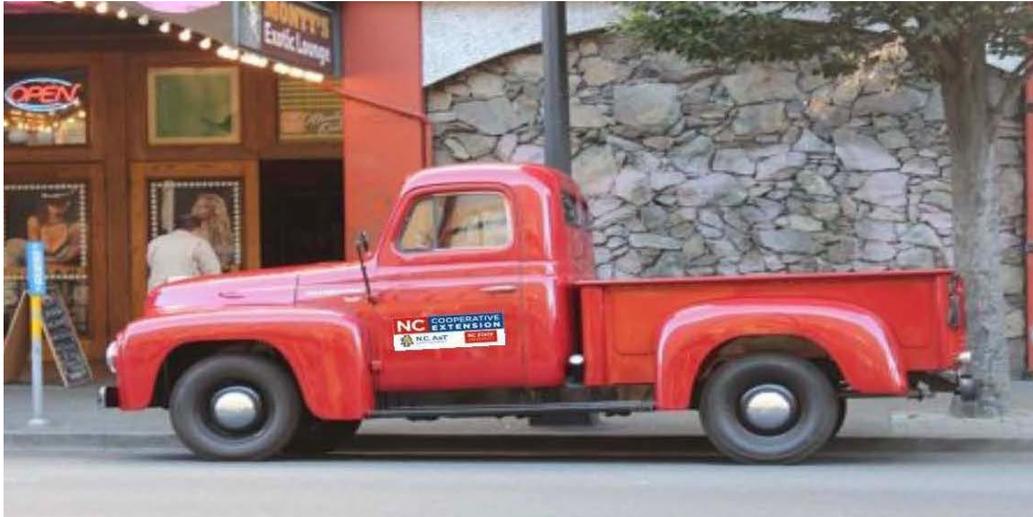


MITCHELL COUNTY CENTER

# Extension E-News

## April 2020



### **\*\*Plant Sale Pick-Up Important Update\*\***

Plant order pick up will operate a little differently this year. In order to practice social distancing, your orders will be available curbside only.

If your ordered plants from us, your order is ready! All orders are available for pick up TODAY, Tuesday, April 7 from 4-7 p.m. only. We are having curbside pick up at the Cooperative Extension Center (10 S. Mitchell Avenue, Bakersville). After 7 p.m., leftover orders will be removed.

Orders are in boxes with a label that has your name on it along with what you ordered and a planting guide. Also, on the label, it will state whether you've paid or if you owe money. If you owe money, please send a check to us at: PO Box 366, Bakersville, 28705. There is NO place to leave a check at the door.

We regret we have to do business this way - we enjoy seeing you. We simply must keep everyone as safe as possible during the COVID-19 situation.

Please make checks payable to:

Mitchell County General Fund and mail to:

Mitchell County Cooperative Extension  
PO Box 366  
Bakersville, NC 28705

---

Preventive Measures to Help Farmers and Agribusinesses



The N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) is taking preventive measures to help farmers and agribusinesses in the event the state issues a shelter-in-place order.

The following documents are to be used as a notification method to notify law enforcement or anyone else that people carrying them are involved in the critical and essential industry of agriculture. Again, these documents should be distributed to farms, agribusinesses and industry partners.

1. **Notice of Essential Food and Agriculture Employee (PDF)**

- The organization should complete and sign the form, which their designated employees can keep with them during necessary work activities and travel.

2. **Letter to N.C. Law Enforcement Regarding Essential Food and Agriculture Employees (PDF)**

- NCDA&CS sent this letter on March 25, 2020, to the five largest law enforcement associations in North Carolina to provide notice about essential employees in the agriculture industry of North Carolina. We are sharing here so our farm and agribusiness contacts can have a copy for their records.

To reiterate, these resources are to keep North Carolina's agribusiness industry flowing if there is an executive order further restricting movement in the state or to use at the local level. Thank you for your ongoing support of N.C. agriculture.

Find more information and resources on the **N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services COVID-19 Response site**.



## Tips For Growing A Successful Vegetable Garden

Spring is here and it's the perfect time to start planning your vegetable garden! As gardeners race out of the "garden gate," consider the following tips for finishing the race with a successful garden this growing season.

**Site Selection** - The best location is one that's near the house, receives full sun all day, is free from large rocks and weeds, has good air circulation and is sheltered from strong winds. Remember leafy vegetables need at least six hours of sunlight to develop properly, while fruiting vegetables such as tomatoes, squash, eggplant, and peppers need 10 hours of full sun.

**Soil** - If possible start with well-drained soil with the intention for annual additions of soil amendments such as compost, aged manure, cover crops, and organic mulches. Soil test your garden; N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' lab in Raleigh will do this service for you for free (April 1 - November)! Simply pick up the paperwork and the boxes from the Mitchell Extension Center located at 10 S. Mitchell Ave. in Bakersville.

**Planning** - Avoid planting crops from the same plant family in the same spot two years in a row. Consider the path of the sun, so tall crops do not shade shorter ones. Think about spacing so outer leaves on mature plants will just miss touching neighboring plants. If you haven't started already, there's still time to set out some of the cool-season vegetables such as arugula, beets, broccoli, carrots, celery, collard greens, leeks, mustard and spinach along with potatoes and onions as intermediate vegetables. When the danger of frost has passed (~ May 15), transplant warm-season vegetables such as tomatoes, peppers eggplants, and any of the cucurbits.

**Start Small** - There's a lot to learn! Experience success with a small garden, then gradually increase its size. Grow only what you like to eat as you'll take better care of your garden with the right motivation. When weather is wet or cold, allow about twice the germination time listed on the seed packet. If there is no sign of growth after this time, dig around a little to check for sprouted seeds. If you find no signs of life, the seed has probably rotted, and you will need to replant.

Crop Varieties - Select with care. Look for crops bred to do well in short seasons with cold, wet springs and extremes of temperature and moisture. Also consider disease resistance, the variety's growth habit and length of harvest season. Water only when necessary, then water deeply and early in the day. Vegetables need about an inch of water a week. Conserve water by building soil organic matter and mulching crops to reduce soil moisture evaporation. When soil around plants is dry a couple of inches below the surface, soak the soil deeply, preferably with a drip or soaker hose.

Scouting - Visit your garden every day. Check for signs of pests and diseases so you can take care of problems before they get out of hand. Of course, visit for the sheer joy of it also! Make sure to correctly identify the cause of a problem before applying a "treatment." Inappropriate use of pesticides is expensive, threatens the health of humans, pets and the environment, and may itself cause more damage than it remedies.

Sanitation - Maintain good sanitation by removing diseased leaves, fruits and vines and of course controlling weeds too! Common weeds that are edible include: pigweed, mustard, purslane, lambs quarter and dandelion greens. Harvesting these plants from your garden plot will benefit you doubly.

Many thanks to colleague Christy Bredencamp, NC Cooperative Extension, for sharing the information!

## **BULL SOUNDNESS EXAMS**



The main goal of any cattle operation is to raise as close to 100% of a calf crop as possible. In order to fulfill this goal, producers must choose the best animals to breed. To do so, annual bull soundness exams are a necessary action to ensure that those bulls are satisfactory in their breeding ability. Bull soundness exams are conducted 30 to 60 days prior to the breeding season and consist of several components that are carried out by a veterinarian. It is suggested that bulls be separated from their herds at least two weeks prior to the exam so that their exam results are more accurate. If a bull has bred one to seven days before the

exam, his semen production will be lower and may alter the exam results. How your bull tests in each section of the exam may deem whether the bull is a satisfactory breeder or an unsatisfactory breeder. In order for your bull to be scored a satisfactory breeder, he must meet the minimum criteria for the following components:

- 1) Physical Soundness of External and Internal Anatomy
- 2) Scrotal Circumference
- 3) Semen Quantity and Quality
- 4) Mating Ability

### **PHYSICAL EXAMINATION**

The first step of a bull soundness exam is for a bull to be restrained in a squeeze chute or headgate. This ensures that both the bull and the veterinarian are safe. Once the bull is safely restrained, the veterinarian examines the exterior anatomy of the bull for any injuries or abnormalities. The veterinarian starts at the head of the animal and works their way back. The veterinarian looks for the following:

#### **Normal / Wanted Anatomy**

- Clean nose
- Clear eyes
- No skin abrasions
- Shiny coat
- Good body condition
  
- No injuries
- Clean penis and sheath
- Proportional testes

**Article Continued.....**



## **4-H Update**

# **Now Is A Great Time to Work on Project Records**

For those who aren't familiar with project records youth complete a record book

outlining their participation in their program of choice. They include goals, create a plan to achieve their goals and report on the activities completed to accomplish those goals that year. Youth participate in four age levels 8-10, 11-12, 13-15, and 16-18. There are monetary incentives provided to Gold winners in each district.

Portfolios are record books that are a long-term process. They are 3 years of record books and they outline participation in programs and set goals like project records do. Youth participate at 13-15 and 16-18. There are also monetary rewards available to Gold winners in each district.

Why is it important for youth to participate in project records? They learn record keeping skills and organization that will help them in the future. It encourages goals to be set and helps youth develop strategies for meeting those goals. They learn responsibility and how to communicate and summarize ideas. Youth also evaluate information that will market personal skills through future resumes and application forms. This is a great way to have a detailed account of past activities and involvement for college applications as well!

You can find the 2020 forms, guidelines, and category list located on the NC 4-H website at

<https://nc4h.ces.ncsu.edu/youth-3/4-h-awards-incentives-programs-2/>

Please be mindful only 2 youth may submit records or portfolios per age group, per category. In the case of 3 or more youth in the same age and category a committee will judge and determine the 2 best submissions to be sent for district competition.

-----

# Introducing the N.C. 4-H



## Mystery Challenge!



**Each Monday, Wednesday and Friday beginning March 23rd, a new challenge will be released. You will have 24 hours to complete the challenge and post it on social media.**

**Your challenge will be critiqued and the winner will be announced via social media. Additionally, we will host a virtual meetup to discuss the challenge.**

**This is open to 4-H members across North Carolina. Make sure you tag @NCATextension in your posts!**

**Use the following hashtags: #NC4H, #NC4HMYSTERYCHALLENGE, #NCATextension**

**All questions should be directed to Dr. Shannon Wiley, 4-H Development Specialist at [srwiley@ncat.edu](mailto:srwiley@ncat.edu)**



**N.C. A&T**  
STATE UNIVERSITY

**COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION**

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE AND  
FACEBOOK PAGES**

**WEBSITE**

MITCHELL COUNTY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION  
<https://mitchell.ces.ncsu.edu/>

**FACEBOOK**

MITCHELL COUNTY COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION  
[https://www.facebook.com/Mitchell-County-Cooperative-  
Extension-444099475666167/](https://www.facebook.com/Mitchell-County-Cooperative-Extension-444099475666167/)

MITCHELL COUNTY 4-H  
<https://www.facebook.com/Mitchell-County-4-H-226821009309/>

---



## Explore Your Career Path

The A.L.I.V.E program provides educational opportunities for selected youth ages 12-18 years old, that may further develop interpersonal, vocational, and life skills.

A couple of weeks ago, Participants were learning about vocational and college career exploration. Participants visited local Mayland Community College to discuss this with Career Counselor, Doug Dewar. Mayland Community College offers a free internet tool called, "Career Coach" that is designed to help choose a career path and plan educational goals. It provides the most current local employment data on a wide variety of occupations and automatically links occupations to Mayland's educational programs!

How to get started:

Go to <https://www.mayland.edu/admissions/career-coach/>, to take the career assessment. It will provide you with a personalized list of occupations to explore further using Career Coach's occupational data.

**EVENTS** | [View Upcoming Events](#)



NC State University and N.C. A&T State University work in tandem, along with federal, state and local governments, to form a strategic partnership called N.C. Cooperative Extension.

Accommodation requests related to a disability should be made to Eve Kindley (828) 688-4811 [eve\\_kindley@ncsu.edu](mailto:eve_kindley@ncsu.edu)