Historic Flood Impacts Farmers

The October 2015 rain event that led to historic flooding in South Carolina occurred at the worst time for many farmers. Cotton, peanuts, and soybeans ready for harvest were left standing in water where flooding occurred, or were so rain soaked by the continual rains that quality of the crops left them unable to be marketed. Lack of a marketable crop put an extremely large financial burden on many farmers who were left unable to repay operating loans. The South Carolina General Assembly passed legislation, named Farm Aid, that made available to eligible farmers financial assistance to be used for paying crop production expenses. Farm Aid eligibility software was developed in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Agriculture and Clemson University and used information on crop sales, acres planted, and harvest records to determine payments made to farmers. Workshops were held across South Carolina that allowed farmers to bring their own records in for application, or one on one meetings were held with farmers for the same purpose. In excess of twenty one on one meetings were held in Newberry, Saluda, Edgefield, and Aiken Counties with several farmers qualifying for much needed assistance.
Newberry Forestry Association - Growing and Increasing Their Reach

The Newberry Forestry Association continues to offer educational programs to their membership. The group meets on the second Tuesday of the second month of the quarter. It provides a great opportunity for land owners and forestry professionals to socialize while also gaining knowledge. The following is list of the topics that were covered over the past year:

- Managing Forest Vegetation with Herbicides
- Quail Management
- Wildlife Food Plots
- Things to Consider before Installing Solar Panels on Your Land

The Newberry Forestry Association is also planning to host their Forestry Focus program in February of 2017. This program is hosted every other year and this will be their 16th program.
Newberry Pasture Field Days

Two grazing and pastureland field days were hosted in Newberry at the neighboring Setzler and Black Grove Angus Farms in February and June of this year. The two farms lend a unique opportunity to compare grazing management and renovation techniques on farms with considerable forage variety differences. Newberry Soil and Water Conservation, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Clemson Cooperative Extension, the South Carolina Grazing Lands Coalition, and the SC Department of Natural Resources partnered to cover topics such as fescue renovation, strip grazing with temporary electric fencing, soil health, hay distribution and storage methods, and winter cover crops for grazing. The rainfall simulator was also demonstrated at the summer field day to show the amount of precipitation that penetrates into the soil under different management conditions. This demonstration is often very enlightening as pasture managers realize the importance of the “take half, leave half” rule when grazing. Participants in both field days were able to witness different management strategies that work for each farm, one which grazes predominantly Bermuda grass and utilizes very little help from heavy equipment, and the other which grazes mostly fescue and cover crop mixes that have been drilled into existing pastures. Approximately 75 people attended both field days.
Dystocia Simulator

Approximately 30 Newberry County cattle producers gathered at Wise’s BBQ in Newberry, SC on September 29th for a demonstration on calving from Cassie Wycoff, Clemson Extension Livestock and Forages Agent. First Cassie discussed the stages of parturition, describing what happens in each stage leading up to birth, and advised the group when it’s best to call a veterinarian or a fellow cattleman with more delivery experience. She then demonstrated various calving situations which might be problematic, using Clemson’s dystocia simulator. The dystocia simulator is a near life-size cow model in which a fifty-pound calf dummy can be manipulated in the mock birth canal to practice delivering various birth presentations. One brave cattle producer volunteered to assist with the delivery demonstration of each of two scenarios: a breech calf (one that is positioned in the birth canal backwards) or a calf that is too large or has its head turned sideways, impeding a smooth natural birth. Producers were allowed to practice using dystocia chains and a calf puller, equipment that might rarely get used, but Clemson Extension recommends keeping on hand in a “birth kit”, along with gloves, lubricant, and something for sanitation. She also recommended that working facilities be checked prior to calving season. “An emergency situation is a bad time to find out the chute isn’t in working order or all the bulbs in the barn are burnt out.”

Mid-Atlantic Secure Milk Supply Program

Hoof and Mouth Disease (HMD, also known as Foot and Mouth Disease) is a constant threat to animal agriculture in South Carolina. If we have an HMD animal disease event, movement of all livestock and livestock products will be restricted. The effects on the dairy industry would be noticed almost immediately with the restrictions on the movement of milk, since just a two day restriction could result in an estimated $2,600 lost revenue to the average dairy farm. The Mid Atlantic Secure Milk Supply (SMS) program has been developed to minimize the operational effects of HMD movement restrictions on dairymen, processors, and allied industry in the Mid-Atlantic States. The SMS initiative has developed a set of biosecurity standards and procedures for dairy farmers, milk haulers, and milk processing plants that would allow them first consideration for permits to move milk during an HMD event. South Carolina has been at the forefront of Mid Atlantic Secure Milk Supply program and became the first state in the Mid-Atlantic group, and possibly the country, to hold trainings. Trainings were targeted to producers and included these topics: recognizing HMD, donning and doffing personal protective equipment, truck washing, and building a farm biosecurity plan. Extension agents and the state veterinarian’s office are currently working with producers to develop farm plans and protocols in order to be certified to move milk in the event of an outbreak. A field day is being planned in Newberry to showcase a pre-certified farm in the summer of 2017.
The South Carolina Dairy Heifer Project began in 1973 as a way to provide youth an opportunity to raise a dairy heifer and learn about the dairy industry. Generous dairy producers from throughout the area provide quality heifers to this program and project members spend the next 18 months caring for, training, and showing a dairy heifer of their very own. These youth gain valuable life skills, a better understanding of agriculture and the dairy industry, and lifelong friendships through participation in this program. The culmination of this project is the bred heifer sale at the South Carolina State Fair each fall. This sale provides dairymen across the state to purchase high quality replacement heifers to enhance their herds. The bred heifer sale in 2016 marked the completion of the projects 42\textsuperscript{nd} year. The 43\textsuperscript{rd} year began with the placement of 36 head of registered dairy heifers, the largest group of heifers in recent history. This project would not be possible and such a huge success if it were not for the support of the South Carolina dairy producers, Clemson Extension, 4-H volunteers, and the dairy industry.

Other educational opportunities and events for Newberry Dairymen and youth interested in dairy

Nutritional Update Meetings
SC Holstein and Jersey Cattle Association Annual Meetings held in Newberry
Southeast Quality Milk Initiative
June Dairy Month Banquet
Dairy Producer and Youth Newsletters
Milk System Checks
Somatic Cell Count testing and monitoring
Milk Quality Meetings
Newberry County 4-H Reaches Record Numbers

Newberry County 4-H offers programs to youth ages 5-19 across the county. Program opportunities include in-school programs, clubs, projects, and camps. Topics cover, but are not limited to, livestock, shooting sports, nutrition and healthy lifestyles, financial literacy, gardening, and wildlife. For this past club year, September 2015 through August 2016, these programs were delivered to more than 1,000 youth in Newberry County, or 12% of youth ages 5-19. The bulk of these youth were reached through in-school programs. We offer a set curriculum per grade level and offer that program district-wide. For the ‘15-‘16 year, 4-H was visible in 7 local schools with programs such as Chick Embryology for 2nd grade, Quest 4-Health in 3rd grade, and Reading Makes Cents in 5th grade, in addition to programs developed upon request by teachers.

In addition to our in-school opportunities, Newberry County 4-H has 6 established clubs allowing youth to try their hand at cooking, shotgun, archery, and learning about the beef industry. Our clubs boast nearly 70 members total and are led by 8 certified and trained volunteers.

We also offer projects, allowing youth to compete on the county, regional, and state level. These youth bring awards and recognition home to our program and our county. Some of these projects include showing livestock, racing box cars, cooking, gardening, and growing food plots. Nearly 20 youth participated in these projects, which require more time than a typical club would.

Newberry County 4-H closed out the 2015-16 year by offering 2 local day camps, 2 regional camps, and 2 state wide camps. Forty youth took advantage of programs like Dairy Boot Camp and Forensics Camp (both local day camps), Camp WILD and 4-H2O (regional camps within the Midlands of South Carolina), and SC 4-H Summer Camp, a week long overnight camp offered to active 4-H members.

Without a doubt, 4-H is making great strides. From the time our current 4-H Agent Alana West arrived in 2010 after a long dry spell with no agent, 4-H membership has risen from 39 youth to 1,033. And we aren’t stopping there. The goal is to reach 20% of youth ages 5-19 by 2020. Want to know how you can participate? Check us out on the web at http://www.clemson.edu/extension/newberry/4h/index.html and like us on Facebook.
Three of Newberry County 4-H’s finest participated in 4-H Legislative Day at the SC State House where they met Rep. Walt McLeod and Sen. Ronnie Cromer, a 4-H Alumni.

Each year, Newberry County 4-H participates in local Christmas Parades. Every year we have entered the Newberry Parade, we have brought home a best entry award.
After an education program, 4-H helped students from Whitmire Community School plant a community garden to be used by community members.

Second graders from around the district look forward to the Spring semester when we bring incubators and eggs to classrooms. With luck, after 21 days the classrooms are full of chirps and chicks.
This group of boys doesn’t realize it here, but they are the first ever 4-H Beef Club in the history of Newberry County, widely known for our dairy industry.
The Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to people of all ages, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital or family status and is an equal opportunity employer.