Bermudagrass Stockpiling Strategies and Winter Feeding Workshop

Bermudagrass is the predominant forage grown in Horry County for hay and grazing production. With the decline in cattle prices producers are looking for ways to lower input cost. Feeding hay is the most expensive input cost annual for cattle producers. By reducing the amount of hay being fed producers are reducing input cost and in return increasing profit.

The Livestock and Forages team planned, coordinated, and implemented a one day workshop on Stockpiling Bermudagrass and Winter Feeding for cattle producers. Two workshops were held in the Pee Dee Region. These were regional meetings and over 50 producers attended from throughout the Pee Dee Region. The workshop contained topics that included Grazing crop residues, Stockpiling Bermudagrass, Quality of Stockpiled Bermudagrass, Economics of Stockpiling Bermudagrass and Winter Annuals, Weed Control, and Developing a Ten-Month Grazing Plan.

Through the workshop producers learned methods to reduce input costs and increase efficiency while improving profitability.

Sprayer Calibration Classes Held

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. Area natural resources agent, Ben Powell, partnered with the coastal commercial horticulture agent, Zack Snipes, to deliver two sprayer calibration workshops in 2016 in Georgetown County. 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 for the second class.
Horry County 4-H recently opened the first community club in Surfside Beach! The South Strand 4-H Club, as the group named it, meets the second Thursday of every month from 6:30-7:30. The group of 15 children is led by a Virginia 4-H alumni, Mrs. Dana Rush, who is also an employee of the city of Surfside Beach. Dana moved to South Carolina in June of 2016 from Toms Brook, Virginia. She was a long-time member of the Toms Brook 4-H Club. Her two children were members of 4-H in their previous hometown and she wanted them to be able to continue with the program in their new location. Dana said, “Aside from the educational life experiences and memories that all my various 4-H activities provided to me, I also was lucky enough to benefit from various trips, competitions, awards, scholarships, etc. For these reasons, I knew that I wanted my kids to have a chance at some of the same opportunities that I was blessed with through 4-H.” After discovering that 4-H wasn’t active in the South Strand area of the county, she decided to charter a new club!

The club practices parliamentary procedures, has elected officers, and by laws. The November meeting consisted of a food drive for local flood victims. Each meeting will involve some aspect of service learning. The December meeting will be held at Thrive at Prince Creek Assisted Living and Memory Care Facility, in Murrells Inlet, where club members will sing Christmas carols to residents.

Topics of future meetings may include robotics, engineering, healthy lifestyles, cooking, horses, or maybe even forestry. Club meeting topics, guest speakers, and field trips will be determined by the interests of the members.

Master Gardeners Hold Plant Education Clinics

Master Gardeners and local Clemson Extension Agents held plant education clinics at five area farmer’s markets as well as one local mall. Approximately 1500 local gardeners ranging from the home gardener to the hobby produce gardener to commercial landscapers visited the clinics. These clinics were held weekly during the growing season from April through September. The gardeners taking advantage of the free clinics were given information on local growing conditions, plants adapted to our growing area as well as problem identification and control measures for various weed, insect and disease issues.

Hatching Success with 4-H Chick Embryology

Across the state, Embryology in the Classroom remains to be one of the most popular school enrichment programs that 4-H has to offer. Horry County 4-H administered Embryology in the Classroom to 124 students in 7 classrooms from Midland Elementary School, Forestbrook Elementary School, St. Michael Catholic School, and Holy Trinity Catholic School in April and May of 2016. An incubator, automatic turner, and two dozen eggs are brought into the classroom for the program. Daily reminders, weekly programs, and two candling sessions serve to teach the children about the life cycle of a chick embryo. Around 21 days later, the chicks begin to hatch and are placed inside a provided brooder box, complete with a heat lamp, and other necessities. The final topic of the program focuses on promoting 4-H poultry projects and future opportunities in the poultry industry.

4H Grows Here!

* Backyard Livestock Club
* Collins Park Junior Master Gardener Club
* Sew to Grow Club
* Woodworking Club
* Coastal 4-H Club
* Heart 4-H Adventures Club
* Wildlife Club

For club information contact: llewis2@clemson.edu

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**Vegetables and Fruit Growing in Horry County**

With the drop in commodity prices, farmers in the Pee Dee Area of S.C. are investigating new ways to increase farm revenue. Traditional row-crop farmers and even farmers already diversifying into new ag-ventures are searching for ways to make their farm more profitable. Therefore, many farmers in Horry County are producing non-traditional crops such as fruits and vegetables. In the words of Mr. Greg Hyman a Horry County Farmer, “In my opinion, Intensive Management is the best way to grow vegetables on a small farm. Following Clemson Extensions directions has shown me how to have a very productive small farm. Clemson Extension has helped me through the year with farm visits and advice on how to grow my crop.” He also added, “My yield was far greater than expected.” However, I must work on my marketing abilities to sell the large quantity of product I produce.”

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**Tobacco Production Meeting Meets Needs of Area Growers**

Horry and Marion Counties are home to approximately half of the state’s tobacco production. With this kind of grower presence, it is important that they have the opportunity to learn about new products, research information, production practices and new crop insurance rules and regulations. Since the retirement of two of our tobacco specialist, it has become difficult to get the expertise in agronomy **within the state** to support the needs of the growers. The Agent(s) knew that tobacco was too important to too many people in the area to let the state tobacco meeting go by the wayside. In the absence of the specialists who normally plan the meeting, the agents decided to step up and make it happen. Six different in-state and out-of-state speakers were scheduled, the sponsors were secured and the meal and meeting location were booked. 91 growers and tobacco industry representatives were in attendance at the meeting in December. 94% Agreed or strongly agreed that they had gained new knowledge from the tobacco meeting. 100% said that they would use the information from the meeting in their operation. 87% of growers said that they learned new ways to either cut costs or increase production. 100% said the meeting met their needs as a grower. 97% indicated that they would recommend the program to others. The continuation of this meeting has shown tobacco farmers that they are still supported by the agents and Clemson Extension.

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**Spring 2016 Master Gardener Course**

The spring 2016 Master Gardener Class for the Horry, Georgetown and Marion county region was held from January through May 2016. Seventeen area residents completed the 14 week course with all those involved passing the final exam. These Master Gardener interns must complete 40 hours of volunteer time before they can become certified Clemson Master Gardeners. Along with the 36 hours of required classroom work studying all aspects of gardening, the students were treated to field trips to the first nursery established along the coast of South Carolina as well as a trip to a small working farm. Stan McKenzie of McKenzie Farms provided a hands on demonstration of fruit tree production, pruning and grafting. The Clemson Master Gardener course is a valuable program teaching local residents all aspects of environmentally conservative horticultural practices. Upon completion, Master Gardeners assist local Extension Offices in various aspect of program delivery.
After a drought-ridden summer, our area was already considered a disaster in terms of certain crop production. Many growers estimated at least a 40% yield loss on all crops from the drought alone. Then came the rain that wouldn’t stop. Storms from Hurricane Joaquin dumped nearly 20 inches in just a couple of days. The excessive rainfall finished off the crops that weren’t totally devastated from the drought. Soybeans, cotton and peanuts that had reached maturity were sprouting in the field, and with more rain came more damage and reduction in quality. Many growers were left not knowing if they’d be financially stable enough to farm another year. County agents were able to assist farmers by helping them navigate through their questions about harvesting and harvest aids, disaster relief, crop insurance, etc. Agents helped to tell the story of the growers with pictures and videos, news interviews, and conducting a flood affected farmer meeting. Extension agents conducted a ‘Financing the Farm’ meeting where growers were able to evaluate their current risks, and get updated information about crop budgets and market situation and outlook. Being available to the farmers to provide support and important information has really strengthened the extension-farmer relationship in the area. Because of the work done by area agents, state legislators and others took notice and in turn proposed the State Farm Aid Bill. Two meetings were held by Extension agent to explain the SC Farm Aid Bill application process where over165 growers were in attendance. After the meetings, agents met with over 70 growers one on one to help them through the application process. By doing this, Extension agent, along with other agriculture lenders, helped the area growers to receive over $3.2 million in grant money.