4-H Member to Attend National 4-H Forestry Invitational

Janine Sutter, 4-H Agent

Pickens County 4-H member, Myles Hutton, participated in the Wildlife Food Plot contest in 2016. The participating youth planted a bag of seed and kept a logbook of how the seed grew, rainfall amounts and wildlife that visited the plot. Hutton did such a good job he was the top scoring senior in South Carolina.

One of his prizes was the opportunity to attend the SC 4-H Forestry Weekend where he was trained on how to measure, scout and evaluate forests. At the end of the weekend, it was announced Hutton made the SC 4-H Forestry Team and will be representing SC in the National 4-H Forestry Invitational in July 2017.

He will spend time between now and then training with the team in preparation of bringing home the gold!

Backyard Barnyard Program

Lindsey Craig, Area Livestock & Forage Agent

In May 2016, Backyard Barnyard: A Hands-on Guide to Small Livestock Farming, was held at Roper Mountain Science Center in Greenville County. The program was a joint effort between upstate area Livestock and Forage Agents Cassie Wycoff and Lindsey Craig. This one-day workshop offered many unique sessions including weed identification, beekeeping, chicken farming, small ruminant farming, hog farming, raising horses, and raising beef cattle.

The class had over 20 participants from multiple counties who practiced some hands-on techniques as well. Some of these activities were ear tagging and giving vaccinations. Most of the participants had small farms themselves or were interested in raising food for their family on limited acreage. The class was a great success with future plans to move this program to other counties with even more topics to be covered.
Commercial Fruit Growers Meeting
S. Cory Tanner, Area Horticulture Agent

Upstate SC is a vibrant fruit-growing region with a number of large and small commercial operations producing a variety of fruit crops. Commercial fruit growers need and want continuing education opportunities to stay current with best management practices and pest management strategies. Additionally, these professionals are required to obtain pesticide license recertification credits to maintain their pesticide applicator licenses as required by law.

To meet this need, a team of Clemson Extension Agents coordinated the 2016 Oconee County Fruit Growers meeting on March 2, 2016. At this meeting, held at the Clemson University Musser Fruit Research Farm in Seneca, Regional Extension Specialists from Clemson University and North Carolina State University presented up-to-date recommendations for peach and apple production. The half-day program included presentations about peach pest management, orchard weed management, fire blight management in apple, and apple rootstock selection, followed by a tour of the apple rootstock trial and training systems. Attendees received resource materials, two SC pesticide license recertification credits, and lunch. Thirty-eight commercial fruit growers and aligned industry professionals attended the program. Most attendees were from Oconee and the surrounding Upstate counties of Anderson, Pickens and Greenville.

Attendees of the Fruit Growers meeting in Seneca

Pickens County 4-H Develops Family Discovery Project
Janine Sutter, 4-H Agent

The desire to learn about our ancestors has always been an interest of most southern families. Today, youth around South Carolina can participate in the SC 4-H Family Discovery Program in order to learn more about their past and keep a record for future generations.

This online program is designed for families to work on together encouraging family bonding. At the same time, it makes the project easy for people with transportation or time issues.

The youth and their families go through 10 lessons - about one per month where they explore the genealogy of their family, jargon their family uses and identifying who is in all of those old pictures!

Feedback from the first set of participants is that the program is fun and easy to use. Hopefully, we can get all of South Carolina building their family strength!

Pickens, Oconee, and Anderson Counties Master Gardener Program
LayLa Burgess, Master Garden Coordinator

The Master Gardener program begins with a 16-week training course covering subjects from soil and plant physiology to vegetable & fruit gardening along with improving the homeowner landscape. Participants then use knowledge acquired to serve the local communities by disseminating valuable information and educating others. Students are required to volunteer 40 hours of their time back to their local community to become fully Certified Clemson Extension Master Gardeners. Fourteen students attended the 2016 training course and 11 students graduated as Certified Clemson Extension Master Gardeners. Additionally, one student from the online training course graduated as a Certified Clemson Extension Master Gardener.

According to IndependentSector.org, volunteer hours are worth $23.56/hour in South Carolina. Our 2016 Master Gardener Class (15 students) will potentially donate 600 hours to South Carolina valued at $14,136 worth of volunteer service to the local community. Completion of certification by four 2015 graduates contributes an additional 160 hours to South Carolina carrying a value of $3,769.60. For the program period July 2015 to June 2016, the 16 newly Certified Clemson Extension Master Gardeners contributed a total of 640 hours valued at $15,078.40 worth of volunteer service.

4-H Member is Livestock Judging Champ
Janine Sutter, 4-H Agent

Coralie Davis, Pickens County 4-H member, won the SC Livestock Judging competition in the junior category.

Coralie was able to beat other competitors with her knowledge of several types of livestock and bring the win home to Pickens! She is a student at the Youth Learning Academy and her club leader is her mother Lindsey Davis.
Produce Safety Alliance Training
Adair Hoover, Area Food Safety Agent

Food safety continues to be an important topic in South Carolina. As an agricultural state we are greatly invested in growing, harvesting and selling our foods. An upcoming resource that will directly benefit Pickens County produce growers is the newly developed Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) training. This training educates produce farmers on the up-to-date safety practices and regulations that will soon be required by the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). In preparation, a group of Clemson Extension Food Safety Agents and Agricultural Agents have teamed up to become trained and certified to teach produce safety to SC farms.

In 2017, PSA trainings will be delivered across the state to produce farmers. Farmers will receive comprehensive information on food safety practices and regulations directly related to growing, harvesting and distributing fresh produce. This will enable them to produce foods that are in compliance with the upcoming FSMA regulations.

Clemson University Joins Stormwater County Partnership
Charly McConnell, Water Resources Agent

Clemson University has joined the Anderson & Pickens Counties Stormwater Partners in order to educate students, faculty/staff, and the community of Clemson on stormwater and its effects to local waterways. Partnerships with different departments, student clubs, professors, and other key employees have been formed to raise stormwater awareness and involvement on campus.

Demonstration projects have also been implemented, one of which includes a tiger paw shaped floating wetland that was installed in the old Seneca River Basin near Jervey Meadows. This wetland is filled with plants that are used to help remove pollution and improve water quality. Other demonstration projects will continue to be implemented throughout campus.
The Upstate Master Naturalist Program graduated its ninth class on November 5, 2015, in the South Carolina Botanical Garden on the campus of Clemson University. During the 12-week course, the class of 20 students visited wonderful natural areas of the upstate including Table Rock State Park, Kings Creek, Burrell’s Ford, Jones Gap State Park, Oconee State Park, Caesar’s Head State Park, Jocassee Gorges, Jumping Off Rock, Bunched Arrowhead Heritage Preserve, Lake Conestee Nature Park, and the Clemson Experimental Forest.

The graduates of the program now have the opportunity to participate in many different types of volunteer activities. These activities might include assisting in a nature outreach program at a park, museum, nature center or school; assisting a scientist collecting bird census data; and collecting data on water quality. Graduates also have the opportunity to continue learning by participating in advanced training and other activities offered by the Upstate Master Naturalist Association (UMNA). All 20 students have joined the UMNA bringing the current association membership to over 100 Upstate Master Naturalists.

The Upstate Master Naturalist Program is one of six host sites offering this Clemson Extension program statewide. The Upstate program is a partnership between the South Carolina State Park Service, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, and the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service offices in Pickens and Greenville counties.

The mission of the South Carolina Master Naturalist Program is to create a corps of citizen volunteers well trained in the fundamentals of natural history, nature interpretation and the interface of humans and nature in order to empower them to contribute their time and talents to responsible, science-based environmental stewardship.
Food Safety in Pickens County
Adair Hoover, Area Food Safety Agent

An important food safety program in SC is the ServSafe Managers Certification. According to the United States Department of Agriculture in 2012 Americans spent more than 43.1% of their food dollars on meals outside of their home. The Clemson Extension Food Safety Team is working hard to help ensure that food service establishments are producing and selling safe, wholesome foods. We do that through training and certifying managers of food service establishments. This year we have offered more than 10 ServSafe manager trainings in the upstate certifying managers from Oconee, Pickens, Greenville and Anderson counties. These classes ensure that food service professionals are up-to-date on current food safety issues and practices, with the expectation that the information will be passed on to their staff who have direct contact with food.

Food safety is important throughout the year but the holiday season offers some extra challenges. Often people spend more time eating at parties, dinners and in other group settings. Pickens County residents are encouraged to take a minute to think about food safety in advance. One way to get quick reminder of some common food safety fouls during holiday dinners is to check out the Food Safety for Reel video: Holidays, Handwashing, and Hygiene. This 3-minute video will remind you of a few ways to be safe when eating in group settings and hopefully give you a little laugh. To watch it go to: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YQ6jGdg-gul&feature=youtu.be

Adopt-A-Stream
Charly McConnell, Water Resources Agent

Citizens in the upstate continue to participate in the Georgia Adopt-A-Stream (AAS) program to monitor local waterways. Volunteers are trained annually by certified trainers in order to monitor their local streams. Participants monitor chemical factors (pH, temperature, conductivity, and dissolved oxygen), bacterial (E. coli) levels, and macroinvertebrate populations. There are currently 33 sample sites that have been adopted by 12 different volunteer organizations throughout the upstate. These volunteer organizations include universities, non-profit organizations, high school science clubs, and more. By testing key factors like dissolved oxygen, pH and bacterial levels, volunteers can gain a better understanding of the health of local waterways.

Bringing Growers and Specialists Together
Chris Talley, Agronomy Agent, Upstate

The upstate area of South Carolina is not known as a large corn and soybean production area of the state, however, there are still a large number of row crop producers who farm full- or part-time. These producers are still in need of valuable research-based information provided through Clemson University to help them maximize their production systems. With the emergence of the new invasive insects like the Sugarcane Aphid, Glyphosate resistant weeds, and diseases like Asiatic Soybean Rust, the need for this type of program is even more critical.

The annual “Upstate Row Crops Production” meeting was held in Anderson County on February 3, 2016. Over 20 local producers from surrounding counties participated in this program. Producers were given information on weed management options for corn and soybeans, insect and disease management in soybeans, and Clemson’s Certified Seed Program and official variety trials (OVTs) conducted across the state.

The 2016 producer meeting had 27 row crop producers in attendance from five upstate counties. All producers indicated that they gained valuable knowledge, which will help them be more profitable in their row crop production. Many of our state extension specialists participate in this meeting where they relay information from their research trials to our upstate producers. Producers can then utilize what they learn in making their farming operations more efficient and profitable.
Clemson University’s Sustainability Week
Charly McConnell, Water Resources Agent

The Anderson and Pickens Counties Stormwater Partners (APCSP) joined forces with Clemson University, Solid Green, the South Carolina Botanical Garden (SCBG), and the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) to host a wide range of events as part of Clemson University’s Sustainability Week.

These events included a Meadow Work Day at the Clemson SCDNR office where volunteers learned about native plants and their importance for erosion control. APCSP hosted two events at the SCBG: a rain barrel and compost bin sale and Carolina Yards Upstate Gardening School. The annual Bin & Barrel Sale sold 66 rain barrels and 31 compost bins. Participants who attended the Upstate Gardening School learned about the Carolina Yards program, soil health, native plants, and composting. Other events that took place during the week included a campus wide litter pick-up hosted by Solid Green, a rain barrel painting by members of the Fine Arts Student Association, and a Sustainability Fair for Clemson University students.

Sustainability Week takes place each October and allows students, faculty/staff, and community members to be involved in a variety of environmental topics and programs.

Woods and Water Forestry & 4-H Camp
Carolyn Dawson, Area Forestry Agent

Area Forestry and 4-H Agents teamed up again this year to offer a multi-county 3-day camp. This year the camp was held at Cedar Falls Park in Fountain Inn. The program covered multiple topics including compass and pacing, stream health, invasive plants, tree identification, entomology, wildfire suppression methods, and native wildlife species. South Carolina Forestry Commission joined in to help teach about wildfires and suppression. The event wrapped up with waterfall fun and a cookout prepared by Regional Lead Agent, Danny Howard. Eight children were enrolled in the camp this year.