Mission Statement

The mission of the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service is to provide sound, scientifically based information to South Carolinians and help them use that information to improve the quality of their lives.

"A Year of Hardships and Happiness" ~ Meree Harper

From the Summer drought to the October Flood, 2015 was certainly a year that will never be forgotten from the perspective of many; including farmers, landowners, and homeowners.

It was an extremely difficult year for the many in Clarendon County as well as the entire State of South Carolina. In this issue of our Clarendon “Report To The People” (RTTP), we will reflect on that difficult year as we keep our hopes and prayers on many successful and positive agricultural years to come.

However, while 2015 and early 2016 was difficult for many, we also have many positive stories to share on education, success, and hope for the future. We are excited to share these stories with you.

Although this RTTP is to cover the last fiscal year in review, our most exciting news is our new office space. The transition happened relatively quickly during early Fall 2016 and we were moved into our new building by November 1, 2016. We will go more in depth with the excitement of the move in our next year’s issue of the Clarendon RTTP, but we just wanted everyone aware that our address has changed from 103 Sunset Drive to 21 West Rigby Street, Manning, SC.

We have also recently created a Facebook page in order to connect with those on social media. This has certainly been a great means of communicating with the public so that they may receive the most updated informational on data, meetings, trainings, and events. You may find us on Facebook at the following link: https://www.facebook.com/ClarendonCountyClemsonExtension.

Thank you all for your continued support of the Clarendon Extension throughout one of our County’s most challenging years. All of us - businesses, farmers, individuals, etc., - came together as a family during trying times to help each other. This is what makes our County so special.

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“Row Crops Flooded”  
~ Hannah Mikell

During the Historical Flood of 2015, over 40 inches of rain fell in Clarendon County from September through December. This weather event basically ended all possibility of crop harvest for the year.

Peanuts rotted in the ground and those that were ready for harvest when the flood hit had deteriorated to the point of falling off of the plant. They were beyond mechanical harvest and were a total loss.  
(Picture 1: Rotted Peanuts)

Cotton was so deteriorated by the weather that it is not economical to harvest even if the cotton pickers could get into the fields. Cotton bolls still attached to the plant are so brittle that using the cotton picker is not practical.  
(Picture 2: Sprouted Boll)

All vegetable crops wilted and died within 4 days because of the standing water and continued rains.

Soybeans were the only crops that had a small percentage harvested, but even then the seeds were docked at sale due to damage.  
(Picture 3: Seed Pods)

The late corn crop sprouted in the shuck. Therefore, it had no value as a crop. The saturated fields have also prevented wheat planting.  
(Picture 4: Flooded Field)

As if the ruined crops and loss of income weren’t enough, the loss of infrastructure prohibited landowners and farmers from getting to livestock and equipment.  
(Picture 5: Damaged roads)

Hannah Mikell  
Agronomy Agent  
and  
County Coordinator

Picture 1:  
Peanut fields where nuts were washed from the vines and into the ditches.

Picture 2:  
Cotton seeds that spouted inside the boll leaving damage to all cotton and raising cost of cotton ginning if farmers were able to pick the field.

Picture 3:  
Soybeans sprouted in the seed pod yielding “0” bushels to the acre for harvest.

Picture 4:  
Cotton field during boll crack that were completely flooded.

Picture 5:  
Infrastructure to fields, farms, sheds, buying points, gins, etc., were impassable due to flooding or roads washed completely out.
“2016 4-H Legislative Day”
~ Mary Margaret McCaskill

Each year the South Carolina 4-H Teen Council visits the State House in Columbia to meet with our Legislators, tour the State House, and share the importance of 4-H in their lives and communities.

This year, for the first time, SC 4-H Agents were charged with bringing at least two 4-H’ers from each county to the State House for the annual SC 4-H Legislative Day. This past year, on March 16th, 2016, over 200 South Carolina 4-H’ers converged upon the State House to partake in Legislative Day.

Clarendon County was well represented by senior 4-H’ers, George Holliday, Katherine Matthews, and Logan Moore. During their visit to the State House, all 4-H’ers were recognized from the floor by county and given the opportunity to observe both the House and the Senate in session.

George, Katherine, and Logan were able to speak with their local House Representatives, Dr. Robert L. Ridgeway, III and Mr. Cezar E. McKnight, as well as Senator Kevin L. Johnson. The teens thanked their legislators for their support of Clemson University, the Clemson Extension Service, and the 4-H Program. The Representatives were very kind and spoke to all three of our County 4-H’ers so that the teens had a chance to share some experiences and express how 4-H continues to make a large impression on their lives.

Because of the leadership experience these Clarendon County 4-Hers received at the SC 4-H Legislative Day, they have gone on to become SC 4-H Ambassadors, a SC 4-H Teen Council Member, and attended leadership events like 4-H Congress at Clemson University.

To find out more about how your youth can become involved in 4-H in Clarendon County please contact Mary Margaret McCaskill, Clarendon County 4-H Agent, at 803-435-8429, or mcrae2@clemson.edu.
**“Bermudagrass Stockpiling Strategies and Winter”**

*Feeding Workshop*

~ Lee Van Vlake

*Area Livestock and Forages Extension Agent*

*Pee Dee Region*

Bermudagrass is the predominant forage grown in Clarendon County for hay and grazing production. With the decline in cattle prices producers are looking for ways to lower input cost. Feeding hay is the most expensive input cost annual for cattle producers. By reducing the amount of hay being fed producers are reducing input cost and in return increasing profit.

The Livestock and Forages team planned, coordinated, and implemented a one day workshop on Stockpiling Bermudagrass and Winter Feeding for cattle producers. Two workshops were held in the Pee Dee Region. These were regional meetings and over 50 producers attended from throughout the Pee Dee Region attended.

The workshop contained topics that included Grazing crop residues, Stockpiling Berudagrass, Quality of Stockpiled Bermudagrass, Economics of Stockpiling Bermdruagrass and Winter Annuals, Weed Control, and Developing a 10 Month Grazing Plan. Through the workshop, producers learned methods to reduce input costs and increase efficiency while improving profitability.

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**“Vegetables are a Hot Commodity in Clarendon County”**

~ Tony Melton

*Area Horticulture Extension Agent*

**SITUATION:**

With the drop in commodity prices, farmers in the Pee Dee Area of S.C. are investigating new ways to increase farm revenue. Traditional row-crop farmers and even farmers already diversifying into new ag-ventures are searching for ways to make their farm more profitable. Therefore, many Clarendon County farmers are producing non-traditional crops such as vegetables.

**RESPONSE:**

Since 2004 we have had an area vegetable growers meeting at the Compass Restaurant in Turbeville, SC. 125 folks attended this year’s meeting to learn about vegetable insects, diseases, production, and food safety.

**IMPACT:**

In SC a total of 20,000 acres of produce is being grown for McCall Farms to be canned and many more acres are being produced for fresh market.

You can also learn valuable information from Tony and other Agents on ETV’s television program, “Making it Grow”!

Tuesday nights at 7:00PM!
“Tax Talk for the Center for Heirs Properties”  
~ Beth Richardson  
Area Forestry Extension Agent

During the past 6 months, there have been numerous forest landowner visits, both new and old, over 7 counties. Education includes teaching how to prescribe burn, forestry taxes, forest herbicide treatments and methods, forest management for both loblolly and longleaf pine stands, reforestation methods, and what to consider when buying new forest lands.

Up until May, many Saturdays, Sundays, and school day afternoons were spent teaching a high school senior forestry for his Senior Exhibition and served as one of the panelist for the SC State Extension meeting providing information to minority landowners about where to go to get help. Working with Dr. Brian Via out of AU on bringing in tree stiffness testing for our mills and will be meeting with his Alabama mill association later this year. Met with new harvesting teacher, Dr. Patrick Hiesl and gave him a one-day longleaf training. Taught two classes for the TOP Logger statewide certification (soil types v tree species and non-native invasive species). Taught in wooded areas as a CFE class on longleaf - requested by local timber buyers. Held two TOP recertification classes for the local loggers and timber buyers.

During this time frame, there were 7 county forestry association meetings to include one local mill tour. The Southeastern one-day seminar was held in May with over 170 people attending (Growing Our Future) with speakers from MS, AL, GA, and NC, where I received the Outstanding Outreach and Education Award from the SC Tree Farm. Taught 3 forestry tax classes for the Center for Heirs Properties two-day meeting where 80 plus minority forest landowners attended at Voorhees College. Working with Dr. Patrick Hiesl, his assistant, and forest landowner in Abbeville, putting in harvesting demonstrations and research. Currently serving as PI on Dr. Hiesl’s grant.

Planning a tour with Black Water Barrel Co, new in Bamberg. Meetings coming up: uneven age management, new chipping mill to be built in Holly Hill, Surveying, et cetera. Planning statewide meeting with speakers from SC as well as other states in conjunction with SC Tree Farm and SC Forestry Association. Will be filming a 30 minute educational program on clearcutting being the first step to reforestation for the SC Forestry Association’s 2017 TOP Logger Recertification program. If all goes well, his video will be shown SE wide.
“Wishing a Warm Welcome to a New Area Extension Agent”
~ T.J. Savereno ~

T.J. Savereno is a Senior Associate Extension Agent with Clemson University specializing in wildlife, forestry, and other natural resources. He has worked for Clemson University since 2003, previously at Clemson’s Pee Dee Research and Education Center, and since April 1, 2016 at the Lee County Extension office in Bishopville, SC. Although Lee is his home county, he also serves Clarendon, Darlington, Florence, and Marlboro Counties.

T.J. assists landowners with questions regarding natural resource management in general, but his specialties include restoration and management of the longleaf pine ecosystem, groundcover management in forest ecosystems, native vegetation management, the importance of early successional habitat for wildlife, creating wildlife habitat in urban and suburban landscapes, invasive plant species control, promotion of the use of prescribed fire, and integrating wildlife management with forestry and agricultural systems (http://newsstand.clemson.edu/mediarelations/clemson-extension-helping-restore-habitat-lost-to-fragmented-landscapes/).

T.J. is currently engaged in a collaborative research and demonstration project with the USDA Forest Service on restoration of groundcover plants of the longleaf pine ecosystem (http://newsstand.clemson.edu/mediarelations/clemson-scientists-collaborators-working-to-restore-longleaf-pine-forests/), and another with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service on establishing native pollinator gardens in Bishopville and at the Sandhill Research and Education Center in Columbia. He is also working with other members of the Forestry and Natural Resources Extension Team to develop programs on Woodland Management: The First Look and Creating Backyard Wildlife Habitat: If You Build It, They Will Come. These programs will be presented in the coming year.

T.J. received his B.S. in Biology from Fairmont State University in his home state of West Virginia and his M.S. in Wildlife Biology from Clemson University. He is past president and current board member of the SC Vegetation Management Association, and past chairman and current steering committee member of the SC Prescribed Fire Council. T.J. also serves on the SC State Advisory Committee of County Forestry Boards, the SC NRCS State Technical Committee, and on advisory committees of the Sewee Longleaf Conservation Cooperative and the SC Chapter of The Wildlife Society.

T.J. is married and has a 19-year-old daughter and 13-year-old son, and he and his wife, Lynette, are active in animal rescue work. In his spare time, of which there is sadly too little, he enjoys nature photography and playing his guitars.
“Water, Water Everywhere…”  
~ Ben Powell  
Area Natural Resource Agent

The area natural resources agent, Ben Powell, has long been a “go to” resource for solving pond and wetland management problems for SC residents. Through the 2015 growing season, Ben has received over 300 calls or emails from across the Pee Dee (and beyond) regarding topics such as aquatic weed control, fish management, fish kills, dredging and construction, aeration and water quality in private ponds.

This year also brought numerous calls on dam repair and fish kills because of Hurricane Matthew, which caused several dam breeches and failures and flooded numerous ponds across the region. In urbanized areas, these calls usually refer to residential storm water ponds, while calls from rural areas tend to be for irrigation and recreational fish ponds. To more comprehensively respond to the growing need for folks that thoroughly understand pond and lake management, Ben joined the development team for the Master Pond Manager program. The Master Pond Manager Program is a comprehensive online training program that includes a certification for lake management professionals. A blended or hybrid course, the MPM combines interactive, self-paced online lectures with field exercises to practice the principles. The course was offered in the summer in the Florence area and again in the fall in the Richland/Sumter area. Over 60 participants took the courses, of which about half enrolled in the entire program and achieved certification as South Carolina’s first certified Master Pond Managers. These trained professionals will be the next generation of lake managers; helping our private and residential pond owners protect our valuable water resources.

For more information, visit this website - http://www.clemson.edu/public/watershed/training/mpm/

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