Farming of any type is risky business when weather conditions are reasonable, but local Livestock and Forage producers have been pounded during the lengthy drought in 2016. These conditions followed the floods during the Fall of 2015. Gary Coleman, Livestock and Forage Agent, has worked closely with farmers on ways to manage the situation.

He encouraged producers to sell less productive stock while prices were high with a plan to add new stock with better genetics later as growing conditions improved. He continues to provide timely information on weed control and fertilization of forages on a regular basis. This will help pasture and forage productivity recovery when conditions return to normal.

Programing on small ruminant animal production has been completed because of increased in interest. These animals increase the diversity of products for local operations and expand sales opportunities while helping small and new growers.

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service is to improve the economy, environment, and well-being of South Carolinians through the delivery of unbiased researched-based information and education.

Annual Report to the People

October 2016
Greenwood County

Forests Vital to Greenwood’s Future

Nearly 70% of Greenwood County is classified as forest land. Our forests provide many financial benefits while protecting our water and soil resources. Greenwood timberland owners received $7 million in stumpage with a delivered value of $15 million in 2011. Current values are actually higher and should continue to rise with the new Columbo Energy Inc. plant startup. Forested areas help contain runoff and protect our rivers and lakes.

Landowners received educational programs through the Greenwood County Forestry Association coordinated by Forestry & Natural Resource Agent, Tom Brant. Brian Stoddard with NRCS went through their updated process for approving ponds for landowners in the wake of recent floods. The program presented by new pellet mill, Columbo Energy, was heavily attended because of the interest in a new purchaser of our local wood and its future impact. The 34th annual youth competition was conducted.

Surviving Storms and Drought on the Farm

Youth Forestry Teams gather for group picture while waiting for final results at Competition at 34th annual Event
Farmers Market Program for Seniors

Good nutrition plays a critical role in good health of people, especially elderly people. Consumption of fresh vegetables and fruit is a critical part of a healthy diet. Often consumption and availability of fresh fruit and vegetables in our senior population is low. For low income seniors obtaining and paying for fresh food is more difficult.

Programs such as the SC Department of Agriculture Senior Nutrition program encourage seniors to visit local farmers markets and purchase fresh vegetables while helping local small farmers to sell their products. Making fresh foods more available to seniors encourages them to consume more on a regular basis.

This was the 15\textsuperscript{th} year in a row that the market has participated in this program. Greenwood received $25,000.00 in grant funds that were distributed to 1000 residents in June of 2016. Each senior who qualified received $25 in food vouchers they used at the Greenwood County Market.

Clemson horticulture agent, James Hodges, worked with the Upper Savannah Council on Aging Director, Vanesa Wideman and her staff to coordinate volunteers. Numerous volunteers from the Lakelands Master Gardeners and farmer’s market staff were trained and distributed the vouchers at the farmers market in June.

Each senior received $25 in vouchers to purchase fresh vegetables. Redemption rate of the vouchers by seniors at the market is historically greater than 95%. Over $480,000.00 has been distributed at the Market in the last 15 years to Senior citizens in Greenwood County.

Master Gardener Volunteers

Horticulture and gardening is more popular than ever so the number of questions coming into the local Clemson Extension offices is often overwhelming. Master Gardener Programs were developed to train volunteers who could provide additional support for Horticulture Agents in answering questions and solving problems at the county level as well as volunteering in the community. Greenwood has a long plant history with the Festival of Flowers and in recent years the Uptown Topiary Project in June. Many Master Gardeners volunteer to help with production and care of the topiaries.

The festival has an economic benefit to Greenwood of $4-5 Million each year. New classes are held each year and in 2016 sixteen new MG’s were trained.

Local Agriculture

Fresh vegetable products add value to Greenwood. The local county supported farmers market drew large crowds of customers from June-October seeking locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables.

Even though the drought affected local production slightly, sales nearly matched 2015. During the five month season nearly 28,800 customer visits to the market occurred. If each customer spent an average of $10 per visit this would be a gross of more than $ 288,000.

During May agriculture was highlighted with two programs sponsored by local Rotary Clubs. Rural Urban Day luncheon served 69 local farmers and Greenwood rotary members. The Emerald City Rotary sponsored the Vegetable Growers breakfast with 58 in attendance.

Agent, James Hodges provided guidance and training support for the County Board and helped with the April Plant Festival that generated early season sales for local growers. Extension’s info booth provided information to 61 shoppers. (Market Photo Below)
Safety Education for our Landscape & Cattle Industry

Landscape installation and maintenance is a significant industry in the Lakelands. Good pasture management also provides additional returns to farmers. Both groups apply pesticides as needed to improve and protect plants from problems. They work on personal, commercial properties for hire or as noncommercial applicators for city, county and other government entities. They all must receive regular training to stay current on regulations and safe application techniques to protect the public when pesticides are necessary.

Each year the Greenwood office provides two opportunities to attend trainings to improve knowledge and safety. In 2016 two classes were held in February for 36 people on weed problems in turf grass and pasture grasses with treatment options. Later in the year two additional classes were conducted in December for 38 people. This training set taught pest management methods to avoid the need for pesticides for insect and disease problems turf grass and pasture grass. Each topic required two meeting times to accommodate the number attending each.

4H Activities & Embryology

This year has been an amazing year for the Greenwood 4-H and 4H Agent, Lucy Wetzel. She completed Embryology classes at Woodfield, Lakeview, and Springfield Elementary schools. At Woodfield and Lakeview, 150 second graders participated in the unit. At Springfield kindergarten classes participated.

An additional unit about dairy farms and dairy products helped school kids learn even more about where their food comes from and the value of agriculture in our county.

Our summer program, Kids in the Kitchen, had 30 youth participating in several 3-day cooking classes. These classes taught basic cooking skills and provide nutritional education while kids planned and cooked meals each day. At the end of each class they ate their own cooking.

Greenwood Horse Club had a good year with many activities. This year members participated in the SC State Horse Show, Southern Regionals, 4-H Horse Camp, Horse Bowl, and the Hippology Contest.

At their September meeting they added 12 new members and hope to continue to grow in size with the new year.

Lucy Wetzel, 4-H Agent, was contacted by Cambridge Academy late in this year. They are interested in starting a Shooting Sports Club at their school and are working toward that.

After one year as agent, Lucy is excited about working to continue the growth of 4-H in Greenwood County.

Food Safety Education

In South Carolina, all inspected kitchens must have a manager who is certified in a nationally recognized food safety program. The law requires facilities to provide proof of certification by June 2016. Research has shown a direct link between manager food safety knowledge and the actual safety of the food served by their restaurant.

Regional Agent, Rhonda Matthews provides Servsafe® Manager Certification classes plus testing to fulfill the requirements of the state law. She also teaches employee food safety handling to help restaurants further reduce any chance of foodborne illness. This year Rhonda continued to teach Servsafe® Manager Certification classes (mainly in the Lakelands area of SC) and then proctored the national certification exam. This equals approximately 274 region managers taking the class. She proctored the certification exam on 4 other occasions (provided test only, no class.) This reached 12 additional managers and 85% received their credentials. She also taught 5 employee training classes for 55 people focused on safe food handling.

Youth use landscape board to simulate runoff of pollutants
Many crops and landscapes suffered under the heat and drought that affected our area during the summer and fall of 2016. Turf grass suffered the most and Senior Horticulture Agent, James Hodges spent extra time and visits working with homeowners and landscapers to correct problems and give management options. Hodges received as many as 100 calls per month with questions during the worst period with requests for visits to assess serious problems in our area.

Much of the contact came from office visits, phone calls or email questions from local consumers and commercial clients during the year. Over the year an estimated 500 calls were answered for consumers and 75 for commercial clients. Many visits were made to local and city greenhouses and homes to help professionals identify problems and provide solutions for these problems. During the year a program was done for 20 people on broadleaf weed identification, control and turf management for the public. Numerous weed samples were examined for identification and treatment options.

Visits were made to local and city greenhouses to look at issues and help solve problems during the 2016 growing season.

Urban trees also suffer serious problems and visits were made to help home owners and landscapers assess problems and provide treatments. On some occasions samples were submitted to Clemson University Plant Problem Clinic to pinpoint problems. These activities were in addition to working with farmers during the drought on problems.