



Anson County Center
April 2016

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Report to the People

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings from North Carolina Cooperative Extension in Anson County. In an effort to keep you better informed of our accomplishments and what is happening in Extension, we present this newsletter, Report to the People. The year 2015 brought many challenges as well as opportunities, and our staff made the most of them all.

Each spring, as we compile our reports from the previous year, I am amazed by the amount of work that gets done, the impacts that are made, and the community involvement utilized. According to our year-end county participation reports, our staff worked with over 9,900 clients in one-on-one contacts. In newsletters, mass media and other correspondence, we reached over 17,000. In addition, Anson County staff members conducted over 200 hours of educational opportunities in non-degree programs for 3,048 participants.

In this issue of our report newsletter, we have pulled some of the success stories from our 2015 accomplishment reports to share with you. As you will see, Extension programming efforts are a diverse mix, but targeted to the issues in the county, with the help of a network of volunteers and partnering organizations.

We are proud to serve the citizens of Anson County and are pleased to be able to share this report with you, highlighting some of the work that exemplifies Cooperative Extension programming. Thank you for supporting us.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT PANEL

The Anson Economic Development Summit is held annually to bring business, government, education and organizational leaders together to explore local economic indicators, potential for growth, and jobs in the county. Since agriculture is the county's leading economic driver, Cooperative Extension was asked to head a panel to discuss trends, issues, and needs of local producers. In response, the Cooperative Extension staff recruited five producers, representing traditional production agriculture, small farms, and local foods, to speak and participate in a panel during the summit. The panel was moderated by Cooperative Extension. Individuals shared their personal experiences and thoughts on maximizing the county's potential, and also fielded questions from the audience. Survey results of those in attendance indicated that 86% felt the summit provided value to the economic development future of Anson County. Respondents also ranked the agriculture panel as 95% in level of importance of all the day's presentations, the overwhelming highest score. Participants in the day's summit were able to hear first-hand experiences of what agriculture in Anson County looks like. In addition, they gained a new appreciation for the risks that farmers face, the value of their food supply, and the importance of agriculture to the county.

- Janine Rywak, County Extension Director

Cooperative Extension's Mission –

The North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service partners with communities to deliver education and technology that enrich the lives, land and economy of North Carolinians.

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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

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ANSON HOMEOWNER GARDENING SUCCESS

In retirement, gardening is a popular passion for those who enjoy the outdoors and raising home grown



Ed Cornwell shows how he propagates desirable muscadine varieties that he will use to expand his vineyard.

produce. But it can quickly turn to frustration and costly troubleshooting efforts if one does not know how to manage crop rotations, prevent diseases, and manage pests. The bigger challenge to educating and demonstrating improved management is successful adoption of Extension recommended practices, which may initially involve more time, changes in practices, or regular scouting and application of pesticides. For the past four years, the Anson Horticulture Agent has been working closely with one dedicated homeowner who has a keen interest gardening and composting. He wanted to learn how to garden better to prevent diseases in his raised bed vegetable gardens, orchard, vineyard, and brambles that occupy about a 1/8 acre. Having invested much time, effort, and money into his hobby over the years, he sought help from the Cooperative

Extension, carefully followed soil report recommendations, replaced diseased soil medium in the raised beds, learned how to properly prune fruit trees, and manage weeds and insect pests. The Extension Agent visits February, July, September, to offer tips on dormant pruning, summer pruning, and pest/weed/disease management. In this way, he can learn hands-on and over time recognize various issues that need attention in his extensive and varied garden plots. The client's garden space has grown to 1/4 acre and he has paid special attention to his muscadines and expanded this planting to over 1/4 acre over the past three years, by propagating vines with the possibility of turning it into a small family enterprise for his college-age grandchildren who have been helping him.

- Aimee Colf, Horticulture Agent

Volunteers make it happen!

The success of Cooperative Extension programs over the years is due to the service of countless volunteers. Anson County is fortunate to have a wealth of them who regularly assist with programs, events and activities. In 2015, 552 volunteers served in various roles and donated more than 1600 hours of their time to Extension programming. Volunteers were active as advisors, club leaders, teachers, judges, fundraisers, workshop presenters, committee members and workers at the annual Ag Expo & Fair. They helped teach summer classes, spoke on behalf of Extension to elected officials, donated materials, helped raise money, and even manned the Extension Center when the staff was out in the field, just to name a few. Valuing their time at the standard IRS rate, volunteers gave \$37,743 to Anson County Cooperative Extension last year. We cannot thank them enough!



Some young Ansonians help pack boxes for Farm Fresh Ventures last summer.

FINISHING STRONG WITH FARM FRESH VENTURES

Farm Fresh Ventures (FFV) was a producer owned cooperative that operated a regional CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) program. In its third year, Farm Fresh Ventures was still operating with a positive net income! However, the board was seeing an incremental loss to initial startup funds every year. The overall sales were plateauing and the operating costs were increasing. For three years Cooperative Extension had functioned as an advisor, business planner, and resource for the Cooperative. Extension began the season with somewhat of a "reality-check" proposal to the board. Seeing a decrease in sales and increase in logistic cost, Cooperative Extension Agents made recommendations to trim the budget, decrease producer payout (5%), and look for long term options to maintain the business. The board created a plan to maintain a positive cash flow and pay taxes and other debts by the year-end. The FFV cooperative served 130 households and 9 growers with an economic impact of over \$48,000 in 2015. By the end of the season, one of the members of the board requested the option to purchase the cooperative and continue operating it privately. Some people may have seen this as a failure, however, this is actually a proven, successful model in Extension. The end goal was to see Farm Fresh Ventures self-sustaining and provide local foods for citizens throughout the region. By this cooperative being purchased, all of these goals were satisfied.

- Dustin Adcock, Area Local Foods Agent

LOWER PIEDMONT SMALL GRAINS FIELD DAY

Farmers are continually pressured to produce more with less, considering the reduced amount of farmland and the increasing costs of operations. This particularly hits row crop farmers the hardest as many smaller operations are put out of business by increasing costs. Wheat and other small grains make up a significant portion of the row crops grown in Anson, Stanly, and Union Counties, with over 72,000 acres planted annually. Extension Agents from Anson and Union counties partnered with specialists at NC State within the departments of Crop Science, Official Variety Testing, and Soil Science to perform research trials at a location in Union County. Tests included the official variety trials, growth regulators, fertilization, and fungicide applications. One hundred and twenty one were in attendance at the May 2015 field day. Those present included local farmers, industry representatives, as well as extension and university personnel. Evaluation was conducted in a quantitative matter immediately after the presentations during the field day but before lunch. Participants were asked to complete the survey and in return they received a ticket for a large raffle item. Ninety eight surveys were returned for a response rate of 81%. Participants self reported acreage farmed, with 36,500 acres represented at the field day. Additionally, participants were asked the expected yield average based on the field days, and provided information with an average of eight bushels per acre. With wheat being \$6/bushel at the time, that led to a total impact of \$1.7 million. The team also wanted to have input from the participants for the time of the year for the field day, with the majority 65% indicating that they would prefer an April meeting.

- Jessica Morgan, Agricultural Agent



Producers listen to Dr. Wes Everman, NCSU Weed Specialist in the crop science department, speak about ryegrass control in wheat.

YOUTH LEARN THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

Youth coming into the 4-H Youth Promise After School Program often deal with a wide range of problems at school. These problems often include poor grades, issues with teachers and peers, suspensions and poor attendance. As youth mature into adulthood, many of these issues often resurface in the form of poor performance on the job, poor relationships with supervisors and peers as well as habitually absent from work. The 4-H Youth Promise After School Program frequently addresses these problems and elected to focus on these issues through interpersonal and skill building activities. Last summer, youth participated in a Summer Camp designed to prepare them for the upcoming school year, impart them with the importance of an education, and finally to teach them essential yet practical skills that they would need one day in the workforce. At the end of the Summer Camp, youth were prompted to set goals for the upcoming school year. All youth were able to come up with clear, realistic goals for the year. One youth even went as far as to put "Better Time Management" for one of his goals, which really impressed staff. Throughout the summer, youth were surprisingly eager to learn how to tie ties and discuss appropriate attire for interviews. Also, several youth who originally had no desire to attend college expressed that they were open to the idea of attending college.

- Sam Cole, 4-H Youth Promise Program Director



4-H Youth Promise program participants learn how to properly tie a tie.

SEWING WITH ANSON YOUTH

For the past two years, Anson County 4-H'ers have participated in a sewing workshop. However, there was not enough interest from the county 4-H program to hold it this year. The only youth that signed up was very interested in learning to sew and her mother reached out to the 4-H Agent for assistance. The agent contacted a 4-H volunteer leader that had experience in sewing. After consulting with her, the volunteer agreed to talk with the parent and together they agreed to set up times for the youth to meet with the volunteer to learn the basics of

sewing. Evaluation methods used were observations and feedback from the volunteer leader, parent and youth. After six months, the youth had learned to sew to the point that she made a skirt to model in the Anson County 4-H Fashion Revue. She competed against three other individuals who had prior sewing experience and she placed second. The 4-H'er was thrilled and so was her mother. The youth also reported that she plans to make another garment for next year's competition.

- Roshunda Terry, 4-H Agent



Proud 4-H'ers in the 2015 Fashion Revue. Pictured in front are two first-timers that plan to participate again next year.

NEWS TO NOTE

The new Anson County Manager, Megan Garner, has joined the planning committees for the Anson Agri-Civic Center. County Extension Director **Janine Rywak** is working with the facilities committee to finalize contract negotiations for architectural and engineering design.

Agricultural Agent **Jessica Morgan** has recently completed a two-year program with the NC Tobacco Trust Fund CALS Ag Leadership Program. The program consisted of over 50 days of leadership training, a legislative trip to Washington DC, and domestic and international agricultural study tours.

The 4-H Youth Promise Program recently received their Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (S.P.E.P.) scores. Staff members **Sam Cole** and **Quantelya Dumas** have been on the job less than a year, and are doing a great job with the program. They were excited to learn that the S.P.E.P. scores for their Community Service/Restitution and After School Programs have exceeded the state levels. Their scores, 55 for community service and 67 for after school, exceeded the state average scores of 47 for community service and 51 for after school.

Pam Layfield, Administrative Assistant, was reappointed to the State Employee's Credit Union Anson County Advisory Board. Her service in the community beyond her job is a testament to the quality professional that she is.

Horticulture Agent **Aimee Colf** worked on two different farm schools in 2015 with neighboring Extension Agents and university Specialists. Each school was a 7-month educational program that trained beginning and transitioning framers with an emphasis in small-scale sustainable farms. Schools included business planning, topic specific seminars, and field trips to working farms. As a result of their success, Aimee's team was awarded the Grange Search for Excellence South Central District Team Award.

As the annual Anson County 4-H fundraiser, the 2016 Clover Crawl netted \$14,724 and exceeded their goal. 4-H Agent **Roshunda Terry** thanked sponsors, supporters, staff and planning committee for all of their help and assistance. Funds will be used to support and promote programs for youth, parents and volunteers, such as school enrichment, summer camps, after school programming, community service and other year round educational programs.

Dustin Adcock, Area Local Foods Agent, has been selected to serve on the Health Quest Non-Profit Pharmacy Board serving Anson, Stanly, Union, and Chesterfield Counties. He is also working to complete his Masters of Horticultural Science at NC State University.

Visit us on the web!

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