

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
WEEKLY UPDATE
Week Ending 6/27/08

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

- ✚ The Division of Water Quality regulates animal waste management procedures such as calculating the uniform application of wastewater to increase the efficiency of nutrients for crop production. Producers are able to perform this procedure on their own, but first they need proper training. North Carolina Cooperative Extension in Greene County hosted a hands-on field day where 32 participants learned how to irrigate waste uniformly by physically getting involved in the collection and calculation of the data received. Specialists from NC State University and North Carolina Department of Agriculture demonstrated how to effectively collect the data needed and how to use the results relative to the needs of the operators. As a result of this program, 68% reported they would make adjustments to their systems to improve uniformity. Additionally, the 32 participants will save \$16,000 by performing the procedures themselves and \$32,000 in fines because they remained compliant with regulations.
- ✚ Soaring energy prices have consumers scrambling to find low-cost, renewable alternative energy sources. Fully utilized in home settings, solar energy is an alternative that can reduce consumer's home energy consumption by 50% as well as reduce carbon emissions globally. Eastern North Carolina's climate provides consumers 225-230 days of sunshine annually, making solar power a viable alternative energy source. Recognizing the opportunity for alternative energy education, North Carolina Cooperative Extension in Onslow County received a grant in the form of a donation of 30 solar panels from Arizona State University's Photovoltaic Testing Lab (PTL) worth an estimated \$24,000. Once installed at the Onslow County Farmers Market Building, these panels will run lights and ceiling fans and provide Onslow County Cooperative Extension agents a hands-on solar energy demonstration site. Educational programming will include hands-on demonstrations of the efficiency of solar energy as well as providing guidelines and recommendations on the installation and use in home settings.
- ✚ Obesity rates of children have doubled over the last decade. Only 1 in 5 children eat the daily recommended amount of fruits and vegetables. North Carolina Cooperative Extension in Pitt County conducted a seven-lesson food safety and nutrition program to 60 indigent Pitt County schoolchildren. Based on parental response, 81% reported their children are eating more fruits and vegetables and drinking fewer soft drinks. Sixty-nine percent also reported their children played outside more and 62% reported their children were reading nutrition food labels.
- ✚ Waste management and recycling are areas of major interest and concern to the Caldwell County Commissioners. North Carolina Cooperative Extension in Caldwell County continued to lead the county's recycling educational programs. Reduction realized during the first six months of 2008 included: mixed paper (1,777.5 tons); cardboard (2,050 tons); and aluminum cans (52.7 tons). Project Hero resulted in 5,775 gallons of used motor oil being recycled.

- ✚ It is important for students to have unique and hands-on learning experiences as a part of their public school experience. This year, 25 Alexander County Public School classrooms received supplies, eggs and curriculum to carry out the 4-H Embryology Program. Over 454 students learned about embryonic development and the responsibility of taking care of the eggs. Over 92% of teachers strongly agreed that the program was applicable to their curriculum. Sixty-two percent (62%) of students showed an increase in their science grades and showed an 82% increase in knowledge in the pre/post tests. The average classroom hatch rate for 2008 was 92%, which was the best in 24 years of conducting this program.

- ✚ Children are encouraged to learn more about their environment through exploration. However, not being able to distinguish between a poisonous and non-poisonous backyard plant or animal can prove fatal for a child. North Carolina Cooperative Extension in Chowan County partnered with the local school health program to train more than 100 grammar school students on identification and characteristics of common backyard plant and animal hazards. As a result, the children decreased their chance of accidental poisoning and the school received recognition as *Safe Kids* certified through the NC Department of Insurance.

- ✚ According to the NC Department of Public Instruction, fewer than half of high school students polled understood how to budget. This is a real concern because the largest age group filing for bankruptcy is currently under 25, and research shows that a big preventer of bankruptcy is knowing how to budget. To help with this problem, NC Cooperative Extension in Stanly County held *The Juggling Act*, which educated children about the financial responsibilities of life, and especially how variables like age, education, and children can affect finances. 12 Middle school aged children learned to create and balance their budgets based on different life situations and hurdles. Based on pre/post tests, all gained a better understanding of how to create a budget, the importance of having a budget no matter how much money you make, and how their level of education will greatly affect their future financial well-being.

5. Routine Items – None this week.