



**NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION  
WEEKLY UPDATE  
Week Ending 8/8/08**

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
8/5/08 – 8/7/08	Haywood County	Family and Consumer Sciences Agents State Meeting

4. Items for Information

- Burley tobacco has long been a mainstay to the economy of Yancey County; however, due to decreased burley prices and the increased cost of production since the tobacco buyout in 2004, there has been a transition away from monoculture production to a more diverse production system. NC Cooperative Extension has made a conscientious effort to assist producers with this transition by providing education and technical support in the production of alternative crops. One of the largest areas of transition has been to nursery production, both field grown and greenhouse. One such example is the largest burley producer in 2004, growing over 60 acres of tobacco, through Cooperative Extension’s support and assistance, has now transitioned totally to a retail greenhouse nursery operation. This family operation has now operates three production greenhouses and a retail greenhouse and have increased their gross family income from approximately \$200,000 in 2004 to over \$400,000 in 2007.
- Oak Moon Creamery is a family run goat dairy and creamery in the heart of Mitchell County. Over the past 15 years, the owners have worked steadily to build up their breeding lines and develop the farm infrastructure. In early 2008, they were awarded an AgOptions grant made available through a partnership with the NC Tobacco Trust Fund and NC Cooperative Extension. They proactively sought the \$5,000 grant level, which required them to develop a complete farm business plan. During the business planning sessions, they ran the numbers and realized that with the equipment that they would purchase using this grant funding, they could realize gross product sales exceeding \$100,000 from their cheeses. The couple is now working full-time on the farm, has a presence at seven regional tailgate markets, as well as requests from the Sheraton Hotel chain for their cheeses! Demand for their product continues to grow.
- Understanding that prevention is key to living long and living well, our FCS Agent from NC Cooperative Extension in Rowan County presented a short and informative talk to a group of ladies about the importance of regular check- ups and preventive screenings. During the workshop each preventive screening and immunization that women should have was outlined along with age, frequency, and possible warning signs. A few weeks later, our agent received a call from the coordinator of the event informing her that one of the ladies present at the workshop was exhibiting several of the warning signs of someone having a heart attack. She went to visit her doctor and informed him of her symptoms and urged him to check her heart. After performing a cardiac catheterization, her doctor found five blockages. Since then she has undergone triple by-pass surgery and is doing well. She insists that it was the information presented during Extension’s presentation that made the difference.

- There are over 2,300 landowners in Edgecombe County. State law allows for any land in agricultural production, producing \$2,000 a year, with a minimum of 10 acres to be eligible for "Farm Use" taxation which, in Edgecombe County, generally saves the landowner about 25 to 30% on their taxation. However, it must be applied for. This year, NC Cooperative Extension in Edgecombe County continued a special effort to inform landowners that this special taxation is available. This year, this educational program led to \$4 million worth of new property enrolling in this program. This saved an estimated \$112,800 annually for these Edgecombe County landowners.
- Disposal of pesticides in a safe and environmentally friendly way is a continuing need of both the urban and agricultural community. In cooperation with NCDA, NC Cooperative Extension in Macon County recently held a Pesticide Collection Day, where 2,423 pounds of unwanted pesticides were collected and disposed of properly. At an estimated cost of disposal at \$10 per pound, the effort had a value of more than \$24,000 to Macon County as well as reducing the risk of environmental damage through improper disposal.
- Mountain View Elementary School teachers needed a living classroom to teach children about sustainable agriculture, growing plants, and ecology. The Ashe County Center of North Carolina Cooperative Extension partnered with parents from the school to write a grant to purchase a greenhouse for the grounds. After receiving the \$1,000 grant, Cooperative Extension, Mountain View Elementary School Teachers, and parent volunteers built the greenhouse and several raised beds. These will be operational by the beginning of the school year and ready for the educational benefit of our youth.
- With unemployment in Guilford County at an all time high, citizens are looking to be retrained to qualify for advertised jobs. NC Cooperative Extension teaches a Horticulture Certification course that is accredited by the green industry. In keeping with the mission of North Carolina Cooperative Extension to improve the quality of people's lives, nine participants successfully passed this course and exam. As a result of passing this course, they have received pay increases, secured new employment and made meaningful changes in their lives.
- Highway NC 94N between Fairfield, NC and Columbia, NC was identified as an impediment to economic development for Hyde County. The highway was narrow, contained many potholes, and the shoulders were very soft. Truckers would not come into Hyde County to pickup produce grown there. NC Cooperative Extension in Hyde County began a campaign to have NC 94 repaired. After meeting with the Southern Albemarle Association, the Hyde County County Manager, NCDOT Regional Engineer, and a NCDOT Area Commissioner discussing the need for improvements to NC 94, work has begun on widening and repairing the road.

5. Routine Items – None this week.