

***Southern Rural Sociological Association  
Annual Meeting***



***“Climate Change, Agricultural Food Systems, Rural  
Livelihoods, and Resilience”***

***February 13-14, 2022  
New Orleans, Louisiana***

***Concurrent with the Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists (SAAS)***

# ***“Climate Change, Agricultural Food Systems, Rural Livelihoods, and Resilience”***

**President Buddhi R. Gyawali, Kentucky State University**

For decades, the rural South has suffered from the negative effects of an aging farmer population, declining communities, retreating industries, a degraded environment, a crumbling infrastructure, and the lack of vital health and educational technology, including broadband. The COVID-19 pandemic is still part of our lives, with no firm end in sight, and recovery from the detrimental impacts is slow. Climate change-prompted droughts, wildfires, freezes, and floods (as well as accompanying food insecurities) are continuously affecting agricultural food systems and supply chains, disproportionately influencing the underserved and limited-resource farmers in the South. These shocks will continue to stress and challenge rural and urban populations, policymakers, academics, research, and Extension professionals in the South, as well as nationwide. It is imperative to study the scale, magnitude, and spatial extent of impacts of such shocks in the livelihoods of local communities with different demographic and geographic variations. Various forms of community resilience and innovative, collaborative initiatives for knowledge coproduction for better decision-making to mitigate such situations are emerging. It is worth sharing the many success stories of university-farmer collaboration to identify social, emotional, physical and economic needs, effective use of social media, and virtual technologies for developing sustainable agricultural practices. The Southern Rural Sociological Association (SRSA) 2022 Annual Meeting is a forum to share scholarly work that studies the impacts of such shocks on the agricultural food system and supply chain, rural vulnerabilities, and alternative mitigation and adaptation strategies at the different footprints of rurality. We also anticipate papers and panels that discuss the importance of social and place-based theories in studying poverty, human-environment relationships and decision-making, climate injustice, and in studying inequitable access and opportunities to resources and federal agricultural and community development programs.

## Program at a Glance

### Abbreviations

Rooms: Napoleon Foyer, Napoleon C1, Napoleon C2, and Napoleon C3, Borgne, Grand Ballroom

#### Organizations

Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists: SAAS

Southern Rural Sociological Association: SRSA

Note: All SRSA members are invited to attend SAAS sessions

Meeting room floor plan (see photos end of program):

<https://www.saasinc.org/meeting-room-floor-diagrams>

### Sunday, February 13, 2022

Day and Time	Location	Session Number and Title
7:45 am–3:00 pm	Napoleon Foyer	Registration and Poster Set-Up (after 9:00 am for posters)
8:00 am–9:00 am	Napoleon C1	SRSA Executive Committee
9:15 am–10:30 am	Napoleon C1	1: Food Systems and Community Quality of Life
9:15 am–10:30 am	Napoleon C2	2: Environment and Climate Change
10:45 am–12:00 pm	Napoleon C1	3: Agrifood Systems and Practices
10:45 am–12:00 pm	Napoleon C2	4: Engaging with Race and Resources in the Rural Context
12:00 pm–1:00 pm		Lunch (on your own)
1:00 pm–2:15 pm	Napoleon C1	Panel 1: In Pursuit of Rural Prosperity: Development Research to Inform Policy and Practice
	Napoleon C2	5: Rural Identities
2:30 pm–3:45 pm	Napoleon C1	6: Research to Action: Informing Extension and Community Development
	Napoleon C2	7: Rural Realities
	Borgne (Third Floor)	SAAS Board Meeting (2:30—3:30pm)
4:00 pm–5:00pm	Borgne (Third Floor)	SAAS General Business Meeting
5:00pm	Grand Ballroom A/B/C/ (Fifth Floor)	SAAS Social and Super Bowl Party

**Monday, February 14, 2022**

<b>Day and Time</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Session Number and Title</b>
7:45 am–3:00 pm	Napoleon Foyer	Registration and Poster Set-Up
8:15 am–9:30 am	Napoleon C1	8: Human Capital and Rural Communities: Education and Migration
	Napoleon C2	9: Technology Adoption and Diffusion
9:45 am–11:00 am	Napoleon C1	Panel 2: Race and Racism in Rural America
11:30 am–1:00 pm	Napoleon C3	SRSA Awards Luncheon and Presidential Address
1:15 pm–2:30 pm	Napoleon C1	10: Health and Wellbeing in Rural Communities
	Napoleon C2	11: Innovations in Community and Organizational Research
2:45 pm–3:45 pm	Napoleon Foyer	Poster Session
3:45 pm–4:45 pm	Napoleon C1	SRSA Business Meeting (all members encouraged to attend)
4:45 pm–5:30 pm	Napoleon C1	SRSA Executive Council Meeting
6:00 pm	To be announced	SRSA Presidential Reception

## Detailed Program

### **Sunday, February 13, 2022**

7:45 am–3:00 pm, Napoleon Foyer: Registration and Poster Set-Up (after 9:00 am for posters)

8:00 am–9:00 am: SRSA Executive Committee, Napoleon C1

9:15 am–10:30 am: Napoleon C1 Session 1 – Food Systems and Community Quality of Life

Moderator: Russ Garner, Southern Rural Development Center

Local Food Systems and Health Interventions: An Exploratory Study on Farmers Perspectives on Food Prescription Programs in the Mississippi Delta. *Curtis Kline, Colorado State University; Anne Cafer University of Mississippi; Meagan Rosenthal, University of Mississippi*

Generative Possibilities for Regional Food Systems Resilience: An Agroecological Perspective  
*Kim Niewolny, and Eric Bendfeld, Virginia Tech*

Food-related Behavior of Food Desert Residents Looking Beyond the Variables: Insights from Journey Mapping of Food Desert Residents  
*Terrence Thomas, North Carolina A&T State University; Steve Folmar, Wake Forest University*

Farmers Market Leadership: Resilience and Support  
*Jama S. Coartney, and Eric K. Kaufman, Virginia Tech*

A Community Based Approach to Deter Childhood Obesity in Title 1 Schools  
*Saungaylia Randolph, Sarah L. Price, Conchita Newman, and Dreamal Worthen, Florida A&M University*

9:15 am–10:30 am: Napoleon C2 Session 2 Environment and Climate Change

Moderator: Brooklynn J. Wynveen, Sam Houston State University

Peer Pressure, Self-Efficacy, Outcome Expectancy and Moral Values Predict Intentions for Active Management of Ecosystems in Oklahoma  
*Bijesh Mishra, Rodney Will, and Omkar Joshi, Oklahoma State University*

It's the Heat Under Our Feet: Assessing Self-Reported Knowledge of Low-Temperature Geothermal Energy Development  
*Abigail Almendarez and; Gene L. Theodori, Sam Houston State University; Urs P. Kreuter, Texas A&M University*

Climate Change, Science, Politics, and Agnotology in the Anthropocene  
*Douglas H. Constance, Sam Houston State University*

The Socioeconomic Impact of Natural Resources Extracted by Multinational Corporations: The Case of the State of Alabama, USA and Sudan, North Africa  
*Dalal Alkordi, Robert Zabawa, and Thierno Thiam, Tuskegee University*

10:45 am–12:00 pm, Napoleon C1: Session 3 – Agrifood Systems and Practices

Moderator: Osei Yeboah, North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University

The Sociology of Sotol: Tequila's Cousin

*Matthew Franciskovich, and Douglas H. Constance, Sam Houston State University*

From Drugs to Agriculture and Back: Perspectives of Kentucky State University's Extension Agents on Rehabilitation of Potential Kentucky Small Limited Resource Farmers

*Laura Rogers, Marion Simon, and Gyawali, Kentucky State University*

Group Solidity/Cohesion in Three Cases: La Via Campesina (via Desmarais) African-American Cooperatives (via Gordon-Nembhard), and The NFO (via Muhm)

*Thomas Gray, USDA, Program on Cooperatives*

Downscaling County-level Crop Yield Information for the Estimation of Parcel-specific Production Potential for Kentucky Farm Lands

*Jeremy Sandifer and Buddhi R. Gyawali, Kentucky State University*

Barriers and Bridges to Success: A Mixed Methods Needs Assessment of Texas Small Producers

*Katie Tritsch, Ken Mix, and Michelle Edwards, Texas State University; Manuel Piña, Jr., Texas A&M University*

10:45 am–12:00 pm, Napoleon C2: Session 4– Engaging with Race and Resources in the Rural Context

Moderator: Diego Thompson, Mississippi State University

Take What You Have to Make What You Need": Can Small-Scale African American Farmers Help Alleviate Food Insecurity In The Alabama Black Belt Counties?

*Folashade Adalumo, Robert Zabawa, Souleymane Fall, Joe Jimmeh, Raymond Shange, and David Nganwa, Tuskegee University*

Exploring Collective Agency in Multi-Sector Advocacy for Racial Justice in the Food System

*Nicole Nunoo, and Kim Niewolny, Virginia Tech*

White Supremacy and the Persistence of African American Poverty in the Mississippi Delta: The Role of the Black Middle Class and Secondary Marginalization.

*Mark Harvey, Florida Atlantic University*

"Tell Your Story": Farmers, Class, Race, and Inequality

*Kelli Russell, Mississippi State University*

Community Resilience Influenced by Race and Politics in the Context of Large Immigration Raids in Central Mississippi

*Diego Thompson, Mississippi State University*

12:00 pm–1:00 pm: Lunch (on your own)

1:00 pm–2:15 pm, Napoleon C1: Panel 1: In Pursuit of Rural Prosperity: Development Research to Inform Policy and Practice

Moderator: Robert Zabawa, Tuskegee University

Presenters:

Samantha Evans, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis

John J. Green, Southern Rural Development Center

1:00 pm–2:15 pm, Napoleon C2: Session 5: Rural Identities

Moderator: Anne Cafer, University of Mississippi

Manifold Relations: An Examination into Types of Community Attachment and Commitment

*D. Clayton Smith and McKenna N. Hale, Western Kentucky University*

A Multifaceted Understanding of Producer Identity and Relationships

*Audrey E. H. King and Quisto Settle, Oklahoma State University*

The Farmer She ...

*Shelley Spiggle, and Marion Simon, Kentucky State University*

She Owns It: A Study of Women Landowners in the Missouri Bootheel

*Hannah Bullock and Anne Cafer, University of Mississippi*

Exploring a Preliminary Theory of Identity-Oriented Evaluation

*Katie E. Sanders, Alexa J. Lamm, and Abigail Borron, University of Georgia*

2:30 pm–3:45 pm, Napoleon C1: Session 6 – Research to Action: Informing Extension and Community Development

Moderator: Glenn D. Israel, University of Florida

Using Data to Make a Difference – Wake-Up-Downtown

*Rachael Carter, Mississippi State University Extension, Center for Government and Community Development*

When Does Support from Organizational Leaders Improve Survey Response Rates?

*Glenn D. Israel, University of Florida*

Logic Modeling an Effective Tool for Extension Program Planning and Evaluation

*Lila B. Karki and Enrique N. Escobar, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, MD*

50 Years of Rural Development: The Regional Rural Development Centers and the Southern Focus

*Russ Garner, Southern Rural Development Center*

Policy Center Research Analyst Update- Heir Property Issues Faced by Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (SDFRs)

*Kara Woods, Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Research Policy Center*

2:30 pm–3:45 pm, Napoleon C2: Session 7– Rural Realities

Moderator: Jin Young Choi, Sam Houston State University

The Association between Living Arrangement and Life Satisfaction in Rural Texas  
*Tze-Li Hsu, Jin Young Choi, and Gene Theodori, Sam Houston State University*

Retirement Migration and Community Attachment: Experiences of Older Adults Moving to Nonmetropolitan Areas in Northern Michigan and North Carolina  
*Ilona Matysiak, Maria Grzegorzewska University*

Not Here for Vacation: Hotels as Stop-gap Affordable Housing in Rural Georgia  
*Kim Skobba, University of Georgia; Terri Lewinson, Dartmouth College; Michael Gawrys, University of Georgia*

Urban Texas Residents' Perceptions of Rural People and Places: Data from a 2021 Survey  
*Gene L. Theodori, Sam Houston State University; Fern K. Willits, The Pennsylvania State University; Michael W-P Fortunato, Creative Insight Community Development*

Measuring the Impact of Broadband on Quality of Life in Rural Areas: A Systematic Exploration of Literature  
*John J. Green, Southern Rural Development Center; Jillian Morrison, Delta Directions Consortium/University of Mississippi; Roberto Gallardo, Purdue University; Brian Whitacre, Oklahoma State University; Dave Lamie, Clemson University; Sreedhar Upendram, University of Tennessee*

2:30 pm–3:30 pm      Borgne (Third Floor) SAAS Board Meeting

4:00 pm–4:15 pm      Borgne (Third Floor) SAAS General Business Meeting

4:30 pm                Grand Ballroom A/B/C (Fifth Floor) SAAS Social/Super Bowl Party

## **Monday, February 14, 2021**

7:45 am–3:00 pm, Napoleon Foyer Area: Registration and Poster Set-Up

8:15 am–9:30 am, Napoleon C1: Session 8 – Human Capital and Rural Communities: Education and Migration

Moderator: Kelli Russell, Mississippi State University

“It is Engrained in Them, that Education Does Not Matter”: Empowering Youth in Kentucky Coal Mining Communities  
*Mallory E. McDonald and Stacy K. Vincent, University of Kentucky*

“We Belong Here”: The Resiliency of Rural LGBTQIA+ Teachers  
*Caleb M. Hickman and Stacy K. Vincent, University of Kentucky*

Examining Education Through a Community Resilience Lens  
*Yasmin McLaurin and Anne Cafer, University of Mississippi; Raeda Anderson, Shepherd Center*

Puddles of Respite: Spatial Migration Trends from the Dry Corridor of Central America to the United States  
*Christian Kelly Scott, Shrinidhi Ambinakudige, and Domenico Parisi, Mississippi State University*



Contribution of H2A Temporary Agricultural Workers U.S. Meat and Livestock Industry: An Econometric Analysis

*Osei Yeboah, Cephas Naanwaab, and Paula E. Faulkner, North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University*

8:15 am–9:30 am, Napoleon C2: Session 9– Technology Adoption and Diffusion

Moderator: Robert Zabawa, Tuskegee University

Why is a Drone a Good Farm Management Tool?

*William Rogers, Kentucky State University*

Using the Zero Energy Cool Chamber as an Affordable Storage Technology for Shelf-Life Extension and Vegetable Loss Reduction among Minority Growers

*Lucy Asare-Baah, Tuskegee University; Robert Zabawa, Tuskegee University; Lisa Kitinoja, Postharvest Education Foundation; Desmond Mortley, Tuskegee University; David Tackie, Tuskegee University*

Factors Affecting Awareness and Adoption of Patch Burning

*Saroj Adhikari, Omkar Joshi, and Sam Fuhlendorf, Oklahoma State University*

North Carolina Veterans and Limited Resource Farmer's Self-Reported Farm Safety Needs

*Paula E. Faulkner, Shon Smith, Robert Cobb, Jr., and Osei Yeboah, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University*

“Input From the Trenches: Farmer Feedback on Technology Adaption”

*Cynthia Rice and Buddhi Gyawali, Kentucky State University*

9:45 am–11:00 am, Napoleon C1: Panel 2: Race and Racism in Rural America

Panelists:

Kara Woods, SDFR Research Policy Center, Robert Zabawa, Tuskegee University; Kelli Russell, Mississippi State University; and Marcus Bernard Kentucky State University; and co-editors Mark Harvey, Florida Atlantic University; Keiko Tanaka, University of Kentucky; and Ken Robinson, Clemson University

11:30 am–1:00 pm, Napoleon C3: SRSA Awards Luncheon and Presidential Address: “Climate Change, Agricultural Food Systems, Rural Livelihoods, and Resilience”, Dr. Buddhi Gyawali, Kentucky State University

1:15 pm–2:30 pm, Napoleon C1: Session 10 – Health and Wellbeing in Rural Communities

Moderator: Edith-Marie Green, University of Mississippi

Identifying Impacts of COVID-19 in Rural Oklahoma

*J. Shane Robinson, Audrey E. H. King, Tyson Ochsner, Paul Weckler, and Mark Woodring, Oklahoma State University*

The Intersection of Paternal Orphanhood or Parental Illness and Child’s Biological Relationship to Household Head on the Physical Health of Children Under Five in Nigeria

*Aramide Kazeem, University of West Georgia; John Musalia, Western Kentucky University*

Race and Space: COVID-19 Disparities, Vaccines, and Hesitancy in the United States’ South

*Jasmine Nguyen, Anne Cafer, and Meagen Rosenthal, University of Mississippi*

Considering a Rural Capacity Development Framework Using Dialectical Models

*Katie Sanders, Barbara Worley, Ellen Harrell, Abigail Borron, and Alexa Lamm, University of Georgia*

Women Incarcerated in Rural Southern Prisons: A Review of Existing Multidisciplinary Literature and Suggestions for Future Directions

*Susan Dewey, Brittany Gilmer, Ariane Prohaska, and Lauren Yearout, The University of Alabama*

1:15 pm–2:30 pm, Napoleon C2: Session 11 – Innovations in Community and Organizational Research

Moderator: Keiko Tanaka, University of Kentucky

Proposing an Identity-Oriented Framework for Culturally-Responsive Evaluation in Rural Communities

*Katie Sanders, Alexa J. Lamm, and Abigail Borron, University of Georgia*

Manifold Relations: An Examination into Types of Community Attachment and Commitment

*D. Clayton Smith and McKenna N. Hale, Western Kentucky University*

A Preliminary Analysis of the Effects of Selected Characteristics on Record Keeping by Small Producers in South Central Alabama

*David Nii Tackie, Khali N. Jones, Francisca A. Quarcoo, Gwen Johnson, Jeffrey Moore, and Alphonso Elliott, Tuskegee University*

Qualitative Analysis of Participation in One Women’s Campus Organization

*Brooklynn J. Wynveen, Sam Houston State University; Sara Jansen Perry, Baylor University*

2:45 pm–3:45 pm, Napoleon Foyer Area: Poster Session

Title	Author(s)
“Agricultural Food Systems: In a State of Flux as the Supply Chain Resets”	Cynthia Rice and Buddhi Gyawali, Kentucky State University
“Climate Change: Possible Future Scenarios for the Agricultural Community”	Cynthia Rice and Buddhi Gyawali, Kentucky State University
Accessibility Experiences among Individuals with Physical Disabilities who use Wheelchairs in Rural Regions	Kaycee Bills, Fayetteville State University

The Effects of the Globalization of the Agrifood Business on Rural Farmers	Edith-Marie Green, the University of Mississippi
The Benefits of Extension Program Area Specialization: A Look at Client Satisfaction and Outcomes	Mallory L. Cotter and Glenn D. Israel, University of Florida
Co-Developing Climate-Smart Strategies for Alabama Row Crop Producers and Agricultural Stakeholders	Stewart, Hannah, Michelle R. Worosz, McKayla Robinette, Brenda Ortiz, and Audrey Gamble, Auburn University; Leah Duzy, Compliance Services International; and Rishi Prasad, Auburn University
Federal Financial Benchmarking: Outreaching and Recruiting Agricultural Producers Online.	Henry Flowers and Jose Lopez, Texas A&M University-Commerce
Farm Business Management and Benchmarking in Time of COVID-19.	Jose Lopez, Kelley Smith, Henry Flowers, Yves Kacou, Texas A&M University-Commerce
Impacts of Drought on Corn and Soybean Production in the Southeastern United States.	Kabita Paudel, Jeremy Sandifer, Buddhi Gyawali, College of Agriculture, Community, and the Sciences, Kentucky State University.
Service Learning for Undergraduates Residing in Rural Regions: An Analysis of Learning Rural Community Resources	Kaycee Bills, Fayetteville State University
Federal Financial Benchmarking: Outreaching and Recruiting Agricultural Producers through Professionally Networking	Kelley Smith and Jose Lopez, Texas A&M University- Commerce
“Climate-Smart” Learning Systems in the Future if Farming	McKayla R. Robinette, Michelle R. Worosz, Ryan Thomson, Hannah Stewart, Brenda Ortiz, Audrey Gamble, Auburn University; Leah Duzy, Compliance Services International and Rishi Prasad, Auburn University
Assessing the impacts of changing climatic conditions in agricultural economy in the Southeastern USA	Suraj K C, Kabita Paudel, Jeremy Sandifer, and Buddhi Gyawali; Kentucky State University
Trust in Trying Times: A Quantitative Study to Understand Rural, Suburban, and Urban American’s Trust of COVID-19 Information Sources.	Naik Wali, Lauri M. Baker, Angela B. Lindsey, and Ashley McLeod-Morin, University of Florida
A Snapshot of North Carolina Veteran and Limited Resource Farmer’s Input about Mental Health Needs	Paula E. Faulkner, Shon Smith, Robert Cobb, Jr., and Osei Yeboah, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University
Food Security Challenges for University Freshmen and their Families during the Pandemic Shutdown Semester	Robert L. Williams, Hailey Cooper, Kasey Curtin, & Clanci Richardson Texas A&M University-Commerce
Local and Regional Food Systems in the South: Engaging new Frontiers	Russ Garner, Southern Rural Development Center
Community Focus Group Discussions Lead to Understanding of Local Experience, Perception, and Opinions Regarding Surface Mining, Reclamation Practices, and the Utilization of Reclaimed Surface Mine Lands in the Eastern Region of Kentucky	Whitney Tara Maynard, Buddhi Gyawali, and Cynthia Rice, Kentucky State University;

3:45 pm–4:45 pm, Napoleon C1: SRSA Business Meeting (all attendees encouraged to attend)

4:45 pm–5:30 pm, Napoleon C1: SRSA Executive Council Meeting

6:00 pm, Room number TBA: SRSA Presidential Reception

## Southern Rural Sociology Officers 2021-2022



### **President**

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**2022 Annual Conference  
New Orleans, Louisiana  
February 13-14**



**Theme:  
"Climate Change, Agricultural Food Systems,  
Rural Livelihoods, and Resilience"**

## Abstracts

### Presentations and Panel

#### Food Systems and Community Quality of Life

Local Food Systems and Health Interventions: An Exploratory Study on Farmers Perspectives on Food Prescription Programs in the Mississippi Delta.

*Curtis Kline; Colorado State University; Anne Cafer, University of Mississippi; Meagan Rosenthal, University of Mississippi School of Pharmacy*

According to the most recent food insecurity statistics published by the USDA Economic Research Service approximately 10.5% of US households face low food security. Over the last decade a potential solution to the issue of food insecurity has been tested in pilot programs around the US in the growing food prescription programs. In these programs a food prescription is used to describe vouchers for free or discounted produce provided by healthcare professionals to address a patient's diet-affected health conditions. To scale up these initial pilot food prescription programs, the critical roles and perspectives of local farmers need to be better understood. The research presented here sought to understand the perspective of the local farmer in the Mississippi Delta on the scaling up and sustainability of food prescription programs. Ultimately, the inclusion of the farmer in the discussion, planning, and implementation of these programs places the issue in the realm of food justice.

Generative Possibilities for Regional Food Systems Resilience: An Agroecological Perspective

*Kim Niewolny and Eric Bendfeldt, Virginia Tech*

An overemphasis on neoliberal and essentialist best practices and technocratic problem solving does not adequately address our most paramount food system challenges from climate change to racial injustice. More emphasis should be placed on generative, not extractive, approaches as an epistemological frame for food system sustainability centering civil society experiences of struggle and resistance. This paper illustrates how such an approach applies to a regional food system planning project in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia where resiliency, social justice, and systems thinking goals guide community planning and action. As a community-university initiative, we describe narrative inquiry and a community-based framework to bring forward rhizomatic possibilities for co-creating a collaborative network that is mycorrhizal in nature for knowledge coproduction in this rural region of Appalachia. The paper concludes with suggestions for exploring the agroecological quality of regional food systems planning for the common goal of good food for all.

Food-related Behavior of Food Desert Residents Looking Beyond the Variables: Insights from Journey Mapping of Food Desert Residents

*Terrence Thomas, North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University; Steve Folmar, Wake Forest University*

It is customary to assume that price, access, taste, tradition, safety, and demographic variables, among others, measured using surveys, focus groups and listening sessions may explain dietary patterns and food-related behaviors of under-served communities living in food deserts. We believe they shed some light on this mystery, but they do not tell the full story. In this study we apply the ethnographic technique of journey mapping to garner deeper insights into how dietary patterns and food-related behavior fits into the larger context of the community and the lived experience of food desert residents. Preliminary data show that the overall context in which the liv

Farmers Market Leadership: Resilience and Support  
*Jama S. Coartney and Eric K. Kaufman, Virginia Tech*

Farmers markets play an important role within agricultural food systems and the local food supply chain; they support rural livelihoods by connecting vendors, people, and community. While the number of farmers markets continues to increase, some markets fail, and it is unclear why. This qualitative case study explores how farmers market leadership influences factors contributing to success and failure of farmers markets. The study may help guide people involved in leading and working with social enterprises, such as farmers markets. Findings revealed surging operational changes, strong support of the short food supply chain (SFSC), and the need for stabilizing forces, such as municipal support. Topics related to agricultural food systems, rural livelihoods, and resilience include surviving the startup phase; professionalizing farmers market management; co-constructing leadership with the community and vendors; and evolving and leveraging the purpose of farmers markets within local agricultural food systems.

A Community Based Approach to Deter Childhood Obesity in Title 1 Schools  
*Saungaylia Randolph, Sarah L. Price, Conchita Newman, and Dreamal Worthen, Florida A&M University*

Community development is a deliberate effort to build assets that increase residents' ability to improve their quality of life. Obesity is a significant health risk to individuals and their communities. In 2016/2017, school screenings showed that 28.3% of first graders, 35.4 % of third graders, and 14.1% of sixth-graders in a Florida Panhandle school district were overweight. Additional data revealed an increase in overweight individuals with large proportions of a minority or low-income students. To intervene, individuals from a Historically Black University respond to the structural inequality - obesity and education access to health care by offering nutritional education to ascertain the possibility of deterring childhood obesity using community-based programming. Over 870 students from Title 1 locations participated. Pretest/posttest was given, and T-tests results revealed significant behavior changes. Community practitioners can offer educational programs to impact students' health behaviors at risk of obesity positively.

## **Environment and Climate Change**

Peer Pressure, Self-Efficacy, Outcome Expectancy and Moral Values Predict Intentions for Active Management of Ecosystems in Oklahoma  
*Bijesh Mishra, Rodney Will, and Omkar Joshi, Oklahoma State University*

The forest-grassland ecotone of the south-central USA is transiting towards close canopy forest due to the exclusion of fire. Active management can restore the ecosystem and its ecosystem services. Active management, however, comes with the cost of management and acceptance of management tools. Deer hunting is a vital source of revenue generation to offset the landowner's management cost in the region. This paper addresses the question how landowners' beliefs, attitudes, and norms about sustainable management of forest, rangeland, and deer habitat impact their intentions for the active management of the ecosystem for deer hunting. We found that subjective norms and perceived behavior controls affected deer hunting intention in presence of moral norms. Attitudes affected significantly but negatively correlated with the intentions. The study suggests that landowners have positive social pressure and are interested in active management but associated financial burden and risk could be shaping negative attitudes.

It's the Heat Under Our Feet: Assessing Self-Reported Knowledge of Low-Temperature Geothermal Energy Development  
*Abigail Almendarez and Gene L. Theodori, Sam Houston State University; Urs P. Kreuter, Texas A&M University*

Current assessments indicate considerable potential growth for the development of geothermal energy sources in the United States. Surprisingly, little social scientific research has been conducted on geothermal energy development in the U.S. Studies aimed at understanding public views on this promising energy source can directly contribute to policy deliberations and assist public and private stakeholders in decision-making processes. In this study, we use data collected from a random sample of individuals residing in Matagorda County, Texas, to examine respondents' self-reported knowledge of low-temperature geothermal energy (LTGE) and five other energy sources. Bivariate and multivariate correlation/regression analyses suggest that environmental ideology and certain individual-level factors are associated with residents' self-reported knowledge of LTGE and the other energy types. Findings from this study should prove beneficial to rural sociologists who work at the energy-environmental/natural resources nexus. Possible implications and recommendations of these results are advanced.

Climate Change, Science, Politics, and Agnotology in the Anthropocene  
*Douglas H. Constance, Sam Houston State University*

It is now generally accepted that industrialism is unsustainable; the science is clear. This "realization" is now embedded in geologic time, in the Anthropocene, the geologic era where human activities change the structure and functioning of the earth systems. Industrial agriculture contributes 25% to 30% of the global greenhouse gas emissions, especially beef production. The climate impacts of the Anthropocene make it imperative that we change the way food is produced, distributed, and consumed. The science is clear, and the problem is well understood; but the political solutions are much more difficult and highly contested. This presentation first reviews the major conceptual frames of the Anthropocene and then applies those frames to the contested discourses and paths forward for the agrifood system – sustainable intensification and agroecology.

The Socioeconomic Impact of Natural Resources Extracted by Multinational Corporations: The Case of the State of Alabama, USA and Sudan, North Africa  
*Dalal Alkordi, Robert Zabawa, and Thierno Thiam, Tuskegee University*

This research examines the socioeconomic impact of Multinational Corporations' (MNCs') investments in Sudan's oil and the State of Alabama's forest. The MNCs are essential for socioeconomic integration and globalization, which help them connect with other countries. This research uses the Input-Output (I-O) methodology to finalize the impact of the oil in Sudan and the forestry in Alabama in their local economies. In Sudan, the oil industry played an important role in the country's economic development. Alternatively, forest and forest-based products have contributed extensively to the economy of Alabama. Moreover, the examination of I-O analysis in this research is done by studying the economic impact of these two sectors in employment, income, value-added and the production. Further, it measures the social indicators from the impact of these economic measurements in both cases. Consequently, potential uses of the results will be shown from the perspective of policy instruments and some policy implications.

## **Agrifood Systems and Practices**

The Sociology of Sotol: Tequila's Cousin  
*Matthew Franciskovich and Douglas H. Constance, Sam Houston State University*



This research combines a Food from Somewhere analytical framework with a commodity systems analysis methodology to investigate Sotol, a distilled spirit from the Mexican-Texas border region. Sotol, also called Desert Spoon, is a taxonomic cousin to the plants used to make tequila and mezcal. It grows wild in the high desert regions along the Mexican-Texas border region. The presentation documents the history of Sotol, the current structure of the Sotol industry, and the nascent contested governance of Sotol as a distilled spirit with legal geographic indication designations.

From Drugs to Agriculture and Back: Perspectives of Kentucky State University's Extension Agents on Rehabilitation of Potential Kentucky Small Limited Resource Farmers  
*Laura Rogers, Marion Simon, and Buddhi Gyawali, Kentucky State University*

This paper will present the perspectives of Kentucky State University's Extension Agent concerning the use of honeybees, pollination, vegetables, and photography of agriculture as a legitimate enterprise for Kentucky's small farmers in rehabilitation. What are some of the positive and negative results of attending classes in a rehabilitation setting for potential Kentucky Small Farm Farmers? This perspective will come from an Extension Agent in Appalachian counties.

Group Solidity/Cohesion in Three Cases: La Via Campesina (via Desmarais,) African-American Cooperatives (via Gordon-Nembhard) and The NFO (via Muhm)  
*Thomas Gray, USDA, Program on Cooperatives*

Cooperative development is facilitated in-part, with the discovery of mutual cultural identities and growth of group solidarity with member involvement and participation in the organization. Nembhard, Demarais and Muhm in their respective works on the history of African-American cooperatives, Demarais' profile of La Via Campesino, and Muhm's work on the NFO provide a rich review of key factors found important in awakening cultural identities and vitalizing group solidarity. This presentation pulls predominantly from these authors' works in highlighting the various factors found important in cooperative and social movement development—as related to member identity formation and group solidarity.

Downscaling County-level Crop Yield Information for the Estimation of Parcel-specific Production Potential for Kentucky Farm Lands  
*Jeremy Sandifer and Buddhi R. Gyawali, Kentucky State University*

The majority of wealth stored in American farm real estate in 2020 was accounted for by the physical attributes of individual parcels, such as topography, soil type distribution and proximity to population centers. The per-acre value of that wealth has increased six-fold since 1986 to the national average of \$3,200, driven in part by increased efficiencies in operations and less reliance on marginal lands. This project integrates data from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) depicting major crops, soil compositions and crop yield estimates for quantifying the spatial extent and cash value of crops by county. A linear model is established between yield values and the proportional distribution of soil types, and resulting global parameters are localized to individual parcels to estimate potential yield and values. The approach has proven useful for understanding statewide generalizations and provided means for quantifying the productive potential of complex small farmlands in Kentucky.

Barriers and Bridges to Success: A Mixed Methods Needs Assessment of Texas Small Producers  
*Katie Tritsch, Ken Mix, and Michelle Edwards, Texas State University; Manuel Piña, Jr., Texas A&M University*

Small-scale agricultural producers are celebrated as the face of U.S. agriculture, yet struggle with profitability, capitalization, lack of institutional support, and a host of other issues affecting their perceived and actual success. In this paper, I use mixed methods to investigate the barriers and bridges to success for Texas small producers. I surveyed 48 Texas small producers to identify their predominant challenges and to evaluate predictors of their success and challenges. Second, I conducted semi-structured interviews with eleven Texas small producers and discovered seven themes related to small farm success, challenges, and visions for the future. Results suggest that Texas small producers struggle with access to land, labor, and capital and their exclusion from the traditional agricultural system. Texas small producers perceived success in terms of quality of life, fulfillment, relationships, and personal resilience, and expressed the need for greater institutional and consumer buy-in to truly thrive.

## **Engaging with Race and Resources in the Rural Context**

“Take What You Have To Make What You Need”: Can Small-Scale African American Farmers Help Alleviate Food Insecurity In The Alabama Black Belt Counties?

*Folashade Adalumo, Robert Zabawa, Souleymane Fall, Joe Jimmeh, Raymond Shange, and David Nganwa, Tuskegee University*

Food insecurity is a perennial problem. Millions of Americans have and will continue to experience food insecurity, a phenomenon that cuts across all races, ages, and ethnicities. Food inaccessibility crises are on the rise particularly in the Alabama Black Belt Counties (ABBC). The purpose of this study is to establish the contribution of small scale African American farmers in the reduction of food insecurity within Alabama Black Belt Counties. Using an online survey website and GIS with Census Data, this research will highlight the severity of food insecurity in the ABBC as well as show how empowering African American farmers can influence food security in their communities. Expected results are that access to USDA programs- farm loans and crop insurance- and adopting sustainable agricultural practices can assist African American farmers in increasing productivity to meet the challenge of food insecurity.

Exploring Collective Agency in Multi-Sector Advocacy for Racial Justice in the Food System

*Nicole Nunoo and Kim Niewolny, Virginia Tech*

The movement making space in the food system is rife with food activists and front line organizers leading the dialogue on equity and justice, notably Black-led organizing. Of essence to the larger food justice discourse is the conceptualization of the multi-faceted and multi-issued nuances present in the food system from a multisectoral lens. Drawing upon White’s (2018) scholarship on Collective Agency (CA) as a concept, this presentation illustrates a review of the literature on black-led grassroots food systems organizations and their cross-sectoral relationships actively re-imagining the food system contemporarily, as pathways for liberation, self-determination, and land-sovereignty. In this paper, we explore and uplift the works of contemporary Black-led multi-sector organizations within the food justice space in the Southern U.S as exemplars of collective agency. Additionally, this paper delves into the design and functioning of these organizations from a racialized institutional perspective to further elucidate their movement-making praxis.

White Supremacy and the Persistence of African American Poverty in the Mississippi Delta: The Role of the Black Middle Class and Secondary Marginalization.

*Mark Harvey, Florida Atlantic University*

In *The Boundaries of Blackness* (1999) Cathy Cohen argues that Post-Civil Rights era racism operates through a process of advanced marginalization (AM). AM is marked by the partial incorporation of the Black middle class (BMC) into “mainstream” white society while the majority remains excluded. Under

AM, the BMC employ a strategy of secondary marginalization toward the black poor by which they “stigmatize and police” them in order to prove their own legitimacy as full citizens. I employ Cohen’s framework and the case study method to examine how the BMC of the Mississippi Delta employ practice secondary marginalization. Data were collected through evaluations of community development initiatives across four counties over a seven-year period and included participant observation and in-depth interviews with over 100 BMC leaders. Findings highlight the various ways in which BMC leaders marginalize the poor as part of their own strategy of negotiating advanced marginalization.

“Tell Your Story”: Farmers, Class, Race, and Inequality

*Kelli Russell, Mississippi State University*

In this research, I ask: (1) How does whiteness relate to agriculture and the reproduction of racial inequality in rural communities? and (2) How do white farmers understand their positions within racial, class, and geographic hierarchies? Data for this paper come from interviews and field notes from the initial portion of a larger ethnographic study of farmers and agriculture in the rural south. In this paper, I discuss my preliminary findings regarding (1) how white farmers use colorblind language and the ideology of the American Dream to explain and justify existing racial and class inequalities in agriculture, (2) how inequalities in agriculture are reproduced through organizations, and (3) how the rural farming identity, rooted in the rural landscape, is deeply interconnected with the negotiation of whiteness and access to land and resources in not only the past, but the present as well.

Community Resilience Influenced by Race and Politics in the Context of Large Immigration Raids in Central Mississippi

*Diego Thompson, Mississippi State University*

The concept of resilience has been broadly used to study how individuals and communities deal with disturbances. Resilience studies of Latinx immigrants in the U.S. have shown how specific risk factors can increase the vulnerability of immigrants. While a few studies have revealed how Latinx immigrants respond to disruptions, the influence of racial and political factors has remained at the margin of this scholarship. Using interviews to Latinx individuals and allies involved in community responses after the 2019 large immigration raids in central Mississippi, this study examines how racial and political factors influenced community responses to challenges created by the raids. The results of this research show the ongoing construction of racial conceptualizations and politics had a significant impact on Latinx immigrants and their responses after the raids, suggesting future studies should pay more attention to these dynamics in rural communities.

## **Rural Identities**

Manifold Relations: An Examination into Types of Community Attachment and Commitment

*D. Clayton Smith and McKenna N. Hale, Western Kentucky University*

Community attachment emphasizes social connections that bind individuals to place. Most often, these conceptualizations seem to make an assumption that there is a single attachment style. Yet, the social psychological literature on interpersonal attachment and love has at times posited at least six different possible attachment styles between individuals. Could community attachment be as varied as interpersonal attachment? In addition, other social psychological literature envisions attachment as one component of commitment (a construct conceptualized of a least ten different personal, moral and structural components). Using data from a statewide survey, this paper pursues the possibilities and implications of varying attachment styles and commitment structures.

A Multifaceted Understanding of Producer Identity and Relationships

*Audrey E. H. King and Quisto Settle, Oklahoma State University*

While rural areas are predominately agricultural lands, an assortment of management practices are used (Groth & Curtis, 2017; Mitchell, 2013). These different practices reflect producers' varying beliefs, values, knowledge, and resources (Mendham et al., 2012). To conceptualize how different agricultural groups interact with and portray each other, a social media analysis, individual interviews, round tables, and surveys were conducted. The goal was to understand the identity of and relationships between agricultural producers in Oklahoma. Results of the collective efforts reveal producers support others' right to produce agricultural products as they see fit, producers did not use social media to communicate about agriculture often, had a strong sense of responsibility to their land, were invested in their communities, and did not consider their neighbors to be competition. Future research should more deeply examine producers' connection to communities and how that manifests itself.

*The Farmer She ...*

*Shelley Spiggle, and Marion Simon, Kentucky State University*

In Kentucky has a high percentage of women farm operators. Yet, this fact is often ignored in our agricultural Extension planning and training. According to USDA-NASS-2027, there were 40,192 female producers with 26,125 who are principle producers. There were 70,773 male producers with 68,305 as principle producers. So of the 110,965 farm operators, over 36% are female while 27% of the principle farm operators are female. It was time to take notice! The development of an educational program targeting farm women at Kentucky State University took several initiatives. First, traditional methods of Extension meetings with mostly men often left the women participants uncomfortable, or reluctant to talk, due to social norms of the area. Secondly, women often have different learning styles than men. There was the need for funding of activities and partnerships. And, there was the need for "the speaker or leader looks like me" to be used.

*She Owns It: A Study of Women Landowners in the Missouri Bootheel*

*Hannah Bullock and Anne Cafer, University of Mississippi*

Southeast Missouri is home to some of the nation's most valuable farmland per acre on average. Just twenty-four percent of this agricultural land is in possession of female landowners. This study investigates the experiences of these female producers using Fuzzy Cognitive Mapping in order to understand their decision making process and the barriers that they are confronted with in their social field, as well as their relationship to capital, as women in agriculture. The findings of this study can serve as a needs assessment for this community and can be used to develop solutions that can help this community achieve a more equitable experience as women in agriculture.

*Exploring a Preliminary Theory of Identity-Oriented Evaluation*

*Katie E. Sanders, Alexa J. Lamm, and Abigail Borron, University of Georgia*

Community-based food systems interventions are inherently communicatory practices. However, community development professionals may benefit from new approaches for intercultural communication, which may improve the social impacts of interventions in cross-cultural contexts. The authors argue for culturally-responsive evaluation and community development oriented around the concept of identity as a communicatory praxis. The current study identifies identity narratives within a community-based rural food access intervention through a culturally-responsive lens to develop a preliminary theory of identity-oriented evaluation. Data were collected through interviews with members of the community coalitions in five [State] counties participating in the program. A constructivist grounded theory approach helped identify themes related to identity construction within the rural counties. Themes included relational demographics, geographic narratives, social/cultural

capital, economic narratives, and identity constructions of health. Examining the themes in a rural context, the authors propose a framework for engaging identity narratives as an entry point for food systems change.

## **Research to Action: Informing Extension and Community Development**

Using Data to Make a Difference – Wake-Up-Downtown

*Rachael Carter, Mississippi State University Extension, Center for Government and Community Development*

The reality of limited resources is a challenge faced by all communities no matter how large or wealthy, but those in rural America feel the burden of this challenge every day. Community leaders and elected officials are tasked with the job of managing the limited resources of their communities while seeking to find a way to make life better for the local population. This oral presentation will provide an overview of how Mississippi State University Extension is using economic analysis, creativity, and the principles of community development to help community leaders and elected officials examine their resources, build relationships, and make strategic decisions to benefit their local economies. This presentation will include case studies of how rural communities have addressed food insecurity, healthcare disparities, economic development, and downtown revitalization challenges to make a true positive change in their daily lives.

When Does Support from Organizational Leaders Improve Survey Response Rates?

*Glenn D. Israel, University of Florida*

As response rates to surveys have declined over the last 30 years, researchers and practitioners have searched for a silver bullet to improve cooperation. Surveys actively supported by organizational leaders can obtain substantial rates of response. But what are the limits of their influence? This question is addressed through three studies using data from the Florida Cooperative Extension's Client Experience Survey to explore whether a more distal relationship between an organizational leader and survey recipients can increase the response rate. The experimental design first compares the standard survey protocol with one including messages from the Director of Extension, followed by the same sequence of messages but with a survey link included in the Dean's messages. The third study adjusts the number and timing of the leader's messages. Analysis of data suggest that supporting messages boost the response rate in the short term but perform no better over the full data collection period (data collection for the third study is ongoing). Despite limitations in the experimental design, the results suggest that the influence of organizational leaders is limited.

Logic Modeling an Effective Tool for Extension Program Planning and Evaluation

*Lila B. Karki and Enrique N. Escobar, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, MD*

Logic Model (LM) works as a state-of-the-art tool for Extension program planning, implementation, evaluation, and communications where there is inadequate plan or no plan. Its multi-functional attributes—logical road-map, systematic thinking, logical connections, and dynamic properties—fulfill Extension education and outreach gaps, build understanding among community stakeholders and Extension professionals, clarify the issues and process, ensuring success more likely to happen. Its increasing use in preparing individual Extension plans, reporting accomplishments, and measuring impacts of research and development interventions has expanded its application in community economic development activities. The components of the LM planning framework (situation, inputs, outputs, outcomes/impacts) calibrated individual Extension plans referring to both forward and backward approaches and reported accomplishments satisfactorily. Extension professionals applied LM to address so what and who cares

concerns while preparing impact statements. Evidently, LM measured the short-medium and long-term changes of the Extension's interventions applying SMART and QQTTP techniques.

50 Years of Rural Development: The Regional Rural Development Centers and the Southern Focus  
*Russ Garner, Southern Rural Development Center*

Responding to the needs of rural America, Congress passed the Rural Development Act of 1972, and as an outcome of the legislation, four Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDCs) were established. Their mission includes integrated research, education, and Extension activities at Land-Grant institutions across each Center's respective region, addressing critical rural development issues. Each RRDC is administered by joint agreement between the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and host institutions within the respective region who operate Extension Services and Agricultural Experiment Stations. The Centers' core funding comes from USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). In the context of their 50th anniversary, this presentation will review the history, structure, progress, and future endeavors of the RRDCs in general, and specifically examine the Southern Center's role in development of the region. Also examined will be sociological themes that were evident in the Southern Center's earlier years in comparison to contemporary topics.

Policy Center Research Analyst Update- Heir Property Issues Faced by Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (SDFRs)  
*Kara Woods, Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Research Policy Center*

The Research Analyst from The Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Policy Research Center (The Policy Center) will provide an update of the work on ongoing research projects dealing with heir property. Four projects examining heir property constraints and data collection will be highlighted. The discussion will include an overview of the varying heir property research projects objectives, methods, data analysis, and preliminary recommendations for the 2023 Farm Bill.

## **Rural Realities**

The Association between Living Arrangement and Life Satisfaction in Rural Texas  
*Tze-Li Hsu, Jin Young Choi, and Gene Theodori, Sam Houston State University*

This study examines the associations between living arrangement and subjective well-being, as well as community support and age variation, to identify determinants of subjective well-being in rural residents. Using the cross-sectional data in a 2012 survey of respondents living in rural places in Texas which a sample of 602 adults with ages between 23 and 94 years old was selected. Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression analysis was used to assess the impact of subjective well-being and perceived community support on subjective well-being varies by different age groups. Significant differences in subjective well-being were found by age groups and community support in different measures of well-being. Older adults (age older than 60) living with others in rural Texas have a higher risk of being dissatisfied with their lives. Community support predicted individual subjective well-being. Community support is a buffer to the elderly living in rural Texas with less social isolation.

Retirement Migration and Community Attachment: Experiences of Older Adults Moving to Nonmetropolitan Areas in Northern Michigan and North Carolina  
*Ilona Matysiak, Maria Grzegorzewska University*

Retirement migration to nonmetropolitan areas is mostly amenity driven. Older people tend to move to the Sunbelt area, but the Upper Great Lakes or North Carolina are also targeted by such migrants. Their mobility creates new opportunities as well as challenges. On the one hand, older in-migrants bring social

capital into the community and boost the local economy by increasing demand for goods and services. On the other, their presence often contributes to gentrification and social inequality. This paper looks more closely at retirees' attachment to their new communities: how is it created and what are the consequences of strategies adopted. It is argued that older in-migrants form their ties with the community by volunteering and socializing. These practices, however, are often limited to other "transplants." The paper is based on 31 in-depth interviews with older in-migrants conducted in 2018 in Leelanau (MI) and Transylvania (NC) counties.

#### Not Here for Vacation: Hotels as Stop-gap Affordable Housing in Rural Georgia

*Kim Skobba, University of Georgia; Terri Lewinson, Dartmouth College; Michael Gawrys, University of Georgia*

Extended-stay hotels are increasingly becoming a stop-gap and often hidden form of housing for lower-income households in rural and small towns. While the costs are often similar to local rents, extended-stay hotels provide fewer barriers to entry. They do not require a security deposit, background or credit check and many accept cash and irregular timing of payments. The financial success of extended stay hotels has led to increased investments among existing hospitality companies and private equity firms. Despite the increase in units, research on the ways in which hotels address housing supply needs in rural small towns is lacking. This study begins to address this gap by providing a case study of extended stay hotel use in one rural county in Georgia. Our study examines the experiences of 15 adults living in extended stay hotels in the county within the context of the local housing supply and economic development efforts.

#### Urban Texas Residents' Perceptions of Rural People and Places: Data from a 2021 Survey

*Gene L. Theodori, Sam Houston State University; Fern K. Willits, The Pennsylvania State University; Michael W-P Fortunato, Creative Insight Community Development*

Endorsement of the positive images of rurality and rejection of the negative representations of rural life is commonly referred to in the literature as the rural mystique. Most of the empirical research on the rural mystique occurred more than a decade ago and is limited to data collected from samples of rural residents in two states—Pennsylvania and Texas. In this study, we use online survey data collected in May and June of 2021 from 2,409 urban Texans residing in the six most populated counties in the Lone Star State to assess their acceptance of the rural mystique and the perceptions they hold about the people and places in rural Texas. Then, using bivariate and multivariate statistical analyses, we examine the associations between various individual-level characteristics and respondents' views of rurality. Lastly, we compare the findings from these data with the results of previous research on the rural mystique.

#### Measuring the Impact of Broadband on Quality of Life in Rural Areas: A Systematic Exploration of Literature

*John J. Green, Southern Rural Development Center; Jillian Morrison, Delta Directions Consortium/University of Mississippi; Roberto Gallardo, Purdue University; Brian Whitacre, Oklahoma State University; Dave Lamie, Clemson University; Sreedhar Upendram, University of Tennessee*

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated economic crisis raised awareness of the need for broadband services, and it uncovered critical socioeconomic and geographic disparities. Increasing investment by the federal government in broadband through pandemic recovery and infrastructure policies are important steps in helping to address these issues, including to the benefit of rural communities. In addition to expanding the availability of broadband services, attention is also needed on access and adoption, as well as the use of broadband to advance quality of life. Framed using the holistic digital access continuum – aware, available, access, adopt, and advance – a group of research and Extension professionals are working to inform efforts aimed at improving the actual utilization and applications of

broadband as the infrastructure is improved and services are expanded. This presentation will share findings from an ongoing systematic review of literature to identify indicators and measures used in research concerning outcomes and impacts for quality of life from broadband adoption and use. The results will help researchers assisting with efforts to build and evaluate programs for digital inclusiveness.

## **Human Capital and Rural Communities: Education and Migration**

“It is Engrained in Them, that Education Does Not Matter”: Empowering Youth in Kentucky Coal Mining Communities

*Mallory E. McDonald and Stacy K. Vincent, University of Kentucky*

In coal mining communities, educational achievement among coal mining youth is marginalized due to high poverty rates and lack of support for obtaining higher education which creates challenges in convincing students to care about their education. Coal mining youth view the coal industry as their only outlet for future jobs that often do not require more than a high school diploma. Teachers in the coal mining counties of Kentucky have successfully inspired their students to achieve on state standardized tests while creating relationships to empower youth to fulfill their potential in future careers. Through interviews with these educators, their students view their teachers as mentors who inspire confidence in their intellectual abilities to obtain educational goals uncommon in their communities. This phenomenon of academic achievement in these coal mining communities is due to the student-centered, goal-oriented, and community-connected mentorships fostered by teachers.

“We Belong Here”: The Resiliency of Rural LGBTQIA+ Teachers

*Caleb M. Hickman and Stacy K. Vincent, University of Kentucky*

LGBTQIA+ teachers living in rural communities may not have the opportunity to share their identity with their administrators, students, or parents of their students. Additionally, teachers report personal or professional identities as incompatible, which leads to low self-worth, depression, and anxiety. In rural settings, the "don't ask, don't tell" heterosexism construct perpetuates a public and personal denial of queer behavior, queer identity, queer relationships, and the LGBTQIA+ community. Fortunately, pre-service education programs are pushing educators to learn how to adapt their teaching for all students. Through these programs, the teachers are becoming allies for the LGBTQIA+ community and are helping pre-service teachers create a more inclusive classroom. The current literature is aiding future teachers in realizing their impact on LGBTQIA+ youth. I want to further the narrative by using a resiliency lens when studying rural LGBTQIA+ community members and describe the positives of being queer in rural areas.

Examining Education Through a Community Resilience Lens

*Yasmin McLaurin and Anne Cafer, University of Mississippi; Raeda Anderson, Shepherd Center*

Educational inequalities are a significant hurdle facing the US, and disparities are particularly sharp in the US South. Resilient educational systems are able to mitigate these disparities and still facilitate successful outcomes for students and communities. However, the literature has historically focused on individual student or individual school district factors that facilitate resilience. This paper will use public data and a more holistic model of resilience to conceptualize the how community level factors impact educational outcomes and outline some of the necessary community conditions for resilient educational systems. This analysis demonstrates that community level factors around health, housing, and economic development are critical to improved educational outcomes, but that these factors are different across rural and urban spaces.



Puddles of Respite: Spatial Migration Trends from the Dry Corridor of Central America to the United States

*Christian Kelly Scott, Shrinidhi Ambinakudige, and Domenico Parisi, Mississippi State University*

The Dry Corridor of Central America is a major source of new immigrants to the US. The effects of climate change, difficult economic conditions, and security concerns drive the migration from the region. By examining national American Community Survey trends of foreign-born populations, several areas of clustering were found. Following a national analysis, a targeted analysis of the southern United States brings Florida and Louisiana into focus as regions that attract specific immigrant populations. Increased spatial autocorrelation trends are identified for all migrants and migrants from El Salvador compared to migrants from Guatemala and Honduras. Our findings demonstrate the theory of birds of a feather flock together in the contemporary American context. Despite this intuitive finding, areas of low spatial autocorrelation also present a narrative regarding the lack of clustering in the Midwest and West. Our findings seek to elucidate these trends as we posit reasons behind these regional disparities.

Contribution of H2A Temporary Agricultural Workers U.S. Meat and Livestock Industry: An Econometric Analysis

*Osei Yeboah, Cephas Naanwaab, and Paula E. Faulkner, North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University*

U.S. agricultural labor market is facing shortages of labor supply. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, an increasing number of producers were reporting farm labor shortages. Real farm wages in the U.S. have been increasing steadily over the past several years due to increasing labor shortages.

Unsurprisingly, the demand for H-2A temporary agricultural workers grew by more than threefold from 2011 to 2019. The H-2A program has been used to augment domestic supply of agricultural workers, thereby reducing the impact of farm labor shortages which have negative implications on food prices. To analyze the impacts of labor shortages and how that in turn affects the supply chain, seemingly unrelated regressions models of total labor demand as a function of wages paid by state, unemployment, and states specific effects will be estimated while also accounting for the contribution of migrant labor (H-2A workers) in ameliorating the farm labor shortages

## **Technology Adoption and Diffusion**

Why is a Drone a Good Farm Management Tool?

*William Rogers, Kentucky State University*

Drones can be used in many ways to make life easier. Some ways that they can be used is checking cattle and livestock, flying over crops, timber, and pastures to check for the impacts of flooding or drought, and checking fences.

Using the Zero Energy Cool Chamber as an Affordable Storage Technology for Shelf-Life Extension and Vegetable Loss Reduction among Minority Growers

*Lucy Asare-Baah, Tuskegee University; Robert Zabawa, Tuskegee University; Lisa Kitinoja, Postharvest Education Foundation; Desmond Mortley, Tuskegee University; David Tackie, Tuskegee University*

The food supply chain is currently affected by loss of vegetables that cannot be sold at target markets due mainly to spoilage. Storage technologies play a vital role in maintaining and extending shelf-life of harvested vegetables thereby preventing spoilage. This study constructed and assessed the efficacy of the Zero Energy Cool Chamber (ZECC) as a shelf-life extension technology for vegetables. A purposive sampling technique was used to collect the data and were analyzed by the cost-benefit function.

Harvested vegetables were randomly selected and grouped into treatments of ZECC, shade, and sun. Vegetables placed in the ZECC were firmer with a marginal color change while those under shade and sun were pale, less firm, with a greater degree of rot (under sun). The ZECC was able to maintain a 5-14°C (41-57.2°F) lower air temperature compared to the others while preventing spoilage. Therefore, shelf-life extension can reduce vegetable loss and improve sales.

#### Factors Affecting Awareness and Adoption of Patch Burning

*Saroj Adhikari, Omkar Joshi, and Sam Fuhlendorf, Oklahoma State University*

Patch burning, a land management tool that combines fire and grazing, is known to sustain biodiversity and maintain rangeland health without compromising their productivity. Despite its benefits, the majority of ranchers are yet to adopt it on their land. Therefore, using data from landowner survey, factors affecting landowner awareness and adoption were jointly analyzed with the bivariate probit model. The results suggested that landowners who had experienced repeated wildfires and those who received the outreach information from the nature conservancy and university/county extension were more likely to have awareness about patch burning. While, landowners who had larger land tracts, repeated wildfire experience, aimed to control blackberry and received the outreach information from the university/county extension were more amenable to adopt patch-burning. However, many landowners (90%) were not convinced to adopt patch burning, suggesting further extension needs to educate traditional and non-traditional ranchers on ecological and production benefits of patch-burning.

#### North Carolina Veterans and Limited Resource Farmer's Self-Reported Farm Safety Needs

*Paula E. Faulkner, Shon Smith, Robert Cobb, Jr., and Osei Yeboah, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University*

North Carolina rural residents often lack access to information allowing them to lead sustainable lifestyles. Researchers, educators, and rural health providers are encouraged to collaborate on projects to address this need. This study aimed to improve the lives of veterans and limited resource farmers by assessing their self-reported farm safety needs. This descriptive study was conducted via two workshops, face to face and via Zoom, over the summer of 2021. Eighty participants attended the workshops. An online survey was administered to gauge participants' knowledge about assistive technologies and AgrAbility. A majority of participants reported being females and African Americans. Most respondents reported a need for training on how to prevent musculoskeletal disorders. Few reported being familiar with assistive technologies and being able to list injury types that are preventable. The researchers concluded that more in person training on farm safety and wellbeing programs would benefit this population.

#### "Input From the Trenches: Farmer Feedback On Technology Adaption"

*Cynthia Rice and Buddhi Gyawali, Kentucky State University*

Everyone has an idea on what farmers need to be sustainable and survive in the 21st century but often no one reaches out and asks stakeholders their opinion on what they need and actually want. Based on results of six focus group meetings, both virtual and in-person, stakeholders voiced their understanding of what technology is useful and needed at the local and individual level. Farming is rarely a high money making enterprise and often farmers are "sold" on ideas, software, practices and equipment, which are less than ideal for their farming enterprises. This has made farmers wary of people who claim to have solutions for problems and issues they are facing. Especially in times such as farmers have faced during COVID-19 pandemic with an unstable supply chain and resulting food security issues, farmers appear more willing to adopt technology but on their terms and on what is feasible for them.

## Health and Wellbeing in Rural Communities

### Identifying Impacts of COVID-19 in Rural Oklahoma

*J. Shane Robinson, Audrey E. H. King, Tyson Ochsner, Paul Weckler, and Mark Woodring, Oklahoma State University*

Research on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in rural areas is lacking (Mueller et al., 2020). We were interested in the understanding how the COVID-19 pandemic affected citizens living in two rural counties in Oklahoma. Using the community capitals framework to undergird our study, a 14-item questionnaire was developed and administered, via Facebook, to rural residents in Harmon and Tillman counties in summer 2020. A total of 298 residents participated in the study. Results indicated that respondents were greatly concerned about the decline of their physical (49%) and emotional health (25%), 35% worried about their employment status and being furloughed (49.3%), 63.4% admitted to thinking more about life and death as a result of the pandemic, and 35.8% answered “no” to: Are your basic needs being met? The findings have implications for protecting and renewing rural citizens and their communities into places people want to live, work, and thrive.

### The Intersection of Paternal Orphanhood or Parental Illness and Child’s Biological Relationship to Household Head on the Physical Health of Children Under Five in Nigeria

*Aramide Kazeem, University of West Georgia; John Musalia, Western Kentucky University*

The knowledge on the role of kin in the health of orphans or other vulnerable children, i.e., children of sick parents, who are under five years of age has mostly been research conducted in eastern and southern African countries. Little is known on the topic in western Africa. This research fills a hole in the literature by investigating whether, in Nigeria, differences exist in the health of paternal orphans or vulnerable children depending on whether they have a close biological relationship with the household head compared to a distant relationship when health is measured through diarrhea, fever, and cough. The research analyzes the 2013 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey Data and employs a multi-level logistic regression as the model estimation technique. The results show that, regardless of the measure of child health, among paternal orphans or vulnerable children there is no significant difference in the health of grandchildren or children who are relatives/non-relatives of their household head in contrast to biological children of the household head. Further, results indicate that, among non-orphans or non-vulnerable children, there is a positive and statistically significant difference only in the odds of diarrhea for grandchildren compared to biological children. These results show that African extended families are meeting the health needs of paternal orphans or vulnerable children and are not discriminating against these children regardless of close or distant biological relations which contradicts Hamilton’s rule. The State and other non-governmental organizations should work with kin to fortify their capacity to care for these children.

### Race and Space: COVID-19 Disparities, Vaccines, and Hesitancy in the United States’ South

*Jasmine Nguyen and Anne Cafer, University of Mississippi; Meagen Rosenthal, University of Mississippi School of Pharmacy*

This study aims to explore the intersectionality between race and space in the South as it relates to COVID-19 disparities. Specifically, this study explores the role of broadband access, a significant problem for vulnerable populations, in hesitancy, and ultimately vaccine uptake in the South. The objectives to the analysis were: 1) determine COVID-19 disparity ratio between non-white and white populations, 2) evaluate levels of hesitancy by race, broadband access, and poverty as predictors, and 3) examine the association between fully vaccinated populations and levels of hesitancy, broadband access, race, and poverty. This study demonstrates that race, poverty, and broadband access explain 18.0%,

22.6%, and 8.3% of the variance of hesitant, hesitant or unsure, and strongly hesitant, respectively. Additionally, broadband access, race, poverty, and hesitancy explain 179.9% of variance in the percent population fully vaccinated by county in the South.

#### Considering a Rural Capacity Development Framework Using Dialectical Models

*Katie Sanders, Barbara Worley, Ellen Harrell, Abigail Borron, and Alexa Lamm, University of Georgia*

Rural communities across the United States experience increased risk and prevalence of chronic diseases associated with both individual and community-based factors. Thus, there is a need for rural capacity development for chronic disease prevention. Traditional health-promotion and intervention approaches focus on diet-related health disparities from a positivist, evidence-based paradigm. To counter the positivist bias within health promotion research, a hybridized approach is proposed using a critical-constructivist paradigm incorporating dialectical thinking, appreciative inquiry, and dialectical inquiry to address cultural and structural barriers, as well as community-based social norms, through evaluation of community-based health promotion interventions. Three dialectical models were identified through interviews with community coalition members: social ties, infrastructure, and worldviews, examining underlying assumptions and counter assumptions. By revealing the dialectic assumptions and counter assumptions operating within project implementation, practitioners can engage in constructive dialogue with communities through a dialectic approach to determine more effective and culturally-responsive pathways for project development.

#### Women Incarcerated in Rural Southern Prisons: A Review of Existing Multidisciplinary Literature and Suggestions for Future Directions

*Susan Dewey, The University of Alabama, Brittany Gilmer, Ariane Prohaska, and Lauren Yearout, The University of Alabama*

Prisons in the Southern United States are fundamentally rural institutions because of their geographic locations, social climates informed by the rural cultures of staff and prisoners, and, for many older Southern prisons, their roots in plantation agriculture. Despite these realities, rural criminology has yet to systematically synthesize and explore what existing research indicates about the everyday lives of the approximately 32,853 women currently serving time in state prisons in the Southern United States. The present study unites multidisciplinary literature to identify four prevailing themes evident in research regarding Southern women's prisons: regional culture in historical context, relationships and social dynamics, victimization and wellbeing, and journeys through the system from sentencing to reentry. Our findings suggest that rural criminology has potential to play a major role in shaping prison research by emphasizing regional culture's relevance to everyday prison life.

### **Innovations in Community and Organizational Research**

#### Proposing an Identity-Oriented Framework for Culturally-Responsive Evaluation in Rural Communities

*Katie Sanders, Alexa J. Lamm, and Abigail Borron, University of Georgia*

Community-engaged professionals often situate their work within problematic identity constructions within rural settings, where target communities are positioned as a passive "other" to be acted upon by professionals. Orienting community development around identity, through a lens of culturally-responsive evaluation (CRE), may help evade these problematic constructions. CRE recognizes that evaluations occur within historical, social, cultural, political, and economic contexts to which evaluators should be responsive. Failing to account for these contexts risks alienating participants from participating in the co-construction of knowledge. The proposed identity-oriented framework looks within and beyond culture to facilitate understanding within community development work, specifically in rural settings. The framework offers practitioners a foundation for recognizing how discourse

surrounding evaluation can reproduce power structures within communities. While identity is closely connected to culture, if the focus remains on cultural identity only, practitioners may miss the interplay between individual and collective that transcends culture.

#### Manifold Relations: An Examination into Types of Community Attachment and Commitment

*D. Clayton Smith and McKenna N. Hale, Western Kentucky University*

Community attachment emphasizes social connections that bind individuals to place. Most often, these conceptualizations seem to make an assumption that there is a single attachment style. Yet, the social psychological literature on interpersonal attachment and love has at times posited at least six different possible attachment styles between individuals. Could community attachment be as varied as interpersonal attachment? In addition, other social psychological literature envisions attachment as one component of commitment (a construct conceptualized of a least ten different personal, moral and structural components). Using data from a statewide survey, this paper pursues the possibilities and implications of varying attachment styles and commitment structures.

#### A Preliminary Analysis of the Effects of Selected Characteristics on Record Keeping by Small Producers in South Central Alabama

*David Nii Tackie, Khali N. Jones, Francisca A. Quarcoo, Gwen Johnson, Jeffrey Moore, and Alphonso Elliott, Tuskegee University*

Record keeping is important in production; however, many producers do not keep records. The study examined the effects of selected characteristics on record keeping practices by small producers. Data were collected from a purposive sample of producers from several counties in South Central Alabama, and analyzed using descriptive statistics and binary logistic regression analysis. The results showed that a majority were part-time producers; males; over 55 years of age; had less than 4-year college degree, and earned less than \$40,000 in annual household income. Additionally, a majority had farming experience of 15 years or less; had acreage owned of 30 acres or less; had acreage farmed of 20 acres or less; a third earned a profit of less than \$5,000, and kept records. The chi-square tests showed that acreage farmed was statistically significant regarding record keeping. The binary logistic regression analyses showed that none of the characteristics was statistically significant.

#### Qualitative Analysis of Participation in One Women's Campus Organization

*Brooklynn J. Wynveen, Sam Houston State University; Sara Jansen Perry, Baylor University*

In the fall of 2021, we began a mixed-methods study to assess the state of affairs of a campus women's organization (open to female faculty and staff, retired faculty and staff, and female spouses) at a large private university in the southern US. The first phase of this assessment involved a Qualtrics survey containing quantitative and qualitative measures related to past, present, and intended future participation in the organization among eligible women. This presentation summarizes themes related to open-ended survey responses. These were informed by shared perceptions of the organization, ranging from positive to extremely negative, and identified reasons for participation (or lack thereof) ranging from logistical constraints to conflicting socio-cultural norms. These results will be combined with those from our quantitative analysis, and will guide the next (focus group) phase of our study. They will also be shared with organization leadership to inform decision-making regarding future directions and programming.

## **Panels:**

### **Panel 1: In Pursuit of Rural Prosperity: Development Research to Inform Policy and Practice**

Moderator: Robert Zabawa, Tuskegee University

Presenters:

Samantha Evans, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis

John J. Green, Southern Rural Development Center

The pandemic and associated economic crisis hit many vulnerable rural communities particularly hard: from low-wage meatpacking workers in the Midwest to Native communities in the Southwest, and from African Americans in the Southeast to immigrant farmworkers in the West. Recognizing the precarious situation these and other communities faced before the pandemic, and the tough work they have ahead of them in recovery, this session will discuss the opportunities and challenges of identifying rural assets and using an asset-based investment framework to inform rural development policy and practice. Presenters will share insights from recent national and regional efforts. These include the book “Investing in Rural Prosperity” published jointly by the Federal Reserve Board and the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, and summary national and southern-region findings from the Regional Rural Development Centers’ collaborative survey on rural development priorities. Following presentations, this panel will include significant time for moderated dialogue among all attendees.

### **Panel 2: Race and Racism in Rural America**

Panelists:

Kenneth L. Robinson, Clemson University; Angie Carter, Michigan Technological University; Mark Harvey, Florida Atlantic University; Keiko Tanaka, University of Kentucky

In the wake of decades of effectively ignoring racism and giving limited treatment to race, a recent journal of Rural Sociology special issue on race and ethnicity calls for sociologists to attend more closely to the “dynamics of race, space and rurality” to “help advance our understanding of power, meanings and structures [at play] in race and ethnic relations in rural settings.” To answer the call, this panel introduces a forthcoming Rural Studies Series volume *Race and Racism in Rural America*. It highlights scholarship on rurality and race from an intersectional perspective. Panelists will draw attention to case studies that shift the analytical focus toward the structures of racial domination. We anticipate that the proposed panel/paper session will provide an important starting point for those who desire to document the concept of race, its associations with rurality, and seek a better informed understanding of rural racial structures and dynamics.

## **Posters**

“Agricultural Food Systems: In a State of Flux as the Supply Chain Resets”

*Cynthia Rice and Buddhi Gyawali, Kentucky State University*

Agricultural production starts on farms and originates with land. From this humble start, many processes occur to transform plants and animals into products, which leave the farm on its way to consumers. Along this path, many breakpoints exist that can upset the smooth progression of raw materials into a finished product suitable for consumption. Whether farmers have to destroy animals due to slaughterhouse shutdowns or disposing of produce, which has been unable to be transported within the window of their usable life, situations can occur which may cause farmers to lose revenue and incur costs threatening their bottom line and jeopardize farms’ existence. Whether retailers and wholesalers continue to be part of a farmer’s venue for sales or if they go out of business, leaving farmers scrambling for alternative methods and pathways for

sales, agricultural producers need to understand previous, current and possible failure points of future supply chains.

#### “Climate Change: Possible Future Scenarios for the Agricultural Community”

*Cynthia Rice and Buddhi Gyawali, Kentucky State University*

Changing conditions of environmental factors will change the face of agricultural production as impacts of climate change become more evident. Changes are occurring but there has not been short or long-range plans developed for farmers to continue to flourish and many do not know what to plan for as they look to the future. Education of agricultural producers on possible impacts on environment and the local ecological changes they might expect allows them to adapt and implement mitigation practices to alleviate possible lowered revenue and help to identify possible expenses related to solutions. Issues such as life cycles changes, as thresholds for plant tolerances are breached, will become more apparent as time goes by. The issue of labor management changing to various factors such as heat stress, different production cycles and influence from contributing factors will become more of an issue as farmers cope with situations they have not experienced.

#### Accessibility Experiences among Individuals with Physical Disabilities who use Wheelchairs in Rural Regions

*Kaycee Bills, Fayetteville State University*

Despite the advances in policies to accommodate for people who have disabilities, individuals who use wheelchairs still face several barriers related to accessibility in rural regions. This study qualitatively examines the daily hardships that are faced among individuals who use wheelchairs in rural regions. The sample consisted of young adults with physical disabilities who were currently residing in a rural community in the Midwest (n = 22). Interviews were conducted in order to perform a thematic analysis in order to identify reoccurring themes related to the day-to-day challenges that individuals who use wheelchairs face. The results of this study demonstrate how the minimum disability accessibility laws do not always accommodate for all of the unique needs of those who use wheelchairs. Implications for policy and future research are discussed.

#### The Effects of the Globalization of the Agrifood Business on Rural Farmers

*Edith-Marie Green, University of Mississippi*

Farming has long been a staple of culture across the globe, as sustenance, business, and a family tradition. However, with the advent of the agrifood business and increasing globalization, more often than not farms in rural locales are getting smaller and smaller, and farmers are being forced to adapt or lose their livelihood. The effects of globalization on farmers is a multifaceted issue—the business done in the global agricultural sector affects people both socially and economically, and there are impacts globally. In this project, I utilized existing research and theory on this issue to create a framework of the effects of globalization on small, rural farmers in a variety of locations, who are, as the research thus far demonstrates, affected socially and economically by agricultural expansion. To that end, my framework stands as such: Firstly, the consolidation of the agrifood business by large transnational corporations (TNCs) has pushed out smaller farmers into different directions and restructured the agricultural sector. Secondly, the actions of TNCs have largely negatively affected the populace in rural locations, and, thirdly, governments have not taken enough action to fight these negative effects. Due to the negative effects of globalization as it relates to the agrifood business, these changes are ultimately not sustainable.

#### The Benefits of Extension Program Area Specialization: A Look at Client Satisfaction and Outcomes

*Mallory L. Cotter and Glenn D. Israel, University of Florida*

UF/IFAS Extension strives to meet the needs and expectations of the diverse and modern clientele it serves and does this in part through the specialization of program areas. The quality of services and additional outcomes provided by Extension was measured using the Client Experience Survey. While Extension continues to exceed its 92% satisfaction performance standard, this project examined the same benchmarks across six of the largest program areas: 4-H Youth Development, Community Resource Development, Family & Consumer Sciences, Agriculture, Horticulture, and Natural Resources. This study utilizes 5,441 responses from 2016 through 2020 and focused on responses relating to satisfaction, outcomes, and benefits. This study found program area influenced clients' perceptions of benefits. The strongest associations existed between Agriculture and clients' perception of an increased income, as well as both 4-H Youth Development and Natural Resources on the development of leadership or volunteer skills. The relationships between benefits and program area can be used by Extension to better focus its communication.

Co-Developing Climate-Smart Strategies for Alabama Row Crop Producers and Agricultural Stakeholders  
*Hannah Stewart, Michelle R. Worosz, McKayla Robinette, Brenda Ortiz, and Audrey Gamble, Auburn University; Leah Duzy, Compliance Services International; and Rishi Prasad, Auburn University*

Climate repercussions are acknowledged by the agriscience community, but individual producers are slower to recognize, accept, and adapt. The Future of Farming Project (FFP) engages with producers and stakeholders through the co-exploration of climate-based conservation challenges and strategies. Videorecorded data were collected from 9 FFP field days (n=9.5 per event), follow-up interviews (n=23), and internal FFP meetings (n=7). These data were transcribed, thematically coded, and visualized in NVivo to quantify the actors and concepts associated with co-developing knowledge (i.e., [define]) about climate and sustainability. Of the 180 times "sustainability" (referencing resiliency) was coded, farmers accounted for 41.7% of its mentions. Using a text search query, "climate change" was introduced only 12 times in transcripts; most "climate" references addressed singular weather events. Applied usage of thematic coding and visualization for agriscience projects has potential to communicate those vexing complications with addressing the existing cognitive dissonance surrounding climate changes effect on agriculture.

"Climate-Smart" Learning Systems in the Future of Farming  
*McKayla R. Robinette, Michelle R. Worosz, Ryan Thomson, Hannah Stewart, Brenda Ortiz, Audrey Gamble, Auburn University; Leah Duzy, Compliance Services International and Rishi Prasad, Auburn University*

Multiple studies have shown that information gathered from social networks helps to drive the adoption of "climate-smart" technologies. The *Future of Farming* project (FFP) aims to co- develop knowledge among a network of researchers and extension personnel, farmers, and other stakeholders interested in "climate-smart" technologies. As a baseline measurement, we investigated who is in the stakeholders' social networks, and the characteristics that qualified them to be a source of information. Primary data emerged from regional engagement meetings (n = 10), semi-structured interviews, and planning and debriefing meetings (n = 50). The interviews and meetings were video recorded, transcribed, and thematically coded in NVivo for analysis. Using social network theory, results highlight the need for peer-to-peer learning systems to further the adoption of "climate-smart" technologies. Understanding the composition of the social networks, the FFP has begun to facilitate more effective "climate-smart" information exchanges among stakeholders.

Federal Financial Benchmarking: Outreaching and Recruiting Agricultural Producers Online  
*Henry Flowers and Jose Lopez, Texas A&M University-Commerce*

Texas has the highest number of ranches and farms in the US with 248,416 farms and ranches covering 127 million acres (TDA, 2021). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, farm businesses experienced production disruptions from lower availability of labor and inputs (USDA, 2021). The resilience of US farmers is



directly related to informed financial decisions. This federal project provides an opportunity for farmers and ranchers to benchmark their finances and receive financial consulting services. However, it has been very challenging to recruit and outreach participants. This is in part because financial management is a sensitive topic and most farmers do not actively seek to acquire financial advice (Hilkens, 2018). This poster summarizes our efforts outreaching and recruiting Texas agricultural producers online, including identifying prospect participants on Facebook. Due to the growing scam industry in the US, the level of response of farmers contacted online is low.

#### Farm Business Management and Benchmarking in Time of COVID-19

*Jose Lopez, Kelley Smith, Henry Flowers, Yves Kacou, Texas A&M University-Commerce*

The Texas Farm Business Management and Benchmarking Education and Outreach Alliance targets agricultural producers in the state of Texas through an interdisciplinary and multi-institutional alliance. Project members rely on their relationships with regional Extension Service agencies, Farm Service Agencies, credit institutions, cooperatives, and outreach programs to recruit agricultural producers. The project uses the FINPACK financial software to create financial statements (Income Statements, Balance Sheets, Cash Flows), conduct financial analysis (FINAN), and enter information into the national farm financial management database (FINBIN). However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, farm agencies and institutions have had limited physical contact with people; agricultural producers have also limited their communication to emails and phone calls; and many producer and research conferences have been cancelled or converted to online versions. This presentation will generate a discussion about identifying university-farmer collaboration, effective use of social media, and virtual technologies for increasing participation in financial benchmarking programs and finding solutions for sustainable agricultural practices.

#### Impacts of Drought on Corn and Soybean Production in the Southeastern United States

*Kabita Paudel, Jeremy Sandifer, and Buddhi Gyawali, Kentucky State University*

Drought is one of the major challenges that the agriculture sector has been facing in recent years. It causes a significant reduction in the yield of crops, especially in rain fed agricultural systems. Corn and soybean are the two major commodities grown in the United States. The objective of this study is to assess impacts of drought on corn and soybean production in spatial and temporal scales and determine to what extent the variability in corn and soybean production is associated with drought in the southern United States. In this study, meteorological data and county-level annual yield data are used to assess the impact of drought on corn and soybean production of the southeastern United States from 1980 to 2020. The study also identifies geographic locations where variability in crop production is strongly associated with drought. The findings of this study can help farmers, governmental agencies, and other stakeholders design and implement drought mitigation strategies.

#### Service Learning for Undergraduates Residing in Rural Regions: An Analysis of Learning Rural Community Resources

*Kaycee Bills, Fayetteville State University*

Due to the unique needs observed in rural regions, it is imperative for students to understand access to community resources when working in rural regions. Service learning is a pedagogical and learning strategy that integrates the use of community service accompanied with classroom instruction. This allows students to learn about community resources from first hand experiences. This study analyzes the benefits of service learning for undergraduate majors residing in rural regions. Qualitative methods were used in order to perform a thematic analysis. Results reveals that students were able to recognize the unique hardships and needs faced in rural regions when trying to obtain community resources. Implications for sociological research in rural regions are discussed.

## Federal Financial Benchmarking: Outreaching and Recruiting Agricultural Producers through Professionally Networking

*Kelley Smith and Jose Lopez, Texas A&M University- Commerce*

With Texas being a prominent contributor in the agricultural industry, it's important that producers have a strong financial glimpse into their operation. This federal project is designed to introduce producers and participants to a financial management system that allows them to view their operation from a numbers standpoint. Meeting face to face with the producers through professional networking and presenting the project has created awareness of this financial resource. The project aims to increase producer participation and software use. The software will not only provide financial data to the producer but will also help them when it comes to decision making from a cost and profit perspective. Informed decisions using data helps producers seek their full potential as a business and become efficient and effective in the goals of the agricultural industry. This poster summarizes our in-person recruiting experiences in collaboration with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension.

## Assessing the impacts of changing climatic conditions in agricultural economy in the Southeastern USA

*Suraj K C, Kabita Paudel, Jeremy Sandifer and Buddhi Gyawali; Kentucky State University*

Climate change-induced droughts, wildfires, freezes and floods are some of the major events faced by the agricultural sector for decades. Unnatural fluctuations in climatic patterns have detrimental effects on agricultural production, which is closely linked with the national economy, as agriculture relates to every aspect of society. As researchers and policymakers are making production process, supply chains, and consumer service more robust and resilient, it is essential to assess the true impacts of climate change in agriculture. For assessing the impacts of changing climatic conditions in the agriculture sector, we analyze the relationships between precipitation and average annual temperature and the annual cash receipts of a few commodities in the Southeastern United States from 2012 to 2020. The results will help understand the concerning impacts of changing climatic conditions on agricultural commodities and regional economies in 13 states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Arkansas, Florida, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Tennessee, Mississippi.

## Trust in Trying Times: A Quantitative Study to Understand Rural, Suburban, and Urban American's Trust of COVID-19 Information Sources.

*Naik Wali, Lauri M. Baker, Angela B. Lindsey, and Ashley McLeod-Morin, University of Florida*

COVID-19 pandemic's far-reaching impact led to mistrust<sup>1</sup>. To fight against pandemics, trust in government agencies, i.e. health-care providers, Universities, and Extension system are needed for resilience. Rural communities were disproportionately affected by COVID-19 in the US<sup>2</sup>. The purpose of this study was to understand Americans' trust of sources during COVID-19 and to determine the role and trust-level of Extension in providing information during crises. An online survey was utilized to address this purpose. Qualtrics was consulted to obtain a non-probability opt-in sample of 1550 US. residents 18 years of age in March 2020. Likert scale items related to active information seeking were used to obtain information. The result showed that respondents trusted the CDC and did not trust Extension for COVID-19 information with negligible differences by residency location. Americans trusted health agencies the most. It is recommended that Extension and universities improve relationships with Americans to prepare for future crises.

## A Snapshot of North Carolina Veteran and Limited Resource Farmer's Input about Mental Health Needs

*Paula E. Faulkner, Shon Smith, Robert Cobb, Jr., and Osei Yeboah, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University*

Individuals living in rural areas often lack information to improve their socioeconomic status and health needs; however, more individuals regardless of geographical area face mental challenges. This study aimed to

educate veteran and limited resource farmers how to assess and address mental health needs. This descriptive study was conducted via two workshops, face to face and via Zoom during May and June 2021. Eighty participants attended the workshops. An online survey was administered with 37 respondents. A majority reported sometimes when asked over the past month, how often have you been bothered by feeling tired or having little energy, with few responding, sometimes when asked over the past month, how often have you been bothered by feeling down, depressed, or hopeless. The researchers concluded that more resources and trusting environments would benefit individuals with an interest of addressing mental health needs.

#### Food Security Challenges for University Freshmen and their Families during the Pandemic Shutdown Semester

*Robert L. Williams, Hailey Cooper, Kasey Curtin, and Clanci Richardson Texas A&M University-Commerce*

This presentation will highlight the food security challenges experienced by one group of university freshmen (n = 45) during the spring of 2020 after the campus closed. Most students returned home to face competition for food in their home and community, regardless of whether the home was in a rural, urban, or peri-urban setting. Data analyzed for this presentation were collected from a final course video assignment called, "Finding Food."

#### Local and Regional Food Systems in the South: Engaging New Frontiers

*Russ Garner, Southern Rural Development Center*

SERA-47 (Southern Extension and Research Activity), "Strengthening the Southern Region Extension and Research System to Support Local & Regional Foods Needs and Priorities" was a 5-year initiative of Extension and research professionals in the Southern region to establish multi-disciplinary and multi-state working groups to address high-priority issues related to food systems in the South. A renewal request was granted in 2021. The renewed initiative, "Local and Regional Food Systems and Research: Network Development, Emerging Issues and Policy Development" will build upon the foundation of the earlier iteration with a continued emphasis on collaborative efforts for Extension and research along with developing intentional linkages with non-Land-Grant institutions and non-profit organizations with common interests. Additional activities providing evidence for public policy recommendations at the local, state, or regional level have been incorporated. This poster will provide information on SERA-47 to help inform and connect with potential collaborators.

#### Community Focus Group Discussions Lead to Understanding of Local Experience, Perception, and Opinions Regarding Surface Mining, Reclamation Practices, and the Utilization of Reclaimed Surface Mine Lands in the Eastern Region of Kentucky

*Whitney Tara Maynard, Buddhi Gyawali, and Cynthia Rice, Kentucky State University*

The Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 placed strenuous rules and regulations on the mining industry to mitigate the environmental impacts of surface coal mining operations, to reclaim abandoned mine lands, and to ensure that surface mined land is restored to useable conditions. Many surface mine properties in Eastern Kentucky are leased to coal mine owners by local property owners. Kentucky State University held two online focus group sessions, inviting local landowners and community members to share and discuss their experiences, successes, barriers, and opinions on utilizing reclaimed surface mine lands in Eastern Kentucky. This poster will describe how the insight and knowledge gained from the focus groups sessions provided KSU with valuable information that was used to create a household survey for local reclaimed surface mine land property owners and community members in Eastern Kentucky.

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