Extension Highlights
Quarterly Report
April - June, 2005
July 1, 2005

North Carolina Cooperative Extension
Bladen County Center

Administration - Kent D. Wooten, CED

Administration
We here at Cooperative Extension were asked to assist with the State's hurricane relief effort, Operation Brighter Day. We assisted over 130 individuals with the application process. I am very proud of the Extension Team working together to serve these applicants while continuing our educational programs. We logged over 177 hours in completing this project.

Staff Update
Elizabeth Hackstall joined our staff on May 16, 2005 as the 4-H Life Skills Coordinator. Elizabeth comes to us from the Bladen County School System. We are very fortunate to have someone with her experience providing leadership to this youth-at-risk program.

On July 1, Ryan Harrelson joined our staff as the Field Crops Agent. Ryan served as the Horticulture Agent in Pender County for a year prior to coming to Bladen. He is a native of Bladen County with a field crops background. Ryan brings a mix of experience and education to this position. We are excited to have Ryan on-board.

Professional Improvement
Devona Beard our Administrative Assistant graduated from the Pathways Leadership Development program at NC State University. This is an intense leadership program offered to employees of the university. Devona is the first off-campus employee to be accepted to attend Pathways. To take advantage of her leadership skills, she has assumed Team Leader responsibilities for the secretarial staff.

Livestock - Becky Spearman, Extension Agent, Livestock

Bladen County Cooperative Extension and the Bladen County Livestock Association held two field days in June - a Beef Management Day and a Forage Management Day. The topics for The Beef Day included heifer replacement, using expected progeny differences (EPD's), nutrition and minerals, and animal handling facilities. Twenty-six producers attended the Beef Field Day. The topics for The Forage Day included weed and insect management, new varieties of forages, and nitrate management in hay and grass. Two hours of animal waste continuing education credits and one hour of pesticide credit were given to the forty-three producers who attended.

Hurricane season is approaching and pet, horse, and livestock owners need to prepare for the possibility of a storm. One recommended way for pet owners to prepare for an emergency such as a hurricane is to have their pet(s) micro-chipped. This is a permanent way to identify animals if they become lost or stolen. The Bladen County Cooperative Extension Office and the Bladen County Animal Response Team (Bladen CART) held two reduced price microchip clinics in April. Sixty-nine animals (67 dogs, 1 cat, and 1 horse) were chipped at the clinics. The team raised $621 to help educate animal owners to prepare themselves for an emergency. The team is distributing hurricane brochures to help educate pet and livestock owners on how to prepare for a hurricane. Animal owners who plan ahead can reduce their chances of losing animals if a storm occurs.
4-H and Youth Development - Angela Redinger, Extension Agent, 4-H

TRY-IT! Bladen County 4-H sent two teams to the recent Teens Reaching Youth in Innovative Teams (TRY-IT) training. A county 4-H TRY-IT! Team is composed of 3-4 early teens (ages 13-16) and at least one adult volunteer coach. The objectives of TRY-IT! are to use volunteerism as an effective strategy to build a stronger society; to use youth as equal partners in our educational endeavors; to promote teamwork that interconnects people, programs, and educational events; to offer programs that nurture strong and meaningful youth/adult partnerships; and to promote programs that empower and engage youth and adults as volunteers in service to their communities.

The first TRY-IT! Team is coached by Johnice Autry and Kathy Cooper. Team members are Wesley Hollis, Anthony Jones, Danielle Saddler and Jasmine Ward. This team’s focus is Diversity and Inclusion and they utilize the Shine Up and Step Out! curriculum. The team is required to teach the curriculum to at least 25 youth between the ages of 5-12 before September 1, 2005.

The second team was formed in partnership with Bladen Health Watch and is coached by Stacie Kilnaw and Tracie Register. Team members include Wesley Clark and Tanesha Munn, Peer Encouragers in the Health Watchers at School program. These team members will train new Peer Encouragers to assist them in the delivery of workshops focusing upon obesity prevention. Topics covered include nutrition, diet, and physical activity and they utilize the Jump Into Foods and Fitness (JIFF) curriculum. They must teach the curriculum to at least 50 youth between the ages of 5-12 before September 1, 2005.

Both of these teams are ready to teach in any educational setting (4-H Clubs, school enrichment, after school, day camps, etc.) and are available to speak to civic groups and organizations. If you would like more information on this initiative, or to book a TRY-IT! Team for your educational activity, please contact the 4-H Office at 862-4591.

Family and Consumer Sciences - Sandra Kelly, Extension Agent, FCS

Noonliting is a program designed to promote weight management and a healthful eating pattern by focusing on recommendations in the U.S. Dietary Guidelines. Participants attend sessions once a week for 13 weeks. Topics include moderation of fat and sugar eaten, variety of foods eaten, increase of foods and vegetables, the establishment of long-term food patterns and the importance of physical activity. Noonliting was recently held in Bladen County. Seven participants lost a total of 77 pounds while learning to prepare more healthy foods and working physical activity into their busy schedules.

The Family and Consumer Sciences Advisory Committee has identified Food Safety as an issue in Bladen County. Cooperative Extension and the County Health Department co-sponsored “ServSafe-Serving Food Safely” to food service providers. Thirteen people enrolled in the 18 hour food safety class. Ninety-two percent of participants passed the final exam. The County Environmental Health Specialist states that when conducting inspections, “it is evident that ServSafe participants are seeing the problems that unsafe food handling causes. They have a better understanding of proper handwashing and the importance of food temperatures. They also have a greater appreciation of the physical and financial aspects of safe food handling.”

Horticulture - Corey Crabtree, Extension Agent, Horticulture

On May 11, 2005, the Bladen County Extension Office held its first annual Muscadine Grape Production Meeting for existing and potential muscadine grape growers. Forty-one people from Bladen and surrounding counties attended the three hour meeting. Educational presentations included: “Opportunities in Muscadine Grape Production and Marketing” given by NCSU Small Fruits’ Specialist Dr. Barclay Poling and “Diseases and Disease Control” given by NCSU Plant Pathologist Specialist Mr. Bill Cline. Representatives from Nutragon, L.L.C. spoke about the benefits of muscadine grapes. Bladen County farmers are looking for new ways to generate income lost by the Tobacco Buyout Program. Bladen County’s muscadine grape acreage has increased by more than 50% in the last year.

The Bladen County Master Gardener program is now operational. On April 15, 2005, 12 volunteers attended the graduation luncheon in their honor. The Bladen County Master Gardeners are now giving back the necessary 40 hours of volunteer work. The Bladen County Master Gardener Plant Clinic, located inside the Bladen County Extension Office, opened on Tuesday May 17, 2005. The Plant Clinic is open every Tuesday and Thursday 10:00 am until 2:00 pm. Citizens can contact a Master Gardener by telephone and email. Walk-ins are welcome. Bladen County Master Gardeners answer questions and help diagnose disease and insect problems related to consumer horticulture.