Collins Lee joined the Williamsburg Co. Extension office in January 2016 as the Nutrition Educator Assistant for the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). Collins teaches practical, hands-on nutrition education to families with limited financial resources. EFNEP uses a research-based curriculum called Eating Smart, Being Active for adults and Choose Health: Food, Fun and Fitness for youth. The information is based on the USDA’s Dietary Guidelines and the food icon called MyPlate. EFNEP strives to increase physical activity and improve the overall health of its participants.

Sprayer Calibration Classes Held in Georgetown, SC

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.
Williamsburg 4H Junior Leadership 2016

Williamsburg County 4-H and the Williamsburg Hometown Chamber combined again to put on another successful year of Junior Leadership Williamsburg. This leadership program is designed for high school juniors in Williamsburg County to learn more about the county they live in, to develop leadership skills, and become engaged in civic activities and projects. These junior leaders had a great time participating in the six-month program. The student even put on a 5K Race to raise money for their trip to Washington D.C. The program concluded with the trip to Washington, D.C. where the students had a great time learning about our nation’s capital.

4H Host Summer Day Camp

Summer is always an exciting time and the 4-Hers in Williamsburg County got to experience a fun day camp this summer. The camp was 3 days and each day explored a different topic. Agriculture, Food and Nutrition, and Arts and Crafts were the topics the students got to learn about this summer. The students also had a great time being able to meet other students from around the County and learn more about 4-H.

Farm Aid Education

Last year’s rains resulted in millions of dollars in losses for the state’s agriculture community. The damage also could be felt in Florence and Williamsburg Counties.

Farm Aid was a state-organized program worth $40 million dollars that was distributed to farmers throughout the state. Anyone could apply who could show they lost at least 40% of their predicted income as well as prove their intention to continue farming. Individuals could apply for up to $100,000 or 20% of their lost income - whichever came first.

Clemson Extension Service, along with S.C. Department of Agriculture & S.C. State University Extension, hosted training sessions to help flood-affected farmers with the S.C. Farm Aid application process. Topics discussed included:

• Farm Aid Eligibility Rules & Application Guidelines
• Required documentation
• Calculating losses
• Accessing & filling out the application (paper and Online)
• FAQs and resources

Through the education provided during the training sessions more than $35 million in relief checks from the South Carolina Farm Aid grant program were delivered to farmers who were approved for crop assistance after last October’s flooding. Of the more than 1,200 farmers who received assistance, 88 applicants received the maximum award of $100,000, while the average award was $28,364 according to SCDA officials.
Fire ants are a statewide problem that affects everyone in some manner. Livestock producers in our state are impacted in multiple ways from the affect ants have on their production. Fire ants can affect feed, forages, animals, electrical equipment, hay, hay equipment, and more. For livestock producers this damage can result in an economic loss to their operation. Although there is no method to eradicate fire ants, there are steps producers can take to help manage them. There are many products on the market to help manage fire ants, livestock producers must ensure that the products they use have a grazing label and they must follow the guideline of the label to provide a safe environment for the livestock. In order to demonstrate how the apply the fire ant bait properly and to discuss some options producers have when choosing the fire ant bait, a demonstration plot was treated for fire ant management in a cattle pasture in Williamsburg county. Working with the producer, fire ant bait was applied mid September on approximately 15 acres. The bait was applied using a calibrated Herd spreader and in the morning while the ants were foraging. This area had an extensive fire ant problem and with only one application made, there was about a 65-75% control observed.

Forestry for the Farm

Having worked with many landowners and farmers across the Pee Dee and beyond, the area natural resources agent, Ben Powell, has seen too many woodland owners do not realize the full potential of their private forests. All too often the uncultivated woodlands are considered an afterthought and are not actively managed to the degree that the farm or homestead are managed. This is unfortunate because private woodlands can be important for generating income, providing recreation, and enhancing the value and natural beauty of the property. To address this problem, Ben coordinated the first ever “Forestry for the Farm” training for South Carolina woodland owners. A partnership with Clemson Extension’s Natural Resources team, the New and Beginning Farmer program, the SC Forestry Commission, the SC Forestry Association, and the Center for Heirs Property, the Forestry for the Farm program was an intensive one day introduction to the basics of forest management. The goal of the program was to change landowner mindsets so that they will begin actively managing their woodlands. The primary objective of the training was to connect forest landowners with the information and resources they need to develop and implement a forest management plan. The class was full with 50 attendees responsible for managing over 30,000 acres of forestland. All participants indicated that they learned new information that they will begin using on their woodlands. The program was so successful that the Extension Natural Resources team is using it as a template for developing a broader statewide training program for private woodland owners.
The Clemson Extension Home & Garden Information Center (HGIC) delivers information to the residents of South Carolina via a toll-free telephone number (1-888-656-9988 FREE) through an interactive voice response (IVR) system and a web site. Nearly 600 recorded messages on landscaping, gardening, plant health, household pests, food safety & preservation, and nutrition, physical activity & health are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Information Specialists are available to speak with consumers to answer questions not covered by the recorded messages.

The Home & Garden Information Center is designed to complement Clemson’s network of professionals and volunteers by answering the routine types of calls and thereby free agents to deal with commercial agriculture/horticulture questions and conduct proactive programming to larger audiences.

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