

  
**DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE**  
**RESEARCH & EXTENSION**  
*University of Arkansas System*

June 9, 2020

To the Division of Agriculture Family,

On May 25, 2020, we witnessed the tragic event of an African-American male's life being taken away in the most unimaginable way; by those who had the duty to protect and serve their community, ALL members of their community. Because of this tragedy, millions around our nation and abroad have come forward pleading for societal change. A change in our society that eliminates systematic inequality and racism, while promoting and valuing inclusion, equity and diversity, and demanding equal justice for all.

We stand with our fellow institutions within the University of Arkansas System. As the Division of Agriculture, we understand our role in moving society forward.

In 2018, with the understanding of the importance of having civil dialogue on race relations, diversity, inclusion, and equity, the Division asked Extension faculty to travel to Washington D.C. to participate in the initiative "Coming Together for Racial Understanding." The participants spent two days of intense training, gaining a deep understanding of racial biases and what different racial groups experience. This was followed by train-the-trainer sessions, so that these professionals could bring back this invaluable training to facilitate this civil dialogue within our organization and to communities in the State of Arkansas. Last year in August, the Division successfully conducted this training internally with many positive comments, and plans are underway to conduct the training in communities. In addition, we recently renamed our Office of Affirmative Action to the Office of Inclusion, Access, and Compliance to better reflect the Division's continuing commitment to diversity, inclusion, equity and access. While these are just a few notable steps we have recently taken, many other trainings, policies, and practices have been put into place over the years, as we continue to educate ourselves and others on these important issues.

The Division's values embracing diversity, inclusion, equity, and access have not changed, and will not waver. We know we will get through these difficult times together. It is our hope, that now, we all have a greater understanding and compassion for all of our colleagues and communities that have been confronted with societal challenges that many of us have not had

to bear. And with that understanding and compassion, we can do our part as a Division to bring about the societal change that is needed.

Thank you,



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