

The Power of Extension

Robeson County Center

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An Inside Glance into Cooperative Extension

The Power of Extension is a summary of the educational programs conducted by North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Robeson County Center, which impact the lives of Robeson County citizens. As an educational leader, the organization works with citizens to determine the most important and urgent issues to the community. When the issues have been identified, the staff utilizes university resources to help address these needs. One shining example of an individual who truly believes in the philosophy of Extension and what can be accomplished by meeting community needs is Cathy Graham. On June 30, 2014, Cathy Graham retired as Robeson County Extension Director. I, along with the Robeson County staff, would like to thank her for the years of service she provided as Director of the Robeson County Center. As Interim Director, I look forward to working with each and everyone of you.

Dalton B. Dockery

Dalton B. Dockery
Interim County Extension Director

Community Resource Development



Commissioners Retreat -- The Robeson County manager identified leadership training as a part of the annual Commissioners Retreat. He requested the training be similar to the six-day Leadership Academy already facilitated by Cooperative Extension, which over the past three years included 120 county employees.

Cooperative Extension provided a four-hour training for the retreat with 14 in attendance (eight commissioners, county manager, and five county administration personnel). Educational topics included team building, effective communication, conflict resolution, and the Conscious Discipline Brain Model. **Evaluation and Results** - All 14 participants completed a survey at the end of the retreat. Results revealed 100 percent of them have increased their knowledge in two or more of the topics discussed. Also, 86 percent intend to use communication techniques taught to improve their personal effectiveness and 93 percent will limit their involvement in the Drama Triangle. One commissioner stated, "The knowledge and excitement of the instructor had a tremendous impact on the way I will process problems and solutions in the future."

Cathy L. Graham, Former County Extension Director





Kindergarten Students Learn Origins of Food -- Over the past several years, society has become further removed from farming, even in an agricultural-based county such as Robeson. Many people purchase and consume processed foods, resulting in children who believe food comes from a can or a package at a grocery store. Children must learn about fresh fruits and vegetables in order to improve overall health and reduce incidence of diet-related disease. Cooperative Extension partnered with the Robeson County Farmers Market Association, Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners, and Biggs Park Mall to conduct educational programming for 130 kindergarten students, 5 teachers, and 15 parent volunteers. Students walked to Biggs Park Mall and rotated through five stations, where

children learned about plant parts, tasted local strawberries and tomatoes, planted seeds to take home, and learned about the distance food travels from farm to plate. Evaluation and Results - Data was collected through oral evaluations completed by 3 teachers and all 130 students through raising hands. About 50 percent of students tasted local strawberries and tomatoes for the first time and 90 percent of children raised hands to indicate fresh produce was delicious. All students unanimously agreed buying local produce is better than produce from another state or country, because doing so supports local farmers and is fresher and tastier. Conversations with teachers revealed adults also learned why eating local produce is important, and as a result, teachers and parents are likely to shop at roadside stands or farmers markets. Cooperative Extension will continue to develop local foods programming for youth in order to connect children to healthier foods and support local agriculture.

Casey Hancock, Extension Local Foods / Tourism Agent

Agriculture

New Livestock Agent in Robeson County -- Please allow me to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Taylor Chavis and I am the Livestock Agent for Robeson County as of July 1. My primary responsibilities are swine, beef, goats, small animals, forages, water quality, waste management, pond management, and youth livestock. I am a native of Robeson County, born and raised in Pembroke. I received a degree in animal science from North Carolina State University (NCSU) in 2012. Although I am new to the Extension community, I look forward to working in Robeson County as the Livestock Agent.



Taylor Chavis, Extension Livestock Agent



Muscadine Grapevine Pruning Workshop -- Improper grapevine pruning can inhibit plant health and decrease fruit production. Local muscadine grape growers made numerous inquiries about proper pruning instructions. To address this need, Cooperative Extension partnered with the University of North Carolina at Pembroke to present an interactive Grapevine Training Workshop. Evaluation and Results - Pre and post survey information was completed by 25 of the 34 participants. Respondent evaluations

revealed 88 percent increased knowledge of fertilizer requirements, 83 percent increased knowledge of proper pruning techniques, and 79 percent increased awareness of factors influencing fruit set. Of the respondents, 32 percent are already pruning with 55 percent planning to prune in the future. Also, prior to the training, 14 percent of the participants pruned at the optimal time. Survey results showed an additional 77 percent will now prune at the optimal time to increase vine vigor and fruit production.

Mack Johnson, Extension Horticultural Agent



Risk Management Workshops Provide Savings -- Small farmers are faced with many challenges as they attempt to manage risks associated with farming. These challenges include high input and energy costs, fewer off-farm employment opportunities, increased financial and marketing risks, and weather. In order to address these challenges, Cooperative Extension hosted a series of Risk Management Workshops. The workshops were held in partnership with the USDA – Risk Management Agency and National Crop Insurance Services. A team of Extension agents assisted in recruiting potential participants and making follow-up contacts with participants. The objective of the program was to teach farmers how to understand and implement farm business planning principles for successful risk management decision-making. Evaluation and Results - After each workshop, participants were contacted by phone, farm visit, office visit, or E-mail for progress updates or to answer questions regarding homework assignments. After the final workshop, each participant completed a project evaluation, which included a pre and posttest. The 17 farmers in attendance learned new risk management tools and services along with those already established. By the end of the last workshop, each farmer had completed a personal risk management plan. Surveys conducted showed that participants have saved \$5,700 by implementing changes made as a result of participating in the workshops. Farmers are now in the process of completing the tasks listed in their risk management plans. With these tools, local farmers can build the confidence they need to deal with both the risks and the exciting opportunities for the future.

Nelson Brownlee, Extension Area Farm Management Agent

Keeping Unwanted Pesticides Out of the Environment -- Inventories of unwanted pesticides (insecticides, fungicides, and herbicides) by pesticide applicators, including homeowners, need to be properly disposed of to prevent health and environmental hazards. These inventories occur by overlooking used pesticides in storage from previous years, applicators retiring or no longer in business, or from individuals who acquire property with pesticides left in outbuildings. Individuals often improperly dispose of unwanted chemicals. Based on this need, Cooperative Extension held a one-day pesticide disposal collection event in partnership with NCDA&CS's Pesticide Disposal Assistance Program. Evaluation and Results - A certified contractor weighed and counted each container of pesticide as it was delivered the day of the collection event. As a result of the free amnesty event, the certified contractor collected 284 containers for a total of 3,064 pounds of unwanted pesticides for proper disposal. Disposal of unwanted pesticides by private individuals would cost on average \$3 per pound. The combined savings for all participants was \$9,192. Proper pesticide disposal contributes to the improvement of environmental and public health by keeping pesticides out of the environment and reducing the risk of pesticide exposure to all citizens.



Mac Malloy, Extension Field Crops Agent

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4-H Youth Development



Making Germs Disappear -- Seasonal flu outbreaks not only stress the health and well-being of students and their families but cause students to miss school and valuable learning time in the classroom. Cooperative Extension's 4-H Program worked with the guidance counselor at Janie C. Hargrave Elementary School to implement the Glo-Germ activity. This activity teaches youth how germs spread and how to properly wash their hands to stop the spread of germs, which might carry illnesses. Every student in the school (approximately 300) had the opportunity to take part in the activity and learn how to properly wash their hands. Evaluation and Results - Two weeks after implementing the activity, an oral teacher evaluation revealed students were not only taking extra care to wash their hands properly but were also policing fellow students. Five teachers reported a diminished absentee rate in their classrooms due to illness. Each teacher linked the lower absentee rate to the Glo-Germ activity. Students who not only demonstrate but also teach proper hand-washing techniques to other students demonstrate a change in behavior in terms of their own health. A lower absentee rate means more youth are able to spend more time in the classroom and increase their learning potential, which leads to successful adulthood in an ever-changing global society.

Shea Ann DeJarnette, Extension 4-H Youth Development Agent

Youth Talent -- Many youth in Robeson County do not have a platform to share their talent with the public. Based on this need, Cooperative Extension's 4-H Program hosted an Entertains Talent Show for youth between the ages of 5 and 19. The 4-H Entertains Talent Show allows youth the opportunity to compete with other youth in their age category. Evaluation and Results - Nineteen participants in four different age divisions competed.



Prizes were given for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in each division, but all participants were deemed winners and received prizes. The two top winners will compete in state competition. Youth involvement in positive, productive activities is essential to help youth become successful young adults. Performing and exhibiting their talent provides empowerment and self-confidence. Due to the impact of this program, Cooperative Extension's 4-H Program will continue to offer 4-H Entertains as well as 4-H public speaking and presentation opportunities to youth.

Wendy Maynor, Extension 4-H Program Assistant

Family and Consumer Sciences



ServSafe Training -- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates 48 million people get sick from foodborne illnesses each year, resulting in 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths. The National Restaurant Association estimates each foodborne illness outbreak could cost an establishment up to \$75,000 in legal fees, medical claims, wasted food, bad publicity, and/or closure of the establishment. In order to prevent foodborne illness, North Carolina Cooperative Extension (Robeson, Columbus, Bladen, and Scotland) collaborated with the Robeson County Health Department and NCSU's Entomology Department to provide ServSafe Training to 24 participants from 15 food establishments. Evaluation and Results - A written evaluation was conducted with all participants collecting quantitative and qualitative data concerning knowledge before and after the class. Written evaluations revealed 96 percent of participants would model food safety practices for employees. Also, 68 percent stated they would monitor employees more closely for correct food safety practices. Just over half of the participants stated they are currently using correct hand-washing procedures. However, the remaining 49 percent

reported they gained enough knowledge to begin washing their hands correctly. Over 78 percent of respondents stated they are now confident in their ability to identify foodborne illnesses. This increase in food safety practices/knowledge directly impacts their ability to provide safe food to their customers. This training has potentially saved Robeson County \$1,125,000 in costs associated with foodborne illnesses. Based on these results, the ServSafe Food Safety Managers' Course will continue to be provided in Robeson County.

Janice Fields, Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Agent

Child Care Provider Trainings for Head Start -- Each year, North Carolina requires Child Care Professionals to attend educational certification training. Workshops are created around nine specific program topics and must be taught by approved instructors/agencies. Each employed provider must maintain certification in order to care for children from birth to school age. Cooperative Extension partners with Four-County Head Start and Lumber River Development Association (LRDA) to provide training. In the 2013-2014 school year, 57 childcare Head Start professionals received training.



Evaluation and Results - Written surveys were collected following the sessions. The information received provided feedback from participants related to what they learned and suggestions for future educational needs in the area. Survey results reported 87 percent of those attending increased knowledge in areas related to providing quality care to children. In addition, 100 percent of participants indicated they would use at least one of the newly learned strategies in their classroom. Cooperative Extension will continue to provide quality childcare trainings for childcare professionals.

Christy Strickland, Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Agent



Healthy Eating, Physical Activity, and Chronic Disease Risk Reduction -- According to the 2013 Obesity Data Reference Guide, North Carolina youth ages 5-17 incurred \$107.18 million in medical costs attributed to excess weight. In Robeson County, approximately 33.5 percent of children and adolescents are considered overweight or obese. Based on this need, Cooperative Extension's 4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) partnered with the Public Schools of Robeson County to deliver six nutrition classes to 248 kindergarten students. Evaluation and Results - Pre and post evaluations were given to all 248 students.

Results of the evaluation revealed the following: 98 percent of the students increased their knowledge of human nutrition, 92 percent increased their variety of foods in daily diet, and 87 percent increased daily physical activity. Good eating habits and adequate exercise can decrease medical costs and the risk of chronic illness attributed to obesity.

Tamika McLean, Extension 4-H EFNEP Assistant

Moving in the Right Direction -- Statistics have shown North Carolina has the ninth highest diabetes rate in the country (1 in 10 state residents have been diagnosed with diabetes). Diabetes also contributes to other health issues as well as death. Healthy People's 2020 goal is to "reduce the disease and economic burden of diabetes and improve the quality of life for all persons who have or are at risk."



Studies show improving and controlling diabetes is possible through dietary habits and physical activity. Based on this need, Cooperative Extension responded to this issue through their Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) for adults. In Robeson County, 120 participants have been offered basic nutrition and physical activity classes. Also, the educational classes focus on eating healthier carbohydrates (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, peas, low-fat dairy products) in the right portion

size. Evaluation and Results - Participants who complete the program fill in demographic information and complete a short survey about their eating behavior. The survey shows areas of improvement, which is a step in the right direction. The Robeson County EFNEP survey has shown the following participant outcomes: 62 percent positive change in consuming more vegetables, 36 percent consuming more dairy, 40 percent consuming more fruit, and 28 percent consuming more whole grains. Based on these results, additional nutrition classes will be offered.

Renee Diggs-Neal, Extension Adult EFNEP Assistant

Upcoming Events

WHEN	WHAT	WHERE	CONTACT
August 4 - 8	4-H Creativity Day Camp	O. P. Owens Agriculture Center 455 Caton Road, Lumberton	Shea Ann DeJarnette 671-3276
August 8 8:00 – 9:00 a.m.	Corn Demonstration Plot Tour	Across from 5352 Barker Ten Mile Road, Lumberton	Mac Malloy 671-3276
August 14 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.	Robeson Local Food Alliance Monthly Meeting (monthly on the second Thursday)	O. P. Owens Agriculture Center	Casey Hancock 671-3276 Call to register
August 18 - 22 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.	4-H Cloverbud Day Camp	O. P. Owens Agriculture Center	Shea Ann DeJarnette 671-3276 Call for information
August 28 1:30 p.m.	Linking Small Farmers to USDA Programs	O. P. Owens Agriculture Center	Nelson Brownlee 671-3276 Call to register
September 4 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	Understanding Packaging and Specifications for Wholesale Markets Webinar	O. P. Owens Agriculture Center	Casey Hancock 671-3276
September 23	Pesticide Recertification Classes 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. - V 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. - X	O. P. Owens Agriculture Center	Mac Malloy 671-3276 Call to register
September 29 and 30 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. October 14 (review/exam) 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	ServSafe Food Safety Certification Training	O. P. Owens Agriculture Center	Janice Fields 671-3276 Call to register

For more information about upcoming educational opportunities, please check out our programming calendar at:

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

