MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

North Carolina Cooperative Extension is an educational partnership helping people put research-based knowledge to work for economic prosperity, environmental stewardship and an improved quality of life. We are very proud of our work in serving the citizens of Bladen County through our programming efforts. Please take a few minutes to review this report. We hope that you will find it informative and, as always, please let us know how we can better serve our clients.

Ryan Harrelson
County Extension Director

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Extension Highlights
Quarterly Report
January-March, 2011
July 27, 2011

North Carolina Cooperative Extension
Bladen County Center

Administration - Ryan Harrelson, County Extension Director

Budget
As everyone is aware by now, the state has faced many cutbacks and reductions in force. I am pleased to announce that for the fiscal year 2011-2012, Extension was able to maintain all of its currently staffed positions! We sincerely appreciate all of our Extension supporters calling our legislators and expressing your support for all that we do. Extension is always here to serve and we thank you for rallying behind us.

Extension Awards- Johnice Autry, 4-H Teen Court, Restitution/Community Services Coordinator of Bladen County Extension Center, was recognized recently for 20 years of service to N.C. Cooperative Extension.

Livestock – Becky Spearman, Livestock Agent

Swine farmers in Bladen County must comply with conditions in their permit to stay in compliance with the Division of Water Quality (DWQ). Bladen County Cooperative Extension provides assistance to certified operators on sludge management, irrigation calibration, record-keeping, manure sampling, general permits and nutrient management plans. Extension answers many questions and reviews options available with producers. Extension provided 14 hours of continuing education credits in 2010. The agent assisted 5 producers in completing sludge surveys on 12 lagoons and 7 producers on calibrating 8 equipment systems saving them over $5,000 by completing the tasks themselves. Extension worked with seven producers on individual problems. One producer had concerns on his sludge removal being miscalculated and not enough sludge being removed. Extension prevented this farmer from being charged $21,000 for work not completed. Extension worked with another farmer to make sure his sludge was applied at agronomic rates for phosphorus, zinc, and copper levels. If improperly applied, these nutrients can build up in the soil and cause problems in the future such as reduced yields or crop failure. The agent assisted a farmer to reduce his commercial fertilizer costs by $14,000 by utilizing effluent from a nearby farm. Extension also assisted two producers with filling out plans of actions for permit conditions that were out of compliance. If a producer is out of compliance, they can have Notice of Violations (NOV) and/or fines from DWQ. The fines can range from $500 per incidence to $25,000 per day they are in violation. Extension made recommendations on two spray-fields/hayfields that needed to be improved. The producers followed the recommendations and the fields were improved, allowing for higher yield per acre and the farms are in compliance. Extension will continue to keep producers up-to-date to protect the environment.
In collaboration with the Bladen County Health Department, Bladen Cooperative Extension received a $2,000 grant to conduct Osteoporosis Education classes in Bladen County. The Falls Prevention Series were held at East Arcadia and Elizabethtown Senior Centers. After attending the five sessions, surveys and evaluations indicated that participants increased their knowledge and skills of Osteoporosis and felt better prepared to reduce their risk of falls. Surveys also indicated that 75% of participants plan to make their homes safer by following recommended practices. Dr. Jim Hundley, retired Orthopedic Surgeon, was the guest speaker for an Osteoporosis Forum. Evaluations indicated that all of the 71 attendees gained knowledge and skills related to Osteoporosis prevention and risk factors. A Healthy Bones program was presented to the Healthy Bladen Living participants. Forty-five citizens attended. Pre/post surveys indicated that all participants were more knowledgeable about Osteoporosis Prevention.

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<th>Elizabeth Blanks-Life Skills</th>
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<td><strong>Life Skills</strong></td>
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<td>Many youth referred to the Bladen County 4-H Life Skills program were having problems handling criticism. After participating in the Strengthening Families Program, “Managing Emotions and Handling Criticism” sessions and participating in a hands on experience planting flowers at one of the schools, 89% of these youth reduced the number of times they were sent to the school office for fighting over a several week period. Additionally, the same youth were succumbing to anger problems and participated in the “Coping with Anger” session of the Life Skills program. Eighty-five percent of these youth showed a change in behavior and self-esteem. Due to the success of the program, the program has been funded for another year. Pictured above is one of the many projects that the Life Skills program sponsors each year. Schools are beautified with flowers purchased through the program.</td>
<td>Teen Court program processed 15 misdemeanor cases this fiscal year. This saves the county monies in attorney fees and client supervision. Teen Court gives the client a second chance. After successfully completing the program clients are granted a clean record. Referrals were received from Juvenile Services, District Attorney’s Office and School Resource Officers. Program youth perform community service hours and attend educational classes. Three clients have requested to return and serve as volunteers with the program. We have seven volunteers graduating this year. All seven have been accepted and will be attending college in the fall. These youth have contributed numerous hours serving Bladen County. They have volunteered as attorneys, clerk of court, jurors, and worked on community service projects. They are seniors from East and West Bladen High Schools.</td>
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