



▶ Beyond The Call 1

ISSUE 2

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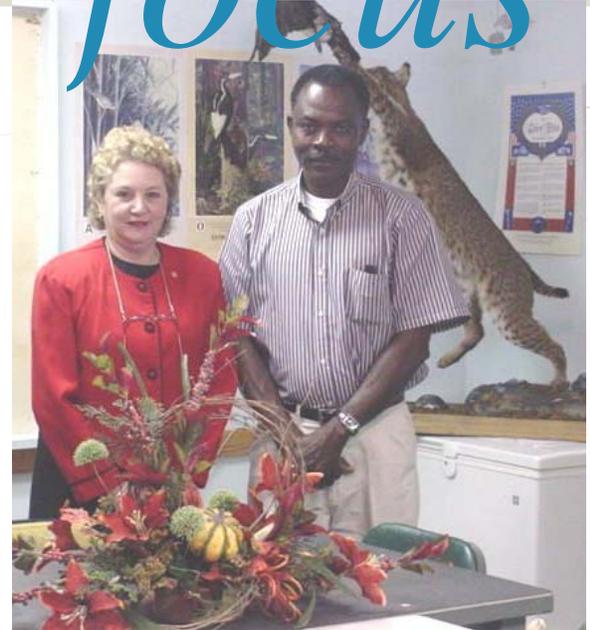
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# FSA focus

FOCUSED ON RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF MS FSA EMPLOYEES ON THE JOB & IN THE COMMUNITY



## Outreach Corner:

### BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY

If we stop to think long enough, all of us probably know of a special someone who goes above and beyond the call of duty. Someone who doesn't just "do their job" and go home. Someone like Mary Frances Carson, former Stone County PT.

When I heard about the special friendship that she shares with producer Thomas Ayodele, I just had to share it with all of you.

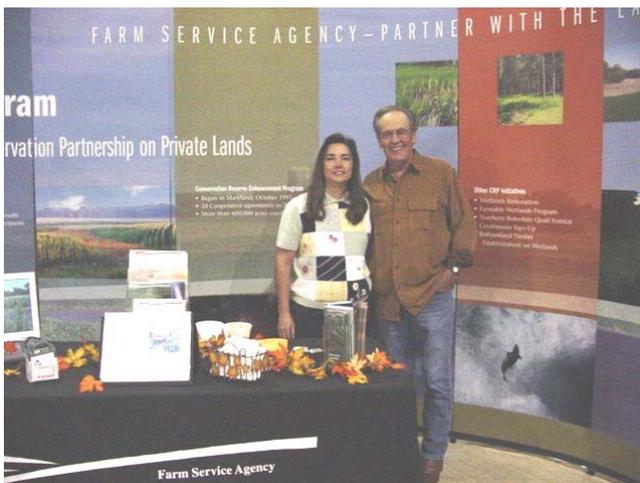
Thomas Ayodele came to America years ago. As a 17 year old in Ghana  
*(continued on page 11)*

Neshoba County FSA Co-Hosts  
2005 Annual Wildlife Jamboree

## FSA CRP Showcased at Jamboree

Neshoba County FSA once again co-sponsored the 2005 Wildlife Jamboree in Philadelphia, MS. Over 1800 were in attendance. CED John Paul Mason, one of the event's organizers, and PT Barbara Edwards say the event seems to grow each year. National Office allowed MS to borrow the Conservation Exhibit used at the White Conference for Conservation. Outreach Specialist J. Latrice Hill-Moore and PT Barbara Edwards manned the exhibit and interacted with the crowd. Barbara is shown on left with Melvin Tingle- host of Mississippi Outdoors and husband of former Newton County CED Betty Tingle.

*(more pictures on page 10)*



# HURRICANE KATRINA RIPS THROUGH FARMING COMMUNITY

## Feature Spotlight #1: Indian Springs Cooperative

Hurricane Katrina ripped through our farming community this year causing massive destruction. It has crippled several operations in southern Mississippi.

National Ag Group "Farm Aid" immediately came to Mississippi and the first stop was to the Indian Springs Cooperative. Director Ben Burkett had just completed a brief tour with Farm Aid, not knowing that he would soon after need help here at home in Mississippi. Carolyn Munger of Farm Aid and Ralph Paige, Director of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives, were on hand distributing checks on the spot to farmers who suffered damage/loss from the Hurricane.

Ben has been traveling around the state with Farm Aid providing financial assistance to producers. Below are pictures of damage to his home, crops & vegetable building.

**Indian Spring Cooperative:**

**Director: Ben Burkett  
(Former FSA State committeeman)**

**1 of 11 Cooperatives Under:  
MS Association of  
Cooperatives Jackson, MS  
1 of 55 under Federation of  
Southern Cooperatives**

**Crops: Watermelons,  
Various Greens, Tomatoes,  
Herbs**

**Main Supplier to:  
(before Katrina)  
Isle of Capri Casino  
New Orleans Farmers  
Market**



# FSA COC MEMBER RISES ABOVE ADVERSITY DESPITE KATRINA

Feature Spotlight #2:

## Scarborough Farm

"You just have to keep going...."  
- Jackie Scarborough



Stone County FSA County Committee Member Jackie Scarborough has faced adversity of all sorts this past year.

Diagnosed with cancer, Jackie has survived chemotherapy, a divorce and now Katrina.

Following a painful divorce, Jackie was left with a nursery, poultry farm, horses, cattle and huge farm debt.

"I'd decided to sell the poultry farm and try to keep my nursery going."

She was scheduled to close the sale on the poultry houses when Katrina came crashing through Mississippi. Katrina completely destroyed the houses and the nursery.

Katrina hit on August 29. Over a month had passed and still no sign of her insurance company (Note: During this interview, the insurance adjuster came to survey her damage)

With so much devastation and turmoil, you'd think she'd have her hands full. Well, not full enough. To top that off, she agreed to help out at the FSA Office during the ECP signup.

Since the storm, she has been at the office everyday helping other producers sign up for disaster related benefits.

"She's been a real angel for us here," said Marquetta Spears, FSA County Office Reviewer detailed to Stone County. She has really helped us out. I don't know what we would have done without her."

Jackie Scarborough. ...Nursery Owner, Poultry Grower, Cattle Producer, County Committee Member, Temporary FSA Employee, last, but certainly not least.....**SURVIVOR.**



**NOTE: In the midst of Jackie's turmoil, employees from FSA & NRCS came to her aid. Last month, employees pitched in *together* at Jackie's farm to restore her fencing.**

**Team USDA at work!!!!  
Way to go FSA! Thanks employees!**



Pictures from Scarborough Farm Damage



Nursery Totally Destroyed



Insurance Company Finally Comes!



# Team FSA Spirit:

*Unity: The Power of One*

Following Hurricane Katrina, FSA Offices in Southern MS were bombarded with producers signing up for Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) benefits. Over 22,000 applications have been taken in Mississippi.

Several of the offices were overwhelmed with the outpouring of producers visiting and calling the offices. One county has requested to recognize and thank the Farm Loan employees who stepped up to the plate and showed their team spirit by assisting the Program staff.

“Jones County would like to recognize:

Farm Loan Specialist Randy Saxon and Farm Loan Officer Mark Dillard of Noxubee County

for all the hard work and assistance provided following Hurricane Katrina. We could not have made it without you. For several weeks you, as well as many others around the state, left your normal lives and work routines to assist our program staff- even when your loan activity was just as busy.

We would like to extend a big “THANK YOU” for showing such TEAM spirit.”

*Randy Lowery, Jones CED & Staff*



Another great example of unity is the kindness of the Utah FSA State Office. They sent 11 handmade quilts in December for Hurricane Katrina victims. Plans have been made to accompany the MS Association of Cooperatives on a food, clothing & toy distribution and present the quilts to needy producers along the coast before Christmas.

Thanks Utah for showing the spirit of TEAM USDA!!!

# Foote Field Day



FSA Outreach recently participated in a Bermuda Grass Field Day sponsored by the SW Rankin County Farmers Cooperative at producer Lee Foote’s place. Sumrall 007 (named for Lawrence County producer Gerald Sumrall) was the topic of discussion.



# GRAHAM NOMINATED BUSINESSWOMAN OF THE YEAR



George County PT Regina Graham was recently honored as one of the nominees for Lucedale Businesswoman of the Year. Nine local businesswomen were nominated and honored at a luncheon last month at the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College. Guest speaker for the event was Dr. Angeline Dvorak, president of the Area Development Partnership in Hattiesburg. Congratulations Regina on your nomination!



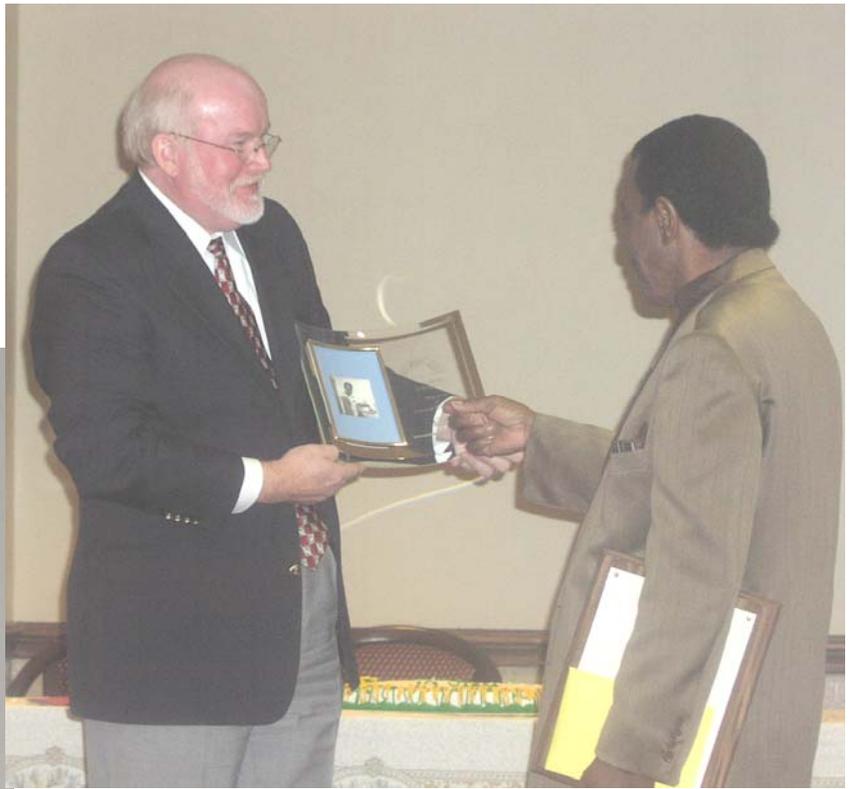
## A STAR IS BORN!.....

Check out the Bulls cheerleader! (A)  
Recognize this model?  
It's Lacey, granddaughter of  
Assistant DD Brenda McDaniel  
(Attala County).  
Lacey was chosen to model for Cheer  
Kids by Mississippi Sportswear this  
year. GOOOOOO LACEY!

## STATE OFFICE RETIREMENTS:

There have been several retirements this year. Shown are snapshots from the retirement party of State Office Employees Roy Cotton & Edmond Griffin. Roy (pictured in black suit) retired with 19 years of federal service and Edmond (pictured in brown suit) retired with a whopping **40** years of federal service! They'll both be terribly missed!







## EMPLOYEE AWARDS

In the last issue we featured Awards issued from 2003 until July 2005. Listed below are awards **due** to employees for dates **8/1/2005 through 12/31/2005 only**. Congratulations to all for their years of service!

### Federal State Office Employees

8/01/2005-12/31/2005
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Edmund Griffin - 40
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### Federal Employees

(Listed by District/County Order)

8/01/2005- 12/31/2005
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Mark Dillard – 15 Doug Naron-20
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### COUNTY EMPLOYEES (Listed by District/County Order)

8/01/2005-12/31/2005
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Selena Knight-20 Sandra White - 20 Kimbal Billingsley - 20 Angela Hollingsworth - 20 Melissa Love - 5 Sherry Dragoo - 5 Ross Loftin - 20 Rodney Dowdy - 25 Alvin Topp - 25 Jennifer Scarborough - 20 Dianne Neal - 25 Karla Perry - 20 Charley Bridges III - 15 Tracie Ellis - 5 Patty Roberts - 15 Lisa Slade-20 Amanda Harvey - 5
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## USDA FSA HELPS MISSISSIPPI FFA YOUTH AFFECTED BY HURICANE KATRINA

*"We're just pleased that FSA was able to come to the rescue of some of our state's brightest students."*

*SED Mickey Black*



FSA helped plant "Seeds of Hope" with state FFA members by sponsoring their trip to the 78th Annual National Convention last week. A generous donation of \$15,000 allowed over 20 students from the southern portion of the state and four advisors to continue their plans to attend and compete at the National Convention in Louisville, KY.

Thanks to a suggestion by George County CED Brent Orr, Outreach helped pitch the proposal to the National FSA Office in Washington, D.C.

The scholarship covered transportation, lodging and food expenses during the four day event. Chapters specifically targeted

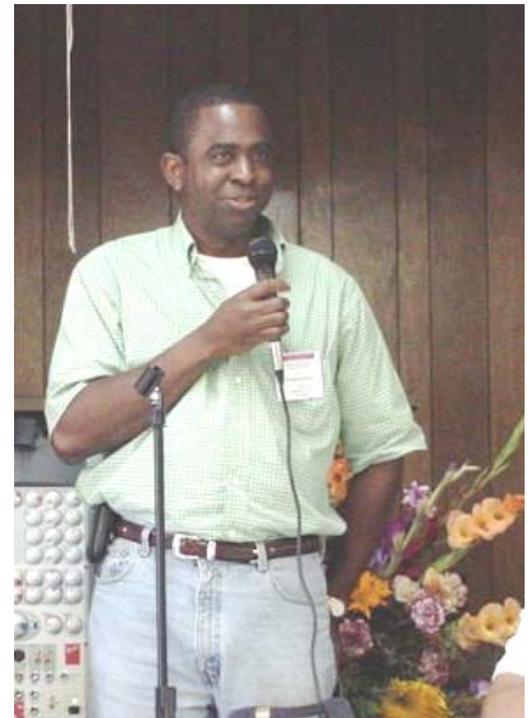
were Greene County, Stone High and Sumrall.

More than 52,000 visitors attended the Louisville convention, which ran from October 26<sup>th</sup> through the 29<sup>th</sup>. The event, touted as the largest annual gathering of any student organization in the world, attracted sponsors, parents and alumni in addition to the students and their advisors. FFA's current membership exceeds 490,000 students from over 7,200 local chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. FFA, which stands for Future Farmers of America, strives to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

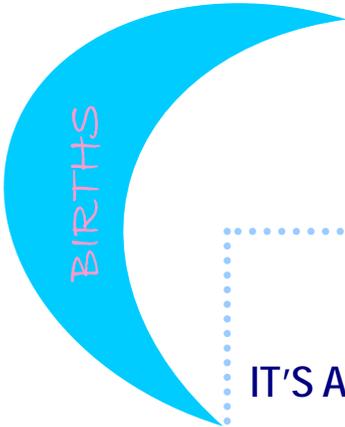


### **Yazoo Farm Loan Team Reaches Out**

*The staff recently displayed at the Annual Fall Fair in Yazoo City, MS*



**USDA Asst. Sec for Civil Rights Vernon Parker speaks at Annual Federation Meeting held recently in Epes, AL**



### IT'S A GIRL!!!!!!

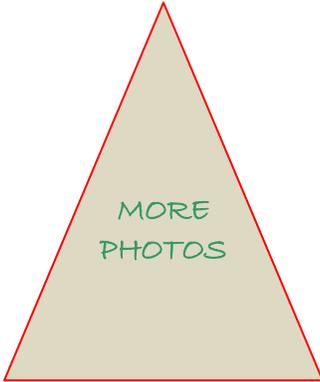
8/25 – Kaylee Grace Barton – Granddaughter of Scott County PT Kay Barton

11/18 - Leah Layne Walker – Granddaughter of Leflore CED Bob Givens

### IT'S A BOY!!!!



12/10 – Gavin Bradley Lowery – Grandson of Jones CED Randy Lowery  
10/14 – Thomas Jeff Boyd, Jr. Son of Covington FLO Jeff Boyd  
09/2005 – Thomas Alexander Urbanic, Grandson of Marion FLPT Jimmie Urbanic



....(continued from page 1)

Africa, he chose a life of adventure at sea over his father's edict that he earn a university degree. Thomas grew up in two cultures. "We lived in Ghana, but we were Nigerian," Ayodele said. He came to America after traveling for over 13 years on Greek and German ships. He wound up on the Mississippi Gulf Coast through a job that delivered bananas from Central America to Gulfport every 10 days. After some time he married, had 3 children and acquired U.S. Citizenship. However, in 1990, his life love affair with the sea was interrupted following a divorce. Circumstances mandated that he become sole caretaker of his children. "The judge would not give custody to a sailor," Ayodele said.

Also, with no formal education, he was forced to change careers. He chose to purchase a farm in Saucier, MS so that he could be home during the day for his kids. He sold pine straw to landscapers and grew and sold farm produce.

One day, still new to the area, he was picking pine straw and didn't realize it was a federal offense to pick straw from land located in the Desoto National Forest. "I didn't know, I was picking straw not knowing why the officer why stopping me!" Ayodele stated. "He gave me a ticket and I had so many days to pay the fine."

Enter FSA Program Technician Mary Frances Carson. Ayodele somehow ended up walking into the USDA ASCS Office to pay the fine. He knew it was a federal office building and thought that was where he needed to make restitution.

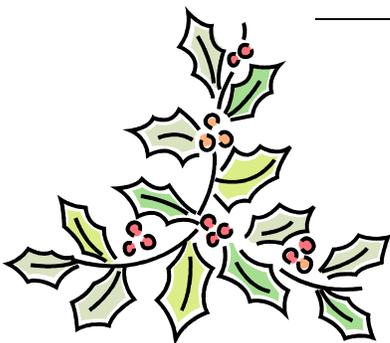
"I made a few telephone calls and directed him to where he needed to go. Just in conversation I found out that he had a farm and we began talking about ASCS programs," Carson reminisced. That day was the beginning of a friendship that has lasted for over 15 years.

Mr. Ayodele, an active FSA producer who signed up recently for the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) due to damage from Hurricane Katrina, not only sells vegetables, eggs and pine straw, but now, he's a full time student. His daughter has graduated from college and his two sons are currently in school at Ole Miss and Perkinston Community College. Ayodele decided to act on his father's original plan for an education. He has received a degree in Mathematics from USM with a minor in Industrial Engineering and Biological Sciences. He is working towards a Master's Degree in Physical Oceanography with USM's Dept. of Marine Science at the Stennis Space Center.

After years of plying the waters of the world's oceans as a merchant seaman, he is now studying the plants and animals of the sea. Farming has enabled him to send three children to college so that he could return to his love of the ocean.

"Mrs. Carson has been more than just a government employee she has been a friend to me over the years, said Ayodele. I am so thankful for her assistance. She pointed me in the right direction, literally, when I first started farming here. Over the years, she's continued to help keep me informed of FSA's programs."

This goes to show you there are still some employees who go beyond and above the call. Outreach salutes Mary Frances Carson for going "Beyond the Call of Duty"!



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*Merry Christmas*  
*from*  
*FSA Outreach!*