

Annual Report to the People

November 2012
Darlington 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.

Darlington County 4-H Promotes Youth in Agriculture *Alma Harris, County Extension Agent (4-H and Youth Development)*

Jay Chapman was inspired by his mother, Ann Chapman, to become a part of 4-H. Mrs. Chapman participated in 4-H as a child and remembered the tremendous impact 4-H made on her life. She wanted Jay to have this same experience.

Recent findings from the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development indicate that young people in 4-H are three times more likely to contribute to their communities than youth not participating in 4-H. 4-H Youth also have higher educational achievement and education – reporting better grades, higher levels of academic competence, and an elevated level of engagement at school.

Jay joined 4-H and never could have imaged the many opportunities and doors that 4-H has opened for him, to include starting his own business. Alma Harris, Jay's 4-H agent, along with his parents encouraged Jay to follow his dreams of becoming a young entrepreneur in the field of agriculture.

He was very successful this year with a bountiful harvest as well as a profit. It is important to teach youth about agriculture and how important it is to our economy and the world. Agriculture plays a crucial role in our economy by providing food, clothing, and jobs to people all over world.

U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) makes operating loans of up to \$5,000 to eligible individual rural youths ages 10-20 to finance income projects. Jay received a grant in the amount of \$5,000 for his project of farming five acres of corn. Jay serves on the Darlington



Jay Chapman, 4-H member

County 4-H Advisory Board and has participated in many activities as well as the 4-H Ambassador Training, 4-H Teen Weekend, and the Regional 4-H Teen Leaders Training.

This summer, he also attended the SC for Agriculture where he and other top high school juniors and seniors from around the country gathered for a week at Clemson University to learn about the diverse industries of agriculture and natural resources.

Darlington County 4-H wants children to learn skills they can use in real jobs,

before or after college. Jay is a senior at Hartsville High School and plans to attend Clemson University. He is the son of Dean and Ann Chapman of Hartsville. His sister Kendall is a student at Clemson University.

Darlington County 4-H puts positive youth development into practice by allowing young people to help make important decisions about their own lives, the organizations that serve them and their communities by inviting youth to serve on the board of a local nonprofit organization, teaching young people to become young business men and women.

Inaugural Annie's Project for South Carolina Farm Women

Jennifer Boyles, County Extension Agent (Community Economic Development)

A diverse group of 15 women from all over the state joined together May 31 – June 3, 2012, in Newberry, South Carolina for the inaugural “Annie’s Project”. This three day retreat program offered the opportunity to learn more about agriculture, financial and estate planning, marketing, risk management, communications and many more topics. This educational program was designed to strengthen women’s roles in farming by giving them the tools needed to make business decisions and provide a network of support.



Annie’s Project, an educational program, was initially started in 2003. The Maryland-Delaware program was developed by Ruth Fleck Hambleton in honor of her mother, Annette “Annie” Fleck. “Annie” was a farm wife who faced many challenges and spent

her lifetime learning to be an involved business partner. Based on her mother’s struggles and accomplishments, Hambleton developed a curriculum focused on helping other farm women.

Annie’s Project has grown into a National Program and is currently being taught in over 28 states. Collaboration was formed between SC Annie’s Project state coordinator, Jennifer Boyles of Clemson University Extension, Faith Lawrimore of the South Carolina Farm Bureau Federation and Miriam Pflug of AgSouth Farm Credit.

Experts in the fields of agriculture and business helped attendees learn in a hands-on environment through discussions, presentations and a lot of interaction. Participants also benefitted by networking with other women in agriculture from around the state. Planning is underway for the 2nd program that will be held in the Pee Dee on March 21-24, 2013.

For more information, contact Jennifer Boyles, 843-616-0786 or jbyls@clemson.edu.

Welcome to SC WAgN

The South Carolina Women's Agricultural Network (SC WAgN) supports women in agriculture by providing positive learning environments, networking, and empowerment.

The South Carolina Women's Agricultural Network (SC WAgN) an Extension Initiative, it is to encourage and support women in agriculture; in South Carolina and provide and strengthen networks for women in agriculture. SCWAgN provides educational and mentoring opportunities for women in agriculture and raises community awareness of agricultural related issues and concerns. SC WAgN offers on-farm education; hands-on workshops; conferences; networking; mentoring; and online information sharing tools.

Membership is open to any person supporting the mission and purpose of SC WAgN. The network is comprised of women farmers, agricultural professionals, agricultural educators, and informed consumers committed to supporting and providing educational opportunities to women working in agriculture and ag-related businesses. For more information or to register go to www.clemson.edu/scwagn or call Jennifer Boyles at 843-616-0786.



Protecting Water Quality from Curbs to Creeks

Terasa Young, County Extension Agent (Natural Resources)

According to the EPA, stormwater is the biggest threat to water quality in the United States. Communities that are regulated as municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) are required to comply with six minimum control measures (MCMs) to be compliant with the NPDES Phase II Permit. Clemson's Carolina Clear program was created to assist these regulated communities with two of these MCMs: public education and outreach and public involvement and participation. Clemson's Carolina Clear program works in conjunction with education providers, universities, cities, and county governments to develop regional consortiums which work together to identify stormwater education and outreach needs, within the community, and then develop and implement a strategy to successfully meet those needs. Natural Resource Agent, Terasa Young coordinates the Florence Darlington Stormwater Consortium (FDSC) which is composed of three MS4s: Darlington County, Florence County, and the City of Florence.

The construction of storm drains and ditches

to alleviate flooding has made stormwater a somewhat invisible problem to the public. The FDSC utilizes storm drain marking as a public involvement activity which raises awareness about the direct connection between storm drains and local waterways such as Black Creek.

In the 2011-2012 fiscal year, two storm drain marking activities took place in Darlington County. Students from Coker College's Science Club placed FDSC markers on 27 drains throughout the campus. The event was organized by Dan Hill, Assistant Director of Kalmia Gardens which is an Education Partner in the FDSC. Volunteers from Kalmia Gardens placed 22 markers in the Kalmia Place neighborhood in Hartsville. This neighborhood was chosen as one of the first to be marked as the storm water from this neighborhood flows into Black Creek at an outfall pipe in Kalmia Gardens where the FDSC has installed an education sign. All houses in the neighborhood also received an educational door hanger about stormwater pollution.

The FDSC plans to continue marking storm drains in Darlington County in the coming year.

McCall Farms, Inc. Expands Production Facility

Tony Melton, Commercial Horticulturist

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 one 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 includes a capital investment of \$10.6 Million. 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, McCall Farms will be able to produce increased quantities of all its brands -

Margaret Holmes, Glory Foods and Peanut Patch - due to more efficient production, guaranteeing customers that a greater amount of their fruits and vegetables will be available for enjoyment year-around.

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, S.C., while some 10,000 additional acres are grown by farmers all over S.C. including Darlington County.

Perfect Timing Increases Peanut Profits

Patricia DeHond, County Extension Agent (Agronomy)

Over the past five years, peanut production has more than doubled, with an increase from 1500 acres to around 3150 acres, in Darlington County. The most critical part of peanut production occurs at harvest when all of a grower's care and hard work can be easily lost by making poor harvest decisions. Harvesting too early can mean lost yield potential as well as poor grades at the buying station. Harvesting too late can mean that peanuts become over-mature and are subject to coming off the vine when harvested, greatly reducing yield. Peanut harvest timing is critical for maximizing profitability for producers.



Peanut maturity is determined by removing the outer hull of the peanut to expose the middle layer or mesocarp. As peanuts mature, the color of the mesocarp changes from yellow to orange to brown, then black. Peanuts can be checked by scraping the hull with a knife or they can be blasted with a pressure washer to remove the outer hull. Under normal weather conditions, most varieties reach maturity at around 135 days after planting. To help peanut producers determine optimal digging dates for their fields, Extension started having "Peanut Harvest Maturity Clinics" in Darlington County in 2010. This helps producers make their annual peanut harvest date decisions in early September based on relative maturity, not just planting date. Several mobile peanut "blasting" set-ups were purchased in 2012 for area agents to share, each consisting of a pressure washer, water tank, pump and generator. Peanuts can be checked right in the field, and producers are gaining knowledge and skills on how to check peanut maturity on their own. Peanut Specialist Dr. Scott Monfort is available to view photos of blasted peanuts sent by email with percentages of each color category, quickly interpreting the results and providing

advice whether to dig now or recheck at a later date.

When farmers' stock peanuts are graded at the peanut buying station, each percent increase in total sound mature kernels (TSMK) is worth about \$4.96/ton, or about \$10/acre for 2-ton peanuts. Extension's assistance with digging guidance helped one Darlington County peanut producer; for example, increase his peanut grade from 60 to 72 TSMK by checking the peanuts in the field with the mobile unit and then digging on time. That means an increased profit of \$120 per acre for that one grower. With 3150 acres of peanuts now grown in Darlington County, one could estimate that the potential increase in profits to peanut producers could be up to \$378,000 (3150 acres X \$120/ton). With both peanut prices and acreage increasing, the profit increase for the 2013 growing season will be even more significant.



Area Agronomy Agent Charles Davis (Calhoun, Orangeburg & Richland Counties) contributed to this article.

Darlington County 4-H Partners with Kalmia Gardens of Coker College

Alma Harris, County Extension Agent (4-H and Youth Development)

For the past five years Darlington County 4-H has maximized its resources through the forming of partnerships with Kalmia Gardens of Coker College. A mutual partnership exists between Darlington County 4-H and Kalmia Gardens of Coker College. Cultivating relationships is extremely important as is working effectively with local/state elected officials, extension stakeholders and others, in order to accomplish the mission and goals of 4-H in Darlington County and maximize our resources.

The partnership with Kalmia Gardens has allowed us to conduct programs in natural resources. More than 1000+ youth in Darlington County have learned the importance of keeping our ground water safe through the efforts of our 4-H20 program. Through activities in storm water education and awareness students learned the importance of water conservation and steps everyone can take to help improve water quality.

Participants learned about the aquatic environment, boat safety, canoeing, how a watershed works and how a watershed affects the quality of water in the lake, including the impact of stormwater. Through hands-on activities in the classroom, field, forest and water, local youth were educated on the importance of water quality, water chemistry, testing, and microscopic identification of invertebrates and algae. We, also, partner with South Carolina Forestry Commission and S.C. Department of Natural Resources to conduct these worthwhile programs in Darlington County.

Elementary school children in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades are eligible each year to participate in the 4-H Jr. Master Gardener Program, which is held at Kalmia Gardens of Coker College. The program offers horticultural and environmental science education, as well as leadership and life skills development. The program provides young people with a chance to help out by doing community service, which is one of the requirements of completing the JMGP.

The JMGP also offers youngsters experiences in outdoor activities by working in an actual garden. According to national studies, the healthiest children are ones who participate in outdoor activities every day. The JMGP teaches children a variety of garden lessons and information including facts about the different soils used in farming, vegetable and fruit gardens, composting, the differences and distinctions between both bad insects and beneficial insects. Information on fertilizers, facts about the water cycle, plant disease, and how to identify different types of trees are covered. Youth also learn important leadership skills.

The Kalmia Gardens of Coker College are located on a former 19th century plantation with 35 acres of private botanical gardens. The historical home of Thomas E. Hart, built in 1820, is also located on the plantation.

Kalmia Gardens donated over \$5,000.00 in in-kind program support through use of their space, indoor and outdoor classrooms and the Coker College Boat House, this fiscal year. These programs have generated over \$10,000 of direct program support from outside funding sources such, as Keep Darlington County Beautiful, Carolina Clear, registration fees, and private donations.



4-H Water Quality
Camp

Pee Dee Region Master Cattlemen

Lee Van Vlakte, County Extension Agent (Livestock)

Cattlemen in the Pee Dee Region are always looking for educational opportunities to further their business in and increase the bottom line. Producers that are just getting started in the beef industry are also looking for educational programs that help them make key management decisions. Topics offered during the 6 week course include general management, marketing, forage production, nutrition, herd health, meat science, and reproduction.

The Pee Dee Region Master Cattlemen course was planned, coordinated, and implemented by the Livestock and Forage Team. There were 25 beef cattle producers from throughout the Pee Dee Region that attended the course.

Producers ranged from small (10-20 head to large over 200 head.) The class was offered at the Pee Dee Research and Education Center in Florence County. The goal of the course was to enable producers to develop an overall farm plan using key management strategies that could be implemented. Due to a pre-evaluation on those who took part in the course and a post-evaluation the program showed great impacts on participants. According to the post-evaluation everyone expressed knowledge gained. The majority of those in attendance expressed they strongly agree the Pee Dee Region Master Cattleman course met their expectations and they planned on taking what they learned during the program and implement it back on the farm.



4-H helps to improve the Quality of Life through Agriculture

Alma Harris, County Extension Agent (4-H and Youth Development)

Clemson University Extension Service 4-H of Darlington County helps to improve the Quality of Life for the Citizens of South Carolina through Agriculture. Volunteers and children have served more than 2,500 people this year with fresh fruits and vegetables from the Clemson University Extension Service and Center Coalition 4-H Community Garden, and they have planted fall crops in hopes of helping even more.

Alma Harris, County Extension Agent, 4-H Coordinator, encouraged the group to give to local groups such as Harvest Hope, The Lord Cares, military families, and Manna House among others in need. Mrs. Harris said that this fits in with the mission of Clemson Extension Service. *The mission of the 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.*

The two-acre lot behind Center Baptist Church on Sally Hill Road is lined with collards, broccoli, kale, cabbage, two kinds of mustards, and okra for fall.

“We had plants, dropped them in a hole and covered them with soil,” Quantasia Brown, 4-H member, said. “We learned many things about the garden like a little plant comes from a seed.”

The purpose of the garden is to teach students about agriculture. Agriculture plays a crucial role in our economy by providing food, clothing and jobs to people all over the world. “The garden plays a major role in the community as we work with our youth in the garden it helps to create well-rounded citizens with strong life skills and community perspective. Research shows that active communities experience less crime and vandalism.” Mrs. Harris.

“In the spring garden, the club had watermelon, tomatoes, squash, corn, sweet potatoes, white potatoes, butter beans, peas, peanuts, bell peppers, hot peppers, and okra. The eight rows of tomatoes stood six feet tall. They also won first place for their canned peppers, at the State fair in Columbia.

The garden has also expanded its efforts to reach Military Kids and families. Through this program the garden received several grants, written by Mrs. Harris. **Operation: Military Kids** is the U.S. Army's collaborative effort with America's communities to support children and youth impacted by deployment.



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The Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to people of all ages, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital or family status and is an equal opportunity employer.

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South Carolina LEADS, Jennifer Boyles, County Extension Agent (Community Economic Development)

The inaugural SC LEADS class was held from September 2011-May, 2012. SC LEADS is an **agriculture, forestry and natural resources leadership program** for emerging leaders. The program is designed to provide intensive leadership development experiences for a promising new generation of leaders who are involved in South Carolina's food, fiber and farming sectors.

Based on a national model, and provided through Clemson Extension, SC LEADS brought together a select group of participants who from all over South Carolina who demonstrated their commitment to advance production agriculture, agribusinesses, forestry, and natural resources. Through a curriculum of seminars and site visits, these participants enhanced both their skills as leaders and their understanding of the social, political, organizational, and economic issues which impact agriculture, forestry, natural resources and our society.

Study trips to North Carolina and Washington D.C. were also a valuable component of the program. The SC LEADS program is funded in part by South Carolina USDA-Rural Development. For more information, call Jennifer Boyles at 843-616-0786.