 4-H contests, activities and events. As a result of the curriculum instruction, 60 percent of the youths reported success in setting goals, appreciating cultural differences and resolving conflicts.

■ Young people in Fresno, Texas, wanted to gain more community visibility and get assistance to stand guard against the increased number of gangs being formed in their neighborhoods. Through **Prairie View A&M University's** Engaging Youth, Serving

Community 4-H Program, youths work with adults in their community to make Fresno more visible. Methods have included purchasing a sign to welcome visitors and establishing a rodeo to give more young people a sport in which to participate. This rodeo is now being held annually. The three young people who organized these efforts with adults in their communities were invited to Washington, D.C., to participate in The White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships roundtable to discuss their community involvement.

■ **Tuskegee University** holds a Summer Leadership Institute to give 9th to 12th grade students the opportunity to learn firsthand about the importance of commitment and involvement in community leadership. Public speaking and communication, juveniles and the law, and responsible social networking

have been among the topics offered during the event. Participants have indicated a better understanding of leadership, ethics, parliamentary procedures and how to work in a team as a result of the institute.

■ Over the past two years, the **University of Maryland Eastern Shore** Extension – Baltimore City 4-H Teen Corps Leadership members participated in leadership development and entrepreneurial trainings. Ninety percent reported that they know the qualities of a leader, 80 percent increased their critical thinking skills, and 50 percent now own their own business. The 4-H Teen Corps initiative has become an international collaborative through the development of a partnership with the Senegalese American Bilingual School in West Africa.

SCHOOL ENRICHMENT



Limited-income, largely minority at-risk youths face many challenges, including low-literacy test scores, low self-esteem, increased high school dropout rates, alcohol and drug abuse, and decreased opportunities to enter the workforce. The 1890 land-grant system is committed to promoting positive outcomes for young people, giving them opportunities, choices and support to fully participate in after-school and summer enrichment programs to overcome these obstacles.

■ **Delaware State University** has partnered with select public schools in the state to organize Ladies and Gentlemen 4-H Clubs to assist in changing negative behaviors of young people ages 9 to 18. Initially, 276 club members attended weekly in-school and after-school meetings on conflict resolution, team building, mentoring, workforce preparation, financial planning and the 4-H Money Moves curriculum. Participating schools reported that school suspensions and detentions declined more than 75 percent for club members, students' overall behavior improved, and 4-H club members realized a 45 percent increase in academic performance.

■ To offer an outlet for youth in Logan County, OK, who do not participate in skills-building and recreation programs during their summer hiatus from school, **Langston**

University conducts an annual Literacy in Action Summer Reading Program for youths in kindergarten through fifth grades. Of the nearly 100 students who participated in the program in 2009, 83 percent improved in reading comprehension, and 81 percent showed improvement in understanding mathematical concepts.

■ Extension staff at **West Virginia State University** responded to the needs of its urban, at-risk youth population by focusing outreach on the performing arts instead of more traditional 4-H initiatives. With the weeklong 4-H Hip Hop Camp, youths choose a track that concentrates on a specific area of the music industry – performance, production, dance or visual arts – and participate in hands-on learning activities with local experts. Campers also learn about

The 1890 land-grant system is committed to promoting positive outcomes for young people.

money management, healthy lifestyles and leadership skills. The program has reached an average of 50 youths each year since its inception in 2004. Post surveys indicate an increase in the skill set of participants' chosen track and a desire to incorporate the arts into their everyday lives and future career paths. Positive reception of the program has led to an after-school version with expanded offerings such as musical instrument instruction.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AGRICULTURE AND MATHEMATICS



To ensure global competitiveness, the 1890 land-grant system is preparing the next generation of scientists, engineers, mathematicians, agricultural and food scientists, and technology professionals to excel.

■ Innovative programs are needed to inform and motivate students to pursue educational choices in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and to build a strong, diverse workforce in Kentucky. The **Kentucky State University** PACT (Pathways & Access to Careers in Technology) Program created lesson plans to increase youths' appreciation for biodiversity and experimentation techniques, as well as their understanding of the greenhouse effect and water quality concepts. In 2009, 140 fifth, sixth and seventh grade students participated in more than 30 hours of hands-on learning experiences focused on natural resource management. As a result, students cited increased understanding about plant life structures and testing water quality.

■ To help middle and high school students in Houston gain a better understanding and

insight into the science base of food and agriculture, **Prairie View A&M University** 4-H and Youth specialists started the Gardening in the Classroom project. Specialists work with the schools' administrative staff to designate areas where a garden can be planted on school grounds, and students grew their own tomatoes, greens, peppers and other vegetables while learning about the environment, water quality testing, and basic aspects of soil science. A total of 500 youths participated in the project in 2009, four new 4-H gardening clubs were organized in the schools, and an herb garden was also planted at one participating school.

■ **South Carolina State University's** Cooperative Extension Program partnered with Pennsylvania-based construction and engineering firm Henkels and McCoy Inc. to

offer TechBridge Academy, a free summer program that gives seventh and eighth grade students the opportunity to build their own computers, increase math and reading skills, and participate in a character education program. The students build a computer and then take the computer home for family use. Since its inception, Cooperative Extension has awarded 251 computers to participants and hired staff from local communities to conduct the trainings, resulting in jobs for local residents. In addition to helping the students with homework and other class assignments, families are using the computers to search for jobs. Most notably, the academy enhances students' academic performance. The post-test scores of students in the 2009 program increased 40 percent compared to their pretest results.

■ More than 1,860 young people have participated in **Tennessee State University's** 4-H Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) programs, receiving hands-on experience in yeast and fermentation, seed germination, states of matter, DNA extraction and aviation exploration to increase their knowledge of science and technology. In addition, "Developing Future Scientists" has been implemented in school classrooms, after-school programs, community centers and housing developments to improve science literacy skills. Emphasized programs include plant science, animal science and energy. Based on post-test evaluations, nearly 3,000 participants can now record data accurately, use science terms to share results and analyze results of a scientific investigation. Short-term impacts include an increased awareness of the SET areas and exposure to SET-related careers. The long-term expected outcome is that these young people will consider pursuing science, engineering, agricultural and technological fields of study upon graduating from high school.





YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP



The 1890 land-grant system is addressing the need to help young people start their own business enterprises. Focus is on small-scale business start-ups and in-depth training in youth entrepreneurship.

■ Consistently attending monthly meetings has helped the 4-H Sprouts, a group of students ages 6 to 18 enrolled in **Fort Valley State University's** 4-H and Youth Program, acquire many hands-on experiential learning opportunities to increase their knowledge and skills in decision making, effective communication and entrepreneurship.

■ **North Carolina A&T State University's**

Yancey County 4-H program offers entrepreneurial training to help its members develop marketable skills. After participating in the 4-H Create-a-Job program, one 4-H'er sold plants at the local farmers market and his brother joined him in selling macramé key chains that they made themselves.



■ Part of becoming a young entrepreneur is possessing the skills necessary to thrive in work-related environments. In 2009, 65 Tennessee counties, 15 of which are represented by **Tennessee State University**, organized more than 2,500 4-H clubs where workforce preparation was the major emphasis. Project work was emphasized and the experiential learning model was used to highlight jobs and careers aligned with 4-H projects. The Tennessee State University School of Agriculture and Consumer Science's Summer Apprenticeship Program was implemented to help expose high school youth to career options in the school.

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES



AGRICULTURAL DIVERSIFICATION – ANIMAL AGRICULTURE



Livestock producers face many challenges, from marketing to animal health. Producers need help in developing alternative livestock management strategies that are effective on their farms. The 1890 land-grant system is successfully addressing this issue with a variety of methods.

■ Goat meat is the most consumed red meat in the world, but most goat meat in America is imported from other countries. However, relevant to other parts of the United States, the South has a competitive advantage on meat goat production. The region's temperate climate and sufficient rainfall allows for forage production on a year-round basis to meet the nutritional needs of meat goats. With its Master Meat Goat Herdsman Program, **Alabama A&M University** and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System have reached over 70 goat producers with instruction on the fundamentals of meat goat production. The program addresses reproduction, nutrition, forages, health, management, marketing, economics, live animal and carcass evaluation, food safety, hands-on experience in handling a goat, and other relevant areas. Participants

have indicated an increase in knowledge and a 5 to 18 percent increase in revenue.

■ Livestock producers in Mississippi have been lacking sustainability and profitability, often due to a lack of proper planning for the breeding season. The **Alcorn State University** Extension Program responded to this issue with educational workshops on the selection of breeding stock and ways to maintain the quality, sustainability and profitability of goats. A six-week training program covered topics such as breeding stock, health confirmation and disease awareness. By the end of the program, each participant completed a farm assessment to identify their specific needs. As a result, 32 goat producers in central and southwest Mississippi adopted and implemented husbandry practices that

improved production efficiency. Evaluation results and subsequent farm visits indicated that the producers have dramatically decreased mortality rates and increased the average daily gain per pound as a result of implementing the various practices learned from the program. The practices also contributed to increased profitability of animals marketed at auction and on the farm.

■ **Delaware State University** (DSU) is helping small-scale livestock producers diversify their management strategies through one-on-one contacts and public workshops. With programs pertaining to small ruminant, small flock poultry and aquaculture, DSU is helping producers increase awareness of sustainability and environmental safety. In 2009, DSU Extension informed 130 producers

The need exists to assist producers in

about internal parasites, about how they affect small ruminants and on their control methods, helped poultry producers select low-fat feed to decrease the demand on their filtration systems; and introduced more than 400 people to the chick-hatching process through the DSU Extension Embryology Program.

■ Since 2007, the Master Goat Program at **Florida A&M University** has provided educational opportunities and technical training to small-scale and limited-resource producers throughout the state of Florida, as well as participants from Alabama, Georgia and international regions. Over 35 percent of participants have become certified as Master Goat Producers. It is estimated that producers have saved over \$1,500 per year by controlling and reducing disease outbreaks on their farm and by using best management practices. Producers have been further able to increase their savings by acquiring animal husbandry

skills (i.e., ear tagging, castration) that reduce their need for veterinarian assistance. It is estimated that producers have saved over \$16,250 annually. In 2009, the Master Goat Program was expanded to include the university's Veterinarian Technology teaching program and was adopted by Tuskegee University and other institutions.

■ Missouri currently ranks in the top 10 states in the nation for goat production. The number of small farms is increasing in Missouri, and many small farmers are focusing on production of goats for meat and milk. **Lincoln University's** newly developed goat program offers workshops for producers focusing on herd health and management. A program was recently introduced to producers to help them learn about fecal egg counting and monitoring parasites within their herds. This program was well-received and continues to be regularly requested. Over 200 producers have

received the training, with approximately 20 percent implementing the parasite monitoring program on their farms. Nearly all of them have noticed positive outcomes of this intervention, including one participant who reported a reduction of medication costs by \$120 annually; and that the loss of newborn goats dropped from 10 to 0 in one year's time.

■ Maintaining profits in niche pork production has been a challenge for many small-scale, limited-resource producers in North Carolina. For years, producers have dealt with a lack of prospective buyers, variations in pork quality and a slowing economy. With some producers on the verge of leaving the pork production business, **North Carolina A&T State University** began researching the viability of a business cooperative of hog producers. The North Carolina Natural Hog Growers Association was established and has already increased its members hog-sale income by over \$200,000.

developing alternative livestock management strategies that are effective on their farms.

The 1890 land-grant system has been successfully addressing this issue with a variety of methods.

Over half of the co-op members have secured contracts with Whole Foods Market, a natural and organic food retailer, and the Association's humane animal treatment has been lauded by the World Society for the Protection of Animals.

■ The demand for market goats among Louisiana's ethnic population is increasing faster than the state's goat cooperatives can meet it. The state is losing a profitable market for goat consumption as citizens are going to states such as Mississippi, Tennessee and Texas for goat purchases. The **Southern University** Agricultural Research and Extension Center began conducting face-to-face visits and consultations on best practices in tending goat herds, providing technical assistance for goat farmers, and hosting an annual Goat Field Day focusing on product development, health care, parasite control, forage-based production and other topics. As a result, over 120 farmers have gained a better

understanding of raising goats, and inquiries about starting a goat farm increased by 20 percent.

■ Beef cattle production is an important source of supplemental income for many limited-resource beef producers in Alabama. However, beef cattle production has become expensive for many producers due to the increased production costs such as feed, fertilizer, fuel, veterinary expenses and hired labor. As a result of the increased cost and low-market prices for calves in auctions, many small-scale beef producers are having a difficult time continuing to produce quality calves for marketing. The **Tuskegee University** Cooperative Extension Program provided a series of educational workshops and demonstrations on beef cattle improvement and management. After participating in these educational programs, 50 producers reported increased knowledge on sound management

practices for beef cattle. Seventy percent of the 20 selected producers are now keeping better management records, 90 percent have improved breeding stock by selecting purebred or high-quality replacement bulls or heifers, and approximately 75 percent have improved nutrition management.

■ Sheep and goat workshops hosted by the **University of Maryland Eastern Shore** have reached more than 40 farmers and led to a significant increase in participants' knowledge, identification and treatment of disease, pasture establishment, rotational grazing, fencing and shelter. Instruction on integrated parasite management also helped producers to minimize treatment costs and has aided in their ability to discover the individuals in the flock/herd showing resistance and resilience to parasites.

AGRICULTURAL DIVERSIFICATION – VEGETABLES AND SMALL FRUITS



The 2007 Census of Agriculture shows that there has been an increase in small-scale farm operations in recent years, significantly among diverse populations. These new farmers face challenges such as the rising cost of farmland, insufficient farm business management skills and limited access to credit. The same challenges are faced by existing farmers, as well. Uncontrollable factors, such as global competition, climate change and rising production costs, have made it even more difficult for farmers to make a profit. Consequently, there is a strong need to provide educational programs and training to equip farmers with the skills and strategies needed to successfully own and operate a farm business.

■ In recent years, requests for Cooperative Extension assistance with gardening have increased dramatically at **Kentucky State University** (KSU). This demand is partially attributed to a downturn in the economy, as well as to an increased interest in green living. In response, KSU launched an educational campaign to teach participants about proper garden practices and sustainability. The initiative reached over 200 households over five months. New gardeners had successful harvests and experienced gardeners learned new practices that led to increased yields. Participants reported that they reduced their grocery bills by an average of \$125 during the growing season.

■ Urban food production is a focus area of the Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program

(ISFOP) at **Lincoln University**. Staff members helped set up four community gardens in 2010 and provided training and technical assistance to the members of two refugee gardens in the St. Louis and Kansas City areas. Fifteen workshops have been conducted to teach interested participants about urban food production in the Missouri region.

■ Socially disadvantaged producers in Arkansas normally look for ways to improve income, such as acquiring additional land and livestock. However, **University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff** Cooperative Extension associates advise producers to diversify their operations through alternative enterprises as a way to increase income. These enterprises include growing vegetables for the Farm to School

Vegetable Marketing Program, direct marketing of vegetables and adding meat goats to their operations. In 2009, vegetables were placed into 96 Arkansas school lunch programs through the Farm to School Vegetable Marketing Program. Seven producers diversified into vegetable production and marketing and have increased their bottom line income by 15 percent. Eleven producers diversified to include livestock in their operations that should increase their incomes by 15-to-20 percent over the next few years.

■ The **University of Maryland Eastern Shore** (UMES) has implemented a Small Farm Outreach Initiative for farmers in southern Maryland that includes events such as forestry management and conservation tours, an



annual small farm conference and small farm update meetings. The initiative is reaching a vast audience and has resulted in participants improving management skills, gaining access to USDA programs, becoming certified organic producers and increasing profits. Meanwhile, the greenhouse production industry in Maryland is showing significant growth, which is resulting in limited access to resources such as water, utilities and financing of environmental technologies. Thanks to the Small Farm Institute at UMES, which demonstrates technologies that improve sustainability and profitability of small farms, over \$18 million in annual sales is being generated, and water and energy costs are being saved.

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING



Small farms are numerous and diverse. Most of America's 2 million farms are considered "small," with a majority grossing less than \$250,000 per year, according to the National Commission on Small Farms. Both the 2002 and 2007 Census of Agriculture show an increase in the number of small and minority-owned farms. Owners of these small farms face many challenges, among them market distribution and limited resources. Many farmers have attempted marketing initiatives with little to no success. These include small farm cooperatives, direct marketing to grocery stores, roadside stands and pick-your-own operations. Assisting small farm producers in successfully marketing their crops is a vital function of Cooperative Extension programming throughout the 1890 land-grant system.

■ Improving the livelihood of small-scale minority farmers has been the focus of efforts at **Florida A&M University** (FAMU) by educating farmers on production, value addition and marketing. Successes have included an increase in the number of retail grocery stores, demonstration sites and school markets that provide outlets for participating farmers. FAMU has also designed, developed and implemented a growers market model and approach. Growers markets are small community markets featuring local small farmers and their fresh, local, seasonal, organic and sustainably grown gourmet vegetables, fruits, herbs, cut flowers and plants. Nine of these markets have been developed. The additional marketing opportunities have increased profits for the

region's small and limited-income producers while providing community members access to fresh market goods every day of the week.

■ In 2008, **Lincoln University** Cooperative Extension launched the Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program (ISFOP) to improve the well-being of small, limited-resource farms and ranches. ISFOP operates in 14 Missouri counties to improve the lives of participating farmers by providing information, resources and guidance. Participation in ISFOP has allowed participants to increase their customer bases and, therefore, their sales revenue. For instance, a collaborative effort between two local farmers has increased each one's weekly revenue by over \$100 and is leading

to additional outlets for product distribution, including a contract with a popular local grocery store chain.

■ The Small Farmer Agricultural Leadership Institute at **Southern University** offers leadership development training to small, minority and disadvantaged farmers with the goal of helping them transition into agricultural entrepreneurs. The Institute, a two-year course of study, promotes small farm sustainability, business management skills and leadership development – all key elements in successful agricultural marketing. Since the program's inception, approximately 90 farmers have enrolled in the course. Classes have been held at several participating

1890 universities, including **Tuskegee University**, **Prairie View A&M University**, the **University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff**, **South Carolina State University**, **Alcorn State University**, **Virginia State University** and **North Carolina A&T State University**. As a result of participating, graduates have become more productive and highly sought-after leaders, speakers and small farm advocates in their communities. They have received appointments to regional, state and local advisory boards and task forces and have been asked to serve on USDA competitive grant panels.

■ More than 90 percent of the farms in Tennessee are considered small farms. Efforts by **Tennessee State University** have helped the state's limited-resource farmers market their produce and establish 10 organized farmers markets. An advisory board was created to guide the initiative, which educates farmers about product diversification, establishing cost-effective operations and creating financial plans. The success of these

markets has been overwhelming with one of the markets grossing over \$330,000 in its first year of operation.

■ Over the years, socially disadvantaged and minority farmers have had low participation rates in USDA programs due to lack of information and technical assistance. The 2501 Small Farm Outreach Project specifically targets this audience, providing informational assistance relating to the operation of farms and ranches, loan applications and farmer programs. Outreach and educational programs are designed to strengthen the growth and sustainability of limited-resource producers, beginning farmers, African-American co-ops and Latino groups. As a result, **Tuskegee University** has assisted close to 400 participating farmers/ranchers through group meetings, where 60 Socially Disadvantaged Application (SDA) candidates were identified, and 54 farm plans were developed. A total of 59 loans and grants were approved totaling \$3,063,000. These included eight farm ownership loans for

\$1,277,000; 11 production loans for \$206,000; eight equipment loans for \$270,000; 11 facility and housing loans for \$870,000; four livestock loans for \$48,000; five youth loans for \$25,000; and 12 cost-share, equipment and specialty crop grants for \$367,000.

■ Many small and socially disadvantaged grain producers in Arkansas sell their crops at harvest when prices are generally lowest. These producers could increase their income by selling portions of their grain crops before harvest when grain prices are normally higher. To assist grain producers in increasing their income, **University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff** Cooperative Extension associates assisted producers in developing pre-harvest marketing plans to sell portions of their crops at prices considerably above the market's low price. As a result of using their pre-harvest marketing plans, approximately 30 grain producers have made several pre-harvest grain sales at profitable prices, resulting in a 15 percent average increase in net income.

■ Many small, limited-resource, and socially disadvantaged farmers and landowners in Virginia have not been aware of potentially beneficial USDA Farm Bill programs and how to best use them. **Virginia State University's** (VSU) Small Farm Outreach, Training & Technical Assistance Program has partnered with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to expand outreach and opportunities to farmers. Three NRCS outreach coordinators, covering a 22-county territory, have joined VSU's Small Farm staff to address resource issues and inform farmers and landowners about available conservation funds. More farmers and landowners have now become knowledgeable about Farm Bill programs and increased their access to initiatives such as the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative, Conservation Stewardship Program and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.



AQUACULTURE



Aquaculture is the business of cultivating marine or freshwater food fish or shellfish under controlled conditions. The 1890 land-grant system was among the first to recognize the potential of aquaculture to diversify small farms and continues to offer programming relating to such endeavors.

■ Ensuring the health of fish stocks and training the next generation of aquaculture producers is part of the mission of **Delaware State University's** Aquaculture Technical Assistance and Outreach Program. The program helps new and prospective fish farmers adapt their existing operations to raise fish profitably and to acquire the skills to be successful in aquaculture. Outreach is provided through a combination of workshops, such as the *Aquaculture 101* series, one-on-one technical assistance, and by working closely with K-12 agricultural science classes. In 2009, over 40 current and prospective aquaculturists learned how to stock ponds, properly feed fish, and how and when to test water quality.

■ For farmed fish to be moved, they must be free of diseases and other aquatic nuisance species that might cause problems at their destination. Four **University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff** (UAPB) Aquaculture/Fisheries Center

laboratories assist farmers in the diagnosing and treating fish health problems by conducting fish export inspections and by developing custom biosecurity plans to prevent the introduction of disease. The Center led a collaborative effort with the Arkansas State Department of Agriculture for a State Bait and Ornamental Fish Certification Program that enrolls more than 95 percent of Arkansas' production acres. The UAPB labs handle more than 2,000 diagnostic cases per year that save farmers an estimated \$5 million in annual fish losses. The majority of Arkansas' fish exports travel under required inspection certificates provided only by the Center. More than 400 inspections are conducted each year. These exports have a farm gate value of over \$50 million per year and an economic impact in Arkansas of some \$350 million. Farm biosecurity plans have prevented the introduction of any exotic diseases of current U.S. regulatory concern.

■ Catfish losses due to algal poisoning can be staggering. From 1999 to 2001, massive losses of catfish occurred in the high salt area of Chicot County, Ark. The **University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff** Aquaculture/Fisheries Center met with producers and instituted an algal monitoring program that has involved monitoring algae in 550-to-1,000 ponds from October through April of each year. Annual losses due to algal poisoning dropped from \$1.5 million to \$175,000 in the first year of program implementation. In 2009, losses dropped to zero. Producers participating in the program in 2009 suffered no fish mortalities associated with algae poisoning. This was the first year since the mid-1990s that no fish losses could be attributed to toxic algae.

CONSUMER HORTICULTURE



Interest in consumer horticulture, while already strong, is increasing. To develop and maintain attractive landscapes and productive home gardens, consumers need knowledge and skills in proper fertilization, plant selection, planting techniques and pest management.

■ Over 53,000 direct contacts with Tennesseans regarding consumer horticulture programs have been made at **Tennessee State University**. Highlights include over 1,440 on-site visits for one-on-one consultations. Reports indicated that 1,100 consumers applied fewer fertilizers and pesticides due to a better understanding of best landscape management practices; 518 consumers implemented gardening practices to conserve water and protect water quality; 4,189 consumers learned about plant selection and proper planting to save money and time in the landscape; and 1,685 consumers learned how to apply landscape fertilizers and pesticides safely. In one county, program volunteers contributed more than \$30,774 worth of labor to the community, and 1,783 volunteer hours were reported.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, RECORDKEEPING AND FARM LOANS



Farmers are not always fully aware of the importance and benefits of maintaining accurate records. To plan an efficient operation and to make sound management decisions, accurate recordkeeping skills must be established.

■ The Small Farm Outreach Project at **Alcorn State University** provides structured, hands-on training and workshops on balance sheets, income statements, input cost analysis, cash flow analysis and recordkeeping. As a result, borrowers continue to increase their financial management knowledge and skills to help minimize farm risks and qualify to receive additional funds from USDA.

■ Limited-resource agricultural producers in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas face numerous challenges in obtaining financial resources through commercial lending institutions. Many producers qualify for financing through the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) but are typically either not aware of available programs or are overwhelmed by the paperwork involved in the application process. **Prairie View A&M University** has provided technical assistance to 55 farm families seeking \$6,666,270 in FSA loans. Each program participant received a complete analysis of their farming or ranching operation and a complete direct loan request to submit to FSA. One hundred percent of the participants developed a farm business plan, received six hours of training on production and financial record bookkeeping, and filled out a current farm financial statement. As a result, all program participants were able to submit complete direct loan applications. Each applicant saved \$2,425 by participating in the program instead of using private loan packagers.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND WATER QUALITY



Protecting our environment is the responsibility of every citizen, and the 1890 land-grant system is committed to providing programs that aid in this mission. Programs strengthen the nation's capacity to address critical environmental priorities and contribute to improved air, soil and water quality, fish and wildlife management, and proper use of forests.

■ In recent years, Alabama has experienced severe drought conditions resulting in crop and plant losses, failure of green industry businesses and declining home values. The water consumption habits of the state's citizens add to the over-burdened water resources. **Alabama A&M University's** extension educators have teamed with members of the community to educate citizens about the economic, environmental and social impact of conserving water, reducing erosion, rainfall impact on the watershed and sewage contamination; and about the amount of water actually used by citizens. As a result, 41 percent of citizens reached have installed rainwater collection systems, and another 71 percent plan to collect rainwater for crop irrigation.

■ Giving producers a chance to lengthen their crop production season will help them increase profits. The most common method of season extension is placing plants inside so they can survive in cold temperatures. Greenhouses are expensive, so high tunnels serve as a lower cost alternative. However, high tunnels have cooler temperatures than greenhouses and poor airflow. **Delaware State University** and the **University of Maryland Eastern Shore** hosted a meeting to introduce small farm producers to Airstream Innovations, a wind-supported tunnel structure that creates uniform conditions and distributes airflow throughout the structure. The 47 participants, including farmers, land managers and agricultural service providers, are now aware of this advanced technology and are seeking ways to incorporate it into

their farm enterprises. In one example, a beginning farmer used a high tunnel to increase his income despite having only three acres of produce and a few chickens.

■ The **Florida A&M University** Whole Farm Sustainable Biofuels Demonstration Project began in 2006 to address the national goal of sustainable energy and has reached hundreds of farmers with information on using recycled materials to make fuel. Since then, more than 300 small farmers in Florida have participated in workshops and hands-on learning opportunities to make biodiesel fuel from used/ recycled vegetable oil and other farm products. These biofuels run all on-farm equipment including tractors, backhoes and trucks.

OUTREACH AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE



An increasing number of young people want to enter into small-scale farming despite such numerous challenges as the rising cost of farmland, insufficient farm business management skills and limited access to financial credit. These are major obstacles for new and existing farmers, especially those who are considered limited-resource and socially disadvantaged.

■ **Alcorn State University** continues to provide training to help producers increase their financial management knowledge and skills that could help them minimize farm risks, meet their educational requirement according to Farm Service Agency (FSA) regulations and qualify to receive additional funds from USDA. Since 2007, participation in this training has helped 93 small producers receive approximately \$3.1 million in loans from FSA.

■ Extension educators at **Lincoln University** are reaching out to farmers in Missouri with a variety of workshops, informational sessions and assistance with funding applications. Staff members have contacted nearly 100

small farmers with information on the availability of cost-share funds for high tunnel construction, with six clients receiving funding in 2010. Nearly \$6,000 in grant funding has been obtained by farmers and ranchers as a result of this interaction.

■ Through training initiatives similar to those conducted by Alcorn State University, close to 400 participating farmers and ranchers in **Tuskegee University's** Small Farm Outreach Project had a total of 59 loans and grants approved in the amount of \$3,063,000 to continue their farming enterprises.

■ With its partnership agreement with USDA to implement a Small Farm Outreach

Initiative for farmers in southern Maryland and along the Delmarva Peninsula, the **University of Maryland Eastern Shore** has coordinated a series of Small Landowner Forestry and Conservation field tours, hosted an annual small farm conference, held quarterly small farm update meetings and hosted several sheep and goat workshops designed for veteran and novice shepherds. Over 400 clients have participated in these events, with 90 percent reporting an increase in knowledge about woodland management, common diseases among small ruminants and wildlife habitat.



RISK MANAGEMENT



As in any business venture, there is a significant element of risk involved in being an agriculture producer. Small-scale producers often need assistance in managing their business risks to preserve and strengthen their economic stability. The 1890 land-grant system is providing such assistance.

■ Farming on Delaware's Delmarva Peninsula has changed dramatically over the past decade. Increasingly, farmers are learning that the current agriculture industry is full of new rules, new stakes and, most of all, new risks. Effective risk management is necessary to mitigate the impact of wide swings in farm income and threats to small farmers' economic viability. **Delaware State University** offered a risk management conference titled "Profiting from a Few Acres" for more than 200 small-scale and socially disadvantaged farmers and agricultural professionals. The conference offered solutions to common on-farm risks and provided attendees with access to university and USDA resources. Eighty-six percent of participants reported an increase in knowledge of risk management practices. Three producers have since completed a business plan, two producers developed a marketing plan, and five producers have ventured into new alternative enterprises.



COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION



According to the National Institute for Food and Agriculture, community development and sustainability remains one of this country's critical issues. The key to strong communities is a revitalized and energized pool of local citizens who can guide the direction and future of their community; provide resources to local decision makers to address regional and national issues; and help families, communities, farms, ranches and businesses attain prosperity and security. Therefore, the revitalization and sustainability of communities and local economies remains a priority for the 1890 land-grant system.

■ Community gardening has gained momentum as a viable community-building agricultural initiative. **Delaware State University** has embraced community gardening by working with Girl Scouts of America and other agencies to create a garden that has yielded more than 1,100 pounds of fresh produce for a local food bank. More than 100 people participate in the project annually, and subsequent inquiries have led to the infusion of educational programs regarding food safety and nutrition into the classroom.

■ The Cooperative Extension Outreach Program at **Florida A&M University** secured \$660,000 to use for community and school gardens. As a result, three new garden sites were developed in collaboration with

local county public works and recreation departments. The initiative has resulted in the distribution of nutrition information to over 8,000 individuals in a six-county region.

■ The Center for Community Leadership and Development Program at **Lincoln University** Cooperative Extension facilitates grassroots leadership training for newly elected officials in the economically-depressed small townships and villages in southeast Missouri. This has inspired mayors of several small villages to start strategic planning for the future, engaging stakeholders in the planning process and developing desired goals for their individual community. In 2008-2009, the Center assisted five small communities with updating and creating new city ordinances, thus saving the communities

approximately \$20,000 in service and attorney fees. In addition, the Center has provided orientation and training to five mayors and 18 other elected officials. The Center is currently collaborating with USDA's Rural Development Agency and the Missouri Department of Economic Resources to secure funds for the construction of a Community Learning Center, which will be a central point for providing needed services to many underserved communities.

■ **Tennessee State University** is helping citizens create and maintain several community gardens in its service area. The Sow to Grow program, part of the university's efforts, has been taught to 150 inmates at the Shelby County penal farm, resulting in the planting of community gardens in

Sustainability of communities and local economies remains a priority for the 1890 land-grant system.

limited-resource communities. Prisoners are taught life skills to assist in becoming self-sufficient upon release. Classes taught consist of urban gardening, horticulture/turf grass management, pesticide training and forestry. Over 40,000 pounds of fresh produce was harvested by the end of the 2009 season. By growing their own produce, participating gardeners have saved a collective average of \$500,000 in food costs.

■ The Cooperative Extension Program at **Tuskegee University** has developed and implemented two grassroots leadership training programs: Leadership for Advancing Communities and Leadership Macon County. The first program trains current, emerging and prospective leaders in the use of transformational leadership techniques, development of human capital for organizational effectiveness and ethical leadership. The second program is an issues- and skills-oriented leadership development



program for residents of Macon County designed to identify and develop leaders who are committed to community growth and progress. Follow-up studies have shown that participants are using the training they received to mobilize their communities. Sixty percent indicated that they are communicating more effectively. In addition, Cooperative Extension educators from India have studied this approach and have

requested permission to use these leadership models in their rural communities.

■ Residents in many of West Virginia's public housing communities have little access to transportation and have limited incomes, making travel to farmers markets and supermarkets difficult. **West Virginia State University** Extension Service has addressed this issue by successfully implementing community gardens in multiple locations throughout the state. At one inner-city location, a 70'x70' fully accessible garden was designed featuring 40 raised-bed plots, four community plots and an English herb garden. Over the course of five years, participants have grown crops such as tomatoes, peppers, green beans and squash, while experiencing an average cost savings of \$2,270 per year on their grocery bill. The garden has fostered a renewed sense of community, playing host to activities such as "Trick or Treat in the Garden" and "Christmas in the Garden" for neighborhood children and families.

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



Independently owned and operated business enterprises are a vital part of local economies. Helping entrepreneurs to develop, launch and sustain their businesses is a primary goal of economic development initiatives by the 1890 land-grant system.

■ Cooperative Extension at **South Carolina State University** provides technical assistance, small business workshops and private consultation to aspiring and existing entrepreneurs. The workshops include sessions on methods that help promote growth, improve operation management, maximize and increase profits, create additional employment and obtain access to funding. In 2009, agents conducted 26 entrepreneurship workshops with 752 participants, consulted 113 businesses and visited 67 companies. As a result, three businesses and one community organization acquired \$452,000 in total financing to fund business startups, support company expansion and establish youth education programs. The Orangeburg Area Boys & Girls Club obtained a \$300,000 grant to establish after-school programs in elementary schools to help improve students' academic performance.

■ **West Virginia State University** Extension Service (WVSUES) provides business development assistance through a variety

of programming efforts. Two incubators are operational to assist start-up businesses, resulting in the launching of 19 new businesses by the end of 2009. During that year, five businesses were approved for operation loans, and an additional 12 start-ups completed business development training and became licensed for operation. Other WVSUES initiatives include the West Virginia Recipe Challenge, an annual competition for hopeful food entrepreneurs that has resulted in the establishment of five new businesses since 2006, and the West Virginia Made Trade Show for statewide artisans and entrepreneurs. The latter event's launch in 2010 resulted in increased exposure and sales for participating businesses from both wholesale and retail customers.

■ The Center for Rural and Small Business Development (CRSBD) at **Southern University** Agricultural Center provided management and technical assistance to more than 12,500 rural individuals, business owners, single

family home owners, local governing bodies, non-profit organizations, municipalities, schools and universities in 2009. This was achieved through seminars, workshops, trainings, site visits, office visits, one-on-one counseling sessions and information distribution. Over the past 16 years, 22 computer technology laboratories have been established and are located in non-profit organizations, religious and faith-based organizations, churches and community centers. Since 1994, CRSBD has assisted 589 repeat small business owners, offered financial assistance to more than 1,088 people, helped 922 individuals prepare loan packages totaling more than \$29 million, prompted at least 636 jobs to be created/retained, seen more than 284 new businesses start, assisted with 227 procurement contracts and helped 21 contractors become certified. One of these contractors was awarded a \$100 million contract after Hurricane Katrina.



CHILDHOOD OBESITY



Obesity is a serious health concern for youths. In 2007-2008, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated 17 percent of children and adolescents are obese. The 1890 land-grant system is uniquely positioned to take advantage of its three-part mission in research, education and extension to help solve the obesity problem.

■ **Delaware State University's** CATCH Kids' Club introduces youths to MyPyramid, the USDA program that promotes the importance of consuming fruits and vegetables and food safety techniques. Students participate in physical activities and receive nutritious snacks. Feedback from recent CATCH programs has found that 85 percent of participants could name nutritious foods from each section of MyPyramid for Kids, and 60 percent reported a willingness to eat a broader variety of foods.

■ **Delaware State University** also used home visits with 50 single female parents to teach lessons in nutrition, food safety and food budgeting. Indicative of the results this initiative has seen, one mother of a developmentally challenged child was taught

how to cut fruits and vegetables into different shapes to bolster her daughter's interest in healthy eating. She also learned to allow her child to assist with meal preparation in an effort to encourage her to eat more nutritious foods. The child is now excited about mealtime and has increased her fruit and vegetable intake by 75 percent.

■ Using the Project Eat Right Add to Life program and Food for Thought curriculum, **North Carolina A&T State University** taught 43 second-grade students about making healthy food choices and the importance of physical activity. After four months of alternating nutrition education and physical activity, 26 students reduced their Body Mass Index measurements.



■ The Color Me Healthy curriculum at **South Carolina State University** addresses overweight and obesity issues among preschool-age youths. Fun, interactive activities engage participants and promote a preference for eating vegetables and fruits. Over 600 youths and families have been reached with the program, including one male preschooler with diabetes who now enjoys eating fresh produce and is managing the disease with guidance from his guardians, teachers and Cooperative Extension agents.

NUTRITION & HEALTH EDUCATION



The 1890 land-grant system is committed to providing resources to help remedy the negative effects of poor dietary choices, unhealthy lifestyles, food-borne illnesses and the potential for threats to the food supply. Programs have been developed that address diet, health, food safety, food security, and food science and technology.

■ **Alabama A&M University's** Urban Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program is designed for Hispanic expecting mothers and mothers with small children. In 2009, 31 percent of participants improved nutrition and food safety practices, and 53 percent improved their food resource management practices.

■ Using the Diabetes Education Awareness Prevention (DEAP) Program, **Prairie View A&M University** teaches participants lessons on understanding diabetes, complications of diabetes, coping with diabetes, controlling diabetes through nutrition, medication management and physical activity. After 300 individuals completed the program, 70.4 percent of participants had a better understanding of the symptoms of hyperglycemia; 65.4 percent now check their feet and skin for changes at least weekly; over

63 percent gained a better understanding of when to test blood sugar levels; and 62.7 percent exercise at least 30 minutes each day.

■ African-Americans represent the largest minority group in Louisiana, making up 32 percent of the state's population. Unfortunately, Louisiana also ranks second in the nation with the largest number of African-American tobacco users. As a result, African Americans are dying from cardiovascular disease and cancers attributable to secondhand smoke and tobacco use. **Southern University** Ag Center's Communities of Color (CoC) Network provides comprehensive, statewide tobacco prevention and control programming specifically for African-American communities in Louisiana, resulting in a decrease of tobacco use by the target audience. Data indicates smoking prevalence decreased by 17 percent among

Louisiana's African-American smokers from 2003 to 2008 thanks to increased community efforts, including the CoC Network.

■ The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) at **Tennessee State University** delivers nutrition information to recipients of government food assistance or persons eligible to receive assistance. Over 10,000 individuals have been reached with results revealing that 100 percent of participants learned the importance of eating healthy foods, how to engage in daily physical activity and the importance of balancing caloric intake.

■ Poverty, poor housing, lack of access to quality foods and limited access to health care can be significant contributors to unhealthy lifestyles for many Alabama residents.

The 1890 land-grant system programs have been developed that address diet, health, food safety, food security, and food science and technology.

Lessons ranging from meal planning to healthy food alternatives were presented to 400 participants during **Tuskegee University's** Cent\$ible Nutrition Program, which targets this population. Evaluations indicated that, for dietary improvements, 96 percent graduated with positive change in one or more of the five food groups. Ninety-eight percent of the families increased their number of meals per day to three and two snacks after graduation, and 50 percent became moderately active by engaging in physical activity for 30-to-60 minutes each day.

■ The Families First-Nutrition Education and Wellness System (FF-NEWS) Program at the **University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff** is a comprehensive, culturally sensitive nutrition education intervention program for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

(SNAP) recipients. The food safety module addresses personal cleanliness, proper handling of food, sanitation in food preparation and storage, and kitchen sanitation—all essential in preventing foodborne illnesses. In 2009, staff made over 28,000 contacts through the FF-NEWS program. Seventy percent of adult participants reported practicing safe food handling in purchasing, storing, preparing and serving food, while 80 percent of youth participants reported proper hand washing.

■ Preparing for potential health crises is an initiative being addressed by Cooperative Extension specialists at the **University of Maryland Eastern Shore**. Staff members provide Avian Influenza (Bird Flu) pandemic preparedness training that focuses on understanding Bird Flu, how geospatial technologies are used to track Bird Flu, and

why and how to be prepared. Post tests indicate that 75 percent of participants' awareness about Avian Influenza increased as a result of the training.

■ The Show Me Nutrition Program at **West Virginia State University** teaches middle school students about nutrition and healthy lifestyles to encourage good food choices, physical activity, and chronic disease prevention and management. By the close of the 2009-2010 academic year, nearly 400 youths had participated in the program. Results indicated that 75 percent of participants increased fruit consumption and overall knowledge about healthy food choices. Physical activity increased by 20 percent, time spent watching television decreased by 50 percent, and 45 percent reported reading food labels to make better food selections.

STRENGTHENING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS



Strengthening family relationships provides a better quality of life for adults and children by enhancing health, safety, support and a nurturing environment in which families can grow. Unfortunately, many families and individuals are suffering financial crises because of inadequate savings, too much debt and poor planning for major life events. Families are also challenged by matters such as conflict management, parent/child relationships, caregiving, safety, balancing work and family, and being prepared for emergencies. The 1890 land-grant system strives to help families deal with these challenges.

■ The Mississippi Department of Health is concerned about the rise of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) among teenagers. **Alcorn State University** Cooperative Extension Program (ASUEP) conducted a pregnancy prevention and STD workshop for 200 youth in southwest Mississippi. Its goal was to educate participants about STDs and encourage postponed sexual activity until involved in a committed relationship. Topics included distinguishing fact from fiction about sexual activity consequences, the impact of sexually transmitted diseases, developing coping skills to deal with peer pressure and learning to say 'no.' Twenty-five percent stated they could identify the

signs, symptoms and treatment of eight of the most common STDs. Forty percent indicated they gained knowledge that would aid them in making decisions to postpone sexual activity.

■ African-American children in Kentucky's Fayette County are over-represented in foster or other out-of-home care at a rate of 3.4 times the expected number based on their representation in census records. The local family court recognized that families of color often perceive barriers that may cause them to be unsuccessful in achieving goals designed for family reunification. **Kentucky State University's** Strengthening Kentucky's Families Program was developed to help

address the problem, and 52 adult clients participated in 2009. Parent participants consistently reported improved knowledge of child development and child needs as they progressed through the program.

■ **Kentucky State University's** "Ready 101: A Kentucky Approach to Preparing Communities for an Infectious Disease Outbreak" mobile unit is stocked with educational materials covering all areas of emergency preparedness, including prevention of the spread of infectious diseases and recovery strategies in the event of natural disasters. Ready 101 survival kits have been distributed to 250 limited-resource families over the course of a year to actively prepare for the H1N1 pandemic

flu, flooding, tornadoes and other natural disasters. The unit can travel to school districts across Kentucky, as well as across the 1890 land-grant system as requested, with materials available in both English and Spanish.

■ According to the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), more than 100,000 cases of child abuse and neglect were reported in 2008. **North Carolina A&T State University's** Parenting Matters Program provides court-mandated training to parents who have been referred by DHHS. Through the program, Parenting Matters helped prevent 393 placements of children in foster care, saving the state of North Carolina an estimated \$4,480,200 to \$5,979,888 over two years.

■ The Powerful Tools for Caregivers Program, conducted by **North Carolina A&T State University**, teaches caregivers how to improve social and communication skills, and mental and physical condition. Topics include the usage of “I” messages rather than “You” messages and how to improve listening skills. Participants



report improved stress management abilities and communication with family members and health care providers.

■ To help Texas residents with job loss and a lack of resources, **Prairie View A&M University** provides a workshop series on Family Financial Management. Over the course of one year, the program reached 16 families totaling 64 individuals. After completing the lessons, 80 percent of participants said their decision-making and problem-solving skills were enhanced; 75 percent learned to analyze their current financial situations; 90 percent learned to establish a budget within their

financial means; 80 percent adapted their spending habits after learning about the cost of credit; and 50 percent had money left at the beginning of the next pay period.

■ In the United States, more than six million children are cared for by grandparents or other family members. Tennessee has more than 61,000 grandparents raising grandchildren, with more than 120,000 children living with relatives that are not their biological parents. Working with citizens in this situation is an initiative being undertaken by Cooperative Extension staff at **Tennessee State University**. Over 1,100 personal contacts have been made with caregivers. In self-report surveys, participants revealed the following: 75 percent of parents/caregivers report an increase in use of appropriate child guidance techniques, 81 percent report an increase in use of positive communication techniques with their children, 77 percent report feeling better about their abilities as parents, and 56 percent report feeling less stressed.

The 1890 land-grant system strives to help families.

■ **Tennessee State University** is preparing baby boomers for the future by offering such classes as “Seniors: Resilient and Resourceful,” “Technology for Seniors,” “Caregiving in an Aging Society” and “Starting a 501(C).” Training sessions have engaged agents from 45 counties while also making fact sheets and handouts accessible online. More than 540 urban and rural residents have received training. Participants are reporting an increased awareness of community resources and information applicable to an aging population.

■ Many low-income households are eligible for the earned income tax credit (EITC) and other tax credits but fail to file for them, thus missing out on greater income and the opportunity to accumulate savings. **Tuskegee University** sponsors a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program, providing a series of small-group and one-on-one

financial education discussion sessions and materials. The focus is on budgeting, saving strategies and credit management to assist low-income taxpayers and the elderly with tax return preparation, better personal finance management and savings. During the 2009 tax season, 55 federal tax returns and 33 Alabama state returns were prepared at the VITA site. Taxpayers received refunds totaling \$61,741, translating into an average refund of \$1,342 each. Of this amount, a total EITC amount of \$27,030 was also received by 19 taxpayers with an average of \$1,423 each. Although most recipients were going to use the proceeds for personal and family expenses, about 25 percent planned to start a savings account.

■ **University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff's** Family and Child Development Program strengthens families through initiatives such as the *Teens on the Go* newsletter and

the Young Scholars Program. The *Teens on the Go* newsletter series is in its 31st year of reaching Arkansas teens in grades 7-12. Teens credit the newsletters for helping them make critical decisions in their lives. The newsletter results in over 60,000 total contacts each year. Now in its 14th year, the Young Scholars Program takes place in a housing community for low-income, minority families. Participants meet in an after-school program that emphasizes math and science skills. Parents meet once each week and focus on the curriculum for the children as well as parenting education, stress management, job-related skills, family relationships, and economic and self-sufficiency skills. The children's school attendance and performance have improved, as have their social skills. Several have entered and completed college. Some parents have gotten their GEDs, and others have taken classes at community colleges.



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