Area 4-H Youth Learn Gardening Skills

The 2016 Project Year for the 4-H Small Garden Contest saw a record number of youth participating. Out of a total of 239 4-H youth participants from across the state, 51 youth were registered in Lancaster County. The purpose of the Small Garden Project is to educate the youth of South Carolina on where and how their food is grown using hands-on, in-the-garden experiences. Individuals are required to work a minimum 100 square foot garden. Groups of 2 or more are required to work a minimum 200 square foot garden. The addition of the group component proved to be a great success as siblings and friends were able to work together to provide food for their families and others.

In addition to preparing, planting, maintaining, and harvesting a garden with at least 3 edible crops, youth are required to keep and return a project record book. The record books are divided into sections based on project timing and topic: preparing, planting, maintaining, and harvesting. Youth also are required to keep up with financial expenses and any income generated from the garden, write a short story, record precipitation amounts, sketch a map of the garden, and document the project in photos. Once the gardens were producing, Lancaster County youth received a visit from the Clemson Extension 4-H Agent and a local master gardener to evaluate the gardens and to provide feedback to the youth.

Congratulations to Elijah Moree, the top junior level 4-H gardener in the county and also to Kaitlyn Hudson, the top Cloverbud level 4-H gardener in the county. All of the youth learned valuable lessons that will last a lifetime.

Article by: Steve Hucks, 4-H Extension Agent
Off-Farm Feeder Calf Sales

Area cattle farmers often seek to add value to feeder calves they sell each year. One method is to market feeder calves in off-farm, semi-trailer load lots. Because semi-trailer load lots are difficult for some small farms to assemble, local farmers often work together to assemble enough cattle to make a semi-load lot of feeder calves (approx. 48,000 lbs. of calves).

During 2016, Clemson Extension Area Livestock Agent worked with farmers in York, Chester, Fairfield, Union, Newberry, and Lancaster County to market off-farm loads of feeder calves. Eighteen different producers sold 22 semi-loads of feeder calves, totaling 1,515 head. Comparing prices received to traditional marketing avenues, off-farm feeder calves sold for an average of $99 more per head. By marketing cattle off-farm, participating cattle farmers received an average of $8,332 more income per farm verses traditional marketing methods.

Article by: Brian L. Beer,
Area Livestock & Forage Extension Agent

Catawba Fresh Market Brings Local Food to Lancaster County

Lancaster County residents now have a new way to purchase locally grown food – on-line! The Catawba Fresh Market is like having a 24-hour farmers market in your computer. Once orders are placed online, local growers process them, and then they are delivered to a pick-up site within the Catawba region. Lancaster County residents can pick-up their orders at Integra Wellness in Indian Land. The goal of the program is to provide the best local produce in a convenient and sustainable manner while promoting the success and future of our local agriculture.

The market is made possible through a partnership between Clemson Extension, the Catawba Farm and Food Coalition and Eat Smart Move More. Currently, the site has 32 active farmers selling items such as meat, eggs, produce, breads and other value-added products. To become a customer (or vendor) visit our website: www.catawbafreshmarket.com. For more information contact Ben Boyles at boyles2@clemson.edu or 803-981-3021.

Clemson Extension Helps Lancaster Farmers with Forage Crop Establishment

Several Lancaster County farmers worked on establishing new fields of hybrid bermudagrass in the spring of 2016. Hybrid bermudagrass is a highly productive forage crop used as either grazing or hay for livestock operations. It is also expensive to plant, with estimated establishment cost of $315 per acre.

Lancaster’s Area Livestock and Forage Agent assisted three area farmers with establishment of new bermudagrass fields in 2016. Farmers submitted soil samples for fertilization recommendations and used Clemson Extension expertise to formulate fertilization plans that would promote successful establishment. After planting, Extension also helped the area farmers with management and weed control recommendations.

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In the spring of 2016, newly established stands of hybrid bermudagrass were slow-growing and farmers were concerned about the viability and quantity of grass in the fields. The farmers relied on Extension’s advice concerning the quality of stand, and they were encouraged to continue proper management, as most stands were adequate, but most were barely adequate. By the end of the growing season, these new fields were looking good and most farmers were pleased with the end results. They are looking forward to next summer, when they will get hay production off of these fields and will have them for years to come by following recommendations from Clemson Extension.

Article by: Brian Beer, Area Livestock & Forage Extension Agent

Lancaster County a part of 2016 Catawba Regional Ag + Art Tour
Nation’s Largest Free Farm Tour

Over 10,000 local residents and visitors had the unique opportunity to see first-hand where their food comes from while enjoying the works of local artisans during the South Carolina Ag + Art Tour in Lancaster County on June 11 and 12, 2016. The tour included 9 agriculture sites throughout Lancaster County. 8 other counties participated in the tour throughout the month of June making it the largest free farm tour in the nation. In addition, the tour featured artisans at every stop who provided demonstrations while exhibiting and selling their work.

The Tour, directed by Ben Boyles, Agribusiness Agent, has created a new agritourism community in the region, bringing together stakeholders from farm, tourism, economic development, and arts backgrounds just to name a few. The 2017 Tour will expand to include 13 counties. For more information about the tour please visit our website: www.AgandArtTour.com

Article by: Ben Boyles, Area Agribusiness Extension Agent
Nutrition and diet play a vital role in health, disease prevention and management, and quality of life. Most people have heard about the importance of too much fat, sodium, sugar and total calories in the diet. But just as important are the foods and subsequent nutrients the body needs to thrive and of which many individuals need more. Most people’s diets are low in fiber, vitamins and minerals, phytochemicals / anti-oxidants, and water.

The State Indicator Report on Fruits and Vegetables, 2013 (a Centers for Disease Control [CDC] document) showed median intake of fruits and vegetables (times per day) for adults in South Carolina at 1.0 for fruits and 1.5 for vegetables. Additionally, the percentage who reported consuming fruits and vegetables less than one-time daily were fruits at 44.4% and vegetables at 27.3%.

The Lancaster County Council on Aging serves many seniors. Currently there are four congregate meal sites in the county, providing daily lunch and educational activities for participants. The Clemson University Food Safety and Nutrition Agent had been asked to provide nutrition education for participants at the sites and pertinent nutrition programs were being taught in all four sites.

Since many Americans have voiced frustration about the foods they have been told to consume less, the Agent decided to provide a class on foods to increase. The primary objectives were 1) to educate participants on the importance of vegetable and fruit consumption, and 2) demonstrate how to increase vegetables and fruits in commonly prepared dishes and recipes. A very common dish – an old favorite, spaghetti over pasta, was used as a springboard to inspire creativity for other favorites. Increasing the amount of vegetables and/or fruits in the dishes they’re already in, or creatively adding f/v to recipes was the premise for teaching this.

The Agent demonstrated a “Spaghetti All in One Dish” recipe for each group. This recipe was based on one previously used in 4H, and being kid-friendly, had few ingredients. To reach the objective of inciting creativity, three ‘non-typical’ spaghetti ingredients were added – shredded carrots, yellow bell pepper, and fresh baby spinach. The participants were asked to share with the group other, non-typical ingredients. Other commonly prepared recipes and dishes were discussed and participants considered ways they could add more vegetables to these dishes.

Participants were given the opportunity to taste the dish, given copies of the recipe, and encouraged to try different ingredients. The program was taught in three congregate meal sites with approximately 63 seniors participating. Written evaluations and verbal feedback were very favorable, with many stating they would work to increase vegetables and fruits in their recipes and dishes at home.

Article by: Angela Forbes, Food Safety & Nutrition Extension Agent
Master Gardener Educates Her Neighbors

The Master Gardener Program is an Extension recruitment tool for community volunteers to be trained in growing plants and all that ails them. Upon graduation from the 15 week class, members are obligated to perform 40 hours of volunteer service by providing unbiased, research based information on gardening to the public. One Lancaster Master Gardener has done much more than that.

Jeanette Oesterlin has been writing a monthly gardening advice column for the Sun City Carolina Lakes monthly community magazine Living for over eight years. There are approximately 3,200 copies delivered to homes in Sun City each month.

It started as a 'what to do this month' to answer questions that people new to South Carolina might ask. It has evolved into a column on timely garden topics of interest. She started out using Clemson University professor, Bob Polomski's book Month by Month Gardening in the Carolinas and now uses resources from Clemson and other land grant university publications for technical material.

Most of the columns are calendar driven. January is information such as what to do with gift plants, and house plants. February is usually planning for spring. March is something about early spring planting in vegetable gardens and flowering pots outdoors. Fall is usually about renewing vegetable gardens, blooming plants that will survive winter, and looking at your landscaping and planning improvements. Winter is fall tree planting.

Currently Jeanette is writing a lot about butterflies because the community is starting pollinator gardens along over three miles of walking paths. She has written about garlic, tomatoes, spring bulbs, fall bulbs, annuals, watering yards and gardens, tree choices for small yards, interesting shrubs, snakes and other 'friends'.

Jeanette gets a lot of calls or questions when people see her on the street and gets a lot of 'will you look at.....'. Most people in the community know who to ask. Jeanette humbly states that she is not the expert they think she is, but using her training, she knows where to find the answers.

*Article by: Paul Thompson, Horticulture Extension Agent*
You are never too old to learn something new as participants in the EFNEP Adult Program in Lancaster County can attest. Ranging in ages from 28-50, the participants from the Carolina Community Actions program overcame some self-described objection to trying new foods and learning how a variety of foods in moderate amounts are the best way to balance their meals.

We began the lessons by teaching the group the importance of eating healthy and how to make healthy food choices which can improve the nutritional quality of the meals they serve their families. The participants in this group were able to increase their ability to select and buy food products that meet the nutritional needs of their families.

The most challenging aspect was working through their concerns about changing their eating habits. However, because the group had agreed at the beginning of the lessons to at least try each food item, we were able to continue to explore new options in food shopping, meal preparation, and ingredient substitution.

The most rewarding aspect of the program was seeing group members use recommendations to make healthy choices. These included:

- Trying whole grain flours to enhance flavors of baked goods made with less fat and fewer or no cholesterol ingredients;
- Replacing whole milk with low-fat or skim milk in soups, puddings and baked goods;
- Steaming, boiling, or baking vegetables and meats rather than frying them;
- Seasoning vegetables with herbs and spices instead of fatty sauces;
- Choosing lean cuts of meat and trimming fat from meat and poultry before and after cooking;
- Using vegetable oil instead of shortening, margarine, or butter in recipes.

Participants shared that since they changed their eating habits and are making healthier food choices they feel better, whereas the high-fat diet they ate before left them feeling tired and lacking energy. They also shared that they now eat more fruits and vegetables along with daily physical activity.

There were a number of contributing factors that led to the success of this program. Giving participants the opportunity to examine the different food items and then see how easy it is to prepare healthy meals with them was key to encouraging them to eat the healthier food options and realize that taste is not lacking with this option.

Article by: Josephine Alexander, EFNEP Nutrition Educator Assistant
Daniel Hilgendorf, of Lancaster County 4-H, continued his success in the poultry show ring this year as he took Grand Champion Honors for the Senior Division in each show that he entered. Daniel went on to earn Overall Reserve Grand Champion at the South Carolina State Fair Poultry Showmanship Show. Daniel is in his 8th year of participating in 4-H and is becoming a great young leader as demonstrated by his show demeanor and boldness to always help others when the opportunity to do so arises. In September, Daniel made a trip to Florence County to lead a showmanship clinic for 4-H youth from several counties. His willingness to share and his reputation of always putting others before himself is a true testament to the values of 4-H. Daniel will be the first to tell you that the greatest reward from participating in 4-H is not the ribbons or trophies, but instead it is the lesson that hard work is rewarded and that a positive attitude will serve you well. Thank you, Daniel, for representing 4-H and Lancaster County so well and congratulations once again on a job well done.