

# 2025 - 2026 LEGISLATIVE REQUEST (\$33,600,00)

## RECURRING



**PRIORITY 1**

**\$2.3 Million**  
Recurring

Statewide Extension  
Agribusiness  
Development & Expansion



**PRIORITY 2**

**\$1.5 Million**  
Recurring

Agriculture Innovation  
Research

## NON-RECURRING



**PRIORITY 3**

**\$525K**

Business Development  
Training and Assistance



**PRIORITY 4**

**\$600K**

New Farmer  
Business Assistance



**PRIORITY 5**

**\$250K**

Future Farm Planning



**PRIORITY 6**

**\$425K**

Health QUAD Initiative

## CAPITAL



**\$8 Million**  
(Camp Daniels - Health Training Center)



**\$20 Million**  
(Animal Research & Education Center)

Innovate.

Educate.

Elevate.

SCState

PUBLIC SERVICE & AGRICULTURE

Innovate. Educate. Elevate.

# **FY 2025-26 Budget Request**

**Col. (Ret.) Alexander Conyers, President**

**Dr. Louis Whitesides,**

Vice President, Public Service and Agriculture &  
Executive Director, 1890 Research & Extension

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# Key Officials/Senior Management Team

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# Agency Information

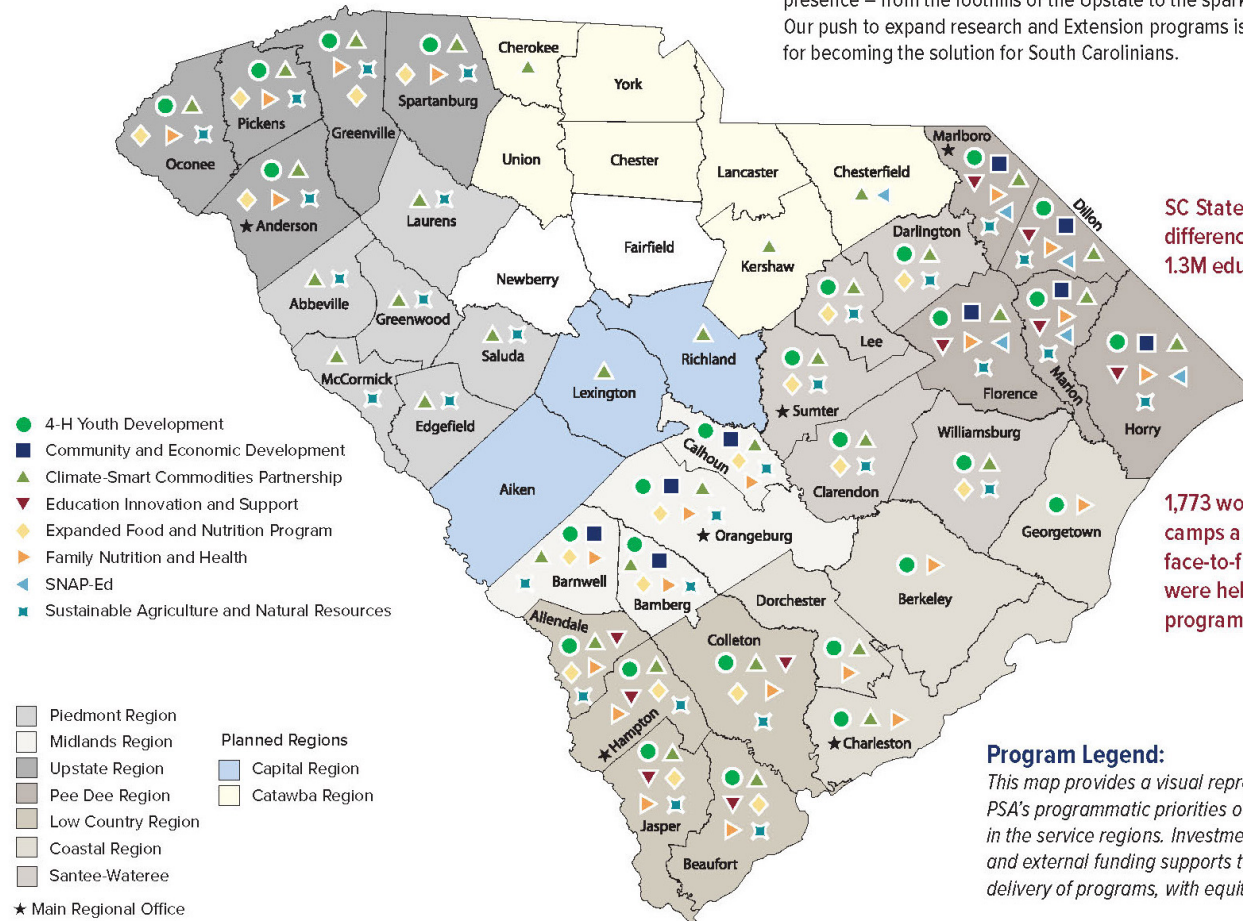
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- SC State PSA innovates and educates to elevate the quality of life and raise the standard of living for all South Carolinians.
- From methodical research for the betterment of traditional and controlled environment agriculture to technological innovation, business enterprises and promoting family wellness in limited-resource communities across South Carolina, SC State PSA constitutes an enormous portion of the university's outreach activities for more than 120 years.
- SC State PSA is part of a national system of over 100 land-grant colleges and universities which provides education, research and outreach services for the benefit of their respective states, the nation and global communities. The cooperative work is done in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the state departments of agriculture.



## Palmetto Presence | FY24

SC State PSA's presence in the Palmetto state spans nearly every county. Our innovative research and life-enhancing priority outreach programs are delivered directly in 32 of the state's 46 counties. By 2026, we will achieve a statewide presence – from the foothills of the Upstate to the sparkling Low Country coast. Our push to expand research and Extension programs is fueled by our passion for becoming the solution for South Carolinians.



SC State PSA made a difference in the lives of 1.3M educational contacts.

1,773 workshops, events, youth camps and sessions, including face-to-face, hybrid and virtual were held across all priority programmatic areas.

### Program Legend:

*This map provides a visual representation of SC State PSA's programmatic priorities offered to citizens in the service regions. Investment of federal, state and external funding supports the development and delivery of programs, with equitable access to all.*



# Agency Information, *cont.*

## Research

At the core of its mission, SC State PSA's research seeks to identify scientific solutions that would positively impact current and emerging food and agricultural issues at local, state, national and global levels.

### 4 Research Focus Areas:

- Data Science for Food and Agricultural Systems
- Food Safety and Health
- Social Science in Agriculture
- Urban, Indoor and Emerging Agriculture





# 1890 Research Program

## Is Chickpeas A Viable Crop in South Carolina?



Dr. Nana Kusi, Extension agronomist and lead researcher of the chickpea research project, shares the critical goals of their work: to determine whether chickpeas can thrive in South Carolina and to introduce this nutritious legume as an alternative crop for limited-resource farmers in the state. 🌱

By exploring chickpeas' potential, the project aims to diversify farming options and strengthen the agricultural economy.

A special thanks to @sc.agriculture for funding this project!

## High Tunnel Production



Local farmers were immersed into the world of high tunnel production systems at our workshop!

Farmers learned how these innovative structures could revolutionize your farm system, offering year-round cultivation and increased yields. 🚜

Contact Dr. Brandon Huber at [bhuber@scsu.edu](mailto:bhuber@scsu.edu) for more information on future high tunnel production workshops.

## Establishment of Silvopasture Demonstration at the SCSU Farm, Olar, SC



- Two pine species were planted (loblolly and longleaf pines) in a five (5) acres plot.
- Spacings designed to allow 60 feet alleyways for forages (cool and warm season forages and cover crops).
- Engage students in the care and maintenance of the demonstration site.
- Introduce livestock when trees are grown enough to avoid damage.
- Rotational grazing and other protocols to improve herd health will be emphasized.

Workshops targeting small scale farmers will be conducted.

## Year One of Climate-Smart Grown in SC



Reflecting on Year One of Climate-Smart Grown in SC 🌱🐄!

Farmers, extension staff, and our project team came together for insightful panel discussions, sharing experiences, navigating challenges, and celebrated the achievements of our dedicated farmers.

🏆 Louis Berry, senior Climate-Smart Grown in SC producer.

🏆 Jonathan Bennet, budding Climate-Smart Grown in SC producer.

🌱 Margaret Harrison, leafy green

🌱 William Weekley, leafy green

🐄 Eddie McFadden, beef cattle

🐄 Robert Sprowl, beef cattle

## Drone Pilot License Workshop



Professional Development Training Workshop focused on Part 107 Drone Prep for our extension specialists.

This training was held from August 26-30, 2024, and was conducted onsite. Due to the intensive nature of the workshop and the desire to provide personalized instruction, attendance will be limited to 12 participants.

# Agency Information *cont.*

## Extension

Through outreach programs and services, SC State PSA addresses quality of life opportunities for South Carolina's small agribusinesses and entrepreneurs, as well as youth, families and communities.

- 7 Regional Service Areas: **Coastal, Low Country, Midlands, Pee Dee, Piedmont, Santee Wateree and Upstate**
  - Future locations include: **Capital and Catawba** regions
- 5 Outreach Priorities: 4-H Youth Development, Community and Economic Development, Education Innovation and Support, Family Nutrition and Health and Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resources





# 1890 Extension Program

## 4-H Youth Development



- AgDiscovery – 17 students
- 1890 Explorer's Camp (statewide camp) – 636 youth
- 4-H Residential Camp (statewide camp) – 96 youth
- Bulldog Ag Immersion Camp (statewide) - 46 youth
- Vibing with Food and Fitness Camp (Midlands Region) - 28 youth
- 4-H Teen Civic Engagement Camp (Low Country & Pee Dee Regions) – 58 youth
- Total youth served for summer 2024 : 881



## Education, Innovation and Support



Currently, there are 63 Agriculture Innovation Scholars in the program. Students are in the College of Agriculture and Family Consumer Sciences.

## Helping Youth Pursue Education (HYPE)

Helping Youth Pursue Education is an After-School Program in six regions across the state.



High schools included are:

- Hampton County
- Woodland
- Carvers Bay
- Marlboro County
- Lee Central
- James F. Byrnes
- Wilson

College 101 are workshops where we go through the entire higher education process including Admissions, Financial Aid, Scholarships, and Campus Life.

## Help for Landowners: Resources and Mentorship



- The Help for Landowners: Resources and Mentoring Program provides the following:
- Assists small scale farmers and woodland owners access resources.
- Introduces mentorship to new and beginning, farmers, ranchers and veterans to navigate available information and resources.
- Introduces drone technologies to youth as related to mapping and diagnosis of insects and diseases.
- Connects small scale farmers and woodland owners with USDA-NRCS and FSA in South Carolina using available collaborative projects on information dissemination.

## Community and Economic Development



### Program Areas:

- **Adult Entrepreneurship**
  - Business Basics Toolkit Workshops
  - Annual Business Bootcamp
- **Youth Entrepreneurship**
  - Youth Entrepreneurship Express
- **Non-profit Development**
  - Non-Profit Development Webinars
- **Civic Engagement**
  - Rural Community Expos (TBD)

### Grant Programs:

- **Rural Business Development**
- **Family Heirs' Property**
- **Rural Energy for America (TBD)**

## Family, Nutrition and Health



The Family, Nutrition, and Health Program team has doubled this year. Which allowed us the opportunity to lead sessions on My Plate and sugary drinks during various 4-H summer camps and other youth programs throughout the state. The reach was over 1200 youth. There were multiple fitness and hands-on activities where the youth prepared three different recipes and learned about food safety and knife skills.

The team is excited about upcoming statewide programs on “Healthy Eating During the Holidays” and “Eat Well Fight Strong” Cancer Prevention. These programs will be held throughout the state in November and February.



# Accomplishments

## College of Agriculture and Family and Consumer Sciences

- College of Agriculture and Family and Consumer Sciences returned, July 2021



Ag-Innovation Scholarship & AgriFCS Scholarship

Annual Enrollment 2% / Now 15%



# Center for Plant Breeding, Genetics & Genomes



**Dr. Fetien Abay Abera, Senior Scientist & Center Director**

- Groundbreaking agricultural research scientist on plant breeding strategies that improve crop resilience.
- Pioneered participatory barley breeding in Ethiopia, releasing five varieties adopted by farmers in the Tigray region, including three drought-resistant varieties
- Became Ethiopia's first woman professor of plant breeding and seed, and was appointed president of Mekelle University in Ethiopia.
- Earned diploma in plant science from Awasso College of Agriculture; Bachelor of Science in plant science from Haramaya University in Ethiopia; Master of Science in rural resource management from Bangor and University in Wales, United Kingdom and Ph.D in plant breeding and seed sciences Norwegian University of Life Sciences in As, Norway.



# Center for Applied Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable Agriculture

## Dr. Joe Mari Maja



- Awarded \$1.43M in funding from Cotton, Inc, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, AgriTech Outreach and Training Initiative and the 1890 Center of Excellence for Emerging IoT Technologies for Smart Agriculture
- Recent award of nearly \$750K has helped to amplify SC State's impact of using innovation to help the state's small and rural farmers.
- **Charleston Post and Courier**, Jan. 2  
"Robots on the farm? How Artificial Intelligence could help underserved South Carolina farmers"  
[https://www.postandcourier.com/news/sc-state-ai-robotics-program-farmers/article\\_406f78b8-b7d0-11ef-90e5-77d3e7468fe7.html](https://www.postandcourier.com/news/sc-state-ai-robotics-program-farmers/article_406f78b8-b7d0-11ef-90e5-77d3e7468fe7.html)
- **Manning Times**, Jan., 23  
"Revolutionizing agriculture: AI robots aim to transform local farming"  
<https://manninglive.com/stories/revolutionizing-agriculture-ai-robots-aim-to-transform-local-farming,123112>



# Governor Henry McMaster

## H.3951 Working Agricultural Lands Preservation Act





# Budget Priorities

## Recurring

### Priority 1 - \$2.3M - Statewide Extension Agribusiness Development & Expansion Support

- Requested funding will allow SC State PSA to train and educate farmers on emerging areas of agriculture, including urban and community agriculture, controlled environment agriculture, organic agriculture.

“...I learned way more than I thought I would. I thought I would just learn basic practices for being a framer. It went more in detail I found out the things I really needed to know.” –

*Sonny Williams - Cattle Farmer,  
Anderson, SC*

*Mr. Williams attended the Beef  
Cattle Production & Management  
Workshop.*



# Budget Priorities

## Recurring

### Priority 2 - \$1.5M

#### Agriculture Innovation Research

- Requested funding will aid SC State PSA in identifying scientific solutions that would significantly impact South Carolina's emerging and specialty agriculture crops including **new plant genetics, larger produce, healthy food production and increased crop yields.**





# Budget Priorities

## Non-Recurring

### Priority 3 - \$525,000

#### Business Development Training and Assistance

Requested funding will be used to assist “Small” businesses by improving operations and enhancing business models that will boost profitability by focusing on technology infusion, planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling business operations in existing businesses as well as start ups. Small agribusiness entrepreneurs will receive technical assistance, training and education to ensure efficiency, job creation and growth.

- *S.C. ranks #5 in top 10 Best States to Start Small Business, Lendio, September 2024*





# Budget Priorities

## Non-Recurring

### Priority 4 - \$600,000

#### New and Beginner Farmer Assistance

- Requested funding will be used to offer an immersive training experience that combines a comprehensive classroom curriculum with hands-on learning at our research & demonstration farm as well as our partner sites.
- Level 1: Interested in farming but not sure where to start? Participants will get their hands dirty with hands-on events and online classroom learning in this flexible program designed for folks who still work full time.
- Level 2: Designed for folks who have some on-farm experience build their skills and launch their farm businesses.
- Level 3: A mentorship program for farmers who have started their businesses and seek targeted support in both production and business.





# Budget Priorities

## Non-Recurring

### Priority 5 - \$250,000 - Future Farm Planning

- 1. To assist small farmers the financial planning, estate planning, transfer, and management of agricultural land and family farm businesses in South Carolina.
- 2. Planning for farms and farm assets is a practice that requires specific knowledge. This program offers practical and easily understood information on the challenges and opportunities unique to agricultural land and agricultural businesses.
- 3. Session topics cover farmland succession within the family, estate planning, agricultural conservation easements, legislative updates, and farmland leasing.





# Budget Priorities

## Non-Recurring

### Priority 6 - \$425,000 – Health Quad Initiative

- 1. *Diabetes* – 80 percent of adults in South Carolina have diabetes and are overweight, according to the 2023 South Carolina State Health Assessment Companion Report, produced by the former SC Department of Health and Environmental Control.
- 2. *Heart Disease* – Is the leading cause of death in the Palmetto State in 2020. Heart disease accounted for 75,886 hospitalizations in South Carolina during 2020, with total hospitalization charges of more than \$6.8 billion.
- 3. *Obesity* – 36 percent of South Carolina adults are obese, making the state one of 23 states with an overall adult obesity rate at or above 35 percent, according to the 2024 State of Obesity: Better Policies for a Healthier America report from the Trust for America's Health (TFAH) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF).
- 4. *Mental Health* – South Carolina ranked as the eighth worst state for mental health care in the U.S. in a 2024 study published by Forbes.





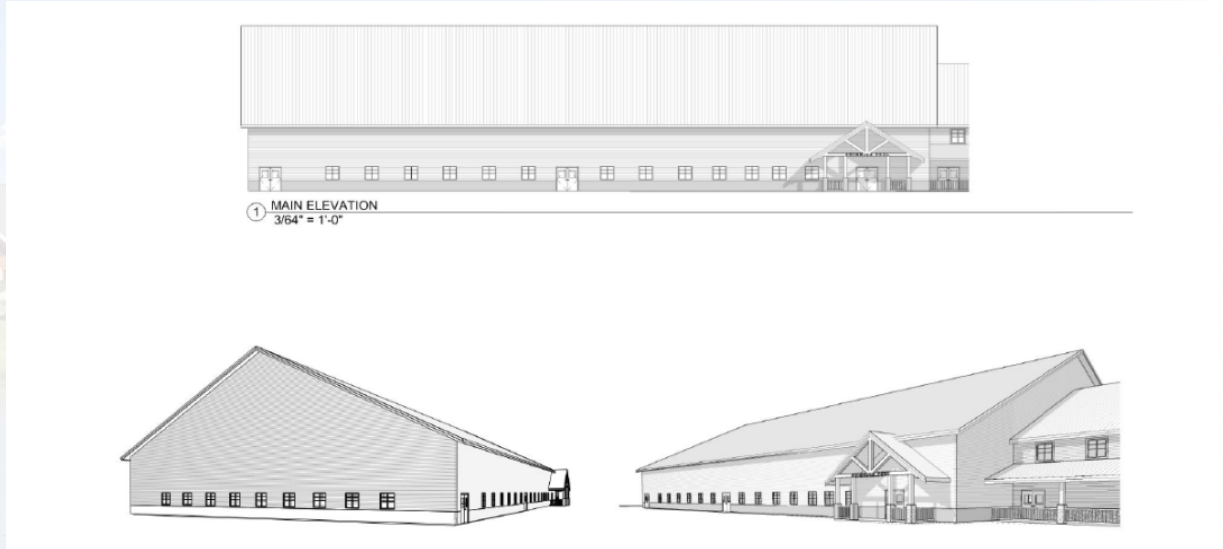
# Budget Priorities

## C- Capital

### Priority 7 - \$8 Million

#### Construction of the Health Research & Training Center

SC State Plans to build a health and wellness center which will help to improve the mental and physical health of the participants. The facility will focus on helping the youth as well as other participants thrive in their environments by adding on destressing, learning and developing better nutritional habits, as well as exercise. Additionally, the innovation will allow the support from federal grants and private investments for continued support and growth.





# Budget Priorities

## C - Capital

### **Priority 8 - \$20M Construction of the Animal Research & Education Center (AREC)**

The Animal Research & Education Center (AREC) Facility will be located in Olar, SC at the Research & Demonstration Farm. The facility will be a state of the art facility that will support the Animal Research objectives of the PSA Division as well as education and experimental learning space for Animal and Veterinarian Science students in the College of Agriculture and Family & Consumer Sciences. Additionally, the facility will allow our world class faculty, staff and scholars in their conduct of groundbreaking research by utilizing laboratory animals in an innovative, ethical and humane manner for advancing scientific knowledge.





# Financial Update (FY 2024 – 2025)

	Non-Re-Occurring Dollars NOT Included in Budget				
Fiscal Year	Budget	General	Federal	Carry Forward	Total
FY 2023-24 - Prior Year	\$13,917,161.00	\$8,894,355.00	\$5,618,369.00	0.00	\$14,512,724.00
FY 2024-25 - YTD (July 24 - Dec. 24)	\$15,076,242.00	\$3,633,126.00	\$2,864,666.00		\$6,497,792.00

## Full-Time Equivalent (Reporting June 30, 2025)

FY	Business Area	Business Area Name	Authorized Total	Authorized State	Authorized Federal	Authorized Other	Filled Total	Filled State	Filled Federal	Filled Other	Vacant Total	Vacant State	Vacant Federal	Vacant Other
2025	P210	SC STATE PSA	74	24	50	0	40	18.25	21.75		34	5.75	28.25	



# Cost-Savings Plan

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Should a reduction in General Funds Appropriation occur, not only would SC State PSA be reduced by 3% (\$214,780), as requested by the Executive Budget Office; but there would also be a 3% reduction (\$214,780) in federal funds, per the USDA-NIFA Cooperative Agreement. Therefore, the total reduction in funding to SC State PSA would be \$429,560 (6%). Consequently, the impact of the reductions would limit the ability of staff to deliver programs/activities offered to the residents of South Carolina.



# Cost-Savings Plan *cont.*

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The measures SC State PSA plans to implement to reduce costs and operating expenses by more than \$50,000 are to decrease funds allocated to programs and activities performed by agents in the service regions. Administrative operational costs would also be reduced. The estimated amount of savings and measures taken would limit the services provided to the constituents of South Carolina.



# In Support....

## SC Department of Agriculture

“SC State University PSA is indeed a forward-thinking organization, whose contributions add significant value to farmers and agribusinesses across this state.” – Hugh Weathers, Commissioner



## SC Farm Bureau

“South Carolina farmers and other agricultural entrepreneurs and businesses value community and understand the important roles they play in the lives of families who rely on them to keep them fed and clothed. Likewise, SC State University PSA shares the same understanding and works tirelessly to ensure SC farmers have the necessary resources and access to educational opportunities that positions them to better serve South Carolinians.” - *Harry Ott, President*



## Palmetto Agribusiness Council

“SC State University PSA is a valuable resource that seeks to address local issues as well as strengthen individuals, families and communities throughout the state of South Carolina.” – Ronnie Summers, Executive Director

