



Items of Interest

Managing CyberPests: NDEET Brings Farm Cybersecurity Resources to Extension



CYBERPEST
Management Resources

Join the National Digital Education Extension Team (NDEET) Cybersecurity Team for a Lunch and Learn webinar on October 15, 2026, virtually on Zoom.

[Register for the Lunch and Learn](#)

Farmers know that preventing pests before they cause damage is essential. The same principle applies to protecting the digital tools farms rely on every day.

The Southern Rural Development Center's (SRDC) National Digital Education Extension Team (NDEET) Cybersecurity Team developed a farm cybersecurity project to help producers recognize digital threats and protect their operations. The project was funded through the Extension Foundation's [New Technologies for Ag Extension \(NTAE\)](#) program, with support from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Extension Foundation resources and expertise—including the Catalyst, Dr. Laura Perry Johnson, and the ECOP Program Action Team—supported the project's development, collaboration, and reach across the Cooperative Extension System.

The project frames cybersecurity as part of good farm management. Connected equipment, online accounts, and digital records support essential operations, but cyber incidents can disrupt work, block access to records, or redirect payments. The [CyberPest Management approach](#) encourages farmers to inventory their digital assets, prevent problems, monitor for warning signs, and prepare to respond and recover.

The resources were introduced to agricultural professionals and producers at a North Carolina field day. During the Blackland Farm Managers Tour, NC State Extension and partners in the AgDefenders Coalition launched the [Farm Cybersecurity Hub](#). The event demonstrated how cybersecurity education can fit into existing agricultural programming while connecting producers with practical tools.

Two resources are available for university branding: the CyberPest Management Resources Guide and PowerPoint slides for agricultural Extension agents to use before pesticide education sessions. Universities can customize both materials for their own outreach, helping producers access cybersecurity education through trusted institutions.

The guide helps educators introduce producers to stronger digital practices. The slides provide a brief overview that agents can present before pesticide education sessions, creating a natural connection between managing field pests and managing "CyberPests" in farm accounts, devices, and equipment.

The materials emphasize four practical habits:

- Use long, unique passwords
- Enable multifactor authentication
- Recognize phishing attempts and scams
- Keep software updated

These steps provide a manageable starting point and help agents discuss cybersecurity in familiar, practical terms.

By adapting the resources for university use and demonstrating them at agricultural events such as the North Carolina Field Day, the project supports broader adoption across the Cooperative Extension System. Agents can incorporate cybersecurity into existing outreach and encourage farmers to take one protective step at a time.

Explore the [Farm Cybersecurity website](#) for guidance and tools. For information about the resources and university branding, contact Kenneth Sherin at kmsherin@ncsu.edu.

AI to Answers: Free AI Marketing Training for Extension Professionals



Everyone says use AI. Nobody shows you how. The Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC) and its land-grant partners are changing that across the South. AI to Answers is a free, one-hour workshop delivered by a regional team: Dr. Roseanne Scammahorn, Interim/Associate Director of SRDC; Dr. James Barnes, Extension Professor and Director of the Bricks-to-Clicks® Marketing Program at Mississippi State University; and Terence Norwood, Extension Specialist in Economic and Community Development at Alabama A&M University.

Funded by the Extension Foundation through the AgriProspects Workforce Development Network, the project is building the nation's first digital credential for AI marketing skills in agriculture and Extension. "By helping agricultural entrepreneurs and Extension professionals develop AI-enhanced marketing skills, the project creates new opportunities for growth and competitiveness," Scammahorn said. "We are excited to collaborate with our partners and look forward to being part of the meaningful impact this work will bring to rural communities." The workshop is designed for Extension work first. In one practical hour — no jargon, no experience needed — you'll learn the AI fundamentals plus eight moves you can use the same week to draft reports, plans, and promotional materials faster, and leave AI to Answers Certified, a Mississippi State University Extension credential.

Join us for an upcoming webinar on Thursday, October 22, 2026, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. CT. This interactive session will provide valuable insights, resources, and practical strategies that you can apply in your work and community. [Register for the webinar today](#). We look forward to having you join us!

If you want to dig deeper, a half-day option adds a second certificate where Extension Professionals can learn to use AI to create a marketing plan for their program based on [Make Marketing Easier for Extension Professionals](#). The team will come to any state in the region, in person or online. Want to attend a workshop — as an Extension professional or an entrepreneur? [Join the waitlist](#) and we'll notify you when sessions open.

Want to host one for your staff, members, or communities? Email [James Barnes](mailto:James.Barnes).

Financial Capability and Homeownership Education Initiative

Relevance

Since 2022, Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU)'s Community Economic Development (CED) Unit, in partnership with Freddie Mac, has implemented the Financial Capability and Homeownership Education Initiative, a multi-year effort designed to expand access to financial education, promote equitable homeownership opportunities, and strengthen community economic development across Texas.



Over the course of this five-year initiative (2022–2026), Freddie Mac has invested \$200,000 in grant funding to support PVAMU Extension's delivery of evidence-based financial capability and homeownership education in rural communities. The initiative reflects a sustained commitment to addressing structural barriers to wealth-building while advancing Prairie View A&M University's land-grant mission.

This initiative directly aligns with PVAMU's Journey of Eminence Strategic Plan, by engaging in solutions that promote equity, deepen industry partnerships, and contribute to economic and community development throughout Greater Houston and surrounding counties.

Response

The Financial Capability and Homeownership Education Initiative was designed to demystify the homeownership process and improve financial readiness among first-time homebuyers, renters, and homeowners. Outreach programming focused on:

- Financial capability and credit education
- Pre-purchase and post-purchase homeownership counseling
- Education on down-payment assistance and mortgage products
- Rent-to-ownership pathways and long-term wealth-building strategies

Through a combination of workshops, counseling sessions, and community-based outreach, PVAMU Extension delivered accessible, culturally responsive education tailored to the needs of minority and underserved populations.

Results

The initiative demonstrated steady growth in reach and engagement:

- Over 2,000+ consumers served through financial workshops, pre-purchase education, and housing counseling activities.
- Programming piloted initially across Hidalgo, Liberty, Jefferson, Waller, and Harris Counties and expanded to 20 other CED county coverages.
- Consistent annual participation increases, with notable spikes in pre-purchase education and financial workshops beginning in 2023 and sustained throughout 2026.

For more information, email [Dr. Natriez Peterson](#), Assistant Program Leader – Community & Economic Development, Prairie A&M University Extension or phone 936-261-5037.

Job Postings

Associate Dean and Assistant Director, Human Sciences Extension at Auburn University

The College of Human Sciences (CHS) at Auburn University and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES) are seeking to fill the position of Associate Dean for Extension and Assistant Director for Human Sciences Extension Programs to begin no later than Fall 2026. This 12-month administrative position will fit within the organizational structures of CHS and ACES.

The Associate Dean/Assistant Director position reports jointly to the CHS Dean and the ACES Director. The position is classified as tenure track faculty with a joint CHS and ACES administrative appointment. The Associate Dean/Assistant Director provides vision and leadership in how Extension, research, academic programs, and other allied programs develop synergy to enhance collaborative research and evidence-based outcomes. The position is responsible for the coordination and integration of Extension programs that engage Alabama citizens in evidence-based programming and research to support the well-being of individuals, families, and communities.

Contact the search committee co-chairs: Drs. [Casey Mull](#) and [Elaine Moliason](#) for questions.

[View more information and apply for the Associate Dean/Assistant Director position at Auburn University](#)

Extension Learning and Development Program Director

Oklahoma State University (OSU) Extension is seeking applicants for a position in program and staff development to oversee a newly established unit of Extension Learning and Development. This position requires a master's degree, PhD preferred, in agricultural and extension education, leadership development, program development or a closely related discipline. This is a 12-month staff position and will be an engaged member of the Extension Leadership Team. Applicants must have 5 or more years of successful county/district/area or state Extension experience or related experience. Applications are being accepted now and will remain open until a candidate is hired. Applications will begin being reviewed mid-September.

[View more information and apply for the Extension Learning and Development Program Director position](#)

Request for Proposal: Production Management and Leadership, Journal of Extension

Extension Journal, Inc. invites proposals from individuals or organizations to provide production management and leadership for the *Journal of Extension*. This request for proposal (RFP) emphasizes the accomplishments most critical to journal operations, those that would add value, and opportunities to strengthen the Journal's production capacity and success over time.

To submit, email the proposal or questions about the RFP process to [Steve Siegelin](#), EJI Treasurer and RFP Chair. Submissions received by September 30, 2026, will receive the highest level of attention. Review will continue until a partnership is developed. For more information, please contact EJI Board Members: [Lori Greiner](#), Asst Director of Publications, Virginia Cooperative Extension, [Jenna Anding](#), JOE Senior Editor, or [Theresa Ferrari](#), EJI President.

[View more information for the Production Management and Leadership RFP for the Journal of Extension](#)

Conferences, Workshops, Trainings

National Digital Education Extension Team (NDEET) Cybersecurity Team Lunch and Learn

Virtual: October 15, 2026

[ACCESS WEBINAR INFORMATION](#)

2026 Rural Tourism Conference

In-person: October 19-21, 2026, Greenwood, Mississippi

[ACCESS CONFERENCE INFORMATION](#)

AI to Answers

Virtual: October 22, 2026, 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. CT

[ACCESS WEBINAR INFORMATION](#)

National Association of Extension Program and Staff Development Professionals
(NAEPSDP) Conference

In-person: November 3-6, 2026, Embassy Suites, Omaha at Downtown Old Market, Omaha, Nebraska

[ACCESS CONFERENCE INFORMATION](#)

Excellence in Tourism Leadership Program

In-person and Virtual: January 1, 2027, Various Locations in Mississippi

[ACCESS PROGRAM INFORMATION](#)

The Southern Rural Development Center at Mississippi State University is an equal opportunity institution.
This material is based upon work supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture.
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