

ANNUAL REPORT

SRMEC.UADA.EDU

2024



UofA

**DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION**

University of Arkansas System



**SOUTHERN
EXTENSION
RISK
MANAGEMENT
EDUCATION**



National Institute of Food and Agriculture
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Table Of Contents



- 2** About SRMEC
- 3** Our Impact
- 4** Special Projects
- 10** Partnerships
- 11** Outstanding Projects
- 13** Grant Funds in Action
- 14** Our Team
- 16** Contact Us

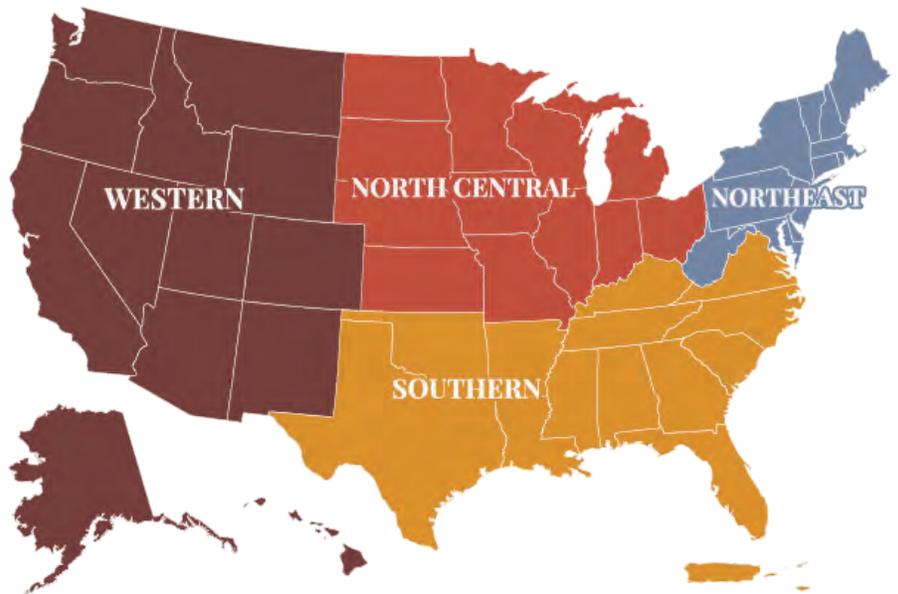
Extension Risk Management Education is supported by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. USDA funding is provided for the scientific/education portion of the program.

About Us

Extension Risk Management Education (ERME) is delivered through four regional centers that provide grant funding and leadership within their regions. The four regional centers include, the University of Arkansas (Southern), the University of Nebraska (North Central), the University of Delaware (Northeast), and Washington State University (Western). The ERME national program is delivered regionally through the Regional Centers in partnership with the Digital Center housed at the University of Minnesota. ERME is funded by USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

The Southern Extension Risk Management Education Center (SRMEC) serves the following 13 Southern states: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and the territories of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Projects are 18 months in length and are designed to help producers learn new strategies to manage the agricultural risks they face. The goal is simple...give farmers and ranchers the tools to improve their risk management skills and capabilities. Projects address the five general types of risk associated with farm and ranch businesses: production, price/market, financial, legal, and human risks.



The Southern Risk Management Education Center has funded innovative programs that have generated tangible results for producers in every state and territory across the southern region.



OUR MISSION
Empowering Producers to Manage Risk



Currently, SRMEC is competitively funded with an annual budget of roughly \$2 million to invest in farmer and rancher risk management. This includes all types of projects:

- Exploratory Projects (Planning Projects)
- Education Projects
- Producers Underserved by Crop Insurance

During 2023-2024, a total of 32 projects were awarded funding.



Our Impact



LEARN MORE

Special Projects



Learn more about this SRMEC Special Project and find your state contact



www.agftap.org

Project is funded by a cooperative agreement through the USDA Farm Service Agency

What is AgFTAP?

The Agricultural Finance, Tax and Asset Protection (AgFTAP) education program seeks to enhance farmers and ranchers ability to understand and navigate the farm business tax and asset protection decisions for their operations, as well as the important relationships between federal income taxes and USDA farm programs. This mission is managed through an online portal of educational trainings and resources.

Services Provided

WORKSHOPS

AgFTAP holds workshops for:

- Tax practitioners, including an online certificate course conducted by tax educators.
- Extension educators, providing communication and direction about FTAP program resources, tools, and timelines.
- Farmers and ranchers, focusing on the links between tax laws, asset protection strategies and USDA programs.

RESOURCES

Audio, video, and online courses focused on:

- Heirs' Property
- Estate Planning
- Farm Tax Issues
- Farm Tax Planning
- And more...



AgFTAP Staff



DR. ALLISON VETTER

PROJECT DIRECTOR

Allison serves as the Project Director for AgFTAP. Allison is an alumna of Doane University in Crete, Nebraska and received her master's degree and Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. Allison was raised on one of the first certified organic farms in the Midwest and continues to take an interest in its operations.



BRITTANY GABRIEL

PROGRAM SPECIALIST

A passionate Program Specialist for the AgFTAP program at the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture. As the primary contact of this program, Brittany provides guidance, resources, and assistance to help farmers and ranchers thrive in the agricultural industry.



GISELLE ALFARO

CULTURAL LIAISON

With over a decade of experience as a language specialist, Alfaro focuses on Spanish interpretation and translation. As a cultural liaison, she ensures our resources are relevant and culturally appropriate for the Hispanic community. She encourages and empowers members of the Hispanic community to become active participants in the educational activities and programs offered by AgFTAP. She holds a B.S. degree in Finance and Economics from the University of the Ozarks in Clarksville, Arkansas.

*Celise Weems, SRMEC staff, is the AgFTAP program coordinator working with our Land-Grant colleges and universities.



The SRMEC Navigator program works to enhance understanding of federal crop insurance. The effort is funded by USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) through a cooperative agreement. The project seeks to serve producers historically underserved by federal crop insurance by:

- Leveraging the land-grant system agricultural economist to create relationships and outreach on crop insurance products and services.
- Building awareness and/or understanding of the network of Approved Insurance Providers (AIPs) while connecting the AIPs with targeted producer groups and academic institutions.
- Connecting with outreach educators—including 1862 farm management committees, 1890 Small Farm Programs (2501 programs), and USDA Liaisons—to enhance the level of crop insurance outreach to historically underserved farmers and ranchers.
- Educating and promoting the programs, products, and services of crop insurance stakeholders—RMA, National Crop Insurance Services, and AIPs.
- Collecting customer service data and stakeholder feedback while also analyzing crop insurance metrics to improve sector performance measures.

This is a 2-year pilot project serving only the Southern region's states. To learn more about the project, visit the Center's program web link listed below. Visit RMA's website to learn more about federal crop insurance.



This is a special project/cooperative agreement supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, under agreement number RMA22CPT0012755.

**LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS
SRMEC SPECIAL PROJECT**

www.srmec.uada.edu/navigator

Navigator Tool-Free Number: 888-731-0888

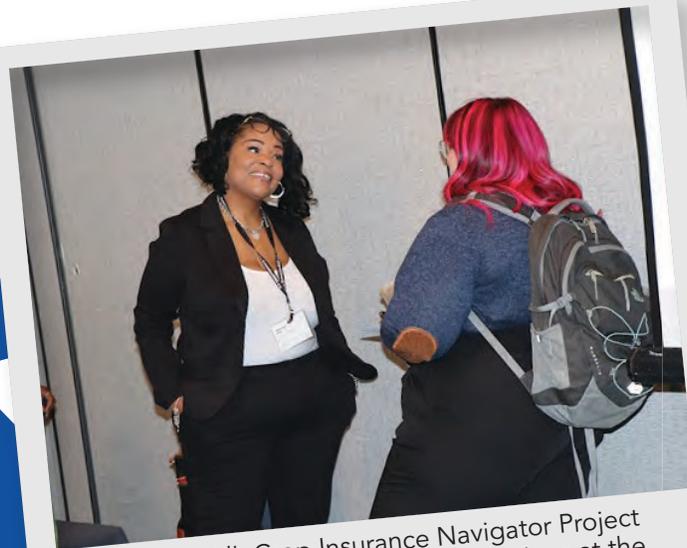
Crop Insurance Navigators *in the field*



Crop Insurance Navigator team members participated in the National Black Grower's Council Model Farm Field Day hosted by Conyer Farms in Pine Bluff.



Chimere Hampton, Crop Insurance Navigator Project Specialist, attended the NBGC Model Farm Field Day in Pine Bluff.



SeRena Hill, Crop Insurance Navigator Project Manager, answering attendee questions at the 2024 ERME National Conference



LaGrand Elliott, Crop Insurance Navigator Project Specialist, represented our team at the Prairie View A&M University Agriculture Field Day.

Crop Insurance Navigator Staff



SERENA M. HILL
PROJECT MANAGER

Service Area: AR, KY, TN, Northern AL, NC, VA

As the RMA Project Manager, Hill hopes to strengthen outreach and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers and to enhance understanding and use of federal crop insurance by producers historically underserved by crop insurance sector.



LAGRAND ELLIOTT
NAVIGATOR PROJECT SPECIALIST

Service Area: MS, LA, AL, FL Panhandle

Elliott is a farmer and VP/COO of Foot Print Farms. Elliott serves as a state contact on Heirs Property for underserved farmers and ranchers throughout Mississippi and has served as a policy analyst for Alcorn's Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Policy Research Center.



TIANA SCURRY
NAVIGATOR PROJECT SPECIALIST

Service Area: GA, FL, SC

Originally from Georgia, Scurry holds a B.S. in Agriculture Economics from Fort Valley State University.



DAVID STEPHENS
NAVIGATOR PROJECT SPECIALIST

Service Area: OK & TX

Stephens is an established professional with over 30 years' experience. Most recently, he's provided 12 years of agriculture technical assistance to small socially disadvantaged farmers, rural landowners, rural business owners and towns.



CHIMERE HAMPTON
NAVIGATOR PROJECT SPECIALIST

Service Area: TN & KY

With 10 years of work experience for the U of A System, Hampton hopes to bring a passion for outreach through assisting and guiding farmers and ranchers, toward diversified enterprises and facilitating the use of crop insurance.

Partnerships



A group of 13 Southern Land Grant University Extension Programs in collaboration with the Southern Extension Economics Committee, the Agricultural and Food Policy Center at Texas A&M, and the Southern Risk Management Education Center at the University of Arkansas officially launched a new digital platform to provide timely, concise, insightful analysis on issues facing southern agriculture.

NCBA PRODUCER EDUCATION

RISK MANAGEMENT TOOLS
and resources available online.

SCAN FOR SURVEY
Tell us, about your risk management and help fellow cattle producers

Learn more under the Producers tab at NCBA.org.

NORTH CENTRAL EXTENSION RISK MANAGEMENT EDUCATION | **SOUTHERN EXTENSION RISK MANAGEMENT EDUCATION** | **USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

The SRMEC is proud to collaborate with the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association to provide risk management resources specifically designed for cattle producers.

The National ERME Program has initiated an annual award to recognize outstanding projects conducted in each of the four regions of the country. The Award seeks to highlight excellence in Extension programming and Project Director scholarship – as well as to promote the many successful ERME projects and resulting educational resources. The Outstanding Project Awards are presented to the Project Directors at the ERME National Conference.



Congratulations to the 2024 Project of Excellence Awardees Justin Benavidez and Tiffany Dowell Lashmet. Award received by Casey Matzke (pictured above with SRMEC Center Director Dr. Ron Rainey at the 2024 ERME National Conference).

Project Directors Tiffany Dowell Lashmet and Justin Benavidez, Texas A&M, received the 2024 Outstanding Project Award for the Southern Region. Their project, "Where's the Beef, Economic and Legal Considerations for Direct Beef Sales", was presented to an estimated 650 producers. Participants had the opportunity to develop necessary skills and individualized plans for successfully direct marketing beef.

Visit extensionrme.org to learn more about this and other ERME Project of Excellence awardees.

Annually, SRMEC selects three outstanding projects from our most recently completed cohort. These Projects of Excellence are recognized for educational materials, evaluation processes and impacts. Annually, an ERME Regional Outstanding Project is selected one year after completion based on impacts and success story.



Project Title: Where's the Beef? Economic and Legal Considerations for Direct Beef Sales

Awardee: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Project Directors: Justin Benavidez and Tiffany Dowell Lashmet (award received by Casey Matzke)



Project Title: Risk Management Education for Socially Disadvantaged, Veteran, and Beginning Farmers and Ranchers in Virginia

Awardee: Virginia State University

Project Director: William Crutchfield (award received by Nadine Jackson)



Project Title: Farmer Risk Management Rebound from COVID-19

Awardee: ASAP – Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project

Project Director: Charlie Jackson (award received by David Smiley)

Grant Funds in Action

SRMEC grant funds are now more commonly used to develop digital resources with the potential for broad and lasting impact. Here are two excellent examples of these innovative strategies.



The 2023 funded project, Labor Considerations for Tennessee Farmers: Strategies for Securing and Managing Agricultural Labor, is led by GAP Connections in Tennessee. Through this project, leaders have developed a podcast series focused on relevant agricultural labor issues. Topics range from farmers' experiences with the H-2A program to housing requirements and transportation concerns.

Visit tiny.utk.edu/laborpodcast to view the episodes



The 2023 funded project, Where's the Beef? Video Series, builds on the success of a 2021 project. In addition to turning the previously developed handbook into an online course, this project has also developed a number of valuable video interviews with producers who are currently involved in direct marketing. Topics range from legal issues to marketing considerations.

Visit [@TexasAgricultureLaw](#) on Youtube to watch the full series



DR. RON RAINEY

DIRECTOR

An Extension Economist, Rainey focuses on enhancing farm and ranch value-added entrepreneurship, risk management and marketing throughout the agricultural sector. Over his almost 30-year career, his programs, expertise, and leadership have been recognized at the state, regional, and national levels.



LAWSON CONNOR

ASSOCIATE CENTER DIRECTOR

Connor currently serves as an assistant professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness at the University of Arkansas with research and extension appointments in crop production economics.



ERICA BARNES FIELDS

ASSOCIATE CENTER DIRECTOR

Fields serves as the Center's financial manager. Additionally, she provides research-based self-help strategies to assist farmers in reducing stress. Her experience with Extension education and outreach extends over 14 years.



HUNTER BIRAM

ASSOCIATE CENTER DIRECTOR

Biram is an assistant professor in the Department of Ag Economics and Agribusiness at the UofA. His applied research and extension program focuses on agricultural production and price risk management using federal crop insurance and commodity programs in the farm bill. Biram grew up working on a diverse family farm operation consisting of a cow-calf herd, broiler chickens, a greenhouse nursery, and a peach orchard.



CELISE WEEMS
PROGRAM MANAGER

Program Manager Celise Weems is an experienced agricultural professional driven to help farmers and ranchers enhance their business operations. She promotes the Center's resources and stakeholder engagement activities across the region. She holds a Master of Agricultural Economics from the University of Arkansas and an MBA from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. She is also certified in Mental Health First Aid.



JAMIE COUSINS
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Cousins holds a BA in Communications from Louisiana Tech University and an MA in Communication Studies from the University of Louisiana at Monroe.

Formerly a Dean of Continuing Education, she has over 16 years experience in Higher Education.



MARCIA SMITH
ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALIST III

Smith brings 17 years' experience serving as Administrative Office Manager in the Division of Student Affairs for the University of Central Arkansas. Actively involved in her community and workplace, Smith has held a number of roles including Staff Senator and Advisory and Diversity Board Member.



NANCY CLARK
ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALIST

Clark retired from Transamerica Insurance after 20 years of service as the Office Manager and Sr. Executive Assistant to the President, COO and CMO. Shortly after retirement, she took a position with FCS Dept. at the University of Arkansas, Cooperative Extension Service.

She is currently working in Ag and Econ Business with the Crop Insurance Navigator project.

Contact Us

877-866-1848

srmec@uada.edu

www.srmec.uada.edu



The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture offers all its Extension and Research programs to all eligible persons without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital or veteran status, genetic information, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.