Meet our New 4-H Youth Development Agent, Ms. Erika Owens

Erika Owens has been a Clemson Extension employee since May 2016. She is the 4-H youth development agent for Marlboro and Dillon Counties. This military-kid is a 2008 graduate of South Carolina State University. She was a substitute teacher for a few years, and then found herself graduating from the University of South Carolina in 2012 with her Master’s in Public Health. Quickly after graduation, she moved to the Pee Dee Region to cater to Marlboro and Dillon Counties.

Erika hit the ground running and integrated herself into the 4-H craft summer workshops. She loves helping youth learn about the farm to table concept, but also recognizes that she must “give her people what they want”. Erika is passionate about giving youth opportunities to show their talents and explore their community, county, region, and world.

Please check out the Dillon and Marlboro County Clemson Extension 4-H Facebook pages for pictures, events, and updates. If you would like to receive the monthly Clemson Extension 4-H newsletter that specifically highlights 4-Hers in this county, please call the office to be put on the list.
The devastating floods of October 2015 left many South Carolina farmers unable to harvest crops, including cotton, soybeans, and peanuts. Growers suffered an average crop loss of 75% as a result of the flood, with crop insurance covering 37% of that loss. In response to efforts spearheaded by advocates such as S.C. Farm Bureau, the S.C. General Assembly approved $40 million in aid on May 24, 2016, to help farms recover in flood-ravaged communities. To assist them with the SC Farm Aid grant application process, Clemson Extension conducted twenty farmer training sessions in 21 days in partnership with S.C. State University and S.C. Department of Agriculture (SCDA), beginning in late June. Farmers from Marlboro County participated in three of these training sessions, in Dillon, Florence and Society Hill (above, right). Area Agronomy Agent Trish DeHond helped eleven Marlboro County farmers with one-on-one application assistance, and responded to individual questions through emails, text messages and phone calls to help them meet the August 15 deadline. Along with the SC Department of Revenue, SCDA staff reviewed applications from 1244 farmers statewide and approved a total of $35,512,560 in grant aid for farmers. Marlboro County row crop producers received $619,129 in checks mailed on September 16 to help them continue their farming operations.

Comments of appreciation from SC Farm Aid Grant applicants included:

“Trish I need help filling out package for disaster money - have all forms. Do not want to make a mistake. Can we schedule an appointment?” on July 16. He met with the agent for about an hour on the 18th, then sent this message on the 27th… “Trish I just got a call from SC Dept. of Ag. I’m approved! Thank you for your help!”

“I just want to thank you for helping me fill that paperwork out. I just got my check Saturday (September 17) and it’s the full amount. I appreciate everything you helped me with.”

“Thanks again, Trish, for all your help.....we could not have completed everything without your help.”

The Clemson University Agricultural Service Laboratory provides services for the citizens of South Carolina. The Agricultural Service Laboratory processed 49,480 soil samples, 2,067 plant tissue, 713 feed and forage, and 1,604 waste samples in 2015.

The Home & Garden Information Center (HGIC) provides research-based information on landscaping, gardening, plant health, household pests, food safety & preservation, nutrition, physical activity, & health.

Call Toll Free: 1-888-656-9988 SC Residents Only, Hours Are: 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday - Friday
-OR-
Visit our website at: http://hgic.clemson.edu
The Marlboro County Project
Grady Sampson, Horticulture Agent

The Collard Greens Project is to build resilient farms, promote the nutritional well-being and health of the community. Farmers in Marlboro County promoted collards as a profitable alternative for local farm production and a healthy alternative for local nutritional consumption.

This project also enhances our local farmers market. The Marlboro County Farmers Market offers an economic boost to our area providing jobs for our citizens and fresh locally grown fruits and vegetables for sale. As residents shop at the Farmers Market, other businesses are also affected because residents also shop for other goods and services.

Agriculture is the mainstay of Marlboro County so it is the intent to use agriculture as a catalyst for sustainable community development. This project provides farmers with educational knowledge and skills in collard green production to enhance their farm income through sustainable agriculture practices, as well as increase the customer base at the farmers market.

Hay Production in the Pee Dee Region
Amber Starnes, Area Livestock and Forages Agent

For many producers in the Pee Dee Region this has been one of the best years for hay production that we have experienced in a long time. Most producers were able to get four cuttings in comparison to the usual three cuttings. Not only did most gain a cutting, the quantity of hay produced for each cutting increased from previous years. Although the hay crop was better this year, so was the weed production. Many producers had weed problems that they had never experienced before.

By working with local livestock and forages agents, the producers were able to target those weeds for control. When working with herbicides the producer must always read the label to ensure proper use of the product. Producers reported great control of the weeds throughout the growing season.

With the increased quantity, many producers wanted to know more about the quality of the hay. There was an increase in the number of producers requesting and submitting forage samples for analysis. This information is very valuable to livestock producers to know exactly what they are getting from the hay. Forage analyses give the nutritional value of the hay that is being fed so that producers can know what hay to feed to different classes of livestock and when to feed that hay.

Pictured Right: Illustrates a core sample being taken for forage analysis
The South Carolina Women’s Agricultural Network (SC WAgN) provided through the Clemson Extension Service. SC WAgN’s mission is to support women in agriculture in South Carolina by providing positive learning environments, networking, and empowerment. The primary purposes of SC WAgN are to encourage and support women in agriculture provide and strengthen networks for women in agriculture; provide educational and mentoring opportunities for women in agriculture; raise community awareness of agricultural related issues and concerns; and sustain farming livelihoods.

The network is comprised of women farmers, agricultural professionals, agricultural educators, and informed consumers committed to supporting and providing educational opportunities to women working in agriculture and ag-related businesses.

Membership is open to any person supporting the mission and purpose of SC WAgN.

To join, or for more information, go to: www.clemson.edu/scwagn; call or email Jennifer Boyles, jbyls@clemson.edu; 843-616-0786.

The fifth South Carolina Annie’s Project was held April, 2016 in Georgetown SC. It proved to be another powerful and outstanding program for 23 diverse women in agriculture.

The participants came from all over the state to learn more about business practices, risk management and agricultural opportunities that are available. Topics included business and marketing plans, estate planning, and policy decisions.

Annie’s Project is an educational program dedicated to strengthening women’s roles in modern farm practices and currently classes are being taught in 33 states around the country, Annie’s Project fosters decision-making skills, problem solving and record keeping.

To learn more about SC Annie’s Project, call or email Jennifer Boyles, State Coordinator at 843-616-0786 or jbyls@clemson.edu

Some comments from our participants:
“ I had a life changing weekend with an amazing group of women who want to know more about agriculture in South Carolina.”
“Annie's Project was an amazing learning experience.”
“ I have made lifelong friends and mentors through Annie’s Project.”
Recertification Training for Structural Pest Control Companies

Ben Powell, Forestry & Natural Resource Agent

Controlling pests in businesses and homes is a massive industry with thousands of licensed applicators across the state. To maintain their licenses these applicators must receive training covering the biology and control techniques for the full array of pests that they are asked to control, and recent changes in state regulations require them to earn twice as many credits as previously required. To address this need for licensed applicators across the Pee Dee, Ben Powell, the area natural resources agent and pesticide training coordinator for Georgetown County, coordinated training in Conway, SC in February of 2016. This day-long training invited specialists from campus and representatives from the Department of Pesticide Regulation to cover topics such as “preparing for your inspection,” “controlling ants,” “controlling bed bugs,” and “identifying and handling cases of delusional parasitosis (a psychological disorder where clients believe they are infested with parasites when none are actually present).” Seventy-six applicators attended from all over the Pee Dee and remarked how much they appreciated having training locally so that they did not have to travel. They appreciated the content and indicated that they picked up new information that will help them control household pests more effectively.

Sprayer Calibration Classes Held in Georgetown, SC

Ben Powell, Forestry & Natural Resource Agent

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, or even legal action if the pesticide is applied over the maximum label rate. To help pesticide applicators in the lower Pee Dee region, the area natural resources agent, Ben Powell, partnered with the coastal commercial horticulture agent, Zack Snipes, to deliver two sprayer calibration workshops in 2016. 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 of the state for the second class.
Check out Marlboro County 4-H on Facebook today!!

https://www.facebook.com/4Hmarlborocounty/?fref=uf&pnref=story