Livestock and Forages in McCormick
Gary Coleman, our area livestock and forage agent has had a busy year trying to help producers in McCormick County weather the drought storm and control army worms in their pastures and hay fields. Gary has continued to work closely with backyard poultry producers, John de la Howe School, and our local cattlemen association in McCormick County. He is trying to encourage more producers to think outside of traditional farming practices in order to survive the harsh floods, droughts, and insect problems that have occurred over the last four years. While working with producers to improve their forages and pastures, McCormick County Cattlemen have done a great job in selling unproductive animals when cattle prices where at an all time record high and they are showing great interest in buying back quality cattle once weather conditions change. Gary continues to work on a Small Ruminate program that has been helping producers build quality meaty type animals and stronger marketing strategies for their operation. Mr. Coleman still continues to attended several professional development workshops and conferences that is conducted by experts of Livestock, Forages, and Finance. He has made the journey to Manhattan, KS to a Beef Improvement Federation Meeting, attended the Southeast Agriculture Lenders School (SEALS) at the Madren Conference Center in Clemson, SC, and several local workshops. At each of these, Gary is learning new science based information to bring back and share with our county producers to expand their knowledge base of livestock and forages.

McCormick County Resident Julie Newby and her kids with their Jersey Cow “Bessey”
McCormick Forestry Association

The forest landowners of McCormick County were provided educational programs through the McCormick County Forestry Association’s quarterly meetings this year. The topics this year covered a wide variety of forestry and natural resource issues.

At the August meeting Chisolm Beckham, the coordinator of the Southern Pine Beetle (SPB) Cost-Share Program for the SC Forestry Commission, gave a presentation on the Current Status of the Southern Pine Beetle. Chisolm joined the SCFC in 2003 and worked as a Forest Inventory Forester before being promoted to his current position, he also diagnoses and provides management advice for individual tree and forest pest issues.

Did you know your trees have their own police force? In November Tommy Mills, Law Enforcement Chief with the SC Forestry Commission Law Enforcement Division discussed their role in enforcing forest fire and timber transaction crime laws of the State.

During the February meeting John Stillwell, Director of Land Division, with Jenks Inc. Reality presented information on “Preparing Your Timberland/Farm Tract for Sale”. There is much more to properly marketing your property than putting up a sign. He also provided some insight on market activity in the McCormick area.

And finally in May during the joint meeting of the Forestry Association and the McCormick County Cattlemen’s Association Dr. Tom Dobbins the Director of the Clemson Cooperative Extension Service spoke to the combined groups. He provided them with an update on what Extension is doing in South Carolina and what plans for the future may hold.

Woodland Clinic

The 34th annual Woodland Clinic forestry competition and career day for high school students was held April 26th. The Woodland Clinic Inc. board members with the assistance of other public and private organizations with interests in forestry and natural resources worked together again on the event this year. Students from eight schools in the upstate of South Carolina comprised the 19 teams competing in the Clinic this year, which is held at the Oasis Farm at Connie Maxwell Children’s Home in Greenwood. Over forty volunteers came out to participate with this popular event. The competition includes elements on tree measurement, tree identification, tree insects and diseases, a compass and pace event and a fun team lumberjack race. Extension is represented on the Woodland Clinic Board and organized and assisted with pre-event training for teams and in setting up the event the day before and coordinating activities the day of the event. All the students had an enjoyable day of competition and camaraderie.

4-H CSI Camp

McCormick County 4H’ers experienced a new camp this summer with 4-H CSI Camp. During CSI Camp the youth got to bring the science from the television shows to life. The first day the kids got to learn blood splatter analysis, mystery powder analysis, and dig through trash to learn clues about people with trash archeology.

The second day the kids learned how to use GPS units to track evidence, dental analysis, fingerprinting and made lie detectors using Snap Circuit kits.

The highlight of camp was a demonstration of the K-9 Police Dog. The K-9 Officer discussed working with a dog as a partner and set up a demonstration to show the kids how the dog works.
Mixing Bowl Cooking Classes

Mixing Bowl Cooking Classes were created and promoted through a coalition of McCormick County churches. A committee of church representatives met regularly to address the needs of food insecurity in the area. They realized there were multiple issues to be addressed: lack of food/food access for low-income households; lack of food budgeting skills; easier access to less healthy food options than healthy options.

The coalition recruited Rhonda Matthews to serve as the instructor for a series of budget-friendly healthy cooking classes. Every 6-8 weeks the class is held on a Saturday at Good Shepherd Catholic Church. The coalition was responsible for:

- transporting class members to the church
- purchasing supplies for hands-on meal prep by class members
- purchasing bag of groceries for class members to take home
- providing coordination and promotion of the session

For each session, Rhonda developed a healthy menu that is easy to prepare, economical, flexible with ingredients, and leftovers freeze easily. She prepared a recipe pamphlet for each class member to take home. She organized members into teams for meal prep and provide instruction during the hands-on portion of the class.

The goal of each session is for class members to learn easy, healthy options for readily available foods. They are then provided the necessary ingredients to replicate the meal at home. Each session (6 conducted so far) had an attendance of 12-25 people present. Members have reported increased knowledge of consuming more fruits and vegetables; using their food dollar to secure maximum amount of nutrient dense foods; healthy cooking styles; decreasing sugar intake. Members have also specifically requested future classes that address good food choices for chronic diseases (diabetes and cardiovascular disease.) Plans are currently being developed to provide these programs.

Total Outdoors Camp Teaches Youth Shooting Sports and Fishing

Fifteen youth participated in this summer’s 4-H Total Outdoors summer camp. This camp took place in June and focused on shooting sports and fishing. The first day of camp the youth learned how to properly shoot bows and arrows and learned the correct way to cast a fishing rod. The second day the youth got to try out their new casting skills by fishing in a local pond. After spending the morning catching lots of fish, the kids then spent the afternoon learning the techniques to shoot air rifles accurately. The third day, the Upper Savannah Shooters Association let us use their range facilities. While at the range, the kids learned how to shoot .22 rifles and shotguns. For the last day of camp, volunteers from the Savannah Lakes Village Rod and Gun Club took the campers out striper fishing out on the lake. The kids really enjoyed this opportunity, as this was the first time many of them had been out on the lake.
Joseph Barron was one of four South Carolina 4-H’ers who participated at the National 4-H Forestry Invitational. This contest is held annually at Jackson’s Mill State 4-H Camp in Weston, West Virginia. For the four individuals, attending the National Competition was a culmination of months of hard work. The four team members were selected to represent South Carolina during their participation at the 2015 South Carolina 4-H Forestry Clinic. After the clinic, the team members met monthly to practice and further tune their forestry skills in order to participate at the National event.

At the National 4-H Forestry Invitational, the youth participated in tree measurement, identification, topographic map reading, forest stand evaluation, quiz bowl, and a written exam.

The four South Carolina 4-H Forestry Team participants were: Joseph Barron, Duncan Gillis, Joseph Arnold, and Nathan Stalford.