Clemson Extension to Restructure

Clemson Extension is moving to multi-county service centers to manage state funding cuts of 48 percent over the last two years. All county offices will remain open; but some counties may not have a full-time administrative assistant.

A voluntary retirement/ separation program this summer left 22 counties without administrative staff. To minimize inconvenience to clients, staff in adjacent county offices will provide services. In counties without a full-time administrative assistant, agents or volunteers will staff the county office during operating hours, which may be reduced.

Staff in the adjacent county offices also will assist clients with soil samples, problem plant samples and requests for fact sheets or other information. Because this is a transition that will not happen immediately, Extension administrators are seeking ways to provide basic support until the service centers are operational.

Service and Business Center breakdown can be found at www.clemson.edu/extension.

Spartanburg Extension Office Relocates

March 2011 the Extension Service will relocate to Highway 221 in Whitney. We will be located in the Old Block Buster Video Building in front of the Old Bi-lo Grocery Store. DSS will be moving to the Bi-lo Store and Veterans Affairs will be located in the Old Block Buster Video beside Clemson Extension.

We are blessed in Spartanburg County to have a full staff despite budget cuts. We are also thankful that the County continues to provide us with housing. The location should be a positive for folks that like doing business on ground level. Parking should be plentiful and easier for our clients. Despite the pros and cons for folks we are moving and feel blessed to have a place to go!
Clemson Extension Vital To Agricultural Research

Biological Control Experiment- This year was the end of a three year trial study testing the effectiveness of a fungal biological control agent for controlling oak root rot (the primary peach tree killer in the upstate of SC). New trees were planted into known oak root rot holes in a Spartanburg County orchard. The beneficial fungus was applied randomly to every other hole. The product was reapplied each year and survivability was kept on trees. To summarize our findings briefly, this product is not effective and will not be a part of our peach recommendations. This work was done under the direction of Dr. Guido Schnabel.

Transgenic Rootstock Experiment- This experiment is also being conducted under the direction of Dr. Schnabel in Greenville County but the results of this experiment reflect the upstate conditions and will be presented at our annual peach meeting where research based information is distributed. In this case, he found a gene in an orchid plant that allowed it to be resistant to oak root rot. That gene was placed into a plum tree rootstock and was planted along with a control plum and a control peach rootstock at 27 different sites throughout a 30A orchard. These plants are measured each year and any dead plants are inspected and cause of death is determined. Unfortunately, many of these trees have been lost to drought, deer, and voles. Approximately half of the sites remain and are still being checked on and measured. Conclusions should be able to be made as to its success within 3 years.

Peach Variety Experiment- Each week I helped evaluate 87 peach varieties at James Cooley’s Farm. That information was provided to all by the web but also through meeting with individual growers asking for my opinion about different varieties for them to plant.

Strawberry Farmers Benefit from Integrated Pest Management Practices

Fumigation IPM- I had funds left over from different research experiments to be able to help calibrate most of the strawberry fumigation machines this year. No one asked me to do this I took this on myself as something that I could do that I knew would have the greatest long term impact. I was able to calibrate more than 4 machines in Spartanburg County. Each farm had different problems with their machines. One of the problems we helped with is decreasing the amount of excess drip from the injection knives when we pick up the machines at the end of each road. Sometimes this action causes the liquid in the lines to leak out as you’re turning around which can bother other workers in the field. I installed check valves on the ends of the knives that go into the ground to reduce this risk.

Whenever pressure drops below 10 psi the check valve holds the fumigant in the line. This isn’t a typical set up but was discovered by me trying to fix this issue. I also provided these farms with a clean out valve that allows them to easily clean there machine out of this very corrosive liquid and helps preserve the long term accuracy and corrosion problems resulting from leaving the fumigant in the lines. Lastly, I installed a blow valve between the nitrogen tank and the fumigant tank which will prevent any possible explosion from this highly pressured liquid.

USDA Rootstock Trial- In conjunction with Tom Beckman, USDA-ARS Byron Ga., I established, helped evaluate and maintained this trial at a Greenville County farm. It is currently in its second year. More will be determined in 2-3 years.

Farm Visits- Made farm visits this year dealing with numerous issues across our county. I assisted a blackberry farm with expanding from 6.5 A to 16.5 A. He had major irrigation issues related to the type of tubing purchased. I identified the problem and assisted him with saving his entire crop by recommending he put individual emitters at places where the irrigation wasn’t working just to get by and then assisted with getting product representatives to evaluate the situation and make better long term decisions that are currently being addressed. I helped a peach grower grow strawberries for the first time. He is very thankful for the assistance and knowledge we were able to provide with everything about fertility, irrigation, disease management, harvesting decisions, frost management, etc. There were major insect problems this year on multiple farms, control recommendations were given. I helped multiple farms lay out new orchards. I helped them make variety, row orientation, fertility and liming recommendations, and planting techniques. I helped one farm with a peach fertility management plan. There were many other individual situations I was able to help deal with this year.

Brown Rot Resistance- Tested farms to see if they had any problems with their fungicides not working properly. During a wet year this is a major problem but overall it was a very dry year and it was not a major issue for anyone.
Master Gardener Volunteers Give Back

The Spartanburg Master Gardeners have been active in the community by planning, coordinating, conducting and assisting with the following programs; Plant - A – Row for the Hungry, Hatcher Gardens, 4-H School Gardening Projects, Kudzu Coalition, Ask - A- Master Gardener” at the Hub City Farmers Market, Extension Office “Green Line” and House Hold Hazardous Waste Collection.

HOUSE HOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION- the Master Gardeners petitioned County Council and received funding of $50,000 to hold one of only four in the state. Master Gardener Volunteers assisted the Haz– Mat contractors in collecting 495 gallons of paint, 30 propane tanks, 550 fluorescent bulbs, 110 gallons of anti-freeze, 2,090 gallons of liquid and solid pesticides and other flammables, over 300 gallons of oil, 200 tires, 20 automobile batteries and a 5 gallon bucket of household batteries from a total of 446 vehicles. Total Spartanburg County Active Master Gardeners (232), Alumni Master Gardeners (884), Master Gardeners trained in 2009-2010 (31), Average (4,000) volunteer hours per year.

Clemson Extension Working on Improving Water Quality

July, August, & October, 2009 & June 2010- Rain Barrel Workshops: 101 individuals participated in these educational workshops, held at the Spartanburg County Cooperative Extension office, the Spartanburg County Public Library, and the Hub City Farmer’s Market and the Spartanburg County Extension office, respectively. Participants learned about general storm water pollution and how rainwater harvesting can alleviate some of the effects of run-off pollution from our home landscapes while providing a free source of water for outdoor use. Every participant constructed a rain barrel to use at home. These workshops were offered in response to the critical drought conditions experienced in the Upstate of South Carolina during the summers of 2007 and 2008.

October 24, 2009- Middle Tyger River Sweep: Coordinated this effort between Clemson Extension, Palmetto Pride, Spartanburg Parks Commission, The Tyger River Foundation, SJWD Water District, the Spartanburg Soil and Water Conservation District and The Watershed Ecology Center at USC Upstate. We had 43 volunteers to participate by providing a collective 140 hours of service. We collected over 1000 pounds of litter, 180 pounds of scrap metal and a dozen tires from the Middle Tyger River. Following the sweep, there was a short presentation by Dr. Jack Turner of USC Upstate regarding the watersheds of Spartanburg County.

March 20, 2010- South Tyger River Sweep: Coordinated this effort between Clemson Extension, Palmetto Pride, Spartanburg Parks Commission, The Tyger River Foundation, SJWD Water District, the Spartanburg Soil and Water Conservation District and The Watershed Ecology Center at USC Upstate. We had 32 volunteers to participate by providing a collective 116 hours of service. We collected over 800 pounds of litter, 100 pounds of scrap metal and two dozen tires from the South Tyger River. Following the sweep, there was a short presentation by Dr. Jack Turner of USC Upstate regarding the Tyger River Watershed and how they are currently impacted by pollution.

Lessons with George

March 2010—HGIC Fact Sheet: Authored a fact sheet titled “Landscaping over Septic Drain Fields” for the Clemson University Home and Garden Information Center (HGIC). This was in response to the large amounts of fecal coliform bacteria in our waterways as documented by SC DHEC.

April 16, 2010- Enviroscope: Presented a program at the ZL Madden Learning Center (alternative school). Youth were taught about watersheds, non-point source pollution and how we mitigate its negative impacts.

March 2010- Taught a 1.5 hour presentation, “Successful Vegetable Gardening” at Cleveland Park in Spartanburg at the request of the Spartanburg Parks Commission. This was offered due to the large amount of recent interest in vegetable gardening amongst the public.

March 2010- Taught a half hour segment, “Fire Ant Management” as part of an Advanced Home Lawn Care Using Integrated Pest Management with HGIC agents and Extension specialists at Spartanburg Community College. Pesticide applicator re-certification credits were offered as part of the program.
This has been an eventful and stressful year to say the least. However, I know one thing beyond a shadow of a doubt. 4-H would not be possible in this County without our dedicated Volunteers and partnerships we have with other groups and agencies.

Due to Budget Cuts and trying to keep all Extension Offices open in the State, I have been spending less time in Spartanburg than in the past. Every Tuesday I work in Union County and every Wednesday I work in Cherokee County.

However, thanks to 4-H Volunteers it is not essential that I be in Spartanburg County all the time. The Volunteers actually conduct the programs and club meetings. They keep the ball rolling!

In September 2010 the following after school clubs were started:

- Pet Pal – Anderson Mill
- Pet Pal – Pauline Glenn Springs
- Pet Pal- Clifdale
- Pet Pal- Inman Parks & Recreation
- Pet Pal- West View
- Pet Pal- Woodruff #1
- Pet Pal- Woodruff #2
- Pet Pal- Boiling Springs #1
- Pet Pal- Boiling Springs #2
- Beef Club-Cross Anchor
- Middle Tyger Library Community Club- Duncan
- JMG &Health Club-Pauline Glenn Springs
- Landrum Library Community Club
- ASTAND Community Club-
- 4-H JMG Club- Woodruff #1
- 4-H JMG Club- Woodruff #2

Other 4-H Activities take place throughout the year. However, space is limited here. Please call Ginger Bowen Johnson to get involved with 4-H.