Abbeville County Farmers Market Meets Community Needs

Abbeville County Farmers Market provides a source of fresh local food for a rapidly increasing number of customers. This year the market relocated to the 6000 square foot newly renovated Livery Stable in downtown Abbeville. Each Friday morning, vendors sell regionally grown products. Opening day of the market filled all 12 inside vendor booths and outside vendor spaces filled as the season progressed. Customer foot traffic has doubled since last season. There are a variety of regular customers: elderly, young professionals, mothers with children, workers on lunch break. This effort coordinated by the Abbeville County Extension Service provides a source of regionally grown foods for competitive prices. Vendor profits have increased. More locally grown food is available for local families.

This year a major promotional campaign was successfully conducted for the market.

Trees Provided for Food and Hunting

The Abbeville County Extension Service continues a decades long tradition of selling fruit and nut trees at minimal cost to area residents. The trees are purchased by those who choose to plant for fresh food to be grown on their own property or to attract wildlife for hunting.

The recent sales have seen a dramatic increase in volume. Efforts have been taken to streamline the sale by placing the forms online and conducting most correspondence by email.

Approximately $17,000 in recent sales took place. Each person was offered instructions on proper planting methods when accepting delivery of their purchase.

This sale is an opportunity for families to invest a minimal amount in a tree and have fresh food available for years to come.
**Backyard Flock Seminar Trains Area Families**

Due to multiple requests, a backyard flock seminar was conducted to educate local families on proper care of backyard poultry flocks for meat and eggs. Safe at-home processing of poultry was demonstrated as well. Youth in attendance participated in a poultry showmanship clinic in preparation for the upcoming 4-H pullet chain show.

Jenny Mountford, 4-H Agent and Kevin Campbell, Livestock Agent worked with Danny Howard, Livestock Agent for Greenville County and Dr. Mickey Hall, Clemson University Small Flock Specialist to bring up to date information to those attending.

The program provided a book and presentations on small flock health, maintenance, housing, egg production, meat processing and youth showmanship. Hands-on demonstrations were utilized through the day.

**Plots that Teach**

Demonstration plots are being utilized to help livestock producers learn about various types of legume forages for animals.

Located in the Calhoun Falls and Mt. Carmel area, demonstration plots have been established that include switchgrass, crimson clover, chickling vetch, gamma grass, and other legume varieties. By incorporating the high quality legumes into an existing stand of grass, producers can save approximately $50/acre in nitrogen fertilizer and see an increase in animal performance due to the increased palatability of the plants the animals are eating. Research has shown animal gains increase by 40% when the legumes are incorporated in pastures and conception rates of cows increase due to their improved body condition. These demonstration plots will be used at Cattlemen’s Field Days, Sheep & Goat Field Days and Forage Field Days.

**Youth Learn Gun Safety through Shooting Sports**

Abbeville 4-H secured funds through the National Rifle Association and private donors for a Shooting Sports trailer to use as a mobile classroom.

A customized utility trailer transforms into a mobile air-rifle shooting range powered by CO₂ tanks and can be used for educational lessons at 4-H clubs, school events, or local festivals. The trailer is used for instructional and promotional purposes to teach youth about gun safety, hunter education, and to promote the 4-H Natural Resources programs.

Certified 4-H Shooting Sports Coaches have used the trailer at numerous venues throughout the county.
Abbeville County Forest Landowners conduct educational workshops with the assistance of Tom Brant, Agent. These workshops are designed to improve landowners’ knowledge of timber and land management issues.

Workshops provided include:

Gene Kodama, Director of South Carolina State Forestry Commission presented information on the current state of the agency and how it fulfills its mission.

Dow AgroScience Specialist, Travis Rogers presented information on do-it-yourself herbicide treatment for controlling unwanted brush in timber stands.

Dr. Tamara Cushing, Extension Forestry Specialist at Clemson University presented information on income tax regulations and estate planning.

Cory Drennan, Wildlife Biologist with South Carolina Department of Natural Resources presented information on the feral hog problem in Abbeville County. Feral hogs damage crops, transmit disease, destroy habitat, and out compete native wildlife for available resources. Cory looked at the how and why the hogs were introduced, the extent to which they cover the county, the damage they are causing locally, and how a landowner can manage the problem.

Agriculture Showcase Informs Public

Abbeville County Extension Service reached out to traditional clientele as well as those who were new to the programs of Clemson Extension by providing an Agriculture Showcase at the Abbeville Spring Festival.

The Ag Showcase included educational information on various types of trainings provided by Clemson Extension Agents as well as numerous displays and demonstrations by producer groups. Multiple agencies partnered with Clemson Extension to make the day a success including:

- Abbeville County Extension Advocacy Committee
- Lakelands Master Gardeners
- Abbeville County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Lakeland’s Beekeepers Association
- John de la Howe School Wilderness Program
- Abbeville County Farm Bureau
- South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
- Abbeville County Forest Landowner’s Association
- South Carolina Forestry Commission
- South Carolina Beef Board
- U. S. Forest Service
- numerous local farmers, volunteers, and 4-H’ers

The Agriculture Showcase highlighted all aspects of agriculture, natural resources and 4-H in Abbeville County with interactive exhibits and experts providing demonstrations. Numerous booths included free take-home information for the public. The City of Abbeville reported that 10,000 people visited the Abbeville Spring Festival.

Farm City Event Teaches Youth Origins of Food

Over 250 local 3rd graders visited the Abbeville County Agriculture Building for a day of hands-on learning about the origins of food.

What’s the most important job of a honeybee?
What so bad about a coyote?
How much milk does a Holstein give in a day?
Do goats really eat tin cans?
How many items can be made from wood?

Third graders learned the answers to these questions and much more as they tasted, touched, asked, heard and saw all facets of Abbeville County Agriculture and Natural Resources.
Something good is always going on! Learn even more about what we’re doing at www.clemson.edu/abbeville

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Ongoing Services Available

Soil Samples
Each County Extension Office can assist citizens with soil samples. $6 per sample.

Home and Garden Information Center
www.clemson.edu/hgic
1-888-656-9988 toll-free
Consumer landscape, garden and indoor plant questions. Food Safety and Preservation questions answered. Mon-Fri 9a.m.-1p.m. No charge.

Feed, Forage, Manure Analysis
Each County Extension Office can assist citizens with submitting feed and forage samples or manure for analysis. There is a charge for the analysis.

Pressure Canner Testing
Each County Extension Office can test pressure canners for accuracy. There is a charge of $6 per canner.

Pesticide Certification
County Agents are able to offer local private pesticide applicators certification and recertification credits (ongoing credits required for license.) This service is provided for a fee and allows farmers and pesticide applicators to legally purchase and apply restricted use pesticides.

What’s Ag Worth To You?
USDA reports that 2009 South Carolina cash receipts include

- Cattle/calves: $115.1 million
- Wholesale Milk: $50 million
- Corn: $102.8 million
- Hay: $17.6 million
- Vegetables/Melons: $112.9 million
- Fruits/Nuts: $78.3 million
- Poultry/Eggs: $1 billion