

# SCSL Digital Collections

## Annual Report to the People - Georgetown County

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# Annual Report to the People

October 2012  
Georgetown 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.

## 4-H Eco-Bot Challenge

**Sherry Davis-Livingston**  
4-H/Youth Development Agent

Students at Georgetown Middle School recently participated in National Science Experiment, 4-H Eco-Bot Challenge. The challenge explores robots and how technology can be used to preserve and protect the environment. Sherry Davis-Livingston, 4-H Agent along with teacher Mrs. Nina Runion involved 7<sup>th</sup> graders in an engaging engineering design that provides participants the opportunity to program an autonomous robot to clean up a simulated environmental spill – a mission that in real life would be too difficult or dangerous for humans to carry out. The experiment consists of three parts; Build Your Bot, The Goal is Control and Make a Clean Sweep.



*Sherry Davis-Livingston, 4-H Agent showing students in Mrs. Runion's 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Class the Eco-Bot*

Build Your Bot, the youths assembled their own ECO-BOT, discovered how it functions, what it can do well, as well as what it can't. The Goal is Control, youths designed a set of control surfaces to program the ECO-BOT to perform a simulated environmental cleanup project. In Make a Clean Sweep, the youth measured the effectiveness of their control surface by recording how much of the spill is "swept up" by the Eco-Bot.

Upon completing the Experiment, students learned firsthand what it's like to work with the process tools scientists and engineers use each and every day to solve real-world problems. Also by conducting this experiment, it exposes the youth to robotics through classroom and science projects on how robots and robotic technology works. And finally, it can help youth discover new interests and careers options, plus give them a taste of how this technology impacts and benefits human life today and in the future.

# Forestry & Natural Resources in the Lower Pee Dee

Ben Powell, the Forestry and Natural Resources (FNR) agent for the counties of the lower Pee Dee, has been busy assisting landowners and resource professionals in Horry, Georgetown, Williamsburg and Marion counties. Ben's primary goal is to provide educational programs that improve awareness and management of water, woods, and wildlife in the region. Here are a few of the programs that Ben offered in 2011-2012.

- Pond clinics and site visits for private pond owners and lake management companies.
- The first ever stormwater pond conferences for South Carolina in Myrtle Beach and Charleston which taught close to 400 attendees the intricacies of managing residential and commercial retention ponds.
- Launch of the South Carolina Stormwater Pond Management website which had over 500 unique visits in its first two months of operation.
- Guidance for landowners on managing nuisance wildlife and wildlife food plots.
- Coordinating meetings of the Lower Pee Dee Landowners Association which meets quarterly in Hemingway and gathers forest landowners to discuss various challenges of managing forests and wildlife in the region.
- Driving the creation of the newly formed Blackwater Beekeepers Association which now has close to 60 members and well-attended monthly meetings. For his efforts, Ben was recognized as Extension Agent of the year by the SC State Beekeepers Association.
- Teaching classes for the regional Master Naturalist program, Wildlife Action's youth summer camps, and several other venues.
- Coordinating projects with Horry Georgetown Technical College to teach students to survey invertebrate communities in the managed impoundments at Samworth and Santee Coastal wildlife management areas.

## Livestock & Forage

### Lee Van Vlakte, Pee Dee Area Livestock Agent

Livestock and forage programming are done on a regional level in the Pee Dee Region so livestock and forage producers can meet in at a central location in order to receive information from Extension Staff throughout the Pee Dee Region. In 2011, Planned, coordinated, and implemented 10 beef cattle programs with over 350 producers. These programs included information on forages, general management practices, marketing, proper culling, fencing, and other practices associated with beef cattle management. Made many farm visits on a weekly basis to assist and educate livestock clientele in the Pee Dee Region. Farm visits include education on forages, marketing herd health, reproduction, bull selection, heifer selection, marketing, pasture management, fencing, facilities, equine management, goat production, and many other facets of animal agriculture in Georgetown County.

## McCall Farms, Inc. Expands Production Facility

**Tony Melton**

Horticulture Agent, Tony Melton, assists and advises commercial cannery, McCall Farms. McCall's is the nation's leading canner of southern vegetables and peanuts. In addition, Melton assists the growers that are contracted through McCall Farms with growing quality crops for canning and freezing. At present McCall Farms cans approximately 4 million servings per day of more than 40 different products under Margaret Holmes, Glory Foods and Peanut Patch brands, as well as private-label and foodservice products. They also freeze approximately 1 million servings a day.

Representatives of McCall Farms, Inc. recently announced expansion and growth plans for the company's manufacturing facility in Florence County. This investment will add 80 jobs over the next three years, create more than 50,000 square feet of new space for production capacity, increase quality, and allow for 24-hour-a-day operation of the facility. With expansion, they will be able to produce increased quantities of all its brands - Margaret Holmes, Glory Foods and Peanut Patch - due to more efficient production.

McCall Farms cultivates and processes tomatoes, okra, corn, squash, beans, peas, peaches, peanuts, greens and other produce. Some are grown on its 2,000-acre farm located in Effingham, SC., while some 10 additional acres are grown by farmers all over S.C. including Georgetown County.



## SC Market Ready - Blake Lanford

Grand Strand area farmers are good at growing things and many Grand Strand restaurants want what local farmers are growing. But sometimes, there is a disconnect between the growers and the chefs. Farmers often don't know how to market their products directly to restaurants and conversely restaurants are not always aware of products that may be available locally.

In an effort to address these information gaps, Clemson Cooperative Extension Service and the state Department of Agriculture hosted a South Carolina Market Ready training workshop on August 30, 2012 to give farmers information about how to build relationships with restaurants, wholesalers and food service buyers.

Originally developed by the University of Kentucky as a compliment to the MarketMaker initiative, the program features information based on interviews conducted with executive chefs

and grocers around the country.

Daryl Watts, a farmer from Conway was among those attending the first workshop. He's interested in making connections with local restaurants to sell them vegetables during the summer and greens during the cool season, but Watts says he doesn't know what chefs expect in terms of quantities and availability.

"Do they want to buy from someone who they can count on having the same thing in certain quantities each week, or what exactly do they want?" Watts asked. Program panelist Robbie Nicolaisen, executive chef at Waterscapes restaurant in Myrtle Beach, says restaurants are asking for more locally grown products because their customers are demanding it and that's due to people today wanting to know more about where their food is coming from.

"People have more of a conscience nowadays about where their food is coming from," said chef Nicolaisen. "It started with things being organic and then it's just rapidly going from there." Nicolaisen said products from local suppliers tend to taste better and have a longer shelf life. It's why he chooses to buy fresh fish

from markets in Murrells Inlet.

"If I were to buy through a major conglomerate, the fish has probably been sitting in their cooler for a few days and then it gets to the supplier, sits there for another couple of days. By the time it gets to me, it's probably a week old," he said.

Extension will deliver the Market Ready trainings across the State starting in 2013 and plans to come up with programmatic adaptations that are based on participant feedback received for the pilot training. Coupled with other local food systems programs such as those related to value added producer support, direct marketing, farmers markets, distribution, and more,

SC Market Ready represents one of the many ways that Extension is working with local producers to scale up food production to meet the burgeoning demand for fresh fruits and vegetables in South Carolina.



# Consumer & Commercial Horticulture

## Gary Forrester

The Clemson Extension Horticulture program covering the Horry, Georgetown and Marion county area is a diverse program. Horticulture agents provide educational programs in both commercial and residential landscaping, small scale vegetable production along with programming targeted toward water quality and natural resource conservation. Various avenues are used to disseminate current, updated information including small scale seminars and lectures, large group lectures, digital media, print media and web based information.

The 2011-2012 fiscal year was a very productive year with regards to Horticulture and Natural Resource Management. Clemson Extension agents, in cooperation with local Master Gardeners, the Phytoplankton Monitoring Network and the Center for Coastal Environmental Health and Biomolecular Research (CCEHBR), have continued for its 11<sup>th</sup> year a monitoring program to quantify phytoplankton in local estuaries. Weekly, samples are taken at sites ranging from Cherry Grove in Horry County to Pawleys Island in Georgetown County. These samples are then assayed for current phytoplankton species and populations. The data is relayed to the CCEHBR lab for final analysis. The purpose of this program is to provide scientist with real time data on phytoplankton populations along coastal regions allowing them to be proactive towards any hazardous algal blooms endangering humans as well as aquatic species.

Clemson Extension Agents and local Master Gardeners are in our 10<sup>th</sup> year of providing Plant Problem Clinics (PPC) to local homeowners and commercial landscapers. Approximately 100 PPCs were held this year at various venues throughout Horry and Georgetown counties including a local mall and local farmers markets. During these PPCs, Master Gardeners and Extension Agents will man an information booth for several hours weekly. Yearly, approximately 1000 local residents and commercial gardeners will visit these information booths to acquire information or discuss gardening issues. To kick off this year's Murrells Inlet PPC, a day-long plant seminar was held at the Inlet Square Mall with over 200 folks sitting in on a variety of informative gardening seminars.

Local county libraries are a good source of information as well as a good venue for providing horticulture seminars. Several gardening seminars were held this year including a vegetable gardening and lawn care program at both Horry County's North Myrtle Beach library and Surfside Beach library. There were 78 clients who attended these lectures. Yearly, Clemson Extension Service cooperates with Horry County Solid Waste Authority to provide a two day series of gardening lectures called the Grow Workshop. This year, 52 local gardeners completed the two day training.

Every year, Clemson Extension Service provides horticulture training to both residential and commercial gardeners through a six course lecture series titled Low-Impact Gardening. This year 48 local gardeners graduated the two lecture series with one being held at the Inlet Square mall with the second being held in Conway.

Horry County was the site this year for Clemson's Ornamental Plant School and Turfgrass School. These two training are held at various sites throughout the state. A total of 87 commercial landscapers from both South and North Carolina attended these day long trainings taught by Clemson University professors and specialist. Ten commercial pesticide applicators continuing education credits were awarded to those attending.

Clemson Extension Service provides horticulture programming every year at various local gardening shows. The Horry/Georgetown Homebuilders Association Remodelers show was held in the fall of 2011 and local Clemson Extension Agents and Master Gardeners manned a Horticulture information booth for the three day show. Six seminars were given to 64 show attendees covering a variety of gardening and natural resource topics.

Various other venues were used to provide quality horticulture education including onsite visits with homeowners and commercial landscapers, 14 print articles were written and distributed to local media, six spot interviews were conducted with local TV media, 16 garden talks were given to local gardening groups and Homeowners Associations along with 4 guest appearances as a panelist on the state wide distributed show Making it Grow.



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## Join the Revolution: Become a 4-H Volunteer

### Why Volunteer?

4-H programs rely on volunteers to help young people learn the skills they need to prepare for the careers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, while also having lots of fun! 4-H is the only informal educational program with a direct connection to U.S. land-grant universities and colleges. In 4-H, youth learn through opportunities in which they master life challenges, cultivate independence with guidance from caring adults, gain a sense of belonging within a positive group, and share a spirit of generosity with others. Volunteers are essential to help make the most of these learning opportunities.

### As a 4-H Volunteer, You Can:

- Lead youth within school-based, afterschool and camp settings and in community clubs
- Serve as a chaperone, board member, judge or camp counselor

- Develop and support community service opportunities for youth to make a difference in their communities
- Teach youth using research-based university curricula
- Work with other adults to create fun, new programs for youth

### A Perfect Fit

With a variety of flexible options, you can decide your level of involvement based on your skills and time available. Want to learn more? Contact [sldavis@clemson.edu](mailto:sldavis@clemson.edu) or come by your local 4-H Office at 731 Prince Street, Georgetown SC to find your perfect fit in the 4-H community.