

OCTOBER

COLLEGE MONTHLY



In the weeks since my appointment as vice president for land-grant engagement was announced, I have talked to many campus leaders about how we can expand engagement. Kentucky Cooperative Extension is a key mechanism for our successful outreach. A review of Extension's recent revitalization and focus shows that, as I often tell others, this is not our grandparents' Extension!

We remain one of the best supported states for Extension, with county, state-mandated and federal funds supporting our mission. We are admired for the degree of county support we receive. With that comes 120 different municipal entities

and nearly 250,000 volunteers.

We describe ourselves as "hard-wired" and "high touch" within communities across the state. Most of these communities are rural with only seven counties having populations over 100,000 and more than half with less than 27,000 people. In many of these communities, Extension is the hub with good facilities, connectivity and trusted people ready to assist citizens.

In recent years, we have expanded programs in economic development, family health, financial well-being, community and environmental health, food safety and security, and arts. Our work with youth through 4-H remains critical to the development of the next generation of leaders.

Agriculture remains an important economic engine for this state. We are developing technology platforms designed for Kentucky and think we have good standing for being a leader in agricultural research and development for mid-sized farms. We have seen large growth in local food systems, especially driven recently by COVID-19.

Today, Extension is finalizing changes that came about after an extensive review of the system. With the review came new leadership, a new organizational structure and an expansive needs assessment involving more than 30,000 people and 500 focus groups. One thing that was never questioned throughout the process was the relationship and respect

agents have with their communities. We will continue to rely on our Extension teams who are key supporters of the community fabric of this state.

On a statewide level, the recent needs assessment outlined three focus areas:

1. Substance use and mental health
2. Economic and workforce development
3. Community leadership, engagement and pride

We have established many partners critical to our success. Some of these include:

- Kentucky State University
- UK HealthCare
- Associate Vice President for Research, Health Disparities
- Barnstable Brown Diabetes Center
- College of Nursing
- College of Fine Arts
- College of Public Health
- James B. Beam Institute for Kentucky Spirits

As we work to expand our outreach across even broader expanses of programs, we must do so thoughtfully and always with the citizens of Kentucky at the forefront. We will look to collaborate with more partners who share our goals of engaging with and being part of communities to improve lives.

My goal is for UK to be known as the land-grant university that does the most for its state, and I appreciate President Capilouto for catalyzing and supporting that vision.

Dean Nancy Cox

Outstanding Staff Awards nomination deadline approaching

The deadline for nominating a deserving staff member for the annual CAFE Outstanding Staff Awards is Nov. 2. Please take time now to nominate someone for an award. Nomination forms can be found [here](#). The college plans to honor staff in a combination of virtual and in-person experiences on Dec. 11.



CULTIVATING INCLUSION SERIES

College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment
Office of Diversity

Cultivating Inclusion Series

The Cultivating Inclusion Series serves to provide an informal, safe environment for faculty, staff and students to engage in conversations related to diversity and inclusion while fostering an appreciation of inclusivity within the college. Sessions are the first Thursday of each month, September through December, from 12 to 1 p.m.

Stamped from the Beginning Book Discussion, November 5: An open discussion regarding topics of race, racism, its influence on higher education, our communities and how we can champion change in the spaces we occupy. Do not forget to complete the short questionnaire at the end of your registration. The first 30 registrants will receive a complimentary book. Register by clicking below.

[Register to attend this event](#)

Faculty Series

Fostering Community and Belonging, noon to 1 p.m., November 16: Studies across the disciplines indicate a positive correlation between a shared sense of community and student success. In this workshop, we will consider what it means to be in community with others in an academic setting, and we will explore the benefits of fostering a sense of belonging through classroom community building and intentional pedagogical choices. Attendees will gain insights and develop practical tools for establishing a welcoming classroom environment for all students. Register by clicking below. If you need accommodations to participate in these workshops, please contact Shauna M. Morgan at shauna.morgan@uky.edu.

[Register to attend this event](#)

Awards and honors

Clare Rittschof, assistant professor, received the Early Career Innovation Award from the Entomological Society of America. She received the award for her groundbreaking research on honeybee behaviors and how those behaviors contribute to honeybee health.

The following awards were presented at the recent Celebration of Land Grant Research:

- **Nicholas Teets**, Department of Entomology - 2018 Bobby Pass Excellence in Grantsmanship Award
- **Alison Davis**, Department of Agriculture Economics, Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky - 2019 Bobby Pass Excellence in Grantsmanship Award
- **Clare Rittschof**, Department of Entomology - 2018 Prestigious Research Paper Award
- **Hongyan Zhu**, Department of Plant and Soil Sciences – 2019 Prestigious Research Paper Award
- **Dawn Brewer**, Department of Dietetics and Human Nutrition, and **Bernhard Hennig**, Department of Animal and Food Sciences - 2018 Research Extension Impact Award
- **Carrie Knott**, Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, Research and Education Center - 2019 Research Extension Impact Award
- **Hongyan Zhu**, Department of Plant and Soil Sciences - 2018 Thomas Poe Cooper Research Award
- **Pradeep Kachroo**, Department of Plant Pathology - 2019 Thomas Poe Cooper Research Award

Cybersecurity month

October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month. The emphasis this year is on personal accountability and the importance of taking proactive steps to enhance cybersecurity at home and in the workplace. Email phishing continues to be a problem, and we must all be vigilant in our work to ensure we practice safe computing. If you have questions regarding a suspicious email, attachment or related IT security issue, consult your CAFE departmental/unit IT professional.



In the news

Pasture renovations help horse farm use rotational grazing

Spendthrift Farm is one of Lexington's iconic Thoroughbred breeding and racing operations. Due to recent expansion, the farm wanted to renovate some unused fields and develop them into pastures to use in a rotational grazing system. They turned to forage experts with the [Horse Pasture Evaluation Program](#) in CAFE for their recommendations. Read more [here](#).



Beam Institute partners with Scotch Whisky Research Institute

The University of Kentucky's [James B. Beam Institute for Kentucky Spirits](#) recently announced a partnership with the [Scotch Whisky Research Institute](#) in Edinburgh, Scotland. The partnership will enhance stability in the spirits industry worldwide and allow the institutions to study distilled spirits together. Read more [here](#).



HealthyWoods app helps owners understand their woodlands

A new mobile app makes receiving research-based woodland management information as easy as reaching for the phone. [HealthyWoods](#), a collaborative effort between forest specialists from Kentucky and other hardwood-producing states in the Appalachian region, provides woodland owners with a convenient tool to scout the health of their woods. Read more [here](#).



Seasonal food resource hub offers easy uses for local veggies

The [Kentucky Seasonal Food Resource Hub](#), from the [Food Connection](#) at the [University of Kentucky](#), benefits both farmers and customers by answering questions on what to do with various fruits and vegetables. It offers recipes, photos, videos and social media posts that give storage tips and quick ideas on how to use the products. Farmers are welcome to download material from the site for their newsletters, social media accounts or websites, and anyone looking for a little help or a new recipe is encouraged to browse the site. [Read more here.](#)

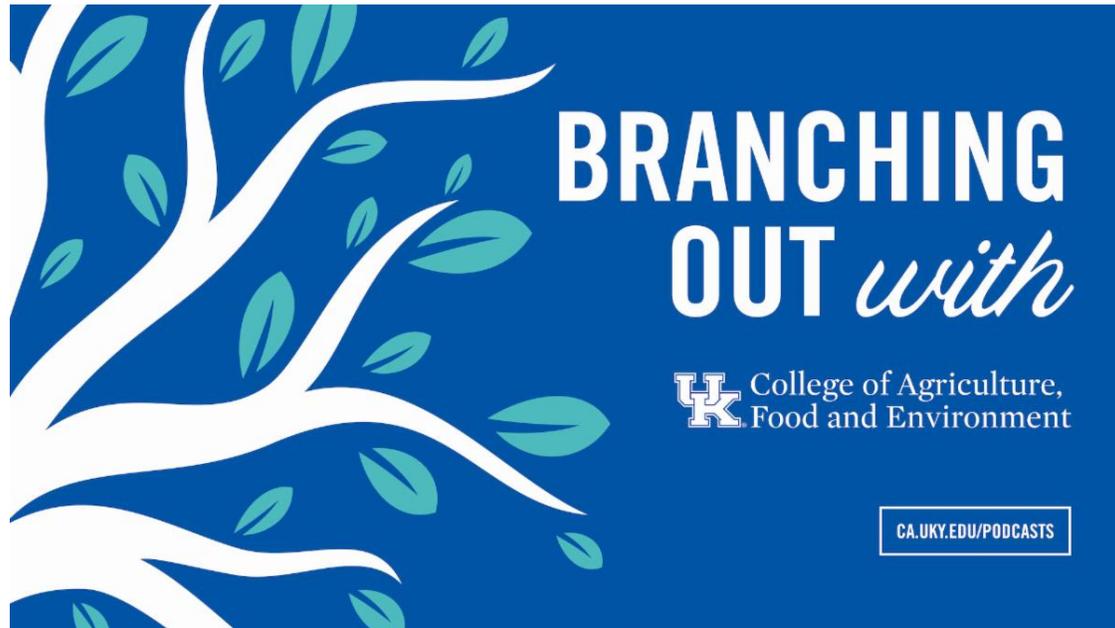


New "Branching Out" episode features USDA official

Listen tomorrow, October 7, for the latest episode of the college's ["Branching Out"](#) podcast

featuring Dr. Scott Hutchins, deputy undersecretary for research, education and economics with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

On October 21, the podcast will feature Akinbode Adedeji, associate professor in the Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering. Click [here](#) to listen to past episodes of this podcast and other CAFE podcasts.



Spotlight

Clare Rittschof

Assistant professor, Department of Entomology

We asked Clare to share a little about her passions, her career path and what led her to us.

Tell us about your background and what led you to your current role at UK?

My scientific background is in animal behavior. I study how social behaviors are shaped by the environment, including the processes in the brain that cause these changes, and the consequences in terms of individual (or in the case of the honeybee, colony) survival and health. I have always been fascinated by the idea that it is possible to predict how an animal will behave - our understanding of the biological basis of behavior is still in its infancy, so predicting behavior seems a bit like witchcraft! I have studied many animals during my career, including different types of insects, and even mammals including humans. I have worked with honeybees for about 10 years now, primarily studying aggressive behavior and its surprising links to health. Honeybees are indispensable in terms of their role in crop pollination (and honey production), but they also live in some of the most sophisticated societies on the planet. I use this combination of features in my current position in CAFE, where my research program investigates how



honeybee social behaviors and other factors (like viruses and food resources) are connected to health.

What is your favorite thing about working in CAFE?

I feel inspired by our diverse, three-part mission in CAFE (research, education, extension/outreach). It is very fulfilling to be able to pursue my fundamental research passions while also interacting with and helping members of the community who care about bees. I also feel well supported by my colleagues in CAFE and across the state, perhaps because we all represent such different perspectives on a shared fundamental mission.

What is one thing about yourself that might surprise people?

Oh boy, I'm not sure. Scientifically, I earned my PhD studying a large web-building spider. Though I had some experience with honeybees, I did not start working with them in earnest until my post-doctoral years. Personally? I love playing music. I play fingerstyle and classical guitar, and, before COVID-19 at least, I sang in a choir here in Lexington.



Calendar of Events

- Oct. 8 [RTM Virtual Career Fair](#)
- Oct. 10-17 [Tree Week](#)
- Oct. 12 [Farmers Day](#)
- Oct. 16 [World Food Day](#)
- Oct. 27-29 [Kentucky Grazing Conference](#)
- Oct. 31 [Halloween](#)

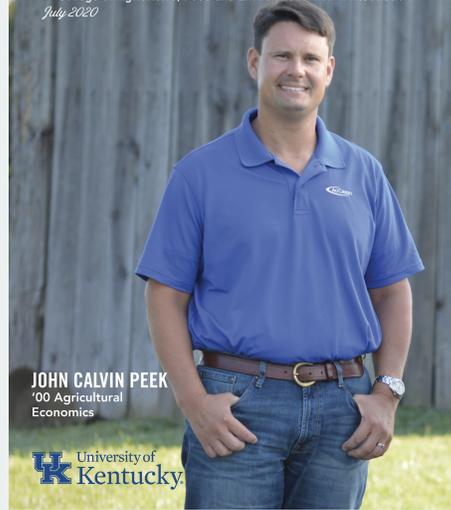
Helpful Links

- [Giving](#)
- [College Weekly for Faculty & Staff](#)
- [College Weekly for Students](#)
- [The Ambassador](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

Nov. 1 Daylight Savings Time Ends

THE AMBASSADOR

College of Agriculture, Food and Environment Alumni Association
July 2020



JOHN CALVIN PEEK
'00 Agricultural
Economics



[Read The Ambassador](#)

