



NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION - STATEWIDE IMPACTS

Week Ending 4/24/09

- ◆ Unlabeled and unwanted pesticides pose a danger to humans, animals and the environment due to leakage, spills and accidental exposure. Perquimans County residents readily participated in a Pesticide Disposal Day as a means of removing these materials from farms, homes and businesses. The Pesticide Disposal Day is a collaborative effort between NC Cooperative Extension and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Structural Pest Control and Pesticides Division, with the local Southern States Cooperative providing the collection site. **As a result, 4,595 pounds of pesticide and 297 containers were received and processed for disposal. This free service saved participants an average of \$7 per pound for a total savings of \$32,165.**
- ◆ Twenty-eight military reserve families (twenty-four were couples) attended the *Essential Skills for Military Families* training on March 29 in Greenville. The unexpected events following deployment of citizen-soldiers may cause stress, fear, insecurity and instability for the soldiers and their families. The *Essential Life Skills for Military Families Program* strengthens relationships by providing skill-building and practical information for citizen-soldier couples. The NC Cooperative Extension Service Family and Consumer Sciences Agent in Greene County partnered with her counterpart in Pitt County to deliver 4 series to 28 Reserve and National Guard soldiers and spouses/significant others. This training focused on developing effective communication skills, dealing with unexpected challenges, managing financial and legal matters, and fostering resilience. **At a cost of \$50/hour for financial consultants and \$100/hour for legal counsel, this series easily saves each family \$250 for a cost savings of at least \$6,000. A 10% drop in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder/Depression is estimated amongst the population participating in this program at an average cost of \$10,000 per soldier.**
- ◆ Many Scotland County organizations (non-profits, churches, governmental agencies) are experiencing reduced budgets due to difficult economic hardships. Based on this need, NC Cooperative Extension in Scotland County offered a two-day grant writing workshop. Thirty participants attended this workshop from organizations representing historical preservation, veterans, at-risk youth, housing, and health. The workshop focused on writing grants, locating funding sources, contacting grantors, and finding statistical information. **Workshop surveys revealed 100% of the participants increased their knowledge in the areas of writing grants and finding grantors. Given the county economic situation, many organizations can benefit financially from grant funds.**
- ◆ The overweight/obesity rate in the United States is 66%. If present rates continue, obesity will replace tobacco as the leading preventable cause of death. Therefore, in partnership with the Brody School of Medicine's Family Practice Center, NC Cooperative Extension in Pitt County offered the community *Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less*. The hospital offers a more expensive weight loss program, *Weight Watchers*. Rather than enrolling in that class, 53 participants enrolled in the *Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less* program. **In choosing the *Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less* program, the total cost saving for all participants was \$5,300.**
- ◆ Staff of Wood Products Extension and the Hodges Wood Products Lab conducted an Engineered Wood Flooring Workshop in March. **Twenty-five wood flooring professionals attended this two-day workshop, which will help them better analyze problems that homeowners and flooring installation contractors experience. Information shows that the wood flooring industry produces an estimated \$2.6 billion worth of products per year.**

- ◆ In an effort to learn about tobacco alternatives, 87 people gained knowledge and skills by participating at the Northern Piedmont Specialty Crops School, held at the NC Cooperative Extension Center in Person County on February 27. Knowledge gained included dehydration, marketing ideas, a "can-do" attitude, and community supported agriculture. Accomplishments stated by participants included: making and revising business plans, getting liability insurance, selling at farmers markets, trying innovative ideas, figuring out what kinds of crops to grow, better record keeping, and using organic fertilizers. **Dollar value estimates from benefits received at the school ranged from several hundred to \$100,000 dollars.**
- ◆ A poor economy and an unstable working environment led many citizens in Graham County to look for other sources of income. With this in mind, agriculture seems to be one of the biggest ways in which citizens are trying to earn extra income. This has created the perfect situation for NC Cooperative Extension to educate the public about several successful agricultural venues. On March 11 NC Cooperative Extension in Graham County offered a workshop entitled *Blueberry Production and Maintenance*. This program was designed to provide participants with the knowledge and skills needed to successfully produce blueberries for both private and commercial use. **According to an evaluation of the participants, 13 of 18 participants left the program deciding to begin blueberry production; 5 of 13 plan to install commercial operations.**
- ◆ In North Carolina, of children ages 10-17, 31% are overweight or obese, one of the highest rates in the country. NC Cooperative Extension's 4-H EFNEP Program in Halifax County helped the children at one Halifax County elementary school understand the importance of eating smart and moving more. The youth, through a hands-on activity, gained a better understanding of the amount of sugar in sodas and other beverages they choose to drink. **As a result, 82% of the 4th grade students lowered their consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages after the lesson. It has been proven that those who make healthy food choices and are physically active are more likely to achieve and maintain a healthy weight as well as reduce chronic diseases.**