A New Year and New Gear

We have new faces in familiar places at the Lee County Clemson Extension Office and around Clemson Extension as a whole. Locally we have five people in the office, David DeWitt (Row Crop Agent) who works with all things row crop. Next we have Darlas Moore (4-H Volunteer Coordinator) which means if it is 4-H related in Lee County she has the final say on it. Third on staff is Joshua Caughman (Program Assistant) who mans the office and helps coordinate the flow of information between the public and the agents, office hours are Tuesday-Friday 8:30a.m.-1:00p.m. then 2:00 p.m-4:30p.m. The fourth office member is Cindy Welsh (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program) EFNEP for short, Cindy works with the youth of Lee County to teach them about healthy eating and physical fitness. Our newest member to the Lee County team is T.J. Savereno (Wildlife and Natural Resource Agent), who specializes in native vegetation and Longleaf Pine restoration.

We have been working to update our office space by adding furniture, modern technology, and digital searchability to better serve and connect with our community. Also, thanks to our increased connection with the community more homeowners are testing their soil, bringing in plant samples, and asking for information. In the past year we have processed 535 soil samples of which 438 were large farms and 97 were homeowners. We are seeing a steady increase of homeowner use at Lee County Clemson Extension. Please come by and see the changes that we have made. Lee County Clemson Extension is in the William L. Bryant Agriculture Building, it is one of the red brick buildings behind the Lee County Courthouse, and it has a brown metal roof with dark green around the windows. It is in front of the hedge-row before you get to the Lee County Sheriff’s Department.

Meet T.J. our new face.
Fun with 4-H: Adventure in Wind Power

We all know that wind is a valuable and renewable resource. This past spring the third graders at Bishopville Primary School joined the ranks of people to learn and understand this concept. By the end of the project the youth learned problem solving, team work, and critical thinking skills.

At the outset of the project a simple pin wheel was made so that the youth could see the effects that wind has on an object. After the concept of the wind’s power was understood, we were able to move onto a more elaborate demonstration.

The next demonstration contained boats that were made out of egg crates, tape, straws, pencils, paper clips, 3X5 flash cards and a penny for weight. Each student had two weeks to come up with a prototype. On test day each boat ran once. After that the children could make any final adjustments and then handed over the boats until race day.

On race day, there was much excitement as to who the 3rd grade champion would be. All children raced and a winner from each class was in the semi-finals. The last race was coming up and the boats were placed on the starting line, the fan turned on and away they went. The third grade champion was Kristupher Sanders. He received a trophy and all the semi-finalist received a certificate marking the occasion. Everyone had a good time and learned the power of wind and working together.

EFNEP: At Work in Lee County

Clemson University’s Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program conducts programs to youth in Lee County. The EFNEP program provides the student participants with hands on demonstrations, food tasting activities, and fun active games along with other physical activities. EFNEP is active in the Lee County schools. EFNEP this year has provided classes for grades 5K thru 8th grade. The programs are taught in the class rooms with several different nutrition curriculums for the different grade levels. The EFNEP program offers fun, interacting learning opportunities for healthier eating habits and physical activities for the students.
T.J. Savereno is a Senior Associate Extension Agent with Clemson University specializing in wildlife, forestry, and other natural resources. He has worked for Clemson University since 2003, previously at Clemson’s Pee Dee Research and Education Center, and since April 1, 2016 at the Lee County Extension office in Bishopville, SC. Although Lee is his home county, he also serves Clarendon, Darlington, Florence, and Marlboro Counties. T.J. assists landowners with questions regarding natural resource management in general, but his specialties include restoration and management of the longleaf pine ecosystem, groundcover management in forest ecosystems, native vegetation management, the importance of early successional habitat for wildlife, creating wildlife habitat in urban and suburban landscapes, invasive plant species control, promotion of the use of prescribed fire, and integrating wildlife management with forestry and agricultural systems (http://newsstand.clemson.edu/mediarelations/clemson-extension-helping-restore-habitat-lost-to-fragments-landscapes/). T.J. is currently engaged in a collaborative research and demonstration project with the USDA Forest Service on restoration of groundcover plants of the longleaf pine ecosystem (http://newsstand.clemson.edu/mediarelations/clemson-scientists-collaborators-working-to-restore-longleaf-pine-forests/), and another with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service on establishing native pollinator gardens in Bishopville and at the Sandhill Research and Education Center in Columbia. He is also working with other members of the Forestry and Natural Resources Extension Team to develop programs on Woodland Management: The First Look and Creating Backyard Wildlife Habitat: If You Build It, They Will Come. These programs will be presented in the coming year. T.J. received his B.S. in Biology from Fairmont State University in his home state of West Virginia and his M.S. in Wildlife Biology from Clemson University. He is past president and current board member of the SC Vegetation Management Association, and past chairman and current steering committee member of the SC Prescribed Fire Council. T.J. also serves on the SC State Advisory Committee of County Forestry Boards, the SC NRCS State Technical Committee, and on advisory committees of the Sewee Longleaf Conservation Cooperative and the SC Chapter of The Wildlife Society. T.J. is married and has a 19-year-old daughter and 13-year-old son, and he and his wife, Lynette, are active in animal rescue work. In his spare time, of which there is sadly too little, he enjoys nature photography and playing his guitars.

Livestock: Stockpiling Strategies

Bermudagrass is the predominant forage grown in Lee and surrounding counties 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 attended. 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 10 Month Grazing Plan. Through the workshop producers learned methods to reduce input costs and increase efficiency while improving profitability.
Reflections of a Horticulturist

Date: October 31, 2016
Release: Report to the People
Writer: Tony Melton, Area County Extension Agent
Hundreds of Acres of Vegetable Crops are being grown in Lee County
SITUATION:
With the drop in commodity prices, farmers in 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, farmers in Lee County are producing hundreds of acres of non-traditional crops such as Peas and Squash.
RESPONSE:
The County Agent is working in cooperation with McCall Farms in Effingham, SC and Lee County farmers to produce the quality & quantity of produce needed to fill millions of cans with quality vegetables. Constant scouting and looking over these new crops is important to improve yield and quality.
IMPACT:
In SC a total of 20,000 acres of produce is being grown by 15 farmers for McCall Farms.

Row Crop Trials: The Flood’s Impact

October 3, 2015 brought to South Carolina a thousand year flood. Many of the state’s best agriculture lands were covered by over twenty five inches of rainfall over a period of just a few hours. These rains came at the absolute worst time for crops as most were just becoming ready to harvest. This flood was followed by many weeks of continuous rain and warm temperatures that totally destroyed anything that remained of the crops.
May 18, 2016 the South Carolina Senate followed the State House of Representatives in over-riding the Governor’s veto of the Farm Aid Relief bill. This Bill provided $40 million in relief to help offset some of the agriculture losses in South Carolina. The South Carolina Department of Agriculture and Clemson Extension Service worked together to educate and train farmers how to fill out application forms to ensure they each received proper funding. This process in Lee County involved an educational seminar attended by over fifty people and over sixty one on one sessions to fill out application. Lee county farmers received $1,862,891 in aid. This money could only be spent on farming expenses to help maintain the future of the farm, and only covered 20% of the farmer’s total losses.
This aid will not be enough to revive a struggling business, but did make a difference to paying some carry-over 2015 debt and allow hope for a good crop in 2016.
Damage from around the area.

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Lee County Clemson Extension is showing the way  
You are Helping Us Bloom

[http://www.clemson.edu/extension/county/lee](http://www.clemson.edu/extension/county/lee)

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