

COMMEMORATING THE SECOND MORRILL ACT OF 1890

1890 LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITIES

ARD Updates

ASSOCIATION OF 1890 RESEARCH DIRECTORS

SPECIAL 135TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION | August 2025, Vol. 16, Issue 8

Message from the Chair / DR. WESLEY WHITTAKER



DR. W. WHITTAKER

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

This August 2025 Edition of *ARD Updates* commemorates the 135th Anniversary of the Morrill Act of 1890, an Act that established the 19 1890 historically black land-grant universities. The Second Morrill Act was successfully shepherded through Congress on Aug. 30, 1890, by then U.S. Senator Justin Smith Morrill of Vermont.

The Morrill Act of 1890 was intended to respond to the need to provide additional

funding for the institutions established through the Morrill Act of 1862. Senator Morrill, however, had been disappointed that our citizens who were *not* the sons and daughters of the wealthy class and for the Black sons and daughters of toil, respectively.

Today, the 1890 land-grant universities—spanning 18 southern and border states—represent a vibrant and growing network of 19 institutions. Building on a proud legacy, they continue to lead in educating first-generation and economically disadvantaged students, strengthening the resilience of limited-resource farmers, families and underserved communities and advancing cutting-edge research with real-world impact. Their work drives innovative solutions to some of the most pressing local, regional and global challenges of our time.

Together the 1890 universities continue to work to improve the socioeconomic status of the citizens in our communities and help to transform lives at the local, regional, national and global levels. The land-grant philosophy is even more relevant today, given the dynamic complexity of the socioeconomic environment where an integrated and iterative systems approach provides the best likelihood of generating solutions that are responsive to the complex dynamism of our environment.

Throughout this month, ARD and the broader 1890 community proudly reflect on the enduring brilliance of the land-grant vision and the transformative impact of the 1890 land-grant universities. We celebrate the foundational role these 19 institutions have played—and continue to play—in shaping and advancing the land-grant mission.

As we commemorate the 135th Anniversary of the Second Morrill Act of 1890, we also look forward with determination and purpose. The land-grant mission must continue to evolve to meet emerging challenges, including building sustainable food systems, strengthening land and water resilience, advancing nutrition and public health and cultivating a diverse and dynamic scientific workforce.

A variety of celebratory activities are already in full swing as leaders, students, researchers, policymakers and partners across the 1890 university community come together to honor 135 years of the 1890 land-grant legacy. Across multiple platforms — including social media with hashtags **#Morrill135** and **#19Strong** — they are sharing powerful stories of innovation, excellence and community service. These stories highlight how 1890 institutions are addressing critical challenges at the local, national and global levels.

Throughout the month, each of the 19 universities will showcase their unique points of pride and key accomplishments, shining a spotlight on the lasting impact of the 1890 land-grant system. To learn more about the 135th celebration and to access the social media toolkit, visit the 1890 Universities Foundation [website](#).

The celebration will culminate with three signature events **We are 1890 Strong—Happy 135th Anniversary to the 1890 Land-Grant Universities!** Washington, DC, on Sept. 10–11:

- **The 1890 Play Cyber Hackathon**, hosted in partnership with Play Cyber and the University of the District of Columbia (UDC), will bring together students from across the 1890 campuses to engage in real-world cybersecurity challenges.
- **Capitol Hill Visits** by 1890 university leaders, students, researchers and public/private partners will amplify the voices and contributions of the 1890 community in addressing urgent societal needs.
- **The 135th Anniversary Commemoration Ceremony**, held in partnership with National 4-H Council, will celebrate the passage of the Second Morrill Act. This high-impact event will bring together members of Congress, USDA leadership, university presidents, alumni, corporate partners and higher education advocates to honor the 1890 legacy and rally support for its future.

U.S. Senator Justin Morrill

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1890s notch 135 years of making global impacts

By **Andrea Putman**

Assistant Vice President for Communications and Partnerships in the Office of Food, Agriculture & Natural Resources at APLU

Throughout their 135-year distinguished history, 1890 land-grant universities have strengthened local communities, advanced the national land-grant university system and served our nation. Today, the “19 Strong” institutions continue to propel agricultural research, education and Extension and lead with innovation, expertise and collaboration. Their groundbreaking discoveries, commitment to student success to prepare tomorrow’s workforce and outreach to bolster communities are paving the path to a thriving future.

The 1890s universities’ impacts on farmers, ranchers, communities and our nation are far too numerous to describe here. Quick snapshots include:

- [Land-grant universities foster community, student resilience](#)
- The 1890 land-grant universities are committed to strengthening communities, farmers and students through meaningful outreach initiatives. Their engagement ensures that resources are tailored to meet local needs such as food security and economic development. Through these efforts, the universities are fostering more resilient communities for generations to come.
- [Advancing food security through sustainable livestock and crop innovations](#)
- Research at 1890 land-grant universities addresses critical challenges in animal and plant production. Collectively, these projects support sustainable food systems and food security by improving livestock and crop health, reducing reliance on agrochemicals and increasing production efficiency.

Alabama A&M University: [Breeding for Parasite Control](#)

Gastrointestinal parasitism is among the leading causes of death and decreased production among goats in the Southeast. Parasitic infections can delay growth, cause weight loss

and lead to higher mortality rates. Alabama Extension's small ruminant breeding program enables goat producers to raise breeds less prone to parasites.

Primary Funding Source / USDA Capacity – Extension

Alcorn State University: [Land-Grant Programs](#)

The College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences Research Unit utilizes cutting-edge technologies and innovations to assist small farmers and rural communities in improving their quality of life and economic well-being.

The Extension Program serves as a premiere “Center for Excellence” for small farmers, ranchers, and limited-resource audiences. Serving 15 southwest Mississippi counties, the Extension educated and empower citizens throughout the state.

Central State University: [CSU researchers demonstrate](#)

[low-cost multi-tasking robot for small scale specialty crops](#)

Agriculture has seen a lot of technological advancements in the last few decades. These advancements have not always been an economically viable option for small- or medium-farm operations which produce one-third of the world’s food from 24% of gross agricultural land. The precision agriculture lab at Central State University focuses on developing and infusing emergent technologies in agricul-

tural systems with special focus to develop low-cost technological solutions which can make small-scale farming more efficient and highly profitable.

Primary Funding Source / USDA Capacity – Research

Delaware State University: [Delaware Master Gardeners Provide On-Site Garden Advice Program to Homeowners in New Castle County](#)

Garden Advice Program connects master gardeners with New Castle County homeowners seeking help with pest management, composting, water conservation and more. Master gardeners share and discuss information and demonstrate landscape sustainability techniques at homeowners’ residences to help them make informed choices to further develop their landscapes. Master gardener volunteer educa-



RAP student with A&T goat faculty. Photo by James Parker @N.C. A&T

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tors suggest ways for homeowners to establish science-based best management practices related to integrated pest management, soil health, plant selection and maintenance; provide guidance in small-scale vegetable and fruit production; improve, augment or remove landscape plants; and establish and maintain healthy turf.

Funding Sources / Fee-Based Funding and Smith-Lever (3b&c)

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University / [College of Agriculture and Food Sciences](#)

Finding local and global solutions to agricultural, ecological, environmental, health, and food security issues is a major focus of the research FAMU's College of Agriculture and Food Sciences. True to the land-grant mission, the research faculty, students, and staff at the Center for Biological Control, the Center for Water Resources, the Center for Viticulture and Small Fruit Research, and within other research programs have accomplished many significant breakthroughs over the years that have helped a wide segment of stakeholders, particularly industry partners and the small and limited resource farmers in Florida.

As the outreach arm of the University's land-grant mission, our role in taking the University to the People is the foundation of FAMU Cooperative Extension. A thriving Florida economy will require empowered and well-informed citizens and workers. FAMU Cooperative Extension puts knowledge to work in pursuit of economic profitability and sustainability as well as social well-being. We bring experience and research-based solutions to help individuals, families and communities thrive in Florida's ever-changing economy.

Fort Valley State University: [Detecting sericea lespedeza with artificial intelligence](#)

Farmers are seeking cost-effective ways to improve the health of their animals and increase overall productivity. A crop gaining popularity in many states among farmers with sheep and goats (small ruminants) is sericea lespedeza. Because of the high demand, Fort Valley State University researchers are developing an app to benefit farmers growing this desired crop in Georgia and beyond. This research involves artificial intelligence to manage invasive plant weed species through advanced image recognition technologies.

Primary Funding Source / USDA Capacity – Research

Kentucky State University: [College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources](#)

Our mission is to develop, advance, and disseminate scientific knowledge, improve agricultural productivity, preserve plants and animals, protect the environment, and enhance the health and economic opportunities of the people of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, especially for socially disadvan-

taged and limited resource farmers and under-served communities, as well as other stakeholders around the world. The land-grant program strengthens communities, families, farmers, individuals and youth to improve their quality of life with state-of-the-art, research-based educational programs. The program is recognized as a leading educational organization that provides comprehensive services to varied communities throughout the Commonwealth. We value accountability, accessibility, integrity, partnerships and collaborations, service and relevant, research-based knowledge that benefits all participants regardless of background.

Langston University: [Natural brackish groundwater in Oklahoma for drinking by small ruminants](#)

Mature and growing sheep and goats are resilient to sodium chloride-dominated ground brackish water sources, with no short-term impact on their performance. However, the performance of lactating Alpine goats may be negatively affected. These studies provide important information on the viability of brackish water for livestock in regions where fresh-water resources are constrained, benefiting small ruminant



Examples of different sericea lespedeza images (first row in top), weed images (second row in middle), and SL images in between weeds (third row in bottom), a combination used in the development of CNN image-based classification. Different images used in the figure illustration show examples of different colors, lighting conditions, angles of images taken, and distances from plants. Photo from Fort Valley State University.

producers. The information will be useful for small ruminant producers to sustainably manage their drinking water resources.

Funding Sources / USDA Capacity – Research and Evans-Alan

Lincoln University: [College of Agriculture, Environmental and Human Sciences](#)

Cooperative Research maintains research farms that function as facilities in support of research and Extension activities.

Congratulations to the 1890s for your work

By: Dr. Jewel Bronaugh

Former President & CEO, 1890 Universities Foundation and Current Dean of Agriculture, Virginia State University



JEWEL BRONAUGH

When I reflect on the 1890 land-grant universities, I think of my own journey, from student to educator, from Extension Administrator to USDA deputy secretary, and now, proudly, as (former) president of the 1890 Universities Foundation. These institutions have not only shaped my life, but they have shaped the lives of generations. The 1890 Universities represent far more than colleges and campuses; they are a living legacy of opportunity and resilience.

Born out of the Second Morrill Act of 1890, our universities were created during a time when access to higher education for African Americans was denied and dismissed. Yet from that foundation of exclusion, 1890 Universities built pillars of excellence. For 135 years, 1890 universities have carried the torch of innovation, service and access. They have educated scientists, farmers, teachers, engineers, veterinarians and public servants. They have turned once-marginalized students into leaders and transformed overlooked communities into centers of knowledge and strength.

Today, the relevance of the 1890s is stronger than ever. Whether it's tackling food insecurity, addressing climate resilience, advancing AI and technology transfer, improving rural healthcare, preparing a STEM workforce or the next generation of diverse talent, the 1890 Universities are not just responding to the moment, we are leading it. And we do so with fewer resources, but unmatched determination.

As we approach the 135th anniversary of the Second Morrill Act, we are not only commemorating history, but we are also recommitting to the future.

To honor this milestone, the 1890 Universities Foundation is proud to host a series of events on Sept. 9–10, 2025, in Washington, D.C. These events are designed to celebrate our legacy, spotlight our present-day impact, and inspire action for what lies ahead.

These events are not just about remembrance; they are about ushering in a movement. They are about telling the story of the 1890 universities in a way that is bold, visible and deeply rooted in impact. They are about showing America that when we invest in including everyone at the table, we unlock innovation. When we empower communities, we strengthen the nation.

It has been my deepest honor to serve these institutions. As I prepare to transition back to Virginia State University as interim dean of the College of Agriculture, I carry with me a renewed sense of purpose and an unwavering belief in what the 1890s will accomplish in the next 135 years.

To all who have supported our journey: thank you. And to those just discovering the power of the 1890s, we welcome you. We have so much more to build, together and we should all look forward to the next state of the journey.

By: J. Faith Peppers

Director of Communications, USDA, National Institute of Food and Agriculture



FAITH PEPPERS

America's 1890 land-grant universities are vital links in agricultural innovation, promoting rural community and economic prosperity and developing the next generation of agricultural scientists and industry leaders. On your 135th anniversary, we salute your history of success.

Today's 1890 LGUs are leading the way in precision agriculture, drone technology integration in agriculture for gathering soil and crop data, cattle monitoring and more. You are developing new rapid tests for invasive pests like the sugarcane aphid or food safety threats like aflatoxin in peanuts, both of which also create issues for U.S. agriculture trade.

Historically, 1890s also fill critical gaps in agriculture and the workforce. Collectively, the 19 universities in the 1890 land-grant system educate close to 100,000 students each year. 1890s play a particularly pivotal role in animal science. North Carolina A&T developed an automated milking system that provides individualized animal care by monitoring each animal's health. Fort Valley State University is a leader in small ruminants, especially in assisted reproductive technologies. And more than 70% of all Black veterinarians in the U.S. graduated from Tuskegee University's College of Veterinary Medicine.

These key specialties and strong connections to the nation's small farmers and ranchers are important elements in the successful partnerships between all the universities in the land-grant university system. Each university contributes unique expertise that, when woven together, creates the strong fabric of the system and enables it to serve all American agriculture, helping the nation stay on the forefront of agricultural innovation, service and education.

That fabric would not be as strong as it is today without the important contributions of the 1890 land-grant universities. There would be critical gaps in service and education. There would be holes in the workforce and missing voices in leadership.

Today we celebrate your success and honor this important milestone, but we also thank you for your valuable contributions to putting farmers first, promoting rural prosperity and fulfilling the mission to constantly prepare the next generation of agriculturists.

ARD will release new roadmap—1890 RISE

The ARD is the official representative body of the agricultural research administrators of the 19 1890 land-grant universities. ARD, chartered in May 1979, is considered one of the five regions of the national land-grant university system's agInnovation Section of the Board on Agriculture Assembly (BAA) of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU).

ARD's mission is to "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, nation and the world-at-large."

The ARD envisions a region and a world with a safe and plentiful supply of food, fiber and water for all, where natural resources and businesses are managed in ways that are sustainable, serve public good and provide innovative solutions to global challenges.

The next 135 years of research at the 1890 land-grant universities will begin with the launch of an ambitious strategic roadmap, developed in collaboration with the 1890 Council of Deans of Agriculture and the Association of Extension Administrators. Tentatively titled "**1890 RISE – Roadmap for Innovation, Sustainability and Excellence,**" this initiative is more than a strategic plan—it is a call to action.

1890 RISE challenges the 1890 community to lead with purpose, to collaborate boldly and to innovate in ways that uplift communities across the region and the nation. Grounded in a shared vision, mission and values, it outlines key priorities to strengthen communities, cultivate future leaders and confront complex global challenges through integrated, transdisciplinary research, education and Extension.

Central to this roadmap is the **1890 Artificial Intelligence Blueprint**, a strategic framework to guide the responsible and inclusive integration of AI across the land-grant mission areas. This blueprint is also a call to action—to lead with values, harness the transformative power of AI and ensure all communities thrive in the 21st-century food, agriculture and natural resources economy.

ARD faculty, staff and administrators at our 19 member universities are fully committed to advancing this forward-looking agenda. With determination and vision, they remain steadfast in fulfilling the 1890 land-grant mission—expanding access, deepening opportunity and driving innovation for the next 135 years and beyond.

The future of ARD—and the 1890 community—is bold, purposeful and full of promise.

ARD—Who are we?

The 1890 land-grant universities and Tuskegee University, commonly referred to as 'the 1890s,' were established under the Second Morrill Act of 1890. These historically Black institutions share the land-grant mission of teaching, research and Extension. The 19 1890s are located in 18 southern and border states.

ARD brings together the research leaders of the 1890 institutions to support collaborative, multi-state research initiatives. ARD promotes the development of students and early-career researchers, advances the research missions of its member institutions and fosters innovation that benefits local communities, regions and the nation. ARD members also contribute their expertise to state, regional, national and international leadership bodies.

The Presidents and Research Directors for member 1890 Universities:

Alabama A&M University | Daniel K. Wims | Lloyd Walker
Alcorn State University | Tracy M. Cook | Dexter B. Wakefield
Central State University | Morakino A. O. Kuti | Jose U. Toledo
Delaware State University | Tony Allen | Chereese W. Casson
Florida A&M University | Marva Johnson | G. Dale Wesson
Fort Valley State University | Paul A. Jones | Keith M. Howard
Kentucky State University | Koffi C. Akakpo | Marcus Bernard
Langston University | Ruth Ray Jackson | Wesley Whittaker
Lincoln University (Missouri) | John Moseley | Johnnie Westbrook
North Carolina A&T State University | James R. Martin, II | Radiah Minor
Prairie View A&M University | Tomikia P. LeGrande | Gerald E. D'Souza
South Carolina State University | Alexander Conyers | Louis Whitesides
Southern University and A&M College | Dennis J. Shields | Orlando F. McMeans
Tennessee State University | Dwayne Tucker | Chandra Reddy
Tuskegee University | Mark A. Brown | Olga Bolden-Tiller
University of Arkansas Pine Bluff | Anthony Graham | Bruce W. McGowan
University of Maryland Eastern Shore | Heidi M. Anderson | Moses T. Kairo
Virginia State University | Makola M. Abdullah | Jewel W. Bronaugh
West Virginia State University | Ericke S. Cage | Ami M. Smith

N.C. A&T sets 135th anniversary calendar

N.C. A&T will celebrate the 135th anniversary of the Second Morrill Act with milestone events in 2025-26.

The College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences (CAES) will also unveil a new motto built upon the land-grant mission: “Where Science Meets Society.” The motto will be used in social media, in publications and advertising.

“It’s our mission, as the ‘A’ in A&T, to take the results of our research out of the lab and bring it to the people to help them improve their lives,” said Radiah Minor, Ph.D., interim dean of the college. “‘Science meeting society’ is the foundation of the Second Morrill Act. It’s what we’re here to do.”

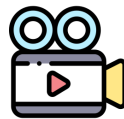
Events begin this fall with [Showcase of Excellence](#), a student research and academic poster event where more than 100 students will prepare posters and make presentations to faculty and visitors about their work.

“This showcase represents the cream of the crop for our college, the finest our students have to offer, showcasing their applied learning and taking what they learned in the classroom out into the world,” said Antoine Alston, Ph.D., associate dean for academics in the CAES.

The celebration will continue with “Legacy and Leadership: A Celebratory Dinner Honoring the 135th Anniversary of the Second Morrill Act.” The farm-to-table event will be held at the N.C. A&T University Farm Pavilion. A highlight will be a showing of [“135 Years Strong.”](#) a video marking N.C. A&T’s land-grant journey from legacy to growth.

In the spring, N.C. A&T Cooperative will celebrate the 40th anniversary of Small

[From Legacy to Growth video](#)



Farms Week, a statewide celebration of small-scale farming and the everyday citizens who power N.C.’s \$111 billion agricultural sector. The week focuses on small farming and will celebrate the [2025 Small Farmers of the Year](#), Elvin and Madeline Eaton of Granville County. It also features educational forums and hands-on demonstrations and the crowning of a new Small Farmer of the Year.

“Small-scale farmers are the backbone of our state, growing the food we eat and caring for the land,” said M. Ray McKinnie, N.C. A&T Cooperative Extension administrator.

1890s mourns death of scholar and leader Dr. McKinley Mayes



The 1890 community mourns the loss of Dr. McKinley Mayes, a beloved scholar, leader and trailblazer who devoted his life to advancing education, equity and excellence within the 1890 institutions. Mayes was more than a distinguished academic—he was a visionary whose commitment to student and faculty success, and the 1890 mission was unwavering. His legacy is marked by a lifetime of service, leadership and inspiration. A few highlights of his extraordinary career include:

- An alumnus of North Carolina A&T State University with a bachelor’s and master’s degrees in agricultural education, respectively in 1953 and 1956. He earned a doctorate in agronomy in 1959 from Rutgers University
- From 1959 to 1976, Mayes was a professor, chairperson of the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, Director of Resident Instruction, Associate Dean and Research Director at Southern University. It is important to note that Mayes was the last surviving founder of ARD and was twice elected as chair. Mayes was also a founding member of AEA.
- From 1976 until retirement, Mayes served as the director of the Office of 1890 University Programs for the Cooperative State Research Service (CSRS), now NIFA. Mayes was the first African American professional in a permanent managerial position with CSRS. In this position, Mayes was instrumental in getting permanent legislation for funding agricultural research at the 1890 land-grant universities.

- Mayes helped to guide legislation through Congress for funding to upgrade agricultural and food science facilities at the 1890 universities, resulting in more than \$180 million in appropriations for these institutions to develop research and Extension facilities.
- In 1995, Mayes was among the honorees in an exhibit paying tribute to ‘African Americans in Agriculture’ at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago.
- Mayes championed initiatives that expanded educational access and opportunity for underrepresented students.
- Mayes advocated for policies and programs that strengthened the impact of 1890 institutions nationally.
- Mayes was widely respected for his wisdom, humility and dedication to community uplift.
- Mayes mentored generations of scholars and professionals who carry forward his legacy of excellence.

In 2024, ARD paid lasting tribute to Mayes by establishing the **Dr. McKinley Mayes Mentoring Award**, ensuring his legacy of guidance, leadership and inspiration will endure for generations to come.

The passing of Mayes is a profound loss to our community. His unwavering commitment to education, mentorship and service touched countless lives and left an indelible mark on all who had the privilege of knowing and working with him. While we grieve his absence, we take comfort in the enduring impact of his life’s work.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family, friends and the many colleagues who were enriched by his wisdom, warmth and generosity of spirit.

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The farms have assisted in the support of beef cattle, goats, sheep, swine, plant and soil science, environmental science research and a number of Extension activities. Cooperative Extension enhances the quality of life for people throughout Missouri with limited access to resources. Specifically, programs address the needs of small farm owners. We teach key skills relating to sustainability, leadership, agricultural innovation and more, so farmers throughout Missouri and beyond can keep up with a changing economy and continue to meet the needs of their customers.

North Carolina A&T State University: [Oleogel delivery system: Improving stability and bioaccessibility of bioactives](#)

The development and integration of oleogels into food products contribute to healthier dietary options, aligning with the American Heart Association guidelines by reducing the saturated fat content in foods. The project offers a valuable technological solution for the food industry that addresses current market demands for healthier, functional foods. Also, the successful formulation of oleogels opens new possibilities for integrating bioactive compounds into diverse food products.

Primary Funding Source / Evans-Alan

Prairie View A&M University: [Urban Agriculture: Developing Sustainable Grow Systems](#)

In Texas, the growing frequency of extreme weather events is a pressing concern. As urban and rural areas expand, the risks of weather-related disasters, including urban flooding, severe droughts, heavy rainfall, rising sea levels and wildfires, continue to increase and contribute to soil limitations which can lead to delayed growing seasons for urban and rural producers, alike. Developing innovative, sustainable grow systems is essential to enhance the resilience of the food system. By educating producers and families on advanced, technology-driven soilless grow systems for food and fiber production, we can address critical public health, education, economic and environmental challenges.

Primary Funding Source / USDA Capacity – Extension

South Carolina State University: [1890 Research & Extension](#)

SC State shares the historic mission of our nation's land-grant universities to provide education, research and outreach services for the benefit of our state, nation and larger world. At the core of its mission, SC State's 1890 agricultural research seeks to identify scientific solutions that would positively impact current and emerging food and agricultural issues at local, state, national and global levels. Through outreach programs and services, SC State 1890 Extension addresses quality-of-life opportunities for underserved and socially disadvantaged minority communities and entrepreneurs.

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

The Office of Research has a mission to "*Link Citizens of Louisiana with Opportunities for Success*" to transform lives through innovative research and education. Our research unit has achieved great success over the past decades. We have expanded the breadth and depth of our research portfolio and strengthened our strategic partnerships to improve the conditions of citizens and communities. Our diverse educational programs provide hands-on learning, industry connections and the knowledge needed to excel in agriculture, sustainability, and community development. The Cooperative Extension Program has a standing reputation of "*Linking Citizens of Louisiana with Opportunities for Success*" while building lasting partnerships and programs to help the citizens of Louisiana who have limited social and economic resources.

Tennessee State University / [Tennessee State University Prepares the Next Generation of Agricultural Workers](#)

To ensure the U.S. Food, Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Human Sciences system continues to thrive, it's imperative



UABP investigates eliminating weeds from sweet potato crops

that the next generation of agricultural leaders and professionals reflects the rich diversity of our nation. The support that Tennessee State University has received through the "NEXTGENeration (NextGen)" program is enhancing its ability to recruit, train and retain diverse, highly motivated students and prepare them for successful careers in agriculture. These efforts are helping to create a strong future for U.S. agriculture for the benefit of all Americans.

Primary Funding Source / USDA Competitive

Tuskegee University: [Managing land usage to improve livestock operations](#)

Tuskegee University Cooperative Extension's program in-

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creases the profitability and sustainability of small-scale farmers and landowners in rural Alabama. The land managing program does this by helping them face production, financial and marketing challenges due to their operation size and historical and environmental factors. The project tackled key challenges in grazing management, herd rotation and feed costs, which significantly impact the sustainability and profitability of livestock operations. The program helped producers develop comprehensive strategies to enhance herd health and productivity by providing targeted education, training and networking opportunities.

Funding Sources / USDA Capacity – Extension and 1890 Extension

University of Arkansas Pine Bluff: [UAPB Research Investigates Weeds that Cause Viruses in Sweet Potatoes](#)

Researchers at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff are studying which common weeds contribute to the presence of viruses in sweet potatoes. This research highlights the importance of vigilant weed control for sweet potato growers. Farmers can focus on controlling these weeds to reduce the overall viral load in their fields by identifying specific weed species that serve as viral reservoirs. This targeted approach can help minimize viral infections in sweet potatoes, thereby improving



UMES works to develop alternative crops for small growers.

crop yield and quality. Further testing would help to find the source of weeds.

Primary Funding Source / USDA Capacity - Research

University of Maryland - Eastern Shore: [Alternative Crop Program helps farmers turn profit, provide 'taste of home'](#)

It was an extremely dry year in 2024. Some alternative crops, such as callaloo or amaranth, grow well with little water. Having these crops more widely available during times of extreme

weather conditions would maintain a continuous stream of fresh food supply. Alternative crops are also high-value. As communities become more diverse, the demand for alternative crops would continue to grow. This creates a niche market that sets small-scale farmers apart from commercial growers and increases their income potential.

Funding Source / USDA Competitive

Virginia State University: [College of Agriculture](#)

VSU's College of Agriculture's *Transformational Commitments*:

- Agricultural Innovation, Integration and Sustainability.
- Student Success, Experiential Learning and Workforce Development.

Integrated Well-Being of Youth, Family and Community.

VSU's academic programs offer a comprehensive array of majors and concentrations that prepare students to become leaders in the fields of nutrition, food science, apparel design and retail, childcare, restaurant and hotel management, agriculture and more. As part of VSU's land-grant mission, the College also houses the Virginia Cooperative Extension program and an Agricultural Research Station, which provide valuable resources to Virginia residents, while also providing practical, hands-on internship and work-study opportunities for students.

West Virginia State University: [Growing the Future: West Virginia State University's Next Generation of WV Ag Professionals](#)

West Virginia faces a critical need for skilled agriculture professionals, but the absence of a dedicated agriculture education completer curriculum limits opportunities for students to explore this vital field. Many West Virginians also struggle to afford higher education, further reducing access to agricultural careers. Coupled with a lack of diverse agricultural opportunities, these challenges threaten the state's ability to sustain and grow its agricultural legacy. The WVSU NEXTGEN program is contributing to agricultural education and workforce development by introducing essential curricula, offering scholarships and providing hands-on internships to prepare the next generation of skilled agricultural leaders.

Funding Source / USDA Competitive

Finally, as we commemorate 135 years of remarkable achievement, the legacy of the 1890 land-grant universities is a testament to the power of education, community engagement, and innovation. These institutions have shaped the landscape of American agriculture while uplifting communities, empowering the next generation of leaders and driving research that supports both local and national progress.

Looking to the future, the "19 Strong" continue to lead with purpose. Their dedication to excellence will foster growth and serve farmers and families across the nation in the coming years and decades. The 1890s collective and enduring impacts ensure that the spirit of land-grant service remains vibrant and advances solutions to build a more resilient and prosperous future for all.

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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](#)

[Lincoln University](#)

[North Carolina A&T State University](#)

[Prairie View A&M University](#)

[South Carolina State University](#)

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

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We invite you to join the 1890 community in the Nation's Capital for this historic celebration.

We are 1890 Strong—Happy 135th Anniversary to the 1890 Land-Grant Universities!

NEW APPOINTMENTS

DR. JEWEL BRONAUGH, Interim Dean, College of Agriculture, Virginia State University, effective Aug. 4.

DR. JOHNNIE WESTBROOK, Dean, College of Agriculture, Environmental and Human Sciences, Lincoln University, effective Aug. 4.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM, Department of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, [Assistant/Associate Professor of Agricultural Economics](#).

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EASTERN SHORE, School of Agricultural and Natural Sciences, Department of Agriculture, Food and Resource Sciences, [Associate Professor of Agricultural Economics and Associate/Assistant Professor of Agricultural Economics](#).

LINCOLN UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI, [Director of Agricultural Communications](#). Contact the Search Committee Chair, [Dr. Douglas LaVergne](#) with questions.

PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY, College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, [Director, Center for Sustainable Farms and Urban Agriculture](#).

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EASTERN SHORE, School of Veterinary Medicine, [Associate Dean for Research](#), School of Veterinary Medicine, [Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs](#).

ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY, School of Agriculture and Applied Sciences, [Alcorn State University Employment Opportunities | Chairperson, Human Development and Family Science](#)

CALENDAR

2025 Joint agInnovation/CES-NEDA Meeting | Theme: "Empowering Land-Grant Universities in Navigating the Future" | Sept. 15 – 18, 2025 | Hotel: Sheraton Westport Chalet Hotel, St. Louis, MO



NOVEMBER 9–11, 2025
Philadelphia, PA

[Register today](#) for the **2025 APLU Annual Meeting**, taking place Nov. 9–11 at the Philadelphia Marriott Downtown. APLU's Annual Meeting convenes senior public university leaders for three days of substantive discussions, collaborative workshops, and strategic networking opportunities focused on advancing public and land-grant universities' education, research, and engagement mission.

Public universities today face unprecedented challenges as well as opportunities, making it more important than ever for leaders to come together to share strategies, advocate for higher education's vital role, and chart a course for the future.

With more than 100 sessions planned, the Annual Meeting offers a robust and wide-ranging program designed to deliver practical insights, foster new collaborations, and inspire leadership across the public higher education sector.

