

# NEWSLETTER

PERSON COUNTY CENTER

January/February 2011

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## Contact Us

Person County Center

304 S. Morgan Street  
Room 123  
Roxboro, NC 27573

336-599-1195  
336-598-0272 (fax)

Website:

<http://person.ces.ncsu.edu>



## FIELD NOTES

Derek Day  
County Extension Director

### 2010 BEST FORGOTTEN

Most growers will tell you that they do not want to wish their time away, but the fact that the 2010 crop year is almost gone is a relief to most. There are very few years where all the crops grown do badly, but 2010 is a year where that indeed happened. When all the numbers are finally in, Person County will be listing some extremely low average yields.

The excessive heat combined with prolonged drought affected yields. Corn suffered the most as the week when most varieties were shooting, daytime temperatures reached almost 100°. It really does not matter how much moisture there is available to the growing corn crop. High temperatures are devastating to pollen. An inch of rain the second week of September would have nearly doubled soybean production. Most soybean crops had enough seeds available, but since they did not receive timely moisture, size was small.

Tobacco suffered also. Three different weeks of temperatures in the low 100's not only had a negative effect on yield but also caused a drop in quality. Buyers of leaf complained about sun baked, lower quality leaf compared to 2009.

While 2011 holds no promise of being better, there are some things that growers can be doing now to position themselves for a better year.

Now is a good time to get soil samples taken. In 2010, there were more crop production issues related to nutrient management than in recent years. One problem was the drought. As moisture becomes more limiting, marginal soil fertility issues can manifest themselves greatly. Some growers due to higher fertilizer prices have not been adding back nutrients as crops were drawing them down. Continuous wheat and double cropped soybeans are especially hard on nutrients. Many growers have been surprised when soybean yields collapsed due to a lack of nutrients.

2011 will be the year of the records. Tobacco companies, NCDA and the Department of Labor all might want to take a closer look at farm records. Go ahead and compile the MSDS sheets of products you know you will be using. Decide now which application record technique works best in your operation. Put your Hazard Communication plan on paper. Gather up your field sanitation supplies. Regulation and oversight will only get worse. Get prepared.

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EXTENSION**

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## BEEKEEPING CLASS TO BEGIN JANUARY 6

Have you ever thought about keeping bees, but never knew where to begin? Are you a current beekeeper who wants to build general beekeeping skills? Do you have an interest in learning about this ancient and environmentally beneficial craft? If so, here is an opportunity for you!

The Person County Beekeepers Association is offering a 10-week beekeeping course. Instructors will cover topics including the history of beekeeping, how to get started, seasonal management and the treatment of pests and diseases. At the end of the course, a hands-on beekeeping field day will be held where practices discussed in the classroom will be demonstrated.



Classes will be held every Thursday night at the Person County Office Building in Room 165. The first class will be held on **Thursday, January 6** and will begin at **7:00 pm**. The option to take the written and practical certification exams will be available during the last scheduled class and the field day.

The registration fee for the entire course is \$35.00 and includes course materials, textbook, and a one-year membership to PCBA. Pre-registration is not required but is recommended, as space is limited. To reserve a spot in class, contact the Extension Office at 336-599-1195 or send your name, address, telephone number and email to [debbie\\_harrelson@ncsu.edu](mailto:debbie_harrelson@ncsu.edu).

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## AMAZING GRAZING

Kim Woods, Assistant Extension Agent  
Animal Science/Natural Resources



## FREEMARTINS IN GOATS AND SHEEP

Freemartins are not common but do happen in goats and sheep. According to the book "Goat Medicine" by Dr. Mary Smith and Dr. David Sherman, even single born doe kids that had developed early on with a male twin that died and was reabsorbed could be a freemartin if the placentas of the two were fused during early embryo development. The information below indicates further that it would be better to select females for breeding that were born co-twins to another female, not a male, for better overall maternal performance.

Data analyzed at the University of Wyoming suggests that producers should select female replacements from same sex litters, as ewe productivity tends to be affected by the sex of the co-twin.

The uterine environment for developing fetuses is influenced by the sex of the co-twin and the effects vary by species. Although freemartinsim is rare in prolific species, such as sheep, effects of co-sibling sex on development have been reported in numerous species, including humans.

Nine years of lambing records from the University of Wyoming's Suffolk, Hampshire, Columbia, and Rambouillet purebred flocks were analyzed to determine if the sex of the co-twin had any effect on the number of offspring, flock longevity, and age at first lambing of ewe lambs retained for breeding.

Ewes born as singles had fewer lambs during their productive lifetime than ewes born co-twin with ewes, but did not differ from ewes born co-twin with rams. Among the twin-born ewe lambs, the presence of a male co-twin tended to decrease the number of lambs born, but it did not affect longevity. Nor did it affect age at first lambing.

Ewes born co-twin to a ram produce approximately 10 percent fewer lambs during their productive lifetime than ewes born co-twin to a ewe.

Source: Effect of Sex of Co-Twin and Breed on Ewe Flock Productivity, 2010 Proceedings of the U.S. Sheep Research and Outreach.

## FORAGE MID WINTER CONFERENCES

The North Carolina Forage and Grassland Council will again be hosting a series of Mid Winter Conferences in January 2011. This will be an outstanding opportunity to learn more about forage management, so mark your calendars now. The conferences will be **January 18 in Clinton, January 19 in Greensboro, and January 20 in Statesville.**

This year's featured speaker is Doug Peterson, a Natural Resource Conservation Service employee in Missouri for 22 years. He is currently their state's Grassland Conservationist. Additionally, he operates a cow/calf and contract grazing operation with his father. They utilize Management Intensive Grazing and High Density Grazing to improve soil health, eliminate the need for most purchased fertilizer and

limit hay needs to about one bale per cow per winter. In addition to Doug, there will be local producers speaking on their individual forage management operations. This producer panel is always an audience favorite. The cost is \$15 for NC Forage and Grassland Council members, \$20 for non-members before January 10 and \$25 for non-members after January 10.

Person County Cooperative Extension will be providing a van for transportation to the Greensboro conference. Call or come by the Extension Office for more information.

**JANUARY CATTLEMAN'S MEETING**

The Person County Cattleman's Association in conjunction with Person County Cooperative Extension will conduct their next educational program on **Thursday, January 27, at 7:00 pm** at the Person County Office Building Auditorium.

Bryan Blinson, Executive Director of the North Carolina Cattleman's Association, will be here to discuss current issues affecting the cattle industry. This should be a very informative meeting so mark your calendars.



Please call our office at 336-599-1195 by January 24 to let us know if you will be attending.

**EXPECTED PROGENY DIFFERENCE COMPARISON ACROSS BREEDS**

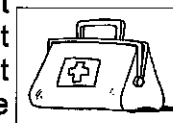
When comparing bulls within a breed, it is fairly easy to compare the EPDs and determine which bull provides more of what you're looking for. However, it gets a little more complicated when comparing bulls from different breeds as each breed registry has their own set of numbers for EPDs. The following table can be used to compare bull EPDs from different breeds. The base breed is Angus. If you are looking at a Hereford bull's EPD for Yearling Weight (YW), then you would subtract 14.2 pounds from his listed EPD in order to compare it to an Angus bull's YW EPD. For example, you are trying to decide between a Simmental bull and a Gelbvieh bull with the main factor being Yearling Weight (YW). The Simmental's YW EPD is 97, and the Gelbvieh's YW EPD is 69. Going by this chart, you would then add 21.8 pounds to the Simmental and subtract 22.3 from the Gelbvieh. The results give you an YW EPD of 119 for the Simmental and 47 for the Gelbvieh. So, if going strictly on Yearling Weight, the Simmental has a higher YW EPD. This can provide some helpful comparisons when trying to decide which bull to add to a crossbreeding program.

Breed	BW	WW	YW	Milk
Angus	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Hereford	2.9	-1.8	-14.2	-18.8
Simmental	5.9	22.8	21.8	10.1
Gelbvieh	4.7	6.3	-22.3	2.4
Charolais	10.0	38.8	53.2	1.8
Red Angus	3.1	-1.0	0.7	-6.8

**JANUARY HORSEMAN'S MEETING**

The Person County Horsemen's Association in conjunction with Person County Cooperative Extension will conduct their next educational program on **Tuesday, January 18**, in the Person County Office Building, Room 165 beginning at **6:30 pm**.

Dr. Fernando Cardenez, veterinarian at 3-H Veterinary Hospital, will present information concerning Equine First Aid. Knowing how to handle equine emergencies whether on a trail or at the show ring is important for every horseperson. This presentation will be done through Elluminate, a web based educational format and will begin promptly at 7:00 pm. Even though the speaker will not be here in person, the presentation will be done in real time with visual aids. Additionally, participants will be able to ask questions at the end of the presentation. This should be a very informative meeting so mark your calendars.



Since there will be a sponsored meal, please call our office at 599-1195 by January 14 and let us know if you will be attending. This will help us better plan for the meal.

## **JANUARY FORAGE REMINDERS**

- To get maximum use of stockpiled fescue, restrict the grazing area (electric cross fencing) so that four to six cows are grazing on an acre.
- If winter pasture is limited, feed hay in the pasture or allow cows to graze every other day. The priority for limited pasture is for (1) calves by creep grazing, (2) stockers, (3) nursing cows, and (4) dry cows.
- Winter annual pastures that were planted on a prepared seedbed may be severely damaged if animals trample on them during wet periods. Allow calves first priority to these high-quality annual pastures.
- Sample hay bales which are stored outside that will be fed during the next four to eight weeks.
- Decide which fields will be re-seeded or overseeded during late winter and early spring; obtain soil test and supplied for planting.
- Lime may be applied on sod during this "off season."
- Keep a record of winter weed problems (especially in alfalfa) so that control measures can be taken next fall. This is the latest month that some herbicides may be used on legumes.
- Determine animal feed requirements for the year (about 6 tons hay equivalent/cow-calf pair) and outline a 12-month forage production and use plan to meet the needs.

## **FEBRUARY FORAGE REMINDERS**

- Apply nitrogen to cool-season grasses to stimulate early spring growth.
- Overseed legumes (ladino, red, alfalfa) into well-grazed (2 inches or less), well-limed grass pastures.
- Divide pastures to improve the quality and persistence of pasture plants.
- Locate source of hybrid bermudagrass sprigs for planting next month.
- Burn warm-season grass residues in late February or early March
- Get herbicide sprayers ready to control weeds in dormant bermudagrass fields. It is also the last chance to control winter annuals in dormant alfalfa fields.

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## **JANUARY BEEF MANAGEMENT TIPS**

### ***Spring Calving Herds***

- Begin to gather calving supplies
- Keep late pregnant cows gaining 1.0 lb per day
- Pregnant heifers and 3 year olds should gain 2.0-2.5 lbs per day
- Keep high quality minerals available
- Review calving assistance procedures
- Stockpile a few gallons of colostrum
- Attend performance tested bull sales and/or order semen for AIS
- Soil test pastures not tested in last three years
- Order clover seed for frost seeding later this winter

### ***Fall Calving Herds***

- Begin/continue breeding
- Check cow and bull condition
- Supplement energy to young bulls during breeding season
- Continue to check calves closely for health problems
- Reimplant September and early October born calves that were implanted at birth
- Soil test pasture not tested in last three years
- Order clover seed for frost seeding later this winter



## FEBRUARY BEEF MANAGEMENT TIPS

### Spring Calving Herds

- Have all calving supplies on hand and review calving assistance procedure
- Move pregnant heifers and early calving cows to calving area about two weeks before due date
- Begin calving late in month (some herds)
- Check cows 3 to 4 time per day, heifers more often - assist early if needed
- Keep calving area clean and well drained, move healthy pairs out to large pastures 3 days after calving
- Ear tag and dehorn all calves at birth; castrate male calves in commercial herds
- Give selenium and vitamin A & S injections to newborn calves
- Keep late pregnant cows gaining 1.0 lb per day
- Pregnant heifers and 3 year olds should gain 2.0-2.5 lbs per day
- Keep high quality, high magnesium minerals available
- Vaccinate cows against scours if it has been a problem
- Attend performance tested bull sale and/or order AI semen
- Frost seed clovers (mid to late in the month)

### Fall Calving Herds

- Begin creep feeding or creep grazing calves if desire
- Plan marketing strategy for calves
- Begin feeding high magnesium minerals to prevent grass tetany
- Continue to check calves closely for health problems
- Inventory winter feed supplies
- Frost seed clovers (mid to late in the month)



## HOMWORKS

Bess Hester-Whitt, Extension Agent  
Family & Consumer Science

### EAT SMART MOVE MORE WEIGH LESS

If you ended up with a few of those extra holiday pounds and want to be sure to get rid of them before they decide to hang around, you might want to check out our Eat Smart Move More Weigh Less support group that begins **January 11, at 5:30 pm** in the Person County Office Building Auditorium.

This beginning series for 2011 is sponsored by the Person County FAN Club and will be led by LeighAnn Creson, Carolyn Turner and me. We also have contracted with Will Paul, who teaches several exercise classes with the recreation department to lead some physical activity during each session. The ESMMWL curriculum is based on weight loss strategies proven to work to help participants be successful in both losing weight and maintenance of a healthy weight. There is a \$25.00 registration fee for the 15 week series. Stop by the Extension Center to complete your registration form or download it from our website at: <http://.person.ces.ncsu.edu>

### LIVING HEALTHY WITH DIABETES

The recent state of the County Health Report shows that diabetes is rising as an area of concern for Personians. In fact, diabetes has risen to the number 5 cause of death in the county!

Our local Health Department is working with Durham County on a grant to expand educational efforts to help local residents learn more about dealing with this chronic disease. We are helping to spread the word on opportunities that funding will provide.

We are also working with the Health Department and the local Senior Center to offer a diabetes self management class coming up in January. Living Healthy with Diabetes is an evidence based program developed by Stanford University to help persons who have diabetes take charge of the disease rather than let the disease take charge of them! We will be offering this program at the Senior Center on Thursdays, beginning January 20, and running through February 24. Each week we will meet from

10:00 am to noon or 12:30. There is no fee to participate but we do ask that you be committed to coming to at least 4 of the 6 sessions. LeighAnn Creson from the Health Department is handling registrations. You can reach her at 336-597-2204 extension 2277. If you have questions I will be happy to answer them as well.

### **PINTO BEAN FUNDRAISER**

The Person County ECA council is sponsoring a Pinto Bean Fundraiser lunch on **Friday, January 21**, from **11:30 am** until the beans are gone! Beans, cornbread, homemade desserts and tea are on the menu. Tickets are \$5.00 and available from ECA members. Proceeds will fund community projects. Thanks in advance for your support!

### **WORKING ARTS**

The 2011 Working Arts Workshops are scheduled for **February 9 and 10** here at the Person County Office Building. We are very excited this year to be able to invite back our rug braiding, rug hooking and pine needle basket instructors. We also are excited to offer chrismons, egg and traditional basket classes, crochet and knitting as well as our Bob Ross Painting sessions. We've never had a session on rush bottom seats and our chair caning instructor will offer rush seats this year. Be sure to stop by the office to request your copy of the registration information or call M. Jay and she will email or mail you the forms. Class spaces are limited and at the time of this writing there are a couple that are almost full so be sure to get your information in as soon as you can.

### **SERVS SAFE**

The National Restaurant Association estimates that an outbreak costs an establishment \$75,000 in lost productivity, not counting any legal repercussions they may face. It's kind of like that MasterCard commercial... The price of education is priceless!



The next ServSafe managers class is being offered **January 24, 25, 26, 31, and February 1, 2 from 8:00 am – 11:00 am** each day in an effort to help ensure that Person County foodservice establishments don't run the risks of either the embarrassment or the financial costs of dealing with food borne illness. The class will cover the basics

behind providing safe food, a quick look at the most pre-dominant microorganisms that put food in jeopardy, the safe food handler, the flow of food from purchasing and receiving through service, Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points, facilities and equipment, and pest management. The instructors for the series include County Extension Director Derek Day, Person County Health Director Janet Clayton, Environmental Health Supervisors Ginger Wilborn and Bonnie Holt, NCSU Food Safety Specialist and Professor Ben Chapman and FCS Extension Agent, Bess Hester-Whitt.

If you don't see a ServSafe certificate in your favorite establishment, be sure to remind them of this opportunity.

### **RADON – A SILENT KILLER**

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that is invisible, odorless, and tasteless. Radon is released harmlessly from the ground into outdoor air, but it can accumulate and reach harmful levels when trapped in homes and buildings.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that radon is responsible for more than 21,000 lung cancer deaths per year in the United States. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S. after smoking and the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. Since radon does not have an odor and is invisible, people tend to downplay the health effects and ignore the possibility that there might be a silent killer within the walls of their home.

According to a map provided by NCDENR, some homes in Person County have tested high for radon. Houses in the same neighborhood can have very different levels, so every home should be tested. Testing homes for radon is simple and inexpensive. Radon test kits can be purchased at local hardware and home improvement stores, directly from radon testing companies, or are available for free during January from the NC Radon Program. Should your home be found to have elevated levels of radon, the problem can be fixed by qualified contractors for a cost similar to that of many other home repairs. In our area, the cost can be from \$1,000 to \$2,500 depending on the home.

The NC Radon Program urges residents to take action during this year's National Radon Action Month by testing their homes for radon. For more information on radon and how to receive your free radon test kit, stop by the Cooperative Extension office at 304 S. Morgan Street or visit the NC Radon Program's website at [www.ncradon.org](http://www.ncradon.org).

### EXPIRATION/USE BY DATE QUESTION

It would be nice if life was simple in lots of ways, and one of those ways comes to dates on canned foods! This is a question that came up recently as folks were donating foods to food pantries during the holiday season. Our Food Safety Specialist Ben Chapman sent the following information to help one of my counterparts explain those dates to her clients. I thought you might be interested as well.....



There really aren't expiration dates that are applied on canned goods (or any packaged goods) in the U.S.

According to ([http://www.fsis.usda.gov/factsheets/food\\_product\\_dating/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/factsheets/food_product_dating/index.asp)) there are four types of dates you might see. They are:

- A "Sell-By" date tells the store how long to display the product for sale. You should buy the product before the date expires.
- A "Best if Used By (or before)" date is recommended for best flavor or quality. It is not a purchase or safety date.
- A "Use-By" date is the last date recommended for the use of the product while at peak quality. The date has been determined by the manufacturer of the product.
- "Closed or coded dates" are packing numbers for use by the manufacturer.

Note -- these dates, especially when applied to canned goods as per the question, are quality thresholds, not safety dates. Canned goods will maintain safety indefinitely if the integrity of the can is maintained.

USDA has really vague guidelines (because it's based on quality) of 2-5 years in a pantry (and I would suggest that this is fine, safety-wise, after a use-by-date—although it may not taste great).

### FCS CENTENNIAL

A whopping huge thanks to the families of Tempie Jeffers, Effie Warren, Dorothy Williford and Sara Hester for their contributions in memory of those outstanding women to the FCS/ECA Centennial Coffee Table book. We are still accepting donations but cannot guarantee after January 1 that acknowledgement will be printed in the book. We're looking forward to celebrating 100 years of work advancing families here in North Carolina and especially to the Centennial Celebration coming up in May. Look for more information on that event as we get closer to the date.



### ECA CORNER

The next Council meeting is set for **January 11** at **10:00 am** in Room 165 of the County Office Building. New Council president, Foy Harrell will take over the gavel from Joan Long. A huge thanks to both of those ladies for the leadership they give to the county ECA program. We'll be putting the final touches on the plans for the pinto bean lunch fundraiser coming up later in January. We'll also be looking for more volunteers to help us as we implement the SNAP Ed Program at North Elementary, so please be sure to bring your calendars.

We also remind club members that their Yearly Activity and service reports are due to their club past presidents by **February 1**, so clubs can get their info into the county past president, Joan Long by **February 15**. Our county information is due on the state level by **March 1**.

ECA members need to be sure to go ahead and mark the dates of **March 24** for Achievement Day, and **April 21** for District Day in Stokes County. You also may want to take a look at the categories for Cultural Arts listed in your yearbooks and be sure to be working on your entries. We'll be asking for them to come in by **March 15**.



## 4-H HUNGRY TO HELP

Jennifer Grable, Associate Extension Agent  
4-H Youth Development

### DEAR 4-H'ERS, VOLUNTEERS, AND SUPPORTERS

Thank you to everyone who has made our 4-H program better over the past year. As most of you know, I will be going on maternity leave in February. With the help of my fellow Extension coworkers, 4-H volunteers and the 4-H'ers themselves, I know that this program will continue to thrive in my short absence.

### LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENED!!!

#### FARM CITY WEEK 4-H POSTER CONTEST

The Farm City Week Banquet was held Wednesday, November 17 at the Person County Office Building. Thanks to our banquet sponsors: Person County Farm Bureau, Carolina Farm Credit, and the Person County Cattleman's Association. This year, our guest speaker was NCSU Professor and Economist, Dr. Mike Walden, who spoke about the importance of agriculture and the current struggles due to the hard economic times. The winners of the 4-H Poster Contest were also announced and they include: **Adam Adcock, Susan Hayes, and Jonah Tatum.** Thanks to SunTrust Bank for sponsoring the contest. Also, thank you to everyone who donated food for our can food drive to benefit the Christian Help Center. So far, we have donated a total of 250 lbs. of food to the Christian Help Center during our Hungry to Help initiative.

#### TEEN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Due to cost, this year's State 4-H Council Conference was held as three separate regional events and shortened to one day. It was held Saturday, November 20 at the Betsy-Jeff Penn 4-H Educational Center. Our state project this year is "HUNGRY TO HELP". This conference focused on building leaders and the workshops were centered on how to be a leader and even an ambassador for 4-H within the county. Thanks to **Spencer Irby, Glen Hutchins, Michael Chaney, Zachary Chaney, and Mikala Halbrook** for doing an excellent job representing Person County at this year's event.

#### CHRISTMAS FUN DAY

The annual 4-H Christmas Fun Day was held Saturday, December 4 at the Person County Office Building. This year, we held a morning session for youth ages 9-12 years old where they got to make some more difficult crafts while the 5-8 year olds attended

the afternoon session and made a few smaller, easier crafts. Thanks to all of our volunteers who were present at the event where several different crafts were made. Contact the 4-H Office if you wish to participate next year.

#### 4-H LENDS A HELPING HAND

On November 15, several 4-H youth volunteers helped out at the Golden Corral Veterans Appreciation Dinner serving as greeters, opening doors, carrying trays, helping people find a seat, and just going around and thanking the veterans for their service. On December 11, the Woodland Lakers 4-H Club held a Christmas for Critters event at our local animal shelter. They went around town collecting donations for the shelter including toys, food, shampoo, leashes, beds, etc. They also threw a little Christmas party that day for the animals at the shelter and even helped a few get adopted.

### WHAT'S COMING UP!!!

#### WINTERFEST

Our District 4-H Council is planning to host the Winterfest event for teens on **Saturday, January 8** in Guilford County. This is a day event where 4-H'ers from our district get together for workshops and a day full of fun.

#### PROJECT RECORD BOOKS AND COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

This year, we did record books a little differently due to the change in the 4-H Calendar Year. Most of the youth submitted their record books in September. Everyone was given back their books so they could take the judges' suggestions into consideration and have time to make improvements before heading on to the district competition. The record books must be turned into the office by **Thursday, January 13 at our County Council meeting which will be held at an earlier time of 3:30 p.m. No late entries will be accepted.**

## APPLICATIONS DUE

It is that time of year again! Those youth that have been 4-H members for at least three years and who are 16 years or older may apply to become members of the prestigious group of NC 4-H Honor Club members. Also, youth that are getting ready to graduate high school have the opportunity to apply for a scholarship through the Person County and NC 4-H Development Fund. Applications are available by contacting the 4-H Office at 336-599-1195. Applications are due to the 4-H Office by **January 13**, so contact us soon!!

## LIVESTOCK SHOW AND SALE

The 4-H Livestock Show and Sale is scheduled for April 20-21, 2011. Anyone who is interested in participating should contact the office for further information. Remember, there are a number of rules and regulations which have to be followed in reference to ages of participants and when animals should be on the farm. Each participant is also required to complete a 4-H Project Book. If you wish to participate in the show, please contact the office at (336) 599-1195. A *mandatory* Livestock Show and Sale meeting will be held on **Tuesday, January 25 at 5:30 p.m.** at the Person County Office Building.

## 4-H SUMMER CAMP

It is never too early to start planning for this year's summer camp! We will once again be going to the Betsy Jeff Penn 4-H Camp in Reidsville, North Carolina. We are camping July 31 – August 5. Cost is \$325 and is open to all youth ages 8-14 years old. The fee includes lodging, meals, transportation, insurance, camp t-shirt, and \$15 at the camp store. This would make a great Christmas present and all you need is a \$100 deposit due by **Friday, January 28** to hold your spot.



## CLICK WITH 4-H: PLAY, WORK, REWARD

The NC Volunteer Leaders Conference is scheduled for **February 4-6, 2011** at the Sheraton Imperial in the Research Triangle Park. They have an incredible line up of workshops that will be available to participants. Leaders who are interested in meeting other 4-H volunteers from across North Carolina, gaining leadership skills, obtaining new program ideas for clubs and just having fun are encouraged to attend. The fee has yet to be determined, but the 4-H Office will cover that fee for volunteers that wish to attend. Let me know if you are interested in attending one day or the entire weekend. More information will be sent out in the coming weeks!!

## 4-H BEEKEEPING ESSAY

The NCSU Entomology Department is hosting their annual 4-H Beekeeping Essay Contest. This year's topic is "US Honey: A Taste for Every Preference". The taste and color of honey varies according to flowers where the bees gather the nectar. Each different type of plant will yield honey with a different taste. 4-H'ers are encouraged to investigate the local honey and see how they differ in taste and color. The first place essay winner in NC will receive \$50 from the NC Beekeepers Association, a book about bees, and will have a chance to compete for the national award of up to \$750. Essays must be emailed to [steve\\_bambara@ncsu.edu](mailto:steve_bambara@ncsu.edu) by midnight **February 14**. Contest rules and other information can be found online at <http://ipm.ncsu.edu/4-H/essay.html>



## LIVE UNITED: SUPPORT UNITED WAY

4-H is just one of the many agencies in the community that is supported by our local Person County United Way. And, as one of the agencies, I can honestly say that we would not be able to do what we do without their support. Every dollar raised stays in this community and there are very few organizations and fundraisers that can say the same thing. During these hard economic times, it is easy to say "I don't have the money" or "I support this other cause" but before you say either one of those things, think about that person that receives help from the Christian Help Center, those in the hospital that receive blankets from the Needleworkers, those kids that learn to read thanks to books provided by the Partnership for Children, or those youth gaining life skills through 4-H or the Scouts program. These are just a few of the organizations that need your support. So, live united and give to your local United Way. Call 599-5899 for more information on how to make a donation or go online to: <http://www.pcunitedway.org/>

## DISTRICT TEEN RETREAT AND DISTRICT OFFICERS

We will be joining other 4-H teens for fun on **March 18-19, 2011**. Details are still being worked out but we usually start the weekend off with a night of fun and candidate speeches for those running for a district 4-H office. If you are interested in running for a district office, contact the 4-H Office. On Saturday, we will complete several workshops on leadership and teambuilding. We will also be participating in a community service project that weekend before heading home. The registration fee has yet to be determined. For information, call the 4-H Office.



## HORTSHORTS

Carl Cantaluppi, Extension Area Agent  
Urban & Commercial Horticulture

### NORTHERN PIEDMONT SPECIALTY CROPS SCHOOL COMING MARCH 4

The 2011 Northern Piedmont Specialty Crops School will be held on **Friday, March 4**, at the Person County Extension Center, 304 S. Morgan Street in Roxboro.

The school is designed to explore the art and science of growing and marketing specialty crops, and will feature many ideas for specialty crop growers to be successful in their ventures.

This year's school will feature Jerry Mills, of Mills Apple Farm in Marine, IL who will give tips on establishing a roadside market and starting a farm bakery, citing examples of what he did on his own farm (what worked and what didn't) to inspire others with new ideas.

Brad Bergefurd, a vegetable grower and Extension Specialist in Wilmington, Ohio will talk about how he operates a successful Community Supported Agriculture marketing venture to supplement his successful roadside market.

Doug Carrigan, vegetable and small fruit grower in Mooresville, NC and Mary Jo Wannamaker of Wannamaker Seeds will discuss the growing and marketing of edamame (edible soybeans) and companion crops to grow with the plasticulture growing system.

The school will be held in the auditorium of the Person County Office Building, 304 S. Morgan Street, Roxboro, NC. For directions, go to: [www.ces.ncsu.edu/person/pext\\_map.html](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/person/pext_map.html)

The cost of the one-day school is \$25.00 for the first person of a family or business and includes lunch. The cost is \$15.00 for each additional family member or business associate, which also includes lunch. Pre-registration is needed to guarantee a seat and lunch.

For a copy of the program, pre-registration form, and a list of local motels, go to: <http://granville.ces.ncsu.edu> and click on "2011 Northern Piedmont Specialty Crops School" or contact Carl Cantaluppi at [carl\\_cantaluppi@ncsu.edu](mailto:carl_cantaluppi@ncsu.edu).

### USE PROPER LIGHTING FOR STARTING SEEDS INDOORS

If you are planning to start vegetable and flower seeds indoors this spring, there are a few things you should know about the kinds of artificial lights and how they should be used. Special plant-raising tubes are not necessary for starting vegetable plants, plant physiologists have found.

"The main differences between grow tubes and standard fluorescents are that they cost a great deal more and that the light they deliver is for cosmetic effect and not based on any horticultural responses," explained Dr. Henry Cathey of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Beltsville, Maryland. "Grow tubes just make plants look better, and unless you need theatrical lighting of plants, standard fluorescent tubes will do."

According to Dr. Cathey, grow tubes have an advantage over fluorescents at first because they put out more light. But because they're not as efficient as fluorescents, they burn out faster. "After six months, the special grow tubes deliver half of the light they did when new," Dr. Cathey said. After a year, cool white or warm white fluorescents will give more light than grow tubes.

Plants do well by mixing cool white and warm white fluorescents in each fixture, providing plants a wide enough range of the light spectrum to thrive. How much light do seedlings need? Two standard four foot shoplight fluorescent fixtures, each containing two, four foot "cool white tubes will illuminate a 1 1/2' X 4' area.

Because seedlings need more intense light than mature plants, keep tubes as close as possible to leaves, short of touching them. For the first month after germination, never have them more than three inches away. Then, as seedlings begin to grow, keep lamps within an inch or two of leaves and maintain this close distance, even as plant height increases. Buy the longest tubes to fit into your area. There are two reasons for that. First, light at the ends of the tubes tend to be weaker than in the center. The strongest light is in the middle quarter of the tube. Second, the more artificial light space available, the more seedlings you'll raise and the greater diversity of crops you'll harvest.

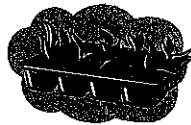
Try to avoid using tubes under three feet long if you can. They are inefficient and cost more to run than they're worth. Every other day, turn the flats so that the outside seedlings are under the middle of the light to prevent the seedlings at the ends from getting leggier than those in the center where the light is more intense. If plants get no outside sunlight, keep them under the grow lights for 18 hours a day. You can install a timer to automatically turn the lamps on and off.

To make the most of reflected light, paint shelves, tables, or boards with flat white latex. This will give plants more light for the same power output. Also, tuck sheets of aluminum foil under the flat and wrap sheets around the top of the grow light fixture, around the lamps.

Fluorescents work at peak intensity when first installed, then "blacken" with age and gradually lose light efficiency. After three months, a fluorescent tube gives 10% less light than it originally gave. A standard, 48 inch long light fixture will cost you from \$12.00 to \$20.00, but they're often on sale, so keep an eye out for bargains. For best plant growth, it's wise to replace fluorescent tubes once a year, even if you used them only during the previous spring. When measured against the hardy transplants you'll set out each year, the cost of new tubes is a worthwhile expense.

### CONSIDER GROWING YOUR VEGETABLE TRANSPLANTS THIS YEAR

Growing your own transplants is a challenge, and it's fun. Besides, you can realize a number of benefits by growing your own vegetable transplants. The major advantage is having plants of the varieties you want. You can grow just the number you need of each, and produce them as you want them. The hazard of importing pest problems is also reduced, and because you control the germination conditions, you get the maximum number of plants from costly seed. Vegetable plants can be grown under lights indoors, in cold frames, hotbeds, or plastic greenhouses.



Any shallow containers with drain holes can be used for growing transplants. For germinating, the flat inserts with narrow depressions for starter mix are very convenient. They are available at most garden stores. The medium for germinating seed should be sterile and uniformly fine. It should be well aerated and well drained, yet have good water retention

properties. The commercial artificial starter mixes, available from garden centers, hardware stores, or greenhouses are excellent. You may use the same medium for growing the small plants up to transplant size.

### Cool Season Vegetables

Four to six week old transplants of broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower survive well in the garden and are frost tolerant. These vegetables can be started from seed indoors in early February. They can be transplanted into the garden early to mid-March. Optimum soil mix temperatures for germination indoors is 70 to 80°F. Seedlings should emerge in 5-7 days. Growing temperatures should be 60 to 70° F. during the day and 50 to 60° F. at night.

### Warm Season Vegetables

Tomato transplants 6 to 8 weeks old may be set out after the danger of frost is past, during early to mid-May. Seed germination should occur in about 6 days with 75 to 80 degrees F. soil temperatures. Tomato seeds should not be started indoors until mid-March.

Pepper and eggplant transplants should be 6 to 8 weeks of age to be transplanted into the garden in mid-May. Seed should be started indoors during early March, with seeds germinating in about 2 weeks.

As soon as developing seedlings have their first pair of true leaves (the leaves that emerge after the seed leaves emerge), they need to be transplanted into individual containers such as styrofoam cups. Handle them by the leaf, not by the stem, so that you don't crush them. Give them enough room. Crowded plants become spindly and weak.

Since seedlings of vine crops (cantaloupes, cucumbers, watermelon, and squash) do not transplant well if stems and roots are injured, and they are warm season vegetables, easily injured by frost, sow seeds directly into the garden in mid-May.

Remember to use fluorescent lighting for your transplants and never keep the lights more than 3 inches above the plants at any time, or they will become tall and spindly.

On April 15, we still have a 50% chance of frost to occur in our area. Remember that the chance of frost occurrence does not decrease to 5% until early May. Putting out warm season vegetables in the garden before that time increases the risk of plant death due to freezing temperatures.

### STARTING VEGETABLE AND FLOWER SEEDS INDOORS

Did you ever want to try growing flower and vegetable seeds at home but didn't know where to start? Just one call to the Granville or Person County Cooperative Extension Service can get you a fact sheet entitled "Starting Plants From Seeds". This publication will tell you all you need to know about growing healthy plants indoors. Topics include:

- Selecting Seeds for Planting
- Containers for Sowing Seeds
- Soil Mixes and Other Growing Media
- Sterilizing Mixes and Containers
- Seeding
- Damping-Off
- Growing Seedlings
- Transplanting
- Moving Plants Outdoors



For tender plants, we generally refer to May 5 for our frost-free date, meaning that we still have a 5% chance of frost on May 5. Certain kinds of flowers and vegetables need to be seeded at different times before the frost-free date to allow the seedling to grow indoors before transplanting outdoors.

So when looking at the charts in the above fact sheet, use May 5 as the last frost date in our area and then back up however many weeks it states before the last frost to plant seed indoors. For cool season vegetables like cabbage, cauliflower, and broccoli, use April 15 as the last frost date, as these vegetables can tolerate light frosts.

### HOLD THE PRUNING TOOLS!

For those with the urge to prune fruit trees and grapes now, hold on and put the pruning tools away for now. Many of you are raring to go once all the leaves have fallen, but now is not the best time of the year to prune. In fact, pruning now may cause problems later on in the year.



We will be getting several days of freezing or below freezing temperatures throughout the winter. After several days of cold temperatures, winter injury or dieback will occur on the tips of the branches. It's best to wait until the cold period has passed so that you will remove winter injured branches as you prune. If you prune now, you will get winter injury on what you leave behind.

Also, the stone fruits (peach, plum, cherry, apricot) have more tender wood than apple and pear. They're more apt to winter injure so it's a good idea to delay the pruning of stone fruits until early-mid March. It's o.k. to prune stone fruits if you see buds starting to break. It does no harm. If you prune back a grape vine and it starts to "bleed" that is, the sap starts to drip like a faucet out of the cut vine, that is o.k. and does not hurt the vine.

If you have a large amount of fruit trees, you can start pruning apples and pears around mid-late February and delay pruning the stone fruits and grapes until mid-March.

A fruit tree pruning demonstration will be conducted in February or March. The location and date will be determined at a later time.

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### COOPERATIVE EXTENSION Helping People Put Knowledge to Work

*Derek Day*

Derek Day  
County Extension Director

*Kim Woods*

Kim Woods, Assistant Extension Agent  
Animal Science/Natural Resources

*Bess Hester-Whitt*

Bess Hester-Whitt, Extension Agent  
Family & Consumer Sciences

*Jennifer Grable*

Jennifer Grable, Associate Extension Agent  
4-H Youth Development

*Carl Cantaluppi*

Carl Cantaluppi, Extension Area Agent  
Urban & Commercial Horticulture

