**Mission**

The 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.

**Strategic Priorities**

- To strengthen the economy through profitable, sustainable and safe food, forest and green industry systems.
- To protect the environment and natural resources.
- To empower youth and families to lead healthier lives and to become community leaders.

**Contact Us**

Yancey County Center
10 Orchard Drive
Burnsville, NC 28714
Phone: 828-682-6186
Fax: 828-682-7680

Hello:

The NC Cooperative Extension Yancey County staff worked hard this past year to provide quality, valuable programs and services for families and agribusiness. I want to express appreciation to the outstanding staff members for their dedicated efforts and to the Extension Advisory Council, under the leadership of Jim Parlier, which contributed in many ways to the county programming efforts through needs assessment, resources identification, awards presentations, program volunteer service, and advocating for Cooperative Extension. We appreciate the state-level volunteer service provided by Jim Parlier, Paula Miller, Mariela Black and Daniel Semon. This past year, Caleb Black served as the President of the NC 4-H Council during the 4-H Centennial.

Extension efforts during the last program year, included 38,398 contacts with residents including 17,188 face-to-face contacts through office visits, workshops, seminars, and demonstrations and 21,210 contacts made through telephone, email, and newsletters. We appreciate the 236 Extension volunteers who extended our educational programming efforts with a contribution of 2,715 hours valued at $52,969.65. The Yancey Center received $124,851 in grant funding last year to extend programming efforts.

Our business is to help people solve problems—economic, social, environmental—by connecting them with rich unbiased, research-based knowledge and technical innovations made possible by NC State and NC A&T State Universities through educational programs, publications, and events. Extension programming top priority areas based on major issues identified in long-range planning efforts were:

1. *Improving Health & Nutrition:* Cooperative Extension is committed to work with families and schools to help individuals gain knowledge and skills needed to make the changes that can reverse the current trends of obesity and chronic disease.
2. *Educational Achievement and Excellence:* Youth and adult education help strengthen knowledge and skills, provide certification for careers, and enhance the quality of life for individuals and families in our competitive, global economy that depends on a workforce that is competent, innovative, and entrepreneurial.
3. *Agriculture and Food Supply:* Agribusiness remains a vital industry even with the loss of prime farmland. The local food and nursery crops producers, the strong agribusiness leaders, and the environmental and natural resource stewardship practices continue to impact the economy in a positive way.

The NC Cooperative Extension will continue to partner with communities to deliver education and technology that enrich the lives, land and economy of North Carolinians.

Sincerely,

Denise M. Oster
Pesticide Applicator Training & State Certification: Fifty-eight private applicators and 15 commercial applicators received recertification credits and gained or improved knowledge of pesticide handling and storage safety, new NC pesticide laws and regulations, personal protective equipment, sprayer calibration, protecting the environment, and pesticide formulation characteristics and modes of action. In addition, Extension offered a pesticide applicator educational program and testing session in conjunction with NCDA&CS Pesticide Section personnel. Fifteen individuals took commercial pesticide exams and 4 individuals took the private applicator exam to receive their initial certification as pesticide applicators.

Problem Solving/Emergency Agricultural and Natural Resource Situations, from black spot on roses to blight on tomatoes to squirrels in the attic or snakes in the house, Yancey Extension staff is available to answer questions for residents. Cooperative Extension is also available and prepared to assist when disaster strikes whether it natural disasters such as floods or freezes or mechanical mishaps such as faulty greenhouse heaters or ventilation systems.

WNC Ag Options Program: The WNC Agricultural Options is a mini-grant program administered by Cooperative Extension in WNC with funding provided through the NC Tobacco Trust Fund. For the 2009 funding year, eight proposals were submitted by Yancey County growers with four (50%) receiving funding totaling $15,000. Funded projects included a drip irrigation system for small fruit and vegetable production, a germination chamber for growing ornamental, floriculture, and vegetable starts from seed, a greenhouse for production of certified organic vegetable seedlings, and an agritourism expansion project that included the development of a classroom and additional parking to enhance current agritourism efforts.

Forage Production Education & Pasture Field Day: Agricultural staff assisted 53 local livestock producers, representing over 1700 acres of forage production, to provide technical assistance specific to the individual producer’s farm situation focused on putting their forage based systems back in place following two years of severe drought conditions. Given a nominal value of $85/ton of forage produced, this represents over $500,000 in savings or income. Extension Livestock Specialist and producers increased their knowledge of pasture management, improved forage production, and forage based livestock management.

Beekeeper Education: Bees are important to our society with one-third of the food we eat somehow directly tied to the honeybee. Diseases, mites, and other pests are taking their toll on the honeybee populations. The Toe Cane Beekeepers Association, with cooperation, guidance and assistance from Cooperative Extension, hold monthly educational meetings and events designed at helping over 130 beekeepers keep their hives alive, healthy, and productive.

“"The earth is given as a common stock for man to labor and live on. The small landowners are the most precious part of a state." — Thomas Jefferson
Small-Scale Farm Production

North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University Cooperative Extension partners with Yancey County government to provide technical support for local small-scale farmers. Through the university, farmers have opportunities to learn research-based production best practices to help them sustain profitability and provide locally produced foods.

Yancey County Strawberry Project: The demand for fresh strawberries has always been high in Yancey County. In recent years the number of strawberries grown locally has steadily declined. Due to these facts Cooperative Extension worked with a group of farmers that where looking for a crop to offset the loss of tobacco production. Each one of the growers involved in the project put out small plots of strawberries. Although there where some production and weather issues this year most of the growers plan to take what they have learned and expand production in the coming years. In the future hopefully the demand for strawberries can be supplied locally.

Food Safety Training: The concern of the safety of our food supply is becoming a huge issue. With this in mind Yancey County Cooperative Extension held a Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) training for local producers. The training was held buy Dr. Keith Baldwin the horticultural specialist and program leader for NCA&TSU. Seventeen Yancey County farmers learned the latest on food safety as it applies to the farm production. The farmers continue to implement what they learned in this training in their operations toward future GAP certification. Agribusiness has high stakes in “farm-to-table” food safety.

Apple Tree Grafting Workshop Yancey Cooperative Extension held an apple tree-grafting workshop. The workshop was held by Joe Conner a horticultural and research technician with The Mountain Horticultural Crops and Extension Center at Mills River. The idea behind the workshop was to give the 51 farmers that attended the knowledge to graft an apple tree. With this knowledge they would be able collect cuttings and graft trees from some of the old heirloom trees that are found around old homesteads throughout the county. There is a high demand for these apples and for the trees themselves. Due to this niche market farmers can take what they learned at the workshop and generate extra farm income by selling apples or apple trees. Hopefully this is the first step in revitalizing the once thriving apple industry in Yancey County.

Small Farmer Appreciation Day Luncheon was held in March as part of NC A&T State University Small Farms Week. "In addition to stabilizing communities, small farms contribute millions of dollars to the North Carolina economy," said Dr. Daniel Lyons, chairperson of Small Farms Week and assistant administrator of regional and county programs for A&T's Cooperative Extension Program. The goal of the event was to recognize the important role that small-scale farms play in our community. There were 50 farmers as well as a number of local officials that attended. The farmers where served a lunch that was 100% sponsored by Yancey Farm Bureau, Carolina Farm Credit, and Yancey County Farmers’ Market. There are plans to make this an annual event in order to showcase local farmers and to raise public awareness of who they are and what they offer. “Small farms are the quiet, but major economic force behind many rural communities,” said Dr. Daniel Lyons, chairperson of Small Farms Week and assistant administrator of regional and county programs for A&T's Cooperative Extension Program. "The people who make these farms work deserve recognition, and we're proud to play a key role in the recognition process."

Farmland Preservation efforts are best supported by keeping farms profitable. The NC Cooperative Extension agricultural staff provides educational information to help make sure local farmers have the knowledge and skills for best agricultural practices, and the staff is making multiple efforts to reach young audiences through 4-H and FFA to encourage students to consider agribusiness as a career choice. Cooperative Extension is supporting the efforts of local government to inform landowners of options for preserving working farmland and the natural resources Yancey families have enjoyed for hundreds of years.
Yancey Grown is an ongoing marketing initiative designed to enhance sales of locally grown agricultural products using the logo to establish a local brand. Over 40 local producers are listed on the website with new listings being added on a frequent basis. The website is currently linked on the Yancey County Cooperative Extension website, as well as the Yancey County Chamber of Commerce and Yancey County Government sites. Donations and grant funds have been secured to fund billboards along Highway 19 to advertise the website.

Small Fruit Production Workshops: Thirty one participants received up-to-date production information and recommendations for blueberries, brambles, strawberries, and grapes specific for the area. Workshop evaluation revealed that 100% of the participants improved knowledge about small fruit fertility management, proper pruning and training/trellising systems; 95% improved knowledge of small fruit options, small fruit production methods, proper site selection, and proper planting techniques; 81% are currently or planning to start or expand small fruit production and 36% plan to implement commercial small fruit production.

Fruit Plant Distribution: Interest in home fruit production has increased as a result of the economy and interest in locally grown produce. Yancey County Cooperative Extension’s annual plant distribution this year included 1,350 blueberry plants, over 16,000 strawberry plants, 1,775 bramble plants, 950 asparagus crowns, 50 horseradish roots, and 335 heirloom variety apple trees were distributed to just under 300 local families. Participants received plant production instructions.

Basic Soils Workshops: Workshop evaluation revealed that 94% of the participants improved knowledge of plant and nutrient interactions; 89% improved knowledge of soils and soil composition, essential plant nutrients, proper soil testing procedures, and interpreting a soil test report; 74% of the participants indicated they were going to implement routine soil sampling, use proper liming techniques, and only apply the needed level of nutrients as determined by soil test and 26% were already doing these practices; 16% were already following best management practices (BMPs) for soil fertility and the remaining 84% indicated they were going to begin following soil fertility BMPs.

Wildlife Management Workshop: Cooperative Extension, in cooperation with the NC Wildlife Resources Commission, NC State University Forestry Department, Western Carolina Quality Deer Management Program, and others, conducted a Habitat Management for Wildlife & Whitetail Deer Workshop in an effort to educate over 75 landowners on the principles and opportunities for wildlife management on private lands.

Wildlife Conservation Camp helps youth appreciate our and resources, water quality, and natural wildlife. Dedicated volunteers share their expertise and time to ensure that today’s youth understand the value of conserving our natural resources for years to come.
Financial Literacy Education Program:
A weekly financial literacy program was held for six-weeks with Bald Creek Elementary After School students and their families using material developed by university Extension specialists. The main focus was on understanding money, the value of money, how we get money, how to save money, how to manage money that you get, working for money, and spending wisely. Students participated in sessions that were based on age appropriate curriculum, and parents received financial program materials targeted for family money management. The program evaluation indicated that 60% of the youth had begun saving money, 75% had begun to control impulse buying, and 80% had begun doing odd jobs for family and extended family to earn extra money.

Playgrounds of Learning Conference Workshop, “Preschool Nutrition for Meals and Snacks,” was developed into an attractively bound workbook with chapters on food safety, nutrition, eight weeks worth of menus and recipes for nutritious meals and snacks. The 15 participants gained valuable information to help them gain skills that will help them provide more nutritious and safer food for the children, an at-risk population group for food borne illness. There have been ten request for the resource manual that was created to serve as a reference for participants.

Food Preservation Workshops reached 32 residents with research-based information on how to can and freeze vegetables and fruit and how to make jams, jellies and pickles. This is not counting the large number of people who called in for canning information. News articles on the safe canning of tomatoes were published in the Yancey newspaper. Unfortunately, many people are still using old canning recipes which may be unsafe and may cause dangerous food borne illness. My goal, through classes, newsletters and newspaper articles is to educate as many people as I can about safe ways to preserve food. Residents can bring dial-gauge canners in for testing.

"Money Matters," developed by extension specialists at NC State University and "Credit Costs," developed by the University of Idaho specialists, were research-based curricula to teach recent workshops for local residents with an emphasis on helping people get control of their finances, manage their money, get out of debt, understand credit and the importance of a good credit score, live on limited income, learn ways to increase income, and guard against identity theft. The programs also included low-cost, healthy recipes, ways to reduce household expenses, and ways to save on energy costs. A post-test survey indicated that 55% of participants were trying to follow recommended methods to reduce household expenses; 62% planned to use low cost healthy recipes, 70% planned to make managing their money a priority.

The Youth Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is conducted through the Cooperative Extension Service targeting youth ages 5-19 years with a series of nutrition lessons. While using a hands-on approach, 4-H EFNEP encourages youth to make smart choices from each food group, find a balance between food and physical activity, read food labels, and use safe food handling techniques. During lessons, students have fun preparing healthy snacks such as; fruit salads, exotic fruits, fruit parfaits, veggie pizzas and more. Energizers are also introduced to the students to help enhance physical activity fun. The 4-H EFNEP Associate reached 1193 students last year in 54 school enrichment sessions. Pre and post surveys given to third through fifth grade students indicate that 84% of youth now eat a variety of foods, 88% increased their knowledge of the essentials of human nutrition, and 96% increased their ability to select low-cost, nutritious foods. The knowledge and skills gleaned will prove their value in students’ lives for years to come.

Summer Cooking School Day-Camp evaluation results indicate that 87% of campers plan to make better food safety behaviors and 71% plan to improve their eating habits. The youth were surprised to learn how easily cross-contamination can occur by not washing hands and how cross-contamination can lead to food borne illness caused by bacteria like e-coli and salmonella. 4-H and Family & Consumer Sciences staff under the leadership of the 4-H EFNEP Program Associate, Jo Simpson, worked with day campers who had fun learning about MyPyramid, how to read and follow a recipe, as well as, preparing and planning each day’s lunch and snack. Throughout the week children gained knowledge on hand washing and food safety and practiced basic kitchen safety and food service guidelines. The goals of this program were to encourage youth: 1) to eat healthier foods and local fresh vegetables, 2) to learn basic cooking and food safety skills, and 3) to learn about food service as a career choice.
Yancey County 4-H celebrated the 100th birthday of the 4-H Program in North Carolina, from 1909-2009, pledging our Heads, Hearts, Hands and Health to the betterment of our community, our country, and our world. This event recognized youth and adults for their accomplishments this year in the 4-H program. Youth were recognized for their leadership as county, district and state officers. 4-H members received awards for 4-H Presentations, a premier public speaking program; 4-H Project Records, 4-H District Teen Retreat, 4-H Citizenship Focus, 4-H Special Interest Programs and 4-H Camping.

Leadership: Caleb Black was recognized at the Commissioners’ meeting in August and Chairman of the Board of Commissioners, Walter Savage, presented a leadership award to Caleb for his leadership as the 2008-2009 President of the NC 4-H Council.

“I have learned leadership, public speaking and a myriad of other skills that have shaped my life, my career choices and insured my relevance in our global society.”

Caleb Black

4-H Discovery Community Clubs, for youth ages 5-19, build life skills to create active citizens and resilient youth with guidance from the 4-H Program Associate from NC A&T State University. Working to make their best better, 4-H Members elect officers, run their business meetings with parliamentary procedure, complete community service projects, learn about citizenship and study subjects from Aerospace to Zoology. 191 youth were enrolled in the 2008-2009 school year.

4-H Presentations is a youth development program that helps youth build public speaking skills. Presentations are judged at the district and state level for youth ages 9-19. This year Yancey County 4-H had seven district winners and two state Silver Award Winners.
Dedicated mature community volunteers give a minimum of two hours a week with a student match. Students are referred for a match with these terrific people who give the most precious resource they have, their time, to enhance the quality of life of these referred students. Volunteers unselfishly share their time to create a positive, safe environment in which to monitor young people who are having major struggles at home. Currently, there are seven youth who are matched up with volunteers who arrange their schedule on a weekly basis to include the student in their normal family routines or they plan a large event to encourage the student to experience some positive experiences to help them feel they are having a successful relationship.

100 Years! Wow. What an achievement. And, what a birthday! Few organizations or companies ever reach their centennial year. In 2009 the North Carolina 4-H Program celebrated 100 years. From humble beginnings in northeastern North Carolina as corn growing clubs, NC 4-H has grown into the largest youth development program in the state. Today’s 4-H is a mirror image demographically of the youth living in North Carolina between the ages of 5 and 19. We now serve more than 239,000 young people.”
YANCEY COUNTY STAFF

Denise Baker  County Ext. Director
Bob Bettini  4-H Program Assistant
Sybil Chapman, School Enrichment
Norma Chrisawn  Administrative Secretary
Richard Chuvala  4-H Program Assistant
Debra Erickson  4-H Program Assistant
Stanley Holloway  Agriculture Agent
Susie Hedrick, After School
Adam McCurry  Agriculture Technician
Beverly Nelson  Family and Consumer Sciences Agent
Carla Robinson  Parent Educator
Molly Sandfloss  Area Specialized Agent
Daniel Semon  4-H Program Assistant
Linda Semon  4-H Program Associate
Jo Simpson  4-H Expanded Foods & Nutrition Program Associate
Glenna Taylor  4-H Program Assistant
Brenda Wilson, Secretary

EMPOWERING PEOPLE PROVIDING SOLUTIONS

OUR LIVES
- Healthy weight and chronic disease prevention.
- Life skills and parenting.
- Caregiving skills for children and elderly
- Youth and adults achieve educational success

OUR LAND
- Sustainable, profitable and safe plant, animal and food systems.
- Environmental stewardship and natural resources management.
- Energy conservation and alternatives
- Emergency and disaster preparedness

OUR ECONOMY
- Workforce and economic development.
- Community, leader and volunteer development

YANCEY COUNTY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Chair: Jim Parlier

Members:
- David Autrey
- Chad Ayers
- Penny Bailey
- Jeremy Ballard
- Maricka Black
- Joy Boothe
- Rita Earley
- Betty Fender
- Elizabeth Gibbs
- Gwen Harris
- Bill Jones
- Eloise McIntosh
- Paula Miller
- Freddy Penland
- Terry Peterson
- Peggy Rogers
- Walter Savage
- Robert Thompson
- Jerry Wilson

EMPOWERING PEOPLE PROVIDING SOLUTIONS