

Annual Report to the People

November 2011
Dillon County



200 South Fifth Avenue
Dillon, SC 29536
Phone: (843) 774-8218
Fax: (843) 774-7249

www.clemson.edu/extension/county/dillon/

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.

The Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to people of all ages, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital or family status and is an equal opportunity employer.



Dillon County farmers extend appreciation to specialist Chapin

Not only was Dr. Jay Chapin the featured speaker at an Extension Small Grain Production meeting, he was the honoree as well. In September, Chapin presented research updates on wheat production to over 50 producers and agribusiness professionals at a lunch meeting in Dillon. His annual "[Wheat Cheat Sheet](#)" continues to be a tremendously helpful reference for wheat producers. Afterwards, he was presented with two plaques on behalf of farmers all over the Pee Dee in recognition of his contribution to their successes in crop production. Dr. Chapin, who is retiring at the end of 2011, has served South Carolina's agricultural community for over 30 years, most of those as Clemson Extension's Peanut and Small Grain Specialist at Edisto Research and Education Center in Blackville. Cullen Bryant of Dillon and Curt McSwain of Minturn made the presentations, to which Chapin responded, "Thank you for making it my pleasure to work with such a progressive and dedicated group of farmers."

Perfect Timing increases Peanut Profits

Over the past seven years, peanut production has increased from 8,000 acres to around 65,407 acres in South Carolina. The most critical part of peanut production occurs at harvest when all of a grower's care and hard work can be easily lost by making poor harvest decisions. Harvesting too early can mean lost yield potential as well as poor grades at the buying station. Harvesting too late can mean that peanuts become over-mature and are subject to coming off of the vine when harvested, greatly reducing yield. Peanut harvest timing is critical for maximizing profitability for producers.

Peanut maturity is determined by removing the outer hull of the peanut to expose the middle layer or mesocarp. As peanuts mature, the color of the mesocarp changes from yellow to orange to brown to black. Peanuts can be checked by scraping the hull with a knife or they can be blasted with a pressure washer to remove the outer hull. Under normal weather conditions, most varieties reach maturity at around 135 days after planting. To help peanut producers determine optimal digging dates for their fields, retired county agronomy agent Vic Bethea started having "Peanut Harvest Maturity Clinics" in Dillon County in 2008. Using a pressure washer plus power and water from the local water company, Extension



continues to help producers make their annual peanut harvest date decisions in early September based on relative maturity, not just planting date. Retiring Peanut Specialist Dr. Jay Chapin and incoming Peanut Specialist Dr. Scott Monfort were on hand to assist farmers with interpreting the results of blasting the outer hull off the peanut samples dug from fields in Dillon, Marlboro and Marion Counties.

By very conservative estimates, Extension's assistance with digging guidance saved Dillon County peanut producers up to 250 lbs of peanuts per acre in 2011. With 2300 acres of peanuts now grown in Dillon County, one could estimate that the potential increase in profits to peanut producers could be up to \$575,000 (2300 acres X 250 lbs/acre savings X \$525/ton). With both peanut prices and acreage increasing, the profit increase for the 2012 growing season will be even more significant.

The logo features a dark blue semi-circle at the top with white lines radiating from a central point, resembling a fan or a stylized sun. Below this, the words "PALMETTO LEADERSHIP" are written in a large, green, serif font. Underneath that, "Dillon County" is written in a smaller, green, serif font, all contained within a dark blue horizontal bar.

PALMETTO LEADERSHIP

Dillon County



Opportunities for education and employment are limited, and rural communities may be overlooked, under-funded, and under-valued. Rural communities contain most of our natural resources, are full of talented people and are comparatively strong in cultural values, family ties, and self-reliance. In order to build on these strengths, meet current economic challenges, and take advantage of new opportunities, Clemson Institute for Economic and Community Development and the Dillon County Chamber of Commerce partnered to conduct the 2010-2011 Palmetto Leadership Dillon County class. The goal was to identify leaders and potential leaders in Dillon County and expand their knowledge and skill to become more effective at creating positive change in their communities. Twenty -one applicants representing various geographical areas, backgrounds, occupations, races, genders, and age groups were accepted into the class. Expert speakers from all over the state presented topics such as leadership skill development, while addressing community issues and assets such as education, health care, government, tourism, economic development and quality of life. Classes included a combination of lectures, audio-visual media, small group and panel discussions, individual and group assignments, projects, and informational tours, with written evaluations conducted after each monthly session. The leadership graduates have overwhelmingly demonstrated an increased know-ledge of issues and skill development and a “learning network” of community leaders was established.

Young People Learning At Community Garden



A group of young people from Vision Education Center are learning skills that will last them a lifetime at the community garden. Clemson Extension is teaching the students about gardening, but DHEC Health Educator who is working with the group pointed out that the students are learning much more.

In addition to learning about how to grow and maintain a garden, supporters hope the students will also learn and will start consuming the fresh local fruits and vegetables and that the physical activity required will get the children moving. While at the garden, the students watered plants, weeded beds, planted plants and more.

The students were surprised to learn that when they go to the grocery store that fruits and vegetables not label as South Carolina grown sometimes will make an average 2500 mile trip to the grocery store.

The community garden was spearheaded by the Master Gardener Association and was made possible due to generous contributions of various local sponsors. The vegetables they grow there go to the Helping Hand Food Bank.

4-H Volunteer Leader Continues Youth Shooting Sport



Squad finished 2nd, 4-H Senior Division



Squad finished 2nd, 4-H Junior Division and SC Youth Foundation Intermediate Division



Awarded Aaron Powell Scholarship



Squad finished 3rd, 4-H Senior Division

“It’s time to start busting a few clays and another South Carolina Youth Shooting Foundation season. Hello everyone, the youth shooting season will be starting soon. There is one Sporting Clay shoot each month from Dec. to May. To get started I would like to have an informal day for new shooters. This will be a good time for our existing shooters to bring out their friends who may be interested.” These are examples of our 4-H Volunteer leader, Mr. Bill Aston, promoting Youth Shooting Sport and have developed a positive group of youth that are winning.

Dillon County Extension Office
200 South Fifth Avenue
Dillon, SC 29536

www.clemson.edu/extension/county/dillon

Staff

Grady Sampson

Coordinator
Area Horticulture
gsampso@clemson.edu
843-774-8218, Ext. 113

Trish DeHond

Area Agronomy
pdehond@clemson.edu
843-858-0754

Lee Van Vlake

Area Livestock
rii@clemson.edu
843-661-4800, Ext. 124

Jennifer Boyles

Area Community Development
jbyls@clemson.edu
843-393-0484, Ext. 113

FCL Provides Wealth of Their Wisdom



The Dillon County Family and Community Leaders (FCL) now have four clubs (formerly known as Home Demonstration Clubs) with a total of 39 members. Each club meets monthly with timely and enlightening lessons given by members. The South Carolina Family & Community Leaders (SCFCL) is a volunteer organization composed of over 2000 members statewide, extending the resources of the land grant universities to the people of South Carolina. Their mission is to improve the quality of life for individuals, families, and communities through fellowship, education, and service.

Making a better community



The Dillon County Master Gardener Association was assisted by the Palmetto Leadership Class to landscape the grounds of the Gibson Building.

Great Tomatoes. Exceptional Judges.



Tomatoes are best in Dillon County.