

2017 REPORT TO THE PEOPLE: FLORENCE COUNTY

4-Hers Win Top Honors

4-H members were awarded top honors during the South Carolina 4-H Congress held on the Clemson University campus last summer. Morgan McManus, a former Florence County 4-Her who is now attending the SC Governor's School for Math and Science, was selected to receive the SC 4-H Presidential Tray and Scholarship, the highest award bestowed to only 4 deserving members annually. Morgan's outstanding project work in healthy lifestyles, leadership on the county, regional and state levels as well as her commitment to community service helped earn her the prestigious award. Savanna Hill, a High School Senior from Effingham, was awarded the National 4-H Conference Scholarship based on her 4-H portfolio and interview. Savannah has been an active member of the Healthy Lifestyles Program as well as the rabbit and meat goat projects. She also serves as the President of the Friendship 4-H Club and has been involved in numerous community service projects. Jordan Snipes, a junior from Lake City, was elected to the South Carolina 4-H Teen Council as the Public Relations Chair. Jordan looks forward to serving SC 4-H members as he works to help educate others about the various 4-H opportunities.



▲ The 'Bayou Belle' is a high yielding, high sugar content sweet potato variety with red to purple skin and deep orange flesh.



▲ Florence County 4-H teens recognized for leadership and service during the 2017 State 4-H Congress held on the campus of Clemson University. From left to right, Morgan McManus, Jordan Snipes, and Savanna Hill.

Making Florence County Sweeter

The sandy loam soils of Florence County are excellent for growing sweet potatoes. In the early 1990s, sweet potato acreage was rapidly increasing. In 2004, the sweet potato weevil was detected by Clemson's Department of Plant Regulation in a field just below Effingham. That field was destroyed to prevent spread of the weevils and Florence County was placed under an exterior quarantine which placed additional costs and regulations on transporting sweet potatoes in and out of South Carolina. Twelve years later, McCall Farms purchased "Bruce's Yam's" which lead to the need for the quarantine to be lifted. The Florence County Horticulture Agent worked many months with McCall Farms, Clemson's Department of Plant Regulation, and the NC Department of Plant Regulation resulting in the lifting of the quarantine. Now sweet potatoes can not only be grown for the cannery, but Florence County sweet potatoes can once again be shipped and sold in other non-quarantined states/countries. Hugh Weathers, 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 South Carolina."

SC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
AT A GLANCE



AGENTS
133



PROGRAMS
11,158



CONTACTS
242,239



**YOUTH & FAMILIES
REACHED**
104,156



AG ED
163



AGRONOMIC
133

**NUMBER OF
PROGRAMS**



**76
FORESTRY**



**FOOD
SAFETY &
NUTRITION**
2,967



**LIVESTOCK
& FORAGES**
316



HORTICULTURE
1,858



4-H
4,278



**WATER
RESOURCES**
1,174



**181
AGRIBUSINESS**



▲ Extension Agent Terasa Lott helps install a downspout planter box at Raceway Ford of Darlington.

Planter Boxes Soak Up Urban Runoff

With stormwater considered to be leading threat to water quality, the Florence Darlington Stormwater Consortium (FDSC), a regional collaborative of Clemson Extension's Carolina Clear program, seeks to enhance water resource protection and stewardship through stormwater education, public involvement and outreach, and by fostering partnerships to support healthy waterways. In an effort to increase the number of small-scale stormwater best management practices on private property, the FDSC launched a community grants program in the spring of 2017 to provide downspout planters to highly visible locations.

These boxes protect water quality by filtering and absorbing rooftop runoff before it reaches local waterways. Other benefits include supporting pollinators and enhancing the aesthetics of the urban landscape. Congratulations to the 2017 grant recipients: Raceway Ford of Darlington, Raceway Chevrolet of Hartsville, and the Strive Hard Educational, Recreational, and Enrichment Center of New Ebenezer Baptist Church. They are to be commended for their commitment to protecting local waterways. After a successful launch, the community grants program will re-open in the spring of 2018.



◀ William Howard, a 7th grader at Sneed Middle School in Florence, was selected as the Junior Division Pee Dee Region Winner for the new 4-H Honey Bee Project. This independent-study project engages youth in the active role of beekeeping, learning the basics of entomology, and gaining an appreciation for the role of pollinators in our world.

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