

Innovate.  
Educate.  
Elevate.

SCState

1890 RESEARCH & EXTENSION

Innovate. Educate. Elevate.

## **FY 2026-27 Budget Request**

Col. (Ret.) Alexander Conyers, President

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Vice President, Public Service and Agriculture &  
Executive Director 1890 Programs

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# Agency Information

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- SC State PSA innovates and educates to improve 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.

# 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.
- 5 Research Focus Areas: **Data Science for Food and Agricultural Systems, Food Safety and Health, Social Science in Agriculture, and 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

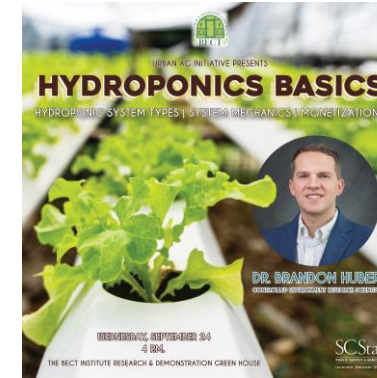


A farm weather station monitors hyper-local weather conditions like temperature, humidity, rainfall, and wind to help farmers make data-driven decisions for optimizing crop irrigation, preventing frost or heat stress, and managing pests. By providing real-time and predictive data, it enables precision agriculture and helps farmers protect their crops and livestock while improving efficiency and yield

## 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.



Dr. Brandon Huber, controlled environment research scientist, will be the guest speaker for this week's Urban Agriculture Initiative class!

This session will focus on the fundamentals of hydroponics, covering:

- 🌱 Hydroponic system types
- 🌱 System mechanics: nutrients and pH
- 🌱 Algae prevention and monetization
- 🌱 1890s lab tour included!

## Drone Pilot License Workshop



Professional Development Training Workshop focused on Part 107 Drone Prep for our extension specialists. This training was held 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 address quality of life opportunities for underserved and socially disadvantaged minority communities and entrepreneurs.
- 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) – 836 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 : 1137



## Education, Innovation and Support



Currently, there are 62 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:
- Assist small scale farmers and woodland owners access resources.
- Introduce mentorship to new and beginning, farmers, ranchers and veterans to navigate available information and resources.
- Introduce drone technologies to youth as related to mapping and diagnosis of insects and diseases.
- Connect 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% / Total Enrollment 261**



# Budget Priorities

## Recurring

### **Priority I - \$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**



# 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 #10 of all 50 states with new small business applications per 100,000 people with a total of 106,429 applications, The Center Square, February 2023*





# 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** - South Carolina had the 8th highest prevalence of diabetes among adults in the nation in 2018. One in seven adults has diabetes, or approximately 500,000 adults in South Carolina.
2. **Heart Disease** – *South Carolina is ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the nation in Deaths and it's the leading cause of death in our state.* Heart disease accounted for 55,853 hospitalizations in South Carolina during 2019, with total hospitalization charges of more than \$4.5 billion. 10,578 people died from heart disease
3. **Obesity** - The adult obesity rate in South Carolina is 32.3 percent, the 12th highest, according to the 14th annual 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** – *1 in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness each year.* In South Carolina, 183,000 adults have a serious mental illness. 12-17 have depression. 1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year.



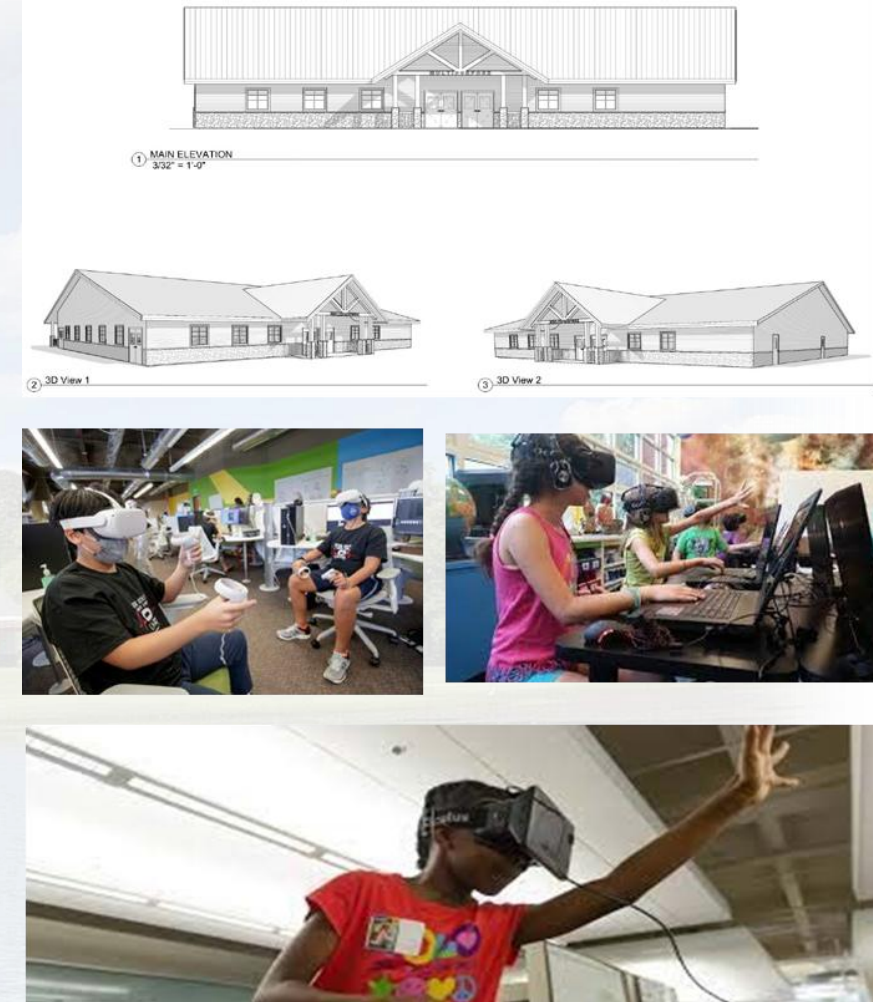
# Budget Priorities

## C- Capital

### Priority 7 - \$5 Million

#### Construction of the Training & Activity Center

- Research has demonstrated that camps for youth provide opportunities for interacting with other people, learning new independent living skills, discovering recreational activities, and increasing self-esteem. A facility at the historic Camp Harry Daniels will strive to instill these benefits to the youth of South Carolina.
- SC State PSA plans to build a training and activity center, which will include a Virtual Reality Training Laboratory.
- The Virtual Reality Training Laboratory will be a digital simulation of lifelike scenarios for training purposes.
- Campers, to include youth and adults, will enter a 360°, active learning environment, experiencing sights and sounds that dissolve the barrier between virtual and actual reality. Using the headset and controllers, campers will look, speak, and move about freely in a 3-D virtual setting, interacting with simulated real-world tools, machinery, and other trainees and instructors.



# Budget Priorities

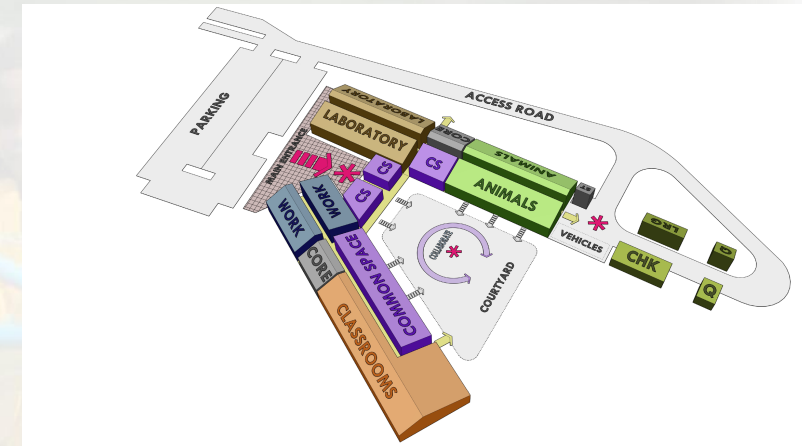
## C - Capital

### 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.





# 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 with a special emphasis on underserved communities.



## 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*

## **Clemson University Public Service and Agriculture**

"For many years, Clemson PSA and SC State PSA have been working in tandem to improve the well-being of South Carolinians. As the state's designated land-grant universities, we continue to provide an important service on behalf of the state by translating research into actions that help strengthen individuals, families, and communities." – *Dr. George Askew, Retired Vice President for Clemson University Public Service and Agriculture*

## **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*

