2010 was a successful year for programs delivered by the Mitchell County Extension Center staff. Programs were successful due to the hard work of the staff and a dedication from our Advisory Council ensuring that we are providing relevant programs and meeting the expressed needs of county citizens.

Needs were identified through an environmental scan process completed in 2008-2009 to determine the educational issues that should be given high priority by our staff. The environmental scan was conducted by surveying citizens, gathering input from various focus groups, advisory leadership council input, census information and direct observation. From this needs assessment, three key issues were identified that our staff should focus on in 2010. These issues included:

1. Healthy Weight and Chronic Disease Prevention: 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. Youth and Adult Academic Success: 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. Sustainable, Profitable and Safe Plant, Animal and Food Systems: 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.

Through these programming efforts Mitchell County Extension staff were able to make 12,199 contacts with county citizens through meetings, on-farm visits, workshops, telephone, email, newsletters and various other outlets. We presented information through 86 meetings, workshops, demonstrations, lectures and conferences. Staff also worked to obtain over $93,000 in funding to present programs such as farmers market marketing, Medicare Part D election, 4-H life skill development, 4-H livestock showing program and agriculture demonstrations and meetings.

Mitchell County Cooperative Extension looks forward to carrying out the mission of the N.C. Cooperative Extension for the citizens of Mitchell County by helping them put research-based knowledge to work for economic prosperity, environmental stewardship, and improved quality of life.
Adult and Youth Health and Nutrition:
- Forty-three third graders learned the importance of good nutrition and exercise by participating in the Snap-Ed School Nutrition Program. One hundred percent of parents evaluated reported observing their children eating more fruits and vegetables, 33% reported their children drinking fewer sodas, and 50% of the parents reported their children reading nutrition labels, and 25% reported their child becoming more physically active.
- Sixty adults have increased their knowledge about the importance of reducing risk factors for chronic disease.
- Seventy-four participants gained knowledge in basic financial management (budgeting, record keeping, goal setting) through news articles and presentations.

Youth Educational Achievement and Excellence:
- Nearly 300 students participated in the national 4-H science experiment. This program provided students with up-to-date information on water quality and how people can have an effect on the condition of their environment. The students’ showed an 84% increase in knowledge of water quality, carbon dioxide, and environmental effects. There was 100% teacher satisfaction with 4-H, the experiment, and the curriculum with 63% being extremely satisfied.
- Mitchell County 4-H secured $31,000 through JCPC to implement a new program for court referred youth ages 14-18. This new program titled ALIVE provides participants with learning experiences which increases their awareness of self, their personal environments, and current situations.
- To raise the awareness of the importance of agriculture in Mitchell County, the Extension staff worked together to implement a strawberry project with a group of second grade students at two schools in Mitchell County.

Agriculture and Food Safety:
- Two hundred eleven pesticide applicators were certified or recertified through twelve Extension classes.
- Mitchell County has partnered with the other Christmas tree producing counties and Christmas tree specialist to do a joint area wide marketing workshop. Marketing education has also been provided through the local county Christmas tree association and through a two county production meeting. Over 134 people have gained knowledge of marketing through these efforts. Four Mitchell County Christmas tree producers that participated in the regional marketing conference saw a 10% increase in sales during 2010.
- Over forty people participated in an alternative agriculture workshop gaining knowledge of alternative agriculture crops and production techniques that they could help increase in their farm profits.
- The Voluntary Agriculture District program has 22 farmers participating, representing over 3500 acres.
- One hundred thirty-four participants increased their knowledge of best management production practices that can increase net farm incomes by increasing production in a cost effective manner and/or by reducing cost of production.
- Farmers have increased their farm income by $35,000 as a result of the production of new or alternative crops/enterprises.
- Fifty-four farmers are selling products locally and they have increased their farm income by $20,000 due to local sales.

FROM: ____________________
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Mitchell County