Lee County Advisory Meeting
October 27, 2011

Members present: Avron Upchurch, Donald Morton, Grace Lawrence, Jane Barringer, Wayne Watson, Reuhl Dabolt, David Dycus, Brenda Willett, Sylvia Churchwell, Mary Beth Jackson, Sam Buchanan, Jerry Lemmond, Donese Pulley, Nancy Gust

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

Avron Upchurch opened the meeting and welcomed the committee members.

Minutes: The July minutes were posted to the web and members were notified. If there are no additions or changes the minutes will be approved by general consent.

Treasurer’s Report: The balance in the NCCE, Lee County account is $11,646.40. Income = $1,570.57, Expenses = $43.00 There were no questions or changes. The Treasurer’s Report was approved by general consent.

Report from the State Advisory Board: Since the staff leadership with State Advisory Council had some restructuring; the SAC will be lead by the leadership team at NC Cooperative Extension. The team is charting a new future for SAC and would like to see an active advisory council in every county. Lee County has a strong Advisory Council. The State Advisory Council received a $10,000 grant from Farm Credit System Foundation. Lee County will get some of the money if they apply for it. A committee was appointed and will meet to determine our needs. No application deadlines have been set. Sylvia asked the committee for their thoughts on the LINK publication.

Business

Horn of Plenty – Avron commented on the event that was held in Cabarrus County on August 19. This event rotates to one of the six Extension Districts annually. This event serves a banquet-type meal during the Annual Conference of County Commissioners. This year, South Central District was host. Extension personnel and supporters supplied and prepared the food for this event. Lee County brought the sweet potatoes and 3 pound cakes. The entire staff and three Advisory members attended this event. Over 800 people were served.

Recognition of 4-H State Fair Booth - Avron passed around a photograph of the winning 4-H State Fair Booth. The Home Grown 4-H Club designed and constructed the detailed booth “Seed to Feed” and won 1st place plus $750. Photo attached to the original minutes.
Lions Club Presentation – Don Morton presented Cooperative Extension a check in the amount of $1,500, for their participation in the Lee Regional Fair.

Recommendations to the Advisory Council - Avron would like to recommend the following to the Advisory Council:

Amy Dalrymple – By position – serves on the NC Cooperative Extension Foundation - All were in favor of Amy Dalrymple serving on the Lee County Extension Advisory Council.

Larry (Doc) Oldham – Commissioner – By position - to serve as the representative from the Lee County Commissioners – All were in favor of Larry (Doc) Oldham serving on the Lee County Extension Advisory Council.

Terry Spivey – Leader for the Maters and Taters 4-H Club – Representing 4-H – All were in favor of Terry Spivey serving on the Lee County Extension Advisory Council.

Al Garcia – Member at large, 3-year term – All were in favor of Al Garcia serving on the Lee County Extension Advisory Council.

Sandhills Farm To Table Funds – Susan explained that for each produce box delivered to a gathering site, the site would receive compensation. As agreed by the Advisory Council at the beginning of this project, half of the proceeds would go to Extension and the remaining half would be divided among the groups that volunteered to distribute boxes to the customers. The summer report is attached to the original minutes. Susan asked the group for their approval on the funds to be distributed. Avron suggested appointing a committee to look into how we can best use these funds and report back to the council in January. Jerry Lemmond made a motion to disburse the funds presented to the various groups for volunteering in the Sandhills Farm To Table. Frank Thompson seconded. All approved. Motion carried.

Farm-City Week Activities Planned – Included in your agenda packet is a Farm-City Week Activities Flier. The purpose of Farm-City Week is to recognize and promote agriculture within the county and to help people understand how city and rural folk are interdependent on each other for our farming activities. Farm-City Week Banquet is scheduled Monday, November 21. The theme will be “After the Storm”. Tickets are available and are $7 each. A Cotton Picking Contest will be held Sunday, November 20 at 2:00 pm at the Extension office in the cotton field adjacent to the building. All ages are encouraged to attend. A 4-H Pumpkin Carving Contest was held October 21. 4-H is also promoting the 4-H Art Contest and 4-H & Adult Photography Contest. Brenda is heading up the 4-H & Adult Scarecrow Contest. Elected Officials tour is Tuesday, November 22. We will meet at the Extension office at 7:30 am and visit the farms that were hit by the storm. Our final event will be the annual Ladies Luncheon, held Wednesday, December 7 at 11:45. It is open to everyone, not just the ladies.

Plan of Work for 2012 - In 2007 we did a needs assessment in the county to help us identify programming needs for Lee County. Its time to do this needs assessment again and to assist with this a suggestion was made to purchase a survey tool. Grace gave the advisory council an overview of Survey Monkey, a tool to gather information and evaluations from the clientele. There are several levels for Survey Monkey, Basic – Free, Select - $204 annually, Gold $300 annually, Platinum - $780 annually. The Select level will allow unlimited questions and unlimited responses. All agents will have access to
Survey Monkey. It was suggested purchasing the Select for $204 with funds from the Lions Club funds we received. Nancy Gust made a motion that we go with the Select level of Survey Monkey for $204 annually. Jerry Lemmond seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried.

Announcements:

Lee County staff won the STARS award for the month of October for all their hard work during the Lee Regional Fair. With this award we had a trophy for the month and were challenged to make pictures with the trophy. A copy is attached to the original minutes. This will be published in the next issue of LEE Outloud, a county monthly newsletter.

David Dycus had back surgery Monday at Rex Hospital and is experiencing difficulties. A card was passed around for everyone to sign. Seth will take the card to David.

Agent Program Updates and Success Stories:

Bill – 4-H Agent – He is in Omaha, Nebraska doing a presentation about 4-H Club development. He should be back Monday. He acquired grant funds to make this trip.

Seth – Agriculture Agent – Prices of beef cattle have been up. Townsend is still in limbo. The potential buyer from Ukraine backed out. Not sure what the growers or workers are going to do. There are two growers in Lee County that will be affected.

Row Crop update – It has been an extreme year from one end of the county to the other, depending on rainfall. Tobacco did well this year. Had a bull soundness exam at Ragan Farms - seaman tested 8 bulls. Of the eight bulls tested, 3 were not potent and could not fertilize the cow or heifer eggs. As a result of this testing, the farmers were able to resell the bulls and purchase potent bulls.

Brenda – Horticulture Agent – This is the second year of Sandhills Farm To Table. In 2010 revenues were $280,000 – 2011 revenues were $410,000 – both were break-even years. Sandhills Farm To Table received a $76,000 grant from USDA – will do market research. With the grant funds received, this will allow the purchase of a truck with a lift gate to help in the delivery of produce boxes. We have a model system. Others are looking at our system. Farmers are interested. The Master Gardener Volunteers have designed and installed a shade garden on the north side of the building. During this process they invited the public to watch and ask questions as they did the work. Worked with a NCSU specialist and David Dycus on the spotted-winged drosophila trapping. Monitored on a weekly basis. The insect was spotted on a farm and worked with them to treat their crops right away.

County Extension Director’s Update – shared an update on the Natural Gas Program which is a hot topic. House bill 242 passed and raised the rates on fines, fees and registration for water wells. The bill also said DENER had to have two public forums before February 2012 and conduct a study of the issue and report to the legislature by May 2012. DENER had a public hearing at the McSwain Center on October 10, 2011. Landowners need more education on Natural Gas leases and they need to know if they own their mineral rights. Our programming efforts will focus on mineral rights and leases on November 8, 2011 at 4:00 pm and 7:00 pm. We will offer another program on
November 10, 2011 at 4:00 pm and 7:00 pm. This program will feature Extension agents from Brafford County, Pennsylvania via technology. This is a small county, similar to Lee County, and we should be able to learn a lot from their involvement. There is a possibility we will be able to take a bus tour to Brafford County, Pennsylvania in the spring to see their operation.

Any comments or concerns from Advisory members – None

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm.

2012 Advisory Council meeting dates:
  Thursday, January 19
  Friday, January 27 – Advisory Leadership Conference
  Thursday, April 26
  Thursday, July 26
  Thursday, October 25