

**COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
WEEKLY UPDATE
Week Ending 6/20/08**

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
	None this week.	

4. Items for Information

- ✚ Five years ago, NC Cooperative Extension, Caldwell County Center was approached by the County Manager to oversee the implementation of a Community Block Grant of \$1.5 million for a five-year period. Extension networked with the Western Piedmont Council of Government and Natural Resources Conservation Service in the application of these funds in the Harpertown community of Caldwell County. The land clearance project alone was valued at 120,000. Also, qualifying homes in this African/American community were selected to receive funds to rehabilitate them. Cooperative Extension has played a lead role in setting up and conducting community meetings and in the establishment of a Community Development Center to help start businesses in the area. Volunteers continued to spray and mow for control of weeds and kudzu, a value to the community of \$1,000.
- ✚ In Jones County, many senior citizens were convinced to sign up for Medicare Advantage Plans. These plans are not suitable for Eastern North Carolina, because a majority of the health professionals in the area are not in their network. In May, one of our Medicare Beneficiaries realized that his Medicare Part D had been canceled. Upon further investigation, he had been placed in a Medicare Advantage Plan, which nullified his Medicare Parts A, B and D. The local pharmacist called our Family and Consumer Sciences Agent for help. With the help of NC Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program, the client was switched back to his original Medicare and placed back on his Prescription Drug Plan retroactive to January. This resulted in a savings for this low-income client of \$1,300.
- ✚ While visiting with a designer of a new kiln who is also a lumber manufacturer, our Extension Specialist made several suggestions to improve his operation. He acted upon these recommendations. Several months later, a potential buyer visited the inventor. Not only did he buy the kiln, but he copied the recommendations Extension had made. The client reported it cost him \$78,000 to make the recommended changes, which were paid back in two months through increased lumber grade recovery. This represents a \$468,000 annual increase in cash flow.
- ✚ U.S. soldiers serving in the Middle East may soon thank North Carolina Cooperative Extension in Pasquotank County for cooler collars. Pasquotank County's Extension and Community Association (ECA) teamed up to hand-sew 100 reusable neckbands that hold moisture-retaining crystals. When soaked in cool water and worn around the neck, the neckbands cool the wearer. Service members receive theirs for free, but similar models retail for up to \$12.99. In addition to the 100 collars bound for the Middle East, an additional 30 are destined for the wildfire fighters in Tyrell County. For more than 80 years, the NC ECA has worked to strengthen families and improve the quality of life within our communities. In Pasquotank County, ECA members range in age from 14 to 90 years.

- ✚ Because of the emphasis placed on Math and English in public schools, many Stanly County students lack opportunities to participate in hands-on learning experiences in Science. To address the issue, Stanly County 4-H offered embryology to second grade classrooms in Stanly County. 414 Students participated in the 4-H Embryology Program, where they learned about the growth and development of quail. As a result of the program: 100% of teachers reported an increase in knowledge regarding understanding the basic needs of developing embryos and chicks, as well as an increase in understanding the basic parts and functions of an egg and a chick. Due to their participation in the embryology program, 98% of teachers responded that youth gained teamwork skills and improved the science skill of observation.
- ✚ Wheat production in Craven County more than doubled its average production acreage (12,000 acres) due to incredible price increases for this commodity. Craven County wheat production increased over 20 bushels per acre to add an additional \$730,000 in farm sales with the help of North Carolina Cooperative Extension. Producers that have never grown wheat or have not grown wheat in over twenty years were struggling to examine current production technology. Varietal selection was also an issue due to the low seed supply. North Carolina Cooperative Extension dedicated newsletters and held field demonstrations for wheat management. Extension also worked on-site to assist producers and agricultural suppliers with tissue testing for proper fertilization, evaluation of plant populations for split-applications of nitrogen, and evaluation of marginal pest situations. As a result of this effort and good weather, the average yield of 63 bushels per acre is 20 bushels per acre above normal.
- ✚ Some of the comments provided by class participants in the 12-week Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less weight management program taught in Union County included "this program helped me to start reading more labels, adding fruits/veggies, cooking at home at least 5 nights, working out 5-6 days a week". A total of 39 individuals attended at least six or more of the twelve class sessions, losing an average of seven pounds each. The biggest loser lost 18 pounds and exceeded the goal she had set for herself for the program. Reduction in body weight is related to a reduction of many chronic diseases. Ultimately this will result in reduced health care costs and a better quality of life.

5. Routine Items – None this week.