YANCEY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION NARRATIVES

August 2013

CED, Yancey County Center
James E. Magner, III

4-H After School has begun. The program is working hard to ensure fun, educational settings at Bee Log and Bald Creek. The 4-H staff has an exciting year planned and seven new 4-H volunteers will be helping to expand the programs impact. 4-H has also been working with the new Gear Up program to design educational programs that will help students with test and academics, but also help develop them into tomorrow's leaders.

TRACTOR continues to thrive despite the poor weather. Close to $30,000 of produce has been moved thru the center this season to 38 different buyers! We are working with two buyers who want to take farm tours. These tours help build that relationship we need to fully expand.

Announcements

ServSafe
Sept 9 Yancey Extension Center
Oct 28 US Forest Serv-Crossnore

Afterschool Starts
Aug 26 Bald Creek Elementary
Sept. 3 Bee Log Elementary

Boxwood Meeting
Sept 17 Yancey Ext. Center 5:30PM

Agriculture
Stanley Holloway

Producers have dealt with flash flooding, drowning plants, and increased pest issues. This equates to a difficult season for TRACTOR as the demand for our local produce far exceeds our supply; however, the facility continues to move product and to date has sold to over 35 different buyers and by the end of the month should exceed $30,000 in sales. TRACTOR will be going through an audit to be GAP Certified as a packing facility late in the month. More exciting, TRACTOR now possesses a refrigerated delivery truck.

Boxwood blight is another major issue of the month. Boxwood blight is a relatively new disease in the US (introduced in 2010) that has the potential to seriously impact the American and English boxwood industry. It has now been found in all boxwood producing states of the US, including North Carolina. The disease was first discovered/reported in Yancey County last November and due to the severely wet weather conditions has been spreading. I have been working with our Extension Plant Pathologist and a number of individual producers to manage/prevent the spread of this devastating disease. An educational meeting on management and sanitation measures is scheduled for next month.

In addition to the above I conducted 21 farm visits on a variety of topics including: tobacco (2), commercial vegetables (6), commercial horticulture (5), home fruit (2), and general home garden/landscape (6), over 40 office visits and numerous telephone/e-mail correspondences regarding a wide array of agricultural topics.

Horticulture & Agriculture
Jeremy Delisle

The past month has been busy and full of challenges from a production standpoint. Growers have dealt with above average rainfall, yet have somehow managed to bring in their harvests, even if they are somewhat reduced.

One highlight this past month was the farm tour that we conducted for Ingles. Regional buyers and Produce Managers visited 3 farms in Yancey County to learn about both organic and conventional production. Post-tour surveys described their experience. Many were surprised at the amount of planning that goes into farming, as well as the significant challenges producers must overcome to bring a crop to harvest.

TRACTOR Director Robin Smith commented that sales have increased significantly since the tour and that the producer managers are even more receptive to the idea of our local food hub after learning more about it and visiting our farms.

Agriculture
Adam McCurry

The harvest is under way for local farmers. Due to the wet weather that we have had this year, plant disease is high. This month has been spent working with growers to protect their crops so that they will have a decent crop to harvest. The TRACTOR project is also going strong with a number of local growers moving product though the facility. The TRACTOR facility is getting ready for a GAP audit at the end of the month. This will allow TRACTOR to get more locally grown product into more markets.

Great for Stuffing!

A Jim Edwards "Jumbo" green pepper delivered to our local Ingles Markets through T.R.A.C.T.O.R.

Family & Consumer Sciences
Hannah Nichols

This month programming and outreach has been heavily focused on local foods and supporting the efforts of Yancey County farmers. Several staff members attended the Local Foods Security Summit held at Avery County High School. The event was organized by Manna Food Bank, and brought community leaders together to collaborate on ways to lessen the effects of food insecurity in Western North Carolina. The Yancey County Extension Center also held a workshop to educate participants on how to safely can tomatoes using a water bath canner, in efforts to decrease the risk of food borne illnesses in our area. Similarly to last month, I held a live cooking demonstration at the Yancey County Farmers Market. Individuals who participated learned how to make simple, affordable meals using local produce and local beef. This month I attended a two-day training in Raleigh, NC, for new employees where I acquired the skills necessary to better serve our community, and preform my job duties in a more efficient manner.

Planning for the 2013-2014 School Year begins with 4-H Staff

As 4-H begins their afterschool at Bald Creek and Bee Log Elementary Schools, we have been making plans for the many activities which will make this a successful year using our 4-H curriculum. Yancey 4-H has many programs to help reach the youth: Afterschool, School Enrichment, Family & Consumer Sciences, Mtn. Challenge, EFNEP (School Age Nutrition), and Discovery Clubs. The Extension and 4-H programs work together to support and enhance the educational needs of the students and the teachers.

Mtn. Challenge
Peirce Bingham

In June and July Mountain Challenge embarked on a new "challenge" with its summer program for at risk middle school kids. We had 11 participants for 8 weeks M-F from 8:30 to 4:30 each day. The kids were chosen from court referrals, the YCLA School, and DSS case plans. We hiked on Mt Mitchell, Grand Father Mountain and High Peaks trails, learned about future vocations at Mayland, TD Bank, the Sheriffs Dept., DSS and the Energy Exchange. We performed community service with and learned the mission of, Dig-In, Tri-County Pregnancy center, Domestic Violence Coalition, Reconciliation House, and High Peaks Trails, planted and constructed a learning garden at Yancey Extension Center, and visited experiential learning sites for interactive learning including the Nature Center, Grand Father Mountain teaching center, horticulture lab at Mayland and the pottery and glass blowing studios at the Energy Exchange. Each day we had a classroom time to address issues and topics that face the population of youth we were servicing, and every day we worked on team building and pro social skills from a group dynamic. Many community leaders made room in their schedules to present programs for us, Dr. Barron and Amber at the library hosted us each week with a reading program, and technology presentation, and each of the kids received a book to read from Malaprops bookstore. We did exciting field trips, arts and crafts, 4H Project Books, sports activities, swimming and much more! I believe we saw great personal growth and awareness among the kids and a difference was made in their lives. I want to thank you personally for the opportunity to provide this program and I look forward to next summer! Since then we have been busily preparing for our school programs, which have begun at Mountain Heritage and Bald Creek and will start soon at Burnsville Elementary.

Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program
Jo Simpson

New curriculum for this year is entitled “Show Me Nutrition” and will be a six-lesson series that uses a hands-on teaching approach. This curriculum has been adapted to address North Carolina’s new Core and Essential Standards and addresses Nutrition and Physical Activity and Reading, Writing and Math.

Last year, Youth EFNEP reached 1170 Yancey County students. 87% had begun to eat a variety of foods; 65% had improved in their consumption of either fruits or vegetables; 91% had improved their knowledge of nutrition; 97% had improved in their ability to select low-cost nutritious foods; and 65% had improved in the amount of time spent being physically active. These outcomes were based on comparative results of pre/post surveys completed by all youth in grades K-5.

4-H Discovery,
Linda Semon

It was an electrifying summer! I traveled with two 4-Hers to the 66th annual NC 4- H Electric Congress in Charlotte, July 22-24. During workshops youth learned about energy conservation and safe electricity use; they also had a chance to meet with representatives from the major power companies and attend a career fair. 4-H Discovery will be holding workshops

this school year to help youth learn about the use of electric energy and the opportunities offered in the 4-H Electric program.

4-H'er Hope Robinson from Yancey County attended the third annual North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) Youth Summit, which was held in Greensboro, North Carolina August 23-24, 2013 North Carolina 4-H and the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service partnered for the fourth year with the NCACC on a multi-year initiative to increase youth involvement in county government. This initiative aims to overcome the mindset that many youth are disengaged and lack trust in government. Hope has been active with the 4-H FIRST (Finding Intelligent Responsible Solutions Together) in Yancey and provides public service announcements and community close-up interviews on WKYK Radio. Over 100 youth and adults from 74 counties in North Carolina attended this event. The event is sponsored and supported by the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners.

One adult 4-H volunteer and five Yancey County youth attended the NC A&T State University sponsored 4-H Residential Robotics Academy held at Betsy-Jeff Penn 4-H Education Center in Reidsville,NC, July 28th – August 3rd. Youth learned skills that will help them share the concepts of the robotics program with other youth in our county. The youth who attended also participated in the traditional camp activities offered during the week such as: archery, horseback riding, canoeing, crafts, swimming and more.

Two Yancey County 4-Hers attended 4-H Leadership Camp at Swannanoa 4-H Education center July 29-31; they attended workshops and completed team-building activities with youth from across the West District.

Bald Creek Afterschool,
Susie Hedrick & Elizabeth McIntosh

The Bald Creek Afterschool begins August 26th. The staff will provide a snack, tutoring, and a protective place for students for working parents. We will be doing special learning projects, which will continue throughout the year. Some of these are gardening, heritage projects, nutrition, teambuilding and Discovery Clubs. The 4-H staff looks forward to working with your child this year.

Bee Log Afterschool,
Gail England & Lesia Phillips

Registration for Bee Log Afterschool is Tuesday Aug 27th 6p-8pm at Bee Log School. The actual start date is Tuesday Sept. 3rd, 2:30-5:30pm. Wednesdays, beginning September 4th, Wendy Calkins, a new 4-H volunteer, will start sewing projects with the children with the exception of September 18th when Jamie Pate, 4-H volunteer and Bee Log teacher, projects with rabbits and poultry. Linda Semon will be there also to start the Bee Log Bears 4-H Club. Cassie Floan, 4-H volunteer, will begin a recycling program with the children. Amy Trobaugh, 4-H volunteer, will begin our greenhouse project. Jo Simpson will teach nutrition and cooking with the children. As always we will be working with the children to help them get their homework completed and we will have arts and crafts throughout the month. We are looking forward to a productive and busy year.

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