

# ED-FACTS

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A Bi-Monthly Publication of NIFA's Division of Community and Education (DOCE)  
USDA—National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)

**Note from DOCE:** Ed-Facts was launched in February 2014 to share information about new initiatives and activities to promote education in food, agriculture, natural resources, and human sciences that are funded by NIFA. DOCE provides leadership for writing Ed-Facts as many of the education programs are housed in the Division of Community and Education. We hope our readers enjoy the new Ed-Facts format. Our goal is to provide the same level of information in a reader-friendly format. In addition, publications will be two pages and come out every other month. In its 2<sup>nd</sup> year, Ed-Facts will include special features on education programs across USDA. We welcome your feedback and suggestions for stories in upcoming issues.

## 125th Anniversary of the 1890 Land-Grant Universities

African-American scientist George Washington Carver revolutionized agriculture when he taught farmers to rotate cotton crops with sweet potatoes or legumes to restore depleted soils. His research earned him the 1939 Roosevelt Medal for outstanding contributions to Southern agriculture. In 2015, the country will honor Tuskegee Institute—the school where Carver taught agriculture for 47 years. On August 30, Tuskegee and 18 other historically black universities will celebrate the 125th anniversary of the Second Morrill Act, which created 1890 land-grant institutions.

NIFA administers a number of 1890 land-grant university (LGU) education grant programs that support projects that strengthen teaching, research, extension, and facility programs in the food and agricultural sciences. These include:

- [The 1890 Institution Teaching and Research Capacity Building Grants Program](#) that strengthen teaching and research programs in the food and agricultural sciences through cooperative linkages with federal and non-federal entities;
- The [Evans-Allen 1890 Research Formula](#) program that supports basic and applied research at the 1890 institutions in the food and agricultural sciences;
- [The 1890 Extension Formula](#) program that supports extension education programs that respond to the changing needs of limited resource clientele; and
- The [1890 Facilities Grant Program](#) that provides funds for the acquisition and improvement of agricultural and food sciences facilities and equipment, including libraries, so that the institutions may participate fully in the production of human capital in the food and agricultural sciences.



*2012: Secretary Vilsack signs a memorandum of understanding with Tuskegee University and the Environmental protection agency—photo from Tuskegee University Website*

Special celebrations for the anniversary take place this summer in Washington, DC, and across the nation. At many 1890 schools, a walk of 1.25 miles will commemorate this important milestone in educational equity. For more information about the 1890 land-grant institutions and upcoming commemoration events for the 125th anniversary, contact NIFA National Program Leader Dr. [Edwin Lewis](#) at 202-690-4565.

## White House Initiative on STEM: Update

The White House 2014 initiative on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education set up five interagency teams to address how the United States could improve education in these fields. The team that is tasked with designing graduate education for tomorrow's STEM workforce has made great strides, according to Ray Ali, NIFA's delegate to the group. His report noted the following:

**Evaluation Measures Survey:** The team's survey that found 19,500 students are supported each year by the combined graduate efforts of USDA, National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, and many other agencies. This finding includes students who received grants from NIFA National Needs Graduate Fellowships (supporting masters and doctoral students) and AFRI-NIFA Fellows (supporting pre-doctoral and postdoctoral students).

**Graduate Student Portal:** Members of the working group are developing a fellowships portal to house information on fellowship opportunities for multiple agencies. Graduate students in the food, agricultural, and human science will be able to search the portal to find NIFA programs that target their needs. Contact [Ray Ali](#) at 202-270-2727 for more information.

## DOCE PROGRAM FAST FACTS

- ❖ **National Awards Program for Excellence in College and University Teaching in the Food and Agricultural Sciences** are due March 15, by 5:00 p.m. Eastern time. See Josue Lopez [jlopez@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:jlopez@nifa.usda.gov) or Kirby Barrick [kbarrick@ufl.edu](mailto:kbarrick@ufl.edu) if you need an application form. [For more information visit the grant page.](#)
- ❖ **Letters of Intent for the AFRI Undergraduate Fellowships** were due Feb. 18 and applications are due May 6.
- ❖ **PD Meeting** participants in the National Association of Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture have until **March 20** to [submit an abstract for oral or poster presentations.](#)

## IMPACT: Alabama A&M

A study by the U.S. Geological Survey found that pharmaceuticals and personal care products that are disposed of via household plumbing can contaminate the water supply, which poses significant risk to humans, animals, and environmental health. Alabama A&M addressed this issue with a project funded by NIFA's 1890 Extension Capacity Grant. Their initiative reached the public with messages on the proper way to dispose of expired medications. Extension agents disseminated about 650 brochures, 840 publications, and 920 flyers. In addition, they and hosted 83 pharmaceutical collection sites where they collected and safely disposed of 4,123 lbs. of medication.

## IMPACT: Tennessee State University

USDA's Economic Research Service defines food deserts as low-income communities where at least 500 citizens or 33 percent of the community live at least a mile from a supermarket or large grocery store in urban areas, or at least 10 miles from a supermarket or large grocery store in rural areas. A faculty member at Tennessee State University's department of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences received an 1890 Capacity Research Grant to study the economics of food deserts. The study focused on Davidson County, home of Tennessee's second largest food desert cluster, with a high obesity rate of 37 percent. Study insights will help the community improve its health. The project also in the development of a new graduate course at the university: Food Marketing and Retail Management. So far, two graduate students have worked on this project, with one using it as the subject of his thesis.

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