

**COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE**  
**WEEKLY UPDATE**  
**Week Ending 4/18/08**

1. Items for Approval – None this week.
2. Items for Discussion – None this week.
3. Summary of County Visits by Dr. Jon Ort

DATE	COUNTY VISITED	PURPOSE
4/18/08	Orange County	Alice Pettitt Retirement Reception

4. Items for Information

- ✚ You can view the video of Rhonda Sherman’s interview on composting with NBC 17 News by clicking on the following link: <http://blogs.wncn.info/green/2008/04/15/go-green-with-worms/>
- ✚ A client was desperate for assistance with drug costs. She was disabled and too young for Medicare. A single monthly shot cost \$1,407 and she had other medications as well. She called NC Cooperative Extension in Tyrrell County and worked with our Family and Consumer Sciences Agent to find assistance through pharmaceutical companies. As a result, the client is now receiving drugs directly through the pharmaceutical company and is saving \$16,884 on a single drug alone. Without this assistance, she could not have afforded her medications and her medical condition would have declined rapidly.
- ✚ Tobacco growers depend on plants grown in the greenhouse for tobacco production. A Martin County grower called NC Cooperative Extension to have our Extension Agent look at a problem in his tobacco greenhouse. He had plants that were turning yellow and not growing properly. The agent determined that he had pythium and recommended that he apply a fungicide to stop the disease from spreading. By applying a fungicide and not purchasing plants, the grower was able to save about \$15,000. Another Martin County tobacco greenhouse grower had one waterbed out of four where the plants were yellow and not growing. Water samples were taken and sent to the NC Department of Agriculture lab. The results showed that the pH in the waterbed with the yellow plants was very low. Corrective action was taken to raise the pH and the grower’s plants recovered. The grower saved about \$12,000 by not having to purchase plants.
- ✚ In Avery County, the adult obesity rate is 60-65% of all adults. NC Cooperative Extension in Avery County has helped 164 people lose 774 pounds in the first 13 weeks of the Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less Program. One participant has been able to quit taking their acid reflux medication due to losing 15 pounds, another is talking with their doctor about eliminating their high blood pressure medicine because they have lost 15 pounds. Three individuals have lost over 20 pounds, and all are looking forward to their annual check-ups.
- ✚ Feeder cattle producers with less than 50,000 pound load lots need assistance with marketing. NC Cooperative Extension coordinated the Wilkes Area Stocker Sale to address this problem. 39 Consignors from 10 counties increased their income by \$25,000. Impacts were magnified since this sale had a price setting trend on other feeder cattle. The sale is used as a demonstration to educate producers on mainstream industry specifications for feeder cattle. Networking opportunities with the local livestock market, NC Cattlemen's Association and NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services were enhanced.

- ❏ The Town of Wake Forest, NC, as many towns of its size, is affected by new Federal Water Quality protection regulations called 'Phase II'. Among other things, the Phase II rules mandate that town staff receive training and education on reducing Illicit discharges and instituting improved good housekeeping measures that are effective in pollution reduction. In response, NC Cooperative Extension in Wake County visited the town's facilities, discussed needs with town officials, identified problem areas, then designed and delivered a customized training workshop for town employees. 49 Staff participated in the 2 hour training session. During the training, over 35 specific environmental problems were identified. While it is too soon to enumerate all the outcomes of the training, town managers have indicated that the training went beyond their expectations and that if they had to contract with a private consultant, the training would have cost over \$100 per person.
- ❏ The Sampson County Coalition for Healthy Children brings together organizations that are addressing the issues of childhood obesity and health. A special project of the group was to sponsor an "Eating Smart, Moving More" Contest. Third-grade classes were given the opportunity to construct a display board promoting the concepts of healthy eating and/or physical activity. These concepts fit into the Healthful Living Standard Course of Study for Third Grade. Participating classes received a trip to a local park for "Super Fun Day"- an exciting day of a variety of fun physical activities and healthy foods. A Farmer's Market gave students an opportunity to taste some new fruits, and a healthy lunch was served. Appearances by Tony the Tiger and Flex the Health Hound added to the festivities. Over 350 students, as well as teachers, Coalition members, and volunteers participated in the "Eat Smart, Move More" Super Fun Day. Following Super Fun Day, the display boards were displayed in area businesses to extend the "Eat Smart, Move More" message to the public. The "Be Active NC" study suggests that each overweight child will likely incur \$200,000 in medical expenses. If the 300 students involved in the "Eating Smart, Moving More" contest use the knowledge gained to maintain a moderate weight, this could result in a \$60,000,000 savings in medical expenses over their lifetime.
- ❏ Childhood obesity and lack of physical exercise is a problem in Halifax County. In an effort to address this problem, nearly 150 4 and 5 year olds participated in a Nutrition Camp through a partnership with NC Cooperative Extension and the Halifax County Health Department. They attended sessions on healthy eating habits, good personal hygiene, exercise, and where does food come from. Through the written evaluation, 85% of the children were able to tell what foods they should eat and where they came from as well as stating the importance of daily exercise.
- ❏ As water restrictions continue, different methods of gardening are necessary. Raised beds are efficient and give a large return on their investment. NC Cooperative Extension in Burke County worked with 23 residents to teach them how to construct a raised bed and how to use the bed wisely. Participants received materials and a cost sheet as well as planting guides as they participated in the construction of a 4x12 foot raised bed. The bed can be watered with a hose or drip irrigation, which is within water restriction guidelines for the county.

5. Routine Items – None this week.