Yancey County Extension Center
James Edward Magner, III
County Extension Director

Despite the hard economy it is an exciting time to be in Yancey County with NC STEP program, the Certified Entrepreneur Community program, Main Street Program, and the AG Center Study. People are working together, and pooling county resources and talent to develop a plan for the future, so that Yancey will be even a better place for our grandchildren. All the success stories started just like Yancey County. People came together to build their economies and communities.

The AG Center Study has looked at multiple sites in depth for an aggregation center. Smithson Mills, the consultant conducting the study will compile a report and a recommendation for the site with the best potential. Extension will host a meeting to share the findings of the Ag Center Study (to-date), Wednesday, April 20th at the Town Center at 7 AM.

The current state budget has NC Cooperative Extension slated for a 30% cut. On the state level Extension understands that these tough economic times has actually prepared for cuts. 30% would dramatically impact the ability of Extension to continue to provide the level of service that the people of North Carolina have come to expect.

The Extension budget is actually under the state’s education budget line item, and not in the agriculture line item. If you put the state extension budget with the agriculture budget it amounts to about 2% of the general fund. This is the amount that supports North Carolina’s 74 BILLION dollar agriculture industry.

Yancey County Extension truly appreciates the support from the County. Please know we will continue to work hard to be good stewards of public funds. All our programming efforts have two aims: to help people save more money or earn more money. Please take a moment to call or email our State Representatives to let them know how much you value extension programming, and ask them to minimize budget reductions.

Agriculture & Natural Resources
Stanley Holloway, Agriculture Agent

Early in the month 6 apple tree grafting classes were held. A total of 71 participants attended the events receiving detailed, hands-on instruction in the art of grafting fruit trees. Participants left with two of their own grafted trees. In addition, participants had the
opportunity to purchase additional apple rootstocks made available through Cooperative Extension. In total 900 semi-dwarfing apple rootstocks were distributed to local residents through the grafting classes. This was the third year that Yancey County Cooperative Extension has offered these classes and interest continues in learning this almost lost art. A number of current and former participants are looking at grafting apple trees as a potential economic opportunity. One former participant has used the knowledge gained to graft over 550 trees. This represents over $10,000 in additional income. A first time participant this year called back requesting additional rootstock since she was taking orders from her family and friends for grafted trees. She reported that this could prove to be a very successful opportunity to make additional income for her family.

As part of my Regional Burley Tobacco Coordinator responsibilities, I presented at the Madison County Tobacco Meeting in Marshall during the month. Over 75 tobacco producers attended the evening event, including 7 from Yancey County. I also travelled to Rogersville, TN to participate in RJR Tobacco’s grower meeting to gain knowledge on the potential implication FDA regulations may play on local tobacco producers.

Later in the month, I assisted the ToeCane Beekeepers leadership to hold a Beesting Awareness/Epi-Certification Program. Local EMS personnel presented a program on the potential danger of beestings and the signs and symptoms of a severe allergic reaction. Dr. David Johnson, ToeCane Beekeeper member, was on hand to write prescriptions for Epipens and also to sign off on the NC form for Epi Certification. Twenty-seven local beekeepers attended the educational event.

Twenty-one field visits were conducted during the month on a variety of topics including: fruit tree/vine pruning (6), soil testing (4), nursery crops issues (4), general landscape issues (4), greenhouse issues (2), and beekeeping (1). In addition, over 60 office visits and numerous telephone and e-mail consultations were conducted during the month regarding a wide variety of agricultural topics.

Agriculture & Natural Resources

Adam McCurry, NC A&T Agriculture Technician

Spring is here and a lot of things are happening in Yancey County. Once again this year there is an increased interest in farming as a way to generate income. This year we offered more workshops with an added variety of educational interest to assist people in planning and growing their crops. February we offered several workshops that were attended by over 100 people. We had a series on apple production that included basic production and apple pruning we also had an introduction to fruit production workshop. March we held our annual apple grafting workshops that were attended by nearly 70 people. On March 18th I held my annual Farmer Appreciation Day with over 60 people in attendance. I have also worked with a number of folks one on one with planning for this upcoming year’s crops. This time of year is always an exciting time for us as well as our local farmers.
Yancey 4-H Narratives

Mountain Challenge

Richard Chuvala, 4-H Program Assistant

Participants have developed their team building, communication and leadership skills. I have also challenged our participants to develop their critical thinking skills. An example is a game I call, “I’m going camping” or after our harsh winter, “I’m going to the beach”. Each participant has an opportunity to go with me to the beach, but in order to come with me they need to bring certain items. The participants take turns trying to figure out what kind of items I am looking for. Eventually they figure out that the items I’m looking for include double letters, such as, a bottle, food, or even a rabbit! Activities like this one help our youth to develop those “thinking outside of the box” skills that are necessary to help deal with daily struggles.

Heading into April we will continue to stay busy and will work on more team building. We will also be visiting some of our local colleges with the high school S.O.A.R class. I am also excited to once again offer our participants an opportunity to come with me to Betsy-Jeff Penn 4-H Summer Camp. I will be taking 10 of our local youth to enjoy a week long 4-H camp located near Reidsville, NC. I already have 7 participants signed up and they are going to earn scholarship money through community service projects between now and July. We are certainly looking forward to another busy yet fun month of Mtn. Challenge.

4-H AfterSchool:

Bald Creek Academy

Susie Hedrick, Glenna Taylor, 4-H Program Assistants

In addition to our regular snack, homework, and recycling each day, we began our karate lessons with Mark Williams. He comes once a week and the children really enjoy these lessons. This teaches them self-respect, self-confidence and self-discipline. He asked them to do three things each week between lessons: practice their karate, do their homework, and say, “thank you” to their parents. We have also had Richard Chuvala (Mountain Challenge) team building, Jo Simpson made waffles with berries for our nutrition lesson, and FFA “PALS” students came.

The students also made posters for Small Farms week. Adam McCurry spoke to the youth about the importance of farming and explained the contest to them. Lia Kirkimilus, a fourth grader from Bald Creek won first place. She and her family attended the Small Farm Appreciation luncheon at the Town Center where she was presented a trophy for her poster.

The students also learned to identify different vegetables seeds and took the seeds home with them to plant. They decorated their own flowerpot to take home and can plant either seeds or a flower plant in it.

Bee Log Afterschool

Debra Erickson, Daniel Semon, 4-H Program Assistants

March has been a rainy month, giving us the opportunity to watch the frogs lay eggs in the pond at Bee Log. We will study them as they progress some have already grown tails.

This month we are searching for talent for the 4H Talent Show in May. We’ve found some great voices and will help them practice until then.
Three more 5th graders joined our club and requests have been made for more enrollment forms. As our group grows so will our achievements.

Jo Simpson came out and taught the students how to make waffles from scratch, using strawberries & whip topping instead of syrup. What a success! They loved the simplicity of the recipe and took copies home to make with their families.

We have done lots of team building activities using stick art, bubble magic, building bridges, sewing and making rain sticks. Also, we go outside (weather permitting) or in the gym daily for at least 30 minutes of exercise. All in all it has been a good month.

4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)

Jo Simpson, 4-H Program Associate

Youth EFNEP presented 20 lessons this month to over 400 students in Bald Creek and Micaville Elementary Schools. Over 170 students received 6 hands on nutrition lesson and graduated from the program while 200 began their adventure with the Professor Popcorn lessons. Students gain knowledge in the area of nutrition and food safety and also learned proper hand washing techniques and ways to prevent the spreading of germs. They also discovered that eating fruits and vegetables daily along with eating a healthy breakfast everyday could help build their immune system to ward off sickness. Students helped prepare several nutritious snacks.

I attended 3 days of EFNEP curriculum training this month in Raleigh. The State EFNEP staff provided the training and fellow colleagues gave demonstrations on each different type of curricula offered for EFNEP. I demonstrated a lesson from the Food for Thought curriculum. It was a fun educational training.

4-H School Enrichment

Sybil Chapman, 4-H Program Assistant

I attended “Building Entrepreneur Skills” at Mayland Community College and learned new ways to present entrepreneurship to Middle School youth in CareeSmarts classes. I have also taken three classes of Learning the Language of LEA (Local Education Agency). These classes help when I am working with the teachers and principals to present my school enrichment programs. Next month I have a face-to-face class in Statesville.

I have taught CareerSmarts to CRMS seventh graders. This month we talked about personalities and how they relate to getting a job. I helped the students learn how to fill out a job application and what to say or not say in a job interview.

I have gone out to the Discovery Club meetings with Linda Semon and I filled in at Bald Creek afterschool site.

4-H Discovery

Linda Semon, 4-H Program Associate

4-H Discovery Club members celebrated NC A&T State University’s Small Farms Week by participating in a poster contest. This contest is designed to be an educational activity for youth to learn about our farming industry across North Carolina. This year’s theme is “Planting Dreams, Cultivating Success.”
Division 1 (6-8 years of age) all ages received ribbons
Division 2 (9-12 years of age) winners received trophies & all entries received ribbons
  First Place: Lia Kurkimilis
  Second Place: Jonah Riddle
  Third Place: Brandy Daugherty
Division 3 (13-16 years of age) winners received trophies & all entries received ribbons
  First Place: Hope Robinson
  Second Place: Payton McCoyle
  Third Place: E.J. Ochoa

4-H Discovery Club members learned about how to plant seeds in a garden. Each received a package of seeds they packed themselves. They also decorated a pot to put a plant in.

Our 4-H Green Team is a group of dedicated 4-H Members who have joined to start doing community service projects. They started this month by working at the Yancey Community Garden.

Our Longshots Shooting Sports Team had their first district competition and placed first in two categories and is sending one of their youth to the state level. The seven adults donated 210 hours of 4-H Green Team work last month.
GREEN TEAM PARTICIPANTS

The 6 youth and 2 adults worked in the community garden, donating 16 hours of service last month. This has been a joint project with Extension, 4-H and the community. Stanley Holloway and Adam McCurry helped during the grant application; volunteers in the community and 4-H'er's have worked hard, initially with cabbage, to provide local produce for the Reconciliation House and The Soup Kitchen.