

National Agriculture Day attracts more than 3,000 students to SU Activity Center



The Southern University [Land-Grant Campus](#) celebrated its 2017 National Ag Day event with the rest of the nation on March 21. Faculty, staff, students from kindergarten to college and community members participated in the celebration with students from area schools numbering in excess of 3,000.

National Ag Day is about recognizing and celebrating the contribution of agriculture in our everyday lives. The event provided not only the opportunity and forum for youth to learn about Louisiana agriculture, but also the platform to meet and recruit potential students to Southern University and particularly, the College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences.

Southern University System President-Chancellor Dr. Ray Belton and Land-Grant Campus Chancellor-Dean Dr. Bobby Phillips, along with numerous administrative staff, were on hand to bring greetings to Ag Day participants.

Activities of the day included a performance by the Southern University *Human Jukebox* Marching Band to kick off the event; animal and plant displays, demonstrations, a petting zoo, and a bio-processing station, to name only a few of the exhibits offered by the students, staff and faculty of the Agricultural Research and Extension Center, College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences; USDA agencies and the East Baton Rouge Public Library. Even the Land-Grant Campus mascot was on hand to entertain the crowd. Event photos are available [here](#).

Chancellor-Dean Bobby Phillips captured the sensation of the day best in his post event message to the organizer Dr. Renita Marshall.

“Dr. Marshall you hit a HOME RUN today. In fact, it was a GRAND SLAM,” said Dr. Phillips. “I can truly say that the Land-Grant Campus is on the move, and people like you and the programs that you all host are simply SUPERB. I am not sure who were all your committee members, but please let them know that I am equally as proud of them as I am of you and your leadership,” said Dr. Phillips.

“The last time I saw this many people (3000 + students) in the F. G. Clark Activity Center was during SU Basketball Glory Days. Thus, to see it like this again, warms my spirit. I can’t wait to see it become bigger and better,” added Phillips.

For the past five years, Renita Marshall, DVM/Associate Professor of Animal Science has worked diligently to make this event better every year. This year, she stated that the success of the event left her speechless. However, she thanked everyone for showing appreciation to all those in the agriculture industry responsible for feeding over seven billion mouths every day.

“Please accept our sincere gratitude for your help during the 5th Annual National Ag Day Celebration. The goal was to promote Southern University Agriculture, celebrate God's creation and encourage whole family awareness of the role agriculture plays in providing safe, abundant and affordable products to the world. The event was, once again, a great success, and we hope all participants enjoyed it as much as we did,” said Dr. Marshall.

On the eve of the National Ag Day event, Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards signed an official [proclamation](#) declaring March 21, 2017 Agriculture Day (Ag Day) in Louisiana. On the day of the event, Agriculture Acting Deputy Secretary Michael L. Young issued a [statement](#) on National Agriculture Day.

"Today is National Agriculture Day, set aside to pay tribute to the farmers and ranchers of our nation. The work of American producers and growers ensures consumers in our country have plenty of safe food and a wide variety at a cost lower than much of the world."

The [History](#) of National Ag Day dates back to nearly 43 years ago. According to the National Ag Day's [website](#), it's a day set aside to encourage every American to understand how food and fiber products are produced, recognize essential roles of agriculture in maintaining a strong economy and appreciating the role agriculture plays in providing safe, abundant and affordable products. Since 1975, National Ag Day has been the program to spotlight all the great work farmers and ranchers do to feed and clothe the United States and the world.

Over the next 40 years, the Earth's total population is projected to increase from 7.3 billion to more than 9 billion, meaning that global agriculture producers will need to increase food production by 70 percent to meet demand.

Engaging the next generation is one of the important initiatives of the program, which is achieved by giving youth an overview of Ag Day and exposing them to careers in agricultural sciences.

Washington D.C. is the main hub where National Ag Day happens with a luncheon on Capitol Hill and the USDA main Ag Day celebration dinner.

“The significance is to make sure that the policy makers in Washington D.C. know what farmers and ranchers do,” said Colin Woodall, Vice President of Government Affairs at National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

“Everyone has to put on clothes and eat every single day,” Woodall said. “Without farmers and ranchers, it wouldn't be possible.”

Source: farmingmagazie.com

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