

# ARD UPdates

ASSOCIATION OF 1890 RESEARCH DIRECTORS

September 2021, Vol. 12, Issue 9



## Message from the Chair

Dr. Chandra Reddy

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As we welcome students back on our campuses for the fall semester, our 'academic' summer is over. I hope your summer has been safe despite the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 and its variants are still altering the landscape of the 1890 land-grant universities; however, our commitment to providing in-person instruction and service to our students

and other key constituents is paramount. On-line and hybrid instruction will continue to be important components of our educational portfolio, but less than during the last academic year. Student health remains a major concern as well as the health and safety of persons working in our research labs.

To keep students, faculty, and staff healthy as we return to our campuses, the 1890s will continue to have extensive health and safety measures in place such as plexiglass barriers, mandatory masks, cleaning protocols, maintaining social distance and reduced occupancy in on-campus housing and classrooms. COVID-19 tests and contact tracing will continue.

As I mentioned in several columns last year, I encourage you to protect yourself, your family, our students and colleagues by getting vaccinated now. The 1890 administrators are committed to providing quality research, education and Extension services while ensuring the safety of our students, faculty and staff. Let's embrace the new normal together and continue to be vigilant about practicing safety as we work together to make 2021-22 a very productive year.

I would like to thank the research directors, research scientists and staff members for their hard work, dedication and flexibility as we adapted to COVID-19 and its impact on our campuses. The 2020-21 academic year presented new opportunities and challenges, and as the 1890s do, we rose to the occasion. We are grateful for your commitment and contributions to that success.

Eighteen months ago, we began the process to face one of the most disruptive events in human recent history – the COVID-19 global pandemic. We must

See Reddy on Page 8

## NIFA reporting updates

The NIFA Reporting System (NRS) team is proud to announce a successful release to the application and would like to highlight the following updates:

- **Improved user experience** – The NRS team made several updates that improve the experience for updating and managing draft research projects. Members will notice a refresh action after each save and will remain on the page instead of being navigated out to the projects dashboard. Members can then make further changes, submit for organizational review, or use a new “cancel” button, enabling them to navigate at will outside of their project page or remain for additional edits. Additionally, the team has made several improvements to the editing feature, providing increased ease in application navigation.
- **Saving classification data** – The NRS team resolved a previously identified bug in saving classification data and all entries of classification data will now be saved.
- **Project director requirement** – NRS will now require project director selection when a project is added.
- **Landing page message** – Users will now see a new landing page message once they've successfully created their eAuthentication account.

In future notifications, we will announce upcoming features to the NRS. For example, an upcoming release will include:

- **Export of project information** – The NRS team is nearing completion of the export feature. Users will be able to export individual project and program entries and export a spreadsheet of all projects and programs associated with their LGU, enabling users to more easily share project and program information for peer review and administrative processing.

Our team will keep LGU users updated as we continue to develop the NRS. Please be on the lookout for further announcements and instructions. For any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to [pow@usda.gov](mailto:pow@usda.gov). Please note that the NRS supports only Hatch, Hatch Multistate, Evans-Allen, Smith-Lever and 1890 Extension programs at this time.

*NIFA Reporting System: eAuthentication: <https://www.eauth.usda.gov/eauth/hl/usda/home>*

*For additional information, please contact: [Dr. Lynn Khadiagala](#); Planning and Program Evaluation Lead; Planning, Accountability, and Reporting Staff; NIFA; USDA; Mobile: 202.841.0948;*





Congress approved the Evans-Allen Act of 1977 to provide capacity funding for food and agricultural research at the 1890 land-grant universities and Tuskegee University (the 1890 Institutions) similar to that provided to the 1862 universities under the Hatch Act of 1887. Research conducted under the Evans-Allen Program has led to hundreds of scientific breakthroughs of benefit to both the unique stakeholders of the 1890 institutions and the nation as a whole. The Evans-Allen Program has been extremely important in allowing the 1890 institutions to attract top-notch scientists to their campuses, conduct high-quality and innovative research and become more fully integrated within the land-grant system.

Below are examples of impacts from the 1890 research program submitted by scientists at Lincoln University of Missouri.

## Lincoln examines rapid detection of foodborne illnesses

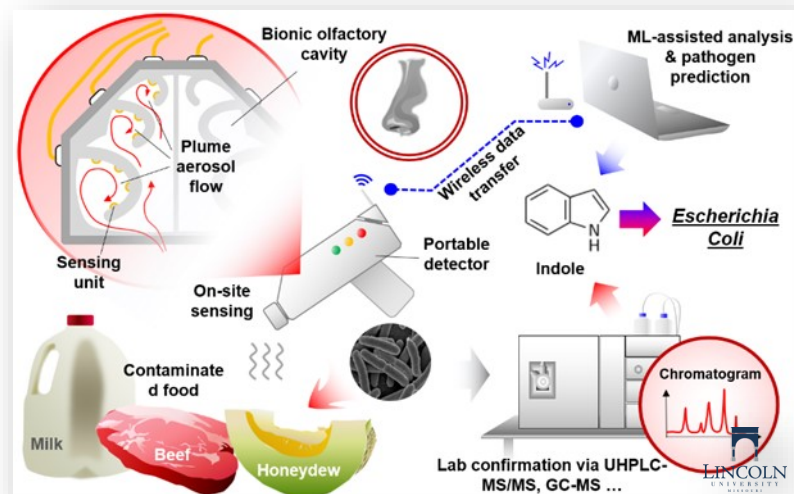
Increasing consumption of high-nutrient and fresh-cut foods have greatly promoted life quality and improved human health, but also increased the risks of foodborne pathogen-related diseases. Food processing, such as compromised cold-chain logistics, complex distribution channels and varied storage methods, etc., may result in superimposed food safety hazards.

In Missouri and other states, food safety has become an increasingly severe problem. Since February 2020, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (Missouri DHSS) has issued more than 70 food recalls, mainly related to foodborne pathogens such as *Listeria*, *Salmonella*, *Escherichia coli*, *Cyclospora*, mold and so on. Many types of foods were involved, including fresh fruits (peaches, watermelons, etc.), vegetables (onions, cabbage, carrots, etc.), and many processed foods such as salads, cheese sauce, frozen cooked shrimp, instant chicken and so on. The current COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated this situation, as seen in a higher frequency of foodborne illnesses outbreaks recently in several states.

The timely detection of potential food hazards is inherently challenging, let alone under the impact of COVID. Unfortunately, the detection of foodborne pathogens still heavily relies on low-efficiency traditional methods, which may cost days or even weeks to land on a reliable result, and sometimes even too late to prevent the contaminated food from being consumed by the public. Thus, there is an urgent need for rapid detection methods to monitor food safety issues with affordability and high efficiency.

In collaboration with faculties at Missouri University of Science and Technology (Missouri S&T), Dr. Qingbo (Roger) Yang, assistant professor of analytical chemistry, works on a complete set of solutions, including:

- design and fabricate a portable, multi-metric olfactory sensor system for on-site detection of foodborne pathogens via small



See Foodborne Illnesses on Page 4

## Help on the way for small-scale poultry producers

Interest in small-scale poultry production using non-commercial genotypes and alternative management systems has grown over the last several years, alongside increasing interest in



local food movements and sustainable farming practices. According to the USDA 2017 Census of Agriculture, there are 227,000 farms in the United States with between one and 399 laying hens. In Missouri, about 8,000 farms fit this criterion and these flocks represent about 97% of the chickens in the state.

The backyard poultry movement has been driven by consumer concerns about food quality, safety and freshness, animal welfare and sustainability. However, studies suggest small-flock owners lack critical knowledge of nutrition, management and zoonotic diseases. Unfortunately, little published data is available to support small-flock producers because poultry research typically focuses on commercial production. Therefore, these small producers often turn to their peers and online forums/blogs for information, but this information may not hold up to scientific scrutiny. Ultimately, the lack of knowledge among small poultry keepers may lead to issues with food safety, animal welfare, and disease control.

Lincoln University of Missouri's poultry research and extension program, led by Dr. Tatijana Fisher, was established to

See Small-scale poultry producers on page 4

# Efforts to secure facility funding continues

The Agricultural Research Infrastructure Advocacy (ARIA) is a bold initiative by the Experiment Station Section, endorsed by APLU, to request that Congress support an agricultural research infrastructure investment of at least \$11.5 billion at U.S. colleges of agriculture in any future federal infrastructure initiatives.

Specifically, ESS is urging funding over a five year period for the [Research Facilities Act \(Act\)](#), administered by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). The Act authorizes an agriculture- and food-focused research infrastructure program for facility construction, alteration, acquisition, modernization, renovation or remodeling. ESS seeks to ensure the Secretary of Agriculture has the authority to waive matching requirements, and consider geographic and equity in program administration.

As a result of our collective efforts, below is a synopsis of the current agricultural research infrastructure activities:

The ARIA Advisory Committee (Moses T. Kairo, Chair; Thomas Coon, PBD chair; Glenda Humiston, BLC chair; Vernie Hubert and Hunt Shipman, Cornerstone; Sue Petersen, CGA; Doug Steele and Caron Gala, APLU; and Jeff Jacobsen and Alton Thompson, Regional Research executive directors; and Caroline Henny, ECOP executive director) continue to meet on a regular basis to develop and implement strategies and tactics to chart a path forward to significantly increase the probability that ESS/ESCOP will obtain these critically necessary funds. Our current focus is working closely with the House and Senate Agriculture committees and champions to garner funding for the Research Facilities Act for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

We encourage you to continue to reach out to your congressional delegations with the following points:

- As Congress proceeds with drafting legislation consistent with the instructions of the recently passed budget resolution, the APLU writes in support of at least \$11.5 billion investment in agricultural facilities at capacity eligible institutions, including 1862, 1890 and 1994 institutions, and non-land grant colleges of agriculture via the [Research Facilities Act \(RFA\)](#) through the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). Please use the letter sent earlier [here](#). Please note that it is not enough to just say ‘agricultural research facilities’, it is important to be specific about supporting the RFA/ NIFA.
- In March a report indicated that 69% of the buildings at U.S. colleges and schools of agriculture are at the end of their useful life. The report estimated the deferred maintenance backlog at colleges of agriculture to be least \$11.5 billion, with a total replacement cost of \$38.1 billion.
- It is critical to make contact early next week if possible, before the Sept. 10 mark-up in the House Agriculture Committee.
- ESS leadership is working closely with APLU Office of

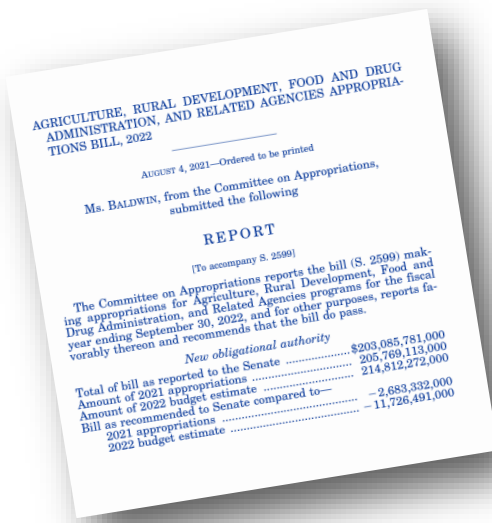
Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR), APLU Council of Governmental Affairs (APLU CGA), and Cornerstone to engage stakeholders at the national level.

Additionally, members of Congress have undertaken the following actions:

- Aug. 11, 2021 - The Senate passed a \$3.5 trillion budget resolution with reconciliation instructions that include ‘[agricultural climate research and research infrastructure](#)’. This is an important milestone in the campaign.
- Aug. 5, 2021 - Senators Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii), Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Angus King (I-Maine), Tina Smith (D-Minn.), Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) and Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) introduced the AG RESEARCH Act ([S. 2636](#)) to address the multi-billion-dollar maintenance backlog and modernization needs at various agricultural research facilities. We urge you to work with your government affairs representatives to gauge the interest in your delegation for additional co-sponsorship. Senate staff that you may directly contact are: [Jen Burks](#) (Hirono) and [Brian Werner](#) (Klobuchar).
  - The bill amends the Research Facilities Act (RFA) to provide the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) with a grant program that addresses deferred maintenance at schools of agriculture. It also provides the Secretary with explicit authority to waive the matching requirement, encourages the Secretary to ensure that funds are equitably distributed, and extends the “such sums as necessary” authorization of appropriations in the RFA to 2026.
- Aug. 4, 2021 -The Senate Appropriations Committee voted to advance S. 2599, the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2022. The [report](#) includes language on the ARIA request, stating:
  - “Inadequate Infrastructure at Colleges of Agriculture: The Committee notes that a recent assessment of the infrastructure at the nation’s colleges and schools of agriculture shows that nearly 70% of the buildings are at the end of their useful life and that the cost of deferred maintenance is estimated to be \$11.5 billion with a replacement value of \$38.1 billion. In future budget requests, the Committee directs the Administration to demonstrate a commitment to this critical research infrastructure and maintenance backlog to ensure that America remains a global leader in agricultural production, research, and education.”



DR. MOSES KAIRO



# NIFA fills three leadership posts

This month, NIFA welcomed three new leaders that are familiar to many of our stakeholders.

**VENU (KAL) KALAVACHARLA** is the new NIFA Deputy Director for the Institute of Youth, Family and Community. Kalvacharla is joining the agency from Delaware State University where he served as associate dean for research and professor of plant molecular genetics and epigenomics in the College of Agriculture, Science and Technology. Since 2009, he also served as the founding director of the Center for Integrated Biological and Environmental Research (CIBER) at DSU.

Kalavacharla obtained his bachelor's degree in agricultural Sciences from Dr. Punjabrao Deshmukh Krishi Vidyapeeth (Agricultural University), India; master's degree in plant science (research in brassica genetics, plant pathology) from the University of Manitoba, and doctorate in plant science from North Dakota State University (research in dry bean molecular genetics, plant pathology). He then worked as a post-doctoral research associate in the multi-institution collaborative U.S Wheat EST Genomics Project (research on wheat EST mapping, wheat scab, and developmental biology).

His passion for developing and mentoring students for careers in the agricultural science will be a valuable asset to the Institute.

**ROBERT GODFREY** is now the director of the Division of Animal Systems in the NIFA Institute of Food Production and Sustainability. He joins NIFA from the University of the Virgin Islands on St. Croix, where he was the associate director of the Agricultural Experiment Station.

Godfrey earned a bachelor's degree in animal science and Industry at Kansas State University, and a master's and doctorate in reproductive physiology at Texas A&M University. He was a post-doctoral research affiliate at the USDA ARS Meat Animal Research Center in Clay Center, Neb. later moved to the Cincinnati Zoo as Rhinoceros Research Coordinator at the Center for Reproduction of Endangered Wildlife. He returned to Texas A&M where he was a research associate in the Department of Veterinary Anatomy and Public Health, College of Veterinary Medicine, before joining UVI.

His expertise in animal science, experience working in the land-grant university system and numerous leadership roles on APLU boards representing both the South-



V. KALAVACHARLA, R. GODFREY, J. STULL

ern Region and Insular Institutions will strengthen the Animal Systems Division programs and science leadership.

**JOSH STULL** rejoined NIFA as the Stakeholder Affairs officer. Bringing almost 20 years of federal food and agriculture experience to NIFA, he will be working closely as a liaison with NIFA stakeholders across the nation to ensure a strong connection to agency programs and opportunities. He will also be acting legislative and policy officer.

Stull returned to the agency after most recently serving as the vice president for Policy and Analysis at the Supporters of Agricultural Research (SoAR) Foundation. Prior to his service at SoAR, he was the NIFA Congressional and Stakeholder Affairs officer and acting communications director.

## Foodborne illnesses ... from page 2

- molecule biomarkers,
- develop high-throughput analytical method for these biomarkers via the state-of-the-art ultra-high performance liquid chromatography and tandem mass spectrometry (UHPLC-MS/MS) and gas chromatography- tandem mass spectrometry (GC-MS/MS) to further scrutinize suspicious food samples, and
- integration of machine learning (ML) algorithms to intelligently enhance the efficiency of the detection method. In addition, a database of molecular fingerprints of foodborne pathogens will

be established to provide insights into the outbreak of foodborne diseases.

This on-going project aims to provide a rapid, sustainable, and cost-effective detection strategy for preventing and controlling foodborne disease outbreaks and safeguard consumers from food contamination nationwide.

**For more information, contact:** Dr. *Quinbo (Roger) Yang*: [yangq@lincolnu.edu](mailto:yangq@lincolnu.edu) or (573) 681-5036. *This project was supported by the Evans-Allen Program of the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).*

## Small-scale poultry producers ... from page 2

develop and disseminate vital information for small-scale poultry producers. The program goals are to:

- 1) identify common production practices and challenges faced by small-flock poultry producers,
- 2) evaluate the suitability of dual-purpose heritage breed chickens for small-scale, pasture-based egg and meat production, and
- 3) evaluate the use of mobile and day-range pastured poultry models for year-round egg production.

Together, this information will help small-flock producers improve the health and welfare of their birds and make management decisions regarding the profitability and sustainability of using heritage breeds in pastured poultry production systems.

**For more information, contact:** Dr. *Tatijana Fisher*: [fishert@lincolnu.edu](mailto:fishert@lincolnu.edu) or (573) 681-5524. *This project was supported by the Evans-Allen Program of the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).*



## 1890 CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

In the 2018 Farm Bill, the Congress and the Administration supported the creation of Centers of Excellence across the 1890 Research, Extension and Education System. Specifically, the Farm Bill listed six centers and authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to allocate \$10 million each year to implement at least three of the six centers:

- Student Success and Workforce Development
- Global Food Security and Defense
- Health, Wellness and Quality of Life
- Farming System, Rural Prosperity and Economic Sustainability
- Natural Resources, Energy and the Environment
- Emerging Technologies.

The mission of these Centers of Excellence is to foster and coordinate research, Extension and education programs consistent with USDA/NIFA priorities and programs.

To date, only the first four of these centers have been funded. The Center of Excellence for Student Success and Workforce Development and the Center of Excellence for Global Food Security and Defense are featured below. The Center of Excellence for Health, Wellness and Quality of Life, and the Center of Excellence for Farming System, Rural Prosperity and Economic Sustainability will be featured in the October edition of ARD Updates.

### SSWD Center at A&T kicks off recruitment, retention efforts

USDA's NIFA awarded a \$1.2 million grant to North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University and seven 1890 consortium partners to help improve the recruitment, retention and graduation of diverse students in the food, agriculture, natural resources and human (FANH) sciences.

With the grant, the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University has established the 1890 Center of Excellence for Student Success and Workforce Development (SSWD), in partnership with co-leads from Florida A&M University, Fort Valley State University, Lincoln University, Tuskegee University, the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, the University of Maryland Eastern Shore and Virginia State University.

These co-leads collaborate in a consortium that serves the remaining 1890 institutions and work seamlessly with the 1890 Universities Foundation to ensure that the SSWD Center advances the recruitment, retention, graduation and placement of underrepresented students in FANH sciences.

The SSWD center has four objectives:

- Provide STEM and experiential learning opportunities to high school and college students.
- Recruit, retain, mentor and graduate first-generation, underrepresented students at 1890 land-grant institutions.
- Deliver workforce development experiences for students to enhance the pipeline from secondary to postsecondary to graduate programs to careers.

Develop strategies to integrate emerging technologies into the academic curriculum.

Animal sciences students work in a lab on a consortium cam-

pus.

Each of the consortium's partners has a leading role in realizing these objectives. Virginia State University and Florida A&M University provide leadership for the experiential learning objective. The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) and N.C. A&T are leading the objective to recruit, retain, mentor and graduate underrepresented students. Tuskegee University and Lincoln

University are leading the objective of delivering workforce development experiences. Fort Valley State University and University of Maryland at Eastern Shore are developing strategies to integrate emerging technologies into curriculum.

The center was established in response to the national need to increase the participation of students from underrepresented minority groups in FANH sciences careers and narrow the gap between the supply of graduates and the number of open jobs in those careers.



The 2020-2025 job projections, published by the USDA NIFA, place the annual number of job openings in the FANH sciences at 59,400, while the number of graduates in those careers is projected to be just 36,100 per year. The difference between the number of jobs and the number of qualified graduates leaves a gap to be at least partially filled by non-majors. This gap is even larger for minority groups; for example, in 2017-2018, African American graduates represented only about 3.2% of the FANH sciences graduates.

The 1890 land-grant institutions are well positioned to play a central role in changing the views of students from underrepresented groups, who can be hard to recruit to the FANH sciences because they may not see a professional future in them. The SSWD Center provides a platform to allow all 19 of the nation's

See SSWD Center on Page 8

# Global center refashions name, awards grants

**The Center of Excellence for Global Food Security and Defense (CEGFSD)** was previously known as the Center of Excellence for International Engagement and Development (CEIED). The Center adopted its new name on July 1. The Center is supported through a grant of \$1.3 million from USDA-NIFA.

The precursor, CEIED was one of the three existing Centers established in 2015 to mark the 125th Anniversary of the Second Morrill Act of 1890. The Center's specific objectives were to support the implementation of innovative, collaborative initiatives aimed at:

- increasing the supply of globally trained degree recipients in the Food, Agriculture, Natural Resources and Human Sciences (FANRHS) disciplines by innovatively integrating a study abroad/study at home learning, discovery, and engagement curriculum into the 1890 undergraduate and graduate educational experience.
- fostering and strengthening collaborative and integrative multidisciplinary, multi-institutional, research and extension activities involving 1890 institutions and international partners that address trans-boundary challenges in the areas of global food and nutritional security.



- developing a robust infrastructure that leverages the collective 1890 human and cyber capital, and partnerships to support the growth and delivery of the Center's international programming. Under the CEIED, 12 projects were funded: six in global education and six in global food and nutrition security. These projects are currently being implemented with an end date of June 2022.

The CEGFSD was formally launched

on July 1, 2021. The new Center focuses primarily on implementing projects designed to supply the country with a globally educated workforce and to address critical needs in global food security and defense.

The Center fosters international partnerships that::

- strengthen agricultural development in developing countries.
- engage international researchers in addressing new and emerging animal and plant pests and diseases.
- engage in agricultural disaster recovery.

- continue activities carried out by the 1890 universities' CEIED. Within the four broad goals, the Center focuses on eight interlinked priorities including:

- Agricultural productivity.
- Reduction of global poverty.
- Enhancement of global food supply chains.
- Improving food safety.
- Impacts of trade on food availability, access, use and stability.
- Advancement of long-term prosperity of the U.S. through global food security and defense initiatives.
- Global climate change.
- Emerging technologies.

While the CEGFSD is hosted at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES), the Center serves all 19 1890 institutions. The UMES Center Administration works seamlessly with the 1890 Universities Foundation, an Executive Committee and a Governing Board with representatives from each of the 19 universities.

An external Advisory Council (AC) also supports the Center by providing recommendations to the Governing Board on the Center's strategic priorities and all other technical implementation issues. The CEGFSD is intended to catalyze and forge concerted and collaborative initiatives among the 19 1890 universities to address food security and defense challenges in four target sub-regions: West/Central Africa, East/Southern Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America.

The CEGFSD has awarded 19 pilot projects which address the priorities above with a view to lay the foundation for the development of a limited number of collaborative initiatives to be awarded competitively. To this end, the Center posted an RFA at the beginning of June 2021. The 1890 Foundation facilitated the review process for submitted proposals. At the present time, the Center is finalizing award processes for four collaborative projects which have brought together four to five 1890 universities with activities focused on sub-regional clusters addressing selected goals and priorities taking into account cross-cutting themes such as global climate change and emerging technologies. The projects are funded at \$200,000 each.

Though the Center's governing board, representing all 19 1890 universities, has been meeting on a regular basis since the creation of the Center on July 1, 2020, the AC met for the first time on June 30. Governing board members were also invited to the meeting.

The Center's AC made a range of actionable recommendations such as:

- increasing study/research abroad opportunities for students.
- increasing faculty exchange as a mutual partnership and a two-way street relation with international partners.
- using hybrid models for programs delivery.
- adopting modeling and forecasting analyses as a strategy for enhancing global food security.
- organizing a summit on global food security and defense.
- documenting and disseminating the Center's accomplishments.
- seeking partnerships with agricultural research organizations (CGIAR), and others (USAID, World Bank, CABI, etc.).

Mbitini Farmers' Horticultural Cooperative Society, Kenya: CEGFSD engaging international researchers (Dr. Evelyn Okoth of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology) in addressing new and emerging plant pests and diseases. Photo, courtesy of Stephen Muyanga.



## THE 1890 RESEARCH AND INNOVATION AGENDA: PATHWAYS TO BUILD BACK BETTER

April 2 – 5, 2022 | [Atlanta Marriott Marquis, Atlanta, GA](#)

Registration: -Deadline for Early Registration – Nov. 12, 2021— \$550

Regular Registration – Nov. 13, 2021 – Feb. 25, 2022—\$575

Late Registration – Feb. 26 – March 25, 2022—\$625

On-Site Registration - \$650

### REGISTRATION

Pay by purchase order, check or credit card. No funds (Note: Credit card users need to pay an additional fee to cover bank charges). [Register here.](#)

### HOTEL REGISTRATION

#### Hotel Guest Room Rates:

Single and Double Occupancy: \$194

Triple Occupancy \$214 | Quadruple Occupancy: \$234

Tax and Surcharges: Hotel rates are confirmed in 2022 and are subject to applicable state and local taxes (currently 16.9% plus a \$5.00 per night State of Georgia Hotel Motel fee) in effect at the time of check in. Deadline to book, March 10, 2022.

### ABSTRACTS & POSTERS

[Click for submission form.](#) Deadline – Nov. 15, 2021

### DISPLAYS & EXHIBITS

Each 1890 campus is invited to display a university display at no-cost. Additional exhibits and non-1890 exhibits must pay the fee of \$2,000 by Feb. 11, 2022. All exhibitors, including the 1890s, must submit the Exhibit Registration Form by the deadline of Feb. 8. [To become an exhibitor, click here.](#) [To become a sponsor, click here.](#)

### MORRISON-EVANS & MAYBERRY AWARDS

The application deadline for the Morrison-Evans Outstanding Scientist Award and the B.D. Mayberry Young Scientist Award is Jan. 21, 2022. External reviewers, i.e. NIFA National Program Leaders will evaluate the applications. Access the [applications here.](#)

In preparing the submissions, please use the following criteria: 8 1/2 x 11 inch page; Times Roman no smaller than 11 points, 1.5 line spacing, one-inch margins all around.

For additional information contact: [Dr. Alton Thompson](#), ARD Executive Director, (336) 285-2955 or [Dr. Orlando McMeans](#) (225) 771-4310.

## Reddy ... from page 1

also acknowledge the three previously existing interconnected injustices (educational disparities, economic disparities and health disparities) are being accentuated by COVID-19 and adversely impacting the underserved communities in the 1890 region, and beyond.

Our communities and how we co-exist in them, contribute to our health; and our economic and social conditions directly impact our health. These interlocking disparities are mobilizing the 1890 community to push for meaningful and significant change and commit to having our land-grant system play a uniting role and being part of the solution.

We have sustained a persistent cycle of reimagining, and this is the undertaking we must carry forward as we elevate our commitment to conducting cutting-edge research, providing quality instruction and delivering impactful Extension programs. We look forward to this new normal, but it should be shaped by creativity and innovation and by transdisciplinary and systems approaches.

As ARD continues to lead our research enterprises through this “new normal,” it is imperative that we stand committed to our mission – “provide visionary and enlightened leadership to member institutions as they continually address issues impacting their ability to provide innovative solutions to the food and agricultural research challenges facing the state, region, nation and world-at-large.” We will also stand resolute to our passion to

“support individuals, families, businesses in rural and urban communities, particularly those who are low income, underserved or marginalized.”

Finally, time and opportunity gives me no greater pleasure than to wish the 1890 land-grant universities a “Happy Birthday!” Aug. 30, 2021 marked the 131st anniversary of the authorizing legislation establishing the 1890 land-grant universities. Almost 30 years after President Abraham Lincoln signed the Morrill Act of 1862, the Second Morrill Act, creating our nation’s historically black land-grant colleges, was successfully shepherded through Congress by Senator Justin Smith Morrill and signed into law on Aug. 30, 1890. This thriving network of 19 universities has a legacy of educating first-generation and economically disadvantaged college students and enhancing the resilience of limited-resourced farmers, families, individuals and underserved communities.

Congresswoman Alma S. Adams (NC-12), vice chair of the House Committee on Agriculture and founder and co-chair of the Congressional Bipartisan HBCU Caucus, along with several of her colleagues, introduced a Congressional Resolution commemorating the 131st anniversary of 1890 land-grant universities. And we thank them all for their leadership and commitment to the advancement of 1890 universities.

## SSWD ... from page 5

1890 land-grant institutions to develop and evaluate effective programs for attracting, recruiting, retaining, mentoring, graduating and then placing minority students in the FANH sciences. The center also serves as a hub for sharing resources on best practices, educational materials, evaluation tools, and data on agricultural-career development while strengthening partnerships among the 1890s institutions; the USDA; public organizations, such as the 1862 land-grant universities and the 1994 Tribal College universities; and private organizations.

A student presents her research findings at an event recently. The consortium is

seeking to boost diverse student engagement in STEM and FANH sciences.

The 1890 Center of Excellence for Student Success and Workforce Development continues, and expands, the work begun with the Center of Excellence to Motivate and Educate for Achievement (MEA Center of Excellence.) The MEA Center was established in 2020 at N.C. A&T through a \$1.6 million grant from USDA NIFA, with the mission to encourage and support young people from underrepresented minority groups to pursue studies and careers in food, agriculture, natural resources, and (FANH) sciences.

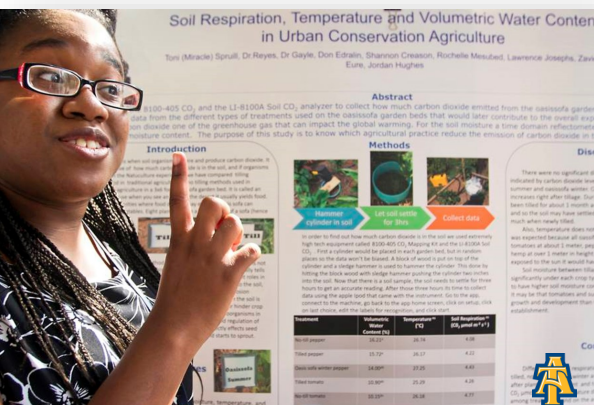
Since its inception in July 2020, the MEA Center has supported 1,409 students from various 1890 land-grant universities, and has engaged 14 of the 19 1890 land-grant institutions in 16 funded projects. The center’s virtual platform is intended to enable faculty, researchers and participants in the consortium to collaborate and carry out recruitment and retention activities, develop and implement award-funded projects, conduct evaluations, showcase research projects and student presentations and publications.

In addition to fostering collaboration among the 1890 universities, the SSWD

Center aims to strengthen their partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and engage other public and private organizations in collaborations to promote minority engagement and success in the FANH sciences.

### CENTER CO-LEADS

- **Mohamed Ahmedna**-North Carolina A&T State University (Project Director)
- **Misty Blue-Terry**- North Carolina A&T State University (Center Co-Director)
- **Paula Faulkner**- North Carolina A&T State University (Center Co-Director)
- **Antoine Alston**- North Carolina A&T State University
- **Neil James** - Florida A&M University
- **Ralph Noble**- Fort Valley State University
- **Adrian Hendricks**- Lincoln University
- **Olga Bolden-Tiller**- Tuskegee University
- **Nina Bennett**- University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff
- **Jurgen Schwarz**- University of Maryland Eastern Shore
- **M. Ray McKinnie**- Virginia State University



A student presents her research findings.



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### 1890 Land Grant Universities

[Alabama A&M University](#)

[Alcorn State University](#)

[Central State University](#)

[Delaware State University](#)

[Florida A&M University](#)

[Fort Valley State University](#)

[Kentucky State University](#)

[Langston University](#)

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[Prairie View A&M University](#)

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[Southern University and A&M College](#)

[Tennessee State University](#)

[Tuskegee University](#)

[University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff](#)

[University of Maryland Eastern Shore](#)

[Virginia State University](#)

[West Virginia State University](#)

ARD Updates is published monthly by the Association of Research Directors. To suggest articles, contact Dr. Alton Thompson at [athompson1@ncat.edu](mailto:athompson1@ncat.edu)



## FAMU's Pittman selected Kirchner Fellow

The Kirchner Food Fellowship, an initiative of the Kirchner Impact Foundation, announced the selection of its 2021-2022 Historically Black College and University (HBCU) Fellows.

The inaugural cohort is comprised of three HBCU students, including Florida A&M University (FAMU) student **BRYANA PITTMAN** who is studying biological systems engineering in the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences (CAFS). [The other two HBCU students were from Morgan State University and Xavier University]

The HBCU cohort was created to help address the lack of diversity within the venture capital sector. As part of the cohort, the Fellows will work as "impact venture capitalists," and make monetary investments in an early-stage, minority-owned business in the agriculture and food ecosystem while remaining full-time students at their respective universities.

"We are so incredibly proud of the candidate pool for this inaugural year of the HBCU cohort. This was a tough decision because of the talent and enthusiasm we saw throughout the application process, but ultimately, this group of fellows emerged as passionate, intellectually curious, and hard-working," said Hattie Brown, director. "We know they're going to have great success at finding an impactful company addressing food security and cannot wait to get started with our collective work."

The program has proven it's possible for newly formed investment teams to become effective venture capital allocators by using a "real world, real-time, real money" model.

Pittman said she is passionate about bridging the gap between food deserts in the local community, researching innovations in intellectual property, and exploring the financial markets, and added she is excited to use her aptitude for problem-solving in the investment landscape.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the Kirchner Food HBCU Fellows.



**BRYANA PITTMAN**

## Global Center . . . From Page 6

- partnering with ICIPE in the specific areas of training master's and doctoral students at 1890 universities and strengthening relationships in the areas of core function and competency.
- influencing ARS's research direction through the diversity, equity and inclusion strategy for both people and research priorities that would create opportunities for students and faculty for 1890 universities.
- increasing the Center's visibility by involving various partners locally and internationally.

Since July 1, 2020, 38 students have been positively impacted by the Center, 11 innovations and processes have been generated, four graduate students were trained and 25 courses/training materials have been developed through various projects implemented under the CEIED initiatives.

CEIED Contacts: [Moses T. Kairo](#), director; [Stephan L. Tubene](#), associate director, and [Maricelle Saullo](#), program coordinator.

## NEW APPOINTMENT



**DR. AMI M. SMITH** has been named interim vice president for Research and Public Service and dean and director of Land-Grant Programs at West Virginia State University. [Click here for the full press release.](#)

## CALENDAR



[Experiment Station Section](#) (ESS) Fall Annual Meeting, Sept. 27-30, 2021 | Hybrid, Olympic Valley, CA

[First Americans Land-Grant Consortium \(FALCON\) 2021 Conference](#), Oct. 21 – 22 | Virtual

ARD Meeting at APLU, Nov. 8 | Virtual

ESCOPE Business meeting at APLU, Nov. 9 | Virtual

BAA Meeting at APLU, Nov. 10 | Virtual

[APLU Annual Meeting, Nov. 15-17](#) | Virtual