

**TO:** MR. BART HEWITT

**FROM:** \_\_\_\_\_, INTERIM ADMINISTRATOR  
JESSE HARNESS

**RE:** REVISION ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT

The Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program is hereby submitting to the USDA CSREES its Revisions to The Annual Report of Accomplishments for the year ending September 31, 2001. We hope that this report satisfies both the law and the spirit of the law.

If you have questions, please call me at (601) 877-6128 or E-mail me at [zwells@lorman.alcorn.edu](mailto:zwells@lorman.alcorn.edu) or Lynette Jones at (601) 877-6555 or E-mail me at [ljones@lorman.alcorn.edu](mailto:ljones@lorman.alcorn.edu).



The Cooperative Extension Program at Alcorn State University was first established in 1971. The Extension Program was established to meet the needs of the citizens of the state that had not fully participated in outreach educational programs being implemented by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and other state agencies. Since that time, Alcorn State University has directed its available resources toward meeting the unique needs of small farmers and low-income rural families and communities.

The Cooperative Extension Program re-committed itself to meeting the needs of the underserved in FY 2000 with the submission of its four-year strategic plan. Since submitting the strategic plans, in 1999, the state's economy has been in a severe slump, leading to severe budget cuts, reduced staff, and resources required to implement planned programs.

In spite of having to do more with less, members of the staff have risen to the occasion in not only responding to the requests from customers, but they also continue to be proactive in implementing program design to increase income and the quality of life of individuals, families, and communities of the state.

This progress report outlines some of the major educational activities conducted during FY 2001 and the impact that they have had on the income and quality of life of the participants. During FY 2002, the Cooperative Extension Program will be faced by additional budget cuts. These cuts will have a dramatic impact on the size of the extension staff and its ability to deliver planned programs. To meet the challenge of reduced resources, the Cooperative Extension Program will increase its collaboration with other state, federal agencies, and make use of paraprofessional and volunteers to augment the effort of its depleted staff and resources.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Formula funds were first made available to operate the Cooperative Extension Program in October of 1971; however, outreach activities at Alcorn State University pre-dated the establishment by nearly 50 years. Negro Extension Programs were developed under the Smith-Lever Act by Alcorn State University and other 1890 Institutions as early as 1921. The 1862 Institution (Mississippi State University) provided supervision and overall administration of the program. The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 made no provisions for the sharing of federal funds with 1890 Institutions.

The indirect funding period under Public Law 89-106 lasted from 1972 to 1977 when all federal extension funds earmarked for Alcorn State University were channeled through Mississippi State University. The day-to-day administration of Alcorn's Cooperative Extension Program was the responsibility of the Coordinator (Administrator).

The Direct Funding Period began with the enactment of Public Law 95-113 in 1977. Under its provisions, Alcorn State University gained administrative control of its funds and began receiving extension funds directly from the Federal Government. Guidelines required Alcorn State University and Mississippi State University to operate a single unified extension program.

In 1971, when Alcorn State University first began operating under Public Law 89-106, the University operated extension programs in five counties: Copiah, Lincoln, Claiborne, Jefferson, and Pike. Ten additional counties: Scott, Smith, Simpson, Hinds, Warren, Lawrence, Adams, Wilkinson, Amite, and Walthal were added in 1972.

From 1971 to 1972, the Cooperative Extension Program at Alcorn State University was known as the Alcorn State University Branch of the Mississippi Cooperative Extension Service. With the passing of Public Law 95-113 in 1977, the name was changed to Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program and the title of CEO was changed to Administrator. The Cooperative Extension Program was re-organized in 1986 as a result of the University's budget being cut by 28%. The University President decided to consolidate the positions of Extension Administrator, Research Director, and Division Director into one position as a cost cutting measure. The current Extension Administrator became an Associate Extension Administrator with responsibility for all extension activities. In 1991, all Extension Paraprofessionals were terminated and replaced with a smaller number of professional Extension Agents working under the day-to-day supervision of three Area Coordinators.

In 1992, the Cooperative Extension Program was further re-structured placing Agriculture, Special Programs, and Family & Consumer Sciences each under an Associate Administrator. Since placing Agriculture and Special Projects under the supervision of an Associate Administrator, the Program has been expanded to thirty counties and includes three off-campus Demonstration Centers. These Centers are devoted to promoting demonstrations and the discovery of facts.

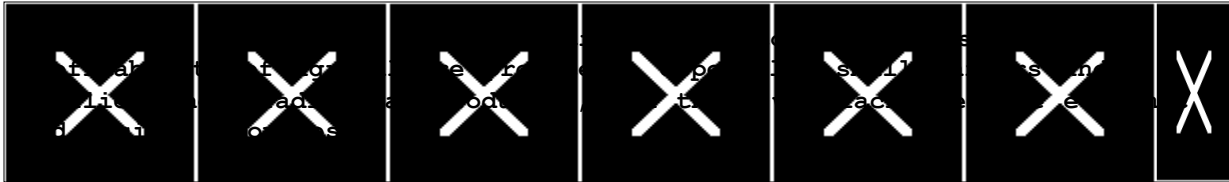
## **SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS FY 2001**

The Cooperative Extension Program at Alcorn State University continues to address needs and concerns of customers and stakeholders. With the modifications of available resources, the extension program continues to be innovative, providing clients with adaptive skills and knowledge in order to maintain and become more competitive in today's fluctuating economy.

During FY' 2001, the major thrust of ACEP was directed toward small farms and alternative enterprises, families and youth-at-risk, nutrition, fitness and health and economic and community development. These programs were delivered by twenty-six (26) agents, four (4) area coordinators, and eleven (11) specialists. The extension program staff received significant technical support from internal departments of the university (agricultural research; small farm development center) and other state and federal agencies such as Farm Service Agency, NCRS, and Mississippi Forestry Commission.

Extension agents and specialists conducted nine hundred-fifty (950) educational workshops, seminars, field days and demonstrations. More than 41,000 small farmers, rural and urban families, youth and community leaders participated in these activities. Agents and specialists also made more than 10,350 farm and home visits conducting one-on-one training for clientele.

Educational programs conducted in 2001 included the Production of Fruit and Vegetables, Forage Crops, Beef Cattle, Swine, Farm Business Management, Marketing of Farm Products, Teen Pregnancy, Family Life and Child Development, Youth-at-Risk, Clothing and Textiles, Nutrition, Fitness and Health, and Community and Economic Development. As a result of educational programs conducted, the accomplishments were made through the following goals and key themes.



## Goal Narrative

According to the most recent census for the state of Mississippi, the number of farms have declined from 125,000 in 1962 to approximately 43,000 in 2001. The rate of farms disappearances for limited resource farmers has been as high as three times that of non limited farmers. Unless a drastic change occurs within this country, small farms will become nonexistent by the twenty-first century.

The major factors leading to the decline of small farms includes: poor management, shortage of capital, marketing, limited knowledge of available USDA programs, enterprise diversification, and value added processing. The demand for fresh fruit and vegetables have continued to increase over the past ten years. Small farmers in the state are producing commercial vegetables as a means of diversifying their farm operation and to generate a farm income during periods of the year they not other wise have an income. The greatest demand for fresh vegetables is during the fall and early spring. During this period, production is low because of a lack of irrigation and producers lack of knowledge of cold season vegetables. Additionally, small farmers are generally afraid to invest in large acreage because of the lack of confidence in existing markets.

The Cooperative Extension Program will implement a pro-active educational program for small farmers in targeted counties on the production and value-added processing of fruit and vegetables. The major thrust of the program will be directed toward producers of traditional operations to include some form of value-added processing.

During fiscal years 1999-2004, extension specialist and agents will work closely with small farmers and community leaders in establishing direct farmers' markets, processing markets and wholesale-retail markets both nationally and internationally. The majority of all produce consumed by food establishments and by individual households within the state are produced by farmers outside the state. Programs will be implemented to establish local markets as well as shipment of produce outside the U.S.

The production of swine remains a major alternative agricultural enterprise for small farmers in the state. Yet small farmers in Mississippi produce a small percentage of the pork consumed in the state. The number of producers will increase during periods of upswing in the market and decrease when prices are depressed. Stability can be obtained if farmers improve the quality of their hogs sold for slaughter, decrease production costs and establish new and improved marketing systems.

The quality of slaughter hogs can be improved by producing higher quality of breeding stock, scheduling of breeding and farrowing, following recommended herd health programs and by following recommended nutrition programs.

Small beef producers in Mississippi do not practice proper culling and selection of breeding stock. Most calves are generally below average at weaning. Most producers have not developed a specific calving season, which means that they are calving year round.

Proper management, record keeping, and nutritional programs for their herds, especially during winter months are major factors limiting production. Winter grazing has not been practiced and high quality hay for winter feeding has been at a minimum.

The meat goat industry is rapidly becoming a major livestock enterprise for small farmers in Mississippi. Quality breeding stock and sound management practices are requirements to meet demands of this industry in order to improve the income potentials of producers. A breeding schedule is needed by farmers to meet marketing demands. Proper nutrition is not practiced due to the fact that goats are known as browsers. Small farmers who own goats purchase them because of their survival skills. A large portion of goats survive on brush without necessary supplements to yield to quality carcass. Major changes in the herd health program must be in place to achieve healthy animals. Furthermore, meat goats can be a profitable business if management techniques are practiced.

A combination of traditional and alternative agricultural enterprises and the incorporation of sustainable agricultural practices by clientele continue to increase farm income by participants. The income of rural residence and the sustain-ability of agriculture has increased through education. On-farm income has the potential of increasing by diversification and the utilization of alternative cash crops. Also, the potential income from traditional and alternative livestock can be increased through emphasis on proper management and production of summer pastures and winter grazing.

The promotional program in aqua-culture has continues to draw interest among small farmers in Mississippi. At the inception of this program there were very few active small farmers in the area of catfish production, that interest has increased tremendously. This interest will continue to expand with concentrated efforts in program promotion. There are hundreds of small farmers in counties targeted by Cooperative Extension Program at Alcorn State University who are experiencing cash flow problems and who are struggling in order to continue farming. -

Must of these farmers have small tracts of land ranging from 1 to 40 acres.

The Cooperative Extension program has developed an aqua-culture program designed to provide potential small farmers with skills necessary for fish production. Small farmers with farm ponds can increase their income and improve family diet by utilizing new and existing farm ponds for aqua-culture.

Farming has never been easy; small and limited resources lack the marginal skills necessary to keep up with a changing and sophisticated industry. Small and limited resource farmers seemingly lack the knowledge of key management practices that enable their small farms to make a profit. That in turn, affects a family's quality of life and maybe even economic survival. Actions, like record keeping, understanding cash flow analysis, taking educational courses, attending seminars, taking soil samples and diversifying farm operations-all can contributes to a farm's success. Skillful farm management is vital of a farmer is to prosper in such a demanding and ever-changing environment.

Farms throughout the state of Mississippi, will continue to face significant challenges in maintaining operation and sustaining growth of their family business. Research has shown that farms are inefficiencies of small size, have restricted income generating capability, receive low erratically output prices, incur rising input in pricing, have limited managerial capability, recently more prevalent, dwindling access to credit and financing.

Small farmers in Mississippi, as well as nation wide, are experiencing financial difficulties, which have led to bankruptcy, foreclosure, and stressful emotional conditions.

**KEY THEME:**

## **DIVERSIFIED/ALTERNATIVE AGRICULTURE (AGRONOMY)**

Extension specialists, agents and research scientists are concentrating on the promotion of new alternative enterprises designed to improve small farm income and overall viability. The major thrust of the agronomy program was directed toward increased acreage of syrup crops, sweet corn and green peanuts by 25%, while encouraging minimum use of pesticides.

### **IMPACT**

Agents and specialists conducted 151 production meetings, demonstrations, tours and field days and made 2,324 farm and home visits. Small farmers produced 23,903 acres of traditional crops, and 1,648 acres of emerging alternative crops. Farmers following a diversified production program administered by extension agents and specialists produced crops valued at more than \$9,500,000.

### **SCOPE OF IMPACT**

Activities conducted and income generated impacted family income and quality of life of the communities in which they live.

## **AGRICULTURAL PROFITABILITY**

The demand for fresh fruits and vegetables has continued to increase over the past ten (10) years. The greatest demand for fresh vegetables is during the fall and early spring. Small farmers do not follow organized planting schedules and they lack knowledge of cool season vegetables. Therefore, production is low and the demand are greater during these periods.

### **IMPACT**

During FY 2001, extension agents and specialists conducted fifty-two (52) workshops, seminars, field days and tours on commercial production of fruits and vegetables. More than six thousand five hundred (6,500) small farmers family members and community leaders attended. Educational programs resulted in small farmers producing 8,099 acres of fruits and vegetables at an estimated value of \$9,000,000.

### **SCOPE OF IMPACT**

Commercial fruits and vegetables production are major alternative enterprises for small farmers in Mississippi. Because of alternative crops, small farmers are able to stay on the farm and enjoy a quality of life that they otherwise would not enjoy. This program impacted small farmers in nineteen (19) counties along the Mississippi River and three counties in east central Mississippi. Commercial vegetable production can be a major economic development tool for the Southwest and Delta Region of Mississippi.



## **ANIMAL PRODUCTION EFFICIENCY**

The production of livestock (swine beef cattle and meat goats) remain a major alternative enterprises for small farmers in the state. While small farmers in Mississippi produce a small percentage of the livestock consumed in the state, the number of producers out number larger commercial producers. Small livestock producers must improve breeding stock, improve herd health, and management practices in order to sustain their operations. The objective of the animal production and efficiency program is to conduct educational programs that will increase production and overall quality. Educational programs emphasized selecting and implementing recommended breeding practices, herd health, pest control, value-added processing, and the organization of small farm cooperatives.

### **IMPACT**

Extension agents and specialists conducted eighty-five (85) workshops, seminars, field days, demonstrations and tours. More than five thousand one hundred seventeen (5,117) producers participated. As a result of educational programs conducted by extension personnel, small farmers sold livestock valued at \$18,000,000.

### **SCOPE OF IMPACT**

Educational activities conducted impacted small farmers in twenty-one (21) Mississippi counties, fourteen (14) of which are in southwest Mississippi.

## **AQUACULTURE**

There are hundreds of small land owners in the state with 40-60 acres. Most of these farmers are middle age and derive most of their income from off-farm employment. Many of their farms have existing ponds on their property. The ponds can be made productive by producing catfish for fee fishing, recreation, home consumption and/or expand into larger commercial operations.

The objective of the aquaculture's program is to inform rural families of the opportunities available to increase income and improve their quality of life through the production of aquaculture. Educational programs emphasized the production of fingerling, proper diet water, quality and marketing.

### **IMPACT**

During FY 2001, extension agents and specialists conducted twenty-five (25) workshops, seminars, and tours. More than five hundred fifteen (515) small farmers/landowners participated. Small farmers/landowners increased acreage in fish production in FY 2001 by nineteen hundred eighty-two (1,982) acres. The same small farmers

produced more than 26,800,000 pounds of fish at an estimated value of \$20,000,000.

### **SCOPE OF IMPACT**

The aquaculture program significantly impact the income and quality of life for hundreds of families in the state. The most significant impact is on farm families in the southwest and northern western part of the state.

## **FARM MANAGEMENT**

Small farmers throughout the state of Mississippi, will continue to face significant challenges in maintaining their operation and sustaining growth of their business. Small farmers of Mississippi, as well as nation-wide, are experiencing financial difficulties, which have led to bankruptcies, foreclosures, and stressful emotional conditions.

The major factor leading to the decline of small farmers includes, but not limited to: poor management, shortage of capital, marketing, limited knowledge of available USDA programs, enterprise diversification and value-added processing.

### **IMPACT**

During FY 2001, the Small Farm Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project conducted eighty-nine (89) educational programs through workshop and group meetings, and held fifteen (15) in-service training for 2501 staff. There were fifty-four (54) farm services loan applications submitted and thirty-eight (38) of those were approved for the sum of \$1,997,256.00. Twenty-four (24) loan applications were submitted to the Small Farm Development Center and nineteen (19) were approved for the sum of \$253,400.00. Three (3) guaranteed loans were submitted and two (2) were approved for the sum of \$298,000.00. Twenty-five (25) youth loans were submitted and approved for \$1 35,000.00. Specialist assisted small farmers in acquiring \$2,385,656 in loans.

### **SCOPE OF IMPACT**

Small Farm Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project worked with a variety of agencies to assure clients receive the necessary information, training and technical assistance needed to improve their present operation and to give direction to new enterprises.

## **ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY'S INCUBATOR FARM FOR KEMPER AND WINSTON COUNTIES**

Ten (10) small farmers in the Winston and Kemper County areas participated as trainees at the incubator farm during FY 2001. These farmers produced approximately sixty-five (65) acres of produce that sold in the local communities for an estimated value of \$75,000. In addition to the ten (10) farmers that produced crops at the farm, the center provided temporary employment for over thirty (30) persons from surrounding counties.

The incubator farm also served as a training center for area farmers and farm family

members. More than twenty-five (25) educational workshops, field days, seminars and demonstrations were held. Approximately eight hundred twenty-five (825) small farmers, family members and community leaders participated. During fall of FY 2001, the center held a graduation ceremony for participants who had successfully completed the program. Four (4) farmers successfully completed the program. These individuals are expected to return to their farm and duplicate what they have learned at the center.

### **DEMONSTRATION FRESH VEGETABLE PROCESSING FACILITY (CENTER FOR VALUE-ADDED PROCESSING)**

Construction of the Demonstration Fresh Vegetable Processing Facility was completed in the late fall of FY 2000. However, because of the lack of funds to purchase equipment, the facility has not been able to fully serve the purpose for which it was established. During the spring and summer of FY 2001, small farmers utilized the facility as a training center and as a packing and shipping center

During the fall of FY 2001, both the North Delta Vegetable Growers' Association and Alcorn State University will pursue funding for the purchase of equipment.

### **ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION/RESEARCH FARM AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER CENTER MOUND BAYOU, MS**

#### **SWEET POTATO PRODUCTION IN THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA**

FY 2000 was a disaster year for sweet potatoes produced in the Mississippi Delta. Extremely hot and dry weather caused complete crop failure for most producers. However, the FY 2001 growing season was one of the best years farmers have experienced since the program was established. Farmers harvested approximately five hundred thirteen (513) acres of potatoes with an expected market value of \$923,400.



## Goal Narrative

According to Campbell, CC (1991), there is an average of 1.5 supermarkets available per county in Mississippi. Supermarkets generally supply the most variety, afford-ability, and healthier foods for consumption. Many people shop at neighborhood grocery stores, whose food supply is inadequate and far more expensive to purchase than if the food was home grown or came from a supermarket. A relative number of the target audience are living in rural areas, but they do not take advantage of growing their own food. The problem of not knowing how to grow and store food for future use is also prevalent.

To get to adequate food sources, transportation is also a problem. The trouble is that many of the consumers in the state do not have access to this food source. Women, Infant and Children Program (WIC) is also a food source, but there are strict qualifications and limitations in order to receive assistance. The elderly, lactating mothers, and young children seem the most at risk. The need to provide information and education to this group is overwhelming.

Approximately 20 percent of the states population are living in households below poverty. According to the Mississippi census, of the 2,615,208 residents, approximately 35 percent are African Americans, of those households, 21 percent are headed by single parent families. Even though this number is extremely high, the number of children residing in families of single households is 58.6 percent. The poverty level and number of people in the household that is currently employed, places these families at risk of not being able to access healthy affordable food sources and supplies due to limitation of resources.

In the area of Family Life and Child Development, this goal will be addressed through the program of “Maintaining Family Stability, Health and Nutrition”. The first phase of the program will be to determined the number and variety of available food sources, safety factors, accessibility, risk factors and afford-ability. The second phase of the program will be to provide practical self help techniques to help families overcome this problem.

The area of Family Life and Child Development will work collaboratively with the department of home economics food scientists, and agricultural food specialists to determine strategies for addressing the issue of safety, accessibility and afford-ability of food to the targeted.

The Claiborne County Family Health Center, Mississippi Department of Human Services, Women, Infant and Children Program and the state Food Stamp Services will play a role in identifying families who have problems in accessing healthy food. These agencies will also be used as resources in the educational aspect of the program.

### **KEY THEME:**

## **FOOD SAFETY AND HANDLING**

Two program Specialist and seven home economist developed a resource manual on food safety and handling and implemented the program in thirteen counties. As a result of our program on Food Safety there has been a 50 percent decrease in food borne diseases in farm families in Southwest Mississippi. Raw meat, poultry and fish is consumed on the average of three (3) times per week by a family of four (4). The process of selecting, buying, preparing, cooking and storing is vital to the health of the family. Fifty-seven (57) workshops were held in fourteen counties in Southwest Mississippi. The food safety handbook was used as a major resource in conducting these workshops. Additionally, publications were written in low literacy and demonstrations were held in public housing, local industry, and low income sections of the communities to prevent food borne illness and safe food preparation and storage. Seventy-five percent of the program was supported through Federal and state funds.

### **IMPACT**

During FY' 2000, two specialists and seven home economist collaboratively developed a resource handbook on food safety that could be used by the average family to prevent food borne illness. Fifty-seven (57) workshops were held in thirteen Southwestern counties selection, preparation and storage of food. Three hundred (300) families participated in this training. Seventeen (17) workshops were held in public high schools to make youth aware of the importance of safe handling of food items.

### **SCOPE OF IMPACT**

Educational programs were concentrated in the southern region of the state, prioritizing TNAF recipients, industry, and high school students.



### **Goal Narrative**

As we move into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century we have observed major changes in the family

structure, computer technology, supermarket products and an increased concern within the small communities on health issues, proper food consumption and food safety. Millions of dollars are spent on nutrition, diet and health research each year causing an explosion of information that is valuable to the consumers. Each day scientists are finding stronger links between lifestyle, diet and good health. In spite of this wave of information in health maintenance and disease prevention, more and more Americans are suffering from nutrition-related conditions such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, strokes, heart disease, high infant morbidity and mortality rates. Mississippi has been ranked third in the nation for obesity. Consumers in the southern region traditionally consume diets high in fat and simple carbohydrates. Rural agricultural counties along the Mississippi river in southwest Mississippi are medically under served areas, with a shortage of health care professionals. Community-based educational programs to improve individuals and families knowledge based on the relationship between diet, lifestyle, and health is greatly needed in order that valuable information learned through research can reach the health conscious consumers.

The Nutrition, Diet and Health program is community-based and offers nutrition and health education activities and services geared toward intervention, prevention and maintenance. The mission of the program is to improve and maintain the southwest communities' optimal health and social well-being throughout the span of life. The program achieves its goals through four components: (1) The Nutrition Resource Library is open to partnership organizations in order to assure the general public proper accessibility to knowledge, facilities, and equipment needed to promote health. (2) Medical Nutrition Therapy is available to women, men, and children throughout the span of life who have received a medical risk assessment and need therapeutic diet counsel. The program offers complimentary consultations with a Registered Dietitian with monitoring and appropriate intervals. (3) A Health and Fitness Program offers a two-hour comprehensive nutrition class once a week for eight weeks. The Health and Fitness Program focuses on the practical application of positive influences to promote healthy food choices, a positive self-image, stress reduction, and increased physical activity. (4) The Community Fitness Club encourages and assists graduates of the Health and Fitness Program to continue the application of positive eating habits and healthy lifestyle practices by joining or organizing a Community Fitness Club. The club serves as the core of communication for gathering feedback on current nutrition concerns of the community.

The Didactic Program in Dietetics, The Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, Alcorn Extension Services, The Department of Social Sciences, and the Alcorn School of Nursing will be the internal linkage utilized on a on-going basis. The external linkage will be Primary Health Centers, The State Department of Health, Department of Health and Human Services, community colleges/organizations, and Mississippi Department of Agriculture.

#### **KEY THEME:**

### **ASU NUTRITION PUBLIC LEARNING UTILIZATION SYSTEM**

The mission of The Nutrition, Fitness and Health Program is to achieve a healthier, nourished population through translation of current nutrition and health research into practical application that will improve the lifestyles of individuals, families, and communities in Mississippi. Its mission is being accomplished through the following programs: **(1.) Health**

**and Fitness Program** is an adult multi-disciplinary program that focuses on healthy food choice, a positive self-image, stress reduction, and increased physical activity. (2.) **Medical Nutrition Partners** provides Menu Plans to women, men and children throughout their life span who have received a medical risk assessment and need therapeutic diet counsel. The clinic-based partnership accepts physician referrals from private practices, community health centers, health clinics and hospitals. (3.) **Nutrition PLUS Community Fitness Association (NPCFA)** practices healthy lifestyles, family unity, and sponsors social events. It also provides community leadership in nutrition, health and fitness. **Nutrition Resource Center** is an avenue for building partnership, exchanging information, resources, and promoting community outreach services.

## **IMPACT**

Seventy-two (72) candidates successfully completed a pilot program designed to improve their health through nutrition and positive lifestyle in the health and fitness program. Medical Nutrition Partners has joined forces with Alcorn State University School of Nursing and Claiborne County Family Health Center with the Diabetic Coalition and the Foot Care Project. Fifteen (15) participants received individual assessments, therapeutic diet counsel and a personalized 18-day cycle menu plan.

Nutrition PLUS Fitness Program provides an opportunity to health-concerned individuals to incorporate physical activities into their daily schedules. The membership continues to grow with each segment of the health and fitness program. The association consists of two hundred and forty-six (246) members. The program meets four (4) days per week at the community fire station. Volunteers have donated five pieces of exercise equipment to develop a fitness center.

Nutrition PLUS Newsletter was designed for the NPCFA members to communicate and share health and nutrition educational information within the rural communities. Newsletters are published quarterly and disseminated to residents of southwest Mississippi.

Approximately 10,000 publications have been disseminated from the Nutrition Resource Center during the fiscal year.

During FY 2001, the program successfully completed ninety-six (96) community awareness projects. Twenty (20) user-friendly nutrition education publications were developed and made available and disseminated to home economist and community organizations.

A project entitled "Mr. Gingerbread" provides early childhood education in nutrition, which is culturally sensitive to the rural community. The focus is on childhood obesity, iron-deficiency anemia, high cholesterol, healthy snack and physical fitness. Five thousand (5,000) Mr. Gingerbread Learner Kits were distributed in southwest Mississippi.

## **SCOPE OF IMPACT**

Through the following multiple intervention projects, these community clinical based programs have made and continue to make substantial impacts on residents of southwest Mississippi.



### **Goal Narrative**

Small farmers in Mississippi have historically been concerned about conserving and sustaining their farms. However, they have not kept up-to-date on current sustainable practices and new technology that would help them to accomplish their goal. Small farmers have not participated in conservation programs provided by the Farm Service Agency at the same level as more prominent farmers for one reason or another. The Cooperative Extension Program has a rich history of meeting the needs of small farmers. These farmers expect to participate in programs conducted by ACEP, especially in the spring. Therefore, The Cooperative Extension Program will work in cooperation with NRES and FSA in insuring that conservation programs are made available to small farmers.

### **KEY THEME:**

### **GRAZING**

Small farmers make up a large percentage of the livestock producers in the state. However, the forage produced on many of these farms are of poor quality and has very low yields. Large numbers of small producers depend on native pasture species and have not applied proper soil amendments for forage production. The objective of the grazing program is to improve the varieties and quality of forage crops produced by small farmers. Emphasis is being placed on getting farmers to produce new and improved hybrid varieties of grasses and to improve the production and management skill of producers.

### **IMPACT**

Four hundred sixty-three (463) farmers made significant improvements in the quality and yields of forage crops. Thirty-nine (39) farmers planted winter grazing for swine, three hundred thirty-seven (337) farmers planted winter grazing for cattle, one hundred fifteen (115) for goats and thirty-two (32) for horses. One hundred-eleven (111) farmers planted 6,551 acres of summer pasture.

### **SCOPE OF IMPACT**



Activities conducted resulted in reduced out of pocket cost and increased net returns for small farmers in targeted counties of Mississippi.

## **FORESTRY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

Small Forest landowners are not aware of the requirement to become a productive tree farmer. Landowners are in desperate need of forest management plans prepared by a professional forester. Many small landowners are not aware of the value of growing timber for profit. Small forest landowners do not know where to go to obtain information about tree farming. Past forest practices by ancestors were not lucrative. Therefore, thousands of acres of Forest land lay idle without any type of management program.

### **IMPACT**

During FY 2001, Extension agents and specialists developed marketing brochures for distribution to the general public. Twenty-eight (28) workshops, seminars, and field days were conducted. More than fifteen hundred (1,500) landowners participated. During workshops, landowners were provided information on the following: Where to obtain information regarding USDA and state forestry programs, cost and returns from forestry production and management programs, developing management plans for small forest landowners and creating small forest landowners monitoring committee to educate landowners on applying effective and improved management practices.

### **SCOPE OF IMPACT**

Activities conducted impacted small landowners in fourteen (14) targeted counties. Educational programs resulted in increased acreage planted in trees and small farmers adopting improved management plans. As a result of educational programs there was an increase in acreage planted and small farmers adopting recommended management plans.

## **SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE**

Small Farmers produced a combination of traditional and alternative agricultural enterprises and incorporated sustainable agricultural practices resulted in clientele continued increases in farm income.

### **IMPACT**

Extension Agents and Specialist conducted 26 Sustainable Agricultural demonstrations, 15 small group meetings, 521 farm visits and conducted 13 Field Days. One hundred -forty (140) farmers participated. Educational programs resulted in 126 farmers implementing sustainable agricultural practices on their farm. Cover crop acreage (1,883) and grass terraces/grass strip (60) for erosion control increased from last year by 600 acres due to more agents placing emphasis on sustainable agriculture practices. Fourteen (14) Sustainable Agriculture Educational Programs were conducted. One hundred eighteen (118) small farmers participated resulting in 60 farmers planting grass strips/earth terraces, and 34 small farmers planting no-till crops on 12,432 acres. Agents conducted 16 cover crop demonstration, 13 field days, and 521 farm and home visits resulting in 60 farmers planting 1,883 acres of cover crops.

## **SCOPE OF IMPACT**

On farm income was increased by planting a mix of traditional and alternative agricultural enterprises. Programs were primarily implemented in fourteen (14) counties in Southwest Mississippi.



### **Goal Narrative**

Since the mid-1980 there has been a growing recognition that in Mississippi, economic and community development is a major concern. Factors such as underemployment (a measure of economic distress in labor markets; rural residents who work or would like to work), unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, inadequate education, joblessness, welfare dependency, crime, desolate environmental conditions, hopelessness and despair have taken root in rural and urban communities. Mississippi communities continue to struggle through these disruptive forces of socioeconomic conditions. Socioeconomic indicators illustrate that the survival of rural communities in the southwest and lower delta region of Mississippi depends on the development of human capital, as well as economic opportunities for residents and ecological quality of these communities. According to the United States Bureau of Census reports, these communities collectively form pockets of “rural poverty” that are considered the worst in the United States, Mississippi rank among the poorest states in the nation. In fact, the survival of many of these rural communities will be determined to a substantial degree by the negative trends outlined above and by developments yet to unfold.

Creating and implementing economic development strategies is a difficult task. Rural communities are being challenged to link community based organizations, public entities and private business in creating long-term job security for the sociably disadvantaged.

Alcorn Cooperative Extension Program emphasizes management and control over development, utilizing an holistic approach to solving and recognizing that development is not a fixed state of harmony, but rather a process of change, in which the direction of resources are used toward investments, orientation of technical development, education through outreach, and institutional changes are made consistent with the future, as well as present needs. An educated and well-informed public is the most powerful tool toward positive community growth, sustain-ability and survival.

Mississippi's demographics are overwhelming, particularly in the southwest and delta region of the state, which harbor the state's highest poverty and unemployment rates. According to a national statistical report released by the Kids Count Project (1995), Mississippi ranks (50<sup>th</sup>) among all states in caring for children. In all four income categories—median household income, median income of families with children, average annual pay for workers, and per capita personal income—Mississippi ranks last in the nation. Furthermore, 30 of the state's 82 counties have been labeled as “severely distressed neighborhoods or communities with deplorable conditions.

These conditions include: (1) poverty rates above 27.5%, (2) dropout rates above 23.3%, (3) welfare dependency above 17%, (4) male unemployment above 46.5% and (5) high percentages of female-headed households.

Overall, the single greatest inequity seems to be the lack of available, long-term employment, thereby creating dependency on government subsidy and transfer payments. In contrast, the area is rich in abundance of natural resources and thrives economically from its agricultural-based products. However, special attention to public preservation and conservation of these natural resources is not being provided in a coordinate effort and poses a risk of contributing to the deterioration of these natural resources. Consequently, revitalizing these rural communities depends primarily on the development of a more informed, active and responsible citizenry.

The President's Council on Sustainable Development (1997) emphasized that an educated and informed public is our nation's most powerful resource for meeting the challenges created by a decreasing economic tax base, social equity demands, and decadence of natural environment. As consumers and producers, individuals make choices that cumulative have impact on whole communities, economies and environments. Without education through outreach services among the rural public, the societal consensus needed to direct rural communities toward a sustainable path cannot be attained. The target audiences will consist primarily of local government officials, community action groups, visionary “grass-root” leaders, school-age youths and county extension agents who function to serve the local residents. Extension specialist will also provide technical assistance and related services to various economic division (i.e., industrial operations, community development corporations, and home-based businesses) and selected social services organization, churches and school on request. Extension specialist will help rural students ( kindergarten through higher education), local volunteers, government officials, educators, and community groups learn about the environment as it rates to their daily lives, through the creation of a communiversit/campus environmental education program.

There is a growing awareness that the problems relating to teen sexuality cannot be addressed with simplistic or superficial methods. Young people must be urged to go beyond

the mechanics of sex and discover the beauty of their sexuality in the context of the family, love and commitment. To help people make choices that safeguard their health in the broadest sense, they need more help to live successfully with the choices they have made. The adult community should hold up the values that build character in the individual and maintain stability in the family.

Because there is a decline in the pool of quality workers in the overall youth population, employers are becoming concerned about the workforce pool for the future. Although the education is available, the delivery and motivational and method have failed to reach the majority of these youth. Which means when they are ready for the employment market they are ill-prepared for the available jobs. There is a mood of fatalism spreading and it is being carved out of poverty, lack of health care, a lack of positive role models and persistent failure in school, which lead to the inability to achieve the degree of knowledge necessary to be productive and successful individuals in today's society; thus, jeopardizing the future of this great nation.

“All children are at risk to some degree.” Without help, youth are most vulnerable and many not develop into healthy, productive adults. Prevention and intervention strategies for youth can be developed that will enable them to build skills and abilities that each possesses in order to gain a positive future. These skills can be further nurtured by involving youth in organized community or school based 4-H clubs. A good education, a positive self-image, personal development and employment skills are all essential in the development of a productive individual. If today's youth do not reach their full potential, it will represent a drain on the nation's future economic system and social stability. This is needed to reduce the neglect outcome and focus on the development of health, productive adults. There should be a renewed emphasis and increase investment in all aspects of their lives, with concentrated effort in the areas of youth development, education, leadership and citizenship.

The national plan for investments in the area of school-to-work transitions are centered around apprenticeships for older adolescents. The stages of career development should not be bound by age or developmental stages, nor should it begin with what to do after high school, but it should be a lifelong process. Youth need more opportunities at a very young age to develop aptitudes and values which prepares them to contribute in more positive ways as they enter adulthood.

Families in Mississippi are in need of assistance of coping with the changes in lifestyles of families. Although Mississippi is sparsely populated relative to its rural nature, 11,000 violent crimes were reported to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Mississippi has a low literacy, high infant mortality and usually high teenage pregnancy rate. Parents are finding it increasingly difficult to deal with the ills of society with assistance and support. The purpose of developing programs is an alternative means of addressing family cohesiveness, decision making, and family violence.

This program will be implemented in three stages: Developing and working with existing basic family support systems which will provide training and assistance for families in self-reliance and empowerment. Further emphasis will be placed on families in the second stage of the program. The role of the family in maintaining the stability of the community will be explored. More importantly, violence in the family will be emphasized to increase the awareness of the dangers of this crisis and to provide families with strategies for combating this

social phenomenon.

**KEY THEMES:**

**COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The Community Resource Development (CRD) Program focused on developing a local and statewide network of community and economic development practitioners, who possess skills in developing and facilitating a community social marketing plan that meets the program needs of their clientele.

**IMPACT**

During FY 2001, thirty (30) counties were targeted for the practitioners programs and ten (10) workshops were held for one hundred fifty (150) trainees.

Alcorn Cooperative Extension Program (ACEP) in its efforts to assist counties in its community asset mapping, two thousand eight hundred (2,800) county/city district needs assessments were conducted, four hundred (400) assessments were on local Board of Supervisors/Aldermen, six hundred (600) on local Businesses, one thousand two hundred (1,200) on community leaders (movers and shakers), two hundred (200) community professionals (educators and mentors); and four hundred (400) faith-based organizational leaders. Twelve (12) public forums were held to discuss the results of the collected data, establish community priorities, and develop collaborative partnership to meet their identified needs.

**SCOPE OF IMPACT**

ACEP workforce development program provided training for one thousand two hundred (1,200) persons. Seven hundred (700) persons were placed in permanent jobs.

In a joint funded project with SOFSEC, ACEP has developed a Rural Youth Entrepreneurship Program Model ('R-U-Ready"). Five (5) engaged programs for youth were successfully completed in five (5) counties.

Two rural youth businesses were started and one presently is in operation. Twelve (12) mini-county grants were funded as a result of ACEP/CRD grant writing workshops.

## **LEADERSHIP TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Extension Specialists and field staff developed several brochures and pamphlets to address the concerns of the community. This educational material was based on a recent survey (community assessment) in 2000 to determine how well rural communities reached out to support agencies for assistance in planning strategies for community development. The educational series focused on new approaches to creating value-added, alternative enterprises for community enhancement and expansion. According to the 1990 census report, five percent of Americans control ninety-five percent of the nations wealth. To off-set this imbalance, efforts were made to motivate individuals and families to pursue entrepreneurship ventures which would provide for family subsistence and economic power for the community.

### **IMPACT**

During FY' 2000/2001, extension agents conducted five (5) educational programs for youth in five southwestern Mississippi counties, 160 youth participated in the effort. Forty-five (45) units and governmental collaborative partnerships were identified and encouraged. As a result of a community needs assessment issued to 2000 residents, one thousand one hundred thirty eight (1,138) responses were received. This indicated that the communities were really interested in identifying critical issues on community stability and enhancement. Five (5) brochures were developed. Additionally, twenty-five (25) advisory groups were organized for program leadership and direction.

### **SCOPE OF IMPACT**

Program efforts were concentrated in the southern region of the state, prioritizing TANF recipients, industry, and high school students.

## **YOUTH AT RISK AND HEALTH**

Extension specialists and agents conducted group meetings, workshops, field days, day camps, and youth summits in the local public school systems and communities on Teenage Pregnancy Prevention, Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD's/HIV/AIDS), Career Development/Workforce Preparedness, Building Self-Esteem, Tobacco Prevention Education, 4-H and Youth Development.

### **IMPACT**

During FY 2001, two thousand three hundred seventy four (2,374) youths and one hundred forty (140) parents participated in forty-four (44) Teen Pregnancy Prevention group meetings and workshops. In the area that relates to Youth Health Issues, there were forty-nine (49) group meetings conducted on Sexually Transmitted Diseases and AIDS Awareness. Two

thousand nine hundred seventeen (2,917) youth and three hundred twenty-eight (328) adults participated in these programs in nine (9) local and six (6) community centers. To determine the effectiveness of this program the evaluation tool developed with the curriculum was used. According to objectives of the program, the main thrust of these workshops were to promote awareness and provide knowledge that dealt with the transmission and prevention of the STD'S.

## **SCOPE OF IMPACT**

The overall effectiveness of the program was assessed using a pre-post test designed by the teen pregnancy curriculum 'Project Taking Charge'. In the area of teen pregnancy this year, we experienced a 20% reduction in the number of youth that became pregnant. The Cooperative Extension Program has observed a decline in the incidents of teen pregnancy in targeted counties as well as the entire state of Mississippi. From the pre-post test over 50% of the youth who participated in the various workshops said they would postpone sexual activity until marriage or until they were in a committed relationship. According to the post-test 65% of the youth participating in the workshops understood how STD's and HIV/AIDS are transmitted and prevented.

## **YOUTH AND 4-H DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

### **IMPACT**

The Alcorn Cooperative Extension Staff conducted seventy-five (75) Career Development/Workforce Preparedness workshops in the local Junior High, High Schools and Voc-Tech Centers. Three thousand one hundred sixty nine (3,169) youth and three hundred twenty-five (325) adults participated in the Career Development/Workforce Preparedness Program, "The Working Class". The program involved the extension staff, teaching faculty, and local businesses.

Building self-esteem/self-imaging enjoyed an equal degree of success. Eighty-two (82) group meetings and workshops were conducted on Building Self-Esteem for youth and adults. Sixteen thousand eight (16,008) youth and one hundred eighty seven (187) adults participated. These programs were designed to increase youth image of themselves. A pre-post test was used to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. Thirty percent (30%) of the youth participants stated that they -felt better about themselves

The 4-H Youth Development Program, through the efforts of the Extension Youth Agents has organized ten (10) community-based youth clubs with one hundred fifty-one (151) members enrolled and seven (7) school-based clubs with one hundred eleven (111) enrolled. Five (5) volunteer leader trainings were conducted for thirty-nine (39) volunteer leaders.

The Alcorn Cooperative Extension Program, along with the Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi conducted a Tobacco Prevention and Education Project. The program was

designed to reduce the number of youth smokers in Southwest Mississippi. Four thousand one hundred twenty-seven (4,127) youth participated in seventy-five (75) workshops.

There were twelve (12) Tobacco Education Day Camps conducted with three hundred twenty (320) youth attending, and two (2) Youth Tobacco Summits were conducted on the campus of Alcorn State University. One hundred thirty-five (135) elementary schools students and one hundred seventy-five (175) high school students attended the two (2) summits.

### **SCOPE OF IMPACT**

The Career Development/Workforce Preparedness Program was successful. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of the youth that participated in this program accurately completed a letter of application, a resume, two types of applications, and successfully completed the interviewing process.

The sessions on self-esteem were considered to be the most successful by the participants primarily because these sessions offered real life resolutions to internal conflicts faced by the targeted population.

## **PARENTING EDUCATION**

An Extension Specialist in Family and Consumer Sciences developed a resource manual on the “Challenges and Principles of Parenting.” Five brochures were developed to complement the manual for distribution to 513 clients. The brochures developed included the following: Single and Raising Children, Effective Discipline Techniques for the Working Parent, Understanding the Developing Child, Managing Stress and Anxiety, and Roundtable Talks with Children. Parents were encouraged to participate in a series of four scheduled workshops. County Home Economists conducted the workshops using the developed materials as resources. Programs were implemented in public housing projects, scheduled home visits, and the extension office. Collaborating institutions includes: The Mississippi Department of Human Services, Mississippi Coalition of Mothers and Children, Faith Based Organizations and local school parenting programs.

### **IMPACT**

The program was implemented in 13 southwestern Mississippi counties. The general public was encouraged to sign up to receive a the newsletter that was published quarterly. The Newsletter included articles on effective parenting techniques.

### **SCOPE OF IMPACT**

The Parenting Education Program efforts were concentrated in the southern region of the state, prioritizing TNAF recipients, industry, and high school students.



## **DRESSING FOR SUCCESS**

### **“THE POWER OF CLOTHING**

An Extension Specialist in Family and Consumer Sciences developed a resource manual on the “Clothing Science”. A total of 511 high school students were recruited to participate in the Family and Consumer Science Clothing Study. The students were introduced to the following subjects: Clothing selections’ techniques, personal development, money management and appearance and fitness workshops. Each program was designed to be instrumental in enhancing students self-esteem, entrepreneurship possibilities and psychological effects of external and internal body coverings. The main focus of the clothing program is to address the needs of limited resource by individuals by empowering them to become self-sufficient.

#### **IMPACT**

During FY’ 2000/2001 the clothing and textile specialist and agents conducted fifty-three (53) workshops, developed five brochures and published two (2) bi-annual newsletters that were disseminated to 200 youths and 400 adults.

#### **SCOPE OF IMPACT**

The Dressing for Success Program efforts were concentrated in the southern region of the state, prioritizing TNAF recipients, industry, and high school students.

### **Program Review**

There has been an addendum to the five year plan of work. Goal 3: To achieve a healthier, more well-nourished population has been added (see plan of work update.

### **STAKEHOLDER INPUTS**

The Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program addresses the need for more stakeholder involvement aggressively. A Marketing Plan was developed in 1999 and is gradually being implemented (budget constraints) in three phases: Strategy, Tactics, and Programs. There are five factors that are being focused on: Image, visibility, interaction, creditability and customer feedback.

Other approaches being utilized is interaction with County level Advisory Committees composed of various commodities groups, and by holding town hall meetings, inviting the general public to provide input into program development. These are major sources of input that provide feedback into the development of the plan of work and to determine program impact.

During FY' 2001, despite budget shortfalls, efforts to address stakeholders needs continued. The citizens of Jefferson County, MS (Fayette), desperately needed a Farmer's Market.

The Alcorn State Cooperative Extension Program collaborated with the Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce, County Supervisors, and others to secure funds, determine site location, and develop a memorandum of agreement. This project has been delayed due to funding. The Main Street Market in Natchez, MS held it's Grand Opening in 2001. Since it's opening, it has provide residents along with visitors access to fresh vegetables and fruits as well as arts and crafts.

Citizens of Louise and Chickasaw Mississippi (Humphreys County) are in desperate need of decent and affordable housing. Kim Wilkes, Rural Housing Specialist for the Small Farm Training and Technical Assistance Project assisted residents within these communities along with the department of Rural Development in acquiring information on credit counseling, completing applications, and locating lands and grants.

Stakeholder issues and concerns were reviewed to measure impact and accomplishments made since FY' 2000. Due to severe budget cuts, concerns were aired that a need to prioritize stakeholder needs verses available resources without affecting services delivered. This is a major problem facing the Alcorn Cooperative Extension Program as well as other extension programs.

### **INFORMATION SOURCES**

- 1 . Annual Accomplishment Reports from Extension Agents and Area Coordinators
2. Reports submitted monthly and annually by Specialists
3. Reports from Coordinators of Off-Campus Centers

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