



Report to the People

From the Director



Anson County Cooperative Extension staff members from left to right: Dustin Adcock, Roshunda Blount, Pam Layfield, Janine Rywak, Richard Goforth, Aimee Rankin, Yolanda Wilson, Jessica Anderson and Erin Dempsey.

Cooperative Extension's Mission –

North Carolina Cooperative Extension is an educational partnership helping people put research-based knowledge to work for economic prosperity, environmental stewardship and an improved quality of life.

The down economy and slow recovery has played havoc on everyone, including Cooperative Extension. Government agencies are currently facing more potential funding cuts from both federal and state levels. As state and county employees, we are challenged to make sure our programs are relevant, our budgets are streamlined and our efforts are transparent. Daily we rise to that challenge. Anson County Cooperative Extension boasts a proud history of programming to community needs and we work to continue that tradition. For example, last year we provided educational programs that included: a Southern Piedmont Winter Beef Conference for 65 producers who learned about utilizing forages and soil fertility, indicating a total potential cost savings of \$82,000; an after-school program with 92% of court referred participants completing with no new adjudications or complaints; a shiitake mushroom workshop where Anson County producers diversified into production with 2013 yields expected to quadruple in response to demand from dependable and profitable markets; a summer 4-H day camp program of five weeks in collaboration with 13 different partners for 109 youth; a poultry composting workshop where 100% of the respondents indicated they would use or consider composting mass mortality and 67% would consider making a mass mortality plan for their farms; and the 10,000th acre was enrolled in the Anson County Voluntary Agricultural Districts farmland preservation program, representing 49 farms and 135 tracts of land. This report newsletter contains additional success stories from Cooperative Extension's efforts in Anson County last year. Our staff is proud of the work we do, and proud to serve Anson County. We are pleased to be able to share some of those accomplishments with you.

Welcome New Local Foods Agent!

The Anson County Cooperative Extension staff is happy to welcome another member to the team. Dustin Adcock began his official duties on the job as Area Local Foods Agent on January 23rd. The position was made possible by a joint effort of local governments and NC A&T University. Dustin serves three counties, Anson, Stanly and Union, with his home base in Union County. A new and creative venture, Dustin's appointment with responsibilities in Local Foods is the first of its kind in the state. With the growing interest in local foods regionally, this program has tremendous opportunity. Dustin will work with both agents and farmers to develop stronger and safer markets, offering more profitability to local producers. He will also be available to provide assistant to consumers with their small farms, markets, gardens or other local production questions. We are excited to have Dustin aboard!



Dustin Adcock, Area Local Foods Agent, is the newest member of the Anson County team.

April 2013

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If you are interested in learning more about any information in this newsletter, contact me at the Extension Center or e-mail me at: janine_rywak@ncsu.edu. For accommodations for persons with disabilities, contact me no later than five business days before the event.

Sincerely,

Janine B. Rywak
County Extension Director



Production site of a commercial shiitake mushroom farm in Anson County showing inoculated oak and sweetgum logs stacked in a cabin style. A pallet at the base helps keep inoculated logs off the ground to prevent other mushroom fungi from establishing.

Horticulture—*Aimee Rankin, Agricultural Agent*

Specialty crops like shiitake mushrooms allow small farms to diversify into niche markets and utilize shady areas typically unsuited to cropland. Anson Cooperative Extension collaborated with NC A&T University to have a shiitake mushroom workshop in February of 2012. Forty participants from 7 different counties attended. Three Anson County residents went into commercial production this fall and have secured markets in cities nearby. Two of the three new growers have said, "Our buyers have asked to purchase as many mushrooms as can be produced." As beginning farmers, they were thrilled with the sales potential of the mushrooms. All three growers plan to inoculate more logs this winter and manage the crop more intensively so their markets can expect a regular supply. Two additional beginning farmers will go into commercial shiitake production in 2013.

4-H Youth Promise—*Erin Dempsey, Program Director*

At-risk youth come from very different backgrounds, with certain situations that many people may never face in their own lives. On numerous occasions, an aging grandparent is the sole guardian of the troubled youth. This fall, Anson County 4-H Youth Promise received a referral for such a child. During intake it was discovered that the youth had not been attending school because his grandmother did not have the money to purchase school uniforms or shoes. Within the county there are a lot of programs and organizations to assist the younger children with this type of problem, but not in the middle and high schools. With approval from the board, 4-H Youth Promise purchased the needed items for the youth to be able to go to school daily. Both youth and grandmother were speechless. Before the items were bought, the youth had missed 31 days. Since then, he has not missed school.

"...youth had missed 31 days of school. Since.....he has not missed school."



Dr. Carl Crozier and Dr. Sanjay Shaw demonstrate litter application rates and calibration during a poultry litter subsurface field day.

Poultry—*Richard Goforth, Area Specialized Agent*

Poultry production is North Carolina's largest agricultural commodity. Manure produced during production continues to increase in value for growers and local crop farmers with the rise in commercial fertilizer prices, which are driven by the cost of oil. Poultry litter is a good fertilizer but must be used properly to prevent contamination of water resources. NC Cooperative Extension helps growers and farmers develop nutrient management plans and keep required records to meet Division of Water Quality regulations. Extension works with growers and farmers to take proper soil and litter samples analyzed by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture. These plans set application rates based on crop needs and soil types. This ensures that excess nutrients are not applied to fields, saving farmers money on fertilizer and preventing run-off and leaching to water resources. Extension developed a new plan to help a grower use 1324 tons of poultry litter properly and provided additional training and assistance with two established plans in Anson County. This represents an estimated savings of \$13,945 over commercial fertilizer cost.

4-H & Youth—*Roshunda Blount, 4-H Agent*

In North Carolina, 24.9% of youth are poor and 11.5% live in extreme poverty, according to childrensdefense.org. In 2011, 948,234 youth in the state were in the school lunch program. Everyday hunger disrupts the lives of 1 in 5 children in North Carolina. In an effort to combat hunger, Anson County 4-H formed a partnership with Wadesboro Elementary School to collect and pack Backpack Buddies supplies for the 2011-2012 school year. Backpacks were given to the school weekly for youth to have food over the weekend. Volunteer Leaders, 4-H'ers and 4-H Youth Promise participants volunteered food items, packed backpacks weekly, and assisted with delivering the food. During the 36-week period, a total of 1,209 pounds of food was given out, which is a cost savings equivalent to \$3,300. One parent stated, "I am grateful for what 4-H is doing with the backpack buddies. It means a lot to me. It has been a hard year for me and my kids and sometimes food has been limited, but it makes me feel good to know that someone else is helping my child get the food and nutrients he needs." Due to its success, the partnership will continue for the 2012-2013 school year.



Janet Gilreath of Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge shows 4-H Summer Day Camp participant, Alyssa Liles, how to open an owl pellet.

Livestock—*Jessica Anderson, Agricultural Agent*

The Annual Southern Piedmont Winter Beef Conference was held at the Stanly County Agri-Civic Center on December 4, 2012. Cooperative Extension agents from Stanly, Anson, Montgomery, Richmond, and Union counties worked together to host the conference intended for local beef cattle producers. Speakers for the conference included Dr. Chris Teutsch, a forage specialist from Virginia Tech, and Steve Lemons, Livestock Agent, Stanly County. Sixty five producers attended the conference, with an evaluation report that 67% of respondents were "very satisfied" with the relevance of the information while the other 33% were "satisfied." Respondents also reported that 70% of them were "very satisfied" with the overall conference while the remaining 30% were "satisfied." As a result of the conference, 71% of respondents stated that they intended to integrate more species of grasses into their current grazing system in order to extend the grazing system. Fifty-seven percent of respondents indicated that they now understood why cattle get rejected at the sale yard.

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Comm. Rural Dev.—*Janine Rywak, County Extension Director*

Anson County Cooperative Extension serves as administrator for the county's Voluntary and Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural Districts Program. Overseeing the county's ordinance, Cooperative Extension works with the 12-member appointed Anson Agricultural Advisory Board to enroll land, educate the public about farmland preservation, and advocate the importance of maintaining the county's agricultural areas. In its 3rd year, the program has enrolled over 10,000 acres, representing 127 tracts on 46 farms. This year the board recommended and the County Commissioners approved amending the county ordinance, bringing it in line with new state statutes, to remove the requirement that land be enrolled in present-use value to qualify. This, in addition to Memorandums of Understanding with all 7 municipalities in the county, allows the board greater flexibility in enrolling agricultural lands in the program.



The County of Anson recently finalized an option to purchase 30 acres of land from Wade Manufacturing on Hwy 74 east in Wadesboro, as the home of the new Anson Agri-Civic Center.



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Farm Fresh Ventures Launched

In the making for the past couple of years, Farm Fresh Ventures Cooperative officially organized this spring and is headquartered at the Anson County Cooperative Extension Center. Thomas Cureton, Market Manager, works part time out of one of the offices. The multi-county, two-state partnership of local agricultural producers is a farmer-owned cooperative that brings producers in Anson, Chesterfield, Montgomery, Richmond, Stanly and Union counties together to sell their products. Centrally located, the Anson County Farmer's Market will serve this summer as an aggregate site for boxing produce on Tuesdays.

Member farms include: Gary Sikes (Anson) Bountiful Harvest Farms; Calvin Phillips (Anson) Phillips Farms; Dale Nelson (Anson) Nelson All-Natural; Chesley Greene (Anson) Pee Dee Orchards; Clayton & Sherry Sellers (Chesterfield) Sellers Farms; Kent Lowder (Stanly) Muddy Boots Farms; Jackie Sherrill (Richmond) David's Produce; Keith Andrews (Richmond) Andrews Farm Produce; Joe and Jim Lambeth (Richmond) Triple L Farm Inc.; Allan Baucom (Union) Piedmont Produce.; and Amy Stanley (Union) Veggie Patch Farm. Working as a regional food hub, Farm Fresh Ventures is now taking subscription orders for weekly produces boxes starting May 7 and running through September.



Thomas Cureton works as Market Manager for Farm Fresh Ventures Cooperative.