



ARD Updates

ASSOCIATION OF 1890 RESEARCH DIRECTORS

May 2021, Vol. 12, Issue 5



DR. CHANDRA REDDY

Message from the Chair Dr. Chandra Reddy

Dear Friends and Colleagues,
The Association of 1890 Research Directors (ARD) would like to thank the senior NIFA leadership, as led by Director Carrie Castille and Associate Director Parag Chitnis, for engaging with the 1890 administrators in very intentional and positive ways.

As NIFA continues to 're-imagine' itself, implement Project CAFÉ while concurrently streamlining their reporting re-

quirements and processes needed for programs efficiency and effectiveness, ARD, along with the Association of Extension Administrators, the Council of 1890 Deans of Agriculture and the 1890 Universities Foundation, is committed to working closely with NIFA to communicate our views and needs to serve the 1890 region better. Our proposal to NIFA included:

- New researcher grants to help establish research facilities for newly hired faculty.
- More programs to support small farms, food and nutrition and emerging areas in agriculture.
- More tailored communication, training and programs for the 1890s and other MSIs.
- When appropriately staffed, scheduling the NPLs to visit 1890 campuses to understand capabilities and needs.

As NIFA continues to attract talented staff, the 1890 administrators will continue to engage with NIFA to use data-driven insights from our survey data and from the NIFA time-series database to develop an engagement strategy to increase the level and quality of 1890 universities' participation and success in competitive grants programs. The focus will be on programs that best match the needs of 1890 stakeholders while building on institutional strengths for maximum impact.

Relative to assisting the 1890 community with implementing the Centers of Excellence and the Scholarship Program, NIFA developed a well-framed listening session and a very interactive webinar, respectively. The listening session was very productive, and several excellent recom-

See Reddy on Page 3

Agricultural Research Infrastructure Advocacy (ARIA) update

Colleagues,

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 \$11.5 billion at U.S. colleges of agriculture in any future federal infrastructure initiatives.

Specifically, ESS urges funding over five years for the [Research Facilities Act](#) (Act), administered by the 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.

Below is a synopsis of our current progress.

- On May 3, the APLU agriculture research infrastructure campaign sent a stakeholder letter to House and Senate Agriculture Committee leaders requesting at least \$11.5 billion for research infrastructure at U.S. colleges of agriculture over five years. Over 350 national, regional and local stakeholder groups signed the letter, which stated that such an "investment is necessary to advance the critical work being done at institutions across the country to support American jobs, recruit a diversity of talent for the agricultural science pipeline, address our climate challenges and ensure ongoing U.S. leadership in food and agricultural innovation."
- I sincerely thank you for connecting with your networks to obtain these signatures for the stakeholder sign-on letter. The purpose of the letter was to ensure a strong stakeholder show of support for the request. In addition to the Experiment Station Section, members of APLU BAA Admin-



DR. MOSES KAIRO

See Kairo on Page 4





1890S HAVING AN IMPACT

The Evans-Allen Act of 1977 was approved by Congress to provide capacity funding for food and agricultural research at the 1890 land-grant universities and Tuskegee University (the 1890 Institutions) in a manner 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 is an example of an impact of the 1890 research program submitted by scientists at the Florida A&M and Fort Valley State universities.

FA&MU develops control strategy for honeybee pests



FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY'S LAMBERT H.B. KANGA, a professor in the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences, has pioneered developing a successful microbial control strategy (patent pending) for Varroa mite, the most destructive honeybee pest.

The Southern Integrated Pest Management Professionals recognized him as the 2021 Integrated Pest Management "Bright Idea" Award for his extraordinary achievements in the mitigation of the honeybee pests affecting crop pollinations, a \$20 billion-a-year industry in the United States.

"Bee health is critical for the success of pollination-based agriculture in the U.S., and Dr. Kanga's unique contribution is a great testimony to the high impact of his research and novel discoveries as related to honeybee health and management, and we are elated to have such a

talented faculty in our College," said Robert W. Taylor, Ph.D., FAMU CAFS dean and director of Land-Grant Programs.

"The novel findings of this cutting-edge research have been translated into several languages around the world and have provided new, environmentally friendly avenues for managing key pests of honeybee colonies," said Kanga, who is also the director for the FAMU Center for Biological Control.

The Southern IPM Center's program recognizes extraordinary achievement in Research, Extension, and Implementation of IPM in the Southern region of the United States. Serving as the hub of a multi-state partnership and communication network linking researchers, growers, Extension educators, commodity organizations, environmental groups, pest control professionals, government agencies and others, it is one of four regional centers funded by the NIFA to promote IPM.

For more information, contact: [Dr. Lambert Kanga](#); or 850-599-8725.

FVSU researchers treat goat mastitis with good bacteria

Treating a common disease that decreases milk production in dairy animals may require fighting off this serious infection with good bacteria.

Mastitis, an inflammation or infection of the mammary glands, can develop in the udder of dairy goats. Due to the negative effects of this disease on herds, Dr. George McCommon, head of **FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY'S VETERINARY SCIENCE DEPARTMENT**, and his team began researching treatment options for mastitis in goats in March 2016. He said with antibiotics, there is a potential for drug residue in the milk and antibiotic resistance in the goats.

"During this five-year project, we have shown that probiotics work. We do not have to worry about drug resistance or drug residue. This research is helpful for the average consumer, as well as farmers and their ability to treat their animals," McCommon said.

The veterinary science professor noted human consumption of goat's milk, due to its health benefits, has increased dramatically. Goat's milk is easier to digest than cow's milk and is less likely to cause lactose intolerance.

McCommon said their research involved collecting samples from hundreds of dairy goats on campus that had mastitis and those that did not have the infection. First, they cultured the samples and examined how well antibiotics worked to treat the bacteria. Then, they switched to probiotics. To their surprise, they found that several probiotics worked better than others.

"Now we are at the point of fine-tuning our research," McCommon said. "We gradually moved from using a lot of antibiotics to using only a few to using probiotics and no antibiotics."

During this five-year research, the FVSU veterinary experts found that



DR. GEORGE MCCOMMON (center), head of Fort Valley State University's Veterinary Science Department, and his team, including veterinary science professor **DR. SAUL MOFYA** (left) and research **ASSISTANT DR. KINGSLEY KALU** (right), are researching treatment options for mastitis in goats.

See McCommon on Page 4

NIFA welcomes Bora and Salter to new positions

NIFA is welcoming new staff every month to the agency, and many of them are coming with experience working with and for 1890 institutions.

DR. GANESH BORA is national program leader for the Division of Agricultural Systems, Institute of Food Production and Sustainability. Bora comes to NIFA with more than 15 years of working in academia, which involved exploring NIFA for grants. He was attracted to the activities of NIFA and its impact at the national level. He is excited to be a part of the organization and contribute to the development of new ideas and techniques for farming and agribusiness.

Growing up on a farm in Northeastern India sparked Bora's desire to advance agricultural technology at a young age. With his position, he can take his passion and help farmers use artificial intelligence, machine learning, and data management to improve crop production.

Before NIFA, Bora obtained his Ph.D. in agricultural engineering from Kansas State University. He has been a faculty member at the University of Florida, North Dakota State University and Mississippi State University. Bora has extensively worked in precision agriculture and passionately guided 1890 land-grant universities for research and workforce development. He is involved in the American Society for Agricultural and Biological Engineers.

REKIA SALTER joins NIFA as a program specialist for the Division of Animal Systems, Food Production and Sustainability.

Salter sought a career that would allow her to keep food sustainable into the future and saw NIFA as a perfect fit. She values the opportunity to interact with stakeholders



DR. GANESH BORA



REKIA SALTER

and address their needs while also aiding in funding research that advances agriculture.

As a rural Ohio native, Salter was always aware of agriculture at a local and regional level. While attending Tuskegee University, she learned more about the impacts of agriculture on various economic and ethnic groups. This experience, coupled with her exposure to larger U.S. agriculture and production systems, will serve her well in this new position.

Salter is originally from Wilberforce, Ohio. She received her bachelor's of science degree in animal science from Tuskegee University. She received a master's degree in dairy science from the University of Wisconsin—Madison, where her research was focused on welfare and behavior, specifically with dairy calves.

Reddy ... from page 1

mentations were provided by the 1890 community. The 1890 Scholarship webinar focused on post-award/funds management and was also very helpful and clarified many of the principal investigator's implementation concerns

We also would like to thank NIFA for publishing its New Policy Guide and for holding a national webinar and regional webinars to review the Guide and to seek stakeholder input. The 1890 regional webinar should give our scientists and administrators opportunities to provide specific input to the Policy Guide.

The updated [NIFA Policy Guide](#) is now available for review. NIFA has made changes to align with regulations in 2 CFR 200 and the current NIFA Terms and Conditions. The Policy Guide is now in an updated format and is easy to use and reference. Feedback can be submitted to policyguide@usda.gov ([link sends e-mail](#)).

The Policy Guide provides comprehensive guidance on:

- Roles and responsibilities
- Application and review processes
- Award notification and administration procedures

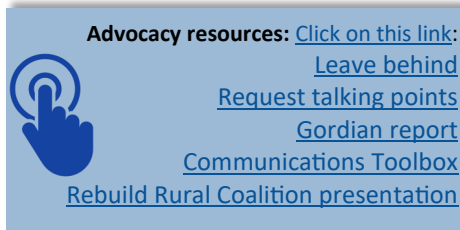
- Award terms and conditions
- Uniform administrative requirements
- Allowable costs
- Reporting requirements
- Close-out procedures
- Audit requirements

Finally, ARD would like to congratulate all of our graduating seniors and graduate students. Enjoy your festive day, the culmination of many demanding classes, new people, a new life of independence, long hours in the research labs, a lot of sleepless nights, and you have overcome a lot of challenges, including COVID-19. ARD challenges each of you to engage in solving the grand challenges facing the agricultural sector and play an active role in building sustainable and thriving communities here in our beloved USA and abroad. Your 1890 degree has given each of you life skills, discerning insights into your field of specialization, a global perspective and humble confidence that have prepared you to make a positive difference in the food system and the world. Again, congratulations!

Kairo ... from page 1

istrative Heads Section, Cooperative Extension Section and APLU Council on Governmental Affairs were very helpful in obtaining these signatures.

- We continue to work diligently to identify Congressional champions. Any assistance that you can provide will be appreciated greatly.
- After we identify our champions, we will develop a “Dear Colleague” letter.
- I ask that you continue to engage your congressional delegation on the importance of this request in the next infrastructure bill. This will enable your delegation to act when appropriate in support of the request and your needs. For more information about the request, please view the [leave-behind document](#). For additional information on the request, please review these [talking points](#).
- We continue to be engaged with the White House Office of Public Engagement, the Rebuild Rural Infrastructure Coalition (comprising more than 250 organizations from across the country focused on rural communities) and other key partners.
- We have also engaged the White House Office of Science, Technology and Policy.
- Using the materials in our Communications Toolbox, we encourage you to write ‘op-eds.’
- President Biden’s **The American Jobs Plan** proposes to invest about \$2 trillion across a multitude of U.S. infrastructure. Embedded in the narrative under **Invest in R&D and the technologies of the future** is the following excerpt, with the emphasis-added on the *italicized* text:
- **“Advance U.S. leadership in critical technologies and**



upgrade America’s research infrastructure. U.S. leadership in new technologies—from artificial intelligence to biotechnology to computing—is critical to our future economic competitiveness and national security. Based on bipartisan proposals, President Biden is calling on Congress to invest \$50 billion in the National Science Foundation (NSF), creating a technology directorate that will collaborate with and build on existing programs across the government. It will focus on fields like semiconductors and advanced computing, advanced communications technology, advanced energy technologies, and biotechnology. *He also is calling on Congress to provide \$30 billion in additional funding for R&D that spurs innovation and job creation, including in rural areas. His plan also will invest \$40 billion in upgrading research infrastructure in laboratories across the country, including brick-and-mortar facilities and computing capabilities and networks.* These funds would be allocated across the federal R&D agencies, including at the Department of Energy. Half of those funds will be reserved for Historically Black College and Universities (HBCUs) and other Minority Serving Institutions, including the creation of a new national lab focused on climate that will be affiliated with an HBCU.”

Finally, I encourage you to continue to use ARIA’s Advocacy Resources.

- Leave behind
- Request talking points
- Gordian Report
- Communications Toolbox

Click on links in the box to access the documents *Feel free to contact me (mkairo@umes.edu or 410-651-6072.) should you have any suggestions or questions.*

McCommon ... from page 2

probiotics work.

He noted there are few studies conducted about mastitis in goats. To set the stage for this impactful research, McCommon said it is extraordinary because many people on campus came together to help with samples, and it has been a valuable hands-on experience for 16 master of public health students.

“We were able to give them that background in microbiology,” McCommon said.

One of those former students includes Dr. Kingsley Kalu, a research assistant in the Veterinary Science Department. The 2018 alumnus said when he started the program, he learned about the mastitis project.

“I was really impressed with the research because the novel use of probiotics will lead to a reduction in antibiotic resistance to both animals and humans, which is a public health concern,” he said. “My interest in FVSU’s Master of Public Health program was because of the concentration in environmental health, which focuses on the role that animals and the environment play in the prevalence of human diseases.”

Interested in clinical medicine, Kalu is a physician from Nigeria with more than seven years of experience. He said with the vast experience he has acquired at FVSU, he intends to continue doing research in the United States in areas that connect human diseases, zoonotic diseases and the environment, otherwise known as One Health, an emerging area in public health.

“COVID-19 is an example of a viral disease that originated from animals and is now affecting human beings,” Kalu said. Ultimately, the research assistant aspires to give back the knowledge he acquired as a student and as a researcher to his home country to help prevent diseases.

“With the experience gained from the mastitis project, I had the opportunity to be involved in several ongoing research projects in the department. I am also conducting my own research project, a pilot study on the prevalence of hypertension and obesity among students in rural Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs),” Kalu said.

In addition to his role as a research assistant, he tutors undergraduate and graduate students on various laboratory experiments and discusses the relevance of environmental health as it relates to public health. He also conducts literature reviews for faculty members’ research projects.

McCommon thanked Kalu and veterinary science professors Dr. Saul Mofya, Dr. Oreta Samples and Dr. Lori Stose for their work on the Evans-Allen project.

“We appreciate the opportunity and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) for funding it,” he added. “We are at the start of some very good research.”

For more information, contact: [Dr. George McCommon](#); or 478-825-6795



DR. OBED QUAICOE



DR. OMON OSIKHUEMHEN



DR. FAFANYO ASISEH

A&T gets grants to study hemp economics

Farmers searching for a new cash crop to grow in the post-tobacco era are still eager to try growing hemp, but the economics of successful hemp production needs further study to provide them with the information to be successful, according to Obed Quaiocoe, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Agribusiness, Applied Economics and Agriscience Education at North Carolina A&T State University.

A three-year, \$500,000 grant from USDA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative to study the economics of hemp production could provide advice that has been missing from the fledgling field.

"The problem is that farmers are getting into something new without having a full understanding of the economic viabilities and risks associated with it," Quaiocoe said. "Hemp still has the potential to turn profits for N.C. farmers experiencing market failure, but growers need to be informed about the dynamics of the business."

According to the N.C. Industrial Hemp Commission, the state had 1,521 licensed growers and 1,183 registered processors in the state as of December 2020, but data on their profitability is hard to find. Due in part to the field's newness – hemp production has only been allowed since the 2018 Farm Bill – a long-term economic study has not been done, Quaiocoe said.

"The hype and unfounded predictions about profitability have overtaken the usual approach of research and extensive testing over many years to develop good production practices that

farmers can follow to make it a profitable agribusiness," Quaiocoe said. "The economic uncertainties and the lack of tested production practices constitute a complex and critical sustainability problem. The current market is not strong enough to handle increased production capacity, and if the trend continues, farmers could potentially lose a great deal of money."

Quaiocoe and his grant collaborators – Professor Omoanghe Isikhuemhen, Ph.D., and Research Specialist Felicia Anike in the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Design; and Associate Professor Fafanyo Asiseh, Ph.D., in the Department of Economics – will take a "holistic" approach to provide growers with profitability and risk information, drawing on the diverse disciplines of the team, Quaiocoe said.

"Using only information based on agronomic research to incentivize farmers to go into hemp production is very misleading," he said. "We need a more holistic, research-driven approach that includes production inputs, post-harvest processing, supply chain management and a legal framework to guide production and marketing."

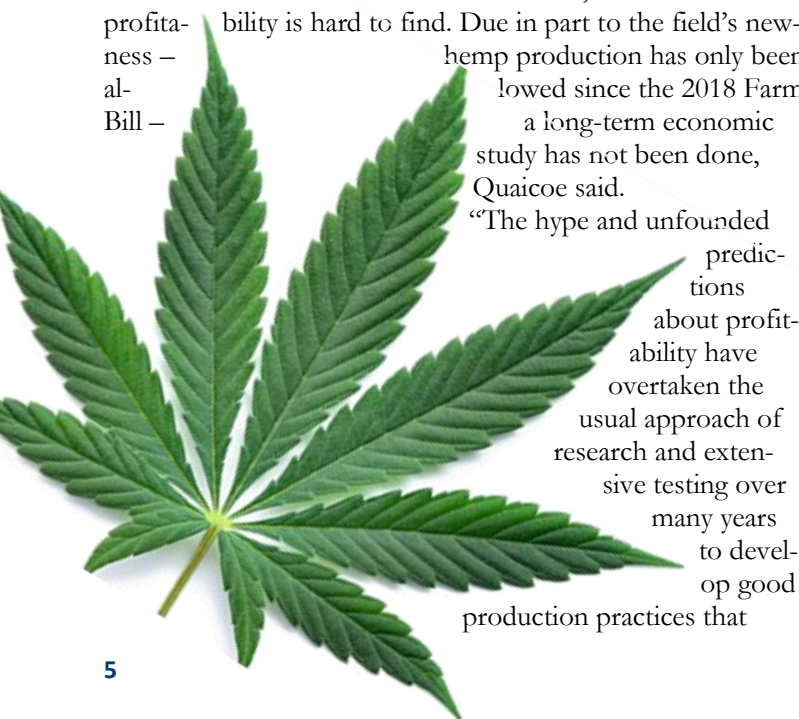
Isikhuemhen's role in the project will be to examine the diseases commonly affecting hemp and start providing small farmers with strategies to mitigate them.

"The first step is for small farmers to be informed about the economics so that they can make an informed decision to go ahead or not. If they do go ahead, then we need to provide guidance about what to do," Isikhuemhen said.

"One of their questions will be, 'What diseases will I encounter?' Information about disease management will help small farmers navigate hemp cultivation."

The team's next steps will be to meet with stakeholders to get an accurate picture of hemp production statewide.

"This project will not immediately solve growers' problems; rather, its goal is to generate data so that we can understand the economics of hemp production and provide farmers with ways to reduce their risks and be profitable and sustainable," Quaiocoe said.



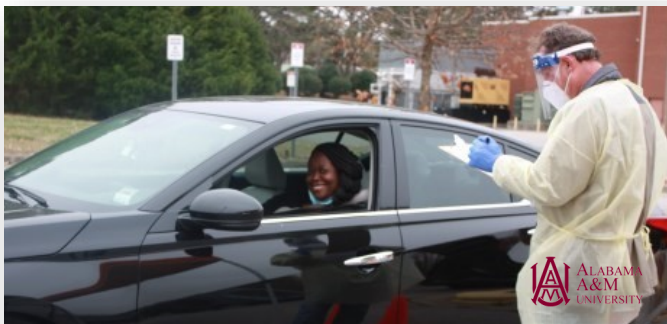
Alabama A&M's College of Agricultural, Life and Natural Sciences' Responds to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The College of Agricultural, Life and Natural Sciences (CALNS) of Alabama A&M University (AAMU) took the lead in collaborating with *Toyota* and *Huntsville Hospital* to provide a mobile medical unit to address the immediate needs of the surrounding community. With the prevalence of the current pandemic and the rise of positive virus cases, the Mobile Health Clinic offers free COVID testing for the Huntsville community (Madison County). The Unit can test up to 50 walk-in persons per day throughout various neighborhood locations.

CALNS, *Thrive Alabama* and *Huntsville Hospital* facilitated a Mobile Drive-Up Testing event, Nov. 12, 2020, on the AAMU campus that allowed all campus personnel and any other interested community residents to receive safe drive-up testing.

Dr. Lloyd T. Walker, dean and 1890 research director of the College and Dr. Ernst Cebert, research associate professor and interim manager of the AAMU Winfred Thomas Agricultural Research Station, have both been involved since 2018 with the establishment of this partnership between Toyota and the University to “identify and solve mobility-related community needs.”

Through this collaboration, Toyota provided grant funding and Toyota Way training to support a student-led program where assessments and research were conducted to determine the need and develop a solution. Of the Toyota funding received, AAMU apportioned \$100,000 to the Huntsville Hospital Foundation to further support the community in this effort, thereby garnering clinical services and training from the hospital for AAMU students in the field.



ARD OFFICERS

Chandra Reddy (Chair)

Tennessee State University
Email: creddy@tnstate.edu

Louis Whitesides (Chair-Elect)

South Carolina State University
Email: lwhitesides@scsu.edu

Majed El-Dweik (Secretary)

Lincoln University
Email: dweikm@lincolnu.edu

Conrad K. Bonsi (Treasurer)

Tuskegee University
Email: cbonsi@tuskegee.edu

Shirley Hymon-Parker (Member-at-Large)

N.C. A&T State University
Email: sjhymonp@ncat.edu

Vernon Jones (Immediate Past Chair)

Langston University
Email: vjones@langston.edu

Non-Elected

Alton Thompson (Exec. Director)

Email: athompson1@ncat.edu

1890 Land Grant Universities

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



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES



NIFA invites all land-grant universities and cooperating institutions and organizations to submit nominations for the **2021 NIFA PARTNERSHIP AWARDS PROGRAM**, which recognizes outstanding contributions aligned with NIFA's strategic goals in support of the USDA mission. Specific instructions and other information regarding this awards program are on the [NIFA Partnership Award webpage](#). Nominations must be submitted via the [NIFA Partnership Awards Nomination Form](#) and are due **May 28, 2021**, via email using scanned files that have been saved as .pdf or .jpg files to performance@usda.gov according to instructions in the award guidelines. Winning nominations will be recognized at the NIFA Day of Appreciation tentatively scheduled for June/July 2021.

NIFA will host a webinar to obtain stakeholder feedback regarding the development of a new competitive funding program to establish one **AGRICULTURE BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTER** at a selected Historically Black College or University (HBCU). Two million dollars were appropriated in FY 2021 to fund this program. The webinar is scheduled for **May 25**, from 1 – 3 p.m. Central Time. Go [online](#) to register.

The **NIFA PREDOCTORAL AND POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP** Funding Opportunities are now available within the AFRI Education and Workforce Development RFA. The deadline is Thursday, May 27, while the postdoctoral deadline is Thursday, May 20. These individualized fellowships develop new scientists and professionals to enter research, education and/or Extension fields within the food and agricultural sciences in the private sector, government or academia.

The **LSU COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE** Fall 2021 applications are now open for the [Vice President's Diversity Graduate Assistantship](#). This program's goal is to increase and enhance diversity, equity and inclusivity into the graduate programs of the College of Agriculture and will include four \$25,000 assistantships to support funding for African American Ph.D. graduate students. The application deadline is June 1. To apply, students must apply to the Graduate School and submit their name, program and a short statement of interest to Dr. M. Salassi. For more information, please contact Michael Salassi, Ph.D., msalassi@agcenter.lsu.edu or Monica Guient, mguient@agcenter.lsu.edu.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES



NORTH CAROLINA A&T STATE UNIVERSITY, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Urban Food Systems Endowed Professorship: [BLUE CROSS AND BLUE SHIELD OF NORTH CAROLINA URBAN FOOD SYSTEMS ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIP](#).

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EASTERN SHORE, ASSISTANT OR ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN FOREST ECOLOGY The Agriculture Experiment Station (AES), Department of Agriculture, Food and Resource Sciences (DAFRS), and the Department of Natural Sciences (DNS) at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, invite applications for the position of [Assistant Professor in Forest Ecology](#).

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EAST SHORE also seeks a **POST-DOCTORAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATE IN SOIL SCIENCE**. [Click for complete job description](#).

CALENDAR



2021 JOINT COPS, July 19-23, 2021 | Virtual

AHS Executive Committee, July 19 @ 3-4 p.m. | ESCOP Meeting, July 20 @ 12:30-3:45 p.m.
BAA/PBD Meeting, July 21 @ 11-12:30 p.m. | ARD Meeting, July 22 @ 10 a.m. to Noon
BAA Policy Board of Directors, July 22 @ 3-5 p.m.

NIFA is seeking nominations for the **NIFA HALL OF FAME**. Inductees into the NIFA Hall of Fame have worked, coordinated, or supported activities exemplifying NIFA's synergy of excellence in any combination of research, education and Extension approaches on local, regional, national, or international levels. The NIFA Hall of Fame Nomination Form and NIFA Hall of Fame background criteria and form are located on the [NIFA Hall of Fame Awards website](#). Nominations must be emailed to [Kimberly Whittet](#) no later than **May 28, 2021**. Hall of Fame inductees will be recognized at the annual NIFA Day of Appreciation tentatively scheduled for June/July 2021.

The **SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED FARMERS AND RANCHERS POLICY RESEARCH CENTER** at Alcorn State University, hosts a two-day virtual meetings on **May 18 and 19** from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. CT (Southeastern Region) or **May 25 and 26** from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. CT (Eastern Region) to discuss issues and challenges faced by SDFR as we prepare for the 2023 Farm Bill. [Register here](#).