Meet our New 4-H Youth Development Agent,

Ms. Erika Owens

Erika Owens has been a Clemson Extension employee since May 2016. She is the 4-H youth development agent for Dillon and Marlboro Counties. This military-kid is a 2008 graduate of South Carolina State University. She was a substitute teacher for a few years, and then found herself graduating from the University of South Carolina in 2012 with her Master’s in Public Health. Quickly after graduation, she moved to the Pee Dee Region to cater to Dillon and Marlboro Counties.

Erika hit the ground running and had a Prepare for the Fair art in June 2016. She loves helping youth learn about the farm to table concept, but also recognizes that she must “give her people what they want”. Erika is passionate about giving youth opportunities to show their talents and explore their community, county, world.

Please check out the Dillon and Marlboro County Clemson Extension 4-H Facebook pages for pictures, events, and updates.
The Dillon County Clemson Extension service is offering a free program called Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). This program assists limited-resource audiences who want to improve their family diet and nutritional well-being.

The goal of the EFNEP Program is to provide practical, hands-on nutrition education in four core areas: diet quality and physical activity, food resource management, food safety, and food security.

Participants in the program will learn how to: (1) plan quick, easy, and healthy meals for their family (2) prepare tasty and nutritious recipes through hands-on learning (3) keep food safe (4) save money on food throughout the month, and (5) be more physically active.

Through hands-on learning activities children and youth 5-19 will: (1) acquire knowledge of the principles of nutrition, physical activity, and good health (2) improve the variety of foods consumed with particular emphasis on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and calcium-rich foods (3) acquire skills necessary to select and prepare low-cost nutritious foods that are safe to eat and (4) change behaviors that lead to healthier eating habits and a more physically active lifestyle.

The EFNEP Program is interactive and research-based. It tailors to the participants needs in a group or one-on-one setting. Anyone should contact: Mavis Jones at 843-774-8218 or mavisj@clemson.edu.

The Clemson University Agricultural Service Laboratory provides services for the citizens of South Carolina. The Agricultural Service Laboratory processed 49,480 soil samples, 2,067 plant tissue, 713 feed and forage, and 1,604 waste samples in 2015.

The Home & Garden Information Center (HGIC) provides research-based information on landscaping, gardening, plant health, household pests, food safety & preservation, nutrition, physical activity, & health.

Call Toll Free: 1-888-656-9988 SC Residents Only, Hours Are: 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday - Friday
-OR-
Visit our website at: http://hgic.clemson.edu
Dillon County Tomato Project
Grady Sampson, Horticulture Agent

Summer is when the South Carolinian begins locking his doors at night to prevent the neighbor from sneaking in and leaving a load of surplus tomatoes on the kitchen counter.

It’s not that the average South Carolinian doesn’t like delicious vine-ripened tomatoes. It’s just that his own tomato plants are already producing more fruit than he can eat.

People who don’t like tomatoes are in the minority. In fact the tomato is the most widely consumed vegetable in the United States. The average American eats about 13 pounds of fresh tomatoes and 20 pounds of the processed variety each year. Those numbers are probably much higher for gardeners who grow their own. And we have a lot of interest in growing your own tomato in Dillon County. We have a committee that supports a tomato growing contest and we provide a grower workshop, updates, certificates and a banquet to showcase the best grower for the year.

Fire Ant Bait Demonstration on Cattle Pasture
Amber Starnes, Area Livestock and Forages Agent

Fire ants are a statewide problem that affects everyone in some manner. Livestock producers in our state are impacted in multiple ways from the affect ants have on their production. Fire ants can affect feed, forages, animals, electrical equipment, hay, hay equipment, and more. For livestock producers this damage can result in an economic loss to their operation. Although there is no method to eradicate fire ants, there are steps producers can take to help manage them. There are many products on the market to help manage fire ants, livestock producers must ensure that the products they use have a grazing label and they must follow the guideline of the label to provide a safe environment for the livestock. In order to demonstrate how the apply the fire ant bait properly and to discuss some options producers have when choosing the fire ant bait, a demonstration plot was treated for fire ant management in a cattle pasture in Dillon county. Working with the producer, fire ant bait was applied early July on approximately 10 acres. The bait was applied using a calibrated Herd spreader and in the morning while the ants were foraging. This area had an extensive fire ant problem and with only one application made, there was about a 65% control observed.
Pee Dee Ag Blog

Justin Ballew, Area Agronomy Agent

Agronomy and horticulture agent Justin Ballew maintains a blog to share field updates, pest alerts, meeting announcements, etc. with growers, industry reps, and anyone interested in agriculture in the Pee Dee region of South Carolina. In addition to the updates and announcements, there are a number of links to important resources like production guides, pesticide manuals, variety trial data, and more. The Pee Dee Ag News has been online since late January, 2015 and has hundreds of readers each month. Readers may choose to subscribe, where they will receive an email each time an update is posted, or they may simply bookmark or type the URL each time they wish to visit.

The Pee Dee Ag News blog can be found at peedeeagnews.wordpress.com

Pesticide Calibration Workshop

Justin Ballew, Area Agronomy Agent

When applying pesticides, the number one rule is to read and follow the label. Reading the label is the easy part, but following it can be much more challenging. Though a user may read the label and intend to follow it, applying pesticides at an incorrect rate is one of the most common mistakes made by applicators. Properly calibrating application equipment is a quick yet important way to ensure proper pesticide rates are applied.

A Pesticide Calibration Workshop was held Dillon at the Dillon Wellness Center on December 7, 2015. A number of novice and experienced pesticide applicators attended, including farmers, landscapers, and structural pest control specialists. Participants were given instruction in calibrating pesticide sprayers and spreaders and then had the opportunity to practice calibrating. Measuring cups and handouts with step by step instructions were given to every participant to ensure they would be able to implement the techniques they learned in their own individual operations. Other topics included personal protective equipment, spray drift, integrated insect management, and weed identification and control. Pesticide recertification credits were offered to participants with private and commercial applicator licenses to ensure proper and continuous training on using pesticides properly. For as long as pesticides continue to be used in South Carolina, Clemson Extension will continue to offer training opportunities for pesticide applicators to ensure pesticides are being used in a safe and efficient manner.
Palmetto Leadership Dillon County
Jennifer Boyles, Area Community Development Agent

In response to the need for Leadership Development, for the eighth year, The Clemson Institute for Economic and Community Development and the Dillon County Chamber of Commerce partnered to conduct the 2015-2016 Palmetto Leadership Dillon County class. The goal was to identify leaders and potential leaders in Dillon County and expand their knowledge and skills to become more effective at creating positive change in their communities throughout the county. Thirteen applicants were accepted into the 9 monthly class sessions representing various geographical areas, backgrounds, occupations, races, genders, and age groups throughout the county. Speakers and experts for the class were solicited from all over the state. Along with leadership skill development, community issues that were addressed included education, healthcare, government, tourism, economic development and quality of life. The class visited to the South Carolina State House in Columbia and was introduced on both the senate and house floors. The group also toured the State Supreme Court.

The fifth South Carolina Annie’s Project was held April, 2016 in Georgetown SC. It proved to be another powerful and outstanding program for 23 diverse women in agriculture.

The participants came from all over the state to learn more about business practices, risk management and agricultural opportunities that are available. Topics included business and marketing plans, estate planning, and policy decisions.

Some comments from our participants:
“I had a life changing weekend with an amazing group of women who want to know more about agriculture in South Carolina.”

“Annie's Project was an amazing learning experience.”

“I have made lifelong friends and mentors through Annie's Project.”

Annie’s Project is an educational program dedicated to strengthening women’s roles in modern farm practices and currently classes are being taught in 33 states around the country, Annie’s Project fosters decision-making skills, problem solving and record keeping.

To learn more about SC Annie’s Project, call or email Jennifer Boyles, State Coordinator at 843-616-0786 or jbyls@clemson.edu
The South Carolina Women's Agricultural Network (SC WAgN) provided through the Clemson Extension Service. SC WAgN’s mission is to support women in agriculture in South Carolina by providing positive learning environments, networking, and empowerment. The primary purposes of SC WAgN are to encourage and support women in agriculture provide and strengthen networks for women in agriculture; provide educational and mentoring opportunities for women in agriculture; raise community awareness of agricultural related issues and concerns; and sustain farming livelihoods. The network is comprised of women farmers, agricultural professionals, agricultural educators, and informed consumers committed to supporting and providing educational opportunities to women working in agriculture and ag-related businesses. Membership is open to any person supporting the mission and purpose of SC WAgN.

To join, or for more information, go to: www.clemson.edu/scwagn; call or email Jennifer Boyles, jbyls@clemson.edu; 843-616-0786.

Forestry for the Farm
Ben Powell, Forestry & Natural Resource Agent

Having worked with many landowners and farmers across the Pee Dee and beyond, the area natural resources agent, Ben Powell, has seen too many woodland owners do not realize the full potential of their private forests. All too often the uncultivated woodlands are considered an afterthought and are not actively managed to the degree that the farm or homestead are managed. This is unfortunate because private woodlands can be important for generating income, providing recreation, and enhancing the value and natural beauty of the property. To address this problem, Ben coordinated the first ever “Forestry for the Farm” training for South Carolina woodland owners. A partnership with Clemson Extension’s Natural Resources team, the New and Beginning Farmer program, the SC Forestry Commission, the SC Forestry Association, and the Center for Heirs Property, the Forestry for the Farm program was an intensive one day introduction to the basics of forest management. The goal of the program was to change landowner mindsets so that they will begin actively managing their woodlands. The primary objective of the training was to connect forest landowners with the information and resources they need to develop and implement a forest management plan. The class was full with 50 attendees responsible for managing over 30,000 acres of forestland. All participants indicated that they learned new information that they will begin using on their woodlands. The program was so successful that the Extension Natural Resources team is using it as a template for developing a broader statewide training program for private woodland owners.
Recertification Training for Structural Pest Control Companies

Ben Powell, Forestry & Natural Resource Agent

Controlling pests in businesses and homes is a massive industry with thousands of licensed applicators across the state. To maintain their licenses these applicators must receive training covering the biology and control techniques for the full array of pests that they are asked to control, and recent changes in state regulations require them to earn twice as many credits as previously required. To address this need for licensed applicators across the Pee Dee, Ben Powell, the area natural resources agent and pesticide training coordinator for Georgetown County, coordinated training in Conway, SC in February of 2016. This day-long training invited specialists from campus and representatives from the Department of Pesticide Regulation to cover topics such as “preparing for your inspection,” “controlling ants,” “controlling bed bugs,” and “identifying and handling cases of delusional parasitosis (a psychological disorder where clients believe they are infested with parasites when none are actually present).” Seventy-six applicators attended from all over the Pee Dee and remarked how much they appreciated having training locally so that they did not have to travel. They appreciated the content and indicated that they picked up new information that will help them control household pests more effectively.

Sprayer Calibration Classes Held in Georgetown, SC

Ben Powell, Forestry & Natural Resource Agent

Calibrating pesticide sprayer equipment is essential to the safe, effective and efficient use of pesticides. Failing to calibrate and maintain sprayer equipment correctly could result in damage to crops, ineffective pest control, damage to the environment or beneficial non-target species, expensive miscalculations, or even legal action if the pesticide is applied over the maximum label rate. To help pesticide applicators in the lower Pee Dee region, the area natural resources agent, Ben Powell, partnered with the coastal commercial horticulture agent, Zack Snipes, to deliver two sprayer calibration workshops in 2016. These classes qualified as continuing training for licensed applicators to earn recertification credits required to maintain their licenses. The first class was attended by 35 growers and private applicators from the lower Pee Dee. A second class was scheduled for DNR technicians, municipal staff and a few growers that were not able to attend the first class. Twenty-seven attendees came from all over the coastal and Pee Dee regions of the state for the second class.
Check out Dillon County 4-H on Facebook today!!

https://www.facebook.com/Clemson-Extension-4-H-Dillon-County-586548761525705/?pnref=story