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



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1890 Universities Foundation President Dr. Felecia Nave Visits the SU Ag Center and the College of Ag	4-5
Recap of the SU Ag Center's 83rd Annual State Livestock and Poultry Show <i>Congratulations to the 2026 Livestock Show Winners!</i>	6-10
Thank you for your years of service at the Southern University Ag Center and the College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences!	11
Nearly 1,000 K-12 Students Learn About the Field of Agriculture During Ag Day on the Bluff	12
Five CAHES Students Represented the University at the 1890 Universities Foundation Career Development Conference	13
Six CAHES Students Selected to Participate in the Cedric Richmond Scholarship Program	14
Three Students Selected as Farm Bureau Fellows	15
CAHES Students Volunteer at LSU's STEM & Stories Outreach Event	16
CAHES and Ag Center Join 4th Annual LUMCON Consortium (SoLC) Meeting	17
Backyard Viticulture 101: Muscadines for Southern Gardens <i>Research and Extension Partner with Community at Garden on Mars</i>	18-19
Opelousas Teacher's Retirement Association Becomes Students Learning How to Read Food Labels	20
Partnership to benefit insect pollinators: Examining honey bee health across landscapes	21-22
Staff Spotlights	23-24
SU Ag Podcast	25



*1890 Universities
Foundation President
Dr. Felecia Nave
Visits the SU Ag
Center and the
College of Ag*



Dr. Felecia Nave, President and Chief Executive Officer of the 1890 Universities Foundation, visited the Southern University Ag Center and the College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences (CAHES) on March 19, 2026.

The visit was part of Dr. Nave's tour of the 19 land-grant institutions.

During the visit, she toured facilities, met with the leadership, faculty, and staff from the teaching, extension, and research areas. The visit included stops at the Southern University Child Development Laboratory, Dietetic Internship Program, the 1890 Center of Excellence for Nutrition, Health and Quality of Life, the JagFresh Farmers Market, mobile units, the demonstration farm and garden, quilt and sewing labs, and the Ag Center's vineyard.

Dr. Nave also had the opportunity to learn about the SU Ag Center's beef research including the Southern University Natural (SUN) Beef "Smart Ranching" innovation, the use of drone technology in agriculture and how the SU Ag Center is encouraging students to enter the field of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art/Agriculture, and Mathematics) through its Youth Precision Drone 'Agcademy'.



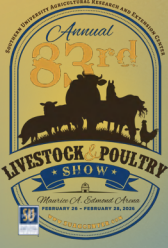


Dr. Nave has served in her current position since October 1, 2025. In this role, she provides strategic direction for the Foundation, leading efforts in organizational growth, fundraising, federal and private-sector engagement, and program development.

Prior to joining the Foundation Dr. Nave served in several distinguished roles throughout her career including serving as the Division Director for the Division of Equity for Excellence in STEM within the Directorate for STEM Education at the National Science Foundation, President of Alcorn State University, Provost and Vice Chancellor at North Carolina Central University, and Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at Prairie View A&M University.

The 1890 Universities Foundation was founded in 2016 and is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization dedicated to advancing the core land-grant missions of teaching, research, and extension at 1890 universities.





Recap of the SU Ag Center's 83rd Annual State Livestock and Poultry Show

Congratulations to the 2026 Livestock Show Winners!



Nearly 150 youth exhibitors from throughout Louisiana gathered at the Maurice A. Edmond Livestock Arena from February 26 – February 28, 2026 for the Southern University Ag Center's 83rd Annual State Livestock and Poultry Show.

The exhibitors showed 200 breeds of cattle, hogs, sheep, lamb, goats, and poultry during the event. The winners took home cash prizes, premiums, banners, ribbons, rosettes, and trophy belt buckles.





Aliyah Milburn, a 17-year-old exhibitor from Washington, La. was one of those winners, placing Grand Champion in the Commercial Dairy category.

Milburn has been showing cows for about four years and previously showed goats at the SU Ag Center's annual Livestock Show.

"Goats were really fun, but my mom showed cows when she was younger and that inspired us to show cows," she stated.

Milburn went on to say that she has learned responsibility from showing animals at the Livestock Show.

"It takes so much dedication, work, effort, and vigor to produce the quality cows that we show," said Milburn. "Responsibility is a major aspect that I have learned throughout my whole career of showing animals," she expressed.

In addition to the annual show, the Ag Center held several events leading up to the annual livestock show.







BOOTS AND BLING AFFAIR

The 4th Annual Boots & Bling Affair was held on January 31, at the F. G. Clark Activity Center. More than 1,160 attendees were entertained by zydeco accordionist and singer, Chris Ardoin. The event raised \$10,000 for the SU College of Ag and the SU Ag Center's Pathways Scholarship Fund and Stockman Success Grant. The Non-Stop Riders; Muse 3 Farms; Dr. Orlando F. McMeans, Southern University System Interim President and Chancellor of the SU Ag Center; and Tony Clayton, Chairman of the Southern University System Board of Supervisors, each donated \$1,000 to the Livestock Program. Past scholarship recipients Sydney Marshall, Catilyn Johnson, and Ty Sams were also recognized during the event.

LIVESTOCK APPRECIATION LUNCHEON

Individuals who have made an impact on the Livestock and Poultry Show were honored during the Livestock Appreciation Luncheon on February 22 at the Maurice A. Edmond Livestock Arena Multi-Purpose Building. The 2026 Trail Blazer Award Honorees were Odis S. Hill, Jason McCray, The Clyde Decuir Family, and Muse 3 Farms.



LIVESTOCK GIVE DAY

The 4th Annual Livestock Give Day was held on February 25. Individuals were asked to give \$83 in honor of the Livestock Show's 83rd anniversary. Funds raised during the event will support the SU Ag Center and College of Ag's Pathways Scholarship Fund and the Stockman Success Grant.

As an addition to Give Day, a virtual roundtable discussion on the legacy and impact of the Livestock Show was streamed on social media platforms. The panelists for the roundtable discussion were retired Lt. General Russell Honoré, representatives from Muse 3 Farms, Zanetta Augustine, Assistant Specialist for Agriculture and Natural Resources at the SU Ag Center, and Mia English, a senior SU College of Ag student majoring in Animal Science. Pathway Scholarship recipients, Sydney Marshall and Caitlyn Johnson served as moderators during the discussion.



SU AG CENTER'S ANNUAL LIVESTOCK & POULTRY SHOW

GIVE DAY

TUESDAY, FEB. 24 • 9AM-2PM

Celebrate 83 Years of Excellence by Giving \$83 to Support the Nation's Only 1890 Youth Livestock & Poultry Show.

For 83 years, Southern University has empowered young agriculturists, strengthened families, and built leaders through hands-on livestock education. Today, you can be part of that legacy. Join us on Livestock Give Day as we reflect on Livestock past, check in with this year's show, and sow seeds for the future.

SCAN TO GIVE \$83
Change a Future.
Grow Livestock.

* All proceeds will provide funding for Youth Exhibitors and Livestock Pathway Scholarship recipients.



THE EDUCATIONAL AG EXPO

Approximately 1,000 students from East Baton Rouge Parish Schools and surrounding areas participated in the SU Ag Center’s Educational Ag Expo on February 25. The students visited nearly 30 interactive exhibits that included ATV and tractor safety, a mechanical bull, a petting zoo, cow milking, train rides, information on community policing, hands-on gardening, drones, agricultural displays, and a mini farmers market.

The event, which was held at the Maurice A. Edmond Livestock Arena Multi-Purpose Building and the Maurice A. Edmond Livestock Arena, introduced students to the offerings in the College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences (CAHES), the programs and services available in the SU Ag Center, and the many career opportunities available in the field of Agriculture.



FRIDAY NIGHT WITH THE STARS OLD FASHION DECORATING CONTEST

The Friday Night with the Stars Old Fashion Decorating Contest was held on February 27 in the Maurice A. Edmond Livestock Arena. This event is held to allow the exhibitors to have fun with their animals one last time before the Junior Auction on Saturday morning.



AWARDS PROGRAM AND JUNIOR AUCTION

An awards program was held on February 28 at the Maurice A. Edmond Livestock Arena with the Junior Auction immediately following. View the list of 2026 winners at, <https://www.suagcenter.com/news/recap-of-the-su-ag-centers-83rd-annual-state-livestock-and-poultry-show>.



Thank you for your years of service at the Southern University Ag Center and the College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences!



The Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center and the College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences recognizes the members of our faculty and staff who are celebrating their 10, 20, 30, and 50-year anniversaries of employment. The employees also participated in the Southern University Office of Human Resources Employee Service Awards Luncheon. Your hard work and dedication are greatly appreciated.



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PAUL THOMAS
Research Farm Specialist 2



DR. KIT CHIN
Research Professor

Nearly 1,000 K-12 Students Learn About the Field of Agriculture During Ag Day on the Bluff



The Southern University Ag Center and the CAHES held SU Ag Day on the Bluff: “Greaxing Louisiana through Agriculture” on March 24, 2026 at the F. G. Clark Activity Center. The event was held in honor of National Ag Day.

“We brought about 1,000 students across Baton Rouge, Opelousas, and East Feliciana to come in and learn about agriculture, and tell them how important it is to their daily lives,” said Assistant Dean of the College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences Dr. Harold Mellieon, Jr.

During the event, K-12 students were able to visit agricultural booths, participate in AgVenture Tours, 4-H STEM Discovery, a JagFresh Farmers Market experience, a youth gardening and planting station, a nutrition and healthy living corner, and an Ag career exploration.

National Ag Day is a nation-wide event held in March every year to highlight and celebrate the role agriculture plays in everyday life.





Five CAHES Students Represented the University at the 1890 Universities Foundation Career Development Conference



Southern University proudly celebrates five outstanding students who recently represented the College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences at the 1890 Universities Foundation Career Development Conference, held February 24–26, 2026 in Atlanta, Georgia. The conference brought together high achieving students from across the 1890 land grant system for an immersive professional development experience designed to strengthen their readiness for internships, leadership roles, and long term career success.

This year's Southern University participants were, Mahogani Anderson, a junior agribusiness major; Jaleah Robinson, a sophomore plant and soil sciences major; Desmond Russell, a freshman animal science major; Marlie Lastrapes a freshman urban forestry major; and Zaria Batiste a freshman plant and soil science/animal science major. Accompanied by Dr. Harold Mellieon, Jr., the students engaged in a series of workshops, employer networking sessions, and hands on career training. Throughout the event, these students demonstrated professionalism, confidence, and a commitment to excellence that reflects the strength of Southern's agricultural programs.



The 1890 Universities Foundation continues to play a vital role in expanding access to high impact learning opportunities that prepare students for the evolving workforce. Southern University extends sincere appreciation to the Foundation and its industry partners for investing in the next generation of agricultural leaders and innovators.

As our students return to campus equipped with new insights, connections, and goals, the College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences remains dedicated to supporting their growth. We look forward to seeing them apply what they learned as they pursue internships, research engagement, and future career pathways across the agricultural and environmental sciences.

Six CAHES Students Selected to Participate in the Cedric Richmond Scholarship Program



CAHES students Jakari Brown, Saige Kenner, Georrein Dupre, Alaishia Joseph, Mishanti Johnson, and Xilyn Berzas have been selected for this year's Cedric Richmond Scholarship Program.

"Your dedication, academic excellence, and commitment to making a positive impact in your communities have distinguished you among your peers," stated Chianti Primus, Senior Administrative Assistant to the Chancellor-Dean and MANRRS Co-Advisor.

This year's cohort is particularly historic, as it marks the first time the program is co-ed, making the CAHES students' participation a significant milestone in the program's legacy.

The program, which is offered by the Office of the Governor's Office of Strategic Community Initiatives, provides scholarship awards to students from Louisiana who exhibit a commitment to their education and demonstrate a strong financial need.

We are incredibly proud of your accomplishments and eager to see the great things you will achieve as you continue to grow and develop through this prestigious opportunity.



JOIN US IN PORTLAND

FARM BUREAU® YF&R LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

MARCH 13-16, 2026 • PORTLAND, OR

Three Students Selected as Farm Bureau Fellows



BRYSON ARMSTRONG



ANANYA MACKEY



IKE INNIS

CAHES students Bryson Armstrong, Anaya Mackey, and Ike Innis have been selected as Farm Bureau Fellows.

The students joined more than 800 young agricultural leaders from across the country at the 2026 Farm Bureau YF&R Leadership Conference, themed *Rooted in Resilience* held in Portland, Oregon from March 13-16, 2026.

The three-day conference provided networking opportunities, sessions, and workshops that fell into the categories of collegiate/young professional; consumer engagement; member engagement and leadership development; innovation and niche marketing; on the farm; and policy and advocacy.

The students also had an opportunity to participate in agricultural tours in the Portland area.

The conference provided the students with a venue to learn from industry leaders, build connections and share the story of agriculture.

CAHES Students Volunteer at LSU's STEM & Stories Outreach Event

Students from the CAHES recently joined volunteers from Louisiana State University's Department of Geology and Geophysics to support the Geaux Science Explorations: STEM & Stories Outreach Event. The program, hosted by the LSU College of Science and the Office of Academic Innovation and Engagement, is designed to introduce young learners to science and mathematics through storytelling and hands-on activities.

The event invited children in kindergarten through third grade to participate in an engaging science story-time adventure led by scientists and researchers. After each reading, students explored interactive activities that allowed them to dive deeper into STEM concepts and spark their curiosity about the natural world.

Students from Southern University contributed their time by assisting with event logistics, guiding young participants through activities, and supporting the interactive learning stations. Their participation alongside LSU volunteers highlights a collaborative effort between institutions to promote science education and community engagement in the Baton Rouge region.



Support for this volunteer effort was provided through the MS Delta Initiative, which encourages cross-institutional collaboration and workforce development opportunities for students interested in environmental and STEM fields. By participating in outreach events such as STEM & Stories, student volunteers gain valuable experience in science communication while helping inspire the next generation of scientists and researchers.

Through partnerships between Southern University and LSU, programs like STEM & Stories continue to strengthen regional STEM engagement and foster meaningful connections between universities and the surrounding community.





CAHES and Ag Center Join 4th Annual LUMCON Consortium (SoLC) Meeting



The 4th Annual State of the LUMCON Consortium (SoLC) Meeting was held on March 3, 2026, at the LUMCON Blue Works Facility on the Houma Maritime Campus in Houma, Louisiana. The meeting convened partners from across Louisiana to discuss collaborative research, infrastructure, and educational initiatives related to coastal and marine science. Dr. Jacqueline McComb, Assistant Professor of Plant and Soil Science, served as the representative of the College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences, and Dr. Miriam Contin Ortega, Assistant Professor of Aquaculture, served as the representative from the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center.

Agenda topics for the meeting included updates from LUMCON leadership, results from the 2025 Brown Foundation–LUMCON Early Career Faculty program, discussions on the LA–NEXT initiative, and updates on the LSU Energy Institute reorganization. Representatives also discussed consortium membership, field station inventories, and future collaboration opportunities.

LUMCON is a program administrated by the Louisiana Board of Regents and is made up of all 32 public postsecondary institutions plus the ten member institutions of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU). The consortium offers a wide variety of resources and expertise to serve as an incubator and leader for marine science in Louisiana, throughout the Gulf Coast, and across the globe.

Backyard Viticulture 101: Muscadines for Southern Gardens

*Research and Extension
Partner with Community
at Garden on Mars*



On a warm day in New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward, a unique blend of science, gardening, and community spirit came together for "Backyard Viticulture 101: Muscadines for Southern Gardens," an educational workshop coordinated by the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center's Urban Agriculture Extension Agent, Asha McIntyre, highlighting the potential of muscadine grapes in Southern home landscapes.

The workshop was hosted at the Garden on Mars, a vibrant community garden established in 2017 by Janet Bell and currently managed by Angela Kinlaw. Located in the heart of the Lower Ninth Ward, Garden on Mars operates as an open community space where neighbors and visitors are welcome to explore, learn, and engage with the garden at their own pace. For this event, the garden itself became a living classroom.

Bringing Research to the Community

The workshop was a collaborative effort between research and extension professionals from the Southern University Ag Center. The team included Asha McIntyre, SU Ag Center Urban Agriculture Extension Agent; Dr. Devaiah Kambiranda, Research Professor and Associate Vice Chancellor for Research; Joshua Reason, Research Associate and Enologist; Michael Walker, Research Associate and Viticulturist; and Terrion Jones, Crop Farm Assistant.

Dr. Kambiranda led the viticulture presentation directly among the vines and garden beds, giving participants a hands-on perspective on growing muscadine grapes in Southern climates.

Attendees learned how to choose the right site and soil conditions, such as the importance of sandy soil and good drainage, proper planting techniques, how to build and use a trellis system, training and pruning methods and how to keep vines healthy through seasonal care and management, and where to purchase quality vines from reputable vendors.



The presentation also highlighted ongoing muscadine research at the Ag Center, connecting backyard gardeners with the latest developments in Southern grape production.

Learning by Doing

Education quickly turned into action as the SU Ag Center team guided participants through the planting of 10 different muscadine varieties at the Garden on Mars. Community members observed and practiced proper planting techniques, including how to trellis and stake young vines, and proper pruning techniques to encourage healthy growth.

Participants were also introduced to the diversity within muscadine grapes, including cultivars suitable for fresh fruit, wine, preserving, and hybrid varieties bred for disease resistance.

The hands-on demonstration helped demystify grape growing and showed how muscadines can thrive in backyard and community garden settings across the Gulf South.

A Strong Community Response

The workshop drew 25 community members, all eager to learn more about growing grapes at home. The enthusiasm extended beyond the day's activities—many participants expressed interest in visiting the vineyard on the SU Ag Center's campus to see muscadine research and production on a larger scale.

Growing More Than Grapes

Events like Backyard Viticulture 101 demonstrates how partnerships between research institutions and community spaces can cultivate more than crops. By bringing university expertise directly into neighborhood gardens, the workshop empowered local residents with practical skills while strengthening community connections around food, agriculture, and shared green spaces. Ninety-nine percent of the workshop participants plan to grow muscadine vines after attending the workshop.

At Garden on Mars, the newly planted muscadine vines will continue to grow—serving as a lasting reminder of a day when science, gardening, and community came together in the soil of the Lower Ninth Ward.

Opelousas Teacher's Retirement Association Becomes Students Learning How to Read Food Labels



Opelousas retired teachers were back in class! Not as teachers but as students. Angell C. Jordan, FHS Associate Agent was the teacher, and the subject was “How to Read Food Labels” on February 5, 2026.

“Teaching retirees about food labels was interesting and fun,” expressed Jordan. “They already value learning and they were practical and interactive. Explaining how to look for sodium, saturated fats, and even sugars was extremely concerning to them,” she added.

The lesson was effective and all students received a passing grade! The retired teachers had a blast and many questions about food labels. One stated “now I know what to look for when I’m reading food labels, this was great.”

Food labels are like a quick health report card for what we eat. Once you begin practicing reading labels, it becomes easier and easier.

*Partnership to Benefit
Insect Pollinators:
Examining Honey
Bee Health Across
Landscapes*



Honey bees play a vital role in supporting agriculture and maintaining healthy ecosystems. At the SU Ag Center, new research is helping scientists understand how environmental conditions influence pollinator health and colony performance. Cynthia Ogbu, a CAHES Ph.D. candidate in Urban Forestry, is leading a study investigating honey bee health across different landscapes in Louisiana. The research is conducted in collaboration with scientists from the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Honey Bee Breeding, Genetics, and Physiology Laboratory in Baton Rouge. This partnership has provided research opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students at Southern University, enhancing their technical skills in molecular techniques, genetic and physiological analyzes, and colony assessments in the field.

This research examines how landscape characteristics influence honey bee health by monitoring colonies in rural and urban environments. Cynthia evaluates several



key indicators of colony performance, including pollen and honey storage, mite infestation levels, and molecular markers associated with bee immunity and detoxification. The first year's findings indicate that landscape characteristics can influence honey bee colony productivity and overall health. Colonies located in rural areas showed higher pollen and honey storage, suggesting greater availability of floral resources. Levels of mite infestation (bee parasites) and detoxification gene expression were lower in bees from rural sites, indicating reduced physiological stress compared to urban sites. These findings highlight the importance of landscape diversity and resource availability in supporting pollinator health.

Presentations at local, regional, and national conferences has generated strong interest among researchers studying pollinator health and environmental stressors in the U.S. Recently, this work was presented at the 2026 Southeastern Branch Conference of the Entomological Society of America in Hilton Head, South Carolina. It has also been shared with the Louisiana Beekeepers Association and the Capital Area Beekeepers Association, bringing scientific findings directly to our stakeholders in Louisiana. Through collaborative research, Southern University and the USDA Honey Bee Laboratory are strengthening ongoing efforts to understand landscape impacts on pollinator health and develop strategies that protect pollinators critical to agriculture and ecosystem stability locally and globally.

For additional information on the SU Ag Center's honey bee research contact Cynthia Ogbu at cynthia.ogbu@sus.edu, Dr. Veronica Manrique, SU Ag Center Research Professor at veronica_manrique@subr.edu, and Kate Ihle with the USDA Honey Bee Lab.



*Staff Spotlight:
SU Ag Center's
Dr. LaShunda Hodges
featured in the
Index of Inspiring
Black Scientists*



Dr. Lashunda Anderson Hodges, Full Research Professor of Soil and Plant Sciences at the Southern University Ag Center and the CAHES, has been featured in the initial listing of the Index of Inspiring Black Scientists.

This Index is a collaborative effort between a committee of scholars and Wiley, a research publisher, to curate a database of Inspiring Black Scientists. It is intended to be an open resource to identify and highlight outstanding Black scientists for educational purposes, collaboration, and networking.

Scientists featured in this Index were nominated for their inspiring contributions to science. They are from various countries, backgrounds, career stages, and fields to create an inclusive list that will remain publicly available.

View the index at, <https://www.wiley.com/en-us/research/index-inspiring-black-scientists/>.

WILEY

Discover the Index of Inspiring Black Scientists

Connect – Collaborate – Inspire





Staff Spotlight: Dr. LaShunda Hodges Featured in the Documentary Queens of STEM



Dr. LaShunda Anderson Hodges appears in the documentary *Queens of STEM*, produced by the QEM Network’s visual storytelling division, QEM Media. This inspiring film highlights visionary women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) whose innovation, leadership, and impact are reshaping the landscape of STEM fields.

Queens of STEM is part of the QEM Network’s ongoing commitment to amplify voices and broaden representation in STEM through compelling storytelling that inspires action and elevates inadequate representation contributors to national attention. QEM Network’s mission is to empower educators, students, and professionals to strengthen educational opportunities and advance talent across STEM disciplines.

Dr. Hodges, recognized nationally for her pioneering work in precision agriculture, drone imaging, and environmental monitoring, brings decades of scientific expertise and community-focused leadership to the documentary. In her role at the Southern University Ag Center and the CAHES, she collaborates with federal, state, and industry partners to integrate climate-smart

technology and innovative practices that support Louisiana stakeholders.

As a featured subject in *Queens of STEM*, Dr. Hodges reflects on her journey—from earning advanced degrees in agronomy and her FAA certification as a drone pilot to her ongoing efforts to elevate STEM education and careers for women, particularly women of color. Her appearance offers audiences an inspiring look at the resilience, expertise, and determination driving women toward groundbreaking contributions in science and technology.

“I am honored to be included among so many remarkable women who are shaping the future of STEM,” said Dr. Hodges. “This documentary shines a light on stories that deserve recognition and encourages the next generation of innovators to see themselves as part of this powerful legacy.”

Queens of STEM is available to stream on WeHBSeeU TV, through the WeHBSeeU TV app (which is accessible on major streaming devices including Roku and Apple TV), the WeHBSeeU TV mobile app, and online at the official WeHBSeeU website.



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 LATEST EDITION AT:

<https://www.suagcenter.com/podcast>

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*A Monthly Newsletter
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