Calhoun County is blessed with a multitude of family farms, many going back to the original King’s Grants of colonial times. There has historically been a long tradition of sons (mostly) coming back to the farm to continue the family heritage. There was, however, a period of time when agriculture lost its appeal to the younger generation, and the siren’s call was to get as far away from the farm as possible. Many young future farmers saw their fathers work themselves to the bone only to have the markets and the politics of the times turn against them. Farms went under, farms consolidated, and farms disappeared. Out of that era came a new agriculture, bolstered by technology, genetics, information, research, and marketing. It came along at a time when the world was asking how it would feed and clothe the growing population. In response farms got larger and farmers got smarter, got more diversified, became more efficient, got educated, paid attention to research, and began to convince the next generation that there was a place for them back on the farm. They would have to be tough, energetic, and teachable, but the groundwork was there for the next generations of farmers to take control and to succeed. Having seen the beginnings of the next generation taking the stage, the Calhoun and Orangeburg County Extension Offices combined forces to begin developing the next generation farmers. In cooperation with South Carolina Farm Bureau, and the South Carolina Department of Agriculture, Clemson Extension has led the effort to focus on the next generation farmer. Two meeting were held this year to begin the process of introducing new farmers to the services and resources offered to them by Clemson, Department of Agriculture and Farm Bureau. The Initial meeting was held in March of 2016 with 30 young farmers between the ages of 20 and 30 attending. This was a get acquainted meeting with a limited program. The follow up meeting was held in November 2016 with 28 young farmers attending. The focus of this meeting was on the marketing outlook for 2017 and how to take that information and make decisions related to the coming planting season. Clemson and its partners plan to continue this effort to support the next generation of farmer in Calhoun and Orangeburg Counties.
Calhoun County 4-H

Leigh Walker – County Extension Agent
4-H & Youth Development for Calhoun and Orangeburg Counties

Calhoun County 4-H and the Calhoun County Library partnered with other organizations to establish a Children’s Learning Garden on what was an empty lot in St. Matthews. Using pollinators as its theme, 4-H and the library drafted a garden and maintenance plan and then organized other volunteer organizations to adopt raised bed garden boxes.

The garden is continuing to serve as a centerpiece for educational programs and plant giveaways for adults and children in the community. Workshops have included pollinator puppet shows, classes and field trips for homeowners, farmers, beekeepers, and elementary school classes. An observation hive has also been constructed in the library.

In addition to 4-H and the library, partners and helpers have included:
Farm Bureau Women’s Committee, Master Gardener’s, Garden Clubs (2), Natural Resources of Soil and Water Conservation Service, Girl Scouts, Churches (2), Calhoun County High School JROTC, Eagle Scouts, High Cotton Nursery, Calhoun County Public Works, Charleston, Calhoun and Orangeburg County Extension offices.
4-H Science on the Move

As a culmination of the 2015-16 school years, teachers at St. Matthews K-8, led by Mrs. Tamika Fordham, organized and hosted a 4-H Science on the Move ScienceFest for all students in 3rd – 8th grade. Teachers were trained in curriculum, then over three hundred students participated in hands-on, grade-level-appropriate 4-H Science on the Move activities. Students created logistics and energy solutions by making and testing gliders, rockets, and alternative forms of energy. They demonstrated laws of physics and motion by designing and racing balloon cars. A bridge-building contest was held and texting and driving issues were simulated by students using model cars and modeling clay.

Out of the 216 evaluations that were completed, 165 students reported a stronger interest in science and 171 students reported being more inclined to participate in activities such as school science fairs. 179 students reported that they had learned from making mistakes and 206 said they learned more about the importance of communicating with others.
The Center for Heirs Properties out of Charleston was planning an event for their landowners at Voorhees College in Denmark. The Center works with minority people who have timber land and Heir property issues. Sam Cook, the Director, asked Beth Richardson, Area Forestry Agent, to teach Federal Income Tax as it relates to Non-Industrial Private Landowners (NIPL) at two-day event. There were three break-out sessions with three different topics so that over two days, each landowner would have an opportunity to listen to each session.

There were about 90 participants from as far away as the Clarendon, Williamsburg Counties to Jasper and Allendale up to Aiken County.

Ms. Richardson knew that the audience had been educated on forest management practices which play a huge part in understanding how to use the forestry tax advantages. However, she did not realize that this program was the audience first exposure to the forestry federal tax laws with the exception of one participant who was employed by the IRS.

The breakout sessions were approximately one hour which was enough time to cover all of the forestry tax advantages but one which requires 30 minutes.

The tax talk was a huge success. One participant stood up at the second day breakfast and told the audience that they all needed to hear the tax talk, that the speaker made the talk fun, exciting, and educational.

The Director, Sam Cook, has asked Ms. Richardson to come back in the future and give a 1.5 to 2 hour talk so that all of the provisions can be covered and how they apply to the NIPL.
The historic floods that occurred in South Carolina in October of 2015 have caused concerns among farmers about nutrient loss, organic matter decomposition, pH fluctuations, and soil movement in their fields. Compounding the situation is the major loss of income associated with the floods and how that impacts their ability to afford remedial fertilization.

Nutrient Management, After the Floods was a workshop developed to address the concerns and questions farmers had about how the floods had impacted their soils. Dr. Glen Harris, Crops Agronomist with University of Georgia Extension Service was contracted to present the workshop based on his past experience with flooded soil conditions in Georgia in 1994. He covered nutrient loss, pH changes, nutrient needs of the various crops, and research data related to these topics. The three hour workshop was held at the Santee Convention Center on February 18th. Eighty four participants registered and 70 evaluations were returned.

Of the 70 evaluations received, 33 listed themselves as farmers, 20 as industry, 9 as Extension, and 8 as other (consultants). All 70 respondents indicated they had learned useful information as a result of attending the workshop. Sixty Nine indicated they had a better understanding of their crops nutritional needs, and 50 participants felt the workshop would help them save money in their farming operations this year. All 70 respondents indicated they would attend a similar workshop if it were offered in the future. Attendees traveled an average of 46.6 miles to attend the workshop.
Coyotes have been on the increase in South Carolina for years. Many hunters blame them for the decline in the deer population in the Calhoun/Orangeburg/ Richland County area. While deer are considered to be pests which cost farmers thousands of dollars in crop damage, many landowners see deer hunting leases as an important part of their income, the value of which is directly related to how many deer hunters see on their property while hunting. To these landowners, decline in deer population reduces the value of their hunting leases.

After requests from landowners the Calhoun/Richland County Extension Agent partnered with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources to present a Coyote Management Workshop at the Santee Convention Center on February 18, 2015. Attendees were educated on the biology, habits, and impact of coyotes on wildlife, as it is currently understood. Attendees were made aware of the trapping and shooting laws pertaining to coyotes, and were given an outdoor tutorial on trapping techniques by a member of the South Carolina Trappers Association.

Sixty Four attendees registered and 62 turned in evaluations after the workshop concluded. Of the 62 who turned in evaluations, 41 registered as landowners, 8 as foresters, 10 as other (land managers) and 3 as government employees. All 62 respondents indicated they had learned useful information as a result of attending the workshop. Sixty felt like the information would help them address their coyote issues. Sixty two felt they had a better understanding of coyote management based on their attendance, and 59 said they would attend another similar workshop if offered in their area. Attendees traveled an average of 46.3 miles to the conference.
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Farmer Dean Hutto addresses the Young Farmer Group as Dr. Tom Dobbins, Clemson Extension Director looks on.