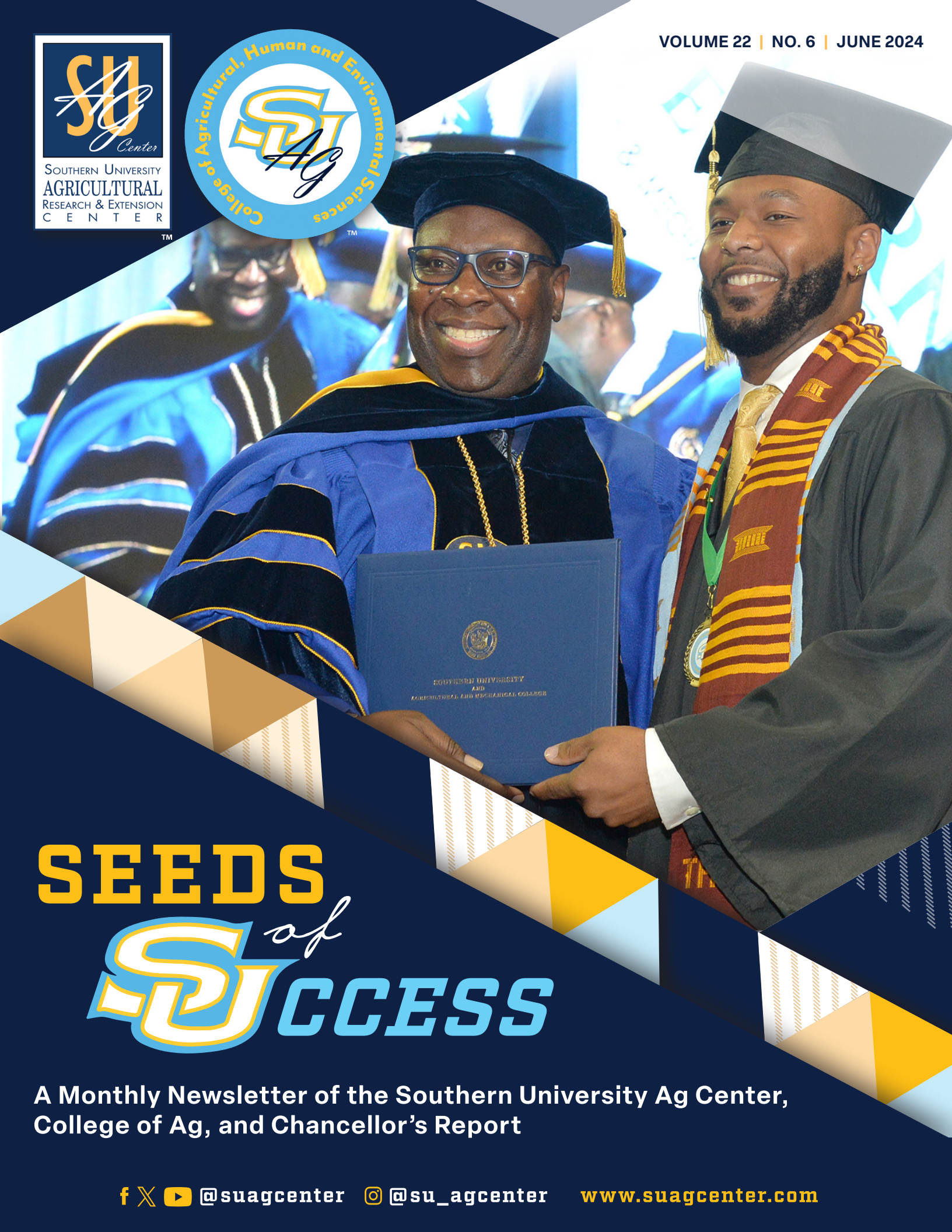




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SEEDS *of* SUCCESS

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

Executive LEADERSHIP



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Members of the House Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture and Rural Development Committee Visits the SU Ag Center

Members of the Louisiana House Ag Committee visited the Southern University Ag Center and the College of Ag on May 23, 2024.

The visit included a brief introduction and a welcome by Southern University System President Dennis J. Shields and Southern University System Executive Vice President, John Pierre.

Dr. Orlando F. McMeans, SU Ag Center Chancellor-Dean, provided information on the impact of the Southern University Ag Center to the state and spoke on the needs of the Ag Center and the College.

Dr. Calvin Walker, Executive Vice Chancellor, spoke on the status of the SU Ag Center's and College of Ag's facilities.

Representative Troy Romero, Chairman of the House Ag Committee, and C. Travis Johnson, Vice Chair of the House Ag Committee also spoke to the Ag Center, College of Ag, Baton Rouge campus, and SU System staff in attendance for the visit.

Dr. Katara Williams, Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement and External Relations presided over the meeting which concluded with a tour of the Agricultural facilities.

College of Ag Faculty Members Engage Students in Educational Tours at the Center for River Studies

Assistant professors, Drs. Jacqueline McComb and Crystal Vance organized educational tours at Louisiana State University's Center for River Studies (CRS), located on LSU's Baton Rouge Water Campus near the banks of the Mississippi River and houses one of the world's largest movable bed physical models of the Lower Mississippi River Physical on April 26, 2024.

These educational tours are being instituted as a key component of the Plant and Soil Science/Sustainable Agriculture curricula in the College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences linking the history of the Mississippi River, Louisiana's disappearing wetlands, and ongoing coastal restoration projects across the coast and the connection to agriculture.

The tours are further supported through the \$22 Million Mississippi River Delta Transition Initiative with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Gulf Research Program targeted at experiential learning and increasing opportunities for underrepresented groups participating in coastal research and workforce development.



CONGRATS!



Forty-seven College of Ag Students Earn Degrees During Spring Commencement

Forty-seven students in the College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences earned degrees during the Southern University and A&M College's Spring 2024 Commencement on Friday, May 17, 2024, along with nearly 600 graduates from the University.

SU alum Ronald "Ron" Chandler, Apple Inc.'s lead for customer engagement for U.S. education business, served as the keynote speaker for the ceremony.

Prior to joining Apple, Chandler served as the chief information technology officer at the Harvard Business School. He held a similar role at the UCLA Anderson School. Before becoming a higher education CIO, he led technology for the Los Angeles Unified School District, the second-largest school district in the U.S.

Chandler has been recognized as one of the "Big Ten Most Influential People" in Technology and Learning magazine.

He received a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering from Southern University and an MBA from the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan.



Spring 2024 GRADUATING SENIORS



College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences students who received degrees were:

Department of Agricultural Sciences and Technology:

- **Alana Colligan** from Baton Rouge, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Amahry Jackson** from Newellton, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Austin Hinton-Richard** from Madisonville, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Bryce Ford** from Opelousas, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Caviana Hill** from Snellville, GA, earned a B.S.
- **Colby Barnum-Bonier** from Natchitoches, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Courtney Emaudry Guilbeaux** from Desoto, TX, earned a B.S.
- **Depore' Rosemond** from Donaldsonville, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Heaven Britton** from Monroe, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Ireyon Buchanna** from Pearl River, LA, earned a B.S.
- **JaMya Lahaye Watson** from Greensburg, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Jefferson Allen Blackmon II** from Hutto, TX, earned a B.S.
- **Jerryan Richard** from Midway, GA, earned a B.S.
- **Kendall Bennett** from Zachary, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Ki'Aunysti Brown** from Slaughter, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Micah Jackson** from Shreveport, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Michelle Lee** from St. Martinville, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Nadia La'Nae Zeno** from Lafayette, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Kirstyn Hale** from Houston, TX, earned a B.S.
- **Niko Grymes-Hill** from Chicago, IL, earned a B.S.
- **Nya Lewis** from Zachary, LA, earned a B.S.

- **Raven Foster** from Baton Rouge, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Reagan Raby** from Baton Rouge, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Brian Thomas** from Opelousas, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Chandler Whitfield** from Zachary, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Zacaria Goldsmith** from Shreveport, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Drew Lasseigne** from Pride, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Edgar Janise II** from Baton Rouge, LA, earned a B.S.

Department of Urban Forestry, Environment and Natural Resources:

- **Taylor St. Vilus** from Fortmill, SC, earned a B.S.
- **Tess Brown** from Denham Springs, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Christiean Smith** from Baton Rouge, LA, earned a Ph.D.
- **Brittany Benjamin** from Baton Rouge, LA, earned a Ph.D.

Department of Human Sciences:

- **Brycelahn Cook** from Sorrento, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Maya Campbell** from Baker, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Amani Comeaux** from Belle Rose, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Domiona Hayes** from Opelousas, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Alison Leduff** from Baton Rouge, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Patricia Mitchell** from Baton Rouge, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Kyra Reeves** from Pflugerville, TX, earned a B.S.
- **Lakoy Scales** from Baton Rouge, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Ladaisha Burton** from Jackson, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Kennedi Hall** from Benicia, CA, earned a B.S.

- **Shantona Jackson** from Baton Rouge, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Tyana Johnson** from Winnsboro, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Jada Ranson** from Slidell, LA, earned a B.S.
- **Brianna Williams** from Baton Rouge, LA, earned a B.S.

Department of Environmental Toxicology:

- **Curtistine Deere** from Baton Rouge, LA, earned a Ph.D.

Photos courtesy of John Oubre, SUBR Office of Communications



TEACHING



Bleat Those Exams for Spring 2024 Goat Yoga

Nearly 25 students participated in the April 23, 2024 Bleat Those Exams for Spring 2024 Goat Yoga on the lawn of Pinkie Thrift Hall.

Dr. Dana Pollard, Assistant Professor of Agricultural Science, instructed the group in various yoga techniques. While performing these techniques, goats frolicked around the participants.

After the event, food of caprine origin was offered to the participants in an effort to get participants to try goat products and to supplement animal science and nutrition information they may have received in the classroom regarding these items.

The focus of the goat yoga event was to improve the mental health of the students before final exams through yoga techniques and interactions with

small ruminants. Essentially, the event helped to increase the flexibility of participants, improve their strength and build endurance, regulate emotions, build balance, and reduce stress and anxiety.

Adding the element of the goats just complimented the therapeutic effects of yoga.

The event also tapped into the “Southern Human-Animal Relationship Experiences (S.H.A.R.E.) under the “Center for Human-Animal Relationships” in the Southern University Institute for One Health, One Medicine.

For additional information on the Bleat Those Exams for Spring Goat Yoga or the Southern University Institute for One Health, One Medicine, contact Dr. Dana Pollard at dana_pollard@suagcenter.com.



TEACHING

VET EXPLORE 2024

SU College of Ag Held Vet Explore 2024

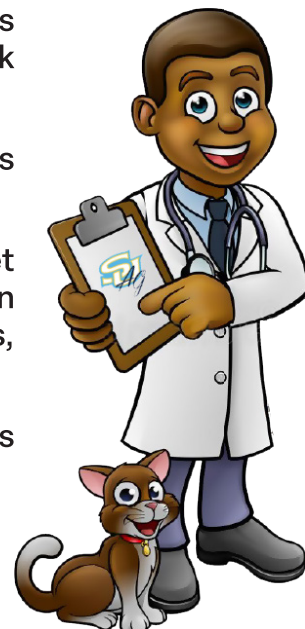
The Southern University College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences held its Vet Explore 2024 event on May 4, 2024 at the Maurice A. Edmond Livestock Arena.

The event was free and open to high school and college undergraduate students interested in becoming veterinarians.

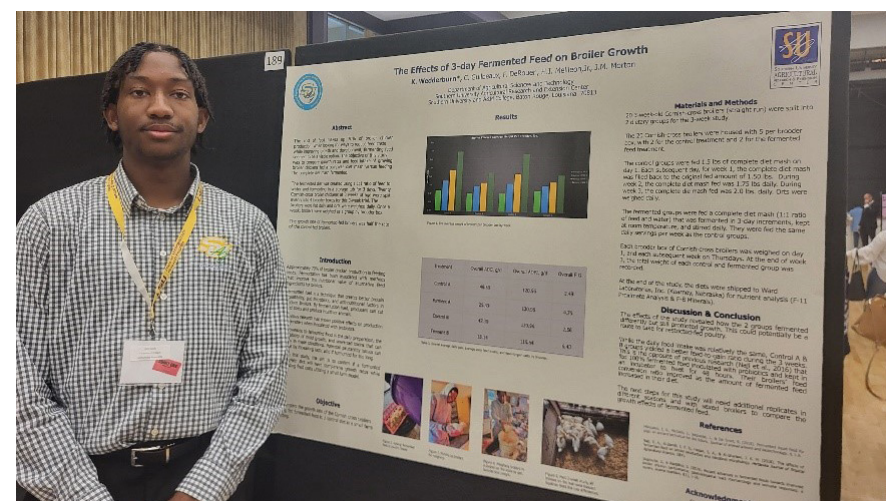
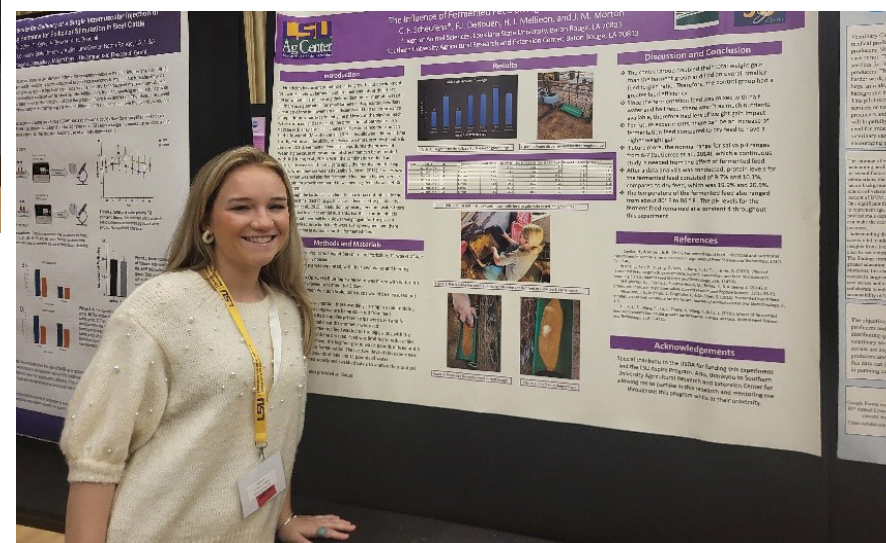
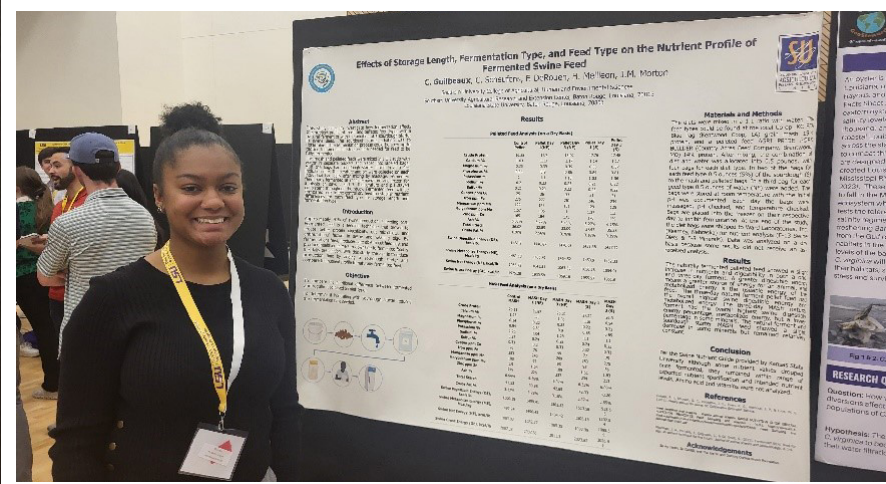
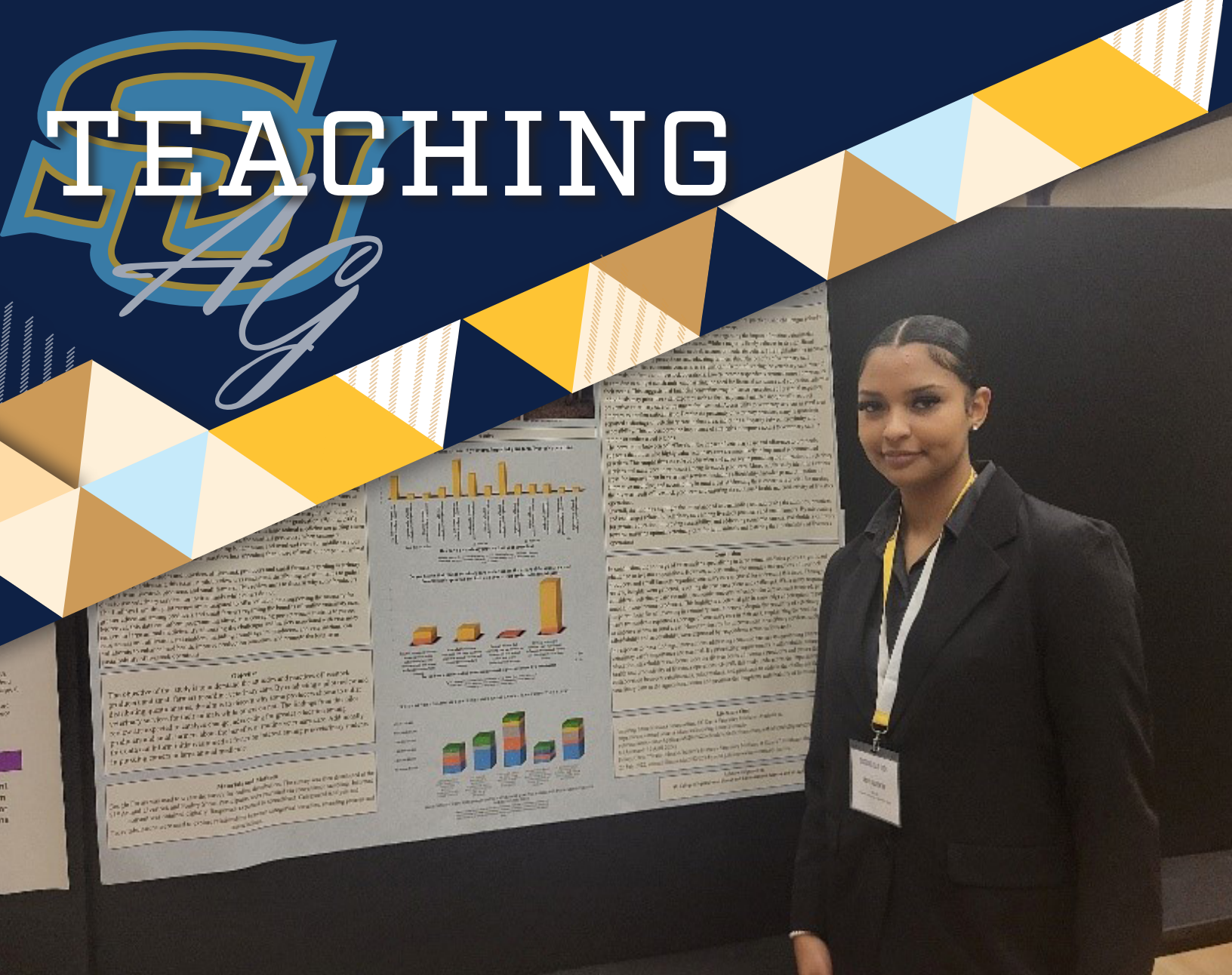
The day's events included hands-on suture and blood collection demonstrations, Vet School 101 and Jag Stars Pre-Vet/Animal Science 101 Sessions, Breed Identification and Basic Animal Husbandry, a Parasitology Lab, Mobile Veterinary Practice Tours, and Career Exploration Sessions with veterinarians.

WAFB News Channel 9 aired a news story on the Vet Explore 2024 event. The story is available at, <https://bit.ly/3VmSWjN>.

For additional information, email Dr. Tyra Davis at tyra.brown@sus.edu.



TEACHING



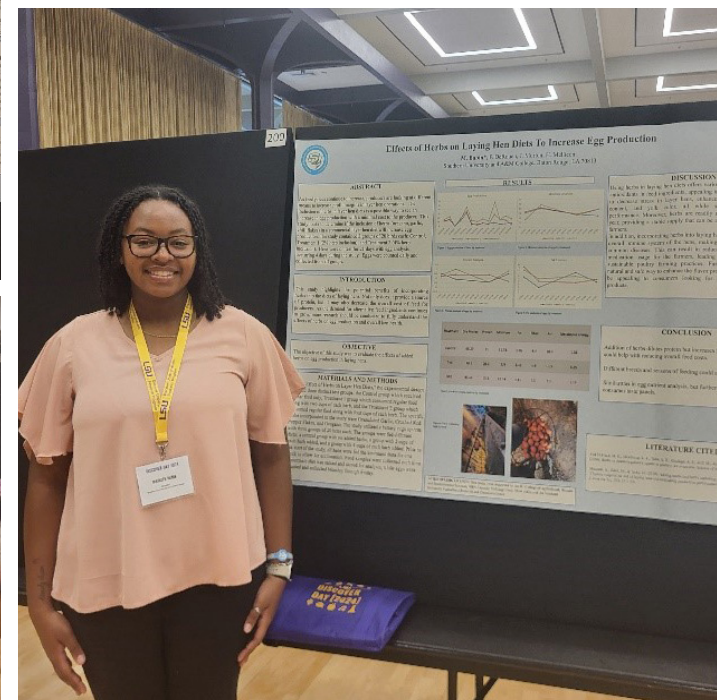
Madison Babin, a freshman Pre-vet major from Southern University, presented research on the project, Effects of Herb Inclusion on Laying Hen Diets for Egg Production and Nutrient Content, with mentor Dr. Harold Mellieon.

Koi Wedderburn, a freshman Pre-vet major from Southern University, presented on, The Effects of 3-Day Fermented Feed on Broiler Growth, with mentor Dr. Jodi Morton.

Claire Scheufens, a junior Animal Science major from LSU, placed second for her LSU College of Agriculture Project, The Influence of Fermented Feed on Pig Growth and Wellbeing, with mentor Dr. Jodi Morton.

Courtney Guilbeaux, a senior Animal Science major from Southern University presented during the conference on the project titled, Effects of Storage Length, Fermentation Type, and Feed Type on the Nutrient Profile of Fermented Swine Feed, with mentor Dr. Jodi Morton

Jadyn Allement, freshman Pre-vet major from Southern University also presented research on the project titled, A Pilot Review of Veterinary Care Attitudes in the Livestock Industry, with mentor Dr. Tyra Davis.



College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences Undergraduate Researchers Presented at LSU Discover Day

Discover Day is an annual multi-discipline undergraduate research conference held in Baton Rouge each Spring. Five students from Southern University and LSU, under Drs. Jodi Morton, Harold Mellieon, and Tyra Davis, Agricultural Sciences and Technology Professors, presented posters about their undergraduate research. All undergraduate research presented at the conference was completed within the last year.

“Undergraduate research helps students improve critical thinking and scientific reasoning skills, having them present their research is another important aspect of research,” said Dr. Morton. “A special thank you to LSU ASPIRE, the Joe W. and Dorothy Dorsett Brown Foundation, the College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences, and the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center for their support of these research projects and undergraduate student researchers,” she added.

The following students presented their research during the conference:

EXTENSION

Center



SU Ag Center Holds Annual Spring Garden Workshop

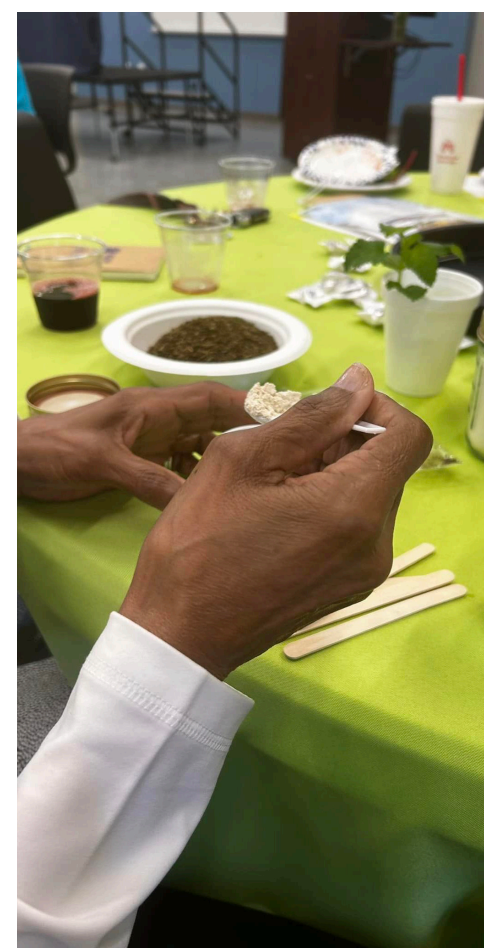
Nearly 100 participants attended the SU Ag Center's Annual Spring Garden Workshop on April 25, 2024 at the Maurice A. Edmond Livestock Arena Multi-Purpose Building.

This year's theme was "Earth Day, Herb Day: Down to Earth Herbs for Everyday Use" and covered the topics of herb propagation, herbs for IPM, feeding herbs to Livestock, and traditional Uses of Herbs.

Attendees were also instructed in making their own herbal foot soak by Professional Herbalist and SUBR Plant and Soil Science major, Desirée L. James.

The workshop was co-hosted by the Southern University Ag Center's Wisteria Alliance, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program, and the LSU AgCenter.

For additional information on the Annual Spring Garden Workshop contact, Terra Polite at michael.polite@suagcenter.com; Mila Berhane at milagro_berhane@suagcenter.com; or Zanetta Augustine at zanetta_augustine@suagcenter.com.



EXTENSION

SNAP-Ed Nutrition Education Program Partners with SU College of Agriculture for Preschool Career Preparedness and Nutrition Education

The SNAP-Ed Nutrition Education Program and the Southern University College of Ag significantly impacted early childhood education at Delmont Elementary's Pre-K Career Day on April 26, 2024. The event aimed to foster career preparedness and promote healthy living habits among preschoolers.

The SNAP-Ed team delivered an engaging mini nutrition and physical activity lesson, emphasizing the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise. Through interactive activities, the children learned about the benefits of fruits, vegetables, and staying active, laying the groundwork for lifelong healthy habits.

In addition to the nutrition lesson, the College of Ag provided a hands-on experience with animals. This interactive segment allowed the children to learn about various animals, sparking curiosity, and interest in agricultural careers from a young age.

"Today's event was a wonderful opportunity to combine career exploration with essential health education," said Chrishana Thomas, East Baton Rouge and East Feliciana Parishes Nutrition Educator of the SNAP-Ed Program. "By teaching children about nutrition and physical activity in a fun and engaging way, we hope to inspire them to make healthy choices throughout their lives."

The collaboration between the SU Ag Center's SNAP-Ed program and the SU College of Ag not only provided valuable educational experiences but also highlighted the importance of community partnerships in enhancing early childhood education.



New Award Funding the Phase IV CEGFSD Project in Kenya

“Promoting Global Food Security in Developing Economies”

The Center of Excellence for Global Food Security and Defense (CEGFSD) is one of six proposed centers of excellence at 1890 universities identified in the United States Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, commonly known as the 2018 Farm Bill. The Center is supported with funds from the United States Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA/NIFA). Through a competitive process, USDA-NIFA awarded a grant to the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) to host and implement the CEGFSD in collaboration with all nineteen 1890 universities, including the Southern Agricultural Research and Extension Center (SU Ag Center). The CEGFSD aims to build on the work initiated through the Center of Excellence for International Engagement and Development (CEIED), which was one of three Anniversary Centers of Excellence established by the USDA/1890 Taskforce to commemorate the 125th Anniversary of the signing of the Second Morrill Act of 1890.

The Center focuses on implementing projects aimed at supplying the U.S. with a globally educated workforce and addressing essential global food security and defense needs. The Center fosters international partnerships to strengthen agricultural development in developing countries; engages international researchers in addressing new and emerging animal and plant pests and diseases; contributes to agricultural disaster recovery; and continues with activities carried out by the CEIED.

The Center supports global projects that address the three broad goals listed below by implementing specific activities in eight priority areas. The three broad goals are to (1) Strengthen agricultural development in developing countries; (2) Address new and emerging animal and plant pests and diseases; and (3) Engage in agricultural disaster recovery. The eight interlinked priorities are focused on: (1) Agricultural productivity; (2) Reduction of global poverty; (3) Enhancement of global food supply chains; (4) Improving food safety; (5) Impacts of trade on food availability, access, use, and stability; (6) Advancement of the long-term prosperity of the U.S. through global food security and defense initiatives; (7) Global climate change; and (8) Emerging technologies.

The 1890 Foundation resealed an RFA in the amount of \$800,000 for Phase IV Funding Cycle on January 16, 2024. The grant funded a total of six new proposals – that is, up to two proposals per region: West Africa, East Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). Dr. James Obuya, Research Assistant Professor (PD) of the SU Ag Center, was one of the awardees for the East Africa region. In addition, project

collaborators (Co-PIs) included researchers from the University of Arkansas Pine Bluff (Co-PIs) and Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya received an award of \$124,865 for a Phase IV CEGFSD project titled, “Strengthening Productivity of Dairy Animals, African Indigenous Cereal and Pulses through Upscaling Climate-Smart Technologies, Enhanced Pollination, and Value Addition for Improved Resilient and Food Security in Muranga County, Kenya.” This is a one-year project which will operate from May 1, 2024 – April 30, 2025. Kenyatta University will be the Kenya implementing partner of this Phase IV CEGFSD project due to the local experience of its researchers in Murang’a County, Kenya.

This new CEGFSD project will focus on two objectives:

Objective 1: To improve agricultural productivity by providing research and outreach skills to students, faculty, scientists, and smallholders in Murang’a County, Kenya.

Specific activities will include:

- a.) Undertake farmer’s recruitment, hold inception meetings with stakeholders, and consent signing to improve productivity by target stakeholders (students, scientists, extensionists, and smallholder farmers).
- b.) Development of Farmer Training Manuals on Climate Smart Cereals, Pulses, and Cattle Management.

Objective 2: To develop cost-effective pest management tools against new and emerging animal and plant pests and diseases for smallholder farmers in Murang’a County, Kenya.

Specific activities will include:

- a.) Establishing Farmers’ Field Schools and demonstration plots for cereals, pulses, and Brachiaria spp.
- b.) Identification and management of diseases and pests of the target crops and animals through participatory methods.
- c.) Develop capacity on livestock productivity and One Health Concept.
- d.) Suggest broad-based recommendations for prioritization, document existing, and introduce success stories to scale up Climate-smart agriculture and IPM strategies.

Significance: The proposed study will enhance crop and animal food value chains/food systems by imparting agricultural knowledge, information, and materials to improve agricultural productivity in Murang’a County, Kenya; ensuring that households in the region are food secure; and empowering smallholder farmers to generate household income from the sale of farm produce. Due to limited land sizes and food insecurity, the CEGFSD project will focus on promoting climate-smart agriculture technologies such as sustainable and integrated agricultural practices.

This project will build the capacity of Kenyatta University researchers and students to continue engaging the local community within Murang’a County on matters related to improving agricultural productivity in the region; engaging students (from SU and partner institutions) in experiential learning through field-based research and outreach activities; develop applied technologies to enhance the mitigation of plant and animal pests and diseases, including the provision of on-the-spot diagnosis and advice to farmers; and foster practices can improve the production of traditional crops aimed at enhancing the food security situation among the local communities. In addition, the outlined project activities will open up new opportunities for forging working relationships with the U.S. missions abroad such as the USDA’s Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) and/or the U.S. Agency for International Development program staff, as we create new opportunities for SU Ag Center faculty and SU students to gain new knowledge on food security issues in developing countries, and how the U.S. can bridge the existing technology in the agricultural commodity market.

Faculty & Staff HIGHLIGHTS



Dr. Zhu Ning Named Southern University's Spring 2024 Outstanding Researcher

Dr. Zhu Ning, Chair and doctoral program leader of the Department of Urban Forestry, Environment, and Natural Resources in the SU College of Ag, has received the Spring 2024 Outstanding Researcher Award from the Southern University Baton Rouge campus.

A certificate and a monetary award were presented to Dr. Ning on April 19, 2024 by the Southern University Office of Sponsored Programs.

Dr. Ning, who has more than 30 years of research experience, is also the Director of the Air, Nutrient, Soil, Water, Ecosystem, and Remote Sensing Institute (SU Answers Institute) at the SU Agricultural Research and Extension Center.

Her research has focused on programs addressing regional, national, and international critical issues such as climate change, environmental problems, mitigation strategies, adaptation options, and sustainable management practices.

She has more than 45 projects totaling over \$37 million in grants and contracts funded by the United States Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA), the National Science Foundation (NSF), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA), the USDA's Forest Service (FS), the United States Geological Survey (USGS), the Department of Energy, and The Ford Foundation. Dr. Ning also has more than 230 scientific publications and over 170 scientific presentations at international, national, and regional conferences, symposia, and workshops.



SU Ag Center and College of Ag Staff Complete the Lead 21 Leadership Development Program

Drs. Dana Pollard and Zhu Ning from the Southern University Ag Center and the SU College of Ag were among 88 individuals who completed the LEAD21 leadership-development program. This group of distinguished individuals represents land-grant institutions and their strategic partners from across the nation. Over the course of the past year, these individuals have met regularly with their trainers/coaches, peers, both in-person and virtually, to enhance their personal leadership capacity. The Program's graduation was held on Feb. 22, 2024 at the culmination of the third in-person session, where the focus was on organizational leadership through collaboration, communication, and leading change.



The primary purpose of LEAD21 is to develop leaders in land-grant institutions and their strategic partners who link research, academics, and extension who can lead more effectively in an increasingly complex environment, either in their current positions or future leadership positions.

The goals of LEAD21 is to enhance the application of skills and knowledge across a set of nine leadership competencies, to develop a network of peer leaders to enhance personal leadership practice, collaboration and diversity of perspective and to develop and implement an individual's leadership development process.

Dr. McComb Served as Keynote Speaker for Seed Library Outreach

Assistant Research Professor of Plant and Soil Science, Dr. Jacqueline McComb, was the keynote speaker for the Grand Opening of the Harriette Person Memorial Library's Seed Library in Port Gibson, MS on April 19, 2024.

A seed library allows community members to collect, store, and share seeds with members of the community for free, including unique heirloom and local varieties.

Dr. McComb further highlighted agricultural principles that aided the foundation of 1890 universities and the importance of collaborating with local and regional library systems to strengthen regional food security and continuous education for gardeners and growers at all levels of expertise.



Alumni SPOTLIGHT

SU College of Ag Alum Dr. Devona Dixon Receives One of the University of North Carolina System's Highest Awards

Southern University College of Ag alumnus Devona Dixon, Ph.D., recently received the University of North Carolina System (UNC) Board of Governors Award for Excellence in Teaching, one of the highest awards in the UNC System.

Dixon formally received the award on May 10, 2024 during the North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University's Spring 2024 Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony from Board of Governors Secretary Pearl Burris-Floyd.

Dixon is an associate professor in the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences' Department of Family and Consumer Science where she has served as a fashion merchandising and design professor for more than 11 years. Dixon said she was "overjoyed" to learn she was the 2024 Teaching Award winner.

"I am deeply grateful for the support and encouragement I have received from colleagues," stated Dixon. "Being recognized for my dedication to enhancing students' educational experiences through teaching, curriculum design, and student engagement is an incredibly humbling experience. I am deeply committed to creating an environment that nurtures student success, and receiving the UNC BOG Outstanding Teaching Excellence Award is a powerful affirmation of those endeavors," she expressed.

The UNC Board of Governors Award for Excellence in Teaching was established in 1993 by the board to highlight the importance of teaching by recognizing the extraordinary contributions of faculty members system-wide. Each winner receives a commemorative bronze medallion and a \$12,500 cash prize. Nominees are selected from a pool of outstanding college or school teaching award recipients for the current year.

Dixon earned a bachelor's degree in clothing textiles and related arts from Southern University and A&M College, a master's in merchandising and design from Colorado State University, and a Ph.D. in human ecology from Louisiana State University.

Information for this story was taken from the North Carolina A&T's article, "UNC System Honors Fashion Professor Dixon with Teaching Excellence Award," written by Lydian Bernhardt on May 23, 2024. The original article is available at, <https://www.ncat.edu/news/2024/05/dixon-bog-teaching-award.php>.



DEVONA DIXON, PH.D.

COMMUNICATIONS

Center

Tune in to the latest episode of the SU Ag Center's Podcast where SU Ag Center Senior Research Associate and College of Ag Adjunct Professor, Mila Berhane encourages the youth to consider a career in Agriculture.

To listen to the interview, visit:

www.suagcenter.com/page/su-ag-podcast

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!"

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

Hosted by:

Dexter "Dex" Newman



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