Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service

Annual Report to the People

November 2012
Charleston County

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service is to provide sound, scientifically based information to South Carolinians and help them use that information to improve the quality of their lives.

Community Pride Inc. of Charleston

In Charleston County, the Adopt-A-Highway program is coordinated by Community Pride, Inc., an organization sponsored by Clemson Extension Service. In 2011 across Charleston County, 4 major cleanups were conducted in February, May, September and November. Approximately 162 groups participated in the program accounting for 2,030 individual volunteers.

An estimated 50,955 pounds of littler was removed from 324 miles of state maintained roadsides. Volunteers donated 4,244 hours of time to make their communities more aesthetically pleasing. Based on the 2011 estimated dollar value of volunteer time at $21.79 per hour, this provided a staggering savings of $92,476 to the local tax payers.

Water Resources Programs

ASHLEY COOPER
STORMWATER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM

Clemson's Carolina Clear program organized and administers the Ashley Cooper Stormwater Education Consortium (ACSEC). The ACSEC regional partnership includes Charleston, Berkeley, and Dorchester Counties, as well as the City of Charleston, City of Folly Beach, City

Update

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Note: Past Clemson Extension Natural Resources Agent, David Joyner, left Clemson Extension in September 2012 to move with his family to Virginia.

of Goose Creek, City of Isle of Palms, Town of Lincolnville, City of North Charleston, Town of Sullivan's Island, and the Town of Summerville. The communities, together with Carolina Clear and more than twenty regional education providers, are working together to educate, inform, and involve Tri-county residents in protecting water quality. These activities also help communities meet NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) Phase II permit requirements for public education and public involvement. Extension assisted with the following

-Mass media campaign "We All Live Downstream" commercial rotations & billboards reached over 400,000 people in BCD.

-Youth water quality programs reached nearly 5000 children through school-yard demonstration sites, 4-H2O summer camps, and storm drain marking programs. Youth also participated in the wetland restoration program, Seeds to Shoreline, initiated with consortium partners.

-ACSEC representation at numerous Fairs & Festivals providing information on ways to protect water quality to nearly 120,000 people.

Horticulture/Master Gardener

Two hundred and seventy three Master Gardeners serve the residents of Charleston County through a variety of horticultural outreach activities.

- 32 new Master Gardeners were trained in 2011-2012 and graduated in February 2012
- 30 new Master Gardener trainees are currently enrolled in the TCMG training course in North Charleston.

The primary duty of these volunteer MGs is staffing the Master Gardener Offices answering phone calls and working with clients who walk in with gardening questions and problems. Additionally, these hardworking volunteers maintain and staff the Coastal Carolina Fair demonstration garden whose theme this year was "The Sustainable Carolina Yard" which illustrated how home gardeners can reduce, reuse and recycle water, waste and other resources in the home garden.

A solar powered pump was used at the Sustainable Carolina Yard to show home gardeners a low impact way to pump water from rain barrels.

TCMGs can also be found staffing Ask-A-Master Gardener booths at the Charleston & Mt. Pleasant Farmer's Markets, Magnolia Gardens AAMG Kiosk as well as various garden centers and community events throughout the year.

Over 70,000 people visited ACSEC permanent demonstration sites across the BCD area. These sites demonstrate diverse best management practices for protecting clean water.

The ACSEC Year 4 activity report (2011-12) recorded a pproximately 2.2 million educational impacts in the Tri-County area.

Approximately 80,000 people were educated through direct contacts including workshops, trainings, and presentations; including the inaugural Charleston Area Stormwater Pond Management Conference.

ACSEC Internet Resources were expanded to include an ACSEC E-newsletter & Facebook page, reaching over 4000 people alongside existing websites.

The Charleston County Master Gardeners volunteered over 10,605 hours, assisted more than 25,159 clients and drove over 65,000 miles.

Charleston County Clemson Extension Horticulture and the TCMGs offered the 2012 Carolina Yard Gardening School, a one day hands-on gardening 'school' where over 82 students enrolled to learn about gardening topics ranging from plant propagation to container gardening, vegetable gardening and native plants. Clemson Extension Agents and Master Gardeners along with area experts taught the classes.

Seed to Shelf a four-week course on canning and gardening was offered through one time program funding by Jonathan Croft, Gayle Williford and Amy Dabbs. We had 29 students enroll at $75 per person for total revenue generation of $2175. Each participant received books, materials and a soil test along with four weeks of instruction. All indicated that they gained knowledge and would engage in gardening and or canning activities using their new knowledge.

Starting plants from seeds was a popular class at the gardening school!

Master Gardner Krista Sprague helped with a container gardening class at the 2012 Carolina Yard Gardening School.

Commercial Agriculture

Roger Francis, Charleston County Agriculture Agent

Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)

- Conducted 4 GAP training for vegetable growers

A total of 225 vegetable and small fruits producers from throughout the state attended.

GAP Training 2012-USDA Veg. Lab

Conducted 1 "Mock Farm Food Safety Audit-GAP" in Charleston County
25 small vegetable growers from throughout the state attended.

- Twenty two (22) wells and farm ponds water samples collected and evaluated for GAP audits in 5 counties.
- Prepared and distributed 78, 3 ring binders with requite forms, standard operating procedures (SOP) and required documentation to small farmers attending trainings in Charleston and Beaufort.
- 7 farms in Charleston, Beaufort and Orangeburg have passed the USDA GAP audits.
- Organized and conducted agriculture tour to North Carolina for small farmers

Commercial Vegetables

- Vegetable Production Field Day -CREC
  Attended by 36 farmers, county council and industry representatives

- Farm Tractor Safety Field day
  Attended by 27 farmers, county and USDA workers

- Commercial Vegetable meeting attended by more than 85 farmers from throughout the state

Extension Advisory Council

- Organized and conducted Charleston County Extension Advisory Council meeting.
- 22 council members attended

- Held meeting with Piggly Wiggly CEO and Chief Produce Buyer
- Conduct Ag tour of Chas. Farms
  Attended by 15 farmers visiting from overseas

Pesticide Education

- Conducted 2 private Pesticide License training
- 9 individuals trained and pass the private pesticide licenses examination
- An estimated 60 individuals received Recertification Credits for attending various extension service training and field day activities throughout the year.

Community and Economic Development

Midland Park Community Center

Working with the City of North Charleston and local information technology groups, Clemson Extension has opened a new community computer lab and classroom. The classroom has 12 computers, while the public lab has 6. So far, classes have been conducted for basic computer skills (in Spanish and English), English as a Second Language, GED and Work Key classes, and IT skills.

Over 1,000 individual users have signed in to the lab since its opening in March of 2012. We are currently retrofitting the lab to increase the classroom capacity to 16.

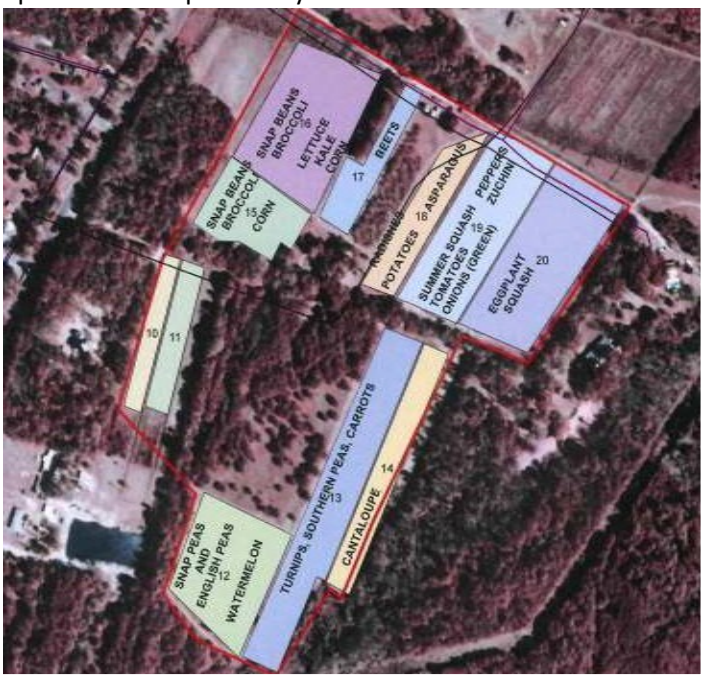
The software used in the lab is Linux (Ubuntu) rather than Windows. This engages our local IT professionals in experimentation and outreach to those less fortunate than themselves. The activities at this facility have been met with extreme enthusiasm by the local community. The neighborhood is predominantly Latino, but participation is strong from all ethnic backgrounds in the area. The idea is to embed the facilities in the heart of distressed communities. We've unofficially opened two more labs since this one.

Rather than sending used computers to the landfill when they are outdated, we retrofit them with software that dramatically increases their speed, while introducing the population to free 'open source' software.

A 'Basic Computer Skills' Graduation

GAP Certification Program

Limehouse Produce sponsored a pilot program with Clemson Extension to acquire certification for Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) for one of our smaller local farms. Working with the local farmer and agriculture agent, our CD agent installed necessary infrastructure requirements and conducted training with the farm manager and workers. He developed a strategy to minimize the negative impacts of certification requirements on the farmer, while maximizing safety measures for the public. The program has been well received. GAP opens markets previously unreachable for the small farmer.

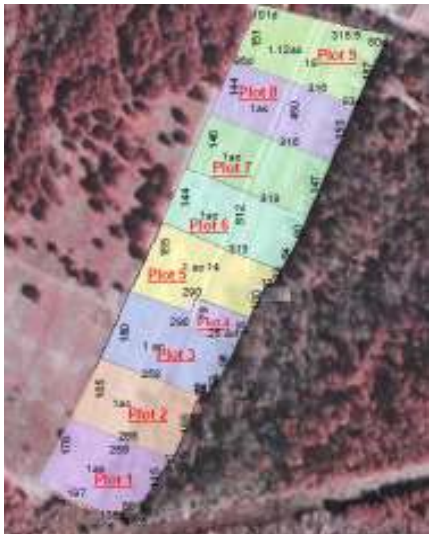


By creating simplified strategies to trace produce origins, the small farmer is better prepared to protect their assets. GAP demonstrates that the farmer has taken the necessary steps to protect the public, while reducing risk for retailers and insurance companies. When farmers follow these guidelines, it becomes very difficult for anyone to demonstrate any sort of negligence by the farmer and proprietor. GAP ensures that workers follow stringent hygiene practices in harvesting and packing produce, ensures the physical assets are present for the workers to follow these guidelines with minimal inconvenience, and ensures that products are traceable to their point of origin.

Left: a very basic farm crop map

Farm Incubator Project: with Lowcountry Local First

Working with a local non-profit group, our local agriculture agent and a local farm, Clemson's CD agent helped to establish the Lowcountry's first farm incubator. The median age of our current farmers is 57 years old. Without a viable strategy, our local food supply could be in jeopardy in not so many years. Actors at Lowcountry Local First, a non-profit focused on improving our economy by reducing retail leakage, were interested in working with Clemson to establish this new facility. Our CD agent is helping with farm layout, economic strategies, and entrepreneur education supporting this effort.



Above: Incubator layout

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