



# FOOD SECURITY RESEARCH CENTER

COLLEGE OF  
AGRICULTURE,  
FOOD, AND NATURAL  
RESOURCES | PRAIRIE  
VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY



# 2025

ANNUAL REPORT

Published February 2026

# Letter from the Executive Director

FOOD SECURITY  
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## Jennifer J. Quinlan, Ph.D.

Welcome to the first Annual Report of the Food Security Research Center (FSRC) at Prairie View A&M University. At the outset, I would like to formally acknowledge the support of the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (CAFNR), whose leadership and administrative infrastructure have been essential to the successful establishment of the FSRC. In particular, I extend my sincere appreciation to Dean Gerard D'Souza and Dr. Erdogan Memili, Director of CAFNR Research, for their continued guidance and advocacy.

During 2025, the Food Security Research Center made progress toward its mission to address food security challenges through integrated research, education, and outreach. The FSRC expanded its research capacity through the updating of its laboratory facilities. The Center secured extramural awards, including a \$299,880 USDA–NIFA AFRI CARE grant to develop evidence-based food safety education messaging for the next generation of caregivers, and a \$421,119 USDA–NIFA Evans-Allen grant focused on assessing microbial risks in goat meat production systems.

The FSRC also contributed to workforce development and experiential learning by participating in programs such as the Summer FUN program and the Experiential Approach to Beef Cattle Production Feedlots program.

Community engagement and collaboration with Extension remained a core component of the FSRC's activities. The Center supported and hosted educational and outreach events, including a National Nutrition Month workshop, a World Food Day event, and participation in multiple College and Extension events promoting food security, nutrition education, and mental health awareness.

Thank you for your interest in, and support of, the Food Security Research Center. We encourage continued engagement through the opportunities outlined at the conclusion of this report.

Warm regards,

*Jennifer J. Quinlan*

Jennifer J. Quinlan, Ph.D.  
Executive Director, Food Security Research Center



# About the FSRC

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## Mission

The Food Security Research Center (FSRC) is dedicated to alleviating food insecurity by addressing key dimensions of food security such as Food Safety & Nutrition, Food Production – Plant Science, Food Production – Animal Science, Workforce Development, and Food Access Solutions through innovative, interdisciplinary research and collaborative partnerships.

## Vision

Our vision is to be a leader in collaborative, interdisciplinary food security research, pioneering solutions that sustainably improve systemic food insecurity while developing the next generation of food and agriculture researchers, professionals, and innovators.

## Letter from the Executive Associate Director of Research, CAFNR Research

### Erdogan Memili, Ph.D.

At CAFNR Research, we pursue the Vision of Excellence in Research through the 3+1 Specific Missions:

- 1) Active research that is relevant, innovative, and impactful.
- 2) External grants.
- 3) Patents, Publications, Presentations, and Products.
- +1) Active linkages between research, student success, and extension outreach.

These are aligned well with the Journey to Eminence of PVAMU, Strategic Plans of CAFNR, and new priorities of the USDA and other funding agencies as well as the stakeholder needs. The Food Security Research Center is a vitally important part of CAFNR Research addressing the critical issues in the State of Texas, US, and the world.

Sincerely,

*Erdogan Memili*

Erdogan Memili, Ph.D.  
Executive Associate Director of Research  
College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources



# About the FSRC

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## 5 Key Areas

### ● Food Safety & Nutrition



Research that advances nutrition security and food safety to promote health and close the health disparities gap through research science, collaborations, and community partnerships to keep food safe and nutritious.

**Led by Javad Barouei, Ph.D., Associate Professor**

### ● Food Production: Animal Science



Research that improves productivity and product quality through targeted nutrition, gut health, and genetics, paired with hands-on meat processing experiences for students.

**Led by Jayant Lohakare, Ph.D., Associate Research Professor**

### ● Food Access Solutions



Research that engages community and industry partners to remove transportation, affordability, and infrastructure barriers and build local, sustainable access to safe, high-quality foods.

**Led by Elvis Ndembe Ph.D., Assistant Professor, College of Business**

### ● Food Production: Plant Science



Research that develops sustainable cropping strategies and innovative methods to increase yield and resilience for small-scale and rural producers while strengthening local food security.

**Led by Aruna Weerasoriya Ph.D., Professor, Associate Vice President for Research & Innovation**

### ● Workforce Development

Programs that prepare students for careers across nutrition, agriculture, food safety, and food systems throughout experiential learning and mentorship that builds a ready workforce.

# FSRC Team

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## Members



Sunil Dhoubhadel, Ph.D.  
Professor



Noel Estwick, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor



Richard Griffin, Ph.D.  
Professor



Tesfamichael Kebrom, Ph.D.  
Research Scientist



Ram L Ray, Ph.D., P.E., ACUE  
Professor



Jenelle Robinson, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor



Zhihong Xu, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor, TAMU

## FSRC Team Faculty and Staff



### Tamra Tolen, Ph.D. Assistant Professor, Animal Science

#### Education:

- Ph.D., Animal Science | Texas A&M University
- MS, Animal Science | Prairie View A&M University
- BS, Animal Science | Texas A&M University-Commerce.

#### Research:

Dr. Tolen's research has contributed to advancements in microbial control and shelf-life extension. Her current research focuses on the microbial characterization of goat meat available to consumers as well as use of antimicrobial technologies on goat meat. Dr. Tolen is also committed to the mentoring of the next generation of animal science students, both through her teaching as well as her work on ongoing Work Force Development Grants.



## Jenn Ashley Project Manager II

### **Education:**

- M.A. in Communication | West Texas A&M University
- B.S. in Sports & Exercise Science | West Texas A&M University

### **Experience:**

Jenn Ashley brings more than two decades of experience in community development, governmental affairs, and development, including roles in the Texas Senate and Texas House of Representatives and as a Family and Community Health Extension Agent. Raised in West Texas by second-generation Mexican Americans, she views her work in agriculture as a way to honor her parents' legacy that laid the foundation for and shaped her family's future.



## Ashley Aborisade Program Coordinator II

### **Education:**

- B.A., Mass Communication | Oklahoma City University

### **Experience:**

Ashley is a committed advocate for food security, financial education and creating opportunities to build strong, capable, and resilient families. She is a certified Texas Master Gardener and is currently pursuing further education in financial planning. Born in Liberia, she immigrated to the U.S. and grew up in Oklahoma City. At a young age, she watched her grandfather turn his backyard into a garden and saw firsthand the revolutionizing effects of gardening. Now, as a Master Gardener volunteer, she enjoys empowering others with the nourishing mental, physical, and spiritual benefits of gardening.

# FSRC Team

## Postdoctoral Researchers

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### Mahta Moussavi, Ph.D.



#### Education:

- Ph.D., Food Science | University of Newcastle
- M.S. in Food Science and Technology | Ferdowsi University of Mashhad
- B.S. in Food Science and Technology | Ferdowsi University of Mashhad

#### Research:

Dr. Moussavi's research investigates microbial food safety in conventional and emerging food products. Through her most recent USDA Grant she aims to identify and assess handling and storage practices that influence food safety risks and develop evidence-based interventions to enhance consumer food safety for the next generation of caregivers in the US.

### Yetunde Olawuyi, Ph.D., CPH



#### Education:

- Ph.D. in Public Health Nutrition | University of Ibadan
- M.S. in Human Nutrition | University of Ibadan
- B.S. in Food Science & Technology | University of Agriculture

#### Research:

Dr. Olawuyi's present research focuses on the assessment of the nutrition environment and access to healthy foods in rural Texas. Her research interests are centered on nutrition interventions designed to promote behavioral change with the goal of improving nutritional and health outcomes. She is particularly enthused by translational and implementation science approaches that help to prevent diet-related chronic diseases and address malnutrition in all its forms.





## **Health Disparities and Enteric Diseases: Empowering the Next Generation of Caregivers to Prevent Foodborne Illnesses**

**Investigators:** Moussavi, M. (PD), Quinlan, J.J. (Co-PD)

**Funding body:** USDA-National Institute of Food and Agriculture

**Program:** This work is supported by the Agricultural Food Research Initiative - Critical Agriculture Research and Extension, project award no. 2026-69008-45780

**Award duration:** 2026-2028

**Amount:** \$299,880

This project will address foodborne illness related health disparities by improving food safety knowledge and practices among college students, the next generation of caregivers for vulnerable populations. Formative research will be used to identify gaps in food safety knowledge and behaviors and inform the development and dissemination of engaging, relevant food safety education messages for young adults.

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## **Microbial Characterization of Skin-on and Skinned Goat Meat**

**Investigators:** Tolen, T.N. (PD)

**Funding body:** USDA - National Institute of Food and Agriculture

**Program:** This work is supported by the Agricultural Research at 1890 Land Grant Institutions - Evans Allen Capacity Grants

**Award duration:** 2025-2028

**Amount:** \$421,119

This project advances consumer safety by examining how carcass preparation methods shape microbial risks in a growing U.S. goat meat market. As cultural and culinary influences expand access to both skin-on and skinned products, understanding microbial behavior across these products is essential.





Through comparative bacterial survival testing on skin-on and skinned goat meat and evaluations of antimicrobial treatments, our goal is to quantify differences in survivability and intervention effectiveness and to translate findings into practical guidance for processors and producers. Led by FSRC, this effort integrates expertise in meat science, food microbiology, and public health to generate evidence-based strategies that reduce foodborne risk, inform production practices, and align with USDA priorities to protect public health and strengthen small-ruminant agriculture.

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## Annual Summer Undergraduate Research and Extension Foundational Internship Training (A SURE FIT)

**Investigators:** Riggs, P. (PD), **Tolen, T.N.** (Co-PD), Cleere, J. (Co-PD), Dunlap, K. (Co-PD), M. Pina (Co-PD), Drewery, M. (Co-PD)

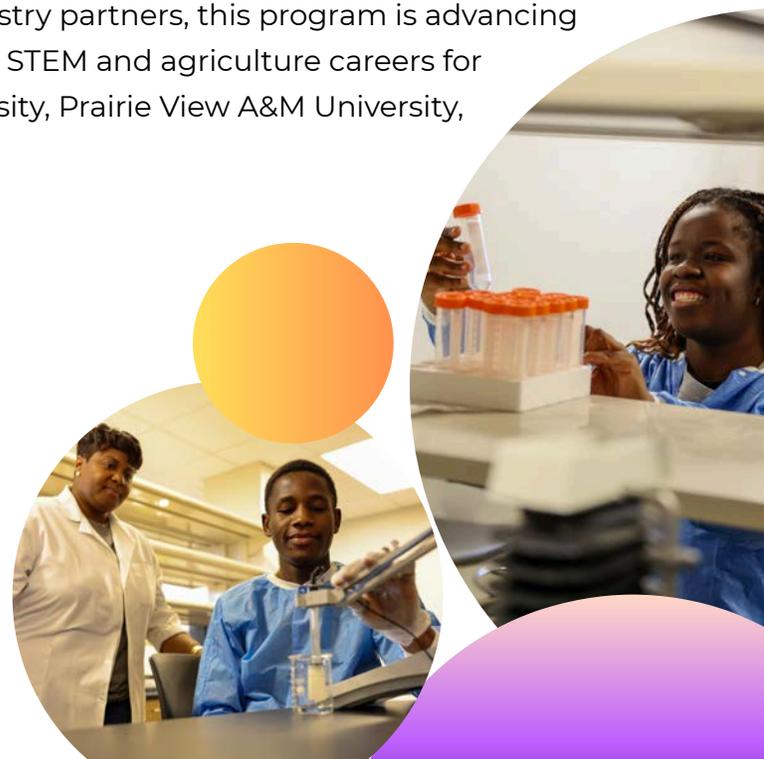
**Funding body:** USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture

**Program:** This work is supported by the Agricultural Food Research Initiative - Critical Agriculture Research and Extension, project award no. 2024-68018-42688

**Award duration:** 2025-2030

**Amount:** Total award: \$748,635; PVAMU Award: \$24,540

Through hands-on research in animal health and production, structured mentorship, and professional development with industry partners, this program is advancing workforce equity by expanding access to STEM and agriculture careers for undergraduates from Texas State University, Prairie View A&M University, and Texas A&M University.





## Food Access, Food Safety, and Nutritional Quality: A Comparison of Food and Food Retailers in Rural and Urban Communities

**Investigators:** Quinlan, J.J. (PD), Moussavi, M. (Co-PD)

**Funding body:** USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture

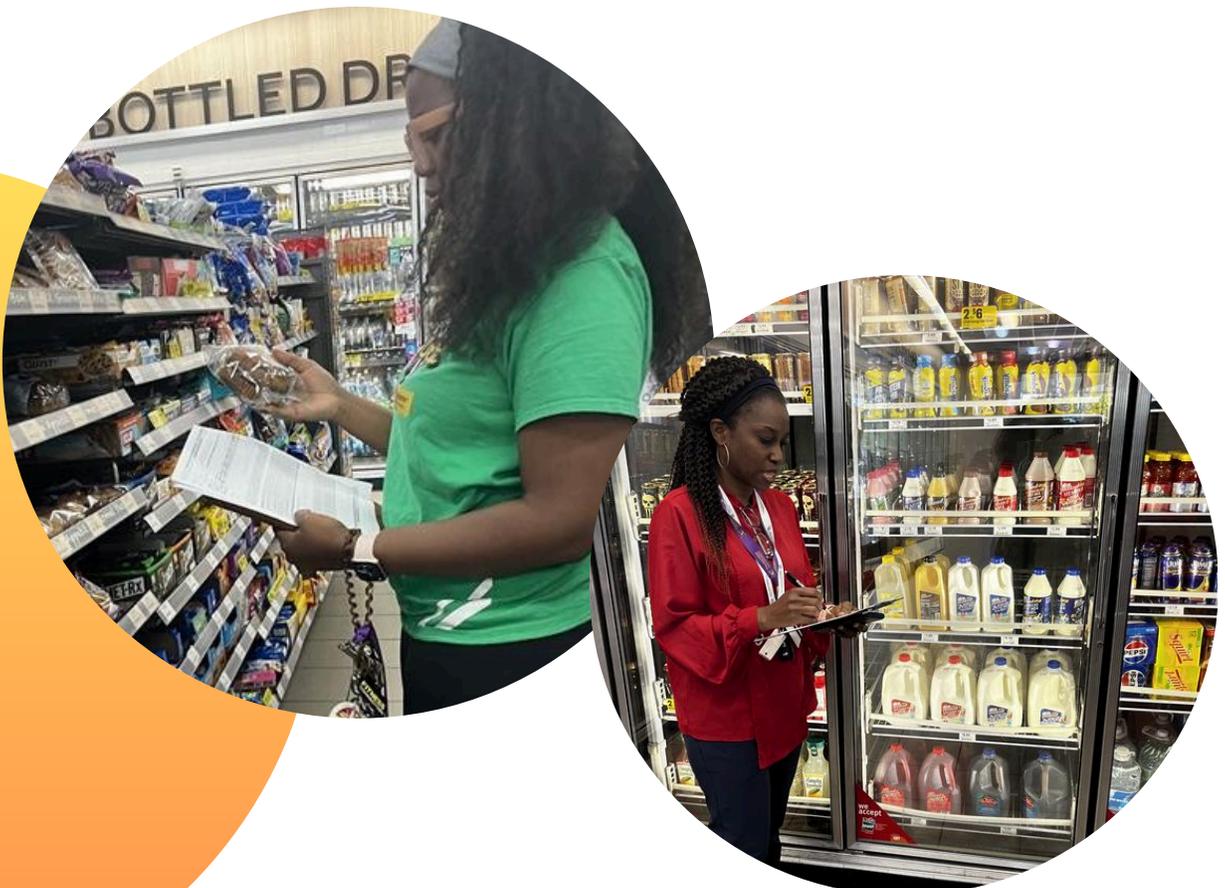
**Program:** This work is supported by the Agricultural Research at 1890 Land Grant Institutions - Evans Allen Capacity Grants

**Award duration:** 2024-2027

**Amount:** \$490,783

This project advances health and nutrition security by examining how geography influences the safety and nutrition of foods available to both rural and urban communities.

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## Immersive Experiential Education of Urban Educators in Food and Agricultural Sciences

**Investigators:** Quinlan J.J. (PD), Lee, V. (Co-PD), 2023-2024; Lee, V. (PD), Quinlan, J.J. (Co-PD), 2024-2026

**Funding body:** USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture

**Program:** This work is supported by the Agricultural Food Research Initiative - Education and Workforce Development, Professional Development for Agricultural Literacy, project award no. 2023-67037-39947

**Award duration:** 2023-2026

**Amount:** \$500,000

This project is advancing workforce development by expanding access to knowledge about careers in food, nutrition, and agriculture to students in Philadelphia, PA. It is unique in that it empowers educators with knowledge about such career opportunities to amplify the efforts of the training to the many students with whom High School teachers and counselors interact.

Three cohorts were recruited to take part in the program over three summers (2023-2025), resulting in 63 participants. Preliminary data indicate that the program significantly increased participants' knowledge and confidence to promote such career opportunities to the students they teach and counsel. It serves as a model that may be replicated in both urban and rural Texas school districts.





## The Impact of Proteins and Dietary Fibers on the Microbiome: Is Digestibility the Understudied Driver of Metabolic Dysregulation?

**Investigators:** Barouei J. (PD), Rabinowitz, J.D.

**Funding body:** Princeton University

**Program:** Princeton Alliance for Collaborative Research and Innovation

**Award duration:** 2023-2026

**Amount:** \$250,000

This collaborative project investigates how food digestibility influences metabolism, immunity, and gut microbiome composition. Using a rodent model, we have found that highly digestible carbohydrates increased intestinal inflammation, while plant-based proteins being less digestible had greater anti-inflammatory effects compared to animal proteins. The project has also offered hands-on research training for PVAMU students in both institutions' labs.

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## Experiential Approach to Beef Cattle Production Feedlots for Undergraduate Students

**Investigators:** Tolen T.N. (PD), Daley M., Kinman L. A., Herring A.

**Funding body:** USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture

**Program:** This work is supported by the Agricultural Research at 1890 Land Grant Institutions - Evans Allen Capacity Grants, project award no. 2023-38821-39981

**Award duration:** 2023-2026

**Amount:** \$300,000

This project advances workforce readiness by creating a joint PVAMU–Texas A&M feedlot on the PVAMU farm to immerse students in production animal systems. Through workshops, day-to-day feedlot operations, and exposure to meat quality assessment, students practice animal husbandry, livestock management, and data-driven decision making across the value chain from growth to harvest. The effort provides experiential learning that applies classroom knowledge to real operations, builds practical skills for careers in production animal industries, and strengthens student interest, retention, and job readiness.





## **Abattoir Academy: Building Capacity for an Educational Workforce Development Program to Promote Experiential Learning Best-In-Class Practices**

**Investigators:** Kinman L. A. (PD), Garcia, L., Daley, M. (Co-PD) , **Tolen, T. N.** (Co-PD)

**Funding body:** USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture

**Program:** This work is supported by the 1890 Institution Teaching, Research and Extension Capacity Building Grant, project award no. 2023-38821-39974

**Award duration:** 2023-2026

**Amount:** \$300,000

This project is advancing workforce development by addressing the skilled labor gap in the meat and poultry sector for high school and undergraduate students at Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU) and The Ohio State University (OSU).

Led jointly by PVAMU and OSU, this work brings together expertise in animal science, food safety, and workforce development to generate evidence-based strategies that strengthen technical competencies, support the mission of 1890 Land-Grant HBCUs, and prepare a job-ready agricultural workforce.





## **An Integrated Approach to Minimize Produce Food Safety Risks for Small-Scale Diversified Growers in Texas**

**Investigators:** Barouei, J. (PD), Somenahally, A., Henry, K., **Moussavi, M.**, Park, D., **Kebrom, T.**, Harris, L., Jung, Y.

**Funding body:** USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture

**Program:** This work is supported by the 1890 Institution Teaching Research and Extension Capacity Building Grant, project award no. 2023-38821-39962

**Award duration:** 2023-2026

**Amount:** \$580,000

Findings reveal that pathogens originating from livestock manure can persist in soil at harmful levels beyond the USDA National Organic Program's recommended three- to four-month interval between raw manure application and produce harvest. This extended persistence increases the risk of fresh produce contamination. These insights are critical for developing science-based food safety risk reduction strategies for small-scale farming operations.

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## **A Nature-based Solution to Reduce Nitrogenous Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

**Investigators:** Barouei, J. (PD), **Kebrom, T.**, Moussavi, S. A.

**Funding body:** Shell International Exploration and Production Inc.

**Award duration:** 2023-2025

**Amount:** \$810,964





Agriculture is the primary source of global N<sub>2</sub>O emissions, largely due to the overuse of synthetic and organic fertilizers, as well as biological nitrogen fixation through rhizobia-legume symbiosis. The study aims to mitigate N<sub>2</sub>O emissions by developing nitrogen-fixing bacterial inoculants capable of converting N<sub>2</sub>O into harmless nitrogen gas (N<sub>2</sub>). Using both culture-based and molecular techniques, the research team has identified several bacterial strains with dual functionality: efficient nitrogen fixation and N<sub>2</sub>O reduction.

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## Enhancing Soil Carbon Sequestration by Implementing Innovative Tools and Interventions Under Different Ecosystems

**Investigators:** Ray, R. (PD), Griffin, R., Carson, L., Qian, L., Weerasooriya, A. (Co-PD), Fares, A., Barouei, J. (Co-PD), Gao, Y.

**Funding body:** Shell International Exploration and Production

**Award duration:** 2023-2026

**Amount:** \$2,576,237

This unique research advances a nature-based solutions approach for agriculture by developing cost-effective soil amendments that increase carbon sequestration in agricultural soils and reduce environmental impact. The project is conducted within both large-scale field sites and controlled environments, using high-resolution instruments to track soil carbon dynamics and quantify soil and atmospheric gas emissions.

Launched in 2023, the work also includes a dedicated microbiology component led by Dr. Javad Barouei that examines how soil microbial communities contribute to soil health, crop productivity, carbon capture, and emissions mitigation. To date, baseline microbial profiles have been mapped, and post-amendment samples are currently being processed to assess microbial shifts and related functional changes. Findings from these integrated data will provide producer recommendations and standards for scaling sustainable soil management.





# Conferences and Scientific Presentations

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March 2025

## Consumer Food Safety Education Conference, Houston, TX

The Food Safety Survey for Older Adults: A Research Tool to Better Understand the Needs of Your Community”, Jennifer J. Quinlan, Ph.D.



Jennifer Quinlan, Ph.D. Presented her research on the availability and use of a validated survey for older adults.

“Leftover Food Handling Practices Among Minority Populations”, Mahta Moussavi, Ph.D.

Mahta Moussavi, Ph.D. and FSRC postdoctoral researcher, presented a research poster examining how education around proper food handling practices can improve food safety for certain populations.



# Conferences and Scientific Presentations

FOOD SECURITY RESEARCH CENTER



**July 2025**

**International Association for Food Protection Annual Meeting,  
Cleveland, OH**

“Plant-Based Meat Products: Determination of Microbial Quality for Consumers under Varying Handling Conditions”, Mahta Moussavi, Ph.D., Javad Barouei, Ph.D., Jennifer Quinlan, Ph.D.



“Retail, Regulatory, and Food Rescue and Recovery Considerations to Address Global Food Waste”, Jennifer Quinlan, Session Convenor



*PVAMU FSRC's new M.S. graduate students Andrew Appiah Darkwah and David Mugabo attended their first international conference, pictured here with Dr. Tamra Tolen*

# Conferences and Scientific Presentations



**November 2025**



**American Public Health Association Annual Meeting and Expo  
Washington, D.C.**

“Retail food access:  
Assessing the rural  
foodscape of Texas,  
using the Nutrition  
Environmental  
Measurement Survey”,  
Chloe Suttles, Yetunde  
Olawuyi, Ph.D. and  
Jennifer J. Quinlan, Ph.D.



# Collaborations and Partnerships

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## Norman Borlaug Institute Texas A&M University

Representatives from the Norman Borlaug Institute visited the Prairie View A&M University campus for a tour and meetings with the Food Security Research Center, including discussions on global food security and partnership opportunities.



*(From Left to Right)  
Jack Elliot, Maad Rawandoozi, Gabriele Bonaiti, Jennifer Quinlan, Ariun Ishdorj, Jenn Ashley, Ambassador Eric Bost, Ignacie Tumushime, Leda Amrullah*

The Food Security Research Center visited the Norman Borlaug Institute to discuss collaborative pathways for international research addressing global food security challenges. The discussion centered on practical ways to work together on international research that addresses real-world food security challenges across global food systems.

# Collaborations and Partnerships

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## Capitol Visit

*Members of our research team visited the Texas Capitol to engage with policymakers, including State Representative Caroline Fairly, on water resource challenges facing the state, including the Texas Panhandle. The visit highlighted legislative collaboration and advisory efforts focused on sustainable water solutions for the region.*



*(From Left to Right) Addisie Geremew, Ram Ray, Sanjita Gurau, Jenn Ashley*

# Academics

## Graduate Students

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### Andrew Appiah Darkwah



#### ***Why am I at PVAMU?***

I chose Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU) because it represents a foundation for both academic excellence and social development. The institution's commitment to student success, research advancement, and community engagement aligns with my personal and professional goals. My experiences on campus ranging from a supportive learning environment to meaningful research opportunities have reaffirmed my belief that PVAMU provides the resources and mentorship necessary for holistic growth.

#### ***Why am I interested in food security?***

Food is an essential determinant of human health and societal stability. When food is unavailable, inaccessible, or unsafe, it can lead to severe consequences such as malnutrition, mental health challenges, and social unrest. My interest in food security is driven by a desire to address these issues by promoting systems that ensure the consistent availability and safety of food. I am particularly motivated to contribute to research and initiatives that mitigate food insecurity and improve public health outcomes.

#### ***What impact do I want to have on the world as a professional within the food security field?***

As a professional in the food security field, my goal is to contribute to global efforts that promote food sustainability, safety, and equity. I aspire to develop and implement strategies that enhance food production systems, reduce waste, and strengthen food safety regulations. Through this work, I aim to foster a world where all individuals have access to safe, nutritious, and sustainable food resources, thereby improving health and quality of life.



## ● Moni Fadamiro



### ***Why am I at PVAMU?***

I chose Prairie View A&M University because I wanted to pursue an opportunity that would allow me to do valuable research that bridges the gap between food science, nutrition and public health. PVAMU has a strong initiative focusing on addressing real-world issues in food such as food insecurity, food disparity, and access to nutrition.

### ***Why am I interested in food security?***

My interest in food security stems from my passion of recognizing how safe, nutritious and accessible food is essential to health. Through my previous experiences in food safety, quality assurance and microbiological research, I have seen how disparities in food systems affect both the food industry and health outcomes.

### ***What impact do I want to have on the world as a professional within the food security field?***

As a professional within the food security field, I want to make an impact in strengthening global food systems by advancing research and policies that ensure food safety and equity. I hope to contribute to developing evidence-based strategies that reduce foodborne illness risks and promote safe and nutritious foods for all communities. One day, I hope to start my own food business that would increase access to food for marginalized consumers.

# Academics

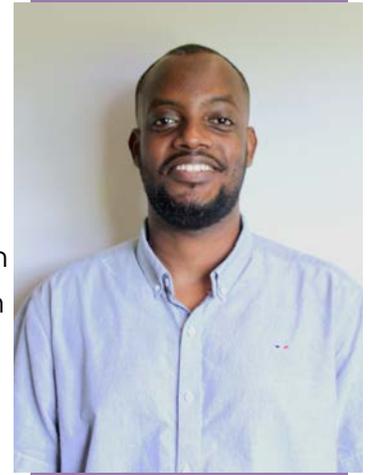
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## David Mugabo

### ***Why am I at PVAMU?***

I am at PVAMU because I strongly believe in its approach that integrates academics, research, and extension. The high education standards and research at PVAMU will help me reach my goal of becoming an aspiring leader in the food security industry.



### ***Why am I interested in food security?***

I grew up in Sub-Saharan Africa, a region where healthy and nutritious food have been a critical challenge affecting millions of people for many years. From this experience, I was able to witness firsthand how food insecurity affects people's livelihoods and shapes children's success later in life. This inspired my passion for food security and motivated me to work toward improving food access both in my community and worldwide.

### ***What impact do I want to have on the world as a professional within the food security field?***

As a professional within the food security field, I hope to use my research skills to explore food security challenges in low-income communities and advocate for data-driven policies that address the challenges and improve food security and people's livelihoods.



## ● Chloe Suttles

### ***Why am I at PVAMU?***

PVAMU offered me the opportunity to grow as both a scholar and a professional through research that aligns with my passion for improving health outcomes in underserved populations. Being mentored by professors who are deeply invested in public health and food access has helped me refine my research interests and expand my perspective. I believe PVAMU is the place where I can connect my purpose, education, and creativity to make real change in communities that look like mine.



### ***Why am I interested in food security?***

My interest in food security comes from understanding how deeply food access shapes overall health, wellness, and quality of life. Growing up, I saw how limited access to nutritious foods can affect families' physical and emotional well-being, especially in low-income. As someone studying nutrition, I've learned that food security goes beyond having enough food. I'm passionate about addressing these disparities and creating sustainable solutions that make nutritious eating attainable for everyone, regardless of income or zip code.

### ***What impact do I want to have on the world as a professional within the food security field?***

As a professional, I want to bridge the gap between research, community, and policy to create lasting improvements in how people access and understand food. My goal is to help develop programs that empower communities to take control of their nutrition through education, accessibility, and advocacy. I want my work to inspire systemic change, where healthy food is not a privilege but a standard whether through public health initiatives, community-based research, or policy development.

# Academics

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*Andrew Appiah Darkwah (far left) among other students in the Department of Agriculture, Nutrition and Human Ecology, being inducted as honorable members of the Kappa Omicron Nu honors society for their excellent academic performance.*

## Journal Club



The CAFNR Journal Club builds skills in critical reading, evidence-based discussion, and scholarly community for students and faculty. The Journal Club meets monthly to examine current research in agriculture, food and natural resources. Each month it provides a hands-on format with rotating roles so students gain experience in clear presenting, rigorous questioning, and collegial, constructive feedback.



## Land Grant Seminar Speaker Highlights

Speakers hosted by FSRC



Yaohua “Betty” Feng, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Extension Specialist in Food Science at Purdue University, presented “An Integrated Research and Extension Program: Human Factors in Food Science and Food Safety”, March 20, 2025.

Ambassador Eric M. Bost, Deputy Director of Texas A&M’s Norman Borlaug Institute and former U.S. Ambassador to South Africa, presented “Issues and Challenges in Addressing Food Security”, March 27, 2025.





## Land Grant Seminar Speaker Highlights

Speakers supported by FSRC



Eric Brenner, Program Coordinator, Latin America and Caribbean; Assistant Director, Center for Coffee Research and Education, Texas A&M University/Norman Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture and Development, presented “The Economic, Cultural, and Political Impact of Coffee”, September 11, 2025.

# Community and Extension Outreach

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## Community Outreach

### ● Prairie View Volunteer Firefighter's Association

**When:**

December  
2024

**Who:** Food  
Security Club

**What:** Holiday  
Food  
Outreach

**Where:**  
PVVFFA Fire  
Station



The FSRC partnered with the Prairie View Volunteer Firefighter's Association (PVVFFA) to provide holiday meals for 65 local families identified as high risk for food insecurity. With the help of student volunteers the team supplied over 300 pounds of nonperishable holiday food and more than ten pounds of fresh herbs and greens harvested from the PVAMU Student Garden Club's Food Scape project in front of the AgBus building.

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### ● National Nutrition Month

**When:** March 2025

**Who:** Mary Snowden, RD and the FSRC Team

**What:** Faculty and Staff In-Person and Online  
Education Campaign

**Where:** PVAMU Campus and online

The Food Security Research Center marked National Nutrition Month with a campus Nutrition Workshop for PVAMU faculty and staff to deepen understanding of nutrition and practical daily choices.



# Community and Extension Outreach

FOOD SECURITY RESEARCH CENTER



Ms. Mary Snowden, RD and Director, PVAMU Dietetic Internship Program, led the workshop. Using real-world scenarios, participants tested the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics guidance against their own lifestyle choices, asked

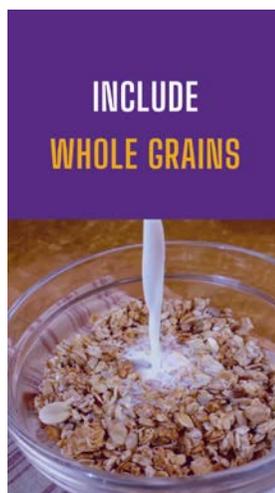


questions, and determined best options that would actually fit their routines.



The FSRC also initiated an online educational campaign for National Nutrition Month. “Health Tips brought to you by the Food Security Research

Center and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics” were launched each week of the month, featuring information from the AND’s website delivered in an engaging and culturally-relevant way.



# Community and Extension Outreach

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## World Food Day

**When:** October 2025

**Who:** The FSRC Team with CAFNR Research

**What:** Food and Agriculture Organization World Food Day 2025: "Hand in Hand for Better Food and a Better Future"

**Where:** College of Juvenile Justice, CAFNR Research building



On October 16, 2025, the Food Security Research Center hosted Beth Racine, DrPH, RD, Professor, Associate Department Head for Extension, Texas A&M AgriLife Research Center at El Paso Director, for a World Food Day seminar.

She presented "The Need for Strong Regional Food Systems," focusing on four research questions and why each matters in practice.

*Marcus Glenn, PVAMU Alum and Director of the Food and Agriculture Literacy program for Houston Independent School District's Nutrition Services, also spoke about the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and how it applies to our food systems.*



*Attendees were encouraged to bring their cultural dishes to share after the Seminar.*



# Community and Extension Outreach

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## Extension Support

### ● Research Extension Apprenticeship Program (REAP)

**When:** August 2025

**Who:** Cynthia Pierfax, Ph.D. and the Extension Team

**What:** REAP summer camp for high school students

**Where:** PVAMU Campus

The Food Security Research Center supported the PVAMU Extension at the Research Extension Apprenticeship Program (REAP), a camp for high school juniors and seniors, to introduce college bound students to food and agriculture careers. Led by Cynthia Pierfax, Ph.D., PVAMU Extension agent, participants visit field sites and spend time with research and extension staff to see daily workflows and the results of ongoing projects.

Our FSRC students led three interactive sessions, presenting everyday scenarios from their research thesis projects. They demonstrated 1) how to cut waste at home, 2) plan and store food to prevent loss, 3) practice food safety by using a cooking thermometer and safe refrigeration, and 4) make healthy choices on a budget. This event demonstrates how students' research has real world implications and how a career in food and nutrition can significantly impact everyday life.



# Community and Extension Outreach

FOOD SECURITY  
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## PVAMU Extension Mental Well-being Conference

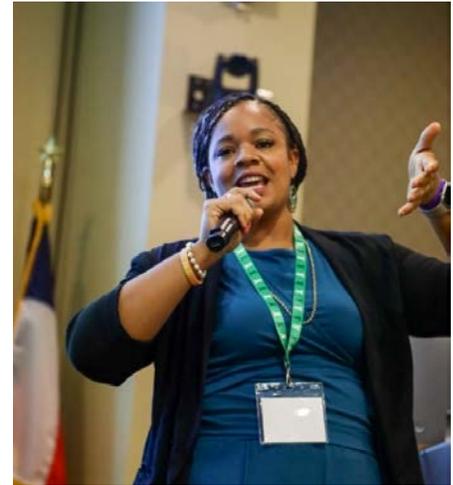
**When:** June 2025

**Who:** Sabrina Simon, PVAMU Extension Program Specialist

**What:** "Breaking the Silence: A New Era of Mental Well-Being"

**Where:** College of Juvenile Justice, PVAMU

Ashley Aborisode, FSRC Program Coordinator and Texas Master Gardener, presented "Rooted in Wellness: The Effects of Gardening on Mental Wellbeing" for PVAMU Extension's Mental Wellbeing Conference. She explained how gardening can steady the nervous system and improve mood and cognitive function, and why gardening works well in trauma-informed settings that



emphasize safety, choice, trust and peer support.

The conference was planned by Sabrina Simon, PVAMU Family and Community Health Extension agent, in June 2025 at the College of Juvenile Justice.

*Sabrina Simon at the Mental Well-Being Conference, June 2025*

## PVAMU Summer Bridge

**When:** June 2025

**Who:** TeneInger Abrom-Johnson, PVAMU Lecturer

**What:** PVAMU CAFNR Summer Bridge 2025 Cohort

**Where:** Agriculture and Business Multipurpose Building, PVAMU

# Community and Extension Outreach

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FSRC Program Coordinator, Ashley Aborisade, led a Food and Nutrition Security session for PVAMU's Summer Bridge cohort that looked at what food security means for new college students. She clarified the difference between food security and food insecurity and why some groups face higher risk, then showed what those realities look like on our own campus using current student hunger data. Led by PVAMU Instructor, TeneInger Abrom-Johnson, the camp took place in June of 2025 with incoming freshmen from all over the United States participating.

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## BRIDGE Mental Health Youth Conference

**When:** August 2025

**Who:** Rebecca Bowe, Executive Director of BRIDGE Mental Health

**What:** BRIDGE Mental Health Youth Conference

**Where:** Schulenburg, TX

The BRIDGE Mental Health Youth Conference is a community-focused event designed to educate and empower youth and those who support them. Students in grades 7-12, educators, parents, first responders, and community leaders heard presentations on critical topics such as suicide prevention, trauma awareness and mental wellness. Ashley Aborisade, FSRC Program Coordinator and Texas Master Gardener, presented on the topic "Healing Gardens: How Gardening Supports Mental Health and Trauma Recovery."

# Community and Extension Outreach

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## Extension Support

### PVAMU Extension's 4th Annual CEP Women in Agriculture Conference

**When:** November 2024

**Who:** Brandon Hawkins, PVAMU Ag and Natural Resources Extension Agent

**What:** Women in Ag Conference

**Where:** Virtual

PVAMU Extension's 4th Annual CEP Women in Agriculture Conference was held virtually on November 1, 2024.



Dr. Jennifer J. Quinlan presented on "Food Security, Food Safety, and Consumer Food Waste". She outlined current food insecurity levels in Texas and the United States, then shared survey findings on older adults' food handling. The virtual program was organized by PVAMU Extension Agent Brandon Hawkins.



*FSRC graduate students playing "Food Safety Bingo" with attendees at Royal Harvest in November 2025*

# Community and Extension Outreach

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*Jayant Lohakare (2nd from left) with Meaquell Lewis, director of PVAMU Hilltop Reserve Emergency Resource Center, and volunteers providing eggs for their food pantry.*



*Mahta Moussavi and Yetunde Olawuyi represented the FSRC at the CAFNR Goes Pink Breast Cancer Awareness Walk in October 2025.*



*Jayant Lohakare offers hands-on learning opportunities for students at the Poultry Center.*

# Please join us!

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## **Opportunities for students, faculty, and collaborators**

### **Faculty and Extension Professionals**

Apply for pilot funds through the FSRC's SEED grant program to build preliminary data and collaborate with the Center

### **Collaborators**

Work with the FSRC to identify areas for collaboration and proposal submission opportunities

### **Students**

Apply for admission to the M.S. in Nutrition or M.S. in NRES in the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources

### **Contact Information**

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