Exploring agritourism: A day on the farms

By Steva Allgood
State Advisory member, North Central District

The fall tours coordinated by the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service — Rockingham County Center are perfect examples of how Extension works with and helps farmers. On Oct. 20, I was one of the attendees who visited four Rockingham County farms. Each farm owner/manager made it clear that much of their success was due to the help and support of their local Cooperative Extension office and the services and knowledge provided there.

The day started with a bus ride to Riverbirch Vineyards, a family owned and operated farm that grows two varieties of muscadine grapes for commercial production. The owners, Paul and Kristi Marshall, are also cultivating a small area of Christmas trees and a pear orchard — and a future in agritourism. With advance notice, the Marshalls welcome visitors to learn about and tour their operation.

Next we visited the Mark Wheeler Farm, which grows burley and dark tobacco and also has chicken houses. Because much of the flue-cured tobacco has moved to the eastern part of the state, Mark’s production has focused on the dark variety. This brand of tobacco has gained in popularity because it is a smokeless tobacco used in snuff and chewing tobacco products. During our visit, we learned about the different practices and processing methods used in curing the two different varieties of tobacco.

The next destination was Oakhaven Farm, 1,300 acres of rolling hills and ponds, where farm

Strengthening Extension Advisory Leadership

By Spring Williams-Byrd
County Extension director, Burke County

Whether you are a new Extension agent, county Extension director or even a new Advisory Council member, there is always the question, “How do I work with this council?” And better yet, “How can this group function, be active and have a positive impact for Cooperative Extension?”

Throughout the years, I have had the opportunity to work with many different advisory members and other Extension staff to answer these same questions. And I am excited to be able to share some tips and advice with you that I have gained through the years. The key to Advisory Councils is having a good orientation and/or good job descriptions for the members. However, once you have these, you need to continue to have opportunities for involvement, communication and training.

Other than the four mandatory meetings of County Advisory Council, I encourage councils to set up committees and meet with these groups on specific tasks. Then, at the council meetings throughout the year, members can share what their committee has been doing. In addition, members can select the committee they want to be on — and usually, their choice is one wherein they can use their skills, knowledge and passions.

I have chosen to assist with communication and encourage involvement by creating a website for the Burke County Extension Advisory Council members, http://sites.google.com/site/burkecoadvisory/. Here are posted minutes, membership lists, news and more.

(Continued on page 3)
By Terri Leith
CALS Communications

Dr. Travis Burke, former Pasquotank County Extension director, has been serving since last March as the Northeast District Extension director for the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service. He replaced Dr. Wanda Sykes, who retired last year.

Burke began service as Pasquotank County’s Extension director in 1998. Prior to that role, he was the Extension agricultural and 4-H and Youth Development agent in Pasquotank from 1982 to 1998.

A native of Elizabeth City, he earned a 1982 bachelor’s degree in agricultural education, a 1986 master’s degree in agriculture and a 2002 doctoral degree in adult and community college education, all from N.C. State University.

During his career with Extension, he has served as state president of the North Carolina Association of Extension 4-H Agents, Southern Region director for the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents and treasurer for the Federation of Cooperative Extension Associations. He has been recognized by extension educational associations, others’ cups of life. We have outstanding employees and a heritage of dedication and selfless service to families and communities across this great state. We also have a State Advisory Council (SAC) that is one of the best in the nation and one I’m extremely proud to have at our side to guide and help us be even better. The SAC excels at filling our Extension cup with their energy, ideas and dedication.

Together we’re combining our talents, energies and resources to make tremendous impacts for those in our state that are in great need. None of us can do this alone, and through Extension none of us is alone.

As challenges continue to come upon us, we must work together in greater unity and with greater focus. We must encourage our clients to share their successes and how we helped them. It is not a time to be meek but a time to speak up. We make a difference!
Granville Advisory Leadership Council studies empowerment

By Paul Westfall
County Extension director, Granville County

One of the 2010 projects of the Advisory Leadership Council for N.C. Cooperative Extension Service — Granville County Center was to study and review the SEAL (Strengthening Extension Advisory Leaders) curriculum. County Extension Director Paul Westfall reviewed the SEAL notebook with the ALC at the June meeting and asked that the group cover the lesson plans at coming meetings.

State Advisory Council member Mary Ann Lumpkins and Westfall led the first session at the September meeting, using “Sharing the Wealth: Empowering Adult and Youth Volunteers” as the first lesson.

Once the lesson was completed, the participants looked at ways to empower the group by taking advantage of opportunities at the upcoming Volunteer Appreciation Banquet. ALC members volunteered to work on preparing for that event.

In each of its meetings, the Granville County Advisory Council will be covering the SEAL training notebook and will look for ways to apply those lessons.

Farm tours — continued from page 1

manager Gary Barrett showed us around. The multiplex facility has a 150-brood-cow operation, along with a petting zoo and a trolley made from re-cycled oil drums, upholstered and colorfully painted. Other attractions included a corn maze, a corn cannon and a jumping balloon. And there is a bed and breakfast house on the property, which plays host to weddings, receptions, corporate events and family reunions. This farm also offers examples of diversification of farm management, rotational cutting, control burns, wildlife management using field borders for habitats, and utilizing forest management practices and conservation practices. And from the proceeds of the farm’s yearly sale of pumpkins, a 33 percent donation is made to the Victory Junction Gang.

Our last stop was to the David and Linda Hill Farm which is dedicated to the preservation of wildlife, focusing on the natural habitats for the quail/bobwhite. It is a beautiful farm made more so because of the love of the land by its owners. The Hills work with the Conservation Reserve Program and best management practices of the Soil and Water Conservation District.

Promoting locally grown foods

As part of a statewide campaign to promote and advertise the value of eating locally grown foods, N.C. Cooperative Extension — Ashe County Center is creating a locally grown registry that will be linked to Extension’s website. The project’s goal is to allow consumers to connect to growers of locally grown produce. Interested Ashe County farmers who would like to market their locally grown fruits and vegetables are encouraged to register their products at the Extension office in Jefferson. They will be asked to complete a short form listing their products and the amounts that will be available. In addition, they must agree to allow this information to be posted on the Extension website. To honor the spirit of the agreement, only food grown in Ashe County can be listed. At the end of the growing season, participants will be asked to complete a short survey. For more information or to request a form to have their produce listed, growers can contact the Extension office at 336.846.5850.
My first experience with Extension came by way of a 4-H project: I ordered 50 baby chicks from the Sears and Roebuck Catalog and raised them till they reached frying size. Then, pulling a wagon-load of chickens, I went door to door through the neighborhood, selling the fryers. To the best of my memory, the project was a success — I chose not to be a chicken farmer.

I received my bachelor's degree from Carson-Newman College, and I served in the Army for three years. After 22 years in broadcasting and sports announcing, I worked in municipal government for 20 years.

During the years I worked in radio in several different counties across the state, I got to know the Extension agents and directors when they brought their weekly radio shows by the station. Then, in 1980, Reagan Ammons, the Burke County director, asked me to serve on the State Advisory Council (SAC). I later learned a lot about Cooperative Extension and how it serves the state through my close friend, Allen Caldwell, when he took a job in with the Extension office in Murphy. Allen later became director in Caldwell County, and he and Reagan conspired to get me on the State Advisory Council. That has proved to be one of the best opportunities I have had to give back to my community. I am truly grateful to serve in this capacity and to get to know and work with some of the finest people in our state.

I am now retired, but I am also staying very busy with my church and family and serving on 10 non-profit boards and numerous committees. Over the past three years, I have been involved with efforts to promote entrepreneurial growth in Burke County. The leadership training I have received as a member of SAC has been a great help in these efforts. No one exemplifies the entrepreneurial spirit more than those who earn their living from the soil.

Two of my children are N.C. State grads: Alan is an environmental engineer, and Deanna is a veterinarian. I have another daughter working in banking. As for me, I still enjoy golf and fishing when I get a chance.

—Chuck Moseley

Spotlight on Chuck Moseley

Another piece to this puzzle is the ongoing training for council members. I have helped with teaching some of the curricula at state and national events provided through SEAL (Strengthening Extension Advisory Leaders), for the southeast region. I have also utilized several of the lesson plans throughout my Extension career.

Some of my favorite SEAL lesson plans are Who’s Who for ALS, Being an Advocate, Relationship Marketing, Expectations and Proficiencies, Orienting Extension Faculty that are Volunteer Administrators, Partnering with Volunteers and Sharing Leadership to Achieve Impact and Communicating Impact to Elected Officials.

These lesson plans are laid out for ease of implementation. Each session includes an abstract, a list of needed resources, the lesson plan, handouts (including worksheets, and power point presentations) and an evaluation or follow-up for the session. Extension professionals in many different states throughout the Southeast provided the SEAL curricula, which are very beneficial for new groups. However, it also is important to have tenured members continue to be trained.

To find out more about these lesson plans go to: http://srpln.msstate.edu/seal/. Also, I have created a wiki for Extension professionals to share their experiences and give or get advice on working with Advisory Councils, https://byrdadvisory10.wikispaces.com/.

Visit the Advisory Leadership System website at http://als.ces.ncsu.edu/