



Dear Friends of Extension,

Thank you for your interest in learning more about the work of N.C. Cooperative Extension in Nash County. The “Report to the People” is a glimpse of the programs the Nash County Extension team provided to the Nash County citizens – from direct farm and agricultural support, to connecting our residents with their food sources and helping them to make safer, healthier decisions about the food they prepare and consume, to working with our youth to increase life-skill development and empowering our citizens with educational tools to strengthen our communities.

Nash County faces some challenges and through Extension research based knowledge from our university land grants, our agents receive training and resources for implementing practical learning experiences and opportunities for all our residents. Nash County is included in a 4-county region having North Carolina’s greatest occurrence of childhood and adult obesity. Many North Carolinians are affected by chronic disease and conditions that compromise their quality of life and well-being. The developing nature of the county is generating concern for the county’s lack of formalized farmland preservation and the generational farmer concerns of who they will pass the farm onto.

With your support, Extension will continue to do great things and positively impact many of these issues through extension education. Extension educational programs will continue to target the county's productive and profitable agricultural industry. The limited resource audience will be intentionally targeted with extension educational programs for financial management, leadership development, entrepreneurship and community development. Our programs in agriculture and natural resources, community development, family and consumer sciences and 4-H youth development have a long standing, with excellent track records in assisting people to help themselves by utilizing a hands-on approach to learning.

Thank you for your interest in our programs and the invaluable resources we offer. We look forward to providing our ongoing services to the citizens of Nash County.

Sincerely,

Sandy P. Hall
N.C. Cooperative Extension Nash County Center
County Extension Director, 4-H Youth Development

Many Thanks to our 2023 Advisory Council...


Your guidance, dedication and support of our work is appreciated!

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*We couldn't do it
without you!*

Report to the People

2023



Number of Outreach of Attendees Reached: 282,634


Number of Program Participants: 7660

Check out just a few of our highlights your Extension team conducted in 2023 to meet the needs of the Nash County citizens.

Number of Volunteers: 686

Total Hours Worked: 6982

Dollar Value @ \$29.95 = \$209,110.00



Number of youth increased knowledge in animals, agriculture and science: 11,635

Number of animal waste management credits earned through Extension programs: 126


Number of participants who increased knowledge of local food and agriculture: 4,462

Number of pesticide applicators receiving continuing education credits: 497

Number of Vendors at the Nash County Farmers Market: 74



Fiscal Resources (Donations, Fundraisers, Sponsorships and In kind contributions): \$348,280.46



Number of participants who used extension-recommended best management practices for landscapes for soil management: 870

Number of people gaining basic financial management skills: 81

Number of participants who increased their knowledge of how to prepare foods using food preservation techniques: 224

Number of crop producers increasing best management production practices, financial farm management practices and learning about alternative agriculture practices: 251

Number of participants who increased their knowledge of safe home food handling, preservation, or preparation practices: 124



Success Stories

Increase in Digital Literacy - Digital Literacy

Ninety-two percent of jobs across industries require digital skills. There is a decline in the number of individuals who have the necessary digital skills and resources needed to enhance employment opportunities. Today's economy is more dependent on the digital delivery of services and digitally reliant means of production and commerce, therefore new skills will be needed for social, civil, economic participation, and health maintenance.

Basic computer course has been hosted through partnership with Kramden Institute and Cloudwyze and with assistance through the Extension Digital Skills Agent. These courses gave individuals the opportunity to learn and increase their computer knowledge. After attending a total of 8 courses, each participant received a certificate that indicated completion of the course as well as the ability to take home the laptops that they were using to further practice and increase their digital skills.

Being Financially Literate Matters in Real Money, Real World - 4-H Youth Development

The Center for Financial Literacy at Champlain College in Vermont released a report card grading each state on its delivery of personal finance education in high schools. According to the report, the need for teaching financial literacy to high school students is greatly needed. Along with 41% of other states, NC sits at a report card grade as a B. The NC Department of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education supports the development of students learning economic decision making, using money wisely and understanding how to be financially responsible citizens. Northern Nash High School Foods teacher, Ms. Ham also realized the importance of her students learning financial management especially with learning about the cost of inflation and how it affects their pocket books.

NC Cooperative Extension, Nash County Center 4-H Youth Development teamed up with Ms. Ham to tackle teaching her students the importance of being financial literate. Ms. Ham was trained and provided the 4 lessons to her students in a 4 week time period. Upon completion of the required lessons, the Nash 4-H Youth Development team along with Extension Staff and Volunteers set up the Real Money, Real World Spending Simulation. During the spending simulation, 59 high school students in grades 9th - 12th assumed the role of a 27-year-old adult. They received an occupation, monthly salary, and the number of children they were responsible to raise. Eighteen Community Volunteers & Extension Staff members worked the stations that represented actual businesses that students visited to pay their monthly bills.

As a result of this program, Ms. Ham reported many of her students spoke highly of the activity and learned the importance of making good academic and career choices in order to make the money they will need to make for the lifestyle they want to have in their future. Overwhelming, 100% of the students that participated stated in the evaluation that they believe that participating in this program gave them a better idea of what is involved in earning, spending and managing money. Since providing this program at Northern Nash High School which is one of the 4 high schools in Nash County Public Schools, a school board member is planning to request the program to be used at all the high schools in the system. In addition while on location at the school for the simulation, several teachers visited the simulation and stated they want to collaborate with Ms. Ham to expand and increase the number of students to participate in the program next year.

Success Stories

Cotton On Farm Trial & Field Day - Field Crops

There was slightly over 8,000 planted acres of cotton in Nash County for the 2023 growing season. There are numerous varieties of cotton for growers to choose from when making pre season seed selections. It was important to bring variety trials to the county level to see how the seed varieties performed on the growers own soil. In addition to the Official Variety Trial (OVT) with the university, on farm trials were adopted to do this. Other than traditional management decisions, soil type and weather play large factors in yield potential. Each seed variety tolerates weather patterns and soil types differently. In NC, there is a vast difference in soil types from the mountains to the coast which is why it is important to test these seed varieties by county. NC cotton growers agreed they wanted research driven data to validate the best varieties annually.

NCSU Cotton Specialist, Guy Collins, along with Nash County Field Crops Agent, Brittany Pendleton, conducted the 6th on-farm cotton variety trial in Nash County. This same trial is replicated across multiple NC counties to provide this data to a multitude of growers. Every year, five seed breeding companies are asked to select two varieties in which they want entered into the trial. This totals ten varieties to be replicated across the state. Each variety is replicated 3-4 times at each trial. In addition to the research trial, a cotton field day and defoliation presentation were conducted in September. At the field day there was also a storm simulation to show how these seed varieties tolerated different weather patterns such as heavy rain and hurricanes since those are prominent in NC to help growers with variety selection. Weed, insect, and disease pressures were also discussed at the field day.

Helping growers select above average varieties for their location will give them a competitive advantage of \$121 per acre over planting below average varieties. Planting a trial in Nash County allows local growers to see what variety yielded best on Nash County soils. In fact, many growers in Nash County have acknowledged planting the variety best performing in Nash County in addition to planting the best performing variety across NC. In conversation with growers who participated in the field day, they stated it was a nice refresher and the fellowship and learning opportunities were great.

Landscaper Professionals Credits: Horticulture

Landscapers and green industry professionals need to be kept abreast of the latest recommendations and care practices within landscape maintenance, care, and management. Many landscapers have several certifications that require annual continuing education and recertification credits. NC Cooperative Extension is able to provide these needed credits to local landscape professionals. Appropriate data can be found at these links: <https://nclclb.com/licensing-2/> & <https://www.ncagr.gov/divisions/structural-pest-control-and-pesticides/pesticide/licensing-and-certification>

The Nash & Franklin County Centers of NCCE addressed these issues by securing an NCSU Horticulture Lecturer and an NCSU Extension Specialist to present. The Nash & Franklin County Center Horticulture Agents also presented an educational sessions to landscapers professionals. The first presentation included information on business plans and how to properly market your landscape business. The second presentation included information on the culture and management of red imported fire ant and mites in warm-season turfgrass. 28 landscape professionals from Franklin, Nash and surrounding counties participated.

Success Stories

Landscaper Professionals Credits: Horticulture...continued

100% of participants improved their overall knowledge of fire ant biology and management, how to effectively update or create a business plan for landscape businesses, and understanding the difference between signs and symptoms in disease management. 100% of respondents indicated they will implement changes that could save their business at least \$10,000. 90% of respondents indicated they increased their knowledge of mite biology and control in warm season turfgrass. 100% of respondents were satisfied with the overall quality of the training workshop.

Canning Improves Emotional Health: Family & Consumer Science

According to a community health survey conducted by Nash County, 47% of the survey respondents reported being told by a health professional they were overweight and/or obese. The data from this survey also reported that 26% of survey respondents do not engage in any physical activity. Overweight/Obesity and limited physical activity can lead to numerous cardiovascular health diseases and some cancers. Following a healthy diet and the recommended daily guidelines for physical activity can reduce some of these chronic health issues.

Encouraging individuals to make healthy food choices is just one part of our job in Family and Consumer Sciences. We also teach individuals about keeping their food safe, how to properly preserve food, the importance of getting enough physical activity, and we discuss emotional and social health. Teaching individuals to safely preserve their food is one way we help decrease food waste, and help families make healthier food choices.

One participant recently shared that taking the canning classes helped her with her emotional health this year. This participant has participated in several canning classes in the past few years. She recently shared that she was diagnosed with breast cancer last year. She shared at first she became very depressed and her daughter told her to find something to try to take her mind off of her health issue. The participant shared that she turned to canning food for family as a support to help her get her mind off her health issue. She shared this act of preserving food for her family helped her emotionally through this difficult time. She shared that had she not taken the canning classes she would have been very depressed through this medical issue. She consistently emails the FCS Agent with updates on everything she is canning and she is very thankful for being able to learn this process. The participant also shared that she is doing very well and she believes having her canning to turn to during this time has substantially helped her emotional health.

"Be Prepared:" Preparing NC Residents for Natural Disasters & Emergencies - Community & Rural Development

North Carolina, particularly the eastern region of the state, is prone to natural disasters including hurricanes, tornadoes, and flooding. Several tropical storms and hurricanes have severely physically and economically impacted the Community and Rural Development staff's service areas. In 2016, Hurricane Matthew devastated half of North Carolina. 50 counties received a federal disaster declaration. 31 residents were killed, and many residents lost their homes due to flooding and other damages. Damages costs over \$4.8 billion. This natural disaster and others showed the growing need of North Carolina residents to prepare for natural disasters and other emergencies.

Success Stories

"Be Prepared:" Preparing NC Residents for Natural Disasters & Emergencies - Community & Rural Development...continued

The Community and Rural Development (CRD) agents in Edgecombe County, Harnett County, and Nash County collaborated to continue their successful "Be Prepared: Disaster Preparedness" workshops and trainings. So far, the CRD team has hosted two disaster preparedness sessions this year for 20 participants. Participants lived in Edgecombe County, Harnett County, and Nash County. The sessions included information related to preparing for various types of natural disasters, previous disasters' financial impacts in communities, creating an emergency preparedness kit, mitigation efforts, and getting electronic weather alerts.

All participants reported an increase in their knowledge of disaster and emergency preparedness techniques and tasks. Over 90% of participants reported they would create or revise their household emergency preparedness plan.

Farmworker Health & Safety Education Program

North Carolina's (NC) agriculture industry supports approximately 74,000 farmworkers consisting of H2A, migrant and seasonal workers. Of those farmworkers, Nash County's agriculture economy houses approximately 3,700 workers helping growers plant, managed and harvest labor intensive crops. Most farms manage an average of 60 workers per farm. With such a large population of workers in NC, and that population playing a tremendous role in the agriculture industry, there was a great demand for unbiased health and safety education to farmworkers.

Having a Safety and Health Educator allows Nash County and NC State to reach a new audience, otherwise considered a minority. These training sessions are in compliance with the Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) certification required by some tobacco and sweet potato contractors. Green tobacco sickness, pesticide safety, farm safety, and health precautions are a part of the training provided in Spanish to farmworkers. This year, with approaching farmworker laws and wage increases Nash County hosted a Farm Labor Contractor workshop to discuss these pressing issues. Most growers verbalize working with the same farmworkers year after year. It has been stated, multiple generations have worked on the same farms. Growers acknowledge farm workers as a vital aspect of the operation. With that being said, taking the time to educate and provide a safe environment for questions had become an important aspect to the yearly startup for growers and farmworkers. Farmworkers are starting to become more and more comfortable with the program and the educator in the role and asking questions more freely. The Farmworker Health and Safety Educator has been able to develop a relationship with the farmworkers. This is multi county venture between Nash, Edgecombe, and Wilson.

Nash County Farmers Market Continued Growth and Outreach

The Nash County Farmers Market had another outstanding market year with 74 vendors selling their produce and artisan products. Saturday and Tuesday market attendants reached a record high of over 50,000 customers. Five market vendors reported record breaking sales. Sixteen vendors are members of the 100% Growers tribute sponsored by Nash County Farm Bureau. Although EBT sales were down the year ended with over \$23,000.00 dollars in sales.

In 2021, the Nash County Farmers Market was awarded the first of three grants to fund CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) box distribution to senior citizens in five local counties. The

Success Stories

Nash County Farmers Market Continued Growth and Outreach....continued

three grants were in the amount of \$202,373, \$181,716 and \$460,000. A total of 22,311 CSA boxes were produced and delivered to senior citizens in Nash, Edgecombe, Wilson, Halifax and Northampton counties since 2021. There are 2500 boxes left to deliver by June of 2024. The UCPCOG grants have paid for two part-time assistants that each work approximately 12 hours a week. These two assistants construct, pack and deliver CSA boxes. In addition, they assist with EBT token distribution on Saturdays and Tuesdays. UCPCOG would like to continue the deliver of CSA boxes, but at this time they have not received funding to award the Market an additional grant. A total of \$113,000.00 in grants were received in 2023 to support the operation, marketing, and events held at the market. Over \$10,000.00 were collected for major event sponsorships. The Nash County Farmers Market continues to be a vital part of the community, providing locally grown produce contributing to the health and wellness of the community.

Congratulations to our Nash County Extension Team for a great year of helping our Nash County citizens improve their quality of life.



Top Row Left to Right: Sandy Hall, Brenda Wind, Regina Moseley, Traci Dixon, Kyndai Bridgers, Estefania Ramirios, JoAnn Pierce

Bottom Row Left to Right: Sally Jones, Maurine Brown, Colby Griffin, Brittany Pendleton, Jennifer Coltrain & Amy Ormond