

**ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
PROGRAM**

**Annual Accomplishment Report
2003**

**Alcorn State University
Alcorn State, MS.**

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Alcorn State University / Extension Program

FY 2003 AREERA Report

**This report represents the AREERA plan of work submitted in 1999
and subsequently revised in 2002.**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary	Page
Overview	3
FY 2000 Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results	
Goal 1	5
Goal 2	12
Goal 3	14
Goal 4	19
Goal 5	21
Stakeholder Input Process	30
Program Review/Merit Review Process	32
Success Stories	33-35

Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program Overview

The Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program (ASU/CEP) acknowledges and values taxpayers' investment in their efforts and targeted resources to avoid waste and redundancy. By recognizing the need for internal improvement, the following goals are being implemented: (1) achieve program excellence through increased funding for basic staff and program expertise; (2) develop effective public relation and marketing plan; (3) develop collaborative relationships between teaching, research, extension; and (4) the development and implementation of a fully integrated telecommunication system that links the external centers and targeted counties. **The Alcorn Cooperative Extension Program (ACEP) name mission and vision was changed in FY 2003 as Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program (ASU/CEP). And the new mission and vision statements are as follows:**

MISSION:

To improve the quality of life of limited resource audiences through education in a time of dynamic change!

VISION:

The ASU Extension Program is a premier "Extension Center of Excellence" for limited resource audiences which is a proactive, responsive, and collaborative learning organization committed to the growth and development of people through life-long learning.

This annual accomplishment report outlines some of the major educational programs and activities conducted during FY 2003 and their impact they have had on the income and quality of life of limited resource participants. To meet the challenge of reduced resources, the Extension Program increased its collaborative efforts with state and federal agencies and made use of volunteers to augment the efforts of its limited staff and resources. Environmental scans conducted annually in each of the fourteen (14) targeted counties obtained stakeholder's input to solicit their participation in determining emerging issues and concerns and recommendations regarding the appropriate education responses. Scans were utilized to collect input from residents, advisers, commodity group representatives, volunteers and other clients to provide them the opportunity to prioritize issues and concerns that were considered in the program direction of ASU/CEP. The data collected from the input of stakeholders were utilized by ASU/CEP to develop and implement educational programs, activities and events to address those needs and issues. Funding for these Extension programs was provided by Smith-Lever appropriations, and state appropriations and public/private grants. Additional program information can be found on the ASU/CEP Web site at Family Nutrition Program <<http://www.alcorn.edu/Outreach/FNP.htm>>, Small Farm Outreach (A 2501 Program) <<http://www.alcorn.edu/outreach/farmmanagement/index.htm>>, Cooperative Extension <<http://www.alcorn.edu/Outreach/CoopExt/default.htm>> .

During FY 2003, the major thrust of ASU/CEP was directed toward small limited resource socially disadvantaged farmers, youth families and communities. The targeted program areas were sustainable alternative farm enterprises, youth-at-risk, family life and child development, nutrition-fitness-and health, farm management, forestry management, and community and economic development. These programs were delivered in sixteen counties in the Southwest and Delta regions of Mississippi utilizing ten (10) agricultural agents, thirteen (13) program assistants, and three (3) area coordinators. Program development and implementation were supported in counties by the state staff consisting of; one (1) coordinator for campus & off campus centers (research/demonstration farms), one (1) project director, nine (9) specialists, and two (2) extension associates. The Extension program county and state level program staff collaborated and received significant technical assistance and support from several federal agencies such as Agricultural Research, ASU Small Farm Development Center, U S Forestry Service and other state agencies.

Educational programs conducted in 2003 included: production and marketing of fruit and vegetables; sustainable agricultural enterprises; value added produces-syrup process & marketing; agronomic and other such as sweet corn-green peanuts-forage crops; animal production-beef cattle-goats and swine; Farm Business Management; Marketing of Farm Products; Forestry Management; Teen Pregnancy Prevention; Career Development/Workforce Preparation; Nutrition, Health and Fitness; Food safety & handling; Youth-At-Risk; 4-H/youth development; parenting education and Community and Economic Development. As a result of educational programs conducted, the following accomplishments were made in accordance with the five (5) National Extension Service goals by addressing the following key themes:

Goal 1: To enhance the global participation, competitiveness, and profitability of agriculture producers, especially small farmers and families, non-traditional producers, and those who lack adequate economic and social resources.

GOAL NARRATIVE

The viability of small farms is dependent upon the farmer's ability to perform in a combination of entrepreneurial areas at a level of expertise that generates profits, sustainable and the farmer's ability to keep the land in production twelve months of the year. The resources of the Alcorn State University's Cooperative Extension Program over the past year have been devoted to implementing educational programs, activities and events designed to assist small farmers and their families in becoming more sustainable and competitive. These small farmers are in a competitive global market and are vital to the overall economy of the state and nation. While small farms and ranchers have difficulty competing with larger operations that supply most of the national and international food markets, they can compete at supplying local and regional markets. In order for small farmers to sustain themselves in the fast changing farming industry, strategies must be developed to identify a combination of high value alternative and traditional agriculture enterprises that will provide significant net return. Over the past ten years, the demands for fresh fruit and vegetables have continued to increase. The production of organically grown product is not significant at this time because local populations have not significantly adopted the national trend to buy organic. However, it is one of the fastest growing small farm businesses in the area and farmers are being armed to take advantage of the certain coming market. The production of beef cattle and goats make up a large percentage of the production in the State because small and part-time farms are very suitable to take advantage of these enterprises. Greater revenue could be realized from livestock production by improving forage crop production. Because the quality of livestock produced is directly related to quality of forage produced. Forage crop production by small farmers has traditionally been low quality and yield because of native species and poor fertility.

KEY THEME: Agricultural Profitability

Implementation of horticulture programs by the Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program is the key source of information on commercial fruits and vegetables production provided for small farmers. Information disseminated informed small farmers about basic production practices, application of fertilizer, pesticide usage, insect and disease control, crop rotation and marketing principles.

Impact:

The Extension agriculture agents provided farmers with educational information technical assistance through newsletters, farm and home visits, field days, workshops, tours, group meetings and seminars. There are two thousand seven hundred fifty-one (2,751) small and part-time farmers and three hundred sixty-two (362) commercial vegetable growers in the fourteen (14) counties served by Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program. The total value of horticulture crops reported by these

farmers was one million three hundred twenty-seven thousand one hundred forty-seven dollar (\$1,327,147.00) from the production of one thousand five hundred eighty (1,580) acres. Also, the number of (farm producers and landowners) homeowners with fruit trees for the fourteen (14) counties was one thousand six hundred fifty six (1,656) and the number of commercial fruit producers was one hundred seventeen (117). The total estimated value of these crops reported was five hundred one thousand two hundred twenty dollars (\$501,220) from the production of fruits consisting of six hundred seventy-three (673) acres.

The major acreage of small farmers for vegetable production was; southern peas-six hundred eighty (680) acres, sweet potato-one hundred forty-nine (149) acres, greens, mustard & collard and turnips-three hundred and three (303) acres, and okra-ninety-five (95) acres. In regards to fruit production the major acreage for producers of watermelons was five hundred fifty-two (552) acres and blue berries-sixty-one (61) acres.

Because of the availability of farmers markets, small farmers did not encounter any problems in selling their produce. Also, the completion of a vegetable processing plant in 2004 farmers will be soon able to enhance their product by utilizing a value added process. Hence, the value of vegetables produced will increase significantly through value added processing. Of the three hundred and nine (309) clients adopting recommendations for development of a farm plans, ninety-eight (98) kept farm records, ninety-one (91) followed soil test recommendations, one-hundred twenty (120) applied lime that resulted in 10 % higher yields.

Source of Funds:

Funds expended for this goal under this program came from section 1444 of the National Agriculture, Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy of 1977 (NARETPA).

Scope of Impact:

State Specific Activities conducted and income generated impacted family income and their quality of life in small farm communities in twenty-one (21) Mississippi counties, fourteen (14) of which are in Southwest Mississippi. .

KEY THEME: Animal Production Efficiency

The major thrust of the Animal Science Program area placed emphasis on the production of livestock (swine, beef cattle, meat goats and pastured poultry). While small farmers in Mississippi produce a small percentage of livestock consumed in the State, the number of producers out numbered the larger commercial producers. Small livestock producers must improve breeding stock and herd health and management practices in order to sustain their operations. Educational programs were conducted with its' major objective of increasing production and overall quality of livestock being produced. These educational programs emphasized selecting and implementing recommended breeding practices, herd health, sound management practices, value-added processing, and the organization of small farm cooperatives to become more competitive and sustainable in the market place.

KEY THEME Beef Cattle Production

The Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program provided producers with current technical information and management practices. Through these efforts small producers were able to maintain their operations even though prices dropped for beef due to the Mad Cow outbreak in December and other problems that faced the beef industry throughout the year.

Impact

Six hundred thirty-two (632) people attended educational workshops, demonstration and field days for beef producers that focused on control breeding, herd health, nutrition and best management practices conducted by the county and staff. Small producers participated in thirty-two (32) group meetings, demonstrations and field days focusing on animal production, management and marketing. During FY 2003 small farmers operations consisted of over thirty-nine thousand two hundred seven-one (39,271) beef cattle valued at approximately five and half million dollars (\$5.5million). Additionally, small farmers operations included more than five thousand two hundred (5,200) dairy cattle that had an estimated value of seven million two hundred thousand dollars (\$7.2 million) in the counties being served by the Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program.

Source of Funds:

Funds expended for this goal under this program area came from section 1444 of the National Agriculture, Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy of 1977 (NARETPA).

Scope of Impact:

State Specific

Activities conducted and income generated impacted family income and their quality of life of the small farm communities in fourteen (14) counties, which are in Southwest Mississippi. .

KEY THEME: Goat Production

The Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program provided producers with current information and technical assistance on herd health issues, breeding, reproduction, marketing and nutrition. The biggest problems facing goat producers are parasite control and marketing. Educational programs were delivered to inform producers on how to address these problems and will have longevity for profitability in the industry.

Impact:

The county and state staff provided eighty-six (86) goat producers educational information through the implementation of; sixteen (16) educational workshops, eight (8) farm demonstrations, one hundred sixty-seven (167) farm visits, twenty-seven (27) new

releases, thirty-two (32) newsletters and two (2) field days in the Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program service area. With the largest percentage of producers selling their goats through direct marketing, emphasis was placed on developing goat cooperatives and identifying new and larger markets to meet the needs of goat producers in southwest Mississippi.

Source of Funds:

Funds expended for this goal under this program came from section 1444 of the National Agriculture, Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy of 1977 (NARETPA).

Scope of Impact:

State Specific

Activities conducted and income generated impacted family income and quality of life of the small farm communities in fourteen (14) counties, which are in Southwest Mississippi.

Key Theme: Swine Production

The swine industry for small producers has been slow over the past couple of years, due to contract farming from large corporations, EPA regulations, and no local markets for small producers. However, the Extension staff and the Swine Development Center have continued efforts to revise the existing swine cooperative to provide potentially profitable outlets for small swine producers.

Emphasis was placed on providing technical assistance on quality breeding stock and marketing. Fifteen (15) swine producers involved with the Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program are being provided educational assistance in the targeted service area. Those producers operations include seven (7) feeder pig operations, two (2) finishing operations, and three (3) farrow-to-finish operations.

Impact:

Through these efforts producers have increased the quality of life as well as improved on-farm income. Environment issues and program efforts have voluntarily made producers more environmentally friendly.

Source of Funds:

Funds expended for this goal under this program came from section 1444 of the National Agriculture, Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy of 1977 (NARETPA).

Scope of Impact:

State Specific

Educational activities conducted impacted small farmers fourteen (14) counties that are in Southwest Mississippi. Through these efforts producers have increased the quality of life as well as improved on-farm income.

Key Theme: Farm Management (2501 Project)

Farmers will continue to face significant challenges in maintaining farm operations and sustaining growth of their business. Research has shown that small farms experienced 1) restricted income generating capability; 2) low production yields; 3) incur higher input cost; 4) limited managerial capability; and 5) limited access to credit. Small farmers of Mississippi are experiencing financial difficulties, which have led to bankruptcies, foreclosures, and stressful emotional conditions which have a significant impact on their quality of life. According to the most recent census for the State of Mississippi, the number of limited resource farmers has declined as much as three times more than that of non-limited resource farmers. The major factor leading to the decline of small farmers includes, but is not limited to: 1) poor management; 2) shortage of capital; 3) marketing; 4) limited knowledge of available USDA programs; 5) enterprise diversification; 6) value-added processing; and 7) risk management. ASU/CEPs are addressing these issues and concerns.

The Alcorn State University Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program (know as the 2501 project) is currently working with small-limited resource farmers and ranchers in adopting modern farm management techniques and the development of alternative enterprises in order to improve their farm income and quality of life.

According to the 1997 census of agriculture, 72% of all farms in the U.S. have an annual gross income of \$40,000 or less. In Mississippi, there are nearly 35,000 farms that fall into that category, accounting for 82% of the total farms in the state. Such farms range from thirteen (13) to six hundred fifty (650) acres. The goal of the 2501 project is to identify, develop and promote successful risk management strategies that small/limited resource socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers can utilize to remain economically visible in a rapidly changing agricultural environment.

Impact:

During FY 2003 the funding for the 2501 project was severely cut and ushered in a ninety-five (95%) lay-off of our entire staff. These cuts were due to the USDA's expansion of the same opportunities to other universities and CBO's to apply for the same funds that were initially designed for small and limited resource family farms. These change in funding allocations of this project have had an enormous effect on the number of educational activities and services that we were able to provide to the vast number of clients that wanted and needed our services. The 2501 Project was able to continue to provide a minimal level of educational services with some assistance from the Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program's agents. There were one thousand four hundred fifty-seven (1,457) small farmers participated in the educational programs conducted in the area of Farm Management.

The 2501 Project co-sponsored a Small Family Farm and Women in Business Conference. The conference was a series of educational workshops that dealt with risk management, financial and production management of alternative enterprises, business development, entrepreneurship and women in business. This conference provided an avenue for small and limited resource farmers to interact and connect with state and federal agencies involved in agricultural areas ranging from financing, cost sharing

conservation, to crop & livestock production. Approximately two hundred and ninety (290) interested small farmers, business owners and other individuals in attendance obtained educational information.

A six-week comprehensive training course was provided borrowers and pending applicants for the Farm Service Agency and the Alcorn State Small Farm Development Center borrowers and pending applicants. Participants received educational training in the areas of business management, financial management, crop production and livestock production. A total of twenty-five (25) small limited-resource farmers participated and graduated. By participating in the training, clients met the respective agencies program requirement of having a select number of hours of training in production, financial management and record keeping.

The Small Farm Outreach Project, Alcorn State University USDA, Agriculture Research and ASU/CEP sponsored a Sweet Potato Jamboree. Sweet potato production is positioning itself as the forerunner among emerging crops in the Mississippi Delta among small farmers. The purpose of this event was to promote and educate small ranchers and farmers on diversification, alternative crops and other lucrative enterprises. Two hundred and fifty (250) people in attendance were provided educational information.

The Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project also co-sponsored and provided technical assistance and educational information in the Small Farm Field Day at the ASU/CEP Incubator Farm in Preston, Mississippi. This field day introduced farmers, ranchers, potential farmers and high school students to new types of alternative enterprises that require minimal input. These introduced enterprises deviate from traditional crop production, but will have a greater return potential on profits based on acreages. There were one hundred and twenty-five (125) people in attendance that received such information. The ASU/CEP web site continues to be upgraded to provide the same information provided in seminars, field days and workshops for small farmers access in which they can obtain on going assistance. To learn more about these program and others click on: www.alcorn.edu/outreach/farmmanagement/index.htm.

Alcorn State University's Small Farm Project also developed and distributed eight hundred and fifty-two (852) brochures, publications and newsletters to provide ongoing educational information regarding this area to small disadvantaged farmers. Forty-nine (49) farm visits were made to provide technical assistance on farm management and a total of twenty (20) loans were prepared for small farmers to support their farm business totaling two million thirty-four thousand dollars (\$2,034,000.00).

The Alcorn State University's Small Farm Outreach Technical Assistance, Outreach and Training Project has provided numerous educational services to small and limited resource farmers throughout the state of Mississippi. The impact from this technical assistance has contributed to improvement in the management and efficiency of small farm businesses resulting in an enhanced quality of life for many Mississippi's residents. Overall, significant contributions have been accomplished and additional efforts are being pursued to seek greater future funding to continue and strengthening these efforts.

Source of Funds:

Funds expended for this goal under this program came from section 1444 of the National Agriculture, Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy of 1977 (NARETPA).

Scope of Impact:

The Small Farm Outreach Project provided technical assistance to nine (9) Delta counties and fourteen (14) counties in Southwest Mississippi with tested farm management techniques, farm planning, profitable alternatives, and farm and non-farm enterprises.

KEY THEME: Forestry Management Program

A valuable resource, to enhance the income level of small disadvantaged forestry landowners that exist in the State of Mississippi, is to become more aware of forestry issues and its resources.

The most effective method of outreach delivery in getting small disadvantaged landowners involved in forestry has been to hold target meetings in communities where a small group of key people assists county Agricultural Agents of ASU/CEP, State and Federal Forestry Agencies in providing a means for to receive forestry assistance. Developing and maintaining contacts are key points that aid in outreach delivery of educational programs.

Impact:

During FY'2003, United States Forestry Service (USFS) assigned a forestry specialist at Alcorn State University To work in partnership with Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program. This specialist along with ASU/CEP Agriculture Agents conducted eighty (80) workshops, field days, and seminars. Six hundred and ten (610) small forest landowners participated in the program. As a result of these educational programs, one hundred and one (101) small forest landowners sold three thousand six hundred and seventy-one (3,671) acres of timber. The stumpage value was estimated to be six hundred eighteen thousand three hundred twenty-four dollars (\$618,324). This was a much higher price for timber per acre than previously realized.

Source of Funds:

Mississippi Forestry Commission and State funds.

Scope of Impact:

Activities being conducted are geared toward improving the quality of life and increasing the economic base of communities within the service area.

ESTIMATED FTEs & Program Cost for Goal 1

FTEs - - _____		Program cost- \$ _____	
Federal	State	Federal	State
20.27	6.19	\$781,818	\$273,420

GOAL 2: To provide a safe, affordable, reliable, and nutritious food supply.

GOAL NARRATIVE

Agriculture Secretary (Veneman, 2003) for the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) issued a challenge to reach the next level of food safety. The challenge calls for creative and effective ways to modernize the FSIS' ability to continue to improve the safety of U.S. meat, poultry, and egg products to better protect public health.

Americans enjoy the safest food supply in the world. This is due in part to efforts by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to follow a scientific approach in administering its food safety programs. The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is faced with constantly evolving challenges in fulfilling its public health mission of ensuring the safety of the nation's food supply.

The mounting challenges of today are a growing list of known food borne pathogens in recent years. The FDA's hard work to enhance agency's surveillance, outbreak response, prevention and education programs and agency collaboration are paying off. There have been expert partners inside and outside of the United States government to assist in this effort. Recent statistics from the Centers for Disease control and Prevention (CDC) point to a substantial decline in food borne illness from a number of pathogens from 1996 to 2000. Additional data indicate that there have been significant improvements in recent years, in food safety-related consumer behavior. Fewer people eat risky raw foods and more people are washing their hands before eating and food handlers are washing hands, wearing gloves and washing cutting boards/food preparation areas to prevent dangerous cross-contamination between foods. The 2.6 million citizens of Mississippi spend approximately eight billion one hundred million dollars (\$8.1 billion) each year on food. The major causes of food borne illness are improper cooling, cooking, holding and reheating temperatures. Mississippi has three thousand thirty-three (3,033) food firms like restaurants and four thousands ninety-three (4,093) convenient food establishments, with a total of one million one hundred sixty-three thousand eight hundred sixty-seven dollars (\$1,163,867).

KEY THEME: Food Safety and Handling

The health and well being of individuals and families are highly valued in today's society. Food plays a major role. Food safety issues and consumers vary greatly in their knowledge of the science of food safety. The Cooperative Extension Service goals are to deliver quality food safety educational programs. These programs reinforce food safety education among limited resource clientele to minimize potential food hazards. These programs will educate the public throughout the state about how to handle and prepare food properly at home, where food safety is equally important whether cooking from scratch, serving take-out meals, or carrying leftovers from a restaurant.

Impact:

Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program (ASU/CEP) remains committed to addressing food safety program issues. There were approximately two hundred eighty-eight (288) educational sessions conducted on food safety. ASU/CEP conducted the following sessions; individual sessions with-one thousand seven hundred thirty-nine (1,739) participants; group meetings for two thousand one hundred and twenty-eight (2,128) participants; and workshops for fifty (50) participants. The total estimated dollar value of savings by participants resulting from knowledge gained during educational meetings is estimated at fifty dollars (\$50) per person amounting to one hundred ninety-five thousand eight hundred ninety-five dollars (\$195,895.00).

Source of Funds:

Funds expended for this goal under this program came from 1444 of the National Agriculture, Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (NARETPA).

Scope of Impact:

State Specific

Program efforts were concentrated in 14 counties in Southwest Mississippi. Emphasis is being placed on improving the health through food choices and educational programs addressing food safety within the service areas.

ESTIMATED FTEs & Program Cost for Goal 2

FTEs - - _____		Program cost- \$ _____	
Federal	State	Federal	State
3.75	1.21	\$153,571	\$53,707

GOAL 3: To achieve a healthier, well-nourished population.

GOAL NARRATIVE

As we move into the 21st Century, major changes have been observed 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 number one out of the top three states in the nation for obesity.

Consumers in the southern region traditionally consume diets high in fat and simple carbohydrates. Rural agricultural counties in Southwest Mississippi are medically under served areas, with a shortage of health care professionals. Community-based educational programs are greatly needed to improve the knowledge regarding the relationship between diet, lifestyle, and health. Valuable information accumulated through research and delivered through ASU/CEP program is an effective approach to be certain that factual information reaches the health conscious consumers.

The Nutrition, Diet and Health area provided community-based and offers nutrition and health educational programs, activities and events geared toward intervention, prevention and maintenance of nutrition-related conditions among limited resource audiences in communities. The program area goal is to improve and maintain citizens of Southwest Mississippi communities' optimal health and social well being throughout their span of life.

The program achieves its goals through the following efforts: (1) development and dissemination of educational information and materials of the Nutrition Resource Library, (2) Medical Nutrition Therapy program, (3) Healthy Weight and Fitness Program, and (4) development of Community Fitness Club and or associations.

The Nutrition Resource Library that is open to limited resource citizens and partnership organizations in order to ensure the general public accessibility to educational information and materials needed to promote nutrition and health. The Medical Nutrition Therapy program is a valuable resource to train health professionals in disadvantaged communities to enhance the availability to women, men, and children to receive a medical risk assessment and needed therapeutic diet counseling throughout the span of life. This program offers complimentary consultations to limited resource clientele with a Registered Dietitian that monitors the clients at appropriate intervals. The 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 to improve nutrition and health among limited resource

participants. The development of Community Fitness Clubs or associations encourages and assists graduates of the health and Fitness Program to continue the application of positive eating habits and healthy lifestyle practices among participants of the program. The program efforts are designed to continue through the share of educational information regarding nutrition, health and fitness among others in their respective communities. The clubs and or associations serve as the core of communication for gathering feedback on current nutrition-related concerns of communities.

KEY THEME: Nutrition, Health and Fitness

The Nutrition, Health and Fitness area of the Cooperative Extension Program has expanded the university's community outreach commitment and will continue to grow throughout regions of the state. The program has provided the vital elements to determine the feasibility, acceptability and the utilization of nutrition intervention projects that will achieve a healthier well-nourished population. The Nutrition, Health and Fitness area of education has been successful in assessing the degree of awareness, attitude and behavioral changes among limited resource residents. The nutrition education delivered through multiple intervention programs has made an impact of healthy lifestyle changes of individuals, families and communities.

Implementation of sound nutrition education programs regarding chronic diseases can improve symptomatic conditions, resulting in substantial savings with the enhancement in the quality of life. Changes in dietary and lifestyle practices can play an important role in prevention and intervention in four of the ten leading causes of death. In the South consumers traditionally consume diets high in fat, salt and simple carbohydrates, which are directly related to obesity, the breeding ground for poor health conditions. The prevalence of medical conditions related to nutrition and lifestyle in Mississippi suggests that there are significant health benefits to be gained from nutrition education that is targeted at different stages of intervention and prevention. Nutrition and fitness are the keys to successful outcomes, because consumers heal faster, need less medication and they have fewer complications requiring physician's visits or surgeries. A major gap in the health care system is due to a lack of community-based nutrition intervention programs within the rural communities.

Impact:

Cooperative Extension Programs in the area of Nutrition, Health and Fitness provides community-based educational programs and activities for individuals and families to utilize knowledge and apply strategies to make informed decisions about nutrition, health, and lifestyle. Current nutrition and health research were translated into practical application learning activities to improve the lifestyles of individuals, families and in communities in targeted areas of the state of Mississippi. Through research-based information, education programs are provided to high-risk groups with nutrition and health-related medical conditions.

The extension Nutrition Resource Network provides an avenue for building partnerships, exchanging information/ resources, and promoting community outreach services in nutrition education. The network consists of various types of nutrition and health education materials, teaching aids and demonstration equipment. The network has

been successful in reaching a diverse audience through the dissemination of four thousand and thirty-six (4,036) pediatric brochures, they are: Mr. Gingerbread in Search of Iron, 560; Let's Make Mr. Gingerbread a Winner, 428; Please Take Me Home Mr. Gingerbread, 289; After School fun with Mr. Gingerbread, 534; Mr. Gingerbread War on Fat, 213; He Loves Me...He Loves Me Not, 432; Eating Your Way to Adulthood, 430; Childhood Obesity, 850; and Feeding the Young. There were also four thousand five hundred and fifty-eight (4,558) adult intervention publications distributed as follow: Learn and Laugh: Nutrition Health Humor, 250; Planning the Family or Guest Menu, 500; Living with Gastrointestinal complications, 100; Cracking the cholesterol Code, 250; Diabetes (Am I at Risk), 250; How Healthy is Dieting? 350; Weigh Your Eating Habits, 450; "Live" The Right Choices, 180; Lifestyle Diary, 100; the Broom and Sponge of Food "Fiber", 500; Solo Menu Plan (Meals on Wheels), 500; the Link Potassium, Sodium and Calcium, 478; Dessert-Life Satisfaction Cookbook, 50; the Healthy Weights Program, 50; Alcorn Extension Nutrition, Health and Fitness, 50; and Highway to Health Newsletter, 500.

The Cooperative Extension Program at Alcorn State University is the sponsor of the "Healthy Weights", an intervention program that addresses critical needs of citizens in local communities in various regions of the state. The program series contains four (4) volumes which are: Volume One- *"The Healthy Weights Program Guide,"* a program overview of information and tools for conducting a community assessment, building program awareness, and evaluation instruments; Volume Two-*"The Healthy Weights Program Facilitator Guide,"* an educational curriculum with learning activities, homework assignments and materials for the successful implementation of an eight-week health and fitness weight reduction session; Volume Three- *"The Healthy Weights Program Community Fitness Association Facilitator Guide"* provides the information and assistance to establish or organize a community Fitness Association consisting of the graduates who have completed the requirements of the program; Volume Four- *"The Healthy Weights Nutrition Resource Network"* is a program that provides information for the creation of an avenue for building partnership, exchanging information and resources for promoting community health, and nutrition and fitness education in local communities.

Forty (40) youths in Claiborne County successfully participated in a three-day camp for Kids-N-The Kitchen. The camp was the target of several subject areas of youth development in the preparation of healthy foods and snacks. The three-day camp included activities in basic cooking skills, food safety and utilized the food Guide Pyramid.

Three hundred and twenty-five (325) residents of Walthall County participated in the Nutrition and Wellness Health fair, which was sponsored in partnership with Walthall county School system. Information exchanged increased awareness of nutrition and health programs within the community and promoted nutrition and fitness to improve overall health.

Twenty-four (24) participants in Adams County successfully completed requirements and received a certificate of completion. The Count Down WCBS Program is a four-week activity program designed to increase management skills for rural residents with a

medical history of high clinical findings of weight problems, high cholesterol, blood pressure and glucose.

Optional Information: Summary of Program Contacts by Nutrition, Health and Fitness A population of over eleven thousand five hundred and thirty-two (11,532) participated in community activities, programs, and demonstrations with a focus on nutrition and health.

There were fifty-seven (57) activities conducted with two thousand twenty-six (2,026) youth and one thousand one hundred fifty-nine (1159) adults participants in-Applying Dietary guidelines and utilize the Food Guide Pyramid to implement healthier eating habits and food choices.

There were eighty-one (81) activities conducted with two hundred thirty-nine (239) youth and three thousand three hundred fifty-nine (3359) adult participants in educational programs emphasizing Preparation of foods that are safe, low in fat-cholesterol-sodium-sugar, while increasing fiber, calcium, vitamins and minerals

Ten (10) activities modify recipes using culturally appropriate substitutes to reduce fat, salt, and sugar content and weight management were conducted with two hundred fourteen (214) adults and three hundred thirty-two (332) elderly adult participants.

There were ten (10) activities on appropriate personal health preventive measures with regular visits to health care centers and private clinics conducted with two hundred ninety-five (295) adults and three hundred thirty-two (332) elderly adult participants.

There were eight (8) activities on benefits of exercise programs and encouraging the integration of physical activity into daily life conducted on with one hundred sixty-four (164) youth and forty-eight (48) adult participants.

There were thirty-seven (37) activities conducted on healthy nutritional principles that will reduce the risk of stress, depression, chronic diseases and preventable illness with one thousand and three (1003) youth; six hundred sixty-eight (668) adults and twenty (20) elderly participants.

Source of Funds

Funds expended for this goal under this program came from section 1444 of the National Agriculture, Research, Extension and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (NARETPA).

Scope of Impact

State specific

Program efforts were concentrated in 14 counties of Southwest Mississippi. Emphasis was placed on improving the health through behavior modification programs as means of addressing nutrition of individuals within the service areas. Scope of Impact

ESTIMATED FTEs & Program Cost for Goal 3

FTEs - - _____		Program cost- \$ _____	
Federal	State	Federal	State
FNP's = FTE's 3	County – 13	\$ 1,321,379.42	

GOAL 4: To achieve greater harmony (balance) between agriculture and the environment.

GOAL NARRATIVE

The rich soils and long growing seasons in the State of Mississippi favor the production of a wide variety of crops and livestock. However, the increased production of livestock in confinement and the excess use of pesticides contaminate water supplies and create an imbalance in the environment.

Animal Waste Management is becoming a major concern in the state. Environmental pollution from food producing animals is a serious concern among federal, regional, state, and local consumer groups. Nitrogen and phosphorous are the primary environmental pollutants excreted in animal waste. Contamination of groundwater especially in rural areas where more than ninety-five percent (95%) of the population's water is obtained is a serious problem.

Small farmers in Mississippi have traditionally been concerned about conserving and sustaining their farmland. However, they have not participated in conservation programs, because of program requirement and sharing privacy data.

KEY THEME: Diversified/Alternative Agriculture (Sustainable Agriculture)

Small farmers produced a combination of traditional and alternative agricultural enterprises and by incorporated sustainable agricultural practices clientele continue to increase farm income. The income of rural residents and the sustainability of agriculture have shown an increase through education by the Alcorn Cooperative Extension Agronomy Program. On-farm income has increased by diversification through the utilization of alternative cash crops, especially value added syrup crops. Income from traditional and alternative livestock has increased through emphasis on proper forage management and production of summer pastures and winter grazing.

Agricultural Agents of Alcorn State University's Extension Program delivered educational programs in FY'2003. In spite of declining full time farmers during 2003, agents have continued to stress alternative crops and value-added processing or new products to new and established farmers. Agents have injected and promoted Sustainable Agriculture as an integral part of farming practices and given the farming community a new vision apart from traditional framing.

Impact

In the FY 2003 crop season, the Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program's agronomy initiative calculated three million seven hundred forty-three thousands three hundred dollars (\$3,743, 300) in crop value for program participants. This farm income came from program participants in fourteen (14) counties of Southwest Mississippi. This is an increase of farm income for participants from these counties even though the total value was higher in FY 2002. This was because the 2002 value included agronomy crops from several additional counties in the Mississippi Delta involved in the 2501 Program.

The FY 2003 dollars were made up of only two thousand eight hundred thirteen (2,813) acres of agronomy field crops and four hundred twenty-eight (428) acres of Alternative Agronomic Crops. The alternative crops were made up of two hundred twenty-one (221) acres of green peanuts, one hundred and eight (108) acres of sweet corn, seventy-eight (78) acres of sugarcane for syrup, and fifteen (15) acres of sweet sorghum for syrup. The sweet sorghum and sugarcane syrup crops alone were valued over nine hundred sixteen thousand eight hundred dollars (\$916,800).

The alternative agronomy crop acreage was down almost forty (40) acres due to several factors. Primarily, monsoon rains during spring planting season for sweet sorghum was the reason for the shortfall. Sweet Sorghum and sugarcane acreage was down slightly from 2002 for sugarcane syrup production by only two (2) acres because acreage killed by hard winter was offset by increased acreage planted in the fall. This was compounded by a hard winter that followed and a wet spring that contributed to the reduction in the per acre yield of sugarcane. However, the effect of the Syrup Marketing Demonstrations project resulted in more than a one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) increase in the value of the syrup crop harvested for syrup in FY 2003. The quality and price of syrup is steadily increasing due to syrup marketing demonstrations known as the “Mill on Wheels” and the crop is becoming more profitable and attractive to new producers.

Four cooperative development training area meetings were conducted for syrup producers/processors where some 60 participants received training. Three temporary advisory committees were organized in three areas of the State. These Advisory committees met several times and have formed the Mississippi Syrup Producers and Processors Association.

Source of Funds

Funds expended for this goal for under this program came from section 1444 of the National Agriculture, Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (NARETPA).

Scope of Impact

State Specific

Activities conducted and income generated impacted family income and quality of life of the communities in the fourteen (14) targeted counties and Statewide because the “Mill on Wheels” demonstrations conducted on processing & marketing demonstrations throughout the state and the nostalgia of the project has been widely publicized in newspapers and magazines.

ESTIMATED FTEs & Program Cost for Goal 4

FTEs - - _____		Program cost- \$_____	
Federal	State	Federal	State
5.04	1.52	\$195,453	\$68,354

Goal 5: To enhance economic opportunities and the quality of life among families and communities.

GOAL NARRATIVE

ASU/CEP emphasizes management and control over development, utilizing a holistic approach to solving and recognizing that family & community development is not a fixed state. But rather, it is a process of change in which the direction of resources is used toward investments. Therefore, it is necessary for implementation of technical development, education through outreach, and institutional changes are projected to coincide with future events with consideration for present needs. An educated and well-informed public is the most powerful tool to use affecting positive community growth, sustainability and survival. And, toward that end we have committed to channel our resources and deliver programs.

Mississippi's poverty & unemployment demographics are overwhelming. According to the United States Bureau of Census report, Mississippi ranks among the poorest states in the nation. This is particularly true in the Southwest and delta region of the State, which harbor the state's highest poverty and unemployment rates. 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 categories in the nation. Thirty (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 subsidies and transfer payments. In contrast, the area is rich in abundance of natural resources and thrives economically from its agricultural-based products. 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 cumulatively have impact on whole communities, economies and environments. The target audience who function to serve the local residence consists 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 provided technical assistance and educational information to various economic divisions (i.e., industrial operations, community development corporations, and home-based businesses). Selected social service organizations through higher education, local volunteers, government officials, educators, and community groups learned about the environment as it relates to their daily lives through the creation of a "communiversity"--campus environmental education program.

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, motivational vehicles, and methods of delivery have failed to reach the majority of the youth population. This means that when they are ready for the employment market, they are ill prepared for the available jobs. There is a mood of fatalism spreading and is being carved out of poverty, lack of health care, a lack of positive role models and persistent failure in school. This lead to the inability to achieve the degree of knowledge necessary to be productive and successful individuals in today's society, putting into jeopardy the future of this great nation.

Although families, youth, and communities in rural Mississippi have experienced some social and economic gains, according to the most recent Census and Kid Count Reports, many of these children, youth, and families still live in poverty and their communities are still unable to provide them or their families with adequate economic opportunities.

The educational programs implemented by the Alcorn Cooperative Extension Family, Youth and Community Development unit are designed to provide practical and research-based information. Educational programs were conducted during FY 2003 by utilizing the expertise of Alcorn Cooperative Extension Program Specialists, Area Coordinator, and Extension Agents with input from the Research Staff and the Small Farm Development Center. Educational programs implemented were designed to address the problematic approaches in the following areas: Teen Pregnancy Prevention, Youth Health Issues (STD/HIV/AIDS), Career Development/Workforce Preparedness, and 4-H Youth Development.

The educational programs conducted in the area of 4-H Youth Development during FY 2003 focused on goal #5 established by The National Agriculture Research, Extension, Education and Economics Advisory Board. This national goal is to enhance economic opportunities and the quality of life among families and communities.

Families in Mississippi are in need of assistance for coping with the changes in lifestyles of families. Although Mississippi is sparsely populated due in part 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 current assistance and support. The purpose of developing programs is an alternative means of addressing family cohesiveness, decision-making, and family violence.

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

KEY THEMES: Parenting Education

The goal of the parenting education program is to assist targeted clients with the problems related to parenting. Through an in-house survey, it was determined that there were over one hundred and seven (107) public schools and more than twenty-two (22) private school in the 14 county program area. In the program area, there are one thousand and eighty-five (1,085) TANF. Half of the counties do not have a domestic violence assistance program and over half of the counties do not have a Family Life Center. Only six counties reported having Faith-based family oriented programs and not any counties had divorced parents (with children) support groups.

Impact:

During FY 2003, all extension agents reported using effective parenting training in their programs. They confirmed that this program was the main reference of targeted parents for; behavioral skills for rearing children, understanding the positive side of discipline, strategies for developing relationships with children, the social-physical and emotional aspects of child growth, and techniques of keeping children safe and healthy within the home environment. There were forty-seven (47) Parenting Education workshops conducted with two hundred seventy-six (276) teen parent and five hundred ninety (590) single parent participants.

Brochures developed in the area of child abuse and neglect were used to provide education by conducting twenty-nine (29) workshops where two hundred and ninety (290) teenage parents and two hundred eighty-five (285) single parent families participated and obtained educational material.

Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program provided educational through programs in the area of "Teaching Responsibility" to three hundred fifty-nine (359) teenage parents, fifty-five (55) single parent families and partnered with seven (7) other government agencies to conduct this program. Results of this program, as reported by the field staff, enhanced lifestyles of parents and individuals by improving discipline problems, offering direction to youth, encouraging positive relationships, helped parents teach children how to manage money and time, and how to make practical decisions.

In the area of early childhood development, the knowledge base of parents on the complex process of child growth and development reported an increase by utilizing appropriate books, educational materials and other teaching tools (first-aid kits). The field staff provided information by conducting twenty-three (23) early childhood education classes to one hundred seventy-four (174) teenage parents and one hundred thirty-four (134) single parent family participants.

The Managing Stress and Anxiety Program for families and individuals identified and addressed stress factors such as; financial deficiencies, unemployment, child discipline and seven other stress factors. There were forty-one (41) educational programs conducted with one hundred and thirteen (113) families were provided strategies and skills for dealing with these factors.

Sources of Funds

Funds expended for this goal under this program came from section 1444 of the National Agriculture, Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (NARETPA) and \$79,000 from the Department of Human Services.

Scope of Impact

State Specific

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

KEY THEME: Children, Youth and Families at Risk

The future of every society depends on the positive development of its children within its families. When attention is given to the physical, intellectual and moral growth of our children, we give them the skills, values and confidence necessary to succeed as productive adults, citizens and leaders.

There is reason to believe that most of today's 71 million American children who are under eighteen (18) years of age will reach adulthood, contribute to the economy, the community and the larger society. This expectation is reinforced by several important measures of childhood well-being such as: the reduction of rate of infant mortality and the decline in teen pregnancy birth rates. Many families with children are escaping welfare. Juvenile violent crime is receding, childhood immunization rates are up, more children are enrolled in pre-school programs, and young people are completing high school.

Nevertheless, a significant percentage of our children remain at risk of not being full participants in the promise of the 21st century. While a large share of all American children are growing up without any easily identified disadvantages, more than half confront at least one vulnerability in their family circumstance that could compromise their future. Far more alarming, nine point two (9.2) million children are growing up with a number of disadvantages that could curtail, if not destroy their chances of becoming productive adult participants in mainstream America in their pursuit of a successful and fruitful adulthood.

The Extension specialists and Extension 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, Tobacco Prevention and Education, and 4-H and Youth Development

Impact:

During FY 2003, four thousand four hundred ninety-six (4,496) youth and three hundred parents participated in ninety (90) Teen Pregnancy Prevention group meetings and workshops. In general, the overall effectiveness of the program was assessed using a pre-post test in the teen pregnancy curriculum "B.A.R.T"(Becoming a Responsible Teen) and Project SNAPP. The area of teen pregnancy this year, we experienced a thirty percent (30%) reduction in the number of youth that became pregnant. There has been a

noticeable decline in the fourteen (14) counties served by the Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program (ASU/CEP). From the pre-post test over forty-eight percent (48%) 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. Most of the objectives were met in the various workshops. In the area that relates to Youth Health issues there were one hundred ten (110) group meetings conducted on sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS Awareness, of which five thousand (5,000) youth and seven hundred fifty (750) adults participated at twenty-seven (27) local schools and seven (7) community centers. To determine the effectiveness of this program the evaluation tool developed with project SNAPP curriculum was used. According to objectives of the program, these workshops provided awareness and knowledge that dealt with the transmission and prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD's). According to the post-test sixty-nine percent (69%) of the youth participating in the workshops understood how STD's and HIV/AIDS are transmitted and prevented. The participants also reported that information was timely, met their needs, provided a platform for open and frank discussion on issues that affects their lives, and help to break down communication barrier with their parents.

Source of Funds

. Funds expended for this goal consist of forty-seven thousand one hundred sixty one dollars (\$47,161) from section 1444 of the National Agriculture Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy ACT of 1977(NARETPA) thirteen thousand two hundred five (\$13,205) state matching funds.

Scope of Impact

State Specific

Program efforts were concentrated in fourteen (14) Southwest Mississippi counties served by Alcorn's Cooperative Extension Program. The targeted audience was middle school and high school students.

KEY THEME: Human Health

The Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program, along with the Partnership For A Healthy Mississippi conducted tobacco prevention and education project entitled "Project Risk". The program was designed to reduce the number of young smokers in Southwest Mississippi.

Impact

In FY 2003, nine thousand forty-nine (9,049) youth participated in one hundred fifty (150) workshops. Six (6) Tobacco Education Day Camps were conducted in six (6) southwest Mississippi counties where one thousand two hundred (1,200) youth participated. Three (3) Youth Tobacco Summits were conducted on the campus of Alcorn State University. Two thousand three hundred (2,300) elementary, middle and high school students attended the three (3) summits. Seventy-one (71) mothers and daughters participated in two (2) Mother and Daughter Conferences. Ten (10) RAT

Teams (Reject all Tobacco) were organized with two hundred (200) members. Twelve (12) SWAT (Students Working Against Tobacco) with eighty-five (85) members, eleven (11) Allies Tobacco Teams with one hundred ten (110) members, fourteen (14) Frontline Tobacco Education Teams with three hundred sixty-five (365) members were organized. Seven hundred sixty (760) youth participated in forty-seven (47) organized tobacco education teams in southwest Mississippi. All of the objectives were either satisfied or exceeded. The sessions on self-esteem and decision-making sessions and activities were considered the most influencing by the participants primarily because these sessions offered real life resolutions and interaction to internal conflicts faced by the targeted population.

Source of Funds

Funds expended for this consist of eleven thousand four (\$11,004) dollars from section 1444 of the National Agriculture Research, Extension and Teaching Policy ACT of 1977(NARETPA), eleven thousand four (\$11,004) dollars in state matching funds and seventy thousand (\$70,000) dollars from the Partnership for Healthy Mississippi.

Scope of Impact

State Specific

Programs were conducted in the fourteen (14) counties served by Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program. The targeted audiences were elementary, middle and high school students.

KEY THEME: Workforce-Youth and Adult

The Youth Development Specialist developed a career development curriculum entitled “The Working Class” to provide educational information to middle and high school students.

Impact:

The Alcorn Cooperative Extension staff conducted one hundred forty-five (145) Career Development/Workforce Preparedness workshops in the eighteen (18) local junior high, high school, voc-tech centers and fourteen (14) community centers. There were fifty (50) local businesses, agencies partners for six (6) career days in local schools and communities. Eight thousand six (8,006) youth and seven hundred (700) adults participated in the career development/workforce preparedness program- “The Working Class”. The program involved the extension staff, teaching faculty, and local businesses. The Career Development/Workforce Preparedness Program was successful. Ninety percent (90%) of the youth who participated in this program could accurately complete a letter of application, a resume, two types of applications, portfolios, and fully completed the interviewing process. The number of students who successfully completed the portfolios and two successful interview sessions assessed the effectiveness of this program as excellent.

Source of Funds

Funds expended for this consist of seventy eight thousand six hundred two (\$78,602) dollars from section 1444 of the National Agriculture Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy ACT of 1977 (NARETPA) and twenty two thousand nine (22,009) dollars of state matching funds.

Scope of Impact

State Specific

Program efforts were concentrated in the nine counties served by the Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program. The targeted audiences were middle and high school students in tech prep, business communication classes and vocational education programs.

KEY THEME: 4-H/Youth Development

Through the efforts of the extension agents and the youth specialist, various youth development programs and activities were conducted. In addition, several 4-H community school-based clubs have been organized.

Impact/(Youth Development)

Building self-esteem and character education enjoyed an equal degree of success. One hundred fifty (150) group meetings and workshops were conducted on Building Self-Esteem and Character Education for youth and adults. Two thousand six hundred ninety-three (2,693) youth and four hundred ninety-two (492) adults obtained educational information. These programs were designed to improve self-concept, improve character and help identify values. A pre-post test was used to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. Forty percent (40%) of the youth participants stated that they felt better about themselves and could define values.

Impact/(4-H)

The 4-H program through the efforts of the Extension Youth Agents have organized twenty-four (24) community-based youth clubs with three hundred eight-four (384) members enrolled and eleven (11) school-based clubs with one-thousands seven hundred eighty-five (1,785) enrolled. Twelve (12) volunteer leader trainings were conducted for sixty-eight (68) volunteers. Thirty-three (33) 4-H members attended the Southwest District Project Achievement Day and forty-two (42) 4-H members attended State 4-H congress. Seventy (70) 4-H members participated in Mississippi State Fair Exhibits. Two hundred twenty (220) participated in the High School Dropout Seminar "CHOICES," one hundred (100) participated in Enviroscape/Earth Day, five hundred (500) youth attended a Bullying Workshop, fifty (50) youth participated in a Table Manners workshop, fifty (50) youth participated in a Make A Difference Day and four (4) 4-H'ers attended National 4-H Congress in Atlanta, Georgia. These programs will continue into FY 2004 in the fourteen (14) counties served by the Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program.

Source of Funds

Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program Funds expended for this goal consist of thirty-nine thousand three hundred one (\$39,301) dollars from section 1444 of the Nation Agriculture Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy ACT of 1977 (NARETPA) and eleven thousand four (\$11,004) dollars of state matching funds.

Scope of Impact

State Specific

The Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program conducted program efforts in the fourteen (14) counties in southwest Mississippi served. The targeted audience for 4-H were youth between 5-18 years of age in various schools and communities.

KEY THEME: Community and Economic Development

Since the beginning of the new millennium, Mississippi Economic and Community Development indicators show a continuous decline in its growth factors. According to the latest U.S. census data factors such as: underemployment, unemployment, illiteracy, job losses of TANF recipients (80%), uncertainty of federal /state funding of the Federal Educational Initiative “no child left behind program” industrial job losses because of NAFTA-- off set by the job gains by new Nissan factory; and formed pockets of poverty (65.6%), depict the plight/conditions of Mississippi. The arrival of the new millennium brought bold expected vision of growth, but has yet to be realized.

Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension’s Community Resource Development program area continues to focus on the revitalization of rural communities and devotes its efforts to developing and establishing a new way of thinking and new patterns of behaviors that results in a more informed and responsive citizenry.

Impact

During FY2003, the assessment conducted in 2003 of critical needs issues were utilized in developing a social marketing planning and implementation strategy for this office. This plan involved the establishment of seven (7) new collaborative partners and the maintaining of relationship with twenty-four (24) other federal, state and local entities.

Through Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Mid-South Foundation, and USDA grant efforts, two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000.00) was awarded to assist in the CRD grass root development of poverty communities.

Twenty (20) faith-based organizations participated in ASU/CEP February Initiatives. Three thousand (3,000) or more senior citizens were active participants in our partnership with TRIAD (Senior Citizen and Crime Prevention Programs) and American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). Twelve (12) brochures, fifty-two (52) news releases, twenty-one (21) community development tool kits, and other educational materials were disseminated within the service area.

Alcorn State University’s CRD program area partnered with the study on “Persistent Poverty” in the South, commissioned by Senator Zell Miller (Democrat/Georgia) and the University of Georgia to assist in developing a model to deal with persistent poverty and to recommend initiatives for Federal and State support. The Black Belt Initiative enables Alcorn’s CRD to develop, organize, mobilize and empower small communities socially and economically. This revitalization will show a more informed and responsive Mississippi citizenry.

Source of Funds

Funds expended for this goal under this program came from section 1444 of the national Agriculture, Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977(NARETPA). Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Mid-South Foundation, and USDA grant efforts, two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000.00)

Scope of Impact

State Specific

These targeted communities show income increases which impact family income and the quality of lives.

ESTIMATED FTEs & Program Cost for Goal 5

FTEs - - _____		Program cost- \$ _____	
Federal	State	Federal	State
14.81	1.52	\$614,285	\$214,830

STAKEHOLDER INPUT

Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program embraces the involvement of its stakeholders-the major one being the taxpayers. Providing accountability and responsive results for the customers are expectations of reasonable returns from their investments. The implementation of Town Hall Meetings gives these stakeholders the opportunity to voice concerns and offer suggestions on program efforts and services. Town Hall meetings were conducted in FY 2002 in regions of the State. Town Hall meetings were conducted in the Delta Region, State Capitol Region and Southwest Mississippi. Issues from these meetings were prioritized by region and combined to assist in planning the FY 2003 POW. A new concept of Town Hall meetings with more detailed prescribed structure was developed during FY 2003. But due to the time constraints for scheduling the Town Hall events of the new town hall curriculum and thorough training the trainer, Town Hall meetings were delayed 'til FY 2004. The environmental scanning system of the ASU/CEP was enhanced in FY 2003. The system consists of the development of implementation of various methods such as expansion of Town Hall Meetings, Focus group sessions in all counties, conducting a Individual Client Service Plan (ICSP) survey and the analysis of secondary data to develop county profile to target limited resources audiences affected by high priority issues in counties of regions of the state. The Town Hall meeting process was revised during FY 2003 to provide a more detailed prescribed plan for seeking stakeholders input, participation and documentation in setting program direction for ASU/CEP. Initial planning of the revised Town Hall process and the train the trainer workshops of state and county staff and the identification of county issue planning teams consisting of a variety of county level stakeholders were implemented in 2003.

Joint ASU/CEP and MSU/ES County Advisory Councils continue to provide essential stakeholder issue prioritizing. Each ASU/CEP Agent solicits individuals to assure that a diversity of small /limited resource/socially disadvantage farmers, families, and youth issues are represented to seek their input and participation on the Council. Joint ASU/CEP and MSU/ES County Advisory Councils meet twice per year to prioritize issues and forward them to Extension Administration at each institution. Issues are then discussed by State Extension Specialist at ASU/CEP and are addressed in programmatic planning, development, and the delivery of educational programs and activities. Additionally, Agents are polled each spring at the Annual Extension Orientation Conference for programmatic issues that they request from Specialist on behalf of their specific stakeholder clientele.

During FY 2003, the following issues from Town Hall, Extension Advisory Councils and specific stakeholder clientele were reviewed and discussed during the Annual Extension Orientation Conference to determine the most effective method of approach:

- Lack of faith-based organizational support for community based educational programs.
- More programs geared toward parents and child relationships.

- Need to employ more subject-matter specialists and agents in the fourteen (14) counties service area of responsibility?
- More health awareness programs.
- Locating and identifying markets for agriculture enterprises.

Individual Extension Specialist has specific programs, activities and commodity advisory groups that provide environmental scans specific to educational programs originating from issues. These advisory groups meet throughout the year as the individual programs dictate.

Statewide Advisory Council's provides programmatic inputs, review and guidance for the overall Extension Programs. Statewide Advisory Council is planned for FY 2004 by the new Extension Administrator at ASU/ES. This Statewide Advisory Council will meet annually and at other times when special reviews and inputs are needed. This Council will be made up of individuals who represent a broad spectrum of diverse interest and exhibit a civic interest in the broad base diverse population of the State.

The Alcorn State University Strategic Planning Committee meets throughout the year, discuss University Departmental issues, programs and progress. And each department of the University submits a strategic plan. ASU/CEP strategic plan for the period of FY 1999-2004 was titled "Recommendations for Continuous Improvement in the Delivery of Programs to the Citizens of the State" and submitted June 28, 2002.

Recommendations were provided for the plan from university stakeholders:

Recommendations were: Extension Administrator, Research Director and the Small Farm Development Center report through a separate vice-president from the Academic Program. Extension organizational Goals were: pursue external funding sources and increase federal and state support; increase external linkages; improve intra-institutional linkages; market Extension to University upper-level administrators & influence research priorities. And there were twelve (12) over all Extension Organizational Recommendations: increase basic funding for staff, fill all vacancies, restore legislative funds, employ six Agents for Delta and Six agents for South Mississippi, state matching funds for 2501 program, recruit horticulture specialist, collaborate with other organizations & institutions, expand programs in Mississippi Delta, evaluation & accountability system to direct program planning, implementation & impact, implement Extension 5-year marketing plan, collaborate with teaching & research , and a telecommunication system that links the external centers and the general public. Also there were specific recommendations for Extension Agriculture, Human Sciences, Nutrition-Health-&-Fitness, 4-H Youth, and Community & Economic Development.

All of these stakeholder methods of input have assured ASU/CEP Educational Programs are of the highest need and relevance of limited resource audiences. Often priority issues, originating from diverse groups at different levels of stakeholder input, have pointed to the same need for programming. Therefore, utilizing these methods of Stakeholder input has been very valuable and has enhanced our programs and them on target.

PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS

There were no significant changes in the program review process since the submission of the 5- Year Plan of Work. “The review of the programmatic goals will be done by committees composed of multi-disciplinary personnel for each goal. Committees will include specialists, research scientist, university faculties, support staff and administrators. The review process will call for the teams to determine the system's level of performance by measuring personnel against tasks accomplishments, the proposed outcomes based on actual outcomes and the level of outputs. Indicator will be reviewed on realistic and measurable probabilities. Also, external sources will be utilized to review and determine feasibility of programs.”

MERIT REVIEW PROCESS

The merit review process of Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program consisted of the development and implementation of a Performance Appraisal System that were performed at all appropriate levels of organization by the administrative leadership. The state and county personnel accomplishments were reviewed based on both organizational and programmatic goals. These goals were reviewed yearly for the state and county staffs of the Cooperative Extension Program. This process was utilized to measure progress and to determine the level of performance of the state and county personnel regarding organizational and programmatic accomplishments in such areas as environmental scanning, program development, increasing programming funding, development of joint programming, technological and professional advancements and the development and implementation of collaborative networks, partnerships and marketing strategies. Merit scores were assessed to determine salaries adjustments, modifications and structural changes based on the availability of organizational resources.

SUCCESS STORIES

INCUBATOR FARM FOR KEMPER AND WINSTON COUNTIES PRESTON, MISSISSIPPI

During FY 2003, ten small farmers participated in the incubator farm program. Each farmer was assigned a farm plot ranging from three to five acres. These farmers produced their choice of a variety of commercial vegetable crops under the supervision of the Incubator Program Specialist and the Farm Manager. Participating farmers were required to participate in a variety of workshops on production, pest control, management, harvesting and marketing of produce. Therefore, the participating farmers produced more than forty-five acres of vegetables with a total estimated value of \$80,000.

In addition to providing on-the-job training for small farmers, the incubator farm served as a training center for the entire family. Workshops, seminars and other educational meetings were held at the center in the areas of family consumer science and youth at risk.

EXTENSION/RESEARCH FARM & TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER CENTER MOUND BAYOU, MISSISSIPPI

During the past growing season (2003), more than six hundred small farmers, small farm family members, home gardeners, and community leaders participated in workshops, seminars, group meetings, and field day held at the Extension /Research and Technology Transfer Center (ERTTC). The Center workshops, seminars and other educational meetings were also held in the areas of family consumer science and youth at risk. These efforts resulted in 13 farmers producing more than 500 acres of sweet potatoes and other commercial vegetables. Hence, the estimated value of the vegetable produced was \$1,500,000. It is also noted that ERTTC was a leader in introducing Sweet Potato production in the Mississippi Delta.

FRESH VEGETABLE PROCESSING FACILITY MARKS, MISSISSIPPI

This facility will serve as a value-added processing, assembly and temporary storage facility for fresh vegetables. The facility will also provide value-added processing of vegetables that are either ready for immediate consumption or prepared for additional processing. The newly purchased vegetable processing equipment will allow small limited resource farmers to add value to sweet potato and green leafy vegetables by producing sweet potato fries and chopped vegetables. Hence, the vegetable processing facility will help to expand marketing opportunities for present and prospective vegetable farmers in North Mississippi.

FNP PROGRAM
Crystal Spring Middle School
5 A Day Campaign 2003
“A Campaign for Healthier Eating”

The fourth graders at the Crystal Springs Middle School recognized National 5 A Day being September 29, 2003. The campaign comes at a time when Americans are eating significantly fewer servings of fruits and vegetables than recommended by USDA Food Guide Pyramid.

Miss Frances Allen, Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program Family Nutrition program Assistant for Copiah County and the fourth grade classes at Crystal Springs Middle School kicked off their own campaign. This campaign was designed to encourage more students to eat more fruits and vegetables in their diets. Lessons were taught on the important role fruits and vegetables play in healthy diets. Students were asked to keep a survey of the daily intake of fruits and vegetables in their diets. Also, Miss Allen provided students 5 A Day Frisbees as an incentive to include active play in their everyday activities.

As a result of this survey more than 95% of students participating, now eat more fruits and vegetables in their diets.

NATCHEZ FARMERS MARKET

During FY2003, the Natchez Main Street Farmer=s Market, operated as a demonstration by Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program, has contributed greatly to the community by providing fresh home grown vegetables and fruits for consumers, which allowed vegetable growers in Southwest Mississippi and Louisiana to increase farm profits. Alcorn State University Extension Program provided technical assistance and all available resources to growers to ensure vegetables were of market quality. As a result, 10 growers/vendors marketed a variety of horticultural crops with an average daily sale of \$1,110.00. In addition, 6 growers are certified to participate in the Farmer=s Market Nutrition Program, which allows WIC recipients to redeem coupons for fresh vegetables. The WIC coupons sales totaled \$4,400.00 and the program has been very beneficial to the market & small farm clientele.

SUCCESS STORIES FOR CRD

The Russum Community Located in rural Mississippi requested a workshop on civil engagement and citizen participation. Eight public forums to discuss community problems have been conducted by workshop participants and the findings published for public review. Several community members are now seeking public office. The technical assistance that was provided to participants resulted in the formation of a nonprofit organization. The organization secured grants that financed the construction of a community development center. That community is now actively engaged.

Technical Assistance was provided to a local landowner in Winston County who was having a land boundary dispute with an adjacent landowner. One hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00) in family property was saved by this intervention.

**SMALL FARM OUTREACH TRAINING AND TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE PROJECT
ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
PROGRAM**

Alcorn Small Farm Outreach Project in conjunction with the Mississippi Association of Cooperatives held a Small Farmers and Women in Business Conference. The conference purposes were to provide focused technical assistance to small farmers; explore concrete opportunities for value-added vegetable marketing; risk management; opportunities for women in business; network with federal and state agencies; and share experiences and ideas with other conference participants. The conference also featured a variety of exhibits focusing on various topics. Approximately 200 farmers participated and 99 USDA official, agents, Community Base organizations, and others received detailed information. There were 299 participants that attended the conference in 2003.

The Small Farm Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project conducted the Venders Borrowers Training Class, which consist of an eight-week comprehensive training course. This training is designed for USDA Farm Service Agencies' borrowers who are required by their loan agreement to take this type of training to enhance their skills and knowledge of their overall management aspects of their operations. Participants received training in the areas of: business and financial management, crop and livestock production, risk management component of Human resource and legal issues, marketing, production and financial risk. A total of 25 small limited-resources farmers participated and graduated this class. This class allowed these individuals to continue to receive additional funding from USDA. And it better prepare them to make sound management decision in their agricultural operations.

The Small Farm Outreach Project received funding for two proposals by USDA Risk Management Agency that was specifically designed to address the Agricultural needs of the American Indians, Hispanics and Women in the state of Mississippi in Conjunction with The Alcorn Small Farm Development Center. The proposals valued near one hundred seventy thousand dollars (\$170,000). These proposals will afford the ASU/CEP to continue its efforts in making sure that the agricultural needs of all citizens of the state of Mississippi are addressed.