

2012 Report to the People

Highlights of the Agriculture, Family and Consumer Sciences, 4-H Youth Development
and Urban Horticulture programs



Forsyth County Cooperative Extension

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- 28,006** Volunteer hours in 2012
- \$567,121** Economic Value to Forsyth County
- 2,550** 4-H youth developed leadership and life skills
- 4,577** producers and citizens received conservation assistance (agriculture and urban)
- 1,761** citizens increased knowledge of financial management, parenting and home maintenance
- 2,278** families increased knowledge of food safety, proper nutrition and physical activity
- 2,480** youth demonstrating increased knowledge in science, technology, engineering, math and agriculture through school enrichment programs
- 14,132** residents received home horticulture assistance
- 143,101** residents received research-based educational assistance through programs, consultations, publications, and online resources

Cooperative Extension—Bringing the Land Grant Universities to You!

Cooperative Extension is the outreach arm of N.C. State University and N.C. A&T State University. We are also a department of Forsyth County Government. Extension carries out programs in the broad categories of agriculture, natural resources and environment; family and consumer sciences; 4-H youth development; and community resource development. Our staff teaches and coordinates educational programs, public meetings, workshops, field days, and personal consultations. Our staff presents a timely topic each Tuesday on WXII 12's noon television segment, a quarterly radio show on WSJS and now a monthly article in Yadkin Valley Living. Forsyth Extension Center is also stocked with publications, newsletters, and other media on a variety of topics.

Local Foods Focus

The combination of a poor economy and high interest in local foods has led to an increase in home food preservation. Failure to use safe canning techniques when processing food can lead to food borne illnesses, including botulism. According to the Center for Disease Control, an estimated 76 million cases of food borne illness occur each year. To help address this need, Forsyth County Cooperative Extension utilized workshops and the media to increase awareness of proper food safety techniques including regularly testing your pressure canner. As a result, citizens requested the testing of 26 pressure canners with dial gauges. 266 consumers requested information about food preservation, with 121 of these requests stemming from a segment about food preservation on the local news with the Family and Consumer Science Agent. This was a 32% increase in the number of consumer information requests from the previous year. Cooperative Extension also provided three canning workshops for 40 citizens throughout the county.



In Forsyth County, 11% of the population is low-income and do not live close to a grocery store. 47% of the restaurants in Forsyth County are fast food establishments. Forsyth County Cooperative Extension, collaborated with the Wake Forest School of Medicine Translational Sciences Institute in a project involving Experiment in Self Reliance clients. The Farm Fresh Healthy Living project offered these low-income families

weekly boxes of fresh produce from a local farmer in conjunction with cooking and etiquette classes facilitated by the Family & Consumer Science agents. The clients also toured the gardens on the grounds of Forsyth County Cooperative Extension, the farm where their produce came from, as well as a local grocery store. As a result of participating in the Farm Fresh Healthy Living program, the attendees reported that they increased their fruit and vegetable intake as well as the variety of fruits and vegetables in their household inventory. Many of them had never seen produce growing in the garden, nor had they prepared fresh vegetables before. They learned new, healthier cooking techniques and prepared and tasted vegetables that were new to them and their families.



Small fruit and vegetable farming grew in Forsyth County during 2012 as the demand for local grown products continues to expand. Many prospective and new growers are looking for innovative ways to enter this highly competitive business. The need for understanding costs to operate these types of businesses and the decisions on the products to grow provides NC Cooperative Extension in Forsyth County the opportunity to assist growers in this decision

process. Through 8 training events from workshops to on-site educational tours, 89 small farmers and prospective farmers have participated in good agricultural practice training, pest management, marketing, business plan development and business costs analysis. As a result of these workshops and assistance by the agent 5 new small farm operations have either opened for business or are in the process of becoming established including 2 growers generating \$28,500 in production to 1 purchasing property and another building a processing site for a total value of \$83,500.

Family and Consumer Sciences

Over one-third (35.5%) of children ages 6 to 17 in N.C. are either overweight or obese. Drinking sugar-sweetened beverages and selecting fast food menu items with high fat and high calories have attributed to this problem. In 2012, Forsyth County Cooperative Extension taught the “Making Smart Drink Choices” lesson to 524 students in the Winston-Salem Forsyth County School system to help address the overweight and obesity issue in N.C. As a result of the programs, students gained knowledge in making healthier drink

choices, healthier choices at fast food restaurants, eating less fast food, and cooking more at home. After implementing the programs, teachers reported that students were reading labels and discussing purchasing lowfat milk and low sugar beverages with their parents.



4-H Youth Development

Parents approached Forsyth County Cooperative Extension staff about the need for an open spring cattle show in our area. According to research by Boleman, Cummings and Briers (2004), youth beef project participants gain at least seven life skills including: self-motivation, decision making, accepting responsibility, developing self-discipline, knowledge of the livestock industry and building positive self esteem. With the help and support of many volunteers, Forsyth 4-H hosted the inaugural Forsyth County Farm Bureau Clover Classic 4-H Livestock Show in March of 2012. The show had 224 head of beef cattle, sheep and goats, shown by 97 exhibitors from 32 different counties. Donations/fees totaling \$10,990.00 were given in support of the youth event. More than twenty volunteers contributed almost 100 volunteer hours to the two day event at a value of over \$40,000. One mom wrote, “Your show had enthusiastic leaders, competent ring stewards, a



good judge, free food, many sponsors, door prizes, a skill-a-thon, and a breezy well lit facility.” A volunteer said “I cannot begin to tell you the number of positive comments I have heard, and continue to hear about the Clover Classic 4-H Livestock Show. The show was VERY well run and the “little things” of the door prizes and neat showmanship prizes were incredibly well received by all... There has been a “need” in the Piedmont for a great quality, well-run show in the Spring, and I sincerely hope the Clover Classic continues to grow, be incredibly successful, and fill that need.”



Research shows that youth experience an actual loss of learning during the summer months; their skills and knowledge often decrease. Risky behaviors also increase as a result of boredom during out of school time. To help combat boredom and provide learning opportunities, Forsyth County Cooperative Extension held nine 4-H

Summer Adventure programs covering 19 days or 108 hours for 96 youth using research-based curriculum. Programs included a week long Farm to Table tour, a three day Crime Scene Investigation camp and a half-day, week long cooking class as well as sewing, citizenship, vegetable gardening and a class on protecting the environment. Parents were sent an on-line survey to complete approximately four months after the program. The results indicated that an average of 79% of the participants demonstrated an increase in life skills such as leadership, problem solving, decision making, communication, goal setting and learning to learn. 98% demonstrated an increased knowledge about specific subject matter areas. Ninety-four youth were able to increase their knowledge and all 96 were able to be engaged in positive out-of-school activities resulting in less down time and boredom. The number one comment made by parents was that they would like to see more programs offered!

Agriculture

Forsyth County like much of North Carolina is losing farmland at an alarming rate. Forsyth Cooperative Extension worked with the local Soil and Water Conservation District, the Agricultural Advisory Board and the Forsyth County Farm Bureau to educate landowners about the program through educational displays, meetings and individual consultations. City-County Planning developed Legacy 2030, a guiding document for the county which includes the need for farmland preservation and encourages use of the Voluntary Agricultural District Program. An on-going

Local Foods Study has also examined the need for farmland preservation including a comprehensive farmland preservation plan. During 2012 an additional 688 acres have been enrolled in the voluntary agricultural district program by 10 landowners. Farmers have now committed 3324 acres to voluntary preservation. This program offers farmers the opportunity to continue farming and preserve farmland for the benefit of all county residents.



Community Gardening

Access to fresh fruits and vegetables is a problem for many Forsyth County residents. According to a survey by Gallup for the Food Research and Action Center, March 2011, the Winston-Salem metropolitan area ranks third in the nation for food insecurity. To increase access to fruits and vegetables, develop social capital and to encourage community engagement, Forsyth Cooperative Extension partnered with a host of partners including Wake Forest University, Cancer Services, Reap More Than You Sow and the Winston-Salem Foundation which provided funding to create the Community Gardening Resource Center. The Resource Center provided education, mentor training, operated a tool lending shed, a seed bank, and offered organizational assistance to potential community garden organizers. Twenty-seven new gardens were established in 2012. The Resource Center Coordinator and individual garden leaders estimate that approximately 75 new families

participated in the 27 new community gardens. Garden surveys indicated that these gardens supplied produce valued at \$55,170 to these families and others. It is estimated that \$5000 of the produce was donated to agencies accepting food or to individuals outside the community garden. 275 individuals have become active with community gardening at the new gardens and at least 24 individuals have assumed leadership roles for their garden or with community gardening collaborations. Surveys of garden coordinators indicate that gardeners and their families are utilizing the garden produce in their diets. Gardeners are eating a wider variety of vegetables and estimate that they have increased their fresh vegetable intake by more than 40 percent.



Extension Master Gardeners volunteer in communities throughout the County helping to mentor new gardeners, overseeing maintenance of some public gardens, maintaining the county Arboretum at Tanglewood Park and Demonstration Gardens at the Agriculture Building, rescuing plants from local development areas, providing educational programs to the public, and advocating for urban tree canopies. In 2012, 38 volunteers completed certification and 40-hrs of horticulture training. In addition to these new recruits, over 300 EMGVs gave a total of 15,936 hours, which at \$20.25 per hour provides Forsyth County \$322,704.00 of volunteer service.

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