



NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION - STATEWIDE IMPACTS

Week Ending 2/6/09

- ◆ In Currituck County, there are approximately 2,200 individuals age 65 or older who need assistance understanding Medicare and Prescription Drug Plans (PDP), and enrollment in these plans for 2008 and 2009. **NC Cooperative Extension received a \$4,200 grant from the Senior Health Insurance Information Program to assist Medicare beneficiaries with the low-income subsidy application, preventative health benefits and enrollment in a PDP.** There have been 10 mass media publications, 25 formal presentations throughout the county, 193 telephone consultations and 195 face-to-face consultations assisting seniors for a total of 291 hours. **The average savings reported is \$2,000 per Medicare beneficiary, for a total savings of approximately \$300,000.**
- ◆ Peanut diseases cost Northampton County producers thousands of dollars each year. Local recorded weather data is used to predict when favorable environmental conditions occur for a given peanut disease. During the growing season, disease advisories and recommendations are sent from NC Cooperative Extension via email for growers to make disease management decisions. This information achieves two goals. It allows for timely treatment during favorable conditions and no treatment during unfavorable conditions. Not treating during unfavorable times, saves time, money, and fungicide use. **During the 2008 growing season, utilization of a disease advisory saved farmers \$38,357.25.**
- ◆ Many individuals with chronic health problems have limited knowledge of how to manage those conditions. As a result, they endure a cycle of pain, depression, difficult emotions, and worries about how to pay for health care. NC Cooperative Extension in Iredell County, The Council on Aging, and the Area Agency on Aging (AAoA) collaborate to address these issues with adults age 60 and over. The Family & Consumer Sciences Agent and staff from the AAoA team-teach the evidence-based Stanford Chronic Disease Self-management Program. Since May 2008, 30 older adults have learned to communicate better with their health-care providers and self-manage chronic conditions like heart disease, diabetes and arthritis through better nutrition and physical activity. **Most participants reported improvements in their health within 1-2 weeks of starting the 6 week series. Based on participant feedback, each participant could save at least \$300 per year on health-care costs by implementing what they learned.**
- ◆ In times of shrinking financial resources and a growing program, a need exists to provide more available dollars to support youth participation at local, district, state and national events. NC Cooperative Extension in Nash County, through its 4-H Youth Development program created a 4-H GALA Committee to organize, plan, market and recruit sponsors and donors. After two years of planning, the Nash County 4-H GALA came to realization. Over 1,000 invitations and donor packets were mailed to 4-H alumni, friends of 4-H, and prospective donors to promote awareness of this event. Twenty-two youth volunteers and 18 adult volunteers prepared for 167 people to attend. **As a result, over \$12,600 was raised to support the Nash County 4-H Program, Endowment and Scholarship fund.**

- ◆ As urban development continues in Henderson County and the population grows, NC Cooperative Extension must develop new strategies to reach more homeowners in the county. The Urban Horticulture Agent developed a newsletter entitled 'Garden Plugs' to help disseminate information. The newsletter reaches over 425 homeowners via the mailbox and 125 more via email. When surveyed, results determined 96% of subscribers feel that the newsletter has positively increased their gardening confidence; 93% felt the newsletter has encouraged them to manage plant pests through cultural methods instead of relying solely on pesticides; 94% said that the newsletter made them more aware of protecting native plants and the environment; and 69% stated the newsletter has saved them at least \$25 or more this year in unnecessary garden costs. **This newsletter provided a minimum total potential savings to recipients of \$9,500.**
- ◆ Alternative energy has become a hot topic in Western North Carolina. This is due, in part, to rising energy costs and the current state of our economy. Based on perceived needs and results of a regional needs assessment, NC Cooperative Extension Agents in six western counties and the Cherokee Reservation along with Brent Summerville from Appalachian State University provided information to help individuals make informed decisions relating to solar energy systems and energy conservation in the home and on the farm. **In November 2008, over 72 people attended 2 regional workshops providing information on various solar energy topics such as passive collectors, photovoltaics, and do-it-yourself systems. Based on evaluations, 53% of the participants plan to implement some of the program ideas, while 100 % indicated an increased knowledge in solar energy.**
- ◆ Studies have shown that the more education and experience child care providers have, the greater the impact on the child care center because of improved management, lower staff turnover, and better classroom practices. Star-rated licensed childcare facilities earn points for staff professional development. Early childhood education and the quality of care have a profound impact on children's social and cognitive development. NC Cooperative Extension and Smart Start agencies in Beaufort, Bertie, Chowan, Gates, Hertford, Hyde, Martin, Pitt, Tyrrell and Washington counties hosted The Building Quality Child Care Conference at Martin Community College in Williamston. This complete day of programming offered 112 childcare providers, owners, and operators education and training to promote safer learning environments with stimulating learning materials. **As a result, 85% of participants indicated that the conference helps them provide quality educational programs in their child care centers but also helps promote professionalism and maintains their star-rated license.**
- ◆ Each year in North Carolina, over \$100 million worth of crops are dependent on honey bees for pollination. Unfortunately, over the past 25 years, pests and diseases have led to a dramatic decline in the wild honey bee population. Due to the lack of wild colonies, it is vital to maintain the numbers of managed honey bee colonies for sufficient crop pollinations. The Smoky Mountain Beekeepers Chapter in cooperation with NC Cooperative Extension agents in Swain, Jackson Counties and the Cherokee Reservation sponsored a Beginner's Bee School to recruit, educate and support new and veteran beekeepers about the fundamentals of beekeeping. Over 90 people registered with 60 people attending the school. **After the School, 100% of the participants rated the quality of the training as very satisfied; 100% of the participants rated their information learned as high; and 52% of the participants stated that they plan to get into beekeeping in 2008 or 2009.**