



SEEDS OF **SU**ccess!

MARCH
2026
VOLUME 24 | ISSUE 3

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



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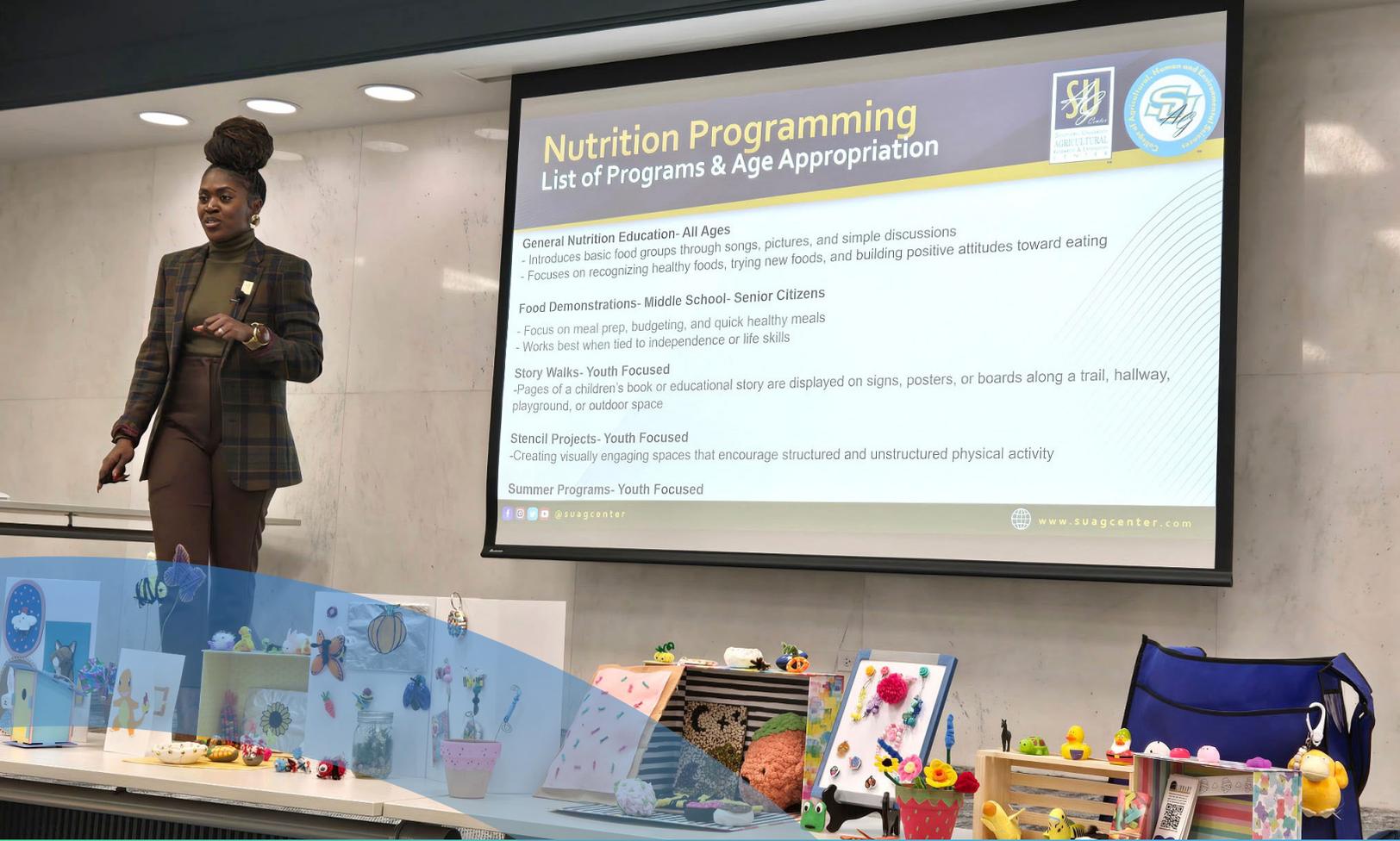


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Nutrition Programming
List of Programs & Age Appropriation

General Nutrition Education- All Ages
 - Introduces basic food groups through songs, pictures, and simple discussions
 - Focuses on recognizing healthy foods, trying new foods, and building positive attitudes toward eating

Food Demonstrations- Middle School- Senior Citizens
 - Focus on meal prep, budgeting, and quick healthy meals
 - Works best when tied to independence or life skills

Story Walks- Youth Focused
 -Pages of a children's book or educational story are displayed on signs, posters, or boards along a trail, hallway, playground, or outdoor space

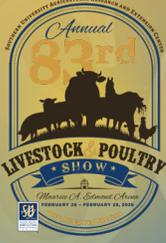
Stencil Projects- Youth Focused
 -Creating visually engaging spaces that encourage structured and unstructured physical activity

Summer Programs- Youth Focused

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SU Ag Center Holds Annual Livestock Appreciation Luncheon



The SU Ag Center held its annual Livestock Appreciation Luncheon on February 22, 2026 at the Maurice A. Edmond Arena Multi-Purpose Building.

The luncheon is held to honor individuals, organizations, and groups who have made an impact on the Livestock and Poultry Show. Honorees are presented with a Trail Blazer Award for their dedicated service to the show. The 2026 Trail Blazer Award Honorees were Odis S. Hill, Jason McCray, The Clyde Decuir Family, and Muse 3 Farms.

Odis S. Hill is a retired SU Ag Center Assistant Area Specialist for Morehouse Parish in the Agriculture and Natural Research unit. He dedicated many years of service to agriculture and the farming community.

Throughout his career, he was a strong advocate for small farmers in Morehouse Parish and the surrounding areas. Hill faithfully served as a ring man in the beef show ring and played a vital role in supporting youth livestock exhibitors and strengthening agricultural education in the region.





Jason McCray, a retired agriculture teacher from West Feliciana Parish, has been a longtime supporter of youth livestock programs. For many years, he brought students to participate in the show and was instrumental in encouraging involvement in the National FFA Organization, particularly helping students attend the Area IV FFA Convention. McCray has also conducted several educational clinics, helping prepare students for success both in and out of the show ring.

The Clyde Decuir Family holds a special place in the history of the Southern University Livestock Program as the first family to process animals for the show. Their legacy of service and dedication continues today, as their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren remain actively involved with the Southern University Livestock Program, demonstrating a true multi-generational commitment to agriculture.

Muse 3 Farms is a family-operated farm that has consistently supported the Southern University Livestock Program. The brothers of Muse 3 Farms are currently active participants in the show loan program, working closely with students in St. Helena Parish. Their ongoing mentorship and support helps ensure students have access to quality livestock and meaningful agricultural experiences.

The Southern University Ag Center extends a heart-felt thank you to each honoree for their years of service and dedication to the growth of the Southern University Ag Center's annual Livestock and Poultry Show.



The Dietetic Interns and Jump Start Your Heart Gala

The Jump Start Your Heart Gala, held on February 7, 2026, provided Southern University Dietetic Interns with the opportunity to serve as Educational Presenters while showcasing the College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences' strong commitment to community engagement, health promotion, and experiential learning. During the event, the interns provided interactive nutrition education focused on heart health, including practical strategies for reducing sodium intake, choosing heart-healthy fats, increasing fruit and vegetable consumption, and understanding the role of balanced meals in preventing chronic disease. Community opportunities allow dietetic interns to apply classroom knowledge in real-world settings while building confidence as future nutrition professionals and community leaders. Heart disease remains one of the leading causes of death in the United States and disproportionately affects historically marginalized communities due to a combination of social determinants of health, access barriers, and lifestyle-related risk factors. Nutrition plays a critical role in both prevention and management, underscoring the importance of education and early intervention. By participating in the gala, Southern University interns helped bridge the gap between scientific knowledge and everyday practice, empowering attendees with realistic, culturally relevant approaches to improving their health. The dietetic interns' engagement serves as a powerful reminder that education, service, and community partnership are central to creating healthier futures for all.





SU College of Ag's BAYOU Summer Program Now Accepting Applications

Applications are now open for the Southern University College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences (CAHES) Beginning Agricultural Youth Opportunities Unlimited (BAYOU) Summer Program.

The program targets rising high school seniors who have completed 11th grade and graduating seniors (incoming college freshmen) and provides first-hand knowledge about career opportunities in Agriculture, Human and Environmental Sciences and related disciplines.

The 2026 BAYOU Summer Program will be held May 31 – June 5, 2026 on the Southern University campus. Participants will take part in departmental tours, industry excursions, immersion in a collegiate classroom environment, and laboratory experience in the form of a short-term research project.



HOW TO APPLY:

To apply to the program, applicants must:

- Have completed the 11th grade with a min. GPA of 2.5. Graduating seniors who are interested in agricultural, family and consumer sciences, business, or the natural sciences or High School GPA of 2.5 or greater, and have an ACT (SAT equivalent) composite score of 18 and above, or rank in the top 50% of high school graduation class AND require no more than ONE remedial course.
- Submit high school transcript
- Submit ACT/SAT scores (composite 18 or SAT equivalent) or above
- 300-500 word essay about your career goals and aspirations (see application for details)

The deadline to apply is **April 1, 2026**.

To apply visit: <https://bit.ly/4s91rwn>

For additional information contact:

bayou@suagcenter.com



From Curiosity to Careers: St. Helena STEAM Expo Prepares Students for Tomorrow's Workforce



The St. Helena STEAM Expo was held on February 4, 2026 at the St. Helena College and Career Academy, bringing together students, educators, and community partners for a day of hands-on, exploratory learning focused on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts/Agriculture, and Math (STEAM).

Learners from St. Helena Early Learning Center, St. Helena Arts and Technology Academy, and St. Helena College and Career Academy participated in the Expo, engaging in interactive activities designed to encourage critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. The event provided students with an opportunity to use their brains in a fun, engaging setting outside of the traditional classroom, allowing them to explore STEAM concepts through experiential learning.

STEAM disciplines play an increasingly important role in today's workforce, making early and intentional exposure essential. Introducing youth to these fields helps strengthen their learning experiences while broadening their future possibilities, including pathways to careers they may not have previously considered. Events such as the St. Helena STEAM Expo allow students to see themselves in STEAM spaces and begin envisioning how these skills translate beyond the classroom.

The SU Ag Center, Tri Parish STEAM Initiative, and St. Helena Parish School District presents

ST. HELENA PARISH

STEAM

EXPO

SCIENCE • TECHNOLOGY • ENGINEERING • ARTS/AGRICULTURE • MATH

Join us for a hands-on morning of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math! The STEAM Expo will feature a variety of vendors providing hands-on STEAM activities for students in grades K-12. Students from St. Helena Early Learning Center, St. Helena Arts and Technology Academy, and St. Helena College and Career Academy will participate and engage with the activities.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 4 | 9 AM - 12 PM
 St. Helena College and Career Academy
 14340 LA-37, Greensburg, LA 70441

FREE ADMISSION • GRADES K-12
 (Parent/guardian attendance encouraged.)

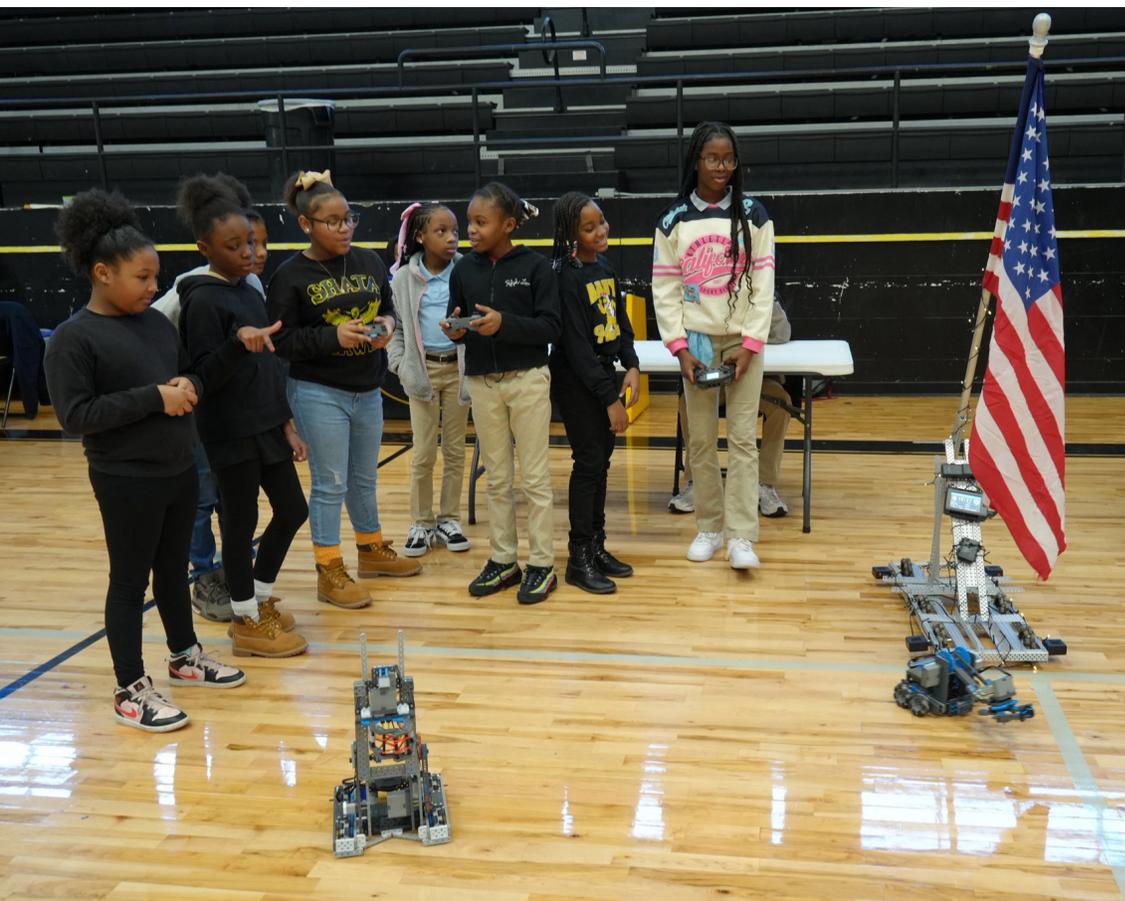
FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT:
 Dr. Charity Schaffer: charity_schaffer@suagcenter.com

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Students also had the opportunity to interact with community and industry partners, including the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) and the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO). These interactions helped learners connect classroom concepts to real-world applications in environmental science, research, and advanced technology, reinforcing the relevance of STEAM education beyond the school setting.



The Expo also served as a precursor to a broader vision for STEAM education within St. Helena Parish. This long-term effort seeks to expand opportunities for students to deepen their knowledge and potentially earn certifications in high-demand STEAM fields, including 3-D printing, Artificial Intelligence, FAA Part 107 drone certification, and other emerging technologies. This vision will be advanced through the Tri-Parish STEAM Initiative, a collaborative partnership between the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center's Youth Development Agent Dr. Charity Schaffer and Mrs. Taryn Spikes-Webb of the Washington Parish STEM and Innovative Learning Center. The initiative serves St. Helena, Tangipahoa, and Washington Parishes and is designed to positively impact youth by equipping them with practical, industry-relevant skills that support workforce readiness immediately upon high school graduation.



The St. Helena STEAM Expo was made possible through a strong partnership with the St. Helena Parish School District and community collaborators committed to expanding meaningful learning opportunities for students. Through this collaborative effort, the Expo was brought to life and proved to be a massive success, reinforcing the value of partnerships in preparing youth for the future workforce.

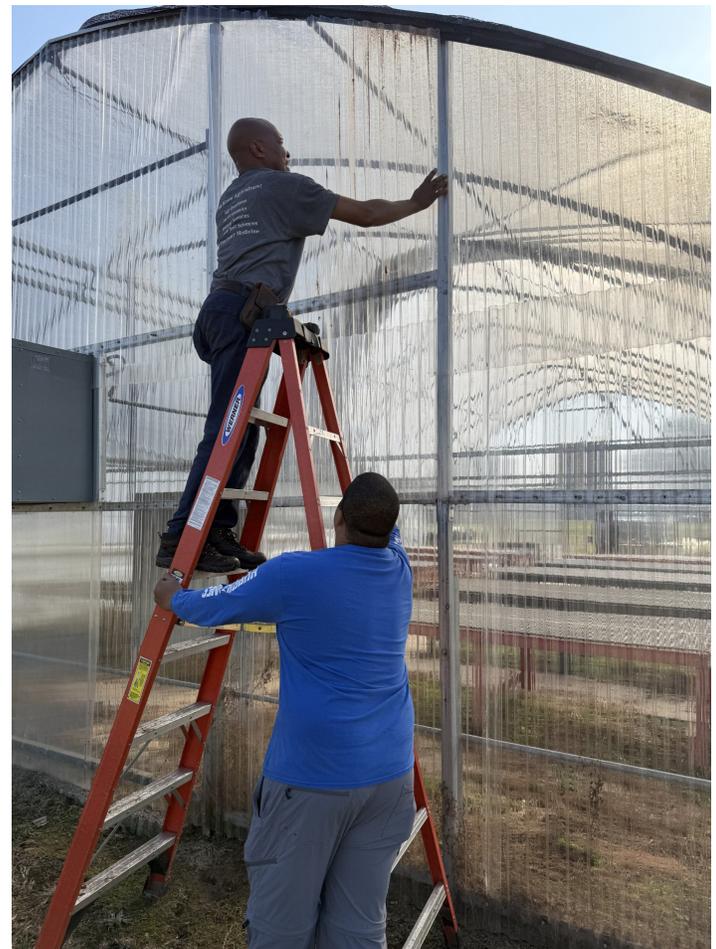


SARDI Revitalizes the Greenhouse at North Central High School

The Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development Institute (SARDI) assisted North Central High School with revitalizing its greenhouse. Over time, the greenhouse had become inoperable due to weather damage.

Ahead of the spring planting season, agricultural students at the school worked with Antonio Harris, Director of SARDI, to reassemble the greenhouse on February 13, 2026. Harris also discussed different aspects of agriculture and career opportunities during the visit. With the greenhouse fully operational, North Central can now prepare for a spring plant sale and raised box gardening.

SARDI is a satellite campus of the Southern University Agricultural Research & Extension Center located in Opelousas, LA. For additional information on SARDI's programs visit, <https://www.suagcenter.com/cooperative-extension/sardi/welcome-to-sardi>.





SARDI Launches Grow, Eat, Move (G.E.M.) Program for Seniors in St. Landry Parish



SARDI hosted the first session of the Grow, Eat, Move (G.E.M.) Program on February 11, 2026, at its office in Opelousas, La. The program teaches participants how to grow vegetables, prepare healthy meals, and a variety of physical activities twice a month.

During the session, participants learned about stretching and range of motion, as well as growing butter lettuce and tasting chicken salad. The program will be held on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month and aims to help participants improve their overall health outcomes.

The program is facilitated by SARDI staff members Kayla Fontenot, Assistant Area Agent for St. Landry Parish and Stacey Nevills, Extension Educator for St. Landry and Evangeline Parishes. For additional information on the G.E.M. Program contact the SARDI Office at, 337-943-1598.





SU and LSU Ag Center's Connect with Librarians During State Library Summit

Si-Arah Jones, Assistant Specialist for Nutrition at the SU Ag Center and Dr. Vadel Shivers with the LSU AgCenter partnered to present at the State Library's Summer Reading Workshop on February 3, 2026. The workshop was part of a state-wide Librarian Summit.

During the presentation, Jones and Dr. Shivers shared program ideas aligned with the 2026 theme "Plant a Seed, Read." The presentation highlighted hands-on agricultural education opportunities offered by both Ag Centers to parish libraries for children and teens, such as food demonstrations. Librarians were also able to experience how a Story Walk is conducted as an interactive way to promote literacy, movement, and connection to nature.

Both Ag Centers look forward to cultivating meaningful partnerships that continue to support youth learning and community engagement across Louisiana.



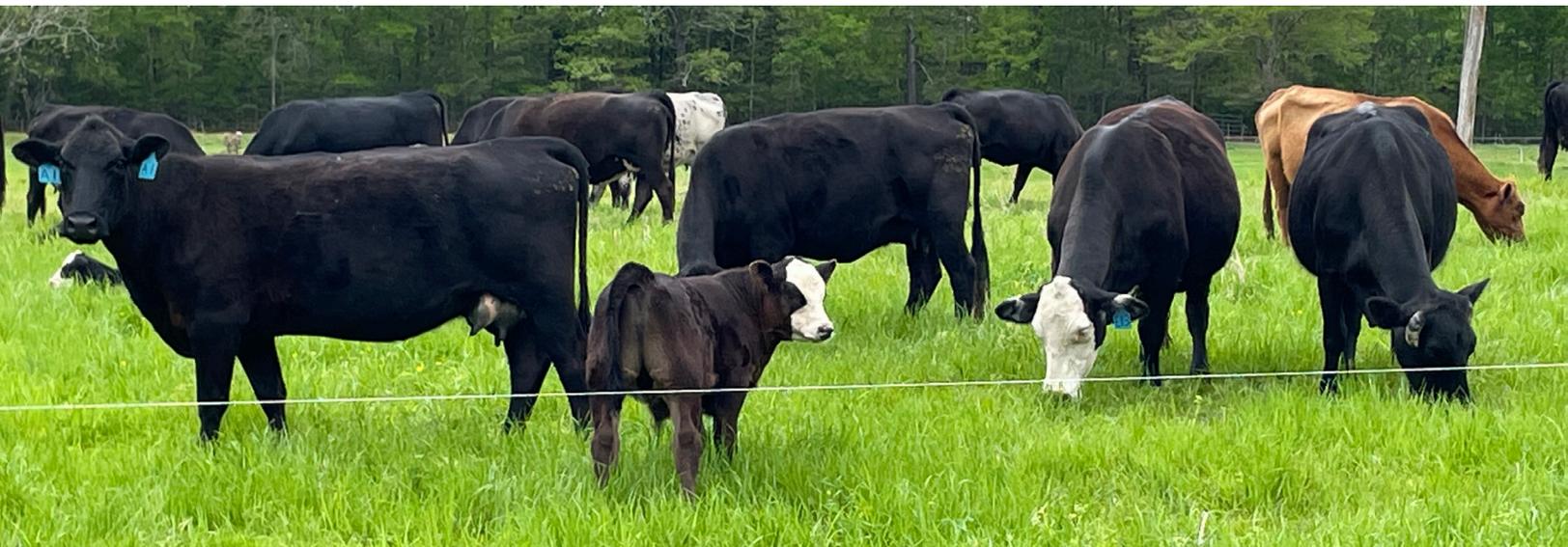


The Southern University Ag Center is Using AI to Chart the Future of Smart Ranching Innovations



The Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center is leading the way in Smart Ranching innovation through its Southern University Natural (SUN) Beef Program, which now manages the first beef herd in the United States to adopt electronic rumen bolus technology at herd scale.

Phase I has produced strong data demonstrating how continuous internal monitoring can transform livestock production. The e-bolus system tracks internal temperature, rumen activity, hydration, stress levels, calving progression, and breeding readiness in real time, allowing earlier veterinary intervention, reduced mortality, and improved herd performance. Precision deworming research has further shown that bolus linked alerts improve treatment timing while reducing drug use and slowing resistance. Ongoing AI modeling work is enhancing early disease prediction, calving risk identification, and feed efficiency assessments to support data driven herd management.





The next phase of Smart Ranching Technology will expand sensor based livestock intelligence by incorporating AI vision systems for weight estimation, lameness detection, and behavior analysis, along with autonomous feeder systems and autonomous vehicles to reduce labor requirements and increase operational efficiency. Additionally, satellite enabled ear tags with geolocation tracking and real time mineral status monitoring will provide continuous insight into grazing patterns, pasture use, and nutrient intake.

Together, these innovations form a fully integrated precision livestock platform that improves food security, enhances animal welfare, and strengthens production capacity. This work positions the Southern University Ag Center as a global partner for countries seeking modern, scalable livestock systems that support beef, dairy, small ruminant, and mixed species agriculture across diverse environments.

For additional information on the SU Ag Center's smart ranching research contact Mallory Tate, DVM, Research Assistant Professor and Attending Veterinarian, at mallory_tate@suagcenter.com.



Staff Spotlight: Keandrys Dalton Selected as MANRRS 40 Under 40 Honoree

Keandrys M. Dalton, Student Support Coordinator at the SU College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences (CAHES) has been selected as a national honoree for the prestigious Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS) 40 Under 40: Honoring the Next Generation of Leaders recognition.

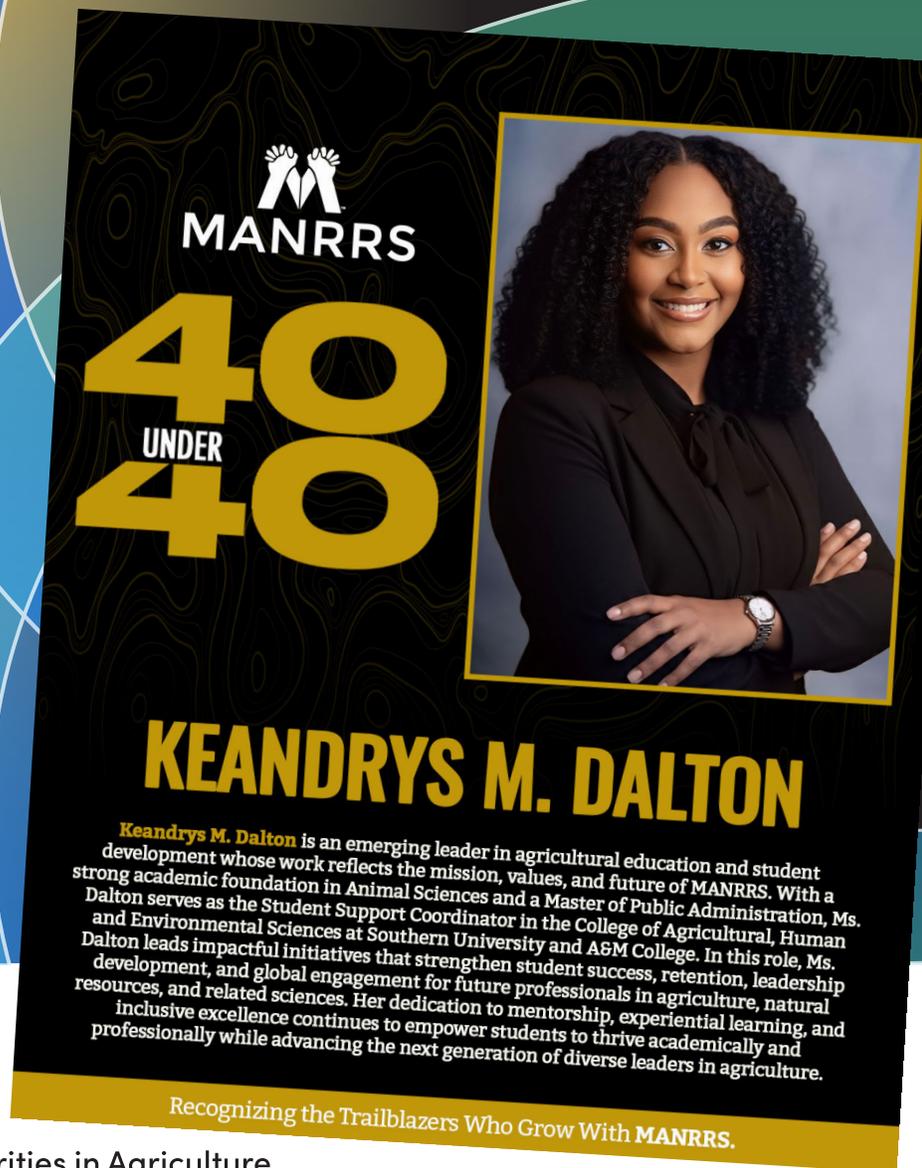
The MANRRS 40 Under 40 honors emerging changemakers and young professionals under the age of 40 who are redefining excellence across agriculture, natural resources, and related sciences.

Dalton's selection reflects her exceptional advancement in student success, retention, mentorship, leadership development, and global engagement for future professionals in agriculture and related sciences. In her role within CAHES, she leads initiatives that empower students to thrive academically and professionally while strengthening pathways into agricultural careers.

With a strong academic foundation in Agricultural Sciences, with a concentration in Animal Science, and a Master of Public Administration, Dalton exemplifies the mission of Southern University by cultivating opportunities that support inclusive excellence and workforce development in agriculture and natural resources.

"We are incredibly proud of Keandrys and this well-deserved national recognition," said CAHES leadership. "Her dedication to student development and her commitment to preparing the next generation of leaders reflects the very best of CAHES."

Dalton will be formally recognized at the MANRRS National Conference in Dallas, Texas, on April 10, 2026.





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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