

Comings & Goings

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN FOR EXTENSION

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Julie Pigott Dillard: Deeply Connected to Community

By J. Scott Angle, Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources



Julie Pigott Dillard, right, with mom Linda.

Julie Pigott Dillard is so good at being one of us at the University of Florida because she's one of you.

Last month when I visited Dillard, director of the UF/IFAS Extension Washington County, I found a leader deeply connected to the community she serves.

While Dillard introduced me to other local leaders from the Farm Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, county government, soil and water conservation district and cattlemen's association, her mom Linda was in a nearby room as a Master Gardener volunteer arranging plants for a youth fair. Her husband, Nick, was at the table with me representing 4-H as a club volunteer. Her father taught agriculture at a local high school.

If you need help with anything growing on your property in Washington County—including kids—call the Extension office.

You might know UF/IFAS for our 4-H programs. But we'll field just about any request. What to plant where? Consult with our Master Gardeners. Weeds in your pasture? Reach out to our livestock agent. How to feed your kids? Attend one of our cooking workshops.

We can do so much in Washington County because the county gives so much to us, including Dillard. She developed into a highly effective public servant in Chipley, where she showed chickens as a 4-Her, attended a Sunday school class led by a UF/IFAS faculty member and tended to cattle on her family's property.

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If you have any suggestions or would like to submit your own recognition or short article of interest, please send them to Valkyrie Aldnari.

Please feel free to also forward any questions or comments about this periodical to Valkyrie Aldnari at valkyriea@ufl.edu.

It eventually led to her helping organize a local young farmers & ranchers chapter in the county, and then to her getting hired as county Extension director eight years ago. She's now in a position to help grow the local economy.

That starts with jobs. Having an Extension office in Chipley meant that Dillard could come home to find meaningful work instead of staying in Georgia, where she started her outreach career. She now employs six faculty and staff at the office on Jackson Avenue.

With our expanding efforts comes the need for expanded facilities. Fortunately, we've enjoyed tremendous support from the Board of County Commissioners. My thanks go to Commissioner and Chair Tray Hawkins, for his leadership in securing the funding to renovate the agricultural center.

The renovations help more than ag. What was formerly a dirt-floored arena that Dillard showed chickens in as a child is now a finished auditorium that can host community events like banquets, weddings and other large gatherings.

The University of Florida is your local university. We're at our best when we're working on local needs with a combination of tradition and innovation.

We've kept century-old oak trees on the grounds, we teach old-fashioned values to youth and we choose local talent like Dillard who strive to protect what's special about Washington County.

Meanwhile, we're promoting modern agricultural practices to farmers, foresters and ranchers, planting new container flower beds, delivering new ways to prepare food, connecting producers more directly with consumers, and keeping farmers and landscapers healthy and in business through training in proper pesticide use.

We've expanded our work in genetics to give local ranchers access to the information they need to select bulls for breeding. We're even partnering with UF Health to start telemedicine in the Extension office in Chipley. The equipment has been installed and we expect to start seeing patients soon.

Local people, local places and local programs. UF/IFAS Extension Washington County is how we bring the university to you. Please continue to let us know what we can do for you.

This story originally appeared in the Washington County Times.

Extension, Holmes County Meet on Two-Way Street

By J. Scott Angle, Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources



L to R: Scott Angle, Jason Carnley, Terry King, Justin Williams, Kalyn Waters

Your local Extension office recently put local youth face-to-face with state legislators in the Capitol to advocate for 4-H funding. It has organized the county's ranchers to protect a 500-year-old way of life in Florida. It connected some of you to grant money to become homeowners.

As part of my commitment to supporting a University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Extension office in every county, I recently visited Bonifay and learned about UF/IFAS Extension

Holmes County's impact not just from my employees but from the people they serve—you.

One reason I'm so supportive of UF/IFAS Extension Holmes County in particular is that you support us back. If I had driven four hours from Gainesville and simply said thank you to Holmes County Cattlemen's Association (HCCA) board members, County Commissioner Jeff

Good, County Administrator David Corbin and Joe Rone, the county's economic development director, it would have been worth it.

County government has thrown its support behind a home for Holmes County Extension as part of the Holmes County Consolidated Government Efficiency Center, which includes a stand-alone Extension building that will be used to support agricultural and youth programming in the county. It will be located south of the existing Agricultural Center.

Extension has had no permanent home since December 2018. My only regret from my recent visit is that the existing meeting space is so small that I could only meet a handful of you.

Next year we expect to open a new office that will be a community classroom where agents can do even more for Holmes County. They'll be able to host larger class gatherings. They'll be able to educate more effectively with technology and equipment.

Once the new facility is completed, County Extension Director Kalyn Waters plans to host an annual community and youth fair, get the Holmes County Outdoor Expo up and running again and offer the open-air classroom and indoor conference room to community groups.

UF/IFAS Extension Holmes County is also working to bring Gainesville-based doctors to Bonifay through a telemedicine initiative we're rolling out in 13 counties statewide.

They've continued to deliver solutions for your life while they've worked under trying conditions in their temporary home. They run 4-H clubs, teach home buyer education classes that qualify attendees for government funding, and run experiments on pastures to see which forages work best on Holmes County cattle ranches. They've even taught sausage-making to hunters who want to get their food from forest to fork themselves.

We've long known we can't deliver everything from Gainesville that you deserve out of your flagship public

university. So we not only put offices in rural counties but we put people in them who go to your churches, send kids to your schools and shop at the same feed stores.

Waters doesn't just offer local cattlemen and cattlemen advice, she works side by side with them in the industry. She helps build a community, investing in the youth and conservation and leading a team of agents.

It works because of the two-way street of Extension. We work on solutions together. Your input on why something

works—or why it doesn't—informs our scientists who work on perfecting solutions for you. And, of course, without hearing from you, we wouldn't know for sure that we are even working on relevant problems.

The reception I got from the HCCA, county officials, and other stakeholders tells me the two-way street is working here. Thank you for your support, and we will continue to support you, Holmes County.

This story originally appeared in the Holmes County Advertiser.

Crossing the Finish Line on the Road to 67

By J. Scott Angle, Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources



In all the traveling I've done in my career, I've never been greeted with finish-line tape, "Chariots of Fire" playing on a public address

system, a 4-H'er hanging a medal around my neck and a state map cake with a different color frosting on every county.

When I joined UF/IFAS in July 2020, I announced my intention to visit Extension offices in all 67 counties. I fulfilled that pledge on April 8 in Lake City by breaking the tape at the Columbia County Extension office.

The celebration organized by County Extension Director Heather Janney prompted me to reflect on all I'd experienced in driving more than 30,000 miles in just 21 months.

I thought about the Ukrainian immigrant who got a new start on life in America in a Pasco County Extension incubator kitchen. It's where she turned her flair for baking into a thriving dessert business, and I got to taste the results in a blue and orange buttercream cake.

I remembered an old farmer's tip on how to tell if someone's home in Madison County: Check to make sure the rocker is facing the street. If it's turned around and leaning against the wall, its owners are out.

I thought about how Extension staff and volunteers in Monroe County had transformed blight into beauty by

turning an unsightly parking lot into a demonstration garden that had become a point of community pride.

In crisscrossing Florida, I've been inspired by Extension agents, staff, volunteers, advisory committee members, commissioners, 4-H youth and farmers.

Your career is a journey, too. It's important to celebrate the milestones. It allows us to step back and reflect on our mission as a group. I recommend cake be part of it, especially if you know a baker like Heather's. I ate Hendry County, and a mouthful of Glades.

And invite your friends. Florida Association of Counties (FAC) Executive Director Ginger Delegal joined us in Lake City, and she eloquently reminded us of how special Extension is. We meet counties where we find them. We don't tell them what they need—they tell us.

Delegal highlighted our partnership with FAC in educating county commissioners in governance so they can solve their own problems and identify their own opportunities.

That captures what we do on a communitywide scale in 67 counties.

My journey was never about completing a checklist but to learn firsthand about each county's challenges and opportunities. And to learn from our Extension team how we tailor our services to those needs. More than anything it reminded me who we work for – every citizen of Florida!

Visiting #67 was not mission accomplished. It was mission acknowledged. I will continue to put in the miles to demonstrate my support for Extension and for the communities we serve.

Please invite me to your ribbon cuttings, awards ceremonies and events that highlight programming. This journey's not over, and for me return visits to Extension offices are icing on the cake.

Comings & Goings with Dr. Johnson

While Dr. Angle has crossed the finish line in visiting all 67 Florida counties, I'm just off the starting block but gaining speed quickly. March began with a visit to Indian River REC in Ft. Pierce, where I engaged in a stimulating conversation with researchers, graduate students and staff. I got to meet many of the people who really make our organization run at the [Florida Extension Business Professionals Conference](#) and virtually moderated a discussion about the future of Florida's agriculture at the [Ag Policy Outlook Conference](#) in Apopka. Dr. Jay Ferrell took me on a tour of the Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants. I then made a whirlwind tour of the Florida Panhandle, with Dr. Pete Vergot serving as my guide. Over five days I got to meet with faculty, staff and stakeholders in Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Holmes, Washington, and Walton counties, as well as WFREC, NFREC and 4-H Camp Timpoochee.

In April I had a great visit with people at the [Central District Symposium](#), where we began a dialogue on how we can become Florida's one-stop shop for science-based information. I visited St. Johns County, where Tim Wilson led me on a tour of St. Augustine. Later we sat down in the beautiful garden the Master Gardener Volunteers had built and talked about Extension's opportunities in the region. Wherever I visit I like to sit down and have a chat about good things that are taking place, and then talk about the opportunities that we want to get into. It's been a pleasure having that conversation with each of you and I am excited to continue my journey throughout Florida.



With Jay Ferrell at the Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants, March 21.



With Tim Momol (left) and Kevin Camm (center) at the Central District Symposium, April 14.



With Gene McAvoy in Washington, D.C. during the Public Issues Leadership Development Conference, April 5.



Learning about 4-H Embryology with Kaylin Waters in Holmes County, April 1.

UF/IFAS Extension in the News

MARCH

3/3: [Florida Youth Naturalist Program Launches Statewide](#)

3/9: [UF Expert Explains Wildfire Terms](#)

3/17: [UF/IFAS Extension, College of Medicine, Local Partners Join to Provide Farmworker Health Fair](#)

3/24: [UF HealthStreet/Extension Collaboration Wins AAMC award](#)

3/30: [UF/IFAS Blueberry Growers App Now Available in Spanish](#)

APRIL

4/13: [Natural Resource Extension Agents Win Big at ANREP awards](#)

4/20: [New Seed Library Takes Root in Inverness](#)

4/22: [UF Health Pediatrics Resident Makes Fresh Produce Affordable and Accessible for Patients with Farmers' Markets](#)

4/22: [Samantha Kennedy Named UF/IFAS Extension Wakulla County Director](#)

4/23: [Professional Landscapers Can Now Become Florida-Friendly Certified](#)

4/25: [UF/IFAS Program Connects Small-scale Growers, Entrepreneurs with Digital Marketing Tools](#)



4/28: [Weeding Out Problems: New Extension Agent Helps Us Manage Yards, Farms](#)

UF/IFAS Invasive Species Council works for you!

Emily Bell, UF/IFAS Invasive Species Extension Coordinator

INVASIVE SPECIES
Training Modules & Emerging Issues Webinars
Monthly from 2-3pm EST
IST #32049
for Extension Professionals
Join us in Microsoft Teams, IFAS-InvasiveSpecies

2022 Schedule:
January 18: Pythons, Paul Evans
February 10: Coyotes, Marty Main
March 17: Rhesus Macaques, Samantha Wisely
April 21: Green Iguanas, Paul Evans
May 12: FL Plant Lists and the UF IFAS Assessment, Deah Lueurance
June 9: Feral Hogs, Hance Ellington
July 14: The land snail Bulimulus sporadicus, Shirley Baker
August 11: Camphor tree, Marc Frank and Stephen Enloe
September 15: Armored Catfish, Jeff Hill
October 13: Torpedo grass, Stephen Enloe



Invasive species are an issue that cut across almost all components of Extension. They impact our natural resources, agricultural and horticultural industries, and even the health and quality of life for Floridians across the state. The [UF/IFAS Invasive Species Council](#) is an interdisciplinary team of researchers, extension agents, and administrators formed to assist stakeholders in gaining the capacity to educate on, control, and prevent invasive species of all taxa. One of our

primary objectives is to provide resources and connections directly to extension agents, helping them stay on top of the most pressing issues and assist their clientele.

We host the [UF/IFAS Invasive Species MS Teams page](#) as a communication and product-delivery platform. In the Teams page you can ask questions and access our training modules — a library of 20+ topic specific ready to use programs. Each training module page includes a PowerPoint file, a recorded presentation, and links to additional info. The library is built from our monthly in-service training webinar series. We also develop communication resources such as the [Standardized Invasive Species Terminology for Effective Outreach](#) publication.

Join the team and connect with us today! For questions or assistance, reach out to Emily Bell, ecbell@ufl.edu

Holmes County Spring Cattlemen's Field Day and Social Event

Kalyn Waters, Agriculture/Natural Resources CED II, Holmes County



Cattle producers gathered to learn about sprayer calibration.

For the past five years, cattlemen from across the panhandle have gathered at Williams Farm in Graceville, FL for the Spring Cattlemen's Field Day and Social. The event is a collaboration between UF/IFAS Extension Holmes County and the Holmes County Cattlemen's Association.

Over 130 producers gathered to foster fellowship and learn. The field day featured demonstrations on sprayer calibration and a hands-on exercise on the financials of purchasing hay and haylage. With increasing input costs dramatically impacting cattle producers' production practices, field days and educational events are critical for the continued education and development of successful management strategies.

This year's social featured live music from Chad Douglas and "pitchfork fondue" (deep-fried strip steak). Besides the steak, the highlight of the social was Cow Patty Bingo, which raised over \$2,500 for community activities and scholarships for youth and families in Holmes County.

This event is an opportunity for cattlemen to come together, share information and build networks. Thank you to this year's sponsors: Williams Farm, Farm Credit of NW Florida, Mid State Stockyard, O&L Farm, Selection Sires Brad Carter, Carden & Associates, West Geneva Farmers Coop, and our door-prize sponsors (Bowen Hardware, Kelly Seed, Cloud Auto Parts, Cold Steel Firearms, Panhandle lumber, M&M Farms, S&W Auto Parts, Baileys Lumber and Southern Cattle Farms).



Cow Patty Bingo winner Shane Abbott(c) with Holmes County Cattlemen's Association President Justin Williams (l) and Kalyn Waters, UF/IFAS Extension Holmes County Director (r).

It All Began with a Question: “How Can We Help You?”

Prudence Caskey, 4-H Extension Agent II, Santa Rosa County



Steve Rhodes of Florida Power & Light and Prudence Caskey of Santa Rosa County 4-H.

Two years ago, the Florida 4-H program announced that a 50+ year sponsorship for its public speaking program would come to an end. In Santa Rosa County, an average of 4,000 youth each year have participated in this program, meaning this change would have

a huge financial impact on the county's program as well as others who utilize the program throughout the state. This was a major concern for Prudence Caskey, 4-H Extension Agent for Santa Rosa County, as well as the teachers that she works with.

"I was very concerned about how I would find funding for my program," Prudence explained. "I have a total budget of \$3,500 each year and I was going to have to determine which project areas to cut."

Then in February 2021, Florida Power & Light Company (FPL) contacted Prudence about possible needs of her 4-H program. FPL works with a number of educational programs to help develop our state's future leaders and was looking for opportunities to expand its involvement in rural and agricultural communities. Prudence communicated the need for funding for her public speaking program and relayed that the cost for the program was an annual amount of \$1,000 for awards for the youth participants, which includes certificates, ribbons, neck medallions and trophies for the students. As conversations continued, Prudence spoke with several other 4-H agents who expressed the same concerns for their public speaking programs.

After learning about the need and the opportunity to support the public speaking program statewide, FPL announced its sponsorship of the Florida 4-H Public Speaking Program on October 7, 2021. The Florida 4-H Public Speaking Program will receive a five-year sponsorship at \$20,000 a year. This partnership ensures that the public speaking program will continue to benefit Florida's students.

And it all started with one phone call and one county's need, which then led to a \$100,000 statewide sponsorship of all 4-H public speaking programs over the next five years.

COMINGS & GOINGS

We would like to welcome the following newly hired and transferring faculty. These individuals were hired following a highly competitive search, screening and selection process. In some cases, candidates interviewed both on the UF campus in Gainesville and in a county Extension office. Selection was often difficult because we typically have two or three suitable candidates. These faculty are truly the best of the best!

New Hires

Calvin Gardner, Urban Horticulture EA I, Orange County

Hillary Ayers, Family and Consumer Sciences EA I, Orange County

Carolyn Kovacs, Sea Grant EA I, Volusia and Flagler counties

Heather Pogue, 4-H Youth Development EA I, Putnam County

Amanda Phillips, Agriculture & Commercial Horticulture EA I, Suwannee County

We would like to wish the following agents the best of luck in their future endeavors.

Retirement

BobbiJo Jarvis, Agriculture & Commercial Horticulture CED IV, Citrus County

Departures

De Broughton, Agriculture RSA II, NE District

Christopher Kerr, Commercial Horticulture EA II, Duval County

Caroline Chappell, 4-H Youth Development EA I, Jackson County

Luke Miller, Horticulture/Small Farms EA I, Bradford County

Abbey Tyrna, Environmental Science Program EA II, Sarasota County

Transfers

Libbie Johnson, from Escambia County to Santa Rosa County, Sustainable Agriculture/Food Systems EA III

Chelsea Woodard, from Volusia County to Seminole County, 4-H EA I

Laura Tiu, from EA III to CED III, Walton County

Samantha Kennedy, from EA III to CED III, Wakulla County