Lee County Advisory Meeting  
January 20, 2011

Members present: Phil Griffin, Grace Lawrence, Sylvia Churchwell, Wayne Watson, Jerry Lemmond, Dale Hulsey, Jane Barringer, Reuhl Dabolt, David Dycus, Nancy Gust, Avron Upchurch

Staff present: Susan Condlin, Seth Holt, and Rhonda Gaster

Minutes: The October minutes were posted to the web and members were notified. The minutes were approved by general consent.

Treasurer’s Report: The balance in the NCCE, Lee County account is $8,704.69. Phil Griffin made a motion to accept the treasurer’s report. Jerry Lemmond seconded the motion. All approved. Motion passed.

Report from the State Advisory Board: Sylvia Churchwell reported she and Avron were working with other district State Advisory Council (SAC) members on the final details for the South Central District Advisory Conference that will be held at the Dennis Wicker Civic Center Friday, January 28, 2011. Both encouraged our members to attend and assist with the event. Representing the SAC, will be presenting at the State CRD Resource Development conference in Southern Pines on February. The next State Advisory meeting will be the third week in February. At this time all SAC members will be meeting with the legislators as they advocate for a fair budget for Extension and Research. Sylvia stated that more than ever we need to be visible and express how important Extension is to our legislators. She encouraged our members to make those personal contacts with Mike Stone and Bob Atwater.

New Member: Grace Lawrence. Grace spoke to us a year ago about the Lee County Farmland Preservation Plan and is a long time residents in Lee County.

McSwain Farm Update – An update on the McSwain Extension and Research Endowment was given. Mrs. Ruby McSwain set up a $25,000 Endowment for Extension and Research when she deed over the property for the McSwain Center. The yearly financial report shows a balance of $20,000. At the time the endowment was established, $5,000 was designated for a separate fund to have in the event the market crashed. These funds pooled with others in a reserve account would continue to pay for scholarships that were awarded. The spending account balance for the endowment is $3,976 as of June 30, 2010. This fund can be used for improvements for the McSwain Center and property. The 4-H Maters and Taters landscaped around the shed. Council approved we request $328 to reimburse the club for their landscaping.

Horticulture Position Update – Stephanie Romelczyk resigned in December to move to Iowa. On December 23, 2010 Susan received a call from Clinton McRae, South Central
District Extension Director, stating that we could post the horticulture position but we must have the posting information to him by 12:00 noon. Later that day, Clinton called and said the university is closing down for two weeks and will not get it posted until January 5, 2011. It actually posted January 12 and will stay up until January 25. A copy of the job description was sent to you for review. At last check only one application had been received. We hope to get our applicants, make a selection and interview quickly before the state freezes positions. Once a decision is made on the interviewees, an interview will be set up within the week. You will be notified of the interview date and are welcome to attend. Phil Griffin asked if we do not have a suitable candidate, would we lose the funding? Susan talked with the county manager about the position and informed her that we did not hire by June 30, he couldn’t promise it would remain in the budget. That would be a decision made by the commissioners. Members were encouraged to spread the word that we’re seeking applicants with a four-year degree in the field of horticulture and to tell them to apply quickly. All applicants must complete the online application located on the NCSU website.

**South Central District Leadership Conference** – Friday, January 28, 2011 at the Dennis Wicker Civic Center. We need volunteers to help with direction of events taking place within the Civic Center. Please let Rhonda or Susan know if you can help. Will need volunteers from 9:00 am until around 3:00 pm. Each county is expecting to have 10 members. The lunch will be locally grown foods, sweet potatoes, collars, chicken, corn bread and blueberry cobbler. You have a copy of the South Central District Extension Advisory Conference agenda with your information today. The opening session will start at 10:00 am with Avron Upchurch presiding. Linda Shook will welcome everyone to Lee County. Sylvia Churchwell will give comments from the State Advisory Council (SAC). We will focus on four areas, Hungry to Help – 4-H Project, Local Foods, FCS Centennial and Advocacy. We stressed having more advisory members and less staff.

- **Hungry to Help** – The NC Food Bank is furnishing the food and we will pack 3,500 back packs. Second Harvest will bring the food. Lynn Lambert, Interim CED in Harnett County, is coordinating the event. For an hour-an-a-half you will be physically working putting together food bags.

- **Local Foods** will be covered at lunch with a presentation from Sandhills Farm To Table.

- **FCS Centennial** – Dr. Wilma Hammett will talk about the FCS Centennial history book that the Centennial committee is compiling and will be available in May.

- **Advocacy In Action** – Robin Adams from NC A&T University and Dr. Donald Cobb, Acting Associate Director County Operations, will talk about advocacy.

- There will be a Conference Evaluation at the end of the day.

**Report to the People** – May 9, 2011 at 5:30 pm. Each year this office hosts the commissioners, county manager and the leaders in the county to show them the impact Cooperative Extension has made during the past year. We would like to have a very good audience for the county commissioners. This is an excellent time to be an advocate for Extension and talk to the commissioners. Will give you an update at the April Advisory Council meeting.

Agent Program Updates and Success Stories
Seth Holt – Crops and Livestock
- Area Farmers are meeting twice a month
- Livestock Producers meet once a month
- Had a joint tobacco meeting with Moore County – had a good turnout
- Working on on-search trials for this area
- Had a VAD meeting yesterday – We now have 14 VAD members with nearly 1,900 acres
- There will be a Forestry meeting next week, January 24, 2011.

County Extension Director’s Updates
- FCS Centennial – plans moving along – Appreciate the support from the Advisory Council – Lee County has raised $1,500. We lead the state at the present time. We will get 10 FCS History Books and will have 40 to sell.
- NCCE Director’s Search - Dr. Joe Zublena is the new NCCE Director. Will serve in the position for at least two years, maybe longer. Will now fill Dr. Zublena’s old position, County Operations. Currently Dr. Donald Cobb is filling this position for a short term. Will have interviews this week.
- Possible 15% Budget Cut to the University in 2011 – The University will raise tuition to help cover the cut but Extension and Research will not be able to handle this cut. Will learn more at our District Conference. Will need to talk to Mike Stone and Bob Atwater.
- Susan asked if the advisory members would like to wear a name badge to certain functions such as Report to the People? They agreed to check on prices and report at the next meeting.
- Master Gardeners’ Class – February 22 – May 31, 2011. This is a 15-week program, 40 hours long. The classes will be held on Tuesdays from 9:00 am until 12:00 pm. Extension agents from other counties will be instructors along with some of the Master Gardener Volunteers and some professionals from NCSU. We try to have a training class every two years. We currently have 22 active Master Gardeners. We have a phone helpline from April – October, Monday, Wednesday and Friday between the hours of 10:00 am and 1:00 pm. During these times MGVs answer phone calls and handle walk-in clients with plant and landscape problems. This class is for those who will partner with Extension to deliver researched based information, not to gain personal knowledge. To become a certified MGV they must attend the training sessions, take an exam and give 40 hours of volunteer service within a 12-month period. If they want to remain a MGV after the first year they are required to volunteer at least 20 hours in a year. Most MGVs give many more hours than 20 per year.

Each spring we try to have four classes for the public. MGV will take the lead in his program and are working on identifying topics that will be beneficial. This will be finalized in a few weeks.

No concerns or comments from Advisory Members.

Next meeting date: Thursday, April 28, 2011