

2017 REPORT TO THE PEOPLE: CLARENDON COUNTY

When Nematodes are a factor.

Luckily this growing season was chopped full of timely rainfall events which makes for bumper crop yields. However, during the soybeans harvest farmers started noticing a trend in soybean yield loss. In order to positively identify types of nematodes causing damage, a sample should be sent to the Plant Problem Clinic. Ideally, this sample should be taken prior to planting. Growers can choose a seed resistant variety, a non-host crop, or apply a nematicide if the assay results indicate a nematode problem. The lab provides accurate nematode identification for farmers, extension agents, crop specialists, and researchers. South Carolina growers use nematode assay results to implement appropriate strategies to minimize damage caused by specific nematodes to their crops. Researchers use this data to discover new methods that growers can use to manage nematode problems in their cropping systems. The nematode assay results are used by the extension agent to address what types of pesticides to apply to the soil. Nematology Lab services help growers make decisions about selecting appropriate nematode-management techniques to maximize yields and minimize monetary losses caused by plant-parasitic nematodes.



▲ Clemson Extension specialist Tony Melton shows a five-pound sweet potato to attendees of the Sept. 13 field day at the Pee Dee Research and Education Center.

Making Clarendon a Little Sweeter

Sandy loam soils of Clarendon are excellent for growing sweet potatoes. Twenty-six years ago when I became a Vegetable Extension Agent in the Pee Dee, sweet potato acreage was increasing rapidly. However, in 2004 a quarantined insect, known as the sweet potato weevil, was detected by Clemson's Department of Plant Regulation in Clarendon County. That field was destroyed/disked to prevent spread of the weevils, but Clarendon was placed under a quarantine and sweet potato acreage started dropping. Farmers could no longer ship sweet potatoes to non-quarantine areas. Twelve years later McCall farms purchased "Bruce's Sweet Potatoes" which lead to the need to get the quarantine lifted. We worked many months with McCall Farms, Clemson's Department of Plant Regulatory, and the NC Department of Plant Regulatory resulting in the quarantine being lifted. Sweet potatoes are now grown for the cannery, but Clarendon sweet potatoes can be shipped/sold in other non-quarantined states/countries. Hugh Weathers, South Carolina Commissioner of Agriculture, said "lifting this ban will help SC agriculture grow since crop diversification is essential in keeping agriculture the number one industry in SC."



▲ Microscopic pictures of plant-parasitic nematodes.

SC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
AT A GLANCE



AGENTS
133



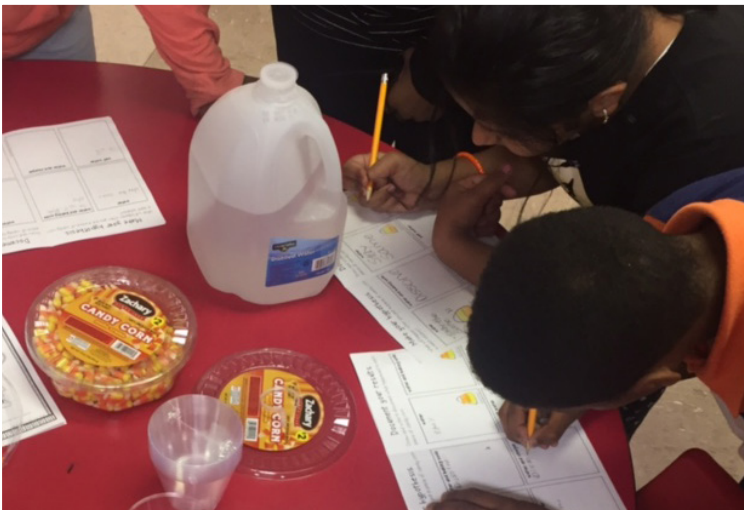
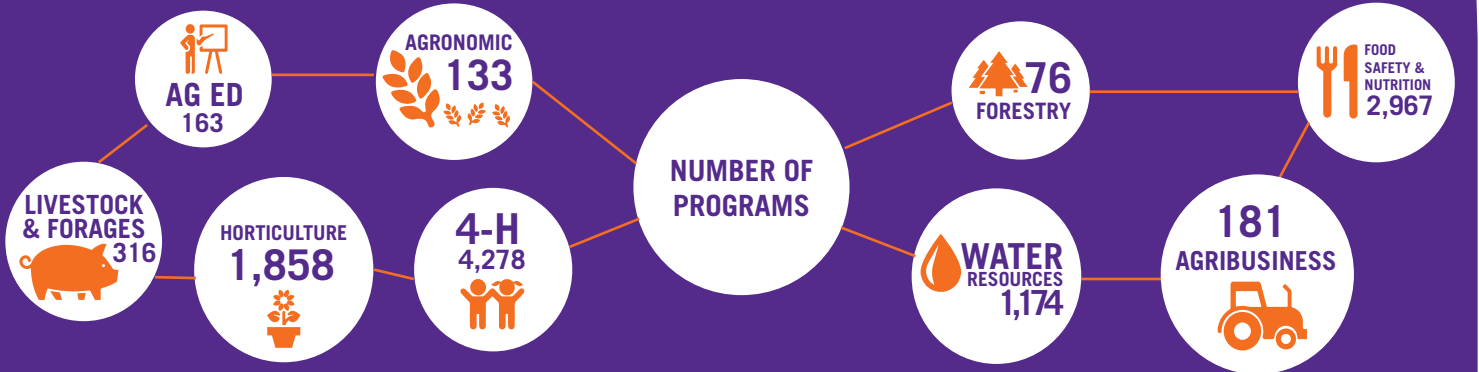
PROGRAMS
11,158



CONTACTS
242,239



**YOUTH & FAMILIES
REACHED**
104,156



▲ Students from the Manning Primary after school program record data from a science experiment.

Agriculture After School

Manning Primary School is a designated 21st Century Community Learning Center. Each afternoon, students participate in homework time, reading programs, tutoring sessions and fun educational activities, such as 4-H. Clarendon County 4-H has been bringing programs to the after school program for three years. During 2016-2017, after previously offering programs in the areas of Health and Nutrition, and SET, 4-H opted to try something different.

A series of agriculture based lessons were delivered weekly covering the major agriculture commodities for the state of South Carolina, many of which can be found in Clarendon County. The majority of the students participating in the program knew very little about agriculture in our area. By the end of the series, they had learned about livestock, peaches, row crops, poultry and forestry. Students began to recognize these commodities that they were learning about outside of school. Their knowledge about agriculture grew, as well as their appreciation of our local food system. Students who previously answered the question, “Where does our food come from?” with “the grocery store” were now able to accurately identify the source of the product.



◀ Beef cattle industry has seen extreme market volatility. Producers are looking for lower input cost to make key management decisions. The livestock agents implemented a Beef Cattle Outlook and Volatility workshop for cattle producers in the Pee Dee Region with over 50 attending. Producers gained knowledge in farm management options to reduce volatility risks, lowering input costs, and increasing profitability. These are all critical aspects to maintain a successful cattle operation.

<http://www.clemson.edu/clarendon>