FAMU's president visits university's research facility.

ARD UPdates

THE ASSOCIATION OF 1890 RESEARCH DIRECTORS

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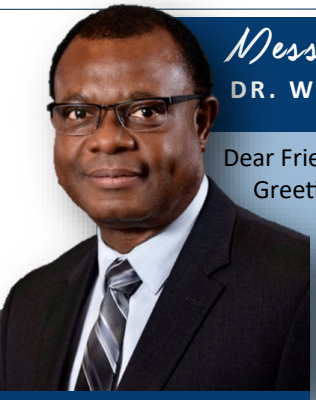

DR. W. WHITTAKER

Message from the Chair

DR. WESLEY WHITTAKER

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Greetings, and Happy New Year! I hope each of you enjoyed a joyous, restful and safe holiday season. The start of a new year offers a timely opportunity to pause, refocus and renew our collective commitment to ARD's vision, mission and strategic priorities.

In that spirit, I find myself having a "Sankofa" moment. *Sankofa* is a concept rooted in the Akan people of Ghana, meaning "to go back and fetch it." In this context, my Sankofa moment reflects a time—such as the New Year—when individuals, communities, or organizations intentionally look back to the past to reclaim valuable lessons, wisdom and practices to move forward in a stronger and more informed way. It is about drawing on our history to guide growth, strengthen our purpose and inspire innovation today.

Sankofa symbol

As I reflect in a "Sankofa" moment on ARD's 2025 accomplishments, I do so within the context of numerous Executive Orders and a broader political environment that has not been favorable to research, science and higher education. Yet, despite these headwinds, ARD has continued to thrive.

I am filled with deep gratitude for each of you who has joined ARD in aligning our work with our North Star: *"To advance transformative agricultural research that drives innovation, strengthens regional and national food systems and addresses global challenges in sustainable agriculture and food security."*

I am also sincerely thankful for the opportunity to serve as ARD Chair. Your support has been strong, steady and deeply appreciated, making this work both meaningful and possible. True to our mission, we are privileged to serve all people—particularly individuals, families and businesses that are unserved, underserved, or resource-limited. That commitment is our passion. We are also fortunate to work alongside outstanding partners who are not just collaborators, but extended family.

As we continue to strive for *inclusive excellence*, please

See Whittaker on Page 5

1890s and QEM forge mutual partnership

The 1890 Universities Foundation and the Quality Education for Minorities (QEM) Network announce a strategic partnership to catalyze the growth of the research and development ecosystem for the nation's 19 historically Black land-grant institutions.

The partnership represents a shared commitment to advancing research excellence, increasing competitiveness for federal and philanthropic funding and positioning 1890 institutions as national leaders in innovation, sustainability and community impact.

Building on the 1890 Foundation's proven record of fostering collaboration and securing transformative funding, such as the $35 million U.S. Forest Service grant to expand urban forestry research and workforce development, the partnership will connect that momentum with QEM's three decades of experience as a national catalyst for minority-serving institutions in STEM. Since 1990, QEM has been at the forefront of capacity building, faculty training and grantsmanship support that has helped hundreds of underrepresented scholars and institutions secure research funding and expand impact.

- **Expanding Access to Funding:** Identifying and strategically pursuing new, large-scale grant opportunities from federal agencies and private foundations.
- **Building Sustainable Infrastructure:** Supporting the 1890 universities as they strengthen their research infrastructure, from labs to staffing, to manage and grow long-term projects.
- **Empowering Faculty Excellence:** Elevating grantsmanship excellence by providing expert training and professional development to help faculty craft winning proposals.
- **Fostering Collaborative Research:** Connecting universities and faculty to build powerful teams that can pursue major, cross-institutional research projects.

See Partnership on Page 5

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 impacts from the 1890 research programs submitted by scientists at The University of Maryland Eastern Shore and North Carolina A&T State University.

Vibrio research aims to keep seafood, oysters safe to eat

The bacterium Vibrio, which occurs naturally in seawater, can infect humans who eat undercooked or raw oysters or fish that swim in waters with high Vibrio concentrations. Open wounds increase the risk of infection.

Rising water temperatures increase the concentration of Vibrio in water. Immunocompromised people are especially at risk of infection, and symptoms range in severity from diarrhea from ingesting a contaminated oyster to a flesh-eating disease from a wound infection that can result in amputation or death.

The CDC estimates there are 80,000 cases of vibriosis (the human illness caused by Vibrio) annually in the U.S., with 52,000 cases related to shellfish consumption.

Dr. Salina Parveen, professor of food microbiology and safety, environmental microbiology and molecular biology at UMES, has investigated where and when Vibrio contamination occurs in oysters and coastal waters since 2004. To solve the problem of Vibrio infection, Parveen and her research team aim to know the bacteria inside and out.

"We have to know the sources. Where is it? What can we learn about it? How do we kill or control it? Our lab is conducting research on all these approaches," she said.

In the article "Comparative evaluation of specimen type and processing conditions for studying oyster microbiomes" published in *Frontiers in Microbiology* in January 2025, the authors, including Parveen, found Vibrio was more likely to be detected when certain types of oyster samples and processing approaches were used. Knowing this can result in changes to the way scientists test seafood for bacteria.

The article "Machine learning to predict the relationship between Vibrio spp. concentrations in seawater and oysters and prevalent environmental conditions," published in the journal *Food Research International* in July 2024, detailed machine learning tactics to predict the presence of Vibrio.

According to the article, in which Parveen is the corresponding author, researchers used machine learning to predict Vibrio concentrations based on chlorophyll, salinity, temperature and growth in liquid media. This research could help scientists more easily identify where the bacteria are present, including which strains. This knowledge could lead to changes in seafood sourcing to ensure food safety.

Extensive research on ecology, antibiotic resistance, genomics, metagenomics and control of Vibrio has already helped Parveen's lab develop methods to control its presence in oysters, including recommended cooking times and temperatures to kill the bacteria and prevent human illness.

Graduate student Alissa Riley, center, and Dr. Salina Parveen, right, inspect freshly tonged oysters from the Honga River in Fishing Creek, Maryland, as Scott Robinson Sr. of Madhouse Oysters looks on. Inset image: Alissa Riley shucks an oyster from the Honga River. Photos by Todd Dudek/UMES

Shewanella findings highlight antibiotic resistance

The water bacteria Shewanella can infect fish, shellfish and humans, and its stability means it can even remain alive on food processing equipment. Unlike some foodborne illnesses, Shewanella doesn't make people sick by releasing toxins. Instead, it infects wounds or invades the body after being consumed. Worse, the more destructive strains can be resistant to antibiotics, making infections difficult to treat.

Shewanella isn't officially tracked by the CDC, so many infections fly under the radar. Strains resistant to common

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Smart irrigation saves farmers water and money

The Issue

Many North Carolina farmers still rely on traditional methods to determine when to irrigate their fields, using visual cues such as wilting leaves or the feel of dry soil. But these methods lack the precision needed to conserve water resources and may not meet crop needs. A more precise method of determining when to irrigate would increase yields and provide more stability for farmers, who are facing extreme weather events — deluges, droughts and hot temperatures — more frequently.

The Response

To combat this issue, researchers at N.C. A&T State University are developing a system using sensor technology and soil data to help farmers determine more precisely when to water. Using a grant from the USDA's NIFA, the research team deployed soil moisture sensors of varying costs to delve below the surface to measure either the actual amount of water in the soil or its "matric potential" (the resistance to water uptake by plant roots in the soil.) The group installed sensors in raised tomato beds and tested different watering thresholds. They compared three treatments: watering when the soil is just starting to dry out; letting it dry further; and watering based on visual cues. In their first year of study, they found that while daily watered tomato plants grew taller, the number and size of tomatoes were comparable to those of plants receiving less water. The project also includes computer crop modeling that uses local weather and soil data to simulate outcomes across different irrigation scenarios.

Blessing Masasi, Ph.D., N.C. A&T State University Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Design, right, and graduate student Anuoluwapo Adelabu check hydration levels in tomato plants, using a handheld device.

The Impact

The research could help small-scale farmers nationwide. By using soil electrical resistance sensors, some of which cost around $45 and include a simple handheld reader, small-scale farmers can use technology to determine more precisely when to irrigate their crops. By not overwatering, farmers save money and conserve the precious resource. Less watering also means smaller environmental impacts, such as nutrient runoff.

Next Steps

Researchers are continuing to gather data before making firm recommendations. They are, however, using farmer events sponsored by N.C. A&T Cooperative Extension to encourage farmers to use technology over traditional methods to determine irrigation needs. They are also sharing their findings with Extension agents, who can share the information with farmers across the state.

For more information, please contact Dr. Masasi Blessing, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Design, College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, North Carolina A&T State

Innovative wound dressing may lessen risk of wound infections

The Issue

Lacerations account for about 13% of all agricultural injuries, according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, making them the third most common nonfatal injury type after sprains/torn ligaments (22%) and fractures (15%). Contact with sharp machinery, tools, and fencing materials, along with animals that may bite or kick, makes lacerations and abrasions a common farm hazard. The presence of manure, soil and crop debris heightens the risk of infection. The rural nature of farming means medical treatment may be delayed, increasing the likelihood of infection.

The Response

A team of graduate students at N.C. A&T State University created a material engineered for controlled antimicrobial release that is safe to use and environmentally friendly. Using techniques like electrospinning — which uses electricity to spin very thin fibers — and 3D printing, the team paired cellulose-based hydrogels and Manuka honey — which has antimicrobial properties — to form a wound dressing called Woundra.

The researchers are also developing a technique that would incorporate biocompatible wide-bandgap semiconductors to support the healing process. Wide-bandgap semiconductors produce extremely powerful light that carries antibacterial, anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. Specific

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Wounds . . . From Page 3

wavelengths of light stimulate biological processes like cell proliferation, collagen synthesis and the formation of new blood vessels. Other wound healing active compounds, such as hydroxyapatite, are also included, providing a scaffold for cell growth and delivering beneficial ions such as calcium and phosphate to further promote healing.

The Impact

Woundra has the potential to benefit nearly every section of society. Once perfected, it could be included in home first-aid kits and used for injuries susceptible to infection. Along with farmers, parents — whose children might sustain a cut or a burn – and emergency responders could use the dressing. Using materials that are abundant or considered agricultural waste will help keep production costs low.

Next Steps

The product is in the patent-filing process, and the team is engaged in talks with potential partners and investors to assist in moving Woundra into clinical studies. The long-term goal is to market Woundra through an external partner.

For more information, please contact Dr. Michael Curry, Joint School of Nanoscience and Nanoengineering, North Carolina A&T State University, mlcurry@ncat.edu; or 336-285-2707. Click on this link to learn more about this project.

The N.C. A&T State University research team for Woundra from left: Kayla Morgan; Mahshid Eghbali; Hoda Motaghed (holding vials of honey and hydrogel); Demetrius Finley, Ph.D. (mentor); Vaishnavi Kandula; and Michael Curry, Ph.D., director of the Curry Intelligent Materials Innovation Laboratory at the Joint School of Nanoscience and Nanoengineering.

Vibrio. . . From Page 2

antibiotics — including penicillin, aminoglycosides, tetracycline and sulfonamides — kill tens of thousands of people every year in the U.S. and Europe, according to the 2025 article "Prevalence and pathogenic potential of Shewanella species in oysters and seawater collected from the Chesapeake Bay and Maryland Coastal Bays" published in the journal *Frontiers in Microbiology*.

The article's lead author, Tahirah Johnson, is a recent Ph.D. graduate and NOAA Living Marine Resources Cooperative Science Center (LMRCSC) fellow at UMES. Under the mentorship of Parveen, who co-authored the article, Johnson centered her graduate research around Shewanella, examining its prevalence, its antibiotic resistance and how to control its spread.

Some Shewanella strains (like S. putrefaciens Pdp11) might benefit fish health in aquaculture by boosting growth and immunity. According to Johnson's article, further research is needed to distinguish beneficial Shewanella strains from harmful ones.

Meanwhile, rising seawater temperatures are creating a more favorable environment for bacterial growth and, together with the excessive use of antibiotics in aquaculture and agriculture, are driving the emergence of resistance genes that can be transferred between different bacteria, making disease control across species increasingly difficult.

In a 2025 article in the *Journal of Food Protection* titled "Antibiotic Resistance Profiling of Hemolytic *Shewanella* Species in Oysters and Seawater from the Mid-Atlantic Region," Johnson and her co-authors specifically address the antibiotic resistance of the bacteria.

Notably, the research showed 16% of oyster isolates and 19% of seawater isolates were resistant to one or more antibiotics.

The article emphasized the need for ongoing monitoring of antimicrobial resistance in marine ecosystems and the development of mitigation strategies to address antibiotic-resistant Shewanella species.

For more information, contact Dr. Salina Parveen, *microbiologist and professor, University of Maryland Eastern Shore's Department of Agriculture, Food, and Resource Sciences, at* ***sparveen@umes.edu*** *or 410-651-8339.*

FAMU hosts upcoming RCAS winter meeting

Dr. Dale Wesson, dean and director of Land Grant Programs of the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences at Florida A&M University (FAMU), is hosting the upcoming RCAS Winter 2026 Meeting, scheduled for Feb. 8–11, in Tallahassee, Florida, and surrounding areas.

This year's meeting is hosted by Florida A&M University's College of Agriculture and Food Sciences (CAFS), in collaboration with the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) and Auburn University's Gulf Coast Research and Extension Center (GCREC). The program will include a lineup of speakers, networking opportunities and a multi-state tour showcasing agricultural diversity and research collaborations across the Florida Panhandle and southeastern Alabama.

Registration Link. Contact Dr. Wesson or Tommeron D. Timmons, Director of Research Programs & Services at tommeron.timmons@famu.edu or 850-599-8313.

Partnership . . . From Page 1

Dr. Felecia M. Nave, president and CEO of the 1890 Universities Foundation, said, "This partnership isn't just about expanding research funding; it allows us to reshape what's possible for our institutions, our faculty, our students and our community. The 1890s have always been incubators of innovation. By combining our strengths with QEM, we're creating a pathway for the next generation of scholars and scientists to lead solutions that impact our nation and our world."

The QEM Network, established in 1990 and led by Dr. Erin Lynch, has marshaled national support for minority-serving institutions and led numerous STEM and educational projects in partnership with agencies, foundations and academic leaders. Together, QEM and the 1890 Foundation will work to ensure effective use of funding and resources for sustainable growth, amplifying the reach and impact of 1890 land-grant universities from urban environments to rural communities.

The collaboration underscores the power of partnership and shared purpose in driving change. By uniting under a common goal, the 1890 Foundation and QEM are helping ensure that HBCUs continue to thrive as engines of innovation, research excellence and community transformation.

Whittaker . . . From Page 1

know how deeply grateful I am for the vital role each of you plays in ARD's performance and productivity. I am confident that 2026 will be a breakthrough year for ARD as we: continue to develop and sustain our Centers of Excellence; expand and fully implement the 1890 Scholarship Program; aggressively pursue reauthorization of the 2023 Farm Bill; remain persistent in seeking increased funding for capacity, capacity-building and facilities programs; complete the integrated Land-Grant Roadmap and prepare and submit competitive proposals for the Research Facilities Act.

ARD's North Star: "To advance transformative agricultural research that drives innovation, strengthens regional and national food systems and addresses global challenges in sustainable agriculture and food security."

In 2026, ARD, with the support of several sponsors and exhibitors, will host its 22nd Biennial Research Symposium from March 28-31. The goal of all 1890 symposia is to provide a forum for interaction, share knowledge, expand partnerships through networks and showcase the talents and achievements of the 1890 community. This year's symposium will provide opportunities for students and early-career scientists to present research papers and posters showcasing innovative and practical findings in food, agriculture, human health and environmental sciences. I eagerly anticipate your presence at the Hyatt Regency New Orleans.

From Jan. 27-29, ARD will convene jointly with AEA and the 1890 Deans of Agriculture to address critical issues of importance to the 1890 community. These discussions will include, but are not limited to, funding and program opportunities; appropriation goals, priorities and advocacy strategies; the federal budget; the 1890 Centers of Excellence; expanding our reach through effective collaborations and partnerships; the role of AI and other emerging technologies and strengthening the 1890–NIFA partnership.

As I conclude my first message of the new year, I want to underscore the importance of working closely with Dr. Chandra Reddy, chair of agInnovation, to advance agInnovation priorities and Chair initiatives, and to maintain our continued engagement with the 1890 Universities Foundation.

Thank you for your continued support of ARD as we conduct innovative research to develop solutions to the food and agricultural grand challenges facing our region, our nation and the world. We recognize that 2026 will be a pivotal year, particularly as we enter the midterm election season. ARD is diligently preparing for the road ahead, and we remain steadfast in our commitment to supporting the individuals, families and businesses within the communities we serve.

ARD 2026 Symposium deadlines, links and critical dates

REGISTRATION **is now CLOSED.**

HOTEL REGISTRATION

Hotel Booking Link Single and Double Occupancy: $249 + taxes. Deadline to book: March 5, 2026

EXHIBITS

Each 1890 campus is invited to display one university exhibit FREE. Additional exhibits and non-1890 exhibitors must pay the fee of $3,000 by Feb. 6, 2026. All exhibitors, including the 1890s, must submit the Exhibit Registration Form by the deadline. To become an Exhibitor: Attached Form.

MORRISON-EVANS, MAYBERRY HILL, & MAYES AWARDS

The application deadlines for the Morrison-Evans Outstanding Scientist Award and the B.D. Mayberry Young Scientist Award, the Walter Hill Distinguished Service Award and the McKinley Mayes Mentoring Award is Jan. 16, 2026. External reviewers, i.e. NIFA National Program Leaders will evaluate the applications. Access the applications here and criteria information.

For additional information contact: Alton Thompson, ARD Executive director; (336) 285-2955 or ***athompson1@ncat.edu*** *or Orlando F. McMeans, Symposium Steering Committee* co-c*hair (225) 771-4310 or* ***orlando_mcmeans@suagcenter.com***.

Upcoming proposal requests, calls for nominations

INRPHA PILOT PROPOSALS

With funding from the National Institute on Aging (NIA), the Interdisciplinary Network on Rural Population Health and Aging (INRPHA) invites investigators to submit proposals for pilot research that enhances understanding of the multilevel and multidimensional drivers of rural health and aging trends and disparities, with emphasis on within-rural heterogeneity. INRPHA seeks proposals that will advance science in this important area and that will lead to fundable NIH grant proposals. Pilot projects will begin as early as July 1, 2026.

Proposals are due Friday, April 10 at 5 p.m, CT. Click for the request for proposal factsheet.

Direct questions to the INRPHA PI, Carrie Henning-Smith, at henn0329@umn.edu.

INRPHA is funded by NIA grant 1R24AG089064 and led by Carrie Henning-Smith (University of Minnesota), Leif Jensen (Penn State), Shannon Monnat (Syracuse University), John Green (Southern Rural Development Center/ Mississippi State University), and Lori Hunter (University of Colorado Boulder.

agINNOVATIONS' NOMINATIONS

Dr. Chandra Reddy, agInnovation Chair, has announced that the 2026 Call for Award Nominations is now available on the ESCOP STC website. Please review the nomination guidelines and consider nominating deserving individuals. Note that the Research Innovation Awards include separate categories recognizing scientists at three different career stages.

Descriptions of each award and corresponding evaluation criteria are hyperlinked as follows:
2026 Excellence in Research Innovation Awards Guidelines
2026 Excellence in Multistate Research Award Guidelines
2026 Excellence in Leadership Award Guidelines

APLU LEADERSHIP NOMINATIONS

APLU Food Systems annually recognizes a leader who has made an extraordinary impact on the food system through leadership and service and who exemplifies the core principles established by the Food Systems Leadership Institute (FSLI), including personal leadership, organizational leadership and food systems leadership. The award also recognizes the leadership, innovation, engagement and service that APLU promotes through its programs.

The APLU Food Systems Leadership Award will be presented at its annual meeting in November. The recipient will be invited to address the current cohort of FSLI Fellows during one of the webinar sessions.

The award's criteria, the directions for submitting it and the nomination form can be found on the FSLI website.

To get a sense of the caliber of the person who would be competitive for this award, you can visit the **FSLI website**.

The deadline for submittal is Feb. 27, 2026. Don't hesitate to contact Dr. Sarah Kotzian, FSLI program manager, with any questions.

LEAD21 NEW COHORT

The LEAD21 program is accepting applications for the next group of leaders. Individuals from land-grant, NARRU institutions and USDA are encouraged to participate.

Program goals are for participants to:

- Enhance the application of skills and knowledge learned in four core leadership development areas (change, conflict, communication and collaboration).
- Develop a peer leadership network to enhance personal leadership practice, collaboration and diversity of perspective.
- Develop and implement an individual leadership development process.

Three on-site sessions will be held - Session I: June 7-12, 2026, Chicago, IL; Session II: Oct. 5-8, 2026, Denver, CO and Session III: Feb. 22-26, 2027 – Atlanta, GA.

For more information and to apply online, the link is 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
Lincoln University
North Carolina A&T State University
Prairie View A&M University
South Carolina State University
Southern University and A&M College
Tennessee State University
Tuskegee University
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
University of Maryland Eastern Shore
Virginia State University
West Virginia State University

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

NEW APPOINTMENTS

MCMEANS, ORLANDO. Interim Southern University System President, effective, Jan. 2.
MCGOWAN, BRUCE, Interim Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, effective Dec. 29, 2025.
MATHIS, CHRISTOPHER. Interim Dean and Research Director, School of Agriculture, Fisheries and Human Sciences, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, effective Dec. 29, 2025.
LAVERGNE, DOUGLAS. Interim Dean and Research Director, College of Agricultural, Life and Natural Sciences, Alabama A&M University, effective Jan 2.
ADDO, KWAKU. Interim Dean and Research Director, College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, Prairie View A&M University, effective Jan. 2.

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.

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

Farms for a New Generation Director, American Farmland Trust

SOUTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY, CAFCS, Department of Agriculture, Assistant/Associate Professor in Animal Science, Assistant/Associate Professor in Natural Resource Management.

ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY, College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences. Associate Director of Extension, **Alcorn State University Employment Opportunities | Associate Director for Extension**

CALENDAR

2026 CARET/BAA WASHINGTON CONFERENCE: Registration is now open for the 2026 CARET/BAA Washington Conference! Join us as we explore this year's theme: *Sustaining the Land-grant Promise: Deep Roots, Strong Futures.* The conference will bring together CARET delegates, college leadership, and stakeholders to engage with policymakers, share impact stories, and advance advocacy for agricultural research, Extension, and teaching. Don't miss this opportunity to connect, learn, and make your voice heard in Washington, DC. Please note that the meeting will officially start at Noon ET on Sunday, Feb. 22, so please make your travel arrangements accordingly. **Register today!**

2026 SRSA ANNUAL CONFERENCE: "Distilling Change: Rural Roots and River Currents in the New South. Feb. 1-2, at the Omni Louisville.

2026 BAA SUMMER MEETING | Portland, OR | July 13-15, Attendees include appointed and elected leadership representing a BAA Section or Member of a BAA Committee. This meeting will be held from July 13th to July 15th in Portland, OR. ECOP and the Budget and Advocacy Committee will be meeting starting at 3:00 pm PST on the 13th. The meeting will begin that night for the rest of the leadership groups at the Joint Opening Reception at 5:30 pm PST. The meeting will conclude on the 15th at 11:00 am PST. Hotel booking information and a full agenda is pending and will be available soon.

Join a free webinar featuring a panel of experts from the **RURAL SOCIOLOGICAL SOCIETY** as they explore how today's evolving policy landscape is shaping rural well-being and opportunity.. We'll explore the impacts of the "big beautiful bill," the recent federal shutdown, and state legislative sessions, highlighting how these developments create both challenges and openings for rural communities across the United States. Register here.

USDA 102ND ANNUAL AGRICULTURAL OUTLOOK FORUM, Feb. 19-20. Attendees can make online reservations or manage existing reservations using your event's booking website.
Visit booking website