

Annual Report to the People

December 2010
Horry County



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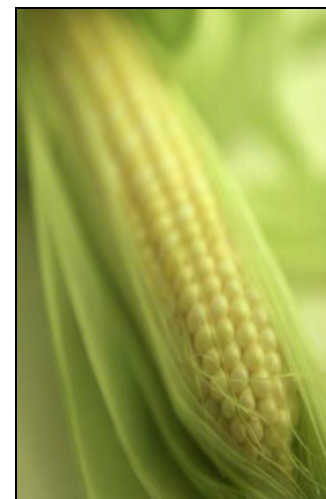
www.clemson.edu/extension

Mission Statement

The mission of the Cooperative Extension Service is to provide sound, scientifically based information to South Carolinians and help them use that information to improve the quality of their lives.

2020 Commitment to Agriculture

Since its founding, Clemson University's commitment to support agriculture, forestry and natural resources has remained unwavering. To be certain, such industries have faced dynamic changes over the last century and so have the Extension programs that serve the vital agribusiness segment of our state's economy. In response to such changes, Clemson Public Service Activities (PSA) and the College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences (CAFLS) are engaged in long-term strategic planning to prepare for transformational changes that allow Clemson programs to thrive in new economic environment.



Clemson's investment in agriculture, forestry and natural resources teaching, research, extension and regulatory programs represents our largest investment in any industry sector and will continue to support the 34 billion dollar impact that agribusiness has on the state's economy.

Extension Diagnostic Services

For homeowners, farmers, lawn care and golf course managers, the Horry County Extension Service is a valuable source of information. Services include soil and water testing, as well as plant problem and disease diagnoses. Samples are brought to the local office and sent to Clemson, where testing is done by professionals at the Agriculture Service Lab. A small fee is charged for these analyses. Lawn and gardening questions can usually be answered by either your local horticulture agent or Master

Gardener volunteers in the county office in Conway. Soil and water tests help clients learn how to fertilize their lawns and gardens for optimal results. Other lab services available through the local office include testing of feed and forage for equine and cattle producers, diagnoses of turf problems, and weed and insect identification and other services. Horry County leads the State in the number of soil, plant, feed/forage, animal waste and irrigation samples conducted for businesses annually.

4-H Reaches Out to Home Schools

Home schooled groups are on the rise in Horry County. Co-ops provide group day classes giving students the opportunity to associate with other homeschoolers, building upon social skills. Classes provided by outside sources provide extra-curricular programs that parents otherwise would not be able to offer to the youth. These co-ops are great outlets for 4-H educational programs.

In the spring of 2010, Horry County 4-H provided H.E.A.R.T. Home School Co-op with the Junior Master Gardener “Literature in the Garden” class. The “Literature in the Garden” curriculum teaches youth about gardening and ecology through children’s books, while also providing hands-on activities. Students get the basics of gardening, learn about the symbiotic relationship between people and their environment, and learn how to become better stewards of our planet.

In the fall, 4-H provided the H.E.A.R.T. Co-op with a Health and Nutrition Class as well as an Outdoors with 4-H Class. The Health and Nutrition Class taught youth nine ways on how to live a healthy lifestyle. Through these healthy habits youth can reduce risks and diseases associated with obesity, physical inactivity, and overall health. The Outdoors with 4-H class covered different outdoor recreation topics as well as ecological topics to include: hiking, camping, mosquito reduction, archery, and snakes of this region.

Horry Horticulture Means Business



Horticulture in Horry County is a thriving industry with many new homeowners arriving with a need for environmentally sound gardening practices. With the influx of new residents and the increase in commercial property, the professional landscape industry has also increased. Horry County Extension meets the needs of its stakeholders by educating the general public as well as addressing commercial landscape demands. Taught in Horry County since 1994, the Master Gardener program has graduated over 600 Master Gardeners. These trained volunteers give back roughly 6000 hours of volunteer time helping

local gardeners with their landscaping concerns. This past year alone, 90 local Plant Problem Clinics we manned by local Master Gardeners, at the Conway and Myrtle Beach Farmer’s Markets and working in local Extension offices, assisting over 2000 clients. Weekly gardening articles are submitted by dedicated Master Gardeners to local news media covering the many topics that local gardeners seek information on. Master Gardeners also help by lending their expertise and gardening knowledge to local community gardens. In conjunction with the Horry County Solid Waste Authority, local Master Gardeners assisted in the preparation of a 1 acre community garden in Horry County. Master Gardeners also assisted in beautification projects started at several local schools. Many Master Gardeners also provide the needed assistance that Brookgreen Gardens require from volunteer activity to keep their grounds pristine.

Fresh Market Revival

Locals know that Horry County’s farmer’s markets are great places to find the freshest home grown produce that money can buy and to an increasing degree many are becoming aware of positive benefits that markets offer to the areas overall quality of life. Indeed one may be hard pressed to determine a segment of the community that markets do not impact. By benefiting small farm producers, local food consumers, the local economy and environment, markets in Conway, Loris, Myrtle Beach and North Myrtle Beach have endeared themselves to a large part of the community. Clemson support to each location either through direct sponsorship or participation plays an integral role in the sustained success of each of these markets. Not only can consumers gain access to fresh, nutritious local foods, but they also participate in market activities that promote nutrition education, wholesome eating habits, better food preparation and environmental stewardship. Future engagement in Horry County’s seasonal markets will help to ensure that more citizens are able to enjoy the many benefits markets can offer, including the educational programs that Clemson Extension maintains.



Learning the Importance of Stormwater Facilities

Non-point pollution carried in stormwater runoff is the leading source of pollutants in SC waterways. In Myrtle Beach's urbanized area, the beaches drive the tourism economy which relies heavily on the recreational use of its coastal waters and depends on the rivers and Intracoastal Waterway to provide safe drinking water and source-water for residential and commercial purposes. In the urbanized areas, thousands of privately owned properties drain stormwater runoff

either to the public municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) or directly to the Waterway or beaches. This means that the decision makers that manage these private properties play an extremely important role in controlling localized flooding and preventing water pollution. Clemson water quality programs such as Carolina Clear educate property managers and directors of home owners associations on regulations affecting stormwater management on private properties,



and the best methods for maintaining private stormwater facilities. In partnership with members of the Coastal Waccamaw Stormwater Consortium, extension staff provides recommendations for pollution prevention and the proper maintenance of private conveyances and best management practices with special emphasis on maintaining stormwater detention ponds.

Regional Livestock Programs

Florence County serves as the center for livestock programming in the Pee Dee Region. All livestock programs are planned and coordinated in Florence County. County Extension staff along with State Animal and Forage specialists from Clemson University assists three cattlemen's associations with a minimum of 12 educational programs each year. Together there are over 250 livestock producers who are members of the cattlemen's associations. Example regional livestock are described below:

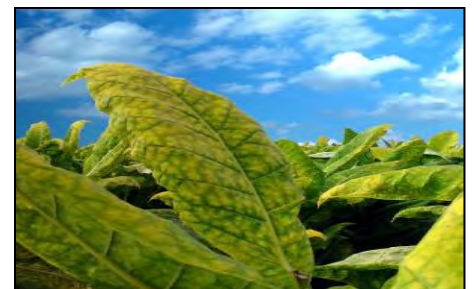


- 10) beef cattle programs are coordinated throughout the Pee Dee Region. Over 350 producers participate in these programs. These programs included information on forages, general management practices, marketing, proper culling, fencing, and other practices associated with beef cattle management.
- (2) Goat Management Seminars are offered in the region. Over 100 Goat producers participated in these programs which include information on forages, management, goat health, reproduction, nutrition, hoof care, fencing, facilities, soil sampling, and toxic weeds, and FAMACHA. Participants came from 5 different states and every county in the Pee Dee Region.
- The Pee Dee Cattlemens Association offers assistance programs to producers from Marion, Horry, Dillon, Marlboro, Georgetown, Williamsburg, and Florence Counties.
- Farm visits are offered on a weekly basis to assist and educate livestock clientele in the Pee Dee Region. Such visits include education on forages marketing, herd health, reproduction, bull selection, heifer selection, pasture management, fencing, facilities, equine management, goat production and many other facets of animal agriculture.

Saving \$ Through Barn Efficiency Practices

The tobacco grower in Horry County continues to see an increase in input costs with little if any increase in what they receive for their tobacco crop. The two top issues of major concern are: Curing costs and labor. Curing cost is something in which Extension Agents can assist. The barns of the growers are often old, most have leaks and are poorly insulated.

Extension agents educate farmers on barn insulation by recommending changes that will save considerable money. Meetings that focus on curing efficiency demonstrate fuel savings associated with additional insulation. As a result 90% Horry's tobacco farmers are in the process of insulating their barns leading to an estimated savings of \$138,240 in 2010.



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Agritourism Development

Census data indicates that Pee Dee farm lands are being converted at an increasing rate. Such declines have encouraged many rural communities to diversify opportunities for the collective development of non-traditional tourism markets. Agritourism presents an opportunity for rural farms to diversify and create alternative sources of income by providing agricultural products, services and experiences to tourists that are drawn to the coastal market.

In simple terms, an agritourism business is a farm operated for the enjoyment and education of the public and that may also generate additional farm income by promoting farm products and experiences. Typically these operations incorporate both a working farm environment and a commercial tourism component. The Pee Dee Agritourism project was initiated by Clemson

Extension based on the understanding that if SC's communities were to enhance the economic sustainability of agricultural systems and provide opportunities for much needed economic revitalization in struggling rural areas, strategic planning for the development of a cohesive agritourism programs should occur. To date this extension initiative has resulted in the creation of the Pee Dee Agritourism Product Development Plan, the formation of the Pee Dee Agritourism Association, the development of Pee Agritourism Passport web portal and the initiation of a marketing and branding campaign that links regional agritourism assets to the tourist and domestic consumer market.

