



SU SEEDS OF *Success!*

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*A Monthly Newsletter
of the Southern University
Ag Center, College of Ag,
and Chancellor's Report*



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SU Ag Center Holds Ag Drone Certification Test Prep Training



The Southern University Ag Center held a Drone Part 107 Test Preparation Certification Training from August 31 – September 3, 2026, at the M.A. Edmund Multi-Purpose Building.

The four-day training, which was held in partnership with Alcorn State University, was designed for farmers, researchers, students, educators, entrepreneurs, and professionals interested in using drones for agriculture, research, business applications, or anyone seeking to become an FAA-certified drone pilot.

Participants learned the fundamentals of drone operations, FAA Part 107 regulations, airspace classifications, weather effects on drones, safety protocols, and how to prepare for the FAA Part 107 Certification Exam.

The participants also gained hands-on knowledge of how drones can be applied in agriculture, research, and technology-driven industries.

For additional information on the SU Ag Center's Drone Part 107 Test Prep Training contact, Dr. LaShunda Hodges at lashunda_hodges@suagcenter.com.

WBRZ News Channel 2 and WAFB News Channel 9 aired news stories on the training.

Student Spotlight: Chynna King Receives (C.A.R.E.) Scholarship

Chynna King, a senior majoring in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Animal Science, has been selected to receive the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) Conservation Access, Relevancy, and Engagement (C.A.R.E.) Scholarship. This distinguished scholarship will support her attendance at the 80th Annual SEAFWA Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, from October 26 – 30, 2026.

The C.A.R.E. Scholarship is awarded to students and recent graduates pursuing careers in natural resources and conservation-related fields, including wildlife conservation, game management, community engagement, and law enforcement.

As a scholarship recipient, King will participate in the C.A.R.E. Fellow Workshop, where she will develop valuable professional skills such as networking, crafting elevator pitches, and resume writing. Fellows will also engage in a Careers in Conservation panel discussion and an agency roundtable designed to provide insight into career opportunities within the conservation field.

These experiences will allow participants to network with professionals representing SEAFWA's 15 member states, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and various federal agencies.

The C.A.R.E. Scholarship covers conference registration, hotel accommodations, meals, and travel expenses, enabling recipients to fully participate in this premier professional development opportunity.



SU Ag Center's 4-H Youth Development Program Engages Students in Real-World Agricultural Challenges



Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center's 4-H Youth Development Program recently engaged 8th grade students at Gonzales Middle School in a Hurricane-Proof Greenhouse Challenge designed to connect science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to real-world agricultural challenges.

During the hands-on activity, students worked collaboratively to design and construct model greenhouses capable of withstanding simulated severe weather conditions while remaining within a designated budget. Working within these parameters required the students to make thoughtful decisions about materials, design, and cost while applying engineering principles throughout the process. As they developed and tested their designs, students strengthened their critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork skills.

The activity also introduced students to the important role innovation and engineering play in protecting agricultural systems and strengthening communities against the impacts of severe weather. Students considered how structures can be designed to protect crops, reduce potential losses, and support agricultural resilience in areas vulnerable to hurricanes and other extreme weather events. The challenge gave students an opportunity to put STEM concepts into practice while exploring the connection between agriculture, engineering, and innovation.



SU Ag Center Provides High School Students With Healthier Take to a High Sodium Dish

ProStart and Culinary students at West Feliciana High School had the opportunity to put their culinary skills to work in the kitchen while learning about healthier food choices. SU Ag Center's Extension Outreach Agent, Evan Egana, discussed the high amount of sodium found in a typical package of ramen noodles and how consuming too much sodium can contribute to high blood pressure, which is a common health concern in the community.

"When I teach students how to cook healthy, we're not just making a meal; we're building confidence, independence, and skills that last a lifetime," said Egana.

To show students that healthier meals can still be flavorful and enjoyable, Egana created a healthier ramen recipe with less sodium. Students prepared their own healthy ramen and had a very positive response to the recipe. Many shared that they enjoyed the healthier version and planned to try making it at home.

"I want students to understand that healthy food can still taste good," expressed Egana. "By getting them in the kitchen and allowing them to learn hands-on, we are helping them make healthier choices that they can take home and share with their families."





SARDI Holds 'House of Trojans Leadership' Workshop at Lawtell Elementary

The SU Ag Center's Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development Institute's (SARDI) Community and Youth Outreach Specialist, Heather D. Bob, partnered with Lawtell Elementary and other community leaders to develop the House of Trojans Leadership Workshop.

The goal of the workshop was to equip students with practical skills they can use in school, in their communities, and throughout their future careers.

Topics covered during the workshop included:

- Digital Legacy & Social Media — Understanding digital footprints, making responsible online choices, and building a positive personal brand.
- Public Speaking & Advocacy — Finding their

voice, communicating with confidence, and learning how to advocate for themselves, their peers, and their communities.

- Time Management & CEO Mindset — Learning to prioritize what matters, manage distractions, and take ownership of their time and responsibilities.

"These young leaders have voices, ideas, and potential—and our job is to help them recognize it, develop it, and use it with purpose," expressed Bob.

For additional information on SARDI and its program offers visit, <https://www.suagcenter.com/cooperative-extension/sardi/sardi-youth-agriculture-community>, or call 337-943-1598.



SARDI Holds G.E.M. Program for Seniors in St. Landry Parish

SARDI held its last Grow, Eat, Move (G.E.M.) program session for September on Tuesday, September 15, 2026.

Participants learned how to grow collard and mustard greens and participated in an instructional food demonstration featuring collard green juice. Linda Peters of Our Lady of Lourdes Regional Medical Center concluded the session with an exercise safety presentation and various exercises.

“The purpose of the G.E.M. program is to promote healthy lifestyles by teaching individuals how to grow fresh food, make nutritious food choices, and stay physically active,” said Kayla Fontenot, SARDI Assistant Area Agent for Agriculture.

The program aims to provide practical skills and knowledge that encourage healthier daily habits, improve overall well-being, and help participants develop lifelong practices that support a healthy and active lifestyle.

Sessions are held on the first and third Tuesdays of each month, bringing together gardening, healthy eating, and regular movement to promote overall health and well-being.

The program is facilitated by SARDI’s Kayla Fontenot and Stacey Nevills. For more information, call 337-943-1598.





JagFresh Farmers Market Opens for the Fall Season

JAG Fresh Farmers Market

The Southern University Ag Center's JagFresh Farmers Market opened for the fall season on September 24, 2026.

The farmers market featured nearly 20 vendors selling fresh produce, crafts, baked goods, plants and herbs, honey, and local products. Healthy living information was also provided by the 1890 Center of Excellence.

"The benefits of having a farmers market on campus is being able to give these small producer the opportunity to sell some of the things they are growing locally as well as provide the students, faculty, and the community with fresh produce, home-grown items, and some value-added products," said Cornelius Jackson Jr., JagFresh Farmers Market Coordinator.

The market will be held from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. outside the Southern University Smith-Brown Memorial Union on October 22, 2026; November 5, 2026; November 19, 2026; December 3, 2026.





Industrial Hemp on the Rise



The Southern University Ag Center is growing more than hemp, it is growing research, innovation, and opportunities for students through its expanding Industrial Hemp Program. Led by Dr. Janana Snowden, and Postdoctoral Researcher Dr. Tyrus Georgetown, the research team is studying how industrial hemp grows and performs under Louisiana conditions.

From early spring to summer, researchers followed hemp plants from early growth through maturity. Measurements included plant and stalk height, stalk thickness, canopy width, branching, and overall plant growth. The team also observed stalk strength, the amount of plant material produced, and how well the plants responded to Louisiana weather and field conditions. To further assess industrial hemp growth patterns, the research group is preparing for its fall grow. This phase will allow the team to compare plant development during a different growing season and better understand how temperature, daylight, and other environmental conditions may affect plant height, stalk development, canopy growth, and overall performance.

The group is also evaluating beneficial microbes and biochar during production. Researchers will examine how these applications may influence soil conditions, root development, nutrient availability, and plant growth.





Standard growing conditions will be compared with microbes, biochar, and a combination of both to better understand their potential value in hemp production.

Industrial hemp is a versatile crop with uses that extend far beyond traditional agriculture. Different parts of the plant can be used to produce building materials, textiles, paper, bioplastics, animal bedding, biofuels, food products, and ingredients used in health and medicinal products. This wide range of applications creates opportunities for students from agriculture, science, engineering, business, health sciences, and other disciplines to explore how hemp can contribute to new products and emerging industries.

One of the program's greatest strengths is its focus on hands-on student learning. Because industrial hemp has many potential uses, from fiber and building materials to agricultural and value-added products; students across disciplines are being trained in different areas of hemp research and production. Through the Southern Institute for Medicinal Plants (SIMP), students gain practical experience in greenhouse production, field preparation, planting, plant care, data collection, laboratory research, and other aspects of hemp production. This interdisciplinary approach helps students see how agriculture connects with science, technology, business, and product innovation.





Staff Spotlight:

Dr. Harold Mellieon Was Selected to Participate in the AASCU 2026 Department Chair Leadership Institute



Dr. Harold Mellieon, Assistant Dean of Academic Engagement and Student Development and Department Chair of Agricultural Sciences, was competitively selected to participate in the prestigious American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) 2026 Department Chair Leadership Institute, an honor awarded to a select group of department chairs from public universities across the nation.

The program received an extraordinary number of applications, and Dr. Mellieon's selection reflects his demonstrated leadership, professional excellence, and commitment to advancing academic success.

The Institute takes place from September through December 2026 and included a two-day intensive leadership experience at AASCU's headquarters in Washington, D.C., from September 9-10, 2026. Participants were expected to engage fully in discussions focused on effective academic leadership, strategic decision-making, and the evolving role of department chairs in higher education.

Dr. Mellieon's participation will further strengthen Southern University's leadership capacity while creating opportunities to bring national best practices and innovative approaches back to the institution. His involvement in this distinguished program supports the University's commitment to academic excellence, faculty leadership development, and student success. The recognition also highlights Southern University's growing visibility and influence within national higher education leadership networks.



SU AG PODCAST

"Everyday we use some form of agriculture, from the time we wake up, until we go to bed. From clothing, gasoline, food, and bed linens — agriculture is all around us!"

Hosted by:

Dexter Newman



Join us as we interview your Ag favorites, and bring you agriculture news.

TUNE IN TO THE SU AG CENTER'S PODCAST BY VISITING:
<https://www.suagcenter.com/podcast>

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