

Farm



Sense

December 2020

UAPB Small Farm Project

Dates to Remember

December 16 - Zoom Financial Assistance for Pasture Production Workshop, 9 a.m.

December 18 - EQIP Sign-up Deadline for 2021 year

January 1, 2021 - Deadline for green growers of fall/spring crops to enroll in FSA Non-Insured Crop Disaster Program (NAP)

January 11 - Zoom Hemp Production Workshop, 9 a.m.

January 25 - Zoom Credit Counseling Workshop, 9 a.m.

February 8 - Zoom Financial Opportunities and Marketing Workshop, 9 a.m.

February 22 - Zoom KIITF Heir's Property Workshop, 9 a.m.

March 8 - Zoom Mental Health and Farming, 9 a.m.

For connection information for all Zoom sessions, contact Karen Lee at leek@uapb.edu or (870) 575-7225.

Beginning Farmers and Ranchers to Benefit from NIFA Grant

By Dr. Henry English, director, UAPB Small Farm Program

Beginning farmers and ranchers will benefit from a three-year \$600,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to the UAPB Small Farm Program. The grant will be used to train beginning farmers and ranchers in 20 counties that have a large number of socially disadvantaged and limited resource farmers and ranchers.

Many farmers have been underserved because of such barriers as limited access to credit, lack of knowledge of land acquisition and transition, limited access to existing

and viable markets and lack of skills in financial planning and production.

The East Arkansas Enterprise Community (EAEC) in northeast Arkansas and the Silas H. Hunt Community Development Corporation (SHHCDC) in southwest Arkansas are working with the Small Farm Program in implementing the program.

The program will identify and work with beginning farmers and ranchers in the targeted areas. Participants will be trained and assisted with farm business planning, livestock and crop production and

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Beginning farmer Justice Bryant (left) confers with multi-county agent Stephan Walker (right).



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marketing. Information on alternative enterprises, use of USDA programs and heirs' property issues will also be included.

Also, as part of the program, UAPB will conduct beginning farmers and ranchers classes on campus, consisting of seven monthly workshops, which will get underway early in 2021. The workshops will be a mixture of classroom sessions, farm and ranch tours, UAPB experiment station

tours and hands-on field activities.

Beginning farmers and ranchers are those who have been farming for 10 years or less. Qualifying farmers may sign up for both the training and technical assistance and the seven monthly campus workshops or just one or the other.

Socially disadvantaged farmers include American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Asians, Blacks or African-American, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, Hispanics and

women. In Arkansas, an average limited resource farmer had gross farm sales for 2018 and 2019 of less than or equal to \$180,000 per year with an adjusted gross income of less than \$26,200. Figures vary by county throughout the country.

For more information, an application to participate in the classroom activities, or to sign up for training and technical assistance, call the UAPB Small Farm Program at (870) 575-7225 or email leek@uapb.edu.

Act 107 Can Help Heirs' Property Owners Keep Land

By Dr. Henry English, director, UAPB Small Farm Program

Land ownership by Black farmers peaked in 1910 at 16-19 million acres, according to the Census of Agriculture, but the 2017 agriculture census reported only 3.8 million acres owned by Blacks. Challenges associated with heirs' property status are the leading causes of involuntary land loss by Black farmers.

Heirs' property refers to family-owned land passed down without a will and held by descendants as "tenants in common." Each owner has an undivided interest in the land. Any owner or anyone that purchases a small interest in the land can file with the court to force other owners to sell. These partition sales often occur against the

wishes of other family members. The result is often a sale that does not meet fair market value and may result in the dispossession of family members from inherited land. Low to moderate income heirs' property owners may not have access to assistance from trust and estate attorneys and are vulnerable to predatory speculators.

Eighteen states thus far have sought to rectify this method of dispossession of family members from inherited land. They have enacted the Uniform Partition of Heirs' Property Act (UPHPA). Arkansas was the fifth state to do so.

The Uniform Act, introduced and sponsored by Rep. Matthew J. Shepherd, was signed into law by Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson on Feb. 18, 2015, and is known as Act 107. It allows the owners or tenants-in-common to buy out an owner who wants to sell at the appraised value without having to put the entire property up for sale.

The 2018 Farm Bill allows owners of "heirs' property" to qualify for a Farm Service Agency farm number and be eligible for many U.S. Department of Agriculture programs including lender and disaster relief programs. It also gives farmers and ranchers who own heirs' property in these 18 states priority consideration for legal assistance to help them restructure their legal ownership for greater stability and to obtain clear title to their property.

Many heirs' property owners are not aware of Act 107 or the Uniform Partition of Heirs' Property Act, in effect in 18 states. Being aware of Act 107, telling others about it and using it if necessary are actions heirs' property owners can do to avoid dispossession of their inherited property.



The 2017 agriculture census reported that 3.8 million acres of farm land was owned by Blacks. In 1910 Blacks owned nearly 19 million acres.

Protect Your Livestock from Harsh Winter Conditions

By Dr. David Fernandez, Extension Livestock Specialist, UAPB

Livestock usually do not mind cold temperatures as long as they have good feed, clean water and shelter from the wind. Their winter coats and the heat produced as they digest their food helps keep them warm. Snow does not usually cause livestock distress. Snow is usually more of a problem for the farmer than it is for the animals. In Arkansas winter can mean wet, cold conditions. Arkansas tends to get a lot of freezing rain, sleet, ice and wintery mix.

The winter coat of livestock is thicker and heavier than their summer coat to trap warm air close to the animal's body. This blanket of warm air keeps livestock comfortable even when you are chilled. If precipitation is freezing as it falls or shortly after it hits the ground, animals can become wet through to the skin. The water causes the hair to mat and lose its insulating value. Water conducts heat away from the body many times faster than dry air. In the summer when you sweat, your body is cooled by this kind of evaporation. The same thing happens to wet animals as precipitation freezes on their skin. In the winter, livestock that become wet through to the skin can suffer from hypothermia and even die.

Keep livestock safe and warm this winter by providing shelter from wet weather. Windy weather can also chill your animals by blowing away the layer of warmer air trapped close to their bodies. This is why the wind chill factor always makes the temperature feel colder when you are out in blustery winter weather. Windbreaks on your farm can provide livestock with a place to get out of the wind and stay warm. Putting wet animals close together in a barn can help keep them warm. Their body heat warms the air in the barn and helps keep them warmer, too. The barn also protects them from the wind and wet.

Animals that are in good body condition have a layer of fat under their skin that helps insulate them from the cold. On a scale of 1 to 9, with 1 being emaciated and 9 being obese, cattle should be in body condition score (BCS) 5. Sheep and goats in Arkansas should be in BCS 3 to 3.5 on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being emaciated and 5 being obese. Thin animals will be more likely to suffer from the cold and will need more shelter.

One way to help livestock keep warm is to provide them with low quality hay. The additional fiber in the lower quality hay generates more heat in the rumen while it is being digested. Just be sure to provide enough nutrients by using a better quality hay or supplement to meet their needs. You do not want to sacrifice production by under nourishing your animals. Be sure to provide plenty of clean water, too. Water helps animals retain their body heat. It is easy for animals to become a little dehydrated when it is cold outside. That's because they tend to drink less cold water when it is cold outside. Also, waterers can freeze, preventing livestock from accessing the water.

Animals that are well-fed and have access to plenty of clean water, windbreaks and shelter from freezing precipitation do not mind the cold. Thin wet animals left out in the wind will not provide the best nutrition for their offspring in the spring and will be more likely to suffer from illness and death. Winter prevention measures go a long way towards increasing your profitability next fall. For more information, contact Dr. Fernandez at (870) 575-8316 or fernandezd@uapb.edu

Average Arkansas Land and Rent Prices

By Dr. Henry English, director, UAPB Small Farm Program

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducts an annual survey to collect data on crop acreage, land use, grain stocks, farms, rents and the value of land and sales. The 2008 Farm bill mandated that

NASS provide mean rental rates for all counties with 20,000 acres of cropland plus pasture.

To get to the average cash rents by county, go to the NASS website at www.nass.usda.gov and scroll to Find

Data and Reports at the bottom of the page, select the state, click on "county estimates" and then "cash rents."

The average cash rent per acre for pastureland in Arkansas remained the same as last year, \$19 per acre. In general, the land value of both irrigated and non-irrigated cropland increased only slightly.

NASS information may be used to provide producers with a guide as to what land is worth and what it rents for in Arkansas. Remember, these are average values only. Information from local real estate agencies may be a better source.

Arkansas Average Land Value Per Acre			
	2018	2019	2020
Cropland Irrigated	\$3,290	\$3,340	\$3,360
Cropland Non-Irrigated	\$1,990	\$2,060	\$2,100
Pastureland	\$2,530	\$2,610	\$2,650

Arkansas Average Cash Rent Per Acre			
	2018	2019	2020
Cropland Irrigated	\$136	\$131	\$135
Cropland Non-Irrigated	\$ 49	\$ 49	\$ 48
Pastureland	\$ 18	\$ 19	\$ 19

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Conservation Awareness Project Underway

By Carol Sanders, writer/editor, UAPB

The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff Small Farm Program is implementing its Conservation Program Awareness Project (CPAP). The three-year \$495,000 outreach project, funded by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), targets women, veterans, socially disadvantaged producers (SDPs) and limited resource producers (LRPs).

Program objectives are:

- Increase awareness of targeted groups to NRCS conservation practices in the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)
- Make on-site farm visits to members of targeted groups and assist them in selecting conservation practices suitable for their operations
- Assist targeted members in completing and submitting conservation applications for participation in NRCS programs such as EQIP and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).

UAPB and NRCS staff will conduct virtual and direct on-site informational meetings to create awareness of conservation programs and practices available. Before a site visit is conducted, participants will complete a short survey about their operations to help determine whether a UAPB or NRCS specialist should be on the team to visit their operation.

Participants will receive a Conservation Practice Identification Tool (CPIT) from that identified conservation practices suitable for their operation after each site visit. This form may be submitted with the EQIP application to the local NRCS office. For more information or to sign up, call (870) 575-7225 or email leek@uapb.edu.



Maria McElroy admires this trough with gravel watering system, one of the many conservation projects funded by EQIP.

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