

Extension Highlights

Columbus County Center

April 2013

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From the Director

Greetings from North Carolina Cooperative Extension. We continue to bring the best research and resources from NC State and NC A&T State Universities to every county and the Cherokee Reservation. We strive to: strengthen the economy through profitable, sustainable and safe food forest and green industry systems; protect the environment and natural resources; and empower youth and families to lead healthier lives and become community leaders. We provide informal community-based learning opportunities and technical assistance to people, businesses and governments. Our research-based solutions can improve the way you live, work and play.

In the year 2012, Extension addressed many issues facing our county and our programs continue to have a positive impact. We remain committed to working in areas true to Extension's mission that are important to our customers. Unfortunately, still the greatest challenge we continue to face is a climate of economic uncertainty. As we are still on the margins of economic decline there are always opportunities that await us if we seize the moment. In this time of economic disparity Extension with your help in 2013 can and will be a "beacon of light" in the area of meeting citizen needs. We continue to solicit your input, support and feedback, as we strive to improve our programming efforts, and make a difference in the lives of Columbus County citizens.

The Columbus County Extension team has worked extremely hard on meeting the needs of citizens. Our dynamic staff is keenly aware of the task that is before us as it relates to providing high quality researched based information to our clientele. Information that will change lives and empower individuals to become better citizens and to improve their quality of life. As we learn from the past and prepare for the future I am sure that Cooperative Extension will continue to be successful in Columbus County.

We are delighted to share with you a few of our accomplishments from the 2012 year. Please accept our thanks for your time, interest and support throughout the year. As always we thank you for your continued support.

Dalton Dockery

County Extension Director

Entrepreneurship

The Cape Fear Young Adult Conference Committee asked North Carolina Cooperative Extension to conduct a workshop for their conference. This conference is held annually. It strives to promote, education, employment and entrepreneurship to underserved and limited resource youth and young adults. The Columbus County 4-H and Family and Consumer Sciences Agents worked with 81 participants between the ages of 16-24. The workshop objectives were to introduce basic entrepreneurial concepts, provide resources to youth interested in following an entrepreneurial path, build life skills and inspire youth to further investigate entrepreneurial ideas. In addition, the youth completed an evaluation. Results of the evaluation are as follows: 91% increased their knowledge and 50% of the participants were willing to make the necessary changes in their lives to become entrepreneurs. This includes such things as developing potential ideas, writing a business plan and developing a network to help support their business venture. 95% of youth thought the workshop was helpful, met their needs, and they would recommend it to others. North Carolina Cooperative Extension will continue to work with other agencies to provide quality programs and activities as we empower people and provide solutions to problems.



Fighting Obesity and Diseases

Over 60 percent of Adults in North Carolina are overweight or obese which results in astronomical healthcare cost. In 2007, **\$4,751,601** (approximately 8%) of total dollars spent on Medicaid were attributed to overweight and obesity for Columbus County. In Columbus County the Eat Smart Move More Weigh Less program, a 15 week program to develop a healthier lifestyle to combat overweight and obesity was conducted at Liberty Commons Nursing home with staff members. This program was provided by North Carolina Cooperative Extension and in partnership with the Columbus County Health Department's Sarah Gray, Health Promotion Coordinator. As a result of the ESMMWL Program, the participants completing

the program lost an average of 10 pounds each, decreased their waist circumferences and lowered potential risk for developing diabetes or diabetes related complications and heart disease risk factors. One participant reported that they lowered their total cholesterol 58 points to a normal level as a result of the program, encouraging her to adopt healthy lifestyle changes. Additional ESMMWL classes will be offered to residents in Columbus County.



BEE Knowledgeable

Columbus County Beekeepers club members inquired about current information surrounding the increased decline in honeybee hive populations. Some members were experiencing issues of abandonment and increase mortality. NCA&T Ag Technician contacted the district state apiary inspector, Nancey Ruppert, and asked for a set date to meet with members and to visit their apiaries. At the meeting, members present, told of their losses and described efforts to minimize them. Nancey Ruppert spoke to each member's personal trials, telling them prescriptions for improvement while crediting their efforts. A tour of three apiaries was informative to all present, giving each person hands-on inspections of hive issues from pest management, health of queen and workers, brood production, queen replacement to honey storage. Also, a follow up discussion about winter preparations, generated questions of preventing hive collapse. Members gained knowledge to apply to their apiary with more understanding when dealing with problems that develop, as well as preventative measures to avoid problems. Those present expressed their appreciation for Nancey Ruppert's whole-hearted concern and support for them. Each stated that the informative discussion was educational and conducive for understanding management ideas to combat the potential loss of any hives. All club members at the next monthly meeting were given updates about the apiary tour by members, which had been present on the tour, speaking of the confidence gained while participating. Members encouraged each other to be vigilant about inspecting their hives and taking the next opportunity to tour with Nancey Ruppert.

Composting of Mortality

Commercial swine and poultry producers have had limited options for disposing of their dead animals over the years. They are buried, incinerated or rendered by a third party. Each proved to be expensive, as well as causing biosecurity and environmental issues. A relatively new alternative of mortality composting is proving to be a viable option. Mortality composting can easily save a finishing operation \$9,800.00, per year in operating expenses. Cooperative Extension, Advanced Composting Technologies, the forced air system, Nioex Systems, the in-vessel system, NRCS and Columbus County Pork Producers, worked together to highlight the two composting systems. They hosted two on-site field days that 12 area producers attended to learn how the different systems work and visit with company and NRCS representatives. Six of the 12 are extremely interested in converting the composting methods and are actively working to convert to composting. Composting facility can be expensive to install especially for larger farms that have a higher mortality rate. To help producers with construction and installation of a composter, NRCS offers cost share monies to qualified farms. This program can pay up to 75% of the building cost, which can easily exceed \$150,000 for larger farms.



Cost of operation for a farm with a daily mortality of 500 lbs: to incinerate it would require 2 gallons of fuel per 100 pounds. At $\$3.40 = \6.80 . = $\$34/\text{day}$ = $\$12,410/\text{year}$ for fuel.

Composting in-vessel requires 2 bags of pine shavings/500 lbs at $\$3.50/\text{bag} = \7.00 day. $\$2,555/\text{year}$ or shavings. Difference in operating cost is $\$9,855$.

Knowledge and Help for ALL

The youth dropout rate in Columbus County is approximately 2.9%. In an effort to continue to reduce this number, the Columbus County Cooperative Extension Director, along with the Leadership Columbus Committee, partnered with the Columbus County School System to work with disadvantaged youth to offer educational training. We offered 4 educational programs to 10 students, that focused on education, quality of life, business/industry and government. Research has shown that early intervention and training in leadership skills will help to reduce the dropout rate. After participation in the educational leadership classes, 80% of the participants demonstrated the ability to stand before a group in a public forum and provide information on a specific topic. We are currently in the process of seeking funding to continue to offer these educational classes.



The Bigger the Nut The Bigger the Possibilities

Farmers are always looking for any new practice that will improve their farm profitability. A new peanut variety was developed and available in limited amounts that may be a fit for our fresh market peanuts. This peanut variety is a large seeded variety that produces a large number of these extra fancy peanuts. These qualities are what the fresh market growers are looking for. The Field Crops Agent was able to obtain one bag of this new peanut variety, and divided the seed among 4 growers. This gave these growers an opportunity to observe firsthand the growth of this new variety. The growers were able to determine how this peanut looks and tastes when eaten green and/or boiled. The results were a firsthand observation of a new peanut variety. Three of the growers liked this peanut variety, and plan to use this variety next year.



for Community

Chadbourn, NC, in Columbus County has a very high rate of poverty along with obesity. Fresh produce for the residents is limited to a couple of truck vendors in town with minimal selection and few to none distant vegetable farmers, which sell, produce retail. NCA&T Ag Technician was contacted by Chadbourn Methodist Church with request for help in establishing a community garden. Chadbourn Methodist Church believed they could assist town residents with fresh produce for meals by providing gardening space. The first meeting on June 19, 2012, with sequential meetings, began their planning and development for a raised bed community garden. Information, guidelines, operational issues, funding and public relations was discussed. A tour was scheduled to observe other garden areas for the public to view design ideas. After a congregational vote to approve the project, Chadbourn Methodist Church applied for and received grant money along with community donations of materials and fund for the community garden to proceed. As of the end of December 2012, Chadbourn Methodist Church has received over \$3,000.00 in grants and contributions. They have established two raised beds and currently test growing winter vegetables. January 19, 2013, is their grand workday for construction of six more raised beds. Public flyers are to be distributed in the local community for participants to apply. NCA&T Ag Technician and Chadbourn Methodist will continue to promote the availability of vegetables for the residents of Chadbourn, and proceed with plans for future growth and development.

EXTENSION TEAM MEMBERS

Dalton Dockery, County Extension Director
 Meleah Collier, Extension Agent, Family & Consumer Sciences
 Phyllis Creech Greene, Extension Agent, Livestock
 Linda Duncan, Extension Secretary
 Renee Kellihan, Extension Secretary
 Carolyn McCain, Extension Agent, Family & Consumer Sciences
 Darlene McQuillan, Nutrition Program Assistant – Adult EFNEP
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 Michael Shaw, Extension Agent, Agriculture, Field Crops
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 Nakoma Simmons, Extension Agent, 4-H Youth Development
 Evelyn Smith, 4-H Program Assistant
 Rebekah Thompson, Nutrition Program Associate – 4-H EFNEP
 Teresa Thompson, Nutrition Program Associate
 Howard Wallace, Agriculture Agent, Horticulture

Numbers



Rising!

Small farmers are always on the lookout for new means of marketing and selling their products. The Columbus County Board of Commissioners charged Columbus County Cooperative Extension and the Columbus County Economic Development Commission to oversee the growth and development of a program known as Down East Connect. Down East Connect was created in 2010 as a means by which small farmers could sell their products via the internet to the Wilmington, NC market. During 2011, Down East Connect saw considerable growth spurred by financial support from grant funding and local municipal awards. 2012 saw even more growth for the program as the customer base for Down East Connect increased as new buying clubs were created in northern New Hanover and Brunswick counties. As of December 2012, Down East Connect has over 900 registered customers across 12 different buying clubs that are serviced by over 80 registered farmers and food-related businesses. In total, over \$65,000 in sales were made by farmers and food-related businesses from January 1 until December 31st. Due to its continued success, work is being done to procure additional funding to ensure the program's stability and improve Down East Connect's web presence.

Statistical Information January – December 2012	
Total # of Contacts	131,554
# Face to Face	30,079
# Non Face to Face	101,475
# Newsletters	8
# People Newsletters distributed to	250
# Web Visits	
# News Articles	33
# Radio Programs	3
# TV Cable Shows	25
# Credit Courses Taught	16
# Participants in Credit Courses Taught	5,405
# Participant hours in Credit Courses	73
# Non-Credit Courses Taught	621
# Participants in Non-Credit Courses	2488
# Participant hours in non-credit courses	627
# Volunteers	851
# Volunteer hours	8,617.50
In Kind Contribution Amount	193,688
Cash/Sponsorships Amount	3,294
Grants	40,000
Total Contributions	\$236,982