

# **FY 2006 Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results**

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**Alcorn State University Extension Program**

# Table of Contents

**A. Alcorn State University Extension Program**

**Overview .....3**

**B. Planned Programs Accomplishment Report .....5**

Goal 1: To enhance global participation, competitiveness, and profitability of agricultural producers, especially family farmers, non-traditional producers, and those who lack adequate economic and social resources.....5

Goal 2: To provide a safe, affordable, reliable and nutritious food supply .....21

Goal 3: To promote a healthy, well-nourished population .....24

Goal 4: To achieve greater harmony (balance) between agriculture and the environment .....31

Goal 5: To enhance economic opportunities and the quality of life among families and communities .....34

**C. Stakeholder Input Process.....59**

**D. Program Review Process .....63**

**E. Merit Review Process ..... 63**

# Alcorn State University Extension Program

## A. Overview

The Alcorn State University Extension Program (ASUEP) through the implementation of its plan of work utilizes various delivery approaches, and strategies to address high priority issues facing limited-resource audiences in communities throughout the state of Mississippi. Its educational programs, events, activities and information address relevant issues to improve the quality of life of limited-resource citizens with special focus on Southwest and Delta counties of Mississippi. Delivery approaches of our educational efforts consist of staffing arrangements, outreach centers and collaborative partnerships with Mississippi State Extension Service and other related state agencies as well as through technology, media and communication strategies.

The Alcorn State University Extension Program staff at the state level consists of state specialists designing, developing and implementing educational programs, events and activities in the areas of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Nutrition & Health, Community Resource Development, 4-H and Youth Development, and Family Life and Child Development. At the county level, its county staff plan and implement educational programs in nearly 30 counties including three off-campus demonstration centers, an on-campus model farm, and a farmer's market. Its outreach centers, another delivery approach, have multi-focus educational approaches to address relevant issues specific to geographic areas of the state. In the southwestern part of the state, the Alcorn State University Extension Program partnered with the City of Natchez to establish the Natchez Marketplace which provides an accessible market to limited-resource farmers and producers of home based businesses where they can sell vegetables, produce and value-added products such as jam and jellies to consumers.

In the North Delta region, the Marks Processing Plant provides limited-resource farmers with the opportunity to process various types of vegetable crops and valued-added products to enhance their potential income. In the east central part of the state, the Small Farm Incubator Center enables farmers during the first years of the program to gain educational knowledge and training about alternative vegetable production and marketing on demonstration plots at the center so that they can apply this knowledge to their own farming operation in the second year of program. Also, a Pastured Poultry Demonstration was established at the Small Farm Incubator Center. Pastured Poultry is an emerging alternative enterprise in the state of Mississippi that can provide opportunities for farmers of Mississippi to increase their economic resources for their farm income by using existing available resources such as pasture land. In the northwest region is the Mound Bayou Research and Extension Demonstration Center that focuses on demonstration plots on the production of alternative vegetable crops specific to this region of the state, and the production of maximum yields to enhance farmers' and producers' income.

The ASUEP utilizes technological advancement, capacity, communication and media approaches to broaden our delivery of educational programs with distance learning strategies to address high priority issues facing limited-resource citizens in communities in Mississippi.

## **MISSION**

To improve the quality of life of limited-resource audiences through educational programs in a time of dynamic change.

## **VISION**

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

## **OUR CORE VALUES**

- Learning
- Accessibility
- Collaboration
- Innovativeness
- Accountability
- Inclusiveness

The Alcorn State University Extension Program (ASUEP) educational programs are available to all residents of the State of Mississippi in collaboration with Mississippi State University Extension Services without regard for race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion or handicap. The ASUEP utilizes citizens' and stakeholders' input through advisory committees, town hall meetings, focus groups, individual client service plans and a dialogue with local government officials to set program priorities, allocate resources, and evaluate program outcome/impacts.

The Alcorn State University Extension Program encourages imaginative, original, and inventive analysis in the creation and delivery of its educational programs.

## **B. Planned Programs Accomplishment Report**

**Goal 1: To enhance global participation, competitiveness, and profitability of agricultural producers, especially family farmers, non-traditional producers, and those who lack adequate economic and social resources.**

### **Goal Narrative**

Agriculture has been an essential force behind the growth of Mississippi economics from the first moments settlers stepped upon the nation's shores. The Alcorn State University Extension Program (ASUEP) has made significant contributions to the agriculture industry in the state of Mississippi. These efforts are designed to improve the quality of life for limited-resource, small family farmers and producers. Major educational program emphasis is being placed on sustainable agriculture emphasizing risk management education. ASUEP is currently working with small/limited-resource farmers and ranchers in adopting modern farm management techniques, providing assistance in establishing niche markets to increase customer base of fresh seasonal produce and developing alternative enterprises in order to improve farm income and quality of life. These efforts are being addressed through educational programs, activities, and events (conferences). In order for small farmers to sustain themselves in the fast changing farming industry, strategies have been developed to identify a combination of high cash value alternative and traditional agricultural enterprises that will provide significant net return. Educational programs, events, and activities have been implemented for Goal 1 utilizing the resources of the ASUEP to assist small farmers and their families in becoming more viable and competitive. For instance, the production of beef cattle and goats make up a large percentage of the production in Mississippi because small and part-time farms are very suitable for these enterprises. Greater revenue can be realized from goat production by improving breeding stock. The quality of goat production is directly related to genetics, health management, housing, nutritional requirements and market availability. Goat production through small farmers has traditionally been of low quality. There is also a lack of adequate markets for their products.

ASUEP has focused on revitalizing the syrup industry to improve producing, harvesting, processing and marketing of syrup that could make syrup crops more profitable and more desirable as an alternative crop. It is imperative that farm income increases to raise many small farmers above the poverty level. Alternative crops like sweet sorghum and sugar cane for syrup can increase farm income. Sweet sorghum and sugar cane for syrup have been traditionally grown in the eastern sector of the state. Low prices, aging producers/processors and the above mentioned reasons reduced this enterprise to bare existence in 1995. Traditionally, processors have packaged syrup in large metal cans, which are unattractive and too large for the modern consumers. Many counties do not

have syrup processing plants available for the new and existing syrup producers. There is an immediate need to create interest and to train young processors on this alternative enterprise. New and existing producers/processors need training on producing, harvesting as well as marketing skills, and value added practices that are capable of making these syrup crops a very profitable enterprise.

Additionally, in the farm and financial program area of ASUEP are the efforts of the Small Farm Outreach. The Training and Technical Assistance Project (2501 Project) has made significant strides in addressing the needs of the farm borrowers and in connecting small/limited-resource farmers to a combination of farm programs and resources of USDA that are vital to the survival of their farming operations. The project also identifies, develops and promotes successful risk management and conservation strategies that small/limited-resource; socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers can utilize to remain economically viable in a rapidly changing agricultural environment.

Agriculture is Mississippi's number one industry, employing approximately 30% of the state's workforce either directly or indirectly. Agriculture in Mississippi is a \$6-billion industry. There are approximately 42,000 farms in the state covering 11 million acres. The average-sized farm is composed of 262 acres. Agriculture makes a significant contribution to all 82 counties. The sustainability of small farms is dependent upon the farmer's ability to minimize risk in a number of managerial areas and perform at a level that generates profits sufficient to keep the land in production 12 months of the year. According to the most recent census for the state of Mississippi, the number of limited-resource farmers has declined up to three times more than non-limited resource farmers. The 2002 census of agriculture, seventy-two (72) percent 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 eighty-two (82) percent of the total farms in the state. Such farms range from 13 to 650 acres. The major factors leading to the decline of small farmers include, but are not limited to: 1) poor management; 2) shortage of capital; 3) lack of availability of markets; 4) limited knowledge of available USDA programs as well as qualification for them and 5) lack of enterprise diversification and the selection and adoption of alternative enterprises appropriate to their farming operations.

## **Goal 1: Planned Program Overview**

The following are planned programs included under Goal 1. The specific program subject areas for Agriculture & Natural Resources planned programs area are included in the chart. The subject areas are: Agronomy, Animal Science/Forage, Forest Management, Horticulture, Risk/Farm Management, and Syrup Producing/Processing/Marketing.

Output activities under this goal are provided in the table below:

Planned Program Area/Subject Area	Extension Events	Extension Contacts
Agronomy	45	1,984
Animal Science/Forage	140	8,203
Forest Management	47	617
Horticulture	190	4,044
Risk/Farm Management	81	1,759
Syrup Prod/Proc/Marketing	53	2,754

### Overall Estimated Expenditures for Goal 1:

Function	FTE		Expenditures*	
	Federal	State	Federal	State
Extension Program	6.71	3.39	\$ 778,725.31	\$393,759.02

\* State and federal expenditures are inclusive of programming, support staff and administrative expenses.

Progress toward intermediate and long-term outcomes and impacts for ongoing programs for Goal 1 are documented under the following key themes.

#### Key Theme: Agricultural Profitability

a. Small/limited resource farmers in Southwest Mississippi have limited financial management skills, which have hindered their ability to measure profit to loss ratio. This has also hindered their ability to complete the year-end analysis that is required by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Farm Service Agency (FSA) of anyone who has received funding from their programs. Small farmers have not received training on record keeping and farm best management practices (BMP) which leads to overspending on farm supplies, misuse of chemicals, feed and fertilizer, which are major purchases of any farmer. There are a large number of farmers needing technical assistance in completing this type of analysis, which determines the feasibility of the farm

enterprise. The technical assistance consisted of the farmer's receipts of the farmer being reviewed to assist him or her in preparing a year-end analysis of the farm business which is vital to the improvement in his operation. The farmer is provided educational assistance on the importance of farm record keeping and its impact on the success or failure of a farm enterprise.

b. As a result of this type of educational assistance, the farmer is able to complete a year-end analysis report on his or her farm utilizing their compiled receipts. Based on the collected information, it is determined if the operation was profitable and if the improvements are necessary to increase productivity.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Risk Management**

a. Small farmers in Mississippi are having difficulties receiving funds from traditional funding sources to purchase land, equipment, livestock and other operational supplies either to expand or to get started with a specific farming enterprise. These individuals often utilize the United States Department of Agriculture-Farm Service Agency (USDA-FSA), which is the lender of last resort, to obtain the finance needed regardless of whether they are new or existing farmers. Farmers have had difficulty in managing the funds provided through a loan and so do not readily repay the loan according to their loan agreement. As a result, USDA-FSA started requiring its borrowers to have 12 hours in financial management training and six hours of production management training in the area of their enterprise as a requirement in obtaining additional funds to help improve their ability to repay their loans. USDA-FSA borrowers are now required to participate in a vendor borrowers training class. The majority of the limited-resource farmers have non-farm employment to supplement their farm income. These non-farm jobs are usually forty hours (40) a week which provide little to no time to take the required vendors borrowers classes, thus making them ineligible to acquire and receive the additional funds necessary to continue farming. The availability of the class is limited due to the small number of agencies that are licensed to provide these training classes in Mississippi. There is also a fee for these training classes as well as the issue of transportation of the vendors for these classes to the farms. The Alcorn Extension Small Farm Outreach Project provided three vendors borrowers training classes with the required hours to assist small/limited-resource farmers to meet their requirements for borrower training as outlined in Farm Service Agency (FSA) regulations. These classes consisted of 12 hours in financial management and 6 hours in livestock or crop production. The financial management session consisted of instruction in record keeping, income statements, farm management, estate planning, balance sheets, financial analysis, FSA farm loan applications and profit to loss ratios. The



livestock or crop production includes best management practices for enterprise, enterprise production techniques and marketing, breed or variety selection. and enterprise analysis. These training classes are designed to provide agricultural producers with knowledge about management skills and techniques that could contribute to more profitable operations. Through these structured classes, the farmers are provided practical exercises used to evaluate the participants' ability to understand and utilize these concepts.

b. A total of 18 borrowers participated in the classes and were trained on improved farm management skills and techniques to meet Farm Service Agency vendor borrowers' standards. This structured training assisted these farmers in meeting their obligations with USDA-FSA which will qualify them to receive additional operational funds if needed. The farmers gained at least an average score of 75 overall from the different sections of the vendors training. Each participant in this class received a certificate of completion. These three classes had one hundred (100) percent passing rate. Because the requirements were met, the FSA put \$1,189,000 dollars into farming operations and into southeast Mississippi's agricultural economy.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Risk Management**

a. Small/limited-resource farmers are experiencing challenges in raising a variety of crops on their farms. These crops include traditional field crops, livestock enterprises and cattle targeted to niche markets. Small farmers have numerous issues, some of which are lack of economy scale, lack of knowledge of USDA programs and limited availability of services and technical assistance for such programs. Additionally, small farmers have difficulty in understanding the significance a farm business plan and income statements which contributed greatly to overcoming difficulties in their financial obligations on the farm. The Small Farm Outreach Project provided technical assistance to small farmers in preparing the necessary documentation to be reviewed by FSA for reaffirmation of debt write down on their farm businesses. The documents needed were a completed loan package, verification of debts and assets, the balance sheet, the projected/actual income and expenses, and the review of the farmers' income taxes for the past five years along with a five-year production history.

b. The various types of educational knowledge provided and technical assistance to the small farmers aided in the completion of packages for reaffirmation of debt write down. The deadline date for submitting the information to FSA by the farmers was met to obtain the necessary capital to meet their financial obligations by paying smaller debts due to the

reaffirmation process of debt write down and establishing an active farm plan for future operations.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Risk Management**

a. One small farmer encountered an obstacle due to lack of clear communication with USDA-FSA loan officers. Because of a disaster experienced during the hurricane season, the farmer was unable to have a successful crop. As a result, the farmer was unable to meet his financial obligations for his existing loan. The farmer expressed an interest in obtaining an emergency loan with FSA. In the farmer's opinion, the loan officer of the agency was uncooperative and did not explore any alternatives that could have prevented the farmer from possibly losing his property. The deadline for meeting his financial obligations was near and some type of arrangement had to be made prior to the loan repayment deadline. The Alcorn Extension Small Farm Outreach Project worked diligently in providing technical assistance to the farmer in the preparation the emergency loan package. The application consisted of compiling personal information and farm records of expenses, balance sheets, and expected production yield information. The farmer was provided educational information on record keeping to alleviate this situation from occurring in the future. Also, he was provided with contact information and was advised to communicate with appropriate representatives in the state office about the lack of cooperation and service by the loan officer.

b. As a result of technical assistance and valuable educational information provided by the project, the farmer was able to complete the emergency loan package and submit it for approval before the deadline date of his initial loan payment. The farmer was awarded the emergency loan at the requested level. Also, the farmer experienced the benefits of a record keeping system that will allow him to monitor his profits and reduce risk within his operation until the next growing season. Additionally, the farmer was assigned a new loan officer by the agency in another county to facilitate effective service for the agency.

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

d. State specific.

## **Key Theme: Small Farm Viability**

- a. Small farmers in southwest Mississippi have been plagued with poor financial management skills, which have hindered their ability to measure profit to loss ratio and to complete of their year-end analysis to determine if their operations are sustainable. Rural small farmers lack adequate knowledge on farm record keeping and best management practices to facilitate effective farm management on their own operations. Without these skills, farmers can be faced with over spending of financial resources on farm supplies and chemicals, feed, and fertilizer that are major purchases of small farmers. ASUEP agriculture agents provided training and technical assistance through scheduled meetings with farmers on completing the year-end analysis report. Farmers were required to hand in their receipts for disbursements and sales from the year's operation expenditures to determine the feasibility of continued production in their enterprises.
- b. Upon completion of the training, farmers were able to review and prepare an accurate year-end analysis report utilizing their receipts for disbursements and sales. Based on this year-end analysis, each farmer determined the degree of profitability of his or her operation along with possible modifications that would improve future profitability. These modifications included breeding techniques, livestock marketing techniques and the purchase of supplies in bulk.
- c. Funds expended for this goal under this program came from Section 1444 of the National Agriculture, Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy of 1977 (NARETPA) and state matching funds.
- d. State specific.

## **Key Theme: Beef Cattle Production**

- a. Limited-resource farmers in southwest Mississippi, especially in Amite/Wilkinson counties that raise commercial cattle, often experience very poor genetics in their herds. This is normally caused by a non-performing bull which makes up eighty (80) percent of the herd. The Romanola breed has been identified as a viable alternative for farmers in this area. Studies have shown this breed's bloodline is of superior quality which will improve the overall herd. Low birth weights and diseases which cause below average sales at the auction are also factors. Furthermore, previous surveys indicate that most limited-resource farmers are not knowledgeable of the cutting edge technology as it relates to cattle husbandry which includes Expected Pregnancy Difference (EPDs), artificial insemination and common herd health practices. Moreover, non-productive brood cows are not culled from the herd which causes additional expenses for the producers in terms of nutrition and vaccinations. ASUEP agriculture agents provided educational programs for limited-resource farmers about the Romanola breed as a possible alternative. Currently, beef cattle market prices are as high as they have been in the past three years ranging from one dollar to one dollar and 30 cents per pound for live weight. Producers were provided educational workshops on herd health, forages, marketing practices, and nutrition

of beef cattle. Additionally, farmers were provided training on farm and financial management to improve the efficiency of their farming livestock operations. Additional information was provided that may improve farmers' access to capital to expand their operations.

b. Two farmers were selected to pilot test the production of the Romanola breed by artificial insemination of 12 brood cows to show the importance of good genetics among the herd and to demonstrate husbandry techniques that are beneficial to limited- resource farmers. As a result, birth and weaning weights improved dramatically because of proper herd management. The farmers were provided ASUEP contacts for special projects that could improve their accessibility to capital for farming operations.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Beef Cattle Production**

a. Small livestock producers often face a shortage of forages during the winter months in southwest Mississippi. Winter forage production is vital to livestock operations in Claiborne County, especially on farms where fall calving is practiced. Producers have limited capital to produce forages. Many producers (approximately forty (40) percent) can overcome this shortage by harvesting hay during the spring and summer and using it for food during the winter. But due to drought in recent years, the cost of round baled hay has increased significantly from \$15.00 per bale to \$30.00 per bale, depending on the quality, which forces producers to sell their replacement heifers and weaned calves at a low market price. To overcome the lack of insufficient forages, which causes an economical dilemma in livestock products, ASUEP educators in Claiborne County selected eight producers to participate in a demonstration project that would show the benefits of planting a cool-season forage crop mixed with a legume that, if managed properly, would provide optimum grazing during the winter.

b. As a result of the demonstration, six producers increased the average daily gain on their animals by thirty-five (35) percent because of excellent management practices. Also fall born calves had a higher weaning weight that averaged 360 pounds. The ryegrass and clover planted pastures were high enough in minerals for cattle to thrive during winter months.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Beef Cattle Production**

a. Beef cattle production is a major agriculture enterprise among small/limited-resource producers in southwest Mississippi, which is also the case in Claiborne County. It is estimated that sixty-seven (67) percent of producers raise cattle as a secondary business to offset the family living expenses. Thirty-three (33) percent of producers are retirees who rely on beef cattle as a source of income for taking care of household expenditures. For the several years, the paradigm of beef production in southwest Mississippi has shifted into the hands of middle-aged adults and their children who often acquire youth loans to purchase cattle. Because of this shift, surveys administered on farm site visits indicated that these producers are deficient in educational knowledge about adjusting changes occurring in the cattle industry. Information collected revealed a need for educational information on beef husbandry which includes: reproductive management inclusive of genetics, basic herd health, pasture fertility, and recordkeeping. The Alcorn State University Extension Program (ASUEP) assembled a team to address the problems plagued by beef cattle producers. The team consisted of ASUEP specialists, Alcorn State University (ASU) veterinarians, and research scientists from the ASU School of Agriculture in collaboration with the USDA Farm Service Agency and the Natural Resource Conservation Service. The team provided the educational information and hands-on delivery response to analyze management skills of producers in the cattle industry. A total of 18 beef cattle producers and six youths who received production loans for beef cattle were also required to attend the training program(s) that addressed very pressing needs and concerns. The team provided production workshops, on farm demonstrations, technical assistance, conducted a beef field day, and shared inputs donated by the local cattlemen association to improve producers overall knowledge and skills in the deficient areas. The producers were provided techniques on how to administer vaccines properly which facilitated the development of a spring and fall herd health schedule for brood cows and calves. Ongoing technical assistance was also provided by agriculture educators through regular farm visits to evaluate and monitor progress and to give recommendations on any problems the producers encountered. Also, the participants were able to develop additional skills for their farm enterprise survival focusing on recordkeeping to determine which animals were productive and which were non-productive.

b. According to evaluation results, beef producers indicated that knowledge was gained in effective management skills. Grazing management was documented as improved as a result of collecting soil samples and applying recommended nutrients to maximize grass growth. It was noted that the 18 producers realized increases in weaning weight of their calves by an average of 45 lbs. These producers realized the benefits when the animals were marketed through the sale by auction where they brought a higher price.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Beef Cattle Production**

a. The beef cattle market prices have been high in the past three years ranging from one dollar to one dollar and 30 cents per pound for live weight. Southwest Mississippi beef producers have experienced difficult times about beef cattle production and issues such as herd health, forages, marketing and the overall nutrition of beef cattle. Limited- resource farmers and producers are in need of educational training programs to enhance their knowledge and skills about managing profitable beef cattle operations through utilizing new practices in beef cattle production. The Alcorn State University Extension Program (ASUEP) provided educational training, field demonstrations, and technical assistance to address the farm management needs of small/limited-resource farmers. Farmers worked closely together in these groups and learning sessions to improve their farm leadership skills and farm management practices. Small farmers were encouraged to establish small farm associations in an effort to increase beef cattle production and save money. The Southwest Beef Producers collaborated with ASUEP specialists and submitted a mini grant for small/limited-resource farmers to increase their knowledge and improve their overall farming operation.

b. As a result of the educational training provided by the ASUEP, the application from the Southwest Beef Producers was accepted and a grant was awarded in the sum of \$5,000.00. The grant was awarded to the small/limited-resource farmers to conduct demonstration trials on forage management and workshops/field days on herd health, marketing practices and nutrition.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Goat Production Efficiency**

a. Goat production is a viable agriculture enterprise among small limited resource producers in southwest Mississippi, which is also the case in Lincoln County. Producers raise goats as an alternative enterprise that can serve as a secondary income. Also, goat producers and processors are not organized in a fashion such as members of a

cooperative. The Alcorn State University Extension Program conducted a goat field day in Lincoln County to provide educational information to goat producers on various topics-the benefits of joining a co-op and the advantage of record keeping, developing and maintaining effective production records, and other aspects of their farming operation. Technical assistance was provided by an agricultural educator on the production and marketing strategies for the sale of goats to consumers in the marketplace. Additionally, a goat sale was advertised to provide a market outlet for farm producers to sell their goats to consumers.

b. As a result of the field day and educational information provided to farm producers, goats were also sold to goat buyers and consumers. Two goat producers are considering joining the Production, Processing and Marketing Cooperative (PPMC) as members to experience savings on supplies by buying in bulk.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Beef Cattle Production**

a. In the state of Mississippi, beef production is a large and important segment of agriculture. This is also an important alternative enterprise to beef cattle producers in Simpson County. Beef cattle enterprise can work well with other enterprises such as grain, orchard, vegetable or other crops. Cattle can make efficient use of feed resources that have little alternative uses, such as crop residues, marginal cropland, untillable land, or range land that cannot produce crops other than grass. For farmers who own land but work full-time off the farm, a beef enterprise can be the least labor-intensive way to use their land. A cattle enterprise can use family or surplus labor needed for calving, weaning, vaccinating, castrating, and weighing. Many limited-resource farmers (women, African-American, Asians, Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, and Hispanics) lack significant skills needed to breed herds, develop a registered and commercial herd, purchase cattle or manage a cow-calf herd. A series of meetings were conducted on production practices, management and other options. The options were grouped into the following areas: soil-fertility, forages, grassland improvement, nutrition, heifer replacement, breeding and reproduction, development of a registered herd, selection of breeding stock, and the management of a cow-calf operation. A volunteer seasonal farmer from a community in Simpson County assisted with training other farmers. A total of 30 participants were involved in the training. Training was provided on soil fertility, forages, grassland improvement, nutrition, heifer replacement, breeding herds, the development of a

registered herd, selection of breeding stock, and management of a cow-calf operation. Training emphasized developing a beef cattle herd, keeping accurate records and registering the desirable purebred calves to be retained for breeding stock. Farmers were also provided training on how to identify sources of good cattle (both registered and commercial) and why it is best to purchase from a successful and reputable breeder who sells only sound cattle as breeding animals.

b. Evaluation results indicated that among producers the short-term result denoted in a shortened calving season increases the possibility of having a uniform set of calves to sell at market. Producers who had cattle of similar breeds and size generated more income. Another advantage realized by producers was shortening the calving season. Producers experienced having a 283 day gestation period and selected breeding dates when their cows will have calves at all times of year. Producers also realized they should develop considerations in determining calving season inclusive of weather conditions and the ability to match natural resources with the cows' requirements.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Adding Value to Old Agricultural Products**

a. Farmer producers or especially youth syrup producers can be exposed to income potential of value-added products of syrup production and processing. Small farmers are unaware of the potential income that is possible by adopting an alternative enterprise such as producing sweet sorghum and sugarcane syrup. Potential producers and processors also lack the knowledge about the additional income potential of syrup crops through increased or improved processing, packing and marketing. The majority of sugarcane producers lack processing skills and so, coupled with the decline in processing facilities, many existing or new producers have no way of processing their syrup crops. The Alcorn State University Extension Program conducted demonstrations by agricultural agents to farmers on juice extraction from sugar cane using the Mills on Wheels syrup processor. The demonstration was held at the local festivals with approximately 65 attendees at the four sessions with approximately 15 youths per session for a total of 260 adults and 60 youths. The agricultural agents demonstrated how to process and market high quality syrup. Syrup processing and marketing demonstrations were conducted to allow established producers to gain knowledge and skills of processing and as well as to offer youths an opportunity to gain insight into syrup processing and marketing.

b. During the event, 325 attendees including youths were given a survey about the value of sweet sorghum and sugarcane syrup demonstrations. According to the results, seventy-five (75) percent of the producers and attendees realized the potential of valued syrup



products as an alternative enterprise to a farm business. As a result of the demonstration on extracting juice from sweet sorghum and sugarcane and the amount of potential profit from establishing a farm business, eight youth attendees prepared applications for funding to the Farm Service Agency to adopt this enterprise as a business. Many producers expressed an interest in this as an alternative enterprise.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Goat Production Efficiency**

a. Goat production has not been recognized as a major industry until recent years in which the demand for this product began to outweigh the supply. Newly arrived immigrants are entering into the state and our community who refer to goat as their “meat of choice”. The largest supply of goat meat is imported into the country in a frozen condition; but the consumer of goat meat prefers to receive fresh cuts of goat meat. With the increasing demand of goat meat or “Chevon” demanded by newcomers of various cultures in the state during the next few years, production will need to be increased by farm producers to meet the supply of diverse population in the state. Nevertheless, to meet this growing demand by consumers in the future, education is needed by producers to deal with the poor quality and lack of quantity of breeding stock that has prevented producers from making sufficient increases in profit. Superior animals are required in order to receive premium prices for the product. The lack of herd health plans and best management practices have created great mortality rates and a decrease in profits. Producers have not been able to connect to one another to sell and buy their product collectively to eliminate cost to remain in business. The cost of breeding stock, supplies, feed, and other materials have created financial distractions that are causing some producers to go out of business. The Alcorn State University Extension Program has conducted workshops, seminars, and demonstrations on herd health, best management practices and selection of breeding stock; in which more than 175 producers/potential producers have been in attendance.

b. Through these educational efforts, 70 new goat producers have begun raising goats and have purchased breeding stock from local producers. The development of the Production, Processing and Marketing Cooperative (PPMC) has given producers opportunities to become members to sell and purchase farm products collectively more than 500 goats have been sold for breeding stock in which members increased profits by ten (10) percent. Over 200 goats have been sold for slaughter to local ethnic groups in southwest Mississippi, which gives promise for a larger market share and a sustained supply for the demand.

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

d. State specific.

**Key Theme: Forage Production Efficiency:**

a. Summer annual pastures can provide valuable high quality forages during a season when livestock permanent pastures may be running out of nutritional supplies. In almost all parts of the southeastern region of this country, livestock producers can add warm season annuals as a part of their forage management program. In Simpson County, forage crops ranging from corn to Bermuda grass to sorghum Sudan hybrids and millet can be phased in as summer pasture crops. Most limited-resource livestock producers' familiarity with these species is not new; yet, their unfamiliarity with knowing when, where, and how to utilize the species is a key to their lack of success in fitting the forage crops to their operations. ASUEP agriculture agents conducted three controlled grazing workshops that were designed to help livestock producers capture better returns on their investments (beef cattle, horses, sheep, goats, etc.) through high grazing efficiency. In collaboration with the Mississippi State University Extension Service (MSUES) staff, the ASUEP agriculture agents distributed a quarterly newsletter to reinforce grazing methods geared towards maximizing better returns. Both the workshops and newsletter provided educational information about pasture yields on summer annuals and how those summer annuals (when not used in the form of hay to supplement feeding costs) lead to rising input costs.

b. Through both the workshops and the quarterly newsletter, 1,597 contacts were made both directly and indirectly to expose the subjects to information on pasture yields on summer annuals and rising input costs. As a result of the workshops and the distribution of educational information, 114 livestock producers realized pasture yields on summer annuals representing an increase from 50 to 70 acres to 400 acres. These increases are due to additional irrigation or fertilizer and efficient grazing when summer annuals are high. When dry weather is occurring, a decrease in forages per acre often leads to increased input. Yet, when irrigation is lacking, it is expected that operating expenses will grow by 10 percent.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Small Farm Viability:**

a. The high capital investments and operational capital requirements of most large scale farming have prevented most limited-resource farmers in the Mississippi Delta, from participating in such enterprises such as raising corn, cotton and soybeans. Hence, there is a need for alternative enterprises that are profitable and require less capital investments. Therefore, to response to this issue, five educational workshops, seminars and on-farm demonstrations were conducted on vegetable production for limited-resource farmers by the staff of Alcorn State University Extension Program. A total of 140 limited-resource farmers participated in the educational workshops, seminars and activities on vegetable production as an alternative enterprise for small limited-resource farmers on their farming operations. The educational workshops and activities included topics on proper production practices, pesticide and fertilizer usage and disease control measures. The on-farm demonstration enabled the farmers to use the field plots as a laboratory where farmers received on-hand experience on the activities associated with best practices related to vegetable production.

b. As a result of the education and on farm demonstrations, ninety-five (95) percent of the 140 participants indicated they would adopt of best management practices in alternative vegetable production. However, 95 farmers indicated that through the adoption they could realize additional income from the sale of the vegetables. The farmers also indicated they would increase their production of vegetables, hence increasing their acreage in the upcoming growing season.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Diversified/Alternative Agriculture**

a. Producing safe and nutritious food for consumers and monitoring the viability of rural agricultural communities through environmentally friendly practices are some of the major challenges facing agriculture today. Therefore, the need to address food production practices and environmental quality for limited-resource farmers is of growing importance in rural Mississippi. Maintaining environmental quality by using low- input farming practices is a goal of many farm families. Therefore, reduction of pesticide use and nutrient management are the primary emphasis for an educational program for farmers. Hence, four workshops and seminars on adequate and responsible fertilizer and pesticide usage, erosion control measure and proper pesticide disposal methods were conducted for farmers in the Mississippi Delta region. Over 50 farmers attended the workshops.

b. Eighty (80) percent of the participants indicated a reduction in nutrient application and an increase in proper pesticide usage and disposal measures. These farmers also

reported recycling and implementing recycling of pesticide containers, and farm materials such as oil that can be recycled from the farm.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Diversified/Alternative Agriculture**

a. Many small/limited-resource farmers in Pike and Walthall counties own many acres of gum trees that are harvested as pulpwood for supplemental income or just removed for other purposes. Prices for pulpwood in south Mississippi reached in all times low of \$5.00 a ton in August 2004. Clients are in need of alternatives to low pulpwood prices and tree removal without adequate compensation. Geographically, we are located in close proximity to New Orleans which is the mushroom capital of the world. It is essential to train limited-resource clientele to shiitake mushrooms which grow on pulpwood size logs or sawdust blocks. It is also necessary to conduct shiitake production workshops that include pre and post testing and program evaluation.

b. A total of 44 limited-resource individuals were trained in the alternative enterprise of shiitake mushroom production. One hundred (100) percent of the participants taking the pre and post tests gained substantial knowledge of shiitake mushroom production. Participants now possess the ability to produce mushrooms which make the same cord of wood worth \$1,000.00 instead of \$5.00. The program evaluation indicated that all participants would be willing to produce shiitake for their home use. Additionally, some participants requested a future workshop on commercial shiitake mushroom production with a tour of the Natural Products, New Hebron, Mississippi shiitake cooperative facility.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Niche Market**

The growing number of seniors has a greater desire to live healthier lives, but they find it difficult to budget for it. Today's elderly people live on fixed incomes that change very little year after year. In addition to this, the elderly are suffering from various chronic diseases that can be improved with the consumption of fresh produce. Of the population of elderly

people with chronic diseases, large percentages are continuing to prepare their foods in a manner that removes a great deal of their nutritional value. The seniors do not have ready access to fresh produce because a large percentage of them live in apartment complexes that are not centrally located community garden projects and local farms offering fresh produce. A collaborative effort has been established with the Natchez Farmers Market, Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce and the Area on Aging Agency to distribute vouchers redeemed at the Natchez Farmers Market for fresh produce. The Farmers Market voucher project for fresh fruits and vegetables will:

- Improve accessibility to fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Allow seniors on fixed incomes to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables with vouchers provided.
- Provide educational demonstrations on the preparation of the produce to retain nutrient value.
- Improve self-management skills for pre-existing nutrition-related chronic diseases such as hypertension, heart conditions, strokes, diabetes and obesity.

b. Adams and surrounding counties that have seniors who participate in Area on Aging Agency were issued vouchers to be redeemed at the Natchez Farmers Market as a means of receiving seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables. The Alcorn State University Extension Program's Marketing Coordinator collaborated with local chefs and extension nutrition specialists in providing demonstrations on preparing fresh fruits and vegetables that are available at the Natchez Farmers' Market. The seniors gained knowledge of proper preparation of the produce to retain its nutrient value. The forty-three (43) percent redemption rate of the vouchers shows that the elderly are taking advantage of the services provided to them through the program. There were 200 sets of vouchers distributed to the elderly with the value of \$28.00 per set. The redemption rate exceeded the expectation of the program director for its first season. The Natchez Farmers Market is centrally located for easy access to the fresh produce.

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

### **Goal Narrative**

Many of the health problems that plague Mississippians are the result of microbial pathogens in food that cause an estimated 7 to 33 million cases of human illness and up to 9,000 deaths in the United States each year. Over forty 40 different food-borne microbial pathogens, including fungi, viruses, parasites, and bacteria are believed to cause human illnesses. For six bacterial pathogens, the costs of human illnesses are estimated to be nine to 13 billion dollars annually. Of these costs, three to seven billion dollars is attributed to food-borne bacteria.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention estimates there are between 60 and 80 million cases of food-borne illnesses like salmonella each year. According to the U.S.

Food and Drug Administration, nearly one-third of all food-borne illnesses begin in the home. About thirty-six (36) percent of food-borne illnesses in the home result from "cross contamination." That means contaminated cutting boards, counters or utensils are not properly disinfected or sanitized before the preparation of food is eaten raw such as fruits or vegetables (Source: American Society of Microbiology).

Over two million citizens of Mississippi spend approximately eight billion dollars each year on food. The major causes of food borne-illness are improper cooling, cooking, holding and reheating practices. More than 200 known diseases are transmitted through food. The causes of food-borne illness include viruses, bacteria, parasites, toxins, metals, and the symptoms of food-borne illness range from mild gastroenteritis to life-threatening neurological, hepatic, and renal syndromes. Data indicate that there have been significant improvements in recent years in food safety-related consumer behavior as a result of increases in educational programs. As a result, more people are beginning to wash their hands before eating, and food handlers are washing hands, wearing gloves and washing cutting boards/food preparation areas to prevent dangerous cross-contamination of foods.

**Goal 2: Planned Program Overview**

The following are planned programs included under Goal 2. The specific program subject area for the Nutrition and Health program area is included in the chart. The subject area is Food Safety.

**Output activities under this goal are provided in the table below:**

<b>Planned Program Area/Subject Area</b>	<b>Extension Events</b>	<b>Extension Contacts</b>
Food Safety	4	356

**Overall Estimated Expenditures for Goal 2:**

<b>Function</b>	<b>FTE</b>		<b>Expenditures*</b>	
	Federal	State	Federal	State
Extension Program	0.10	0.05	\$ 11,269.22	\$ 5,698.23

\* State and federal expenditures are inclusive of programming, support staff and administrative expenses.

Progress toward intermediate and long term outcomes and impacts for ongoing programs for Goal 2 are documented under the following key themes.

### **Key Theme: Food Safety**

a. Food poisoning results when food is eaten which has been contaminated by harmful organisms, such as bacteria, parasites, or viruses. Food poisonings contracted in homes have had an impact on Mississippi families. These illnesses are costly, with estimates ranging from five to 22 billion dollars annually for medical treatment and loss of work productivity. It is also estimated that a high percentage of food poisoning, ninety-seven (97) percent, could be avoided by improving the food-handling procedures. Food safety is important for all Mississippi citizens. The Alcorn State University Extension Program strives to provide research-based food safety education to citizens of all ages. Our goal in teaching food safety is to provide individuals with knowledge about safe food handling, storage, and preparation practices so that they will be better able to purchase, prepare and serve food that is safe to eat. The Alcorn State University Extension Program (ASUEP) utilized safe food handling messages consistent with the national Fight BAC<sup>!</sup> Campaign that provides consumers with brief, positive actions that they can take to reduce their risk of illness in the areas of Clean: Wash hands and surfaces often, Separate: Prevent cross-contamination, Cook: Cook or reheat foods to proper temperatures, Chill: Keep cold foods cold and cool leftovers promptly, Store: Store food properly to prevent illness. Participants were given hands-on experiences in identifying causes of food-borne illness and checking temperatures of perishable foods such as eggs, meats, poultry, fish, shellfish, milk, and milk products. More than 200 participants attended the workshops.

b. An eight-week follow-up assessment was mailed to 200 participants after the workshops. Approximately seventy-one (71) percent of the 200 participants completed and returned the survey. The surveys revealed that sixty-five (65) percent of the 200 participants indicated they had adopted positive behavioral changes relating to food safety such as in washing hands, refrigerating foods, observing cooking times, maintaining reheating and holding temperatures, and allowing proper cooling.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Food Safety**

a. Food poisoning is the result of food eaten which has been contaminated by harmful organisms, such as bacteria, parasites, or viruses. Food poisonings

contracted in homes have an impact on Mississippi families. These illnesses are costly, with estimates ranging from five to 22 billion dollars annually for medical treatment and loss of work productivity. It is also estimated that a high percentage of food poisoning, ninety-seven (97) percent, could be avoided by improving the food-handling procedures. Food safety is important for all Mississippi citizens. The Alcorn State University Extension Program strives to provide research-based food safety education to citizens of all ages. Our goal in teaching food safety is to provide individuals with knowledge about safe food handling, storage, and preparation practices so they will be better able to purchase, prepare and serve food that is safe to eat. Alcorn State University Extension Program (ASUEP) utilized safe food handling messages consistent with the national Fight BAC! Campaign that provide consumers with brief, positive actions that they can take to reduce their risk of illness in the areas of Clean: Wash hands and surfaces often, Separate: Prevent cross-contamination, Cook: Cook or reheat foods to proper temperatures, Chill: Keep cold foods cold and cool leftovers promptly, Store: Store food properly to prevent illness. Participants were given hands-on experiences in identifying causes of food-borne illness and checking temperatures of perishable foods such as eggs, meats, poultry, fish, shellfish, milk, and milk products.

b. A follow-up assessment was mailed to participants after the workshops. Approximately 40 participants completed and returned the survey. The surveys indicated that ninety (90) percent of the participants adopted positive behavioral changes in washing hands, refrigerating foods, observing cooking times, maintaining reheating and holding temperatures, and allowing proper cooling.

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

d. State specific.

### **Goal 3: To promote a healthy, well-nourished population.**

#### **Goal Narrative:**

Nutrition and lifestyle behavior are related either directly or indirectly to the onset of most prevalent chronic diseases. Research has linked the relationship with diet, lifestyles and disease and has provided the dissemination of dietary recommendations to prevent or delay the onset of chronic diseases. In spite of aggressive efforts to intervene, the health trend in the United States continues to be excessive weight gain, with Mississippi leading the way with the highest rates of obesity. According to the Mississippi Governor's Commission Report Card, more than 40 percent of high school students are insufficient in physical activity, and 15.6 percent reported no physical activity. One third of Mississippi children are overweight and over 73 percent of all deaths in the state are due to



preventable diseases that can be addressed through five risk factors: obesity, nutrition, physical inactivity, tobacco, and the lack of medical screening.

Obesity is associated with the increased incidents of Type II diabetes, hypertension, strokes, and heart disease. Cardiovascular disease and stroke rank number one in the top ten leading causes of death in Mississippi, accounting for more than 10,267 deaths per year. Over 700,000 Mississippians are at increased risk of undiagnosed preventable medical conditions because of obesity, overweight, and/or a sedentary lifestyle. The southern culture has been and remains generally more socially conservative with food being most commonly associated with the southern style of living. The American South draws on multiple unique culinary influences to form its traditional methods of food preparation. This style is characterized by the heavy use of high-calorie cured or salted fats in prepared vegetables, gravies, sauces, and fried meats. These traditions have been passed down through many generations. The ASUEP is changing attitudes and behavior in the southern kitchens. Culturally sensitive educational programs preserve the tradition through healthy modification of southern style recipes.

The Alcorn State University Extension Program's priority area of Nutrition, Health, Wellness and Obesity provides community-based approaches necessary to address the needs for information exchange on medical complications, food safety, diet and physical activity. The educational programs are geared toward intervention and prevention of nutrition-related conditions among limited-resource audiences in local communities. The program's goal is to improve and maintain southwest Mississippi's social well-being in the promotion of a healthy, well-nourished population.

### **Goal 3: Planned Program Overview**

The following are planned programs included under Goal 3. The specific program subject areas for Nutrition and Health program areas are included in the chart. The subject areas are: Basic Food, Dietary Quality, Food Security, Human Nutrition, Nutrition-Related Disease, and Shopping/Food Resource Management.

**Output activities under this goal are provided in the table below:**

<b>Planned Program Area /Subject Area</b>	<b>Extension Events</b>	<b>Extension Contacts</b>
Basic Food	12	317
Dietary Quality	19	488
Food Security	10	1,942
Human Nutrition	31	7,528
Nutrition-Related Disease	12	149
Shopping/Food Res. Mgt.	1	15

**Overall Estimated Expenditures for Goal 3:**

Function	FTE		Expenditures*	
	Federal	State	Federal	State
Extension Program	1.04	0.53	\$ 120,662.20	\$ 61,012.31

\* State and federal expenditures are inclusive of programming, support staff and administrative expenses.

Progress toward intermediate and long-term outcomes and impacts for ongoing programs are documented under the key themes in the next section.

**Key Theme: Human Nutrition**

a. Obesity and overweight in the United States are classified as an epidemic. Over 119 million Americans are currently listed as being obese or overweight which is slightly over sixty-four (64) percent of the total population. According to America’s Health Organizations, Mississippi is listed as the fattest state in the nation. Mississippi is ranked in the top 10 for the fastest growing rates of obesity. Jefferson County has been identified as the number one county in the state of Mississippi with the highest prevalence of obesity and obesity-related health conditions. Current data show that twenty-six (26) percent of its population is suffering from the effects of obesity. The residents of Jefferson County are highly concerned about the current status of excessive weight gain within their communities. The demand is extremely high for information exchange, programs geared toward stopping excessive weight gain, and proper management of existing health problems related to obesity. The Alcorn State University Extension Program met the demands of the citizens of Jefferson County by banding together with other community resource organizations and volunteers to identify, support, and resolve issues that promote obesity within rural communities. A total of 21 participants registered for the train-the-trainer program and were introduced to factors to help stop excessive weight gain and maintain weight loss through the implementation of the Healthy Weights Program of ASUEP. The focus of the program is scientific methodology for losing 5-10 percent of total body weight, ways to stop excess weight gain, and the maintenance of healthy weights. The program covered six major topics at each of the educational sessions: (1) Managing Your Weight to Improve Your Health (2) Using The My Pyramid to Make Healthy Food Choices (3) The Pros and Cons of Fad Dieting to Your Health (4) The Benefits of Physical Fitness to a Healthy Life (5) Prevention Strategies in Chronic Disease and (6) Modify Recipes to Manage Your Weight.

b. Data analyzed showed an average mean score of three to four pounds of weight loss of eighty-five (85) percent of the 10 participants who completed the program. Seventy-three (73) percent of the 19 participants showed improvements in diastolic and systolic readings in blood pressure. The consumption of vegetables and dairy products increased by twenty-eight (28) percent while the consumption of high fat foods decreased by twenty-four (24) percent.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Human Health**

a. Heart disease and stroke are the principal components of cardiovascular disease and are respectively the first and third leading causes of death in the United States. In Jefferson County, cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death among its residents. The disease claims nearly 1,000,000 lives annually accounting for more than forty (40) percent of the deaths in the United States. In Mississippi, heart disease accounts for thirty-two (32) percent of all deaths. The rate of death from heart disease is thirty-four (34) percent higher among African American than Whites. The economic effects of cardiovascular disease on the state's health care system in Jefferson County increase as the population ages. A series of Heart Smart Workshops were conducted through the partnership established with the Mississippi Department of Health. Educational programs on heart disease were implemented throughout the community. A total of 50 families were provided with important information on the effects of risk factors on lifestyle behaviors related to heart disease, and instructions were discussed on how to monitor their blood pressure and glucose status. The information emphasized how to identify the warning signs and symptoms of a heart attack and the importance of using 911 to respond to emergency situations.

b. As a result of the Heart Smart workshops in Jefferson County, an evaluation was implemented which indicated that seventy-two (72) percent of the participants improved their knowledge base on the effects of heart disease. Eighty-three (83) percent of participants gained skills in monitoring their blood pressure in order to prevent heart attacks. One hundred percent (100) percent of the participants stated that the program had changed the way they perceived consumption of excessive animal fat, and they were willing to change their behavior. Twenty-six (26) percent of participants agreed to make behavioral changes such as a commitment to stop smoking, lose weight, and include more physical activity in their daily routine. One hundred percent (100) percent of the participants agreed that they could save money with fewer doctors' visits through the implementation of healthier lifestyles.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Human Health**

a. An estimated 17 million people in the U.S. have diabetes and about 1.4 million have Type 1 diabetes. The prevalence of Type 1 diabetes is about 5-10 percent of the total number of diabetes patients in the U.S. Approximately, thirty-five (35) percent of American children are diagnosed with juvenile diabetes every day. These alarming national statistics are parallel to the health issues we see in Jefferson County as well. Juvenile diabetes, Type 1 is not caused by obesity or by eating excessive sugar. Type 1 diabetics or juvenile diabetes most often develops in children and young adults as a result of genetics, disease, or injury to the pancreas, but can appear at any age. The risk of juvenile diabetes is higher than virtually all other severe chronic diseases of childhood. Juvenile diabetes tends to run in families. The brothers and sisters of a child with juvenile diabetes have at least 100 times the risk of developing juvenile diabetes versus a child in an unaffected family. To combat this health problem, parents and children need to become aware of juvenile diabetes, to learn its warning signs, and to gain proper management skills. The Alcorn State University Extension Program conducted the Managing Juvenile Diabetes Program. Educational sessions were offered once a week for two hours. Three segments of the Managing Juvenile diabetes program were implemented for a total of 63 parents for early diagnosis and management of juvenile diabetes among their children. The topics discussed during the program were: different types of diabetes; the risk of other diseases; symptoms and warning signs of juvenile diabetes; and proper management skills through changes in nutrition and lifestyle behaviors. There were 21 parents who attended the first segment. A total of 30 parents attended the second segment, and 12 parents attended the third segment.

b. Evaluation indicated that seventy-four (74) percent of the 63 participants increased their knowledge of diabetes. Eighty-two percent (82) percent of these participants were able to adequately identify the warning signs of juvenile diabetes. Ninety-six (96) percent enhanced their knowledge about the role of nutrition and lifestyle for proper management of juvenile diabetes. Two parents provided verbal testimonies that indicated their unawareness of the dangers of juvenile diabetes. All parents verbally agreed that adoption of good nutrition practices and daily exercise will be incorporated into their lifestyles to better manage juvenile diabetes among their children.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Human Health**

a. Adams County has one of the highest rates of overweight and childhood obesity. Approximately one in every 400-500 children and adolescents has Type II diabetes. Obese or overweight children, as compared to children with a healthy weight, are more likely to develop health problems such as high cholesterol and high blood pressure, which are associated with heart disease in adults. Type II diabetes, previously considered an adult disease, have increased dramatically in overweight children and adolescents. One of the most severe problems for obese children is sleep apnea (interrupted breathing while sleeping). They also have a high incidence of orthopedic problems, liver disease and asthma. Research studies indicate that Type II diabetes is becoming more common among Native American/American Indian, African American, Hispanic and Latino children and adolescents. The ASUEP educators in Adams County addressed the need for preventive education through a host of programs: The Pyramid Power is Yours, Five a Day Healthy Snacks, and Kids-in-the Kitchen Fun Camp. The focus of the program was to encourage healthy food choices and increase physical fitness to prevent the chronic diseases and to stop excess weight gain. Children were taught to substitute a fruit or vegetable for a high fat snack and to improve their levels of physical activity.

b. The pre and post evaluation showed 100 youths in Adams County improved their food choices. The test results showed that seventy-eight (78) percent of the participants have improved awareness of the correlation with nutrition, exercise and healthy living. The program's learning activities demonstrated that the youths and adults were able to prepare a healthy, nutritious snack. Sixty-four percent (64) of participants were able to identify all the food groups on My Pyramid. Ninety-two (92) percent of the participants indicated that they were willing to share information gained with family, peers, and friends in their communities.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Human Nutrition**

a. Living in a fast paced society makes it difficult to find time for regular meals, much less time to prepare them at home. The state spent an estimated \$263 per person in 2003 on medical-costs related to obesity, which was the 23<sup>rd</sup> highest amount in the nation. Some of the factors related to obesity include lack of adequate physical exercise, poor eating

habits, the cost of buying healthy food, and portion sizes. According to the 2004 report published by the State Department of Health; Mississippi ranked sixty (60) percent for the adult population as being overweight. Diabetes was the seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) leading cause of death in Mississippi. The Alcorn State University Extension Program Nutrition and Health staff presented a workshop entitled: "Women Health, a Matter of Lifestyle Behavior" at the Small Farmer Conference. The program was information driven on weight management and positive behavior changes, My Pyramid along with the Dietary Guidelines. The workshop also included an open discussion on the role of the community in reducing the rise in nutrition-related chronic diseases. A total of 34 women attended the workshop and participated in the learning activities.

b. Each participant was asked to complete an evaluation form to measure the feasibility, knowledge gained and attitude changes. As a result of the workshop, ninety-two (92) percent of the participants strongly agreed to the statement: "I have learned some valuable information today during the workshop." Ninety-eight (98) percent of the participants strongly agreed to the statement: "I plan to use portion control for weight management." The statement "I plan to drink or eat two or more cups of fruits and vegetables" ranked ninety-four (94) percent. Ninety (90) percent of the participants strongly agreed to the statement: "I will try hard to include more physical fitness into my daily routine" and one hundred (100) percent strongly agreed to the statement: "I plan to visit My Pyramid website." Eighty-six (86) percent strongly agreed to the statement: "I plan to include high fiber foods into my daily menu plan."

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Human Nutrition**

a. According to the report, "How Obesity Policies Are Failing in America, 2005," Mississippi ranks first in the U.S. as the highest rate of adult obesity at 28.1 percent. The state ranked first in the U.S. with the highest rate of obese and overweight adults combined at 64.5 percent. To put it bluntly, Mississippi is the heaviest state in the nation. Claiborne County has the fourth highest obesity rate in Mississippi at 24.2%. Counties with higher rates are Jefferson (26.1%), Holmes (24.9%), and Humphreys (24.6%). Obesity is the gateway for many illnesses such diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, certain cancers, osteoarthritis and sleep apnea. The American Obesity Association suggests making behavioral and healthy lifestyle changes as the first part of treatment to lose weight. The Healthy Weights Program is designed to provide educational information and techniques to enable participants to make wise decisions concerning nutrition, and lifestyle choices that can contribute to losing weight and to maintaining a healthy weight. The Healthy Weights program was implemented in Claiborne, Jefferson, Holmes and Humphreys counties. From 20 to 30 people were recruited to participate in each county. Community volunteers were trained as co-facilitators and assumed the role of trainers during the eight-week program. Program topics were (1) Managing Your Weight to Improve Your Health, (2) Using the

Food Guide Pyramid to Make Healthy Food Choices, (3) Pros and Cons of Fad Dieting for Your Health, (4) The Benefits of Physical Fitness for a Healthy Life, (5) Prevention Strategies for Chronic Diseases, and (6) Modifying Recipes to Manage Your Weight. Each session included a 45-minute lecture, an activity so the participants can apply the information from the lecture, and a thirty minute physical fitness activity. Reading, written and behavioral assignments were conducted each week with participants of the program. Over the duration of the eight-week program, an average of eighteen (18) participants attended each week in the counties.

b. Evaluations were conducted using tracking folders to record weight loss or gain of the participants. Some participants did experience weight loss. The average amount of weight loss by participants was three pounds. Perhaps the biggest and most apparent impact was behavioral changes and increased knowledge indicated by the participants. Comments recorded by participants on the final evaluation included such statements as “this program inspired me to change how I prepare my food and how much I eat” and “this program has made me aware of my health, it gave me a new balance of taking care of myself”.

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

d. State specific.

#### **Goal 4: To achieve greater harmony (balance) between agriculture and the environment.**

##### **Goal Narrative**

Mississippi small-scale growers find it hard to earn a sustainable living from farming. Furthermore, the perception of farming as low-income, risky, hard work is an enormous impediment to young people entering the profession. Traditionally, there have been concerns about conserving and sustaining their farmland. Across the state, consumers are beginning to seek food produced using more environmentally sound methods. That trend offers a wide range of profitable opportunities for farmers. The rich soils and long growing seasons in the State of Mississippi favor the production of a wide variety of crops.

Mississippi's fertile soil and temperate climate make it an ideal state for agriculture. The agriculture industry is comprised of nurseries, greenhouses and farms producing a diversity of vegetables and fruits, sweet potatoes, watermelons, greens, peas and other fruits such as muscadine, blueberries and peaches. Also, other agriculture enterprises, vineyards, pecan orchards as well as sod farms and, pick-your-own farms plus many other alternative farming operations contribute greatly to the revenue produced by Mississippi's agriculture industry. Small/limited-resource farms (i.e., farms generating less than \$100,000 in annual sales) constitute approximately ninety (90) percent of Mississippi's 4,186 farms, according to the 2002 Census of Agriculture (USDA, NASS, 2003).

The ASUEP currently provides educational programs, events and activities and works closely with small/limited-resource farmers to aid them in adopting modern farm management techniques and developing of alternative enterprises to enhance farm income through minimizing risk.

**Goal 4: Planned Program Overview**

The following are planned programs included under Goal 4. The specific program subject area is Agronomy (sustainable agriculture).

**Output activities under this goal are provided in the table below:**

Planned Program Area/Subject Area	Extension Events	Extension Contacts
Sustainable Agriculture	2	25

**Overall Estimated Expenditures for Goal 4:**

Function	FTE		Expenditures	
	Federal	State	Federal	State
Extension Program	0.66	0.34	\$ 77,105.19	\$ 38,987.90

\*State and federal expenditures are inclusive of programming, support staff and administrative expenses.

Progress toward intermediate and long-term outcomes and impacts for ongoing programs are documented under the key themes in the next section.

**Key Theme: Diversified/Alternative Agriculture**

a. Producing safe and nutritious food for consumers and monitoring the viability of rural agricultural communities through environmentally friendly practices are some of the major challenges facing agriculture today. The need to address food production practices and environmental quality for limited-resource farmers is of growing importance in rural



Mississippi. Maintaining environmental quality by using low-input farming practices is a goal of many farm families. Therefore, reduction of pesticide use and nutrient management is the primary emphasis for an educational program for farmers. The program consisted of four workshops and seminars for farmers in the Mississippi Delta region on adequate fertilizer and pesticide usage, erosion control and proper pesticide disposal methods. Over 50 farmers attended the workshops.

b. Eighty (80) percent of the participants indicated change in reduction of nutrient application and an increase in proper pesticide usage and disposal measures. These farmers also reported recycling and implementing recycling of pesticide containers, and farm materials such as oil and other items that can be recycled from the farm.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Diversified/Alternative Agriculture**

a. Many small farmers in Mississippi experience a low level of income; therefore, challenges are faced in exploring appropriate alternative enterprises and pursuing value-added products can enhance farm income. Increased awareness is needed among farm producers regarding the quality of syrup that on farm processed syrup affords. Many farm producers and especially youths need to be exposed to the benefits of making homemade syrup in order to provide a high quality product to customers. Sweet sorghum and sugar cane are syrup crops that have the ability to generate a good income if processed and marketed correctly. Educational workshops and exhibits with hands-on processing demonstrations were conducted by agricultural agents and farmers at the annual State Fair. Other regional events and festivals on juice extraction and syrup processing were also held. Technical assistance was provided to farmers and producers prior to the state fair event at various locations within counties utilizing a mobile processing unit provided by the Alcorn State University Extension Program. The unit demonstrated new techniques on syrup processing that enhance syrup quality. The marketing demonstration for syrup producers demonstrated that a high volume of good quality homemade syrup can be sold at a higher price in attractive plastic jugs or containers.

b. At the state fair event, it is estimated that in excess of 5,000 attendees gained knowledge from the exhibit and syrup processing demonstrations conducted agricultural agents and farm producers on juice extraction, syrup processing and syrup marketing to producers and other attendees to introduce the probability of value-added syrup product. Producers sold their value-added syrup products to consumers at the event utilizing the improved marketing strategies provided by ASUEP. Additionally, it is estimated that in excess of 1,000 to 1,500 attendees observed juice extraction during the syrup processing and marketing demonstration by

agricultural agents presented at the Natchez Farmers Market Harvest Festival. Some 65 attendees at the event learned how to extract juice from sugar cane and how to process the juice into high-quality syrup. Attendees were given the opportunity to purchase syrup in attractive plastic jugs from local syrup producers during the marketing demonstration at the event. It is noted here that some 15 youths attended the event and were given detailed information about syrup production and processing techniques.

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

d. State specific.

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

### **Goal Narrative**

Healthy families promote the emotional, physical and social welfare of individual family members. Among the many factors that contribute to this process are a family's internal strengths and the durability of the family unit. Unlike any other social group, families are able to provide the close emotional support needed to produce self-confident and well adjusted children and adults. Likewise, families that function in a healthy manner are well equipped to deal with the many normal changes and unexpected crises that confront them throughout their lifetimes. Therefore, the family's primary function is to create a healthy environment where family members can successfully grow and develop.

According to the Kids Count Data Book (2003), the total population in Mississippi in 2003 was 2,871,782. Of this number, eleven (11) percent was young adults ages 18-24, and twenty-six (26) percent were children under the age of 18. A total of twenty-seven (27) of Mississippi's children lived below the poverty level; thirty-five (35) percent of families with children were headed by single parents. The median family income was \$39,300. A total of thirty-nine (39) percent of the females ages 16-19 gave birth in 2003. A total of eleven (11) percent of teens, ages 16-19 were high school dropouts, and thirteen (13) percent didn't attend school and were not working. A total of nineteen (19) percent of young adults between ages 18-24 were considered "disconnected" which is defined as not enrolled in school, not working, or not working on a degree beyond high school. This data confirms the fundamental link between poverty and a range of negative outcomes such as academic failure, early pregnancy and other risk factors that can diminish a child's chances of adult achievement and success. The issues facing young people are in many ways overwhelming, both in number and complexity. Youth are facing staggering issues

such as, violence, poverty, sexual transmitted diseases, unintended pregnancies as well as drug, alcohol, and tobacco use.

Families can make a difference in the lives of their children. Research has identified several factors that promote resiliency in children. Among these are social competence, problem-solving skills, autonomy and a sense of purpose and future (National Network for Family Resiliency, 1993). Children whose families promote these skills have a better chance of becoming successful adults. In addition, families who express caring and support create high expectations for family members and encourage children's participation in school and other activities. Such actions are more likely to produce happy and successful family members. Often, it is perceived that the best way to reduce negative outcomes in child behavior is to strengthen our state's most vulnerable families and increase their ability to provide some real educational and economic security for their children.

The Alcorn State University Extension 4-H Youth Development/Youth At-Risk Program provides a positive setting to support the young people by structuring programs that are developmentally appropriate and have clear expectations. These programs play an essential role in helping young people acquire the assets to help them become successful adults. The educational programs and activities were designed, developed, and implemented to address issues in the following areas: teen pregnancy prevention, youth health issues (STD/HIV/AIDS), career development/workforce preparedness, personal development and 4-H youth development.

According to the 2000 United States Bureau of Census report, Mississippi's demographic data in all income categories (median household income, median income of families with children, average annual pay for workers, and per capita personal income) rank the state last in the nation in these categories. Although there have been marked improvements in income, education, and housing, Mississippi remains well below the national average in these areas. Mississippi ranked 49<sup>th</sup> among the states in per capita income and 48<sup>th</sup> in median family income, according to the 2000 Census. The state's median family income was \$39,266, more than \$10,000 less than the \$49,507 median family income figure for the United States. Overall, 50 of the state's 82 counties have been labeled as "severely economically distressed communities." The single greatest dependency is in government subsidies and transfer payments. Yet, Mississippi is rich in historical sites, natural resources and agricultural-based products. Consequently, revitalizing these rural communities depend on the development of its economic resources and more active, informed and responsible citizens. In a recent address, the Governor of the State of Mississippi cited challenges such as natural disasters (Hurricanes) that brought death and destruction to the Gulf Coast, decades of state budget declines, and political and economic deadlock within our boundaries. National statistics on Mississippi indicate all income data for the state (median household income, median income of families with children, average annual pay for workers, and per capital personal income) as the lowest in the nation. A total of 75 of the 82 counties in the state ranked below the national average in unemployment.

In Mississippi's rural counties real per capita income grew from \$16,506 in 1993 to \$21,831 in 2000, and the percentage of rural people in poverty fell from 17.1 to 13.4 percent over that period. Welfare policy changes (including time limits on assistance and stiffer work requirements) contributed to declines in food stamp requests, assistance to needy families, and unemployment insurance payments. However, according to SAIPE (Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates), the persistent poverty in the Delta and the southern area of the state show little significant improvements. Community development, leadership and management skills are sorely needed.

The educational programs implemented by the Alcorn State University Extension Program Family, Youth and Community Development unit are designed to provide practical and research-based information to address issues in communities.

**Goal 5: Planned Program Overview**

The following are planned programs included under Goal 5. The specific program subject areas for Family Life & Child Development, Youth Development/At Risk, and Community Resource Development planned programs areas are included in the chart. The subject areas are: Business Development, Community/Economic Dev, Faith-Based Development, Government Training, Land Stewardship/Retention, Leadership Skills, Child Development, Family Life Issues, Family Resource Management, Family Stress Management, Family Wellness, Parenting Education, Career Dev/Workforce Prep, Club Maintenance, Communication/Leadership, Disease Control/Prevention, Entrepreneurship, Personal Development, Tobacco Education, and Volunteer Development.

**Output activities under this goal are provided in the table below:**

<b>Planned Program Area/Subject Area</b>	<b>Extension Events</b>	<b>Extension Contacts</b>
Business Development	76	759
Community/Economic Dev	309	6,494
Faith-Based Development	43	6,077
Governmental Training	26	554
Land Stewardship/Retention	31	2,691
Leadership Skills	298	3,895
Child Development	1	76
Family Life Issues	24	309
Family Resource Mgt.	8	206
Family Stress Management	0	0
Family Wellness	5	139
Parenting Education	11	376
Career Dev/Workforce Prep	104	3,299

Club Maintenance	194	3,833
Communication/Leadership	41	242
Disease Control/Prevention	30	1135
Entrepreneurship	11	101
Healthy Lifestyle Education	20	1095
Personal Development	81	546
Tobacco Education	181	7,140
Volunteer Development	14	369

**Overall Estimated Expenditures for Goal 5:**

Function	FTE		Expenditures	
	Federal	State	Federal	State
Extension Program	5.91	2.99	\$ 686,199.08	\$ 346,431.00

\* State and federal expenditures are inclusive of programming, support staff and administrative expenses.

Progress toward intermediate and long-term outcomes and impacts for ongoing programs are documented under the key themes in the next section.

**Key Theme: Parenting Education/Family Life Issues/Wellness**

a. According to Teen Research, unlimited teens spend ninety-eight (98) percent of the money they earn and one in five has their own credit card or access to their parents' card. The average teen has three credit cards and has an average debt of \$2,327.00. The Youth and Money survey indicated that thirty (30) percent of youth parents rarely or never discuss saving and investing with their children and forty-seven (47) percent say their parents rarely or never discuss household budgeting with them. Due to a lack of information and money management skills, there was a need to conduct a series of programs on money management. As a result of the survey, Hinds County Youth Bill Program and the Alcorn State University Extension 4-H staff implemented program for youths between the ages of 18 and 19 years of age. A total of 84 students participated in the nine week series of the Money Smart program to improve their financial management skills. The Money Smart program included sessions entitled; Talking about Money, Stretching Your Money, Developing Money Goals and Developing a Spending Plan. Students applied for fictitious jobs, wrote checks for bills, balanced their checkbooks and started fictitious checking and savings accounts. In addition, participants were taught about

withholding taxes and were requested to pay bills. A total of nine, one-hour meetings were held throughout the year.

b. A total of 84 participants have successfully graduated from the program and approximately 50 have already opened no-fee, no-minimum balance savings and checking accounts. One single-parent teen, welfare-recipient participant, after attending the first day of the session, returned the next day to open her savings and checking accounts with \$500. Prior to opening her account, she actually kept it in a sock at her home. Another participant decided to stop giving her son dessert every night. When asked the reason for her actions, she said, "It was too expensive according to her budget." Immediately following the sessions, participants estimated that the program and information presented helped them in their financial awareness through hands-on demonstrations.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Parenting Education/Family Issues/Wellness**

a. Current data shows that parental involvement in their child's education is below forty (40) percent. Children with parents who have a lack of knowledge of parenting skills, ineffective parenting practices and a lack of involvement in their children's education are more likely to be non-successful, get lower grades, score lower on achievement tests, attend school irregularly, have lower aspirations and are more likely not to graduate. Only about one-fifth of parents consistently attend school programs. About one third of children say their parents have no idea how they are doing in school, and one sixth say their parents do not expect good grades. Even as scholars describe ways parents can become active partners with their child's school, they caution that without special efforts, few parents stay involved throughout the school year where strong stable relationships between parents and children are very important. ASUEP consumers Sciences educators, cooperating with the school system and Department of Education, provided parenting education in the schools. They held parent-teacher meetings to help parents have a better understanding of the effect parental involvement in the school setting have on children. Three lessons were conducted by ASUEP educators to identify strategies for building stronger families with school partnership. Parents were given a survey on strengthening parent involvement in their child's education and building partnerships between the families' school and communities.

b. As a result of the three sessions participants gained knowledge about the benefits of parents' involvement in schools and ways parents can engage in their children's education. On a scale from 1 – 5 (1- poor 5- excellent), thirty (30) percent of the participants rated the sessions a 4 and sixty (60) percent rated the sessions a 5. Some comments made were

“I'm impressed that we're leaving the session with knowledge on how important it is to get involved in your child's education,” “I'm glad I had a chance to be a part of the session to increase my knowledge through participating in my child's education” and “I will continue the effort to be involved in my child's education.”

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Children Youth and Family at Risk**

a. Youth and other family members often lack the financial management information and skills to save and manage their financial resources to prepare them to survive throughout their lives. The lack of financial management skills among students and adult family members can result in various types of financial crises, especially as youths become mature adults. Many limited-resources students earn their own money by obtaining employment to assist with the household income. They also desire to earn their own income to obtain goods and services that are available to their peers. Other students may obtain income from receiving allowances or performing household chores or odd jobs at home or the community. In these cases, gaining skills in saving and managing money is valuable information for students and adults. A total of 84 students and adults participated in the Money Smart program sponsored by ASUEP to improve their financial management skills. The Money Smart program included a series of nine educational sessions on various educational topics for students.

b. Of the 84 students and adults attending the Money Smart program, eighty (80) percent of the students gained valuable knowledge on starting a checking account and indicated they were utilizing their money management skills gained in the workshop. Many of the students of the program indicated they were opening a checking account as a result of knowledge gained. Immediately following the sessions, participants indicated that the program and information presented helped them in increasing their financial awareness through hands-on demonstrations.

c. Funds expended for this goal under this program came from Section 1444 of the National Agriculture, Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy of 1977 (**NARETPA**) and state matching funds.

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Youth at Risk - Tobacco Education**

a. Tobacco use among young people in Claiborne and Warren Counties has resulted in significant health problems among teens, including an increase in the number and severity of health respiratory illnesses, like asthma and bronchitis, and has decreased their ability to be physically fit. Tobacco use also increases the risk of other health conditions such as cancer, heart disease, stroke and emphysema. The first symptoms of nicotine dependence among 12- and 13-year-olds can appear within days to weeks after occasional use begins, often before the onset of daily smoking. Tobacco use among youth is often influenced by images on television, in movies, and advertising as well as the behavior of their peers. In an effort to reduce the number of youths who use tobacco and tobacco products in Claiborne and Warren Counties, the Alcorn State University Extension Program (ASUEP), in partnership with the Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi, conducted two Tobacco Youth Summits. A total of 950 youths attended these summits. The topics were: glamorization of tobacco use; developing decision-making and communication skills to resist tobacco use and promoting self-confidence of young people to deal with peer pressures and other influences that might contribute to the vulnerability to the use of tobacco. Additionally, in these counties, 4-H Youth Development Extension educators organized 1) age-appropriate Special 4-H Youth Tobacco Clubs, 2) SWAT clubs-Reject All Tobacco youth clubs in grades K-3, 3) Clubs for young adults in (Students Working Against Tobacco), for children in grades 4-6, 4) Free for youth grades 7-8, and 5) Frontline clubs for youths in grades 9-12. Monthly educational workshops were conducted during the age-appropriate club meetings. Youth gained knowledge and skills to develop their self-esteem and use communication, decision-making, and leadership skills to deal with peer pressure and other influences as it related to the use of tobacco and tobacco products.

b. Evaluation results cited changes in knowledge gained and skills developed regarding tobacco use from participants' experiences in educational summits and the development of organized age appropriate 4-H clubs and monthly educational sessions implemented in communities in Claiborne and Warren Counties. Fifty (50) percent of the 950 participants indicated gaining an increased understanding of the dangers of tobacco use. Twenty (20) percent of these youths stated that they would not use tobacco or tobacco products in the future because of the knowledge gained regarding the potential health effects. According to the Mississippi Department of Health, tobacco use by youth has declined by seventy (70) percent among youths in the Mississippi Public School System which is inclusive of Claiborne and Warren Counties.

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

d. State specific.

## **Key Theme: Fire Safety**



a. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) estimates that approximately 11 people per day die in house fires in the U.S. Fires are the number one cause of death in the home of children under five years of age. One in every 15 fires is started by a child under the age of 14 and one third of all children die in a fire started by themselves. These alarming fire occurrences are also relevant and observed issues cited by citizens of Adams County. Fire Safety awareness programs are conducted every October in Natchez in conjunction with National Fire Safety month and emphasis is placed on the importance of the fire and safety for children and families. Educational information creates awareness among children, equipping them with necessary information and safety techniques on how to prevent fires and respond to a fire in their homes or other places in their communities.

In order to address this issue and reduce risks of fires, several Fire Safety Prevention Awareness Programs were conducted by the Alcorn State University Extension Program in collaboration with other county agencies and organizations in Adams County. Several programs were conducted through the Adams County Public School System and Adams County 4-H clubs members on various topics of fire safety. The programs included: The ABCs of Fire Safety; Dangers of Fires; Stop, Drop, and Roll; Smoke Detectors; and a Fire Truck Tour. Coloring books were used to provide educational information related to tips on fire safety. Fire prevention is one of the most rewarding educational programs young people can participate in and use as a life saving tool. About 900 young people as well as teachers and administrators were in attendance at sessions of the Fire Safety Awareness program.

b. As a result of implementing the Fire Safety Awareness/Prevention Programs in Adams County, one hundred (100) percent of the 900 participants indicated they increased their knowledge gained regarding what to do in case of a fire and how to respond. The participants indicated that by attending and participating in the Fire Safety Programs, the young people themselves were equipped with skills that could possibly save their lives and others if a fire occurred in their home or community facility.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Children, Youth and Families at Risk**

a. One of the most crucial challenges facing the state of Mississippi and especially rural communities in Claiborne and Warren Counties is providing opportunities for young people in limited-resource communities to deal with persistent issues and problems facing them daily. A few of the issues are increases in high school drop out, alcohol and drug use, teen pregnancy, and elevated violent crime rates. As a result of social, economic and community situations, many young people from limited-resource families and communities

are becoming trapped in negative cycles of violence, addiction, and hopelessness. These realities can prevent them from being able to make valuable contributions in their communities. Public youth educators indicated that providing meaningful opportunities, educational information, and experiences for youths to develop life skills may point them toward a more hopeful path and brighter future. The Alcorn State University Extension Program organized community-based 4-H clubs and worked with existing clubs within the school systems in Claiborne and Warren Counties. The 4-H club members were exposed to educational programs, events and activities that provided assistance to enhance their leadership skills and self esteem to compete with their peers in various regions across the state through a variety of contests at the local, district, and state levels. The focus of the educational sessions for 4-Hers was to develop their leadership, decision-making and communication skills; develop and prepare visual presentations on topics of interest to include self awareness/understanding; and explore ways to build self confidence.

b. In Claiborne County, 159 youths ages 5-19 were involved in local community clubs, a one percent increase over the last year. Club members were winners and served locally, statewide, and nationally in state leadership roles. There are currently 84,000 members involved across the state of Mississippi. Two members of clubs in Claiborne County were selected to serve as the Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team. A member was also selected to represent the Southwest District at National 4-H Congress (Atlanta, GA) and 4-H Focus (Washington DC). Claiborne County 4-H club members also participated in the following district and state events such as Southwest District 4-H Project Achievement Day and State 4-H Club Congress (Starkville, MS). A personal testimonial of a 4-H club member about their 4-H experience of participating in the various local, regional and state events were: "I am proud of my 4-H experiences and they were truly important stepping stones to where I am today and where I am headed in the future. 4-H afforded me the right start to a life I love. Projects and leadership involvement provided me the joy of learning and helping others. The various trips allow experiences of a broader worldview and inspired me to keep exploring. Family, friends, leaders, and 4-H agents supported me and helped me realize my potential. I am who I am today because of the commitments, challenges, support and adventures I had in 4-H."

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Personal Development- Tobacco Education**

a. The use of tobacco and tobacco products is becoming increasingly common among youths in the state of Mississippi and in Jefferson County. According to the Mississippi Department of Health, about 3,000 Mississippi youths begin smoking each year. This number, 750 will die from tobacco-related diseases. Data also suggest the eighty (80)

percent of all youth smokers try their first cigarette before age 18. Statistics reveals there is a need to provide educational programs that discourage the use of tobacco and tobacco products by youths in Jefferson County. As a result, Alcorn State University Extension 4-H educators organized the following youth tobacco teams: Reject All Tobacco (RAT) Teams for youths in K-3 grades; Students Working against Tobacco (SWAT) for youths in grades 4-6; and Frontline Clubs for Youth (FREE) for youths in grade 7-8 and grades 9-12. ASUEP educators conducted monthly educational workshops for 150 youths utilizing the Project STAR curriculum. Also, a Tobacco Youth Summit was planned and implemented. During this summit, 350 youths participated in educational sessions that focused for the following topics: Learning About the harmful effect of learning about tobacco products on your health; building self-esteem; and developing decision-making and communication skills.

b. Seventy (70) percent of the young people participating in monthly educational sessions of the youth tobacco teams indicated increased knowledge gained of the dangers of tobacco use. The evaluation of the youths participating in the tobacco summit, indicated twenty (20) percent of the youths attended admitted they had experimented with smoking. Of the 350 youths in attendance at the summit, sixty-nine (69) percent stated they had gained valuable information that would have enable them to make better decisions about the use of tobacco and tobacco products which would lead to the reduction of smoking or use the tobacco related products.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Personal Development**

a. Although teenage pregnancies are decreasing in the state of Mississippi, they continue to present a special problem because of the increased health risks to the baby and the negative social consequences for both mother and baby especially in Hinds County. Mississippi teen has one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the nation at seventeen (17) percent. Eighteen (18) percent of all babies born in Hinds County are born to teenagers. This data highlighted a need for ASUEP to provide educational and support services through collaborating with other agencies for teens and their families. Through community partnership, ASUEP 4-H Educators conducted the Human Sexuality Program. The goal is to program was to reduce the negative impact of premature sexual activity in youths. Some of the topics were: adjusting your attitude; values, goals and feeling; how to relate to others and our ideas; our gender and physical make-up as it related to influencing decisions regarding sexual activity. A total of 64 young people participated in a series of two-hour educational sessions.

b. According to the post evaluation results, ninety (90) percent of the youths indicated they gained knowledge and skills in the educational session that influenced them to postpone sexual activity until they were older and more responsible and mature.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Youth Leadership Development and Training**

a. Many complex issues facing rural communities that require financial stability in human resources highlight a need for training in recruiting and developing community volunteers. Alcorn State University Extension Program plays a vital part in spearheading a peer mentoring program with teens through the Jefferson County 4-H clubs by training and developing the leadership skills of 4-Hers to mentor younger children by providing a series of peer mentoring workshops. The topics included: What is Teen Mentoring? How To Become an Active Listener Role Playing; and Understanding Sensitivity. There were a total of (25) 4-Hers between the ages of 14-17 who participated in these sessions. After successfully completing the series of workshops, each 4-Her was assigned one youth (between the ages of 6 through 11). Under the guidance of the Alcorn State University Extension 4-H Agents and adult 4-H volunteers, the teen mentoring programs were conducted at Jefferson County Elementary and Middle School Boys and Girls Club in Jefferson County. These 4-H peer mentoring programs served as two-fold purpose. They offered teens and children the opportunity to foster and develop positive one-on-one relationships.

b. Program participants completed an evaluation to measure impact. The finding indicated 22 of the 25 teens agreed being a part of this program increased self-esteem and enhanced their leadership skills. Some of the teens gave the following testimonials: "It made me feel good to work with the little children," "They hug me and confide in me about problems within their families," and "I feel like I will be a better parent in the future because of this experience." These comments were typical of statements expressed by many of the teens of the programs. Because of the positive outcomes of this teen mentoring program, 4-H enrollment has increased by two percent in Jefferson County.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Youth Leadership Training and Development**

a. One of the most crucial social issues we face in Mississippi today is how to provide our young people with a solid foundation for life. The evidence appears year after year in newspaper articles and scientific studies that call attention to the challenges and problems facing youths: persistently high rates of alcohol and other drug use, teenage pregnancy, youth obesity and many more. As a result, the vast majority of young people are building their lives on a foundation that is truly fragile. Some youths still manage to steer their way through adolescence into adulthood relatively unharmed, despite their circumstances and some of the harmful choices they make. Yet, too many will not. For them, experiences in early years will leave scars that will take years to heal. Some will become trapped in negative cycles of violence, addiction, and hopelessness. ASUEP 4-H and Youth Development programs provide hope for our young people through educational activities. In this way, 4-H participants can gain leadership skills, management relationships, make decisions and become resilient enough to overcome the risks they face. They then become better communicators and serve their communities well. Educational programs implemented for youths in communities can ensure the development of life skills and assets through various projects and contests, which offer a positive and hopeful path to a brighter future for today's youth and society. Through active 4-H participation by youths, they can gain leadership skills, manage relationships and make good life decisions,

b. In Claiborne County, 4-H members participated in 4-H projects/contests. There were five 4-H members who earned blue ribbons and displayed their exhibits in the 4-H village at the state fair. The Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team is a highly recognized, prestigious group of teens. Claiborne County has two 4-H members to be selected to the Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team. The National 4-H Congress National 4-H Congress is the most important event for leadership and community service learning for 4-H members between the ages of 14 to 18. Over 1,300 young people from 48 states participated in the 5-day conference in Atlanta, GA. Thirty (30) Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team members attended the conference. Of the thirty (30) Mississippi 4-H members to attend, a Claiborne County 4-H member was the representative for the Southwest District. A 4-H award/recognition program was conducted for 4-H members and volunteer leaders to recognize them for their outstanding achievements throughout the year. The guest speaker for the award ceremony was one of Claiborne County's outstanding 4-Hers who has excelled in every 4-H project and contest in which she participated. During her speech, she gave credit for her experiences, skills, and knowledge of her participation in 4-H. She also credited her ability to set goals and follow through with them to her experiences and education in 4-H.

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

d. State specific.

## **Key Theme: Community Development**

a. Many complex issues facing rural communities in a time of shrinking financial resources to acquire adequate human resources highlight a need for the training and development of both youth and adult volunteers to address issues facing youth in communities. A 4-H Volunteer Leader Training curriculum of ASUEP entitled "Developing Leaders to Organize School and Community Clubs" was implemented to provide educational training for community leaders, parents, and teachers who are committed and to increase their knowledge regarding organizing community and school-based youth clubs. There were 20 4-H volunteer leaders trained. ASUEP, in collaboration with youth and adult leaders and youth club members, organized a Make a Difference Day that attracted anyone who would make a commitment to help others for just one day. The activities can be almost any type of project or providing a service in communities.

b. As a result of the Make a Difference Day in Claiborne County, 4-H members and volunteer leaders participated by doing several projects within their communities such as community clean up of debris senior citizens of senior citizen yards, picking up trash from local neighborhoods, reading to kids at local daycares, and communicating with the elderly in their communities. Additionally, Claiborne County 4-H members and volunteer leaders collected donations for a Food and Toy Drive to help needy families in their communities during the months of November and December. They provided toys and food to five families in Claiborne County who would otherwise have some essentials to enjoy during holiday season as other families in communities.

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

d. State specific.

## **Key Theme: Youth Development**

a. Jefferson County has a total population of 9,432, twenty-six and four-tenths (26.4) percent are under the age of 18, according to U. S. Census Bureau. In rural communities of Jefferson County, youths are at a disadvantage because of the lack of extracurricular youth programs within the community. As a result, there is an increased chance that young people will become involved in risky behaviors. This emphasizes the need for the implementation of educational programs, events and activities to empower your people to enhance life skills and develop social, emotional and cognitive competencies. To reduce the number of youths in Jefferson County being involved in risky behaviors, the ASUEP 4-H Youth agent enrolled youths in hands-on learning by developing and participating in 4-H projects/contest. A series of educational workshops/special projects were conducted with 85 young people ages 8-18 in community clubs in the following areas: character education, citizenship, how to do a visual presentation and all about 4-H.

b. A result of youths participating in workshops and special projects in Jefferson County, they were prepared to compete in various competitions. Youth senior members between the ages 14-18 throughout the state of Mississippi competed for trophies and ribbons in various contests. Jefferson County had four members to compete with one overall 1<sup>st</sup> place winner with a visual presentation on food and nutrition at 4-H Club Congress. Another youth won 2nd place visual presentations in health. At the Southwest District 4-H Project Achievement Day Contest for junior 4-H members ages 8-13; there were seven 4-H members who won trophies and ribbons. Jefferson County has two 1<sup>st</sup> place winners in PowerPoint Presentations and four members to showcase their talent in Share the Fun contest and win with 2nd place. As a result of participating in workshops, special projects, regional and state contests, young people in Jefferson County gained knowledge about various educational topics and were involved in productive activities outside of their school environment. These activities empowered 4-Hers to have educational experiences that enhance life skills to resist risky behaviors. The evidence is supported through the winners at 4-H contest and positive post evaluations from workshops. The evaluations indicated over seventy-five (75) percent of the youths involved in projects and competitions agreed that being a part of these educational workshops has made a positive effect on their lives and the choices they make their lives.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Youth Workforce Development**

a. Wilkinson County has an unemployment rate of twelve and six-tenths (12.6) percent according to current statistics from the Labor Market Data for the State of Mississippi. There is a need for career and workforce development to prepare youths in Wilkinson County for employment in the workforce. Surveys were randomly distributed to high school students in the county to determine how knowledgeable the students were in the areas of setting career goals, writing a resume, completing a job application and preparing for an interview. The results of this survey indicated that high schools students were not aware of the appropriate way to complete an application for employment. ASUEP 4-H Youth educators conducted a series of workshops. The first session dealt with goal setting. Youths were given the opportunity to think and discuss their plans for career choices. In the he second workshop, participants prepared sample cover letters to attach with the resumes. The third workshop consisted of youths writing sample resumes. The fourth workshop had each participant completing a job application. IN the last workshop, youths participated in job interview training. The series of workshops were conducted with 83 students with a combination of high school students and combined community based 4-H clubs.

b. After conducting the series of workshops, an evaluation was administered to all participants. Due to the workshops, there was an eighty (80) percent increase of knowledge in the areas of goal setting, cover letters, resumes and interview skills. Also some youths gave verbal testimonies stating that they now have self-confidence. The youths spoke with confidence

that they are ready to apply for employment, whether it's part-time work, next year's summer employment programs or even future career opportunities. This is largely due to hands-on participation in these types of workshops/training sessions.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Personal Development**

a. Disadvantaged youths in rural communities in southwest Mississippi show an increase in the number of youths using cigarettes and other tobacco products. The use of cigarettes and tobacco products can lead to a lifetime of social and economic consequences that affect the future of youths in these communities. The use of tobacco can promote significant health problems among young people, including an increase in the number and severity of respiratory illnesses such as asthma and bronchitis. In an effort to provide knowledge and awareness about the harmful effects and dangers of cigarette and tobacco products on the health and well-being of youths in Southwest Mississippi, the Alcorn State University Extension Program in collaboration with the Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi and local middle and high schools conducted two Regional Tobacco Youth Summits for youths in grades 7-12. The educational sessions of the two summits focused on the dangers of tobacco use by youths, and the importance of not starting to smoke.

b. Of the 485 middle and high school youths attending the two Tobacco Youth Summits and according to the survey conducted at the conclusion of the youth summits, sixty-nine (69) percent of the 485 youths understand the danger of tobacco use forty-nine (49) percent felt they would be able to refuse cigarettes or tobacco products if offered by their peers, and sixty-six (66) percent stated they would not start smoking cigarettes or start using tobacco products because of the health risks.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Youth-At-Risk - Tobacco Education**

a. According to the Surgeon General Report, an estimated 440,000 Americans die each year from diseases caused by smoking. Smoking costs the U.S. over \$150 billion each year in annual health care costs and lost productivity. Cigarette smoking and alcohol during childhood produce significant health problems among young people, including cough and phlegm production, an increased number of respiratory illnesses, decreased physical fitness and an unfavorable lipid profile. Children and teens are easy targets for the tobacco industry. Often their choices are



heavily influenced by TV, movies, advertising, and by peer pressure, children and teens don't think much about health consequences. In underserved communities such as Claiborne and Warren Counties, youths encounter many risk factors in their daily routine associated with smoking. These risk factors lead to social and economic issues which create problems for families and communities. It's never too late to quit no matter how young or old a person is.

In an effort to reduce the number of youths who use tobacco-related products in Claiborne and Warren Counties, ASUEP staff in conjunction with Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi conducted monthly tobacco education workshops/activities and distributed educational materials and incentives to youths in attendance, and organized special interest 4-H Tobacco Clubs in Claiborne and Warren Counties. There were approximately 300 young people who participated. The Project S.T.A.R. Curriculum was used to conduct monthly activities which consisted of: RAT (Reject All Tobacco) for grades K-3rd; SWAT (Student Working Against Tobacco) targets grades 4th -6th; FREE for grades 7th -8th; and Frontline targets grades 9th - 12th. Educational materials (Facts Sheets) and other paraphernalia were distributed and used as a marketing tool to communicate this message to young people "Say NO to Tobacco Use".

b. The surveys and pre/post tests indicate that over fifty (50) percent of the 300 participants agreed that smoking was harmful and they will stop using tobacco and related products. Forty (40) percent of those 300 young participants understood that smoking around nonsmokers (second-hand smoking) could also be as harmful. The students also gained knowledge and skills to deal with peer pressure, to communicate more effectively and to make more effective decisions, regarding resisting the use of tobacco and other tobacco products.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Youth-At-Risk - Tobacco Education**

a. The use of tobacco by adolescents leads to other chemical exposure. For that reason, tobacco is considered a gateway drug to substance abuse. Even those youths who don't become substance abusers risk developing cancer, heart and lung diseases. Research conducted by Smoking Trends-American Legacy Foundation stated eighty (80) percent of all smokers have their first cigarette before age 18. Further data stated youths between the ages 12 to 17 try a cigarette for the first time and, within days or weeks of the first cigarette use, symptoms of nicotine dependence may appear. Between one third and one half of young people who try a cigarette will go on to become a daily smoker. These concerns led Alcorn State University Extension Service 4-H educators to develop a tobacco prevention program in Jefferson County. A series of workshops were conducted along with a Tobacco Youth Summit. These tobacco workshops were carried out through organized tobacco teams within the Jefferson County Public Schools and Community 4-H Clubs. All workshops reinforce young people to develop

positive attitudes toward non use of tobacco products. A total of 150 students participated in these workshops. The curriculums used for these sessions were provided through Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi. One Tobacco Youth Summit was conducted. During the summit age appropriate hands-on activities were carried out with participant. All sessions focused on educating our children to stay away from tobacco products. A total of 350 young people attended this event.

b. As a result of the Alcorn State University Extension program conducted the tobacco workshops and youth summit for 500 youths benefited in Jefferson County. After a period of attending workshops, each participant was given an evaluation to complete as to the effectiveness of the sessions. The findings indicated seventy (70) percent of the 500 youth participants had increased their knowledge on the importance of staying tobacco free. Some youth added extra comments on their evaluations stating as result of participating in the tobacco workshops, they had gained insight on the importance of remaining tobacco free. During the tobacco summit, twenty (20) percent of 500 youth participants admitted they had tried smoking a cigarette. Because of participating in this summit, they agreed to remain tobacco free to protect their health. This could greatly decrease the chances of our young people getting lung cancer and other tobacco-related diseases. More importantly, because of the knowledge gained, our young people now have the tools to make positive decisions and maintain healthy lifestyles.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Personal Development**

In 2001, the Hinds County teen pregnancy rate was 45.1 percent and has remained relatively high as compared to state average at 38.9 percent. The potential problem(s) of adolescent pregnancy results from increases in sexual activity among adolescents contributing to adolescent pregnancy, birth, and parenting. A potential solution is providing educational information and programs to emphasize various options to adolescents such as abstinence, use of birth control, and the use of provide a peer social support system. The ASUEP 4-H program conducted a human sexuality program in Hinds County to provide information regarding premature sexual activity among youths. A total of 64 students participated in the human sexuality program consisting of a series of two, one-hour sessions. The human sexuality program focused on various topics other than sexual activity. The sessions also emphasized their attitudes, values, and feelings about sexual activity, explored ways to improving self image and appearance to gain confidence in yourself, and explained methods to effectively relate to others of the opposite sex in relationships. The sessions also covered setting goals in life for the future and understanding how earlier sexual involvement or unprotected sex can impact.

b. As a result of the program, the adolescent participants indicated they gained knowledge and

skills to change their behavior. Of the 64 students participating in the human sexuality program, ninety (90) percent of the adolescents say that by participating in this program they would postpone sexual activity until they were older and more mature. The participants of the sessions indicated they would adopt the skills they learned to make better decisions in their lives.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Leadership Training and Development**

a. Communities in rural southwest Mississippi are rapidly declining, and this is also true in Claiborne County. Poor infrastructures, poor water quality, lack of adequate and affordable housing/utilities, lack of jobs, lack of recreational centers/facilities, and increased crimes are issues plaguing communities in Claiborne County. Poor leadership or the lack of trained leaders has been cited as one reason for the lack of action taken toward addressing such issues. In most cases, many community issues are dealt with from the governmental level with little or no citizen participation. Therefore, leadership development training was determined to be necessary in combating these issues in the county. To address pressing community issues, a Community Voices Leadership Development Training Program Kick-Off meeting was held to introduce the program and train co-facilitators in various communities in Claiborne County. A total of 25 leaders from five communities (Hermanville, Russum, Pine Grove, Gordon Station, and Northside) participated in the training. The training focused on developing the leadership skills to enable them to become more efficient in collaborating with others to resolve community issues at the grassroots level. The Community Voices Leadership Development 15-week training program was implemented and provided citizens with the educational tools and strategies needed to tackle the many issues facing their community. The Community Voices program also enables leaders to build and strengthen local capacity through partnerships with like agencies and organizations by focusing their efforts toward specific outcomes within their communities.

b. As a result of the Community Voices Leadership Development training implemented in Claiborne County, 20 leaders from three communities (Pine Grove, Gordon Station, and Russum) successfully completed the leadership development program. Since the initial training, Claiborne County now has 20 trained and emerging leaders involved in various leadership roles to tackle current issues. The emerging leaders are working on their action plans and they continue to meet on a regular basis to address community issues. A project of establishing a nutrition site has been undertaken. Additionally, four of the emerging leaders have been selected to serve on countywide boards. They were chosen because of their leadership abilities and skills demonstrated during the Community Voices

program. The board includes representatives from the Claiborne County Hospital Board, 4-H Advisory Council, Warren County Hospital Board, and 4-H Volunteer Leaders. These leaders indicated that they attributed their success of their leadership roles to the active participation in the Community Voices Leadership Training Program.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Leadership Training and Development**

a. Jefferson County is a small rural county with a population of 9,432, according to U.S. Census Bureau. Over the years, Jefferson County has experienced a declining economy and crumbling social and physical infrastructure. Because of the declining economy and crumbling infrastructure, there was a need to develop a leadership base in several communities within the county. This leadership base will provide the leadership skills for citizens to deal with the issues and problems facing communities within the county.

The Alcorn State University Extension Program (ASUEP) in Jefferson County implemented a 15-week training program referred to as Community Voices. This training is designed to train and develop citizens who traditionally have not been active in making decisions concerning issues and problems that affect their communities. The first four units of the 15-week training sessions were implemented. The units were as follows: A Shared Group Leadership Approach; Communicating Our Vision through Working Together; Working on Our Vision Step by Step and Building a Community and County Organization to Implement Our Community Action Plan. These sessions focused on an understanding of leadership styles, and developing the problem solving and decision-making skills of the citizenry of the county. A total of 25 citizens were actively involved in hands-on training sessions from two communities in Jefferson County. During the training, the leaders of communities, discovered they had similar issues and problems within their communities, which included a lack of housing, jobs, health care, and community recreation for youths. As a result of being a part of Community Voices, each community selected issues and developed an action plan to resolve community issues. This action plan consisted of step by step details to bring a solution to the issues.

b. During the last session, an evaluation of the participants of the Community Voices Leadership Development program was implemented to document its impact. The results indicated personal impacts were realized by ninety (90) percent of the 25 participants, through increased skills in listening, working as part of a team and expressing ideas. The evaluation also indicated that eighty (80) percent of the 25 citizens stated the leadership skills gained through the training will allow them to become more involved in leadership roles at church, work, and community service organizations. The participants stated that as a result of the Community Voices training, they are now empowered to help find solutions to community issues. The citizens developed trust and respect for each other over the 15-week and did not want their experience to end. Therefore, they decided to

meet quarterly to discuss the status of the action plan and continue to work on addressing issues and community projects. The Harriston community action plan focused on clearing up dilapidated buildings in Harriston. The Lorman Community action plan was to focus on a youth recreation park.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Youth Leadership Training and Development**

a. Leadership opportunities for youth are limited in rural southwest Mississippi. There is a need to build and strengthen leadership skills of limited-resource young people to enable them to act responsibly in all aspects of their lives. There is a need to develop youths who possess the leadership abilities to meet present and future challenges in a global society. A need also exists to provide students with opportunities to learn and practice essential leadership skills. To address the issue of developing leadership skills for limited-resource youths, the Alcorn State University Extension Program, in Partnership with ASU Upward Bound Program and The Center for Rural Life Center, planned and implemented a 4-week Youth Leadership Academy for one hundred (100 young people) in grades 9-12. The youths participated in education sessions for the curriculum entitled "Youth Leadership 101" that provided information on the following topics:

- 1) Developing Knowledge of Self and others;
- 2) Defining Leadership;
- 3) Developing leadership skills and practices; and
- 4) Practicing leadership through service.

The goal of this academy was to increase youth participants' knowledge and skills so that they can become effective leaders in various roles in the community to enhance their future development. It is also designed to promote an awareness of their potential for leadership at many levels such as home, school, and workplace and in local, state, and national communities.

b. According to the post evaluation survey, fifty (50) percent of the youth participating in the academy felt they had a better understanding of themselves. Also, sixty five (65) percent of the youth participants had a better understanding of what leadership really mean and what it takes to be a good leader. Below are some comments from youth participants:

- 1) "Being a leader means more than being in charge of your life, but others lives as well. This program has been very helpful to my future development."
- 2) "I enjoyed being involved in this program. I met many great people and learned more about being a leader."
- 3) "I really enjoyed getting to know people from other schools."
- 4) "I really enjoyed and gained valuable information about planning for the future because it made me think about what I want to do."

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

d. State specific

### **Key Theme: Youth Entrepreneurship**

a. Over sixty (60) percent of youth in poor communities in Mississippi lack the necessary skills for building financial literacy to promote entrepreneurial skills and secure educational assets to build healthy financial business foundations for themselves and their families. There are many young people in Claiborne and Warren Counties who lack job opportunities to improve their economic well being and who are longing for and eager to start up small businesses. Youths in these counties have untapped potential, interest and great ideas, but often experience difficulty obtaining the information needed to create opportunities for realizing their dreams and using their potential to contribute to the social and economic growth of their communities. Many youths are unaware of the different agencies that provide educational and technical assistance regarding developing a business plan and providing financing for small business development. Youth entrepreneurship develops the wealth of our communities and creates meaningful opportunities. Therefore, it keeps youth out of trouble while adding growth to the economy, and establishes the opportunity for future businesses. Entrepreneurship can foster many individual traits in youths such as self-discipline, and self-respect. Young entrepreneurs face many serious issues and concerns such as obtaining start-up capital, and leasing property and equipment in starting their own businesses. In an effort to address the above mentioned issues that are facing young entrepreneurs today, Alcorn State University Extension Program, in collaboration with the USDA Farm Service Agent and Mississippi State University Extension Service (MSU-ES), conducted a series of Youth Loan Workshops, site visits, and a 4-H Business Tour. There were over 70 youths from Claiborne and Warren Counties who participated in these workshops, activities, and events. The participants of Youth Loan Workshops joined 4-H which was required for application for youth farm loans through the USDA Farm Service Agency. The workshops aided youths in creating and launching their own business; building relationships with other young entrepreneurs; developing skills; and gaining knowledge about the different agencies that can assist with funding their businesses. Young people were trained in certain areas relating to the completion of a loan application (i.e. effective business management procedures and practices, bookkeeping, and many others). Site visits were also conducted by ASUEP with local educators of the 4-H youth development and agriculture programs and USDA loan officers. The site visits were a follow up with participants who received youth loans and provide technical assistance to assure they were meeting the obligations of their loans. The business tours provided motivational and educational information to inspire young people to value business and economics, and to improve the quality of their businesses. It also prepares youths for future economic and workforce issues they might face.

b. As a result of implementing the Youth Loan Workshops in collaboration with the USDA, 10 youths successfully secured a youth loan through USDA Farm Services Agency. All 10 of the youths received a total of \$5,000 to develop their own business ventures. The youth businesses ranged from landscaping to cattle ventures. Six of the 10 youths secured loans to purchase various types of livestock and farm equipment; three received loans for lawn and landscaping; and one secured a loan for goats to produce agriculture products for sale. Once the youths have successfully repaid the loans, all profits generated can be used to improve the quality of their lives and to assist with family obligations. Also, results of the evaluation of the Youth Loan Workshop and site visits were that eighty (80) percent of the 75 youths indicated knowledge gained about the major organizations and agencies that provided aid in developing and funding their business {ASUEP, USDA, SBA, ASU Rural Development, 4-H Cooperative Business Tour and MSU-ES. Seventy (70) percent of the 75 youths indicated that other youths, once given ample resources and training, could easily establish and successfully run a business venture. One hundred (100) percent of the 75 participants agreed to contact at least one or all of the sponsored organizations for assistance with future business ideas, plans, and funding.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Promoting Business Program**

a. Young people's interest in the agriculture industry is continuously diminishing, basically as a result of their historical perspective and view of farming being associated primarily with the agriculture industry. It is perceived as a labor intensive profession requiring hard work year around. Today, young people lack a broader understanding of the variety of career options associated with the agriculture industry which are lucrative and high-paying employment opportunities along with the connection of agriculture to many other aspects of their daily lives. The youths of Jefferson County are not an exception. For example, the horticulture area of agriculture is where ornamental products are produced. Such flowers are used by floral businesses and are in constant demand on an ongoing basis from consumers, other businesses, and institutions. Vegetable crops are also in the horticulture area of agriculture. They include vegetable crops and related products prepared for daily consumption and to improve our diets, health and lives. Also, ornamentals are agricultural products used for community beautification projects at various locations. A school-based community beautification demonstration project was implemented by the Alcorn State University Extension Program in Claiborne County that focused on creating a broader understanding of agriculture and its connections to their daily life. The youths were provided educational information and knowledge regarding horticulture production emphasizing how to plan, apply cultural practices, and manage vegetable and flower gardens effectively. The youths planted an assortment of annual flowers and vegetable seeds to understand the various growing characteristics of horticultural products. They

were also provided with information about how plants grow and develop. A total of 140 young people participated in the demonstration project.

b. Evaluation results indicated 140 students were provided the opportunity to demonstrate skills in planning, purchasing, preparing necessary supplies and using equipment in the production of flower beds in various locations on the school grounds. They observed first how an area in agriculture is associated with aspects of their daily lives through their involvement in the development of a beautification project to improve the appearance their school. Eighty-five (85) percent of the 140 students indicated that they plan to grow a vegetable garden at home with the seeds they received donated by Heifer Project International. One hundred (100) percent of the 140 participants involved in the demonstration project indicated that they were exposed to products associated with Agriculture and these products can be used.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Youth Entrepreneurship**

a. Many young people lack job opportunities in rural communities due to the lack of business development. Lincoln County livestock exhibitors need the best prices to receive for their animals. The Alcorn State University Extension Program in collaboration with MSU Extension Program and the Lincoln County Livestock Association conduct a Sale of Champions each year. The sale is held after the local winter show and before the Dixie National for bidders to buy animals. If the animals should mead the Dixie National Sale of Champions, the local sale is null and void.

b. Steers were sold on an average of \$2,175.00. This was approximately \$800 more than what the youths would have received at the local auction. The lambs sold for an average of \$450.00 each. This was approximately \$160.00 more than what the youths could receive at a local auction. Goats sold for an average of \$500.00 that brought approximately \$300 more than being sold on local auction.

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

d. State specific.



## **Key Theme: Community Development**

a. Hurricane Katrina committee was one of the worst storms ever to hit. This storm destroyed millions of dollars in farm property, necessitated costly repairs and caused the loss of the livestock by farmers when affected farmers' economic well being and the economy of the agriculture industry. Immediately after the storm, the Alcorn State University Program, in collaboration with various departments of the University such as the School of Nursing and others, formed the Hurricane Katrina committee. The committee focused on community development efforts to facilitate various aspects of on the rebuilding efforts of communities along the coast line of Mississippi. In the absence of electrical power, a portable satellite communication system was provided in collaboration with other telecommunication entitles of USDA system to victims and businesses to allow people to find relatives and friends through technological communication channels. ASUEP, in conjunction with the Labron James Foundation, distributed clothing, water and generators to victims in communities of D'Iberville, Mississippi. This was a part of joint efforts between Christian Organization For Relief Efforts (C.O.R.E.) and America's University to restore services to coastal areas of the state. Additionally, the staff of ASUEP, the School of Nursing staff, students of Alcorn State University and students from Purdue University joined together and organized clean up efforts for the victims and families of Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf Coast of Mississippi.

b. A mobile communication system was set up and allowed citizens of coastal communities to reconnect with their families and the world. Equipment such as generators was distributed to ease the comfort of storm victims in these communities. A massive cleanup was launched among the participating agencies resulting in savings of an estimated \$200,000 to storm victims in repairs and clean-up of their homes and property, etc.

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

d. State specific.

## **Key Theme: Community Development**

a. The lack of physical infrastructure development is a major challenge for small, rural communities where the lack of economic resources exists due to the lack of a tax base to provide basic services for the citizens. Municipal fire departments reacted for eighty (80) percent of the county fire and emergency responses in rural communities. Ninety (90) percent of the county training and training of volunteers are done through the city government. Leaders of communities identified rural fire protection as a major issue throughout public forums. In collaboration with local governmental officials in which volunteer firemen were trained, ASUEP staff identified and developed and implemented strategies to address this problem.

b. As a result of collaboration with governmental officials, in four counties were allotted state insurance rebate funds to create six local rural volunteer fire departments. In three of those counties, grant funds were obtained to purchase turn-out gear for county/district fire

departments. Also, facilities were provided for the Red Lick Community/Volunteer Fire Department.

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

d. State specific.

### **Key Theme: Youth Development**

a. One of the major factors that hinders inner city limited-resource youths from joining and participating in 4-H is an inability for their parents to acquire farm property with sufficient facilities to care for livestock that the youths are interested in showing during contests. This usually causes low minority participation for both males and females when competitions are held at the county, district, and state levels. Research indicated that youths who show animals learn how to be responsible citizens, due to the care they provide for their animals, and are less likely to commit crimes. The ASUEP Agriculture agent recruited 6 at-risk youths to join 4-H clubs in Hinds County to show lambs during the county livestock show. ASUEP, along with the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Museum provided housing for the lambs of the youths at no cost. Prior to the show, the ASUEP agents provided educational sessions to train youths on showmanship, nutrition, and grooming techniques.

b. As a result of the youths participating in the Southwest Mississippi District Livestock Show, they were able to show their animals and received ribbons for their leadership efforts. They were also instrumental in encouraging other inner city youths to join 4-H where they participated in other contests such as 4-H Project Achievement Day. As a result, minority participation in 4-H has increased in Hinds county and has proven to be very educational for the young people, as well as their parents.

## C. Stakeholder Input Process

The Alcorn State University Extension Program's mission is to improve the quality of life of limited-resource audiences through educational programs in a time of dynamic change. While the vision is to be a premier extension center of excellence for limited-resource audiences, it is proactive, responsive, and collaborative. ASUEP is committed to the growth and development of people through life-long learning. The core values of ASU Extension are learning, accessibility, collaboration, innovativeness, accountability and inclusiveness.

The process of the environmental scanning system is designed to provide a means of collecting data. The process is used to seek information and ideas about the issues of the limited-resource populations that Alcorn State University Extension Program seeks to address. Multiple approaches will be taken to seek stakeholder input. The approaches include town hall meetings, and focus groups, Advisory Council sessions and ICSP. Efforts will be made to ensure that the stakeholders involved are representatives of the limited-resource communities in terms of geographic location, family status, income level, age, and gender and disability status. Stakeholders will include both users and nonusers of existing educational programs.

The town hall meetings are planned in detail and are carefully executed to produce the desired end—to gather pertinent information that will assist ASUEP in identifying the critical needs issues of limited-resource communities as the populace of the communities see them. These meetings are a platform created for the population in disadvantaged communities to give voice to their needs and concerns. Efforts will be made during town hall meetings and focus group sessions to increase awareness of the mission of ASUEP, its capacity and the collaborative efforts of the planned programs as they relate to extension and research at Alcorn State University. The primary goal is to facilitate greater access to stakeholders of our limited-resource customers and communicate our planned programs that are in their best interests and have been developed in response to evaluation of the needs of the targeted population.

One-on-one contact with target clientele of the planned programs will be conducted through an Individual Client Survey Plan to seek input from stakeholders. Stakeholder input is also obtained with active participation of extension professionals and stakeholders will participate in the future meetings. The outcome will be used in designing educational programs, events, and activities that address stakeholders' needs.

These data input processes grant the Alcorn State University Extension Program the means to access, analyze issues and needs, and implement programs appropriate to issues of limited-resource citizens. The analysis consists of the prioritizing and developing of an action plan for addressing community issues as seen by limited-resource citizens living with those issues on a daily basis. The aim is to set aside preconceptions about what

limited-resource people are seeking and to gain a more precise and dynamic picture of their realities and their existing conditions.

The intent of the town hall process was to identify issues or needs of limited-resource citizens in counties targeting the public. The analyses of the issues facilitate programming efforts, through an action-based team response to the critical issues identified from the analysis. This provides a more accurate basis for identifying those factors that face stakeholders.

Focus group sessions were provided and implemented to prioritize the issues identified in the public hearings (i.e. town hall meeting). These groups were made up of select and diverse individuals to seek additional information on the most prevalent issues identified in public meeting. The focus group sessions were convened at different time frames in targeted counties to maximize input from a broad participant base.

The Individual Client Service Plan (ICSP) is an individual and or family needs assessment instrument designed to collect information on relevant needs and issues of limited-resource clientele to enable county staff to provide educational programs, information and activities and appropriate technical assistance regarding issues.

These methods of scanning granted Alcorn State University Extension Program the means to access, analyze issues and needs, and implement programs appropriate to issues of limited-resource citizens. A computation of the findings was converted into a County Cluster Matrix to enhance the issue identification processes of limited-resource communities. This matrix provides issues that have been stated by limited-resource individual and families to ASUEP for response by the agency.

The following are the issue themes identified from various environmental scanning processes:

## **Education**

- Adult and continuing educational programs in the areas of technological and workforce training are lacking or completely inaccessible.
- Local schools are staffed with inadequately prepared and insufficiently compensated personnel, have outdated curriculums that do not meet the challenges of the twenty-first century, and are faced with disparity in funding.
- Communities are looking to school systems to broaden their customary roles and educate residents in the areas of social issues that embrace teen pregnancy instruction, drug counseling and education, and AIDS awareness.

## Rural Housing

- Housing in these communities are in an acute state of disrepair and is sorely in need of restoration. Many of the residential structures would be deemed substandard and not suitable for habitation.
- Availability of quality housing remains a problem. These areas are not attractive to homebuilders primarily because of the existing socio-economic conditions. This places residents in a no-win cycle—needing better residential structures but not having the desirable characteristics residential developers require.
- For limited-resource audiences, housing cost represents a significant portion of an already overly taxed household budget. Finding ways to provide quality living accommodations at affordable prices remains a major housing challenge.

## Community Programs

- Water and sewer services are antiquated and/or not functioning at an adequate capacity to serve the needs of the limited-resource residents in many rural areas.
- Access to good health care and hospital services remains an issue for rural and limited-resource communities. Rural areas are experiencing difficulty in attracting and retaining health care professionals, particularly those practicing in specialty areas. Rural health care systems themselves are inadequate. There is a shortage of hospitals and limited health-related service providers. The cost of medical insurance and prescription medicines contribute to the health care crisis facing these communities. Additionally, there is an increased need for prevention and intervention programs including nutritional education and stress management.
- The number of professionally trained and paid firefighters and law enforcement officers are significantly low and in some instances non-existent. Police and fire protection are underprovided in many of these areas.
- The lack of parity in funding for rural and outlying communities is labeled as the reason for inferior roads and bridges through rural communities that pose potentially dangerous conditions to human life.
- Failure to enforce animal control and waste disposal laws are, litter, abandoned structures in part, responsible for the prevailing conditions in many of these communities.

## Environmental Concerns

- Water and air quality levels range from questionable to poor. Residents are contending with poor media response to boil water alerts and hazardous plant emissions. Only a few of these communities are served by local television and radio stations and believe it is vital for media outlets to respond to their isolated areas.
- Waste disposal and recycling programs are outmoded and, in many cases, are not present at all.

## Human Relations

- The struggle for power among political, social, civic and faith-based organizations continue to be major obstacles to the “meeting of the minds” necessary to finding solutions to collective community issues.
- Poor racial relations, although is not unique to the South, continue to plague many communities. Tradition, cultural differences, history, and ethnic intolerance are some of the barriers yet to be overcome before communities can meet on common ground to find ways to triumph over shared issues.
- Crime is no longer thought of only an urban problem. Rural crime and rural justice are important issues with particular emphasis on interpersonal offenses.

## Employment

- Once thriving industrial and manufacturing entities are either downsizing or opting out of business altogether, leaving communities in precarious economic dilemmas. With each plant or business closing, communities find themselves faced with even fewer jobs in an environment already beleaguered by declining employment opportunities.
- Many of the job options are menial, low-paying positions that contribute to other community ills. (i.e. housing affordability, the departure of young college graduates and lack of employment prospects for teens).
- If rural areas are anything, they are land rich. All too often much of that land remains idle. Agricultural education and development may well be crucial in converting this natural resource into an income-earning mechanism. Many limited-resource individuals are landholders who lack the “know-how” of making their land

work for them. By learning how to tap into these resources, they can provide for themselves and create opportunities for others.

#### **D. Program Review Process**

There were no significant changes in the program review process since the submission of the Five Year Plan of Work. The plan states that “The review of the program’s goals will be done by committees composed of multi-disciplinary personnel for each goal. Committees will include specialists, research scientists, university faculty members, support staff and administrators. The review process will call for the teams to determine the system's level of performance by comparing expected performance to actual accomplishments and the proposed outcomes against actual outcomes and the level of outputs. Indicators will be reviewed on realistic and measurable probabilities. Also, external sources will be utilized to review and determine feasibility of programs.”

#### **E. Merit Review Process**

There were no significant changes in the merit review process. The merit review process of the Alcorn State University Extension Program consisted of the development and implementation of a Performance Appraisal System that was performed at all appropriate levels of organization by the administrative leadership. The state and county personnel accomplishments were reviewed based on both organizational and program goals. These goals are reviewed yearly for the state and county staffs of the Alcorn State University 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 program accomplishments in the areas of environmental scanning, program development, program funding, development of joint programs, technological and professional advancements and the development and implementation of collaborative networks, partnerships and marketing strategies. Merit scores were given to determine salary adjustments, modifications and structural changes based on the availability of organizational resources.