



ARD Updates

ASSOCIATION OF 1890 RESEARCH DIRECTORS

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USDA advances 1890s with \$30.8M investment

The USDA recently announced an investment of \$30.8 million as part of its commitment to all 19 of America's designated 1890 historically Black land-grant universities. This investment, made through NIFA's [1890 Institution Teaching, Research and Extension Capacity Building Grants Program](#) will support scientific research that addresses some of our nation's toughest agricultural challenges.

The 68 funded projects will strengthen the skills and diversity of our nation's higher-education workforce, bolster scientific research and knowledge delivery systems and equip 1890 land-grant universities with the resources needed to better address emerging challenges and create new opportunities.

The investments will also build 1890s' capacity for teaching, research

and Extension activities including curriculum design, faculty development, student recruitment and retention, fundamental or applied research enhancement and Extension program development. Activities supported address key problems of national, regional and community importance in sustaining all components of agriculture including farm profitability and entrepreneurship, human nutrition, food safety, breeding, biotechnology and more.

FY 2023 Awardees: Alabama A&M (four awards); Alcorn State (five awards); Central State (two awards); Delaware State (three awards); Florida A&M (six awards); Fort Valley State (four awards); Kentucky State (four awards); Langston (two awards); Lincoln (four awards); North Carolina A&T State (one award); Prairie View A&M (four awards); South Carolina State (one

award); Southern (three awards); Tennessee State (five awards); Tuskegee (two awards); the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (four awards); the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (five awards); Virginia State University (one award); and West Virginia State (eight awards).

This investment will strengthen the ability of 1890 land-grant universities to deliver innovative solutions that address emerging agricultural challenges impacting diverse communities," said NIFA director Dr. Manjit Misra. "Building the research and training capacity of the nation's universities is critical as they continue to develop and guide the next generation of agricultural leaders."



DR. LOUIS WHITESIDES

Message from the Chair DR. LOUIS WHITESIDES

Dear Friends and Colleagues,
As I mentioned last month, the 1890 research directors will actively participate in meetings at the BAA Summer Leadership Conference and collaborate with agInnovation on our research strategy. Additionally, the research directors will meet with the 1890 University Presidents and Chancellors, hosted by the Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Policy Center at Alcorn State University. They will discuss and evaluate the priority impacts and justifications for

capacity funds, mutual priorities with the USDA and how the 1890s can contribute to achieving those priorities. The ARD leadership will also attend the annual meeting of the 1890 Universities Foundation.

The 1890 community will stay vigilant in monitoring the 2024 Farm Bill, which appears promising at this juncture. Currently, all of our key priorities have been incorporated into Title VII. We remain hopeful that funding stays robust as decisions move forward.

ARD must persist in crafting our "innovative agenda" aimed at offering practical solutions to improve the quality of life of individuals in the 1890 region and beyond. We will maintain our



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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.

This edition, includes an impact from the 1890 research program submitted by scientists at South Carolina State University.

Are chickpeas a specialty crop for South Carolina farmers?

South Carolina State University’s 1890 Research & Extension researchers are evaluating the viability of chickpea production as a potential specialty crop for South Carolina agriculture.

The pea-size legume packs powerful nutrients, such as dietary protein and fiber, in addition to being gluten-free, making it a preferred global superfood. Chickpea is a staple in Mediterranean, Middle Eastern and Indian cuisines – and growing in popularity in the United States.

India tops the list of countries producing the most chickpeas, followed by Australia and Turkey, ac-

According to the USDA’s Economic Research Service. The United States has doubled its chickpea imports over the last decade to a record \$69 million, according to a 2022 report. Canada supplies most of the U.S. chickpea imports.

Production in the United States mainly occurs in Montana, Oregon, Wyoming, Washington, Idaho and North Dakota, which is about 1% of the world’s production. The crop’s increasing demand in the U.S. among consumers sparked interest for the S.C. Department of Agriculture to explore the market potential of chickpeas for the state’s small-scale producers and growers. The agency invited SC State 1890 to submit a competitive grant to investigate the possibility of growing chickpeas in South Carolina.

The state invested in the project, “Examining the Growth and Yields of Chickpeas as a Specialty Crop in South Carolina,” with a \$100,000 grant award. As part of the outcomes, researchers hope the project will reveal potential growth and yield of two chickpea varieties (Kabuli and Desi); help develop a chickpea maintenance and post-harvesting

strategy; and lead to the preparation of a chickpea production manual specific to South Carolina.

Dr. Nana Kusi, Research and extension Agronomist, oversees the project as director and Tillman Ancrum serves as his research assistant. The project also provides research learning opportunities for SC State students, who are actively involved from land preparation to planting, data collection and field management. The study is being conducted on an acre of land at the 200-acre SC State 1890 research and demonstration farm in Olar, South Carolina.

The first trial was in spring 2023. Using a randomized complete block design set up in a split-split plot, the research team sowed approximately one acre of the two varieties (Kabuli and Desi), to take advantage of the crop’s preference for cold weather. Chickpea variety was the main plot, planting date was the split plot and seeding rate was the split-split plot. Dr. Kusi indicated that the planting season was cool and produced rainfall that was advantageous for the crop’s growth. However, he encountered several challenges such as, the July temperatures in South Carolina (around 90 degrees F), the heat destroyed most of the pods; deer consumed some of the crop and a corn ear worm infestation also occurred.

“That was a learning curve for the team. It gave us an idea of changing the timing of planting,” said Kusi. With this information in mind, the team planted seeds for the next trial in September of the same year. The Kabuli variety was unsuccessful and succumbed to colder temperatures in the

winter, but the Desi variety survived the frost in December 2023 and in January 2024. Planting earlier meant the crop would yield before the summer heat could scorch the pods. Electrical fencing was installed around the field as a deer control method. The crop escaped an infestation of corn ear worm, as corn had not yet been planted on the research and demonstration farm for the season.



DR. NANA KUSI



Chickpeas in the field.

Chickpeas . . . From page 2

For the future, Dr. Kusi and team are exploring other funding opportunities to scale the project. He speculates the Desi chickpea variety has the potential to be used in regenerative agriculture as a fall cover crop due to its biomass and nitrogen-fixing capability. This will help improve resilience to climate variability. Further, Desi chickpea variety can be used as a forage legume due to its nutritional quality and crude fiber (about 22%) as indicated from our tissue analysis results. Kusi further contemplates the future of chickpea as a contender for the state's large peanut industry, which generated \$73 million in 2022.

“When you diversify the crops that you are producing, you produce more benefits for agriculture. When you keep growing the same crops over and over, you're going to deplete your nutrients for that crop within the soil. For example, chickpea as a fall legume can help increase yields of succession crops with little to no nitrogen fertilizer. Like what peanuts have done for

South Carolina's economy, chickpea could eventually compete with peanuts as the preferred legume,” said Kusi.

In April 2024, the Deputy Secretary of Agriculture

Xochitl Torres Small visited the ongoing chickpea research at the SC State 1890 research and demonstration farm and was impressed. Kusi and his team have disseminated preliminary findings to targeted audiences through conferences and workshops. The research has also received attention from other interest groups in the agricultural sector.

While more research is required to better understand the potential impact of chickpeas on South Carolina agriculture, its potential

as an emerging crop could produce countless economic benefits to small-scale farmers through diversifying their crops with value-added crops, expanding markets for these producers and growers, and ultimately increasing profits.

For more information, contact [Maurice Mitchell](#), SC State 1890 Research & Extension, Strategic Communications at (803) 516.4739.



(l-r) Desi chickpea (which survived the December 2023 and January 2024 frost) and Kabuli chickpea on the right, died as a result of frost.

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commitment to investing both intellectual and monetary resources in alignment with USDA's strategic goals to promote agricultural and rural prosperity. It is imperative that ARD consistently prioritizes the voices and needs of our stakeholders as we develop, co-develop and implement programs and initiatives. I am enthusiastic about the future of the nation's food and agricultural systems and the pivotal role ARD plays in fostering the transformational research and education essential for progress.

Juneteenth, observed on June 19th, marks a significant moment in 1865 when Major General Gordon Granger declared the end of slavery in Galveston, Texas, following the Emancipation Proclamation by two years. The announcement ignited the

Reconstruction era. Now in its fourth year as a federal holiday, Juneteenth holds special significance for the 1890 community, as we have honored it as a time to celebrate African American freedom, history, heritage and culture. Furthermore, the 1890 community remains committed to innovative research, education, Extension and outreach aimed at addressing the challenges disproportionately impacting African Americans and other marginalized communities. In light of the prevailing political landscape and efforts to regress progress, there is still significant ground to cover in our journey toward fostering access, equity, inclusion and diversity. Nevertheless, our dedication to these values remains steadfast and unwavering.

As the summer draws nigh, I urge you to prioritize spending time with your families. Time is a precious gift, invaluable and uniquely yours to give. Personally, I am committing to dedicating myself more fully to quality moments with my family. It's not necessarily about increasing the quantity of time, but rather being fully present in each moment.

Wishing you all a fulfilling summer ahead.

State approves new \$50 million facility for WVSU

The West Virginia Legislature recently approved a \$50 million appropriation for the construction of a new state-of-the-art agricultural laboratory to be located at West Virginia State University (WVSU).

The cutting-edge facility will house laboratory space for both WVSU and the West Virginia Department of Agriculture. It was first announced by Gov. Jim Justice during his State of the State Address in January and included on the list of appropriations to be considered during the recent legislative special session. It was also approved by the State Senate and the House of Delegates.

“This is another huge win for the people of West Virginia,” Gov. Justice said. “The immense need for a state-of-the-art agricultural lab is a topic I highlighted during my State of the State Address, and I’m glad to see this project finally get across the finish line. Additionally, I cannot think of a better home than West Virginia State University. We all know this is something that will create a huge impact for the agricultural industry and community in the Mountain State for generations to come.”

“We are thankful to Gov. Jim Justice, Senate President Craig Blair and House Speaker Roger Hanshaw for this transformative investment to provide cutting-edge research facilities for the state of West Virginia,” said WVSU President

Ericke S. Cage. “Agriculture is a tremendous part of our state’s economy, and this new facility will play a vital role in educating the workforce of tomorrow while supporting the agricultural research and development that is already underway. I look forward to working with Gov. Jim Justice’s office and State Agriculture Commissioner Kent Leonhardt as we bring this important facility to life.”

The new facility will provide laboratory and classroom space for WVSU faculty and students while also playing an important role in the creation of a new School of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources at the university. The laboratory will also help build on WVSU’s Agricultural Research portfolio which includes: aquaculture; bioenergy and bioproducts; environmental microbiology and biotechnology; horticulture and specialty crop production; urban forestry; soil, water and natural resources management; vegetable genomics and disease resistant plant breeding; foodborne pathogens; value-added food products; sustainable food packaging technologies; native pollinators; and environmental engineering and water systems modeling.

“This new agricultural research laboratory will provide outstanding experiential learning opportunities for our students, faculty, staff and researchers while delivering vital services to the state of West Virginia,” President Cage said.

agInnovation seeks nominations for DEI awards

agInnovation is seeking nominations of individuals and teams for the National agInnovation Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Awards.

The agInnovation Diversity Catalyst Committee is [seeking nominations](#) for the individual and group Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Awards. These awards recognize the creation or implementation of pluralistic and inclusive efforts at the local, state, regional or national level—

efforts that go beyond meeting EEO/AA program requirements. The submission process is easy and is made through an [electronic nomination portal](#). Further, submitting a nomination assists agInnovation in creating an archive of DEI best practices from which we can learn with one another.

The Diversity Catalyst Committee looks forward to seeing all the good that the system has to show.



NEW PUBLICATION

AEA/ARD develop systemwide impact document

AEA and ARD, in collaboration with the 1890/U.S. Department of Agriculture Task Force, have produced a 62-page publication titled “Making a Difference Through Education, Extension & Research.” This publication highlights selected impacts of the 1890 land-grant system. Special thanks to Latasha Ford and the Agricultural Communications staff at Fort Valley State University, and the 1890 Land-grant Communications Committee, for gathering and editing the impact stories and publishing superb document. It will be distributed widely within the land-grant system and among our stakeholders and legislators.

[Click for the electronic copy.](#)

SC State paves way with Climate-Smart Agriculture

The USDA announced two climate-smart agriculture grants to transform farming practices and support sustainable agriculture in South Carolina through a \$70 million Building Commodities Partnership grant and a \$4.5 million Public-Private Partnership Grant. The grants will drive innovative farm production and conservation practices that reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, increase carbon sequestration, enhance sustainability and boost economic and market opportunities for local farmers.

The Building Commodities Partnership grant, branded, "Climate-Smart Grown in SC," is a partnership between SC State University and Clemson University, the state's two land-grant institutions. The project will incentivize



(Top) Daniel Lukoma (right), 1890 Extension Low Country ag agent, with Climate-Smart Grown in SC beef cattle commodities program participant, Benjamin Steward in Allendale County, SC. (Bottom) Farmers gathered to learn more about the Expands Markets for Climate-Smart Greens and Specialty Crops grant during an informational workshop held at Camp Harry E. Daniels, in Elloree, SC.



statewide producers to adopt approved climate-smart agriculture production practices. Climate-Smart Grown in SC is the largest public-university partnership grant award in South Carolina and will focus on four key commodities: leafy greens, peanuts, beef cattle forage and forestry.

In addition to the \$70 million grant, the USDA awarded a \$4.5 million single-state award to SC State Public Service and Agriculture to support underserved farmer's adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices and expansion. The Expands Markets for Climate-Smart Greens and Specialty Crops is an exclusive public-private not-for-profit partnership with Mixon Seed Service Inc. (Orangeburg, SC) and the South Carolina Black Farmers Coalition. The Expands Markets for Climate-Smart Greens and Specialty Crops project will focus on regenerative agriculture production practices that support underserved farmers and producers cultivating cover crops as a cash crop to advance sustainable agriculture.

The SC State and Mixon Seed Service partnership introduced two innovative cover crop blends, a Revive SC State 1890 Mix and a Revive SC State Salad Mix. The new

edible cover crop mixes were designed and developed to make it easy for producers to meet specific crop management goals and offer better soil health benefits like higher moisture retention, better weed reduction, enhanced nutrient recycling and lower fertilizer inputs. On March 18, the two cover crop blends were unveiled to farmers at the Midlands Research and Demonstration Farm in Olar, SC.

"This groundbreaking partnership with USDA NRCS will position SCSU to expand its tripartite mission of teaching, research and outreach service delivery as well as enable our scientists and extension specialists to implement the University's strategic vision for climate smart agriculture research," stated Dr. Louis Whitesides, vice president of SC State University PSA.

The farmers participating in both climate-smart grants will receive financial assistance per acre, up to a maximum of eight acres (leafy greens) and a cap of 200 acres (peanut and beef cattle forage), to adopt and implement the prescribed conservation practices, including cover cropping, reduced tillage and mulching.

In addition to the monetary incentives, farmers will also receive comprehensive technical training and Extension education to integrate climate-smart techniques into their farming operations effectively.

As the recipients of these historic grants, SC State PSA and Clemson University are at the forefront of a national initiative to promote climate-smart agriculture that will strategically position South Carolina State University as a leader in climate-smart research and innovation.

Dr. Lamin Drammeh, associate vice president of SC State PSA and principal investigator and co-principal investigator for the two climate-smart programs, said, "The grant funding represents a strategic national investment designed to provide technical and financial assistance to producers for implementing climate-smart production practices. To this end, our collaborative goal is implementing climate-smart agriculture practices, increasing carbon sequestration and mitigating greenhouse gases. SC State PSA is excited to spearhead this strategic investment, which will have a meaningful impact on our farmers, our state and our nation."

Dr. Chishimba Nathan Mowa, climate-smart project director, further emphasized the two grants' comprehensive benefits, stating, "These grants will positively impact agriculture conservation and improve the environment while at the same time providing extension education and training to the farmers."

Monique Daniels, an enrolled farmer in the Expands Markets for Climate-Smart Greens and Specialty Crops project, shared her excitement, "Climate-smart farming will significantly help with soil erosion on my farm. It's a great way to learn that cover cropping and reduce tillage over time can reduce erosion and improve soil health. SC State 1890 Extension agents have been beneficial in the enrollment process and are always available to answer any questions."

[For more information click here.](#)

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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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[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



NEW APPOINTMENT

DR. MARK BROWN, president and chief executive officer, Tuskegee University, effective July 1.



JOB OPPORTUNITIES



PROGRAM SPECIALISTS, Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement, Department of Agriculture, Multiple Locations (Alabama A&M University; Alcorn State University and University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff).

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY, Climate Fellow Program Analyst. The Fellow will assist with many aspects of USDA's climate change strategy, including providing technical support; conducting analysis on or providing support to climate change initiatives. Salary: GS 11-13, \$82,764 - \$153,354. Restrictions: This position is located in Washington, DC. Applicants must be a US Citizen or US National.

TUSKEGEE STATE UNIVERSITY, College of Agriculture, Environment and Nutrition Sciences, [Climate-Smart Project Associate](#) and [Agroforestry Project Coordinator](#)

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS SYSTEM, [Associate Director—Research Development and Compliance](#)

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EASTERN SHORE, School of Veterinary Medicine, [Inaugural Dean Associate Dean of 1890 Programs and Associate Director of UMES Agricultural Experiment Station.](#)

PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY, Cooperative Agricultural Research Center, Veterinarian

PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY, Cooperative Agricultural Research Center, Research Associate/Professor and the Director of the International Goat Research Center (IGRC)

WEST VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY, WVSU Research & Development Corporation, [Associate Dean/Associate Director for Research](#)

USDA FOREST SERVICE, SOUTHERN RESEARCH STATION, Research Economist or Research Forester to conduct research in in economics and policy focused on wildfire and other forest-based disturbances. This is a permanent, full time position at the GS-12 level or the GS-13 level.

FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SCIENCES, Executive Director, Brooksville Agricultural and Environmental Research Station (BAERS) in Brooksville, Florida.

CENTRAL STATE UNIVERSITY, Vice President for Research and Economic Development and Director of 1890 Land-grant Programs

SOUTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY, Senior Director for Research Development. Send resume and cover letter to PSAhumanresources@scsu.edu 803536835.

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY, Associate Dean for Global Engagement

CALENDAR



2024 BAA SUMMER LEADERSHIP MEETING (formerly known as Joint COPs) | July 16-18, 2024

2024 URBAN FOOD SYSTEMS SYMPOSIUM | June 11-13 | Ohio State University College of Food, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Columbus, Ohio. Keynote speakers and 40 presentations and 50 posters, six off-site educational tours.

SOUTHERN REGIONAL MEETING | July 26-28 | Lexington, Kentucky.

14TH ANNUAL HBCU PHILANTHROPY SYMPOSIUM | What to Expect: HBCU Presidents' Roundtable, Professional Development for Advancement Leaders and Staff, Special Funding Initiatives for Sustainability and Growth of HBCUs, Legislative, Corporate and Foundation Updates, Fundraising and Student Success Insights for Deans, Academic Professionals and Strategies for Alumni Engagement that Drive Support and Giving; and much more. [Click to access the agenda, registration and hotel accommodations:](#)