

Dr. Chembezi honored by USDA Secretary

USDA Secretary Thomas J. Vilsack has awarded Alabama A&M University's professor, Dr. Duncan M. Chembezi for exceptional service. Dr. Duncan M. Chembezi was recently honored by the Secretary for his service on the Vilsack's Advisory Committee on Small and Beginning Farmers and Ranchers (ACBFR). Chembezi directs AAMU's Small Farms Research Center in the College of Agricultural, Life and Natural Sciences. He also is professor of agricultural and applied economics in the College of Business and Public Affairs.



Carolyn Parker, who directs the USDA's Office of Advocacy and Outreach, commended Chembezi for his leadership on the committee, his comprehensive knowledge of key issues affecting beginning farmers and ranchers, as well as for his sound policy background.

Moreover, Secretary Vilsack recently reappointed Dr. Chembezi to serve a second term on the Committee.

"This award is certainly an honor, I'm humbled by it," commented Chembezi. "It feels extra special coming from the Agriculture Secretary." Chembezi said the honor is a testimony that the Secretary values the Committee's individual input and it underscores the Secretary's confidence in his appointees.

"The Secretary is strongly committed to growing a new generation of farmers and ranchers," added Chembezi, "and to reversing the declining trend of farms and farmers in the United States with input from this Committee, and through efforts championed by individuals at the grass roots level."

Dr. Chembezi currently heads a team of researchers and outreach providers who received over \$650,000 in 2012 from USDA/NIFA/Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Program (BFRDP) to provide individualized training and targeted technical assistance to beginning farmers and ranchers in Alabama.

The professor also been reappointed to sit on the advisory board of the Council on Food, Agricultural, and Resource Economics (C-FARE), a non-profit national organization dedicated to strengthening the national presence of the agricultural and applied economics profession. The advisory board includes prominent agricultural economists representing a wide range of public and private sector interests.

Chembezi has previously served on the Advisory Board of the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, Advisory Council of the Southern Region Risk Management Education Center, and Advisory Committee of the Southern Agricultural Economics Association. In recognition of his outstanding professional work, he received in 2009 the Excellence in Extension and Public Service Award from the Southern Rural Sociological Association.

For more information, contact Dr. Chembezi at (256) 372-4970.

Reference: Jerome Saintjones, Director of Marketing and Public Relations, Alabama A&M University