

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
WEEKLY UPDATE
Week Ending 7/11/08

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
7/11/08	Guilford County	NC Association of County Agricultural Agents State Meeting

4. Items for Information

- ✚ In Henderson County, the North Carolina Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund awarded \$300,000 in grant funds to build an apple storage facility and \$22,500 in grant funds from a NCDA Public and Private Enterprise Grant to pay for a farmland preservation study. Henderson County Government agreed to provide \$40,000 in matching funds for these projects.
- ✚ Because of the demand for locally grown products, North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Orange County Center continues to seek new ways to support local producers. A partnership has been formed with Alamance, Chatham and Durham Counties as well as Weaver Street Market and Whole Foods to develop the "Piedmont Regional Shared Use Food Processing and Value Added Center". A location and facility has been identified in Orange County off Interstate 85. This facility will be used by surrounding farmers and those participating in the food business to add value to their product. The North Carolina Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund awarded \$132,000 for this project.
- ✚ The North Carolina Legislature was considering ending recurring funding for the Juvenile Crime Prevention Program (JCPP) in North Carolina. Cooperative Extension in Camden County receives Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) grant monies, and provides programs through 4-H. Two Camden County youth who participated in these affected programs developed a powerful slide show. The program was presented at a Program Manager’s forum, which had over 200 participants, one of which was Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Secretary George Sweat. The presentation generated a standing ovation by all present and a huge “pat on the back” from Secretary Sweat. As a result, the video has been seen by over 100 other JCPC affiliates, and was a determining factor in getting recurring funds for fiscal year 2008-2009. Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) funds provide valuable services for youth throughout North Carolina.
- ✚ The poultry industry in the West Central District of North Carolina has experienced extensive growth. In the last six months, 113 new poultry houses have been built in the region. Lending agencies financing this \$20,000,000 expansion realize the importance of nutrient management. North Carolina Cooperative Extension in Iredell, Wilkes and Alexander Counties assisted 29 poultry growers in the first six months of 2008 by preparing Waste Utilization Plans for new or expanded poultry operations as required by local lending institutions. Waste Utilization Plans prepared by Extension provided the growers with comprehensive plans for applying their litter at agronomic rates and following all environmental regulations. Growers with limited available cropland were able to identify potential sources of income by finding individuals to purchase the litter in place of commercial fertilizer.

- ❏ Many Alexander County families with limited resources lack the knowledge of tax incentives for which they may qualify. Cooperative Extension in partnership with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Alexander International Center (AIC) sponsored the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. As a result of this partnership, six IRS trained volunteers provided free tax assistance to 32 low-income, elderly, and non-English speaking families, saving these taxpayers an estimated \$3,200 in tax preparation fees. It enabled qualifying families to receive \$6,475 in Earned Income Tax Credit, \$3,000 in Child Care Tax Credit and refunds of nearly \$25,000. Clients visiting the site also received Extension information on basic money management and smart tips for use of refunds and economic stimulus payments.
- ❏ With ongoing drought, forage availability continues to be a problem for livestock producers. Cool season grasses become dormant, and fail to provide adequate forage when producers need it most. North Carolina Cooperative Extension in Burke County worked with producers to provide education on alternative forages, and best management practices for pasture management. Twelve producers established perennial warm season grass pastures, and thirteen others used warm season annuals to fill a gap in their forage program. These warm season grass pastures have saved producers an average of \$1,350 in feed costs alone, for a total savings of \$33,750. There will be additional value in savings as cool season grass pasture vitality has been enhanced and its duration extended due to reduced grazing pressure during this long dry period.
- ❏ Fifty-five 6-7th grade students in Catawba County completed LifeSkills II Program during after-school. Students in this program were referred by school staff and identified as at-risk for future substance use and/or school suspension. One program component involved homework assistance and tutoring. At the beginning of the program, students reported a C-average grade in classes. Following the 12-week program, students reported a B-average. According to teacher surveys, prior to the program 10 percent of the participating students were "average" students. After the program, 80 percent of the students were rated as average students based on academic performance. An increased number of students completed homework assignments, behaved appropriately in class, and demonstrated an improved ability to resist negative peer pressure. LifeSkills was funded by grant of \$20,000 from the Governor's Crime Commission.
- ❏ Medicare beneficiaries are faced with a variety of mailings. Some of this paperwork is important and some is junk. In Perquimans County, one individual on Medicare was distraught over some confusing Medicare and Medicaid correspondence. Phone calls to other agencies led nowhere. Finally, our Extension Agent was able to ask the right questions, identify the problems, contact the correct departments and follow up with the proper enrollment procedures. By intervening in this situation, Extension was able to save the beneficiary over \$8,000 in yearly prescription drug costs and "red flag" a statewide computer glitch.
- ❏ Research shows that youth delinquency rates are most prevalent between the hours of 3 p.m. and 6 p.m., when youth are home alone and unsupervised. To assist in solving this problem, North Carolina Cooperative Extension in Currituck County offers a Support Our Student program in both middle schools, which reached 120 students this school year. Students receive assistance with homework and are taught life skills they may not get at home or in school. At the end of the year, a parent survey indicated that 100% of parents agreed that this program helped their child gain self confidence, and 70% agreed that this program helped improve their child's grades.

Over 800 students in the Ashe County Schools are below grade level in reading, math, and/or writing. These students, along with all English Language Learners, are eligible for the 21st Century Community Learning Center 4-H Teach-Reach Academic Challenges (TRAC) after school program. The TRAC program is offered in partnership with Ashe County Schools, and provides academic enrichment, tutoring with a certified teacher, life skills, a daily snack, recreational activities, and transportation. TRAC is offered in partnership with the Ashe County Schools. In 2007-2008, a total of 396 students were enrolled in TRAC, with 243 attending thirty days or more. When parents were surveyed, 96% felt their child had improved their academic performance and reading, writing, and math skills because of the 21stCCLC 4-H TRAC program. Of 66 teachers surveyed, they indicated that the TRAC students showed the greatest improvement in turning in their homework, participating in class, and academic performance.

5. Routine Items – None this week.