Wilder Ferreira, Regional Economic and Agribusiness Development Agent has been working with municipalities, community leaders and business groups to deliver rural entrepreneurship programs in the Freshwater Coast region. Several farm workshops in Abbeville, McCormick and Anderson have been encouraging more producers to engage in food production. Topics covered ranged from sustainable small farming, drip irrigation, to farm financial management. Feasibility studies on a hydro/aquaponics grant for Calhoun Falls Charter School and a new database for the McCormick Chamber of Commerce were delivered. Wilder has collaborated with various organizations and community leaders to reopen the McCormick County Farmers Market, and to open the new Calhoun Falls Farmers Market in 2017. The work continues with more rural entrepreneurship programs for the Freshwater Coast region.

Wilder promoting the Calhoun Falls farmers market opening.

Wild, Wild Creatures

Each summer the Abbeville County 4-H program hosts day camps for children where they can participate in various activities from cooking to science or wildlife and livestock. One of the more popular day camp activities include the wildlife program. Many times the class offers a hike, live animals and a field trip with hands on activities. Children may learn about reptiles and amphibians at the creek banks, or learn about native game species while they pour plaster casts of tracks along the hiking trail.

No fear of snakes in this group of campers!
**Backyard Poultry Processing**

A group of four agents worked together to teach efficient and humane backyard poultry processing for local bird owners. Four separate workshops were coordinated in the area for 4H’ers enrolled in the local Broiler Project plus individuals who wanted instruction on how to cull their backyard flock. Approximately sixty participants attended a hands-on workshop at one of four locations. Approximately 220 total birds were processed. Participants received direct, hands-on instruction plus they received (their choice) either a hard copy or a thumb drive with step by step graphics for reference when they process birds at home. All participants left the workshop with their birds packaged and ready for cold storage.

Paying close attention to the instructor.

**Livestock and Forages in Abbeville County**

Gary Coleman, our area livestock and forage agent has had a busy year trying to help producers in Abbeville County weather the drought, storms, and control army worms in their pastures and hay fields. Gary has continued to work closely with backyard poultry producers, young farmers, and our local cattlemen association in Abbeville County. He is trying to encourage more producers to think outside of traditional farming practices in order to survive the harsh floods, droughts, and insect problems that have occurred over the last four years. While working with producers to improve their forages and pastures, Abbeville County Cattlemen have done a great job in selling unproductive animals when cattle prices were at an all-time record high and they are showing great interest in buying back quality cattle once weather conditions change. Gary continues to work on a Small Ruminate program that has been helping producers build quality meaty type animals and stronger marketing strategies for their operation. He continues to attend professional development workshops and conferences that are conducted by experts in livestock, forages, and finance, and is learning new science based information to bring back and share with our county producers to expand their knowledge of livestock and forages.

**Reading Success!**

Abbeville County 4-H and Abbeville County Farm Bureau Federation have partnered to sponsor five agricultural literacy kits as a resource for schools, teachers and even homeschool parents. The kit consists of the Farm a Month curriculum set, paired with the twelve children’s books that the curriculum uses to teach agricultural based lessons with activities. In addition to the set, several of the various annual “Book of the Year” that Farm Bureau Women’s Committee sponsors are included. The kits are a fun way to combine literacy and agricultural activities to help children learn where their food and resources are coming from across America.

A client inspecting his herd.
Down on the Farm at the 2015 Farm City Day

Abbeville County third grade students spent the day with local farmers, FFA members, 4-H members, and Clemson Extension Agents meeting some of the people and the animals that provide for their daily needs. Farm City Day is designed to align with the third grade State Educational Standards, and the fast pace of the day’s activities helps keep everyone’s attention. The students learned that their food, clothing and shelter may be purchased at the local stores but it all actually starts out on the farm; possibly from right here in Abbeville County.

So this is where milk comes from!

The Woodland Clinic Program

The 34th annual Woodland Clinic forestry competition and career day for high school students was held April 26th. The Woodland Clinic Inc. board members with the assistance of other public and private organizations with interests in forestry and natural resources worked together again on the event this year. Students from eight schools in the upstate of South Carolina comprised the 19 teams competing in the Clinic this year which is held at the Oasis Farm at Connie Maxwell Children’s Home in Greenwood. Over forty volunteers came out to participate with this popular event. The competition includes elements on tree measurement, tree identification, tree insects and diseases, a compass and pace event and a fun team lumberjack race. Extension is represented on the Woodland Clinic Board. They organize and assist with pre-event training for teams, in setting up the event the day before, and coordinating activities the day of the event. All the students had an enjoyable day of competition and camaraderie.

Dixie High School FFA team took home 1st place overall and Calhoun Falls Charter School team won the Lumberjack Race.

Forest Landowners Association Activities

Programming of interest to the forest landowners of Abbeville County was provided through the Abbeville County Forest Landowners Association’s quarterly meetings this year. This group always covers a wide range of forestry and natural resource topics during the meetings.

At the August meeting, Max McIntire has had a hobby for the last four years trapping wild hogs. He has become very efficient at trapping, using small traps, with approximately 475 animals caught. Max presented information on his techniques and answered questions.

Following in November, the program was presented by Michael Ransom with Timber Mart-South. Michael discussed our timber products values looking at the reasons behind where they have been, where they are now, and what they see coming in the future.

During the February meeting Tom Brant, Area Forestry Agent with the Clemson Extension Service presented information on the actions you need to take before you replant after the final harvest of an area of timber.

In May, the program was presented by Gary Peters, Wildlife Biologist with the National Wild Turkey Federation. He talked about how the wild turkey was reintroduced to this area, the biology of the birds, and what conservation activities are being done.
The Perfect Partner

This is the fourth year that Calhoun Falls FFA members have helped lead the After School 4-H Club at John C Calhoun Elementary School. What seemed like a great start in 2012 has become an even greater asset and partnership with 4-H and FFA members and advisors working together. Charged with leadership skills and the desire to teach has helped make several junior volunteers popular 4-H Club Leaders with the local elementary school kids. The partnership began when 4-H and FFA advisors decided to reach the younger age with agricultural based lessons. The incentive was to expose them to both programs and prepare them for more involvement in FFA and/or 4-H when they enter high school. The hidden benefits are the life skills and lesson that the elementary school kids are gaining. Many of the lessons have an agricultural or natural resource theme, which is well suited knowing that Abbeville County is rural and the top economic drivers are agriculture and natural resources! Amongst the FFA junior volunteers, there has also been career experience gained. This year, the FFA leader while gaining his FFA achievements for the 4-H Club work, also has decided that his passion for youth, agriculture, and leadership will become his future as an Agricultural Educator and will seek a degree from Clemson beginning next year.

www.clemson.edu/extension/county/abbeville

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