NC Cooperative Extension
Sampson County Center

"2009 Report to the People"

"North Carolina Cooperative Extension partners with communities to deliver education and technology that enrich the lives, land and economy of North Carolina."
Agriculture ... Sampson County Cooperative Extension teamed up with the Sampson County Cattlemen’s Corporation to offer the annual calf sales in March and September. Cattle from 11 different counties were processed and sold during each of the one-day sales. At the March sale, 784 head of cattle averaging 558 pounds were processed. Sale prices ranged from $0.52 to $1.13 per pound with an average of $0.89 per pound. The March sale grossed $382,239.

The September sale totaled 1,195 head of cattle, which averaged 586 pounds per head. Prices during the September sale ranged from $0.50 to $1.035 per pound and averaged $0.62 per pound. This sale grossed $571,375 for a total of $802,147 generated by both sales. In addition, 6 truckloads of cattle were sold throughout the year via Blue Grass Stockyards Internet auctions. These truckloads of cattle totaled 410 head and grossed an additional $271,400 for county producers.

Small and part-time limited resource farmers face many economic and educational challenges as they endeavor to make their farm operations more sustainable and profitable. The Small Farm Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program works directly with small farm families to provide one-on-one assistance to help them improve their production and marketing skills. In 2009, Sampson’s Farm Management Agent recruited farm families to participate in a 5-week computer literacy class through the Farmers Adopted Computer Training Project (FACT) coordinated through NCA&T Cooperative Extension programs in partnership with community colleges. A total of 29 students graduated from the classes, including 21 Hispanic farm families. By completing these courses, the participants improved their basic computer skills, which enabled them to manage and store files; create basic tables and graphs; send and receive emails; and utilize the Internet to search for information, thus becoming more competitive in the marketplace. As a result, these farmers reported a 60 percent increase in income.

The farm value of market hogs in Sampson County for 2008 totaled $460,000,000. There are 493 swine farms in the county that are required by permit to complete a yearly lagoon sludge survey, a biannual irrigation system calibration, and a waste sample analysis within 60 days of waste application. Cooperative Extension supports these farms in complying with their DEWR animal waste permit by providing technical assistance to operators. Over 100 swine lagoon sludge surveys were completed and 60 irrigation systems calibrated to ensure proper waste application. Over 1,000 waste samples were collected and transported to the lab for analysis. In addition, 245 animal waste applicators received recertification training to maintain their certification and 12 new animal waste applicators received 10 hours of initial certification training.

During 2009, the County witnessed an increase in cattle production from the previous year, which was due in part to the expansion of existing herds as well as new producers entering the cattle business. As a result, Cooperative Extension offered a Master Cattlemen Program. The program consisted of a series of 10 meetings that covered all facets of cattle production from types of fencing, to cross-breeding systems, to marketing options for calves. Upon completion, a Beef Quality Assurance Training was conducted. Producers who attended meetings and passed the BQA test were deemed Sampson County Master Cattlemen. A total of 34 producers attended the series of meetings, with 6 qualifying to become Master Cattlemen. In order to improve the overall profitability of their operations, all of these producers indicated that they intended to implement the strategies learned.

Beeknapping has been a part of Sampson County’s agriculture heritage for many years. In order to increase production for more than 15,500 acres of vegetables, which provides over $52,000,000 of farm income, honeybees are needed for pollination services. Several years ago, Sampson County beekeepers established the Black River Beekeepers Association. However, as time passed, membership declined and during the early 1990s, the association was eventually phased out. In order to increase hive production within the county, several individuals inquired about a beekeeping class. In the fall of 2007, a meeting was held and, as a result, Sampson County Cooperative Extension held the first Beekeepers Short Course for our citizenry. Over the past three years, Extension has provided educational opportunities to those that have an interest in beekeeping, whether commercially or as a hobbyist. Supervised by the Consumer Horticulture Agent, this group of individuals meets monthly to conduct business and engage in educational opportunities. The group also hosts 2 annual field days—one during the spring and the other in the fall. Over 30 beekeepers in eastern North Carolina have been trained and successfully certified. From the subject matter taught, 100% of the participants have gained knowledge and hands-on experience. Based on the educational programs in 2009, on average 77% of the participants showed knowledge gained from the monthly meetings. 69% have demonstrated practice change from what they learned from the educational programs, whether it be feeding bees, pesticide safety and use, or equipment maintenance. Overall, with beekeepers combined, we had a 1090% increase in the number of hives compared to the previous year.

Seven new poultry nutrient management plans were written and growers educated on how to utilize the plan and keep required records. Plans were written for 5,850 tons of litter to be utilized on 1,815 acres of land.
Family and Consumer Science ... With 66 percent of Sampson’s adult population overweight, obesity among adults in the County is greater than the North Carolina average. Economically, this is a staggering statistic because ‘beactivenc.org’ reports that the associated annual medical cost of excess weight per individual is $2,384. To address this issue, beginning in January, 2009, NC Cooperative Extension offered Eat Smart Move More Weigh Less, a 15-week weight loss program based on healthy lifestyle behaviors. At the conclusion of the program, surveys were taken to record its impact, with the following results:

- 62 percent reported being physically active 30 minutes each day
- 77 percent were eating fewer calories
- 69 percent consumed smaller portions
- 69 percent prepared more meals at home
- 60 percent ate the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables

These behavior changes resulted in a combined total loss for participants of 95.6 pounds and 15 inches. In addition, 7 participants lowered their blood pressure and BMI (Body Mass Index) during the 15-week program. According to the ‘beactivenc.org’ website’s associated annual medical cost of excess weight per individual, ‘Eat Smart Move More Weigh Less’ had a potential cost savings of $30,992.

4-H Youth Development ... Although the 4-H Department lost 2 staff members during the past year, the program continued to have a positive impact on Sampson County’s youth. As there are 12 active clubs with 200 members, these youth provided over 1,500 community service hours in a variety of areas. Activities produced over 3,500 Valentine and Christmas cards that were made and delivered to area nursing homes and hospice patients. During the Thanksgiving holiday, 10 families received food baskets. Over 100 stuffed bears, as well as canned food, were collected for local foster families. Approximately 100 pounds of supplies were collected and mailed to our military troops. More than 60 youth participated in 20 workshop sessions and field trips, which provided fun and educational information in areas such as crafts, beekeeping, salt marshes, and prehistoric life. Sampson County was represented at District Activity Day by 14 youth who gave presentations and 16 teenagers that attended 4-H Congress. The annual Prestage Farms Youth Round Up Livestock Show was held with more than 50 exhibits featuring goats, sheep, and heifers. Sampson was represented at the NC State Fair by 12 showmen, who entered lambs. In the fall of 2009, 10 youth joined the newly established Livestock Judging Team.

During 2009, 4-H delivered grant-funded drug and alcohol prevention curriculum to 650 youth in the County School’s 9th Block Program, and 175 youth received the curriculum in Clinton City School’s 21st Century after-school setting. The 9th Block Program provides instruction in character education, drug and alcohol prevention, remediation, and various other life skills.

Medicare prescription drug coverage is insurance that covers prescription drugs. Within Sampson County, there are over 3,700 seniors that are eligible to participate in the program. As the program is complicated, difficult to understand, and Internet-based, it is necessary for many individuals to seek assistance. In 2009, 339 Medicare-eligible persons or their caregivers gained the knowledge needed to understand and enroll in the program through Extension’s programs and technical assistance. The average savings to each of the beneficiaries is $1,600 per year, for a total savings of $542,400 in prescription medication costs. Through group meetings, 150 eligible seniors received Medicare assistance.

During 2009, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) enrolled 117 families in Sampson County. Of the 117 participating families, 103 graduated after completing a minimum of 9 EFNEP lessons. In addition, 57 volunteers gave 267 hours to the Adult EFNEP Program. Sampson’s new EFNEP Program Assistant has developed new contacts and collaborations. One successful and innovative project has been a bi-weekly newspaper article using nutrition subjects and representative recipes. In order to share the information with other counties, these articles are now posted on the State EFNEP staff’s website workspace. As there are 69 individuals already enrolled in the program for the first two months of 2010, it promises to be a successful year. Sampson County is fortunate to have such a strong EFNEP program, which has educated limited-resource families for over 20 years.

The 21st Century Program provides after-school care for students who are performing below grade level. As a result of participation in these two programs, nearly 70 percent of the involved youth have demonstrated a positive increase in attitude toward abstaining from substance abuse and other risky behaviors.

The 4-H Department was also excited to work with the Sampson County Arts Council to hold an Art Show, where over 200 exhibits were on display.

As the nation deals with resolutions on global warming, youth were given the opportunity to learn about alternative energy at a Biofuel Workshop. Participants took part in an experiment where yeast was fermented thus producing carbon dioxide gas and ethanol.

Overall, 170 volunteers helped deliver leadership, citizenship, and life skills to over 1,000 youth in the Sampson County 4-H Program for a total of 4,259 learning experiences.
Herbicide-resistant weeds continue to be a major issue for growers. In 2009, two on-farm tests were conducted in cotton and soybeans to continue to evaluate resistant pigweed management so effective herbicide strategies can be developed. Local producers are doing a better job in managing resistant weeds utilizing the strategies recommended based on Extension’s research.

Several years ago Cooperative Extension identified the need for a system to notify integrated poultry companies of potential or real disasters, such as hurricanes and foreign animal diseases. Extension worked with local poultry company representatives as well as swine integrators and the NCDA & CS to gather the necessary information to develop the system and conduct educational and training meetings for implementation. The Multi-Hazard Threat Database (MHTD) has been completed and is now utilized by all poultry companies within the State. The system provides timely notification of any potential or real disasters even down to the individual farm level. In case of natural disasters, decisions can be made quickly to avoid further spread of disease outbreaks or actions necessary in the case of natural disasters.

**Sampson County Cooperative Extension Staff ...**

**Administration**

Kent Wooten, County Extension Director
Frankie Waters, Administrative Secretary

**Family and Consumer Sciences**

Casey Stevens, Extension Agent, Nutrition and Housing
Pam Matthis, EFNEP Program Assistant
Vacant...Extension Agent, Family Resource Mgt.
Cindy Nance, Secretary

**4-H Youth Development**

Amanda Bradshaw, Extension Agent, 4-H
Charmae Kendall, 4-H Program Assistant (Part-Time)
Bob Turner, Teen Court Restitution Coordinator
Lee Matthews, Drug & Alcohol Prevention Specialist
Denise McIntyre, Drug & Alcohol Prevention Specialist
Ardith Taylor, Secretary

**Agriculture**

Paul Gonzalez, Extension Agent, Livestock (Cattle)
Della King, Extension Agent, Home Horticulture
James Hartsfield, Small Farms Management Agent
Allan Thornton, Ext. Res. Assoc., Commercial Horticulture
James Parsons, Area Specialized Agent, Poultry
Vacant...Extension Agent, Livestock (Swine)
Vacant...Extension Agent, Row Crops
Patricia Burch, Secretary/Receptionist

**4-H Youth Development ...** Sampson County 4-H Teen Court and Juvenile Restitution Programs served 90 juvenile offenders/delinquents while utilizing 120 youth and adult volunteers. Offenders worked over 5,000 hours of community service through the ‘Adopt-A-Highway’ Program. In addition, offenders assisted 25 elderly citizens with yard work and the City and County Schools with janitorial duties as well as several churches with food drives. Over $5,000 was paid in restitution to crime victims. The program’s 8-year existence has demonstrated a 95 percent success rate in preventing juvenile recidivism, thus saving millions of dollars it would cost to secure delinquent juveniles in a supervised environment.

**we’ve made a difference !**

North Carolina State University and North Carolina A&T State University commit themselves to positive action to secure equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status, or disability. In addition, the two Universities welcome all persons without regard to sexual orientation.