

2015 Mitchell County Cooperative Extension Report to the People

Mitchell County Center

February 2016

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Mitchell County Cooperative Extension works to provide the citizens of Mitchell County with educational information to improve their quality of life. Mitchell County still faces the same issues that are affecting our nation job loss, health issues, ways to keep agriculture profitable and ways to train our youth for future careers.

Through efforts to determine the needs of Mitchell County citizens, the Mitchell County Extension Center and the Extension Advisory Council identified the top programming priority issues for 2015 as:

- ◆ North Carolina's plant, animal and food systems will become more profitable and sustainable.
- ◆ Producers will increase sales of food locally to more agriculturally aware consumers through market development, producer and consumer education, and new farmer and infrastructure support.
- ◆ Agricultural producers, workers, food handlers and consumers will adopt safer food and agricultural production, handling, and distribution practices that reduce workplace and home injuries/illnesses, enhance food security, and increase the quality and safety of food that North Carolinians prepare and consume.
- ◆ Futures that Work: School to Career Pathways

- ◆ Youth and adult program participants will make healthy food choices, achieve the recommended amount of physical activity and reduce risk factors for chronic diseases.

Program efforts included 13,729 contacts made with residents including 7,566 face-to-face contacts through office visits, workshops, seminars, and demonstrations and 6,163 contacts made through telephone, e-mail, newsletters and other media outlets. Forty-two presentations were made last year providing research-based information for our clients. We appreciate the 348 Extension volunteers who extended our educational programming efforts with a contribution of 1,284 hours of time valued at \$28,428.00. The Mitchell County center acquired \$73,020.00 in grant and sponsorship funding to extend programming efforts. Highlighted below are the 2015 accomplishments toward the county major program priorities and integrated staff programming.

Program Highlights

Profitable and Sustainable Agriculture Systems:

- ◆ One hundred two participants (102) increased their knowledge, and/or skills as related to:

- 1) Best management production practices (cultural, nutrient, and genetics)
 - 2) Pest/insect, disease, weed, and wildlife management
 - 3) Financial/Farm management tools and practices (business, marketing, government policy, human resources)
 - 4) Alternative agriculture, bio energy, and value-added enterprises.
- ◆ \$8,756 net income gains were realized by the adoption of best management practices, including those practices related to nutrient management, conservation, production, cultivars, pest management (weeds, diseases, insects), business management, and marketing.
 - ◆ 50 acres of land had best management practices (BMP's) implemented on them.

Local Food Systems

- ◆ 8 producers gained knowledge to help them increase production for local markets.

- ◆ 10 producers gained skills to increase production for local markets.
- ◆ \$6,398 Increased net income from sales of locally produced agricultural products to local buyers.
- ◆ Increase of seventy-six (76) county residents who are buying from local farmers through on farm sales and farmers market sales.
- ◆ 6 producers improved their marketing skills as a result of extension educational opportunities.

School to Career Pathways:

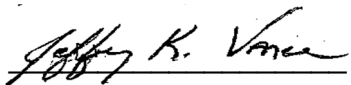
- ◆ 342 youth (students) increased their knowledge in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math).
- ◆ 12 youth (students) participated in 4-H dropout prevention (student at-risk) programs.
- ◆ 42 youth (students) increased their knowledge of career/employability skills.

- ◆ 4 teachers were trained on 4-H STEM programs.

Healthy Eating, Physical Activity and Chronic Disease Risk Reduction:

- ◆ 275 youth increased their fruit and vegetable consumption.
- ◆ 125 participants increased their physical activity following extension program participation.

For more program highlights, go to <http://mitchell.ces.ncsu.edu/about/>

FROM: 
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