



NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION - STATEWIDE IMPACTS Week Ending 6/19/09

- ◆ In an effort to address the statewide obesity epidemic, NC Cooperative Extension in Dare County conducted the *Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less* program in which 20 participants completed the program and lost a total of 183 pounds. In addition, 70% were able to reduce their Body Mass Index by at least one point, 75% reduced their waist circumference, and 40% were able to reduce their blood pressure during the program. All of the participants reported adopting at least 5 healthy behaviors such as preparing more meals at home and being more physically active. Most importantly, at a six-week follow-up, 100% of the participants had maintained their weight loss. The State of North Carolina estimates that the financial cost of overweight and obesity is \$2,384 per person per year, so by conducting this *Eat Smart, Move More Weigh, Less* program, North Carolina has saved \$47,680 in associated medical costs due to overweight.
- ◆ According to NC's Division of Public Health, Physical Activity and Nutrition Branch, nearly two-thirds (64.6%) of adults in NC are either overweight or obese. In Beaufort County, NC Cooperative Extension offered a 13-week weight loss management program to 35 obese or overweight people. All 35 individuals lost weight, losing a total of 388 pounds. Thirty individuals lowered their BMIs reducing their risk of heart disease and other health complications associated with obesity, impacting taxpayers by saving them thousands of dollars related to the cost of excess weight. Risk factor calculation is \$2,384 annual per capita cost of excess weight in NC.
- ◆ In Dare County, approximately 62% of adults are overweight or obese. Teaching healthy habits, such as eating fewer calories and being more physically active and helping people adopt these behaviors over the long term helps to address the problem of overweight. The Family and Consumer Sciences Agent in Dare County has helped two participants who have completed the *Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less* program twice to adopt a healthier lifestyle. Through the two programs and a 9-month period, one participant lost 70 pounds, reduced her body mass index by 11 units and has lost 8.5 inches off of her waist. Another woman has lost 39 pounds, reduced her body mass index by 7 units and lost 2 inches around her waist. She touts "Although I have lost 39 pounds since first starting the program, the implementation of a new healthy lifestyle is my goal rather than a specific number."
- ◆ In New Hanover County, youth from limited resource families and those living with disabilities have limited opportunities to participate in hands-on nature-based experiences. The Ability Garden, a unique program of NC State Cooperative Extension, built on its successes in 2008 by extending its programming model to Pre-K aged youth this spring. *The Nature Education and Outreach Project* (NEOP) served 303 pre-school aged students and provided educational opportunities to 61 teachers and staff at 4 schools in New Hanover, Pender and Brunswick Counties. Learning opportunities for students and staff were extended through the development of 2 school garden spaces and the donation of all program resources. NEOP successfully developed social connections between group members and increased participants' appreciation and knowledge of plants and nature. These four school partnerships were made possible through a \$6,000 grant from the Landfall Foundation of Wilmington.
- ◆ During recent budget discussions, Burke County Extension Advisory members came together inviting other supporters to learn about the possible reduction to the county's Extension budget for the 2009-2010 year. This group of volunteers discussed the problem and developed a strategy to approach officials. They created a phone chain, a letter writing campaign, and identified leaders to have one-on-one conversations with officials. The efforts of these volunteers paid off. A position that was proposed to be cut was restored to the Extension budget. Their organized approach has received positive feedback, showing that citizens can make a difference.

- ◆ Recently, a poultry farmer in Hoke County decided to diversify his farming operation to include beef cattle. Over the last year, this farmer has been working with NC Cooperative Extension in Hoke County to prepare for this expansion. Taking advantage of beef cattle production classes that have been offered, as well as individual programs specifically geared to his farm, Cooperative Extension worked diligently to assist this farmer with this transition. Due to his trust in Cooperative Extension's educational efforts, this farmer has invested over \$25,000 to start this agricultural enterprise. In the operating budget that was developed for his farm, the farmer expects to recoup his investment within five years. According to the farmer, "without the assistance I received from Cooperative Extension, I would not have felt comfortable enough to follow-through with this investment."
- ◆ Cereal Leaf Beetles are an insect that left untreated can devastate a wheat crop. The insect is treated during April and requires an extra trip through the field which cost grower's approximately \$7 per acre plus the cost of the chemical. NC Cooperative Extension has promoted the use of applying the insecticide early while applying the top dress nitrogen. This practice will save the grower the \$7 per acre trip across the field and is effective in controlling the pest. In 2009, 30% (7,500 acres) of the wheat crop was treated utilizing the early application, saving local growers \$52,500 in application costs. This program will allow growers to increase profitability in a crop that typically does not generate much profit.
- ◆ Recent increases in Nitrogen prices have left farmers scrambling to save on input costs. Our field crops agent in Stanly County in conjunction with NCDAs Regional Agronomist began utilizing Soil Nitrate Sampling as a tool to save corn growers on top dressed nitrogen costs. From this tool, one Stanly County grower reported that he saved more than \$12,000 on 200 acres of corn as a result of information gained from the local Extension Agent.
- ◆ Goal setting is a struggle for some teens, because they have not had the proper guidance. Setting goals is a process for thinking about your future and to motivate yourself to achieve them. As part of 4-H, youth are encouraged to practice goal setting skills which is what one Robeson County 4-H'er did. She knew she wanted to become a lawyer, so she put the 4-H's into her future plans, *Head, Heart, Hands and Health* to see the big picture. She worked hard to achieve to make the best better. She graduated with honors from high school and was accepted into law school. Remembering the goals she set, she graduated with honors and is studying to take the bar exam. She contributes all her success to 4-H and encourages all young people to set goals and strive to reach them, because you can be anything you want to be.
- ◆ The Homeowner's Association of the Villas at Mayfare brought in new landscaping plans for review by NC Cooperative Extension personnel in New Hanover County. The commercial and consumer horticulture agent questioned the selection of one of the plants. Knowing this site's history and drainage issues influences plant selection. It was recommended that different plants be selected for this site. Further investigation revealed plants were to be placed around utility boxes in the neighborhood. The local utilities made it clear to the Homeowners Association that they would remove any plants that interfered with maintenance on these utility boxes. The design and plants selected were changed. Extension's review and recommendations for plant selection saved the Villas at Mayfare \$10,000 in plant material that would have died of disease or been removed by utility companies.
- ◆ Today's agriculture is more complicated than ever before. Growers are constantly faced with production challenges. NC Cooperative Extension's field crops agent in Stanly County offered a winter production planning class to local field crops growers. Through individual consultations, weed control options were evaluated on a field by field basis to find the most economical and best suited chemicals for their farming operation. One grower commented that by evaluating his fields, he saved \$15 per acre in unnecessary chemical applications. For his 200 acres of corn, this was a net savings of \$3,000.
- ◆ The disposal of canceled, banned or unwanted agricultural and consumer pesticides poses a significant challenge to agricultural producers and homeowners due to its high cost. In Scotland County, NC Cooperative Extension in cooperation with the NCDAs Pesticide Disposal Section held a pesticide disposal day for farmers and homeowners. Over 3,000 pounds of unwanted pesticides were collected. The cost of disposal of these pesticides would have exceeded \$6,000 through commercial pesticide disposal. The proper disposal of waste pesticides eliminates a potential threat to health and the environment.