Summer Camps offer Youth Experiential Learning and Fun

The Pickens County 4-H Program offered three day camps and one overnight camp during the summer of 2010. All camps were designed to be hands on learning experiences with the youth being immersed in the content area.

4-H2O is a water quality/resources camp which uses Lake Keowee and local streams as the classroom. Youth collected water samples, observed microscopic and macroscopic life, conducted water quality experiments, and explored tributary streams. Not only did the participants learn about enhancing and preserving the intricacies of the aquatic ecosystem, they also learned about the basic techniques of fishing, bait-crafting, and orienteering.

Culinary Cooking Clovers is a cooking camp during which youth were taught by a certified chef. This was the second year that this program had been offered in the county. The focus of the camp was world cuisines. Some of the skills that youth learned were how to roll sushi, make pecan pralines and make ravioli by hand. Each day parents and guests were invited to lunch to taste the creations of the class.

Sewing Camp was also held this year in Pickens County. Camp participants were either tracked as beginners or intermediates, based on prior sewing experience. Beginning sewers completed 3 projects during the three day camp, while intermediates completed a rag time quilt during their camp experience.

This was the first summer in years that Pickens County has been able to offer a residential camp. In cooperation with the Oconee County Extension Service and the SC Forestry Commission, Wild Days Camp was held overnight. This camp is a natural resources camp during which youth learned about and experienced: shooting sports, wildlife management, forestry techniques, outdoor recreation including fishing and hiking. This is the first camp of its kind to be offered in the upstate region, through the 4-H program.
Upstate Master Naturalist Program Graduates Fourth Class

Participants from the fourth Upstate Master Naturalist class graduated November 4th. This class had 20 participants and is still popular among upstate residents. The Upstate is one of seven host sites for the Master Naturalist Program, a Clemson Extension program offered statewide. The program is a 12 week course that in cooperation with the State Parks Service, SC DNR and countless other non-profit organizations, takes participants to different locals throughout the region in an intensive outdoor classroom experience. Participants learn about their natural surroundings and learn how to “read” the landscape. Once participants graduate from the program they are expected to commit at least 30 volunteer hours to environmental education programs, ecological service projects or citizen science projects each year. So far, in the past four years, the upstate has had 79 total graduates donating more than 3,000 hours of volunteer labor to environmental organizations and agencies throughout the region, including the state parks and SC DNR.

Master Cattleman Program Huge Success

The Master Cattleman program was developed and started on February 18, 2010. It met one night a week for 7 weeks and covered topics relative to beef production and management. Clemson University Specialists, Area Agents, and Ag Agents typed chapters and developed powerpoints for the class curriculum. Response to press releases was overwhelming with 38 producers signed up for the first class and a waiting list started in the lower part of the state and 15 people on a waiting list for another program in the Upstate. Registration fees were set at $125 dollars/single or $150 dollars/couple to cover all material and travel of agents to develop, implement, and deliver the program on a statewide level. Producers from all across the upstate attended the class and indicated an increased knowledge of beef production at the end. Another Master Cattleman class will be held in the spring of 2011.

Clemson Extension Horticulture Reaching Commercial Audiences

Commercial landscapers, nurserymen, and greenhouse professionals make up a significant sector of the Upstate’s economy and are in need of more professional development opportunities. Clemson Extension is positioned to provide these opportunities through pesticide applicator certification trainings, pest & disease updates, best management practices programs, and certified nursery professional trainings. One such program was the Commercial Ornamental Extension Horticulture information booth assembled in June 2010 for the Southeast Color Connection Trade Show at the Carolina First Center in Greenville. Ten Extension Agents and Specialists participated in the booth by providing content and/or staffing the booth during trade show hours. Information from Clemson Extension and the Department of Plant Industry was displayed and distributed to a diverse audience of over 350 of the trade show’s 1,400 attendees. Several other commercial programs are planned for 2010-2011. Contact Cory Tanner, Area Commercial Horticulture Agent, for more information.
3rd Annual Cattlemen’s Day addresses Calving Concerns

Calving season is a very stressful time for any beef producers. Live calves are very important and determine the success of a beef cattle operation. Dystocia, calving difficulty, is a major problem in the beef industry and something that every beef producer deals with every calving season. Through genetic selection, dystocia levels can be decreased, but not eliminated. Since the average herd size in South Carolina is between 25-30 cows, events similar to the bull sale are optimum times to educate producers. Upstate Area Livestock Agent, Matthew Burns, and Pee Dee Area Livestock Agent, Lee VanVlake coordinated the 3rd Annual Cattlemen’s Day in conjunction with the Clemson University Bull Sale. Dr. Mark Alley, North Carolina State University Veterinary School of Medicine, was the guest speaker. He presented “Calving Management, the good the bad and the ugly” to address dystocia and what producers can do to address problems when they occur. He did an excellent job of demonstrating different fetal positions that may present during actual delivery. At a closer look, there were 1800 cows represented at this program. On the post survey, 100% of the participants indicated they would take at least one thing they learned and implement on their farm.

Producers surveyed also indicated this program was worth approximately $1000 to their operation. A producer used what he had learned two weeks after the program and saved the cow and calf during parturition. If each person in attendance uses a practice learned to save one cow/calf pair then the program was worth more than $50,000 to the SC beef industry. Supper was offered at no cost as a “thank you” to those producers who attended and consigned bulls to the bull testing program. Awards were given out to the producers who had the top-performing bulls in the bull test.

Upstate Multi-County Meeting Educates Producers on Herd Health

Herd health and marketing are two of the most important concepts for beef producers to understand and plan. Herd health ensures that animals are cared for and remain healthy in order to provide a safe wholesome product to the consuming public. Marketing ensures that healthy calves are sold in a way that provides the most profit back to the producer as possible. Dr. Patty Scharko addressed concerns about vaccination programs, mineral supplements, and other health program concerns that producers may have. Brian Beer addressed alternative marketing strategies and provided a market forecast and update. Stephanie Moore and Dan Schusler delivered an excellent live animal demonstration to address concerns about discounts cattle receive at market. Over 100 producers attended the Anderson/Oconee/Pickens/Greenville counties meeting. Through questions and personal interaction producers have demonstrated an increased knowledge pertaining to herd health and marketing alternatives. The goal given to each producer when they left was to plan. Herd health and marketing planning will allow these producers to provide a safe wholesome beef product while maximizing profits.

Junior Naturalist Program Strong in 3rd Year

The Pickens Junior Naturalist Program is a program designed for youth (ages 8-12) with an interest in their natural surroundings. It focuses on the flora and fauna of the upstate region, the region’s natural history and human impacts on the region. There were a total of 29 youth participating in the program during its 3rd. To date 20 youth have earned the title of Junior Naturalist. With building interest in other counties, there is hope that this program will be expanded in years to come.
Landowners interested in forestry and wildlife in Pickens and other upstate counties participated in a two day workshop at the Clemson University International Center for Automotive Research (CUICAR) in Greenville. The first session covered attracting birds to your property, including songbirds and quail. Specialists from SCDNR and a local forest landowner discussed ways landowners could modify their lands to make their property bird friendly. Judy Barnes with DNR led a discussion on quail, covering their population history in SC, habitat requirements, goals of habitat management and forest management practices for quail.

Other major forestry topics covered in the workshop included; Allocation of timber and land tax basis for forest land by Dr. Tamara Cushing, Clemson Extension Forest Specialist, Tree farming on a firefighter’s income, by Mark Jones, fireman and forest landowner in Abbeville, Economic Decisions for thinning timber, by Bruce Carroll, president of Forsight Resources; Are my pines ready to thin, by Dr. Stephen Dicke, Mississippi State Forestry Extension Specialist; and short presentations by each of the Agriculture Agencies that work with Forest Landowners. A highlight of the program was a presentation by Dr. Patrick McMillan, Naturalist and Biologist, Clemson University on the importance of private property in Conservation in the South Carolina Piedmont. A field trip was held in the afternoon, led by Dr. Dicke that gave participants a chance for some hands on training in using diameter tapes, clinometers and increment borers as well as measuring sample plots.

Approximately 90 people participated in the two day workshop.