Williamsburg County’s Black River 4-H Club recently held an event at Gilland Park that brought an exotic animal exhibitor to the area. Roark Ferguson, also known as “The Big Snake Daddy”, shared his love of animals with everyone who attended the event. With him he brought a tortoise, an American alligator and numerous snakes from around the world, just to name a few.

Youth and parents from Williamsburg County and the surrounding areas came out for the show. All were mesmerized by Ferguson and his animals. Ferguson, who has appeared on both National Geographic and Animal Planet, has already been scheduled to present his animals next year as well. If you would like to find out more information on this event or you would like to find out how you can become a member of the Black River 4-H Club please contact Mary Margaret McCaskill.

Williamsburg County Held First Master Gardener Class

Williamsburg County held its first Master Gardener Training Course in 2010. There were six participants involved in the Training Course. The Training Course teaches volunteers different aspects of horticulture from soils to diseases to plant identification to irrigation systems. Classes were held once a week for three hours. The students gained valuable knowledge and information. During the course the Master Gardener students developed a landscape plan for the area in front of the Williamsburg County Courthouse. When they are able to complete the work, residents of Williamsburg will see an updated landscape as well as Courthouse.

If you have horticulture questions you can contact the Home and Garden Information Center at 1-888-656-9988.
Livestock Update

Florence County serves as the center for livestock programming in the Pee Dee Region. All livestock programs are planned and coordinated in Florence County. The Florence 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. The associations are the Pee Dee Cattlemen’s association, Central Cattlemen’s Association, and the Sandhill’s Livestock association. Below is a brief description of livestock programs held in the Pee Dee Region. As an area Livestock agent most programmatic work done in Florence County is done on a regional basis. This seems to work best when multiple counties are invited for large meetings done at a central location.

Very active in 4-H livestock clubs in the Pee Dee Region. Make many presentations during the year to these clubs. Clubs include Williamsburg County Horse Club, Sumter-Clarendon County Livestock Club, and Horry County Livestock Club.

Make many farm visits on a weekly basis to assist and educate livestock clientele in the Pee Dee Region. Farm 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. Florence County, Clarendon County, Sumter County, Darlington County, Marion County, Marlboro County, Dillon County, Horry County, Georgetown County, Williamsburg County, and Lee County.

The focus of Fire Ant Demonstration Plots is to research how well Fire Ant Baits work in a Pasture or hayfield situation. Once these products are observed and researched educational programs are planned and implemented to educated livestock producers on what products should be used and when. Demonstration plots were used in Williamsburg, Clarendon, Horry, and Marion Counties.

Planned, coordinated, and implemented 2 Goat Management Seminars in the Pee Dee Region. Over 100 Goat producers participated in these programs. These programs included 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.

4-H Teen Shares Love of Cooking with Younger 4-Hers

During the Summer of 2010, Aubri McLeod, senior 4-H member, organized a week long cooking camp for 4-Hers ages 9-13. Youth learned to cook recipes that were special to Aubri and her family, as well as other traditional 4-H recipes. They also learned nutrition facts, how to measure ingredients and the importance of portion control. One morning the campers had the opportunity to pick fresh blueberries and used them to cook a homemade blueberry cobbler. By the middle of the week the camp had to expand into a larger room to accommodate everyone. The cooking camp was a huge success and will be offered again during the summer of 2011. For more information on 4-H Cooking Camp or any other 4-H Day Camps, please contact Mary Margaret McCaskill, Williamsburg County 4-H Agent.
Los Angeles 4-H Club was established in 2008 when Hispanic outreach became a top priority to 4-H on the state and national level. With the help of Dr. Bob Lippert from Clemson University and Clarendon School District 2 ESOL teacher Kathy Brunson, the club was started. Los Angeles meets every second and fourth Tuesday of the month during the school year and is made up of Hispanic youth from grades second through sixth. Former club members who are now in the seventh and eighth grades serve as mentors and youth leaders for the group.

The group has continued to grow every year and now has 30 active members. They have participated in service projects that include making holiday cards and cookies for area nursing homes and cleaning and landscaping the garden at Manning Primary School. They were invited to participate in a camp counselor training activity for high school age 4-Hers during Senior Teen Weekend at Camp Bob Cooper. Club members served as “campers” during the training.

Los Angeles club members have branched out from their group and participated in state 4-H activities such as Junior Teen Weekend and other county wide 4-H Day Camps.

For more information on how to start a 4-H Club like Los Angeles or any other 4-H activities please contact Mary Margaret McCaskill.