Sumter County 4-H Program partnered with the Curriculum Director of Ebenzer and Hillcrest Middle Schools to deliver the “4-H Healthy Lifestyle Program. The goal of the program is to engage youth in activities that encourage healthy eating and active play. In this activity the youth were able to visualize sugar in drinks, practice reading labels, and learn to distinguish between drinks to have daily and those to have occasionally.

Sixth graders at Hillcrest Middle School learn about how much sugar is in a bottle of Coca-Cola.

Keep Sumter Beautiful
Amanda McNulty - Horticulture Agent
Keep Sumter Beautiful
The Keep America
Beautiful local branch is directed by Horticulture Agent Amanda McNulty. As a state affiliate of Palmetto Pride, Sumter Extension applied for and received $8,000. The City of Sumter used their portion to replant areas of Swan Lake Iris Gardens destroyed by the October, 2015, floods. Environmental Science Professor

Austin Jenkins at the USC Sumter campus was able to purchase native plants to add to his campus-wide arboretum.
For eight years, Clemson Extension/Keep Sumter Beautiful has partnered with Manchester State Forest, Palmetto Pride, and Sumter County Public Works to remove debris from that huge expanse of wooded property. Last year, 106 volunteers cleared over 18.95 tons before enjoying a celebratory picnic provided by Manchester’s staff.
4-Her’s “Cooking Like a Chef”

The cooking camp program for youth aged 9 to 14 is designed to expose children to a wide variety of healthy foods and to teach them cooking skills, nutrition information, and safe food handling in order that children gain confidence in food preparation for themselves and their families at home. The camp sessions included the chicken cutting demo, taste workshop, nutritional lessons, kitchen safety procedures, knife handling, etiquette workshop, kitchen basics, and measuring techniques. The camp featured many homemade recipes including a chicken stir fry, sesame chicken, minestrone soup, chicken stock, and brown rice. The camp also featured apple cheese quesadilla, fruit yogurt smoothies, pizza, assorted infused waters, and herb popcorn. The camp in addition covered many other recipes—Manicotti with homemade crepes, Cajun catfish with Corn Relish, and an upscale Collard Greens recipe. Local Grits were made as well as Eggplant Parmesan and a Kale-Macaroni and Cheese dish. The “Cooking Like a Chef” program was designed to teach youth to identify fruits, vegetables, herbs, and healthy foods. The 16 participants increased their knowledge in basic nutrition, MyPlate, and the importance of physical activity. They also learned how to use their hands as a measurement to make one serving.

Beef Cattle Management Workshop
Lee Van Vlake-Area Livestock and Forages Agent-Pee Dee Region

For the past three years the South Carolina cattle industry has seen record prices. In the spring of 2015, cattle producers began to experience a downturn in cattle prices that has lead to losing 50 percent value in feeder calves in the last six months. With the decrease in cattle prices, producers have been searching for ways to improve management and efficiency of their operations. The workshop titled Beef Cattle Improved Management Practices was developed to educate both beginning and veteran farmers and ranchers with in-depth beef cattle production information.

The Livestock and Forages team planned, coordinated, and implemented a one-day Beef Cattle Workshop. The workshop was held at the Sumter County Farm Bureau Office in Sumter, SC, with a total of 21 cattlemen attending from Sumter and surrounding Counties. The workshop contained topics that included cattle outlook, economics of castration, bull selection, preparing for calving season, EPD utilization, and weed control. Through the workshop, producers learn methods to increase operational efficiency and improve profitability.
The Clemson Master Gardener program remains a viable force for good in Sumter. Thanks to generous support from the Friends of Swan Lake, seasoned Master Gardener and former teacher, Robin O’Brien serves as the coordinator for the teaching program for new master gardeners each year. We have a new way of offering that program that has resulted in much higher participation from graduates than we had in past years. Traditionally, Master Gardener training programs are a half day. In Sumter, with the smaller class size that has occurred with the mandated tuition cost of $300, we now hold classes in our kitchen/classroom at our Extension Office. Students, in class sizes ranging from eight to twelve, come at 11:00 in the morning. For two hours they discuss the current weeds, blooming plants, and have lunch and fellowship. At 1:00, we start the formal weekly training program – turfgrass, pesticides, insects, etc. Horticulture Agent Amanda McNulty and other Extension Agents with special expertise conduct the formal class activities.

Part of the Master Gardener training program is to give back volunteer service, 30 hours of service in addition to the classroom activities. In Sumter, where the Master Gardener Association has responsibility for the Chocolate, Sensory and Butterfly Display Gardens at Swan Lake Iris Gardens, we require that the trainees perform all their outdoor volunteer hours in these areas. Robin O’Brien schedules and leads these work activities so that the students continue to build comradery and practice their gardening skills under a watchful and trained eye. Of course, each Display Garden has a dedicated group of experienced Master Gardeners from the Association and a leader who schedule regular work days and plan the seasonal color for each garden. The Sumter County Master Gardeners share their knowledge with the general public with an always highly informative and attractive booth at the Sumter County Fair, taking home best of show ribbons repeatedly! This year they focused on helping the public understand the importance of pollinators – not just the Imported European Honeybee, but also the numerous native bees and wasps and flies that are responsible for every third bite of food we eat.

At the Community Garden on Purdy Street, a dedicated contingent of Master Gardeners grows vegetables in several beds and takes all the harvested foods to the nearby food kitchen. At the Clemson Extension Office, both Master Gardeners in Training and those who have graduated and have years of experience, come and help us with phone calls, walk-in questions, and processing soil samples and plant problem clinic materials.
This summer over 500 FFA members from across the state flocked to the FFA camp in North Myrtle Beach to enjoy the sun, sand and recreational activities the camp has to offer. Campers are afforded the opportunity to become closer to members from their own chapter as well as forming relationships with other members from across the state.

Campers participated in a variety of traditional camp activities including beach trips, kayaking, low ropes, high ropes, paintball, pool, athletics, cardboard project, and color war. It was a pleasure to watch how much the student enjoyed themselves during the weeks and to see the take-away from their experiences at camp.

The highlight of many campers’ week was completing the high ropes course. To do so they must overcome fears of heights, falling and failure. They also learned the importance of being an encourager to others who are facing difficult tasks. Another camp favorite is paintball; having to work with unfamiliar people to create, communicate, execute, and adjust a plan at a moment’s notice provides a real-world opportunity to practice the leadership skills FFA promotes in its members.
October 3, 2015, brought a thousand year flood to South Carolina. Many of the State’s best agriculture lands received over twenty-five inches of rain 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. Sumter and Clarendon were among the hardest hit counties. Cotton and peanuts, our high revenue cash crops, were devastated. Cotton seeds, which normally are sold and pay for ginning costs, actually sprouted in the bolls as the ruined plants stood in the fields and were rendered worthless. Roads and bridges on farms, crucial for moving heavy equipment from field to field, were destroyed. The ginning facilities were without revenue and did not even qualify for relief under the Farm Aid Bill.

The South Carolina Department of Agriculture, Clemson Extension Service, and the Farm Bureau Agency mobilized support and as a result on 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 in how to fill out application forms to ensure they each received proper funding. Scott Mickey, Extension Associate with special responsibilities in farm management, worked with the SC Department of Agriculture to develop protocols for farmers to use in determining their eligibility for payments from the Farm Aid Bill. Mickey made presentations and gave more detailed information at many of the twenty-one meetings which Extension held for farmers in the affected areas.

In Sumter County alone, an Extension-sponsored educational seminar was attended by over thirty people. Extension Agronomy Agent David Dewitt met with over forty farmers individually to assist them in filing out their applications. Sumter county farmers received $1,064,781 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. If a farmer lost $500,000, he was eligible for the maximum payment of $100,000. Numerous farms had losses well over that half-million dollar amount. The funds farmers received from the Farm Aid Bill could only be used for operating expenses and allowed producers to plant and hope for a good crop in 2016.
Most people are aware of threatened endangered species, many of which are animals such as the red-cockaded woodpecker or sea turtles. Although the longleaf pine tree itself is not a threatened species, the longleaf pine ecosystem is. This is an ecosystem defined by the incredible diversity of species found living within it.

Longleaf pine was once the most extensive forest type in North America. It is estimated that it covered approximately 90 million acres and spanned from the Gulf of Mexico into Virginia. Today, less than 3.4 percent of the original longleaf pine forests exist. As a result, there have been numerous programs developed to increase awareness of longleaf pine and the proper management methods necessary to restore that ecosystem.

At a one-day Longleaf Pine Opportunities and Management Workshop for private landowners and forestry professionals was held in Camden, SC. This was a partnership between USDA, Kershaw County Conservation District, Clemson Extension, SC Forestry Commission, the Longleaf Alliance, Tree Farm, and Society of American Foresters. Ryan Bean, the Forestry and Natural Resources Extension Agent in Sumter County, spoke to more than 50 attendees on the topic of “Fire Ecology and Wildlife”. Other topics included “Natural History,” “Establishing Longleaf Pine,” and “Financial Assistance Programs”. A field tour followed the workshop demonstrating planting, herbicide use, and prescribed fire. Through continued education and implementation of practices the longleaf pine ecosystem can be restored!
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Sumter County 4-H Programs

Terri B Sumpter—Sumter County 4-H Agent

4-H is the nation’s largest youth development organization. In 2015, the Sumter County 4-H program reached approximately 10,000 youth through camps, afterschool programs, school enrichments programs, career fairs, 4-H clubs and individual study. The Sumter County 4-H program had approximately 632 4-H members in community, in-school and project clubs.

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4-H Canning Class
4-H Scrapbooking Workshop
4-H Sewing Class
4-H Creative Craft Class
4-H Rocketry Workshop
4-H Nutrition Class