



VOLUME 22 | NO. 8 | AUGUST 2024



# 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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## Dr. Orlando McMeans Discussed Academic Programs During the National SU Alumni Federation Panel

Dr. Orlando F. McMeans, Chancellor-Dean of the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center and the College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences, participated in the Chancellor's Panel during the National Southern University Alumni Federation on June 28, 2024, in the Cotillion Ballroom of the Smith-Brown Memorial Union, along with the chancellors from throughout the Southern System.

During the panel, Dr. McMeans discussed the College of Ag's enrollment increase and was asked to highlight two academic programs.

He highlighted the area of environmental sciences and explained its importance.

"Our focus is on climate-smart commodities because of climate change. The foods that we grow up north. You can't grow them there anymore," explained Dr. McMeans. "So we are looking at genetic engineering and cross-breeding. We have created a whole new area that's not only Academic, we also have the Research area, as well as, the Outreach component. We have a request into Congress for \$100 million, along with our counterparts at LSU, to have the first climate-smart facility in the area," he expressed.

Dr. McMeans also mentioned the Enology and Viticulture Program.

"We are able to grow grape plants that would never grow in this part of the state. Through breeding and genetic engineering, we now have those grapes growing in our orchard right now at the Southern University Ag Center," he added.

In addition to the College of Ag, Dr. McMeans also spoke about the recent changes to the state's medical marijuana program.

"There were some challenges during the last session as it relates to the licenses for Southern University and LSU," he stated. "Due to the legislation, the licenses for each of the universities was removed and LDH is now in charge of those licenses and they will go directly to the growers. The first HBCU to be in this space is no longer there as it relates to medicinal marijuana. However, we are and will continue to work in the area of research."

He went on to say that the Ag Center has partnered with other HBCUs because we have been in that space a lot longer.

"We have great research. One of the islands in St. Kitts is in the process of developing a research lab for the Ag Center. We will continue to work with medicinal cannabis, and we will go on to work with other Caribbean Islands. So some good has come out of it," said Dr. McMeans.

The panel ended with each chancellor discussing ways alumni can assist the five campuses of the Southern University System. The chancellors each echoed the need for scholarship dollars for their students and reminded the alumni of the System's current Million Dollar March on August 30, 2024. To give to the SU Ag Center and the College of Ag visit, <https://www.givecampus.com/campaigns/45754/donations/new?tc=23335&amt=100.00>.

The top of the page features a dark blue background with a large, stylized 'SU' logo in gold and blue. Below the logo is a large, white, cursive 'Ag' script. To the right, a diagonal band of geometric shapes in yellow, orange, and light blue runs across the page. The word 'TEACHING' is written in large, white, serif capital letters across the top left.

# TEACHING

## **SU Ag Students and Faculty Members Participate In An International Trip to China**

Seven Southern University College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences (CAHES) students and two faculty members were among over 1,000 participants from 28 countries and regions who participated in the 2024 Global Youth Conference & China-U.S. Youth Camp.

The conference, which was themed “Sharing Youth, Enjoying the Future,” was held in Beijing, China from July 11-24, 2024.

The students, Tyler Jackson, a senior pre-veterinary medicine major; Georrein Dupre, a graduate student in Environmental Toxicology; Sterling Brown, a senior AgriBusiness major; Yasmyne Wells, a graduate student in Environmental Toxicology; Jude Robert, a sophomore AgriBusiness major; Nyasha Sims, a senior Child Studies major; and Evan Egana, a graduate student in the Dietetic Internship Program are being accompanied by Alexis Motley, CAHES Dietetic Internship Director/Instructor; and Keandrys Dalton, CAHES Student Support Coordinator.

Each student was recommended to attend the conference by one of their professors. Many of the students stated they were shocked when they received the news that they had been nominated to go to China.

“Finals week started on campus and I had four of my finals on a Monday,” recounted Jude Robert about the day he learned he had been recommended to go on the trip. “On that day I was walking across campus to get lunch when I received a phone call from Ms. Dalton and right before I picked up the phone I told one of my friends, ‘I just need to go study and I keep getting phone calls and I don’t know what’s going on,’” he added with a laugh.

Members of the group also expressed their excitement for the opportunity and what they planned to gain from the experience.

“I’m most excited about hearing the different languages and trying to learn something more than just saying hello in Chinese,” expressed Nyasha Sims. “I’m interested in going down the clinical psychology route so how people talk to each other and interact with each other is a major interest of mine.”

“As a dietitian, I’m excited to see what other countries are doing as it comes to food, especially on the nutrition side but I also want to bring back some healthy recipes that we can tweak here at the Ag





Center and put our own spin on it when Café Lacumba reopens,” said Alexia Motley.

Keandrys Dalton also expressed her thankfulness for this opportunity. Dalton was able to participate in a study-abroad program to Brazil while attending Southern University.

“Once I graduated, I knew I wanted to work with students and show students the world,” she stated. “I’m glad our students will be able to experience this opportunity because it doesn’t come around every day.”

Although most of the students were excited to go on the international trip, the recommendation did come with some apprehension for one of the students.

“I was very hesitant when Mrs. Motley told me because I have a six-year-old and I’m a single parent,” said Evan Egana. “The thought of me going away from my daughter for two weeks almost made me have a full-blown panic attack.”

Egana said that after Motley reassured her that everything will be okay and her family told her that they would care for her daughter while she was away, she felt better about the opportunity.

“I just want her to know that anything is possible and if you have a dream you can do it,” stated Egana.

Additional topics of interest for the students included learning about Chinese culture, their agricultural practices, logistics and supply chain, trade, foreign policies, import and export system, international networking, and food/cooking culture.

During the conference, students engaged in cultural exchange and friendship-building, learned about Shandong’s history through lectures, participated in workshops covering topics such as e-commerce and traditional Chinese music, visited several landmarks such as the Great Wall of China, and participated in interactive activities such as E-Games and tree planting.

The CAHES group was a part of a 71-student delegation from universities throughout Louisiana participating in the conference.

Students from China will also have an opportunity to travel to the United States in the winter through this program.

The CAHES’ trip was sponsored and organized by the Shandong Travel and Airline, G2 Club, Stonebridge Golf Club, and Olde Oaks Golf Club.

# TEACHING

## College of Ag Student Kennedy Orr Sworn In As the Louisiana Board of Regents Student Board Member

Southern University College of Ag senior agricultural business major Kennedy Orr was sworn in as the student board member of the Louisiana Board of Regents on June 12, 2024.

The Chicago native is the Student Government Association President of Southern University's Baton Rouge campus.

Prior to being elected SGA President, Orr served as the SGA Vice President and Sophomore Class President. In 2022, she was selected as one of Glamour Magazine's College Women of the Year: HBCU Edition. She is also an 1890 USDA Land Grant Scholar, a coveted honor that promises full tuition, books, and room and board to HBCU students for up to four years.

Orr is a member of the Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS), Ag Business Students United Club, Chicago State of Mind Club, and a recent initiate of the Beta Psi Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated.

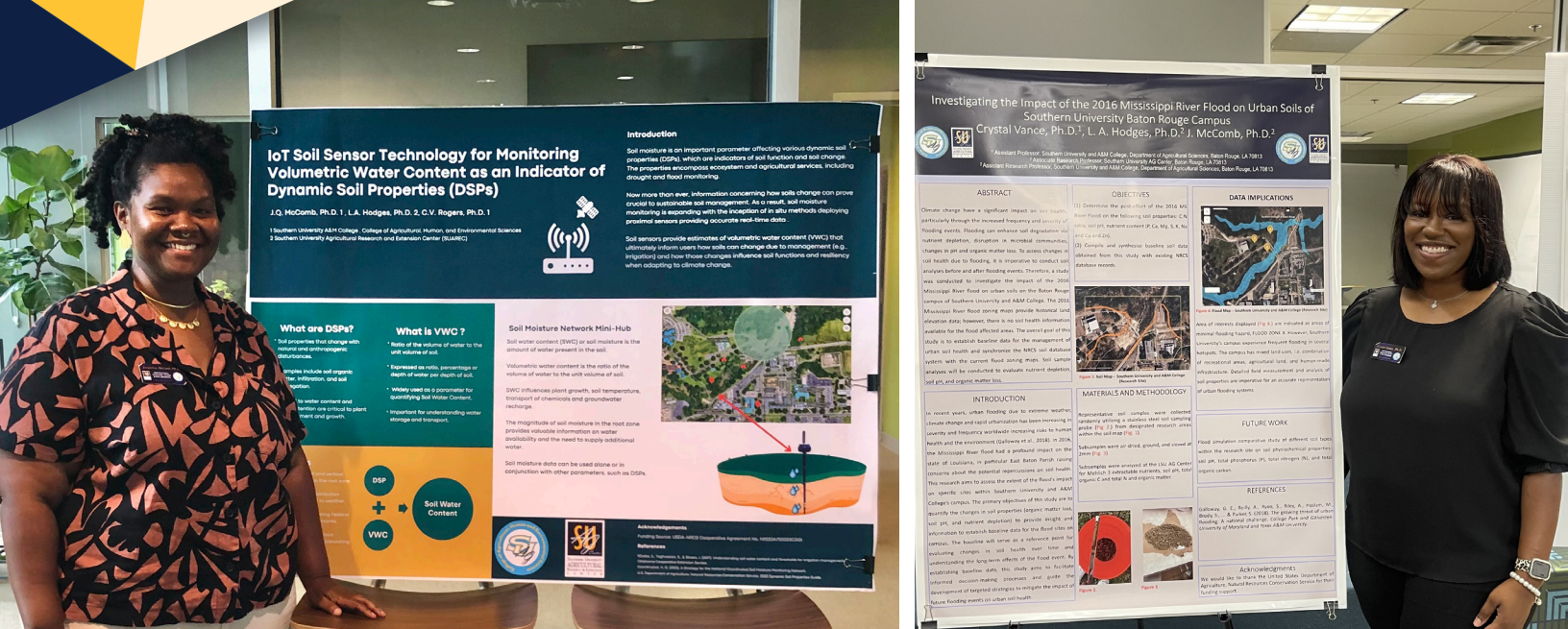
After graduation, Orr plans to pursue a career with the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service.

Her term on the Board of Regents Board will end on May 31, 2025.



**KENNEDY ORR**





# SU Ag Center and College of Ag Professors Presented Research Findings at the Southern Regional Cooperative Soil Survey Conference

SU Ag Center research professor Dr. Lashunda Hodges and CAHES faculty members Drs. Jacqueline McComb and Crystal Vance presented their collaborative research on soil health at the 2024 Regional Cooperative Soil Survey Conference. The conference was held at the Louisiana Immersive Technologies Enterprise (LITE) Center on the campus of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette May 21-25, 2024.

This year's regional conference theme was "Our Soils, Our Heritage." Conference events included local field tours, oral and poster presentations, and sessions from the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) leadership while providing an opportunity to connect with fellow soil scientists, re-evaluate activities of the National Cooperative Soil Survey, and learn about the soils and landscapes of South Louisiana.

Participation in the conference was a component of the \$150,000 award from the USDA-NRCS cooperative agreement to assess the soil health status of urban soils affected by flooding at the Southern University Baton Rouge campus.

For additional information on this research, contact Dr. Hodges at [lashunda\\_hodges@suagcenter.com](mailto:lashunda_hodges@suagcenter.com).





# TEACHING

## FAB LAB Students Invited to Essence Fests' Fashion Show

Fashion Design, Merchandising and Textiles (FDMT) students along with members of the Fashion and Business Laboratory (FAB LAB) attended the 50th Essence Festival of Culture held at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in New Orleans, LA on Friday, July 5, 2024.

Associate Professor and FAB Lab Program Director, Dr. Samii Kennedy Benson along with students Ja'Neice Allen, Kamryn Eugene, Amaya Johnson, Darlynn Marks, Aliyah Payne, and Olivia White were invited to attend the McDonald's Black and Positively Golden (B&PG) Fashion Show, "Change of Fashion" featuring one of the initiative's Change Leader Designer's Durrell Dupard.

The Black and Positively Golden (B&PG) Change of Fashion Program supports Black Fashion Designers and addresses their underrepresentation in the fashion industry. The program provides designers with mentorship, resources, and financial support to help them overcome systematic barriers and grow their brands.

In addition to attending the fashion show, the students had an exclusive meet and greet opportunity with Durrell Dupard and received a branded gift bag.

"My experience at Essence Fest as a student was electrifying," expressed Kamryn Eugene. "Being in a new space, surrounded by Black creatives, felt empowering and inspiring. The highlight was the McDonald's Fashion Show, which showcased incredible talent and style. The sense of community and celebration of Black excellence made the entire experience unforgettable and motivating," she added.

Fellow student Darlynn Marks echoed her experiences at the Essence Fashion Show.







“It was an inspiring experience to be part of such a dynamic event,” shared Marks. “The fashion show featured innovative designs and highlighted the latest trends, all while promoting positive change in the fashion industry. This vibrant showcase celebrated the dynamic intersection of culture, style, and community.”

“We are looking forward to forging an exciting partnership with The Black and Positively Golden (B&PG) Change of Fashion Program to provide more opportunities such as this, for aspiring fashion designers at Southern University,” stated Dr. Benson.

The FAB Lab program is sponsored by a USDA grant to foster entrepreneurship amongst fashion students. Fellows are selected through an extensive application process. As a part of the fellowship, the students receive a stipend, mentorship, and other opportunities through the program.

For additional information on the FAB Lab, contact Dr. Kennedy-Benson at [samii\\_kenedybenson@subr.edu](mailto:samii_kenedybenson@subr.edu).





# TEACHING



## SU College of Ag Holds FAB Lab Summer Camp For Beginning Sewists

The Southern University College of Ag held the first session of its Fashion and Business Laboratory (FAB Lab) Youth Leadership Program Level Up Summer Camp for beginning sewists July 8-12, 2024 in Pinkie Thrift Hall.

The camp, which was open to students aged 12 – 18, taught participants about textiles, fashion design, and apparel entrepreneurship.

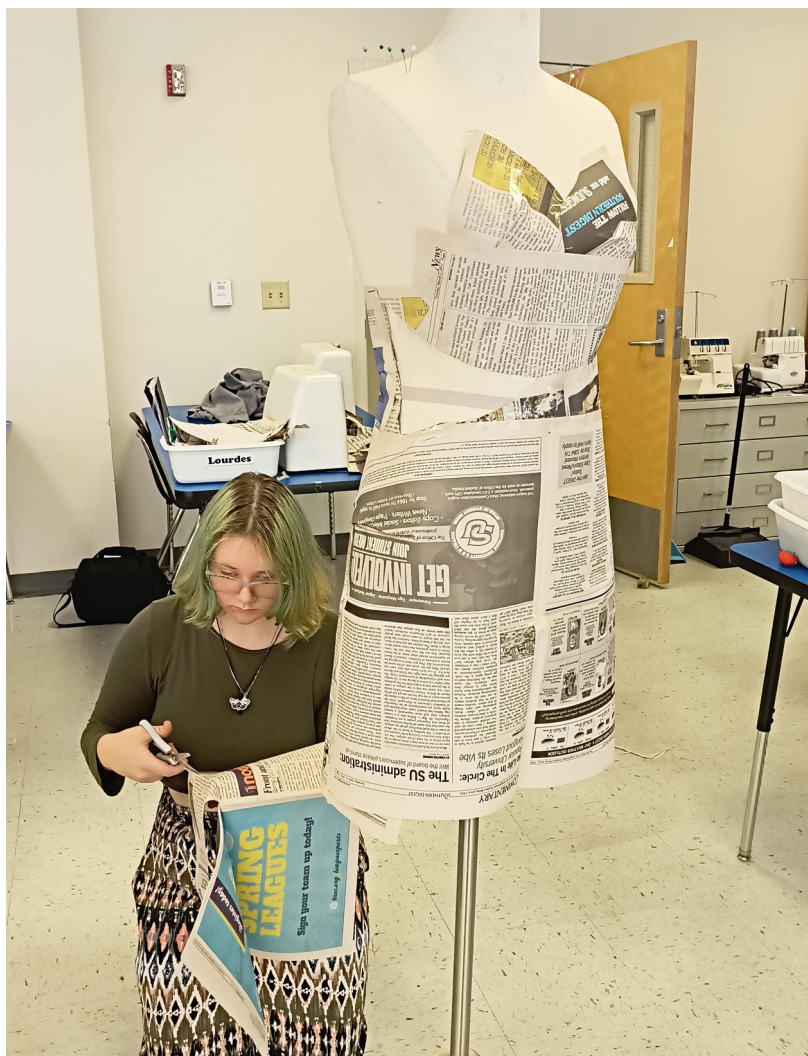
During the camp, participants created their own hats, skirts, and tote bags. They also designed

dressess made out of newspaper.

The camp ended with a fashion show where the participants modeled the items they made for their parents.

For additional information about the FAB Lab and its Youth Leadership Program's summer camp contact, Dr. Samii Kennedy Benson, Associate Professor of Apparel Merchandising and Textiles in the CAFCS at [samii\\_kennedybenson@subr.edu](mailto:samii_kennedybenson@subr.edu).







# TEACHING



## College of Ag Holds Quilting Design Summer Camp

The Southern University College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences (CAHES) Fashion Design, Merchandising and Textiles (FDMT) Program held its 2024 Quilt Design Summer Camp for youth aged 14-17 from June 17 –28, 2024.

The camp operated from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. (Monday – Friday) in Pinkie Thrift Hall on the campus of Southern University.

Eight participants learned everything from using a sewing machine to completing two quilt projects. Each student also created a pin cushion, a needle holder, a small pouch, a cushion cover, and a potholder.

This year's camp included a 'Quilt Story Time' session. During these sessions, quilters from Baton Rouge shared their stories, the spiritual significance of quilts, and various quilt-making techniques with the students. This gave the students a unique

opportunity to delve into the rich history and cultural importance of quilting.

On the last day of the camp, each participant competed in a friendly competition where they discussed their designs. After the competition, judges selected first, second, and third place winners. The 1st place winner was Sarah Lands, the 2nd place winner was No'Saj Broussard, and Arianna Judson took home 3rd place. Each winner received a different sewing machine based on their placement. The sewing machines were generously provided by the Propel Center.

At the end of the camp, all participants received a certification of completion for the 2024 Quilt Design Summer Camp.

For additional information on the Quilt Design Summer Camp contact, Dr. Jung-Im Seo at [jungim\\_seo@suagcenter.com](mailto:jungim_seo@suagcenter.com).







# EXTENSION

*SU Ag Center*

## SU Ag Center Extension Staff Attend Annual 1890 AEA Summer Meeting

The 1890 Association of Extension Administrators (AEA) held their summer meeting in Greensboro, North Carolina, June 24 – 28, 2024. In addition to the traditional AEA business, the meeting focused on bringing together selected 1890 Program Leaders in the areas of Agricultural and Natural Resources (ANR), 4-H Youth Development, Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS), and Community and Rural Development (CRD) to serve as a part of the newly formed Program Area Task Forces. The Task Forces were assigned and began setting regional program priorities, proposing expected program outcomes, and measurable indicators for the 1890 region.



The SU Ag Center Cooperative Extension Program Leadership Team members participating in the meeting were Dr. Raquel Ayles, Dr. Krystle Allen, Dr. Ashlyn Harrison, and Dr. De'Shoyn A. York.



# SARDI Holds a Homebuyer Workshop For Potential Homeowners

The SU Ag Center's Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development Institute (SARDI) and Chase Bank, hosted a Homebuying Workshop on June 11, 2024, at its' Opelousas location.

The workshop provided participants with information on purchasing a home from Bobby George, Chase Senior Home Lending Advisor, Kendrick Martin, Secondary Lending Specialist from Southwest Funding, and Lisa Day, Realtor and Investor with The CJ Group.

Attendees were also able to visit vendor booths that included information on loan types, funding availability, credit repair, and realtor services from Pelican Credit Union, Washington State Bank, REMAX, Geneva Financial, and Maison Title.

For additional information about SARDI's Homebuyer Workshop contact Stacey Nevills-Brady at, [stacey\\_nevills@suagcenter.com](mailto:stacey_nevills@suagcenter.com).



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**TUESDAY, JUNE 11  
6PM-7:30PM**

SARDI (SU Ag Center Location)  
1209 Diesi St., Opelousas, LA 70570

**REGISTER AT:**  
<https://bit.ly/4aekaNZ>

**FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT:**  
Stacey Nevills at 337-943-2410 or  
Email: [stacey.nevills@sus.edu](mailto:stacey.nevills@sus.edu)

## SARDI Holds Senior Day Out For St. Landry Parish

Fifty-five seniors from St. Landry Parish attended SARDI's Senior's Day Out on June 26, 2024. The event was held in partnership with the Opelousas Elderly Awareness Seminar (OEAS) at SARDI's Opelousas location.

During the event, vendors discussed medical benefits and Medicare fraud. SU Ag Center Extension agents also shared summer gardening and emergency preparedness tips. The event concluded with several games of bingo and door prizes.

This monthly initiative aims to inform seniors about health and safety resources supported by sponsors like Aetna Healthcare and United Way of Acadiana.

For additional information on SARDI's Senior Day Out contact Kayla Fontenot at, [kayla\\_fontenot@suagcenter.com](mailto:kayla_fontenot@suagcenter.com)

Sustainable Agriculture & Rural Development Institute  
(SARDI) & Opelousas Elderly Awareness Seminar  
PRESENTS

## Senior's Day Out

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26 11AM-1PM**  
SARDI SU Ag Center • 1209 Diesi St. Opelousas, LA 70570

- ✓ Health & Wellness Info
- ✓ Healthcare Vendors
- ✓ Free Food & Bingo
- ✓ And Much More!

**FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT:**  
For more information, contact Kayla Fontenot, MS  
at [kayla\\_fontenot@suagcenter.com](mailto:kayla_fontenot@suagcenter.com)  
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**Opelousas Elderly Awareness Seminar**



# EXTENSION

*Center*



## SU Ag Center and GOHSEP Held a Community Emergency Preparedness Event

The SU Ag Center's JAGriculture program and the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) held its "Real Preparedness for Real People" community emergency preparedness event on July 17, 2024 at 9 a.m. at the Jewel J. Newman Community Center in Baton Rouge, La.

"This was a community event especially tailored towards older adults and vulnerable populations," said Dr. Krystle Allen, SU Ag Center's Program Leader for Family and Human Sciences. "We wanted to ensure they were prepared for this predicted above-normal hurricane season," she added.

During the workshop, the Louisiana Office of the State Fire Marshall taught attendees the best way to prepare for power outages and how to use generators safely, and Ag Center Nutrition Specialist presented on Food Safety after a disaster and healthy alternatives for nonperishable goods.





Additional topics covered during the event included:

- Fortification Efforts to Homes/Property
- Financial Preparations (Emergency Savings and Financial Literacy)
- Insurance Education and Advocacy
- Maintaining Health, Social Services, and Educational Networks and Services

There was also a special presentation on FEMA's Individual Assistance Reform.

For additional information on this emergency preparedness event, contact Dr. Krystal Allen at, [krystal\\_washington@suagcenter.com](mailto:krystal_washington@suagcenter.com).





# RESEARCH

*SU Ag Center*



## The SU Ag Center Is Conducting a Research Project On Bagasse With Impact Fusion International, Inc.

The Southern University Ag Center has begun a research project on the use of bagasse as a cattle feed with Impact Fusion International Inc. (IFUS).

Bagasse is a waste byproduct of sugarcane. For years, cattle farmers have been trying to find an innovative way to feed it to cattle.

Since May 10, 2024, a team of researchers from the SU Ag Center has been studying why cattle are drawn to IFUS' Supreme Gold Plus (SGP+™) and sugarcane bagasse feed and how they are benefitting from it.

"Lignin was thought to be indigestible," said Dr. Pat Bagley, Director of Beef Cattle Research at the SU Ag Center. "What we think is happening here is the blend is making the lignin pull apart and become digestible, which we haven't seen happen before.

In a drought like we had last year, bagasse can be a valuable replacement for hay. We currently have about five million tons of leftover sugarcane bagasse, and we need to find a useful product for it", he added.

The feed also addresses environmental concerns. The accumulation of manure in one area over weeks has been studied to observe the reduction in odor and the reduction of flies.

The Ag Center's research team will continue to analyze the herd score of the cattle being feed IFUS' Supreme Gold Plus.

Information for this story was used from Impact Fusion press releases and the KTBS News Channel 3 story, <https://bit.ly/3YkDlxV>.



# CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

*Center*

## The Center of Excellence Served As a Co-Sponsor For The Well Woman: BR

On Saturday, May 4, 2024, The Maxine Firm hosted The Well Woman: Baton Rouge | Conversations Around Improved Wellness at the Valdry Center for Philanthropy on the Southern University campus. The event brought together over 100 women from surrounding areas, all eager to enhance their knowledge, behaviors, and skills on a variety of wellness topics at no cost to the attendees. The Well Woman: Baton Rouge provided a platform for women to engage in meaningful conversations, gain valuable insights, and build a supportive community focused on holistic wellness.

The event featured sessions on:

- Yoga & Mindfulness: Techniques for stress reduction and mental clarity.
- Balanced Nutrition: Tips for creating healthy, sustainable eating habits.
- Health Equity, Policy, and Advocacy - Addressing disparities in healthcare access and outcomes through policy advocacy.
- Black Maternal & Infant Health - Focused on improving outcomes for Black mothers and infants during pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum.
- Mental and Spiritual Wellness - Anxiety and Depression: Strategies for managing mental health challenges.
- Mental and Spiritual Wellness - Grief and Loss and Relationships: Support and resources for navigating difficult emotional experiences.
- Diabetes and Hypertension: Information on prevention, management, and treatment.
- Mastering the 15-Minute Face with a MUA: Quick and effective makeup techniques for busy women.

This impactful event was made possible by the support of our sponsors and community partners, including:

- The 1890 Center of Excellence for Nutrition, Health, Wellness, and Quality of Life
- State Representative Vanessa Caston LaFleur
- Louisiana Healthcare Connections
- The Nu Gamma Omega Educational and Charitable Foundation
- The Power Coalition
- Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome
- Sista Midwife Productions





# COMMUNICATIONS

*SU Ag Center*

## SU Ag Center's Podcast and Focus TV Show

Tune in to the latest episode of the SU Ag Center's Podcast as we speak with the students and faculty who recently traveled to China by visiting <https://www.suagcenter.com/page/su-ag-podcast>.

The SU Ag Center's Focus Show is now streaming on the Ag Center's YouTube Channel. It's a program built to inform, educate, and motivate people from all socioeconomic backgrounds. Tune in and gain knowledge about health, the environment, agriculture and much more. The Focus Show can also be seen statewide on public access channels throughout Louisiana. Check your local listings. This program is a production of the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center. Watch the show at, <https://youtu.be/dKLaAuCXiA?si=3qWJD2ikvYyNiGXt>.



*Hosted by:*  
**Dexter "Dex" Newman**

## 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.**





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