

**COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE**  
**WEEKLY UPDATE**  
**Week Ending 5/9/08**

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
5/3/08	Tyrrell County	4-H Dock of the Bay Event
5/4/08	Wake County	Gala in the Garden
5/7/08	Duplin County	Foundation-Sponsored Retiree Luncheon
5/9/08	Granville County	BioFuels Center Grand Opening

4. Items for Information

- Both farmers and homeowners often find themselves with outdated or unwanted pesticides. Robeson County Cooperative Extension coordinated with the NC Department of Agriculture, Pesticides Division, to offer a pesticide collection day in March. This effort eliminated the cost to individuals for disposing of hazardous materials, and prevented unwanted pesticides from being placed in the county landfill or disposed of illegally. The Robeson County Fair donated their facilities as a collection site. A total of 229 containers weighing 3,177 pounds were collected, and shipped for proper disposal. Since this program provides a tremendous service and saves individuals and the county over \$150,000 annually, it will continue to be offered on a semi-annual basis. The same collection day was held in Nash County in April, collecting 617 containers weighing 5,509 pounds.
- Small farmers, many of them semi-retired or on a fixed income, rely on the Robeson County Farmers Market as a convenient and affordable location to sell their products. This market is coordinated by NC Cooperative Extension in Robeson County on county-owned property, and operates on Wednesday and Saturday mornings. Farms with limited labor can sell their produce within a few hours, and return to their farms to complete needed tasks. During 2007, 23 different vendors sold a total of 361 market days, generating approximately \$162,000 in additional income for their farm operations. Approximately 12,200 customer visits provided opportunity to purchase fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables. Vendor numbers were less than the previous year due to the drought, but efforts are being made to recruit more vendors and to better publicize the market.
- Because of the language barrier, many migrant youth are considered at-risk of not graduating and having low test scores. One of the ways that the 4-H Migrant Education Program (MEP) deals with this problem is by enrolling migrant school aged youth in the 4-H Afterschool program. In collaboration with North Carolina Cooperative Extension-Ashe County Center, the 4-H Migrant Education Program, the Ashe County School system and the 4-H Afterschool Program, migrant youth improved NCEOG scores over a period of time. One of the most impressive scores was from Lizbeth Silva, who excels in mathematics. Lizbeth did well on her 2007-2008 school year EOG scores, as a result of one-on-one tutoring. Through consistent tutoring by the MEP and Afterschool staff, Lizbeth's Reading NCEOG scores increased by two points and her Math NCEOG scores increased by 97 points.

- ❏ Many small farmers lack computer knowledge to coordinate documents, keep records, and manage their farm, which can help increase their production and income. In order to address this problem, The North Carolina A&T Cooperative Extension Program, North Carolina Cooperative Extension 's Robeson County Center, and Robeson Community College Continuing Education Program organized two five-week computer classes through the (FACT) Farmers Adopted Computer Training Project. The curriculum for the training included computer literacy and keyboarding. Ten farmers graduated from the courses and increased their knowledge of computer usage and the World Wide Web. By completing the courses, these farmers will be more competitive in the marketplace through the use of technological innovations. Due to this success, these classes will continue to be offered in the future.
- ❏ An individual visited NC Cooperative Extension, Robeson County Center seeking assistance with an insect problem in his home. He stated that three different pest control companies had treated his home, and that he sprayed insecticides in the home and on the bed daily, costing him over \$3,000. The problem was still so bad he was considering selling his home. Sensing that something was wrong, the County Extension Director began working to determine the problem. Several samples were sent to the Plant Disease and Insect Clinic at NCSU. None contained any evidence of insects that affect humans. Gaining their confidence by exhibiting a concern for their well being, the Extension Director convinced this client that there was no insect problem and to change their laundry detergent and stop spraying insecticides. The individual made a special trip to the Extension Center three days later to express his appreciation for solving the problem.
- ❏ Extension worked with a Vance County resident who is employed with the City of Raleigh. After retirement, he plans to grow asparagus commercially to sell by direct marketing. One of his concerns was obtaining a harvest aid to eliminate walking and stooping to harvest asparagus. The Extension Agent showed him pictures of how to build a harvest aid using existing farm equipment, saving this client several thousand dollars by not purchasing a new harvest aid.

5. Routine Items – None this week.