

# N.C. Cooperative Extension, Rutherford County Center

## Programs & Resources

NC State Extension extends research-based knowledge to all North Carolinians, helping them transform science into everyday solutions that improve their lives and grow our state. Our office has many areas of expertise including: Family & Consumer Sciences, Nutrition, Food Safety & Preservation, Local Foods & Horticulture, 4-H & Youth Development, and Livestock & Forages.



**Summer Fun:** Each summer 4-H hosts a series of educational activities for youth ages 5 and up. These summer enrichment programs cover a wide range of topics and are taught by Extension staff, volunteers, 4-H teens, and other professionals in their respective fields. Some of the more popular topics include Wildlife, Fishing and Mussels, Agriculture, Cooking, Heritage Arts, Electricity, Art. Some of these classes include taking field trips, making crafts, preparing foods, etc.

**4-H Teen Leadership:** County Council is composed of officers from the clubs, as well as County Officers. They meet monthly and help plan county-wide events. Occasionally when youth excel in their leadership abilities, they are encouraged to run for a district or even a state office. Teens are also encouraged to participate in the Ambassador program on the state level

**Breeding Soundness/Bull Selection Clinic:** Many producers rely on one bull to breed their herd. This clinic tests bulls for fertility to ensure that the calf crop is successful for producers. This clinic also provided educational information on selecting a bull that will sire calves that fit the needs of the producer and make them the most money.

**Soil Testing:** Soil testing kits and advice and report understanding and assistance with fertilizer recommendations

**Horticultural Agent Consultations:** Phone, email, and in-person consultations for plant ID, insect ID, and any other garden planning and problem-solving for the general public and community garden consultations and planning questions. Agent also assists Farmers through Farm consultations with current and aspiring producers and farmers including market and enterprise development and planning assistance.

**Livestock and Forages Consultations:** Provide farm visits and consultations for producers needing in-person advice in many of the areas listed above. Assist producers with soil sampling kits, report interpretation and fertility advice.

**Leading The Way:** Training course on group dynamics, effective communication, conflict resolution, facilitation, and cultural understanding for agency and non-profit staff, civic clubs, and community groups.

**Local Food Systems:** Interactive talks and demonstrations designed to build awareness of food system components, food access issues, and certifications and food labeling

**BBQ Bootcamp:** Day camp for youth and/or adults focused on food science, meat safety, and outdoor grilling techniques

### Commercial Horticultural Continuing Education:

**Pesticide Coordinator-** Continuing education for pesticide license holders, Landscape and Turf for Private Applicators (farmers). **WNC Green Team-** A multi-county agent team that hosts classes across the region for landscape and nursery professionals as well as the Certified Plant Professionals (CPP) short course, Certified Turf Professionals course for WNC is also put on by this team.

**Extension Master Gardener Volunteers (EMGV):** Under the guidance and direction of Extension agents, individuals complete a 40-hour training program, pass an examination, and complete at least a 40-hour internship to become certified Master Gardener volunteers. To remain active in the program, volunteers must complete a minimum of 20 hours of volunteer service and a minimum of 10 hours of continuing education each year. Master Gardener<sup>SM</sup> volunteers provide unbiased, research-based information that empowers residents to cultivate healthy gardens, landscapes, and ecosystems through safe, effective and sustainable gardening practices.

**4th Grade Garden Nutrition:** Series of classroom-based activities including hands-on gardening experiences, taste tests, physical activity, and student challenges that encourage fruit and vegetable consumption and healthier lifestyle choices.

**Home Food Preservation:** Hands-on workshops for canning, freezing, and dehydrating foods.

**Extension & Community Association (ECA):** Members of ECA give volunteer time toward educational outreach and community service projects aimed at strengthening families and communities.

**Cooking School:** Hands-on classes for adults focused on healthy cooking techniques designed to encourage healthier food choices, safe food handling, and preparing more meals at home.

**Miniature Horse Club:** Meets in Shiloh. Members learn about horses, focusing on miniature horses. Youth do not need to own a horse or a mini, but can get the opportunity to learn and experience hands-on learning from participating the club's meetings on the farm.

**Color Me Healthy:** Nutrition series taught in preschool classrooms to help young children use their sense of touch, smell, sight, sound, and taste to explore new foods

**Carolina Foothills Forage Management Series:** Partnered with Clemson Extension, workshops were held at a few different locations including Tryon International Equestrian Center (TIEC), Foothills Equestrian Nature Center (F.E.N.C.E.), and Cotton Patch Farm. These workshops focused on a variety of pasture management topics for equine owners that will help them reduce their feeding and hay costs.

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**Cattlemen's Association:** Livestock Agent serves as an educational liaison for the Rutherford County Cattlemen's Association, assisting them with the educational portions of their meetings. The Association aims to encourage, promote and develop all phases of the livestock industry and to facilitate the most practical application of all research pertaining to agricultural products.

**Med Instead of Meds:** Nutrition series for adults on the Mediterranean-style eating pattern and other nutrition recommendations based on USDA Dietary Guidelines this series features lectures, videos, taste tastes, cooking techniques, recipes, and a dedicated website.

**Regional Pastured Pork Workshop:** Partnered with a local pastured pork producer and NC State Extension specialist to host a workshop on outdoor swine production. This group has often been an overlooked audience and we felt there was a need across our region to bring them together. This workshop had attendees from 5 different states and covered topics from farrowing to finishing, nutrition, genetics and marketing.

**NC Foothills Farm Tour:** In partnership with Polk Agricultural Economic Development Office. An event which allows the public to visit and interact with farmers in their area which helps build relationships and future partnerships. Participants only need to pay for a car pass so that all their passengers to visit all farms on the program as a group.

**Horticultural Presentations:** The Horticultural Agent assists in community enrichment through presentations as requested for local organizations and garden clubs.

**Extension Master Food Volunteers (EMFV):** Training course on food systems, nutrition, and food preparation for those interested in volunteer projects and continuing education in food-related topics.

**Food Security & Health Equity:** Discussions facilitated by the FCS & Horticulture Agents to gain better understanding of community food issues.

**Special Interest Topics:** Food related talks and demonstrations for community groups led by the FCS Agent.

**4-H Volunteer Training and Development:** All 4-H volunteers must complete training on the local level. New screening procedures on the state level are more extensive than ever.

**Chase Middle Pirates:** An afterschool club at Chase Middle. The leaders have a vested interest in 4-H and agriculture and want to pass this on to their students. The group focuses on learning leadership skills as well as learning about various aspects of agriculture. They have maintained container gardens at the school.

**Galloping Gryphons:** An afterschool club at TJCA. The club serves middle school and high school students. Members do not need to own their own horse. They study a lot of equine science and participate in Horse Bowl and Hippology competition on the district and state levels.

**Regional Small Ruminant Workshop:** Partnered with West District Livestock Extension Agents to host a workshop for sheep and goat producers. These producers are smaller in number across the district, but still have needs in the areas of parasite management, pasture management, lambing/kidding management, predator control and marketing.

**Friends of Agriculture Monthly Breakfasts:** In partnership with the Farm Bureau, farmers and community members can mingle and learn more about each other and learn about local resources. An excellent event for new farmers to meet other farmers to learn from one another and connect.

**Extension Gardener Newsletter:** A newsletter for gardeners of all levels of experience. The newsletter is provided online by NC State Extension and it is a resource for home gardeners to receive updated information about our area and gardening and other tips and tricks that they may find useful.

**Value-Added Cattle:** Partnered with the Mountain Cattle Alliance and Southeast Livestock Exchange to develop a regional marketing program for cattle producers. This program has educational components for attendees about Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) guidelines (which are determined by genetics, nutrition and herd health practices). Additional educational components include animal handling and behavior and facility design.

**Embryology: Second Grade:** Teachers are loaned an incubator, egg turner (for the weekends), and candler. They are trained and given curriculum the week before eggs arrive. Fertilized eggs are donated and distributed to the classrooms. Students are able to witness the embryo's growth and development during the 21 day process.

**Butterflies: Second Grade:** This is one of our newer curriculum pieces. Upon training, we order caterpillars that will morph into chrysalis, then hatch into beautiful Painted Lady Butterflies! We encourage teachers to order enough cups to have one per student. Their kit also comes with a butterfly cage and feeder. After they have enjoyed their butterflies, they can have a Release party and release them into the wild. \*

**Magic of Electricity:** Using our national 4-H curriculum, I work with Fourth Grade students to learn the basics of circuits and the flow of electrons. We utilize basic resources such as batteries, lightbulbs, wires, aluminum foil, and magnets to let students understand the concept and build various types of circuits.

**Speedway to Healthy Exhibit:** A walk-through exhibit loaned out from NC A&T State University. We borrow the exhibit for an entire week. We host all the fourth grade students from the county schools, charter schools, private, and home schools. At least 800 students attend annually. We receive grant money from RHI Legacy Foundation to support this event. Grant funds cover give-aways for the students and other event costs.

**Farm/City Program:** Integrated program that partners with Rutherford County Schools and local agricultural agencies to educate 4th graders on the importance of agriculture to our everyday lives and the economic impact it has on our region and state. 4th grade students receive an agricultural lesson and participate in a poster contest themed "Grow It, Make It, Use It".

**Agricultural Literacy Program:** Agents teach local 2nd graders about agriculture through reading time and other activities where children are free to ask experts questions

**Farm Friends 4-H Club:** A club for older youth to learn about agriculture. The club is based out of the Bostic community.

**Betsy Ross 4-H Club:** A community club that meets in Rutherfordton. The club focuses on a new topic each year, including Expressive Arts, STEM, Environmental Sciences, Community Service, etc.

**The Poultry Club:** (New, Starting virtually) was scheduled to begin in April 2020. Due to the pandemic, their field trip got moved to a virtual mode. Youth and adults from across the state, including NCSU Poultry Science faculty, tuned in for this Virtual Coop Tour. Charter members took guests on a virtual tour of their coop, highlighting their different equipment and breeds of chickens.

**Healthy Helpers 4-H Club:** Meets at the Extension office. Their themes center around the topics of foods, nutrition, cooking, Family & Consumer Sciences, safety, and heritage arts, and crafts.

**Kids & Chefs Camp:** One week farm-to-table day camp for youth ages 10-13 focusing on food production, harvesting, food safety, nutrition and cooking skills

**State Line 4-H Club:** A community club in the Cliffside community. Their topics vary each year and have included rocks and minerals, science, and dairy foods.

**Agritourism Development:** Visit NC Farms App Management. We strive to engage the public in meaningful ways on farms so that they are able to better understand their local food producers and to know how to support them. This also offers opportunities for farmers to learn about ways that they can expand their businesses and engage with customers in meaningful ways.

\* School Enrichment programs are offered to school classrooms at minimal or no cost. Teachers are trained on curriculum.

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### Additional Overview Information

The Family & Consumer Sciences (FCS) program provides educational opportunities in the area of health and wellness including nutrition, meal planning, cooking, food safety and home food preservation. Programs for both youth and adults focus on making safe and healthy food choices, being physically active, reducing risk of chronic disease, and achieving healthy weight.

In addition to food-related programs, FCS can address urgent community needs in housing, parenting, family resource management, and human development as identified by community need assessments.

Livestock educational programming includes educational meetings and materials on a variety of topics. Some of the most common areas are: genetics and reproduction, animal health and nutrition, pasture management (forage production, grazing management, weed control, & soil fertility), animal handling and behavior, fencing systems, and facility design.

The Horticultural Sciences program includes resources and trainings for horticultural crop producers such as production-specific education, farm design, marketing, and enterprise development. This program also offers services for homeowners such as garden planning, insect and disease management, soil management, and plant identification. Appointments and farm/home visits are available as well. Local foods and community development-centered programs are oftentimes developed and managed in partnership with agencies and community members.

4-H is the largest youth organization in the United States with more than 7 million participants. 4-H is best identified by its green four-leaf clover with an H on each leaf. The four H's on the emblem stand for Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. 4-H is the only youth organization based at land-grant universities and the first experience many youth have with higher education.

Because youth get to “Learn by Doing” and meet new friends that share their interests. Youth can participate in projects where they make something, develop a skill, raise and/or train an animal, join a virtual club with kids from anywhere in the world! There are numerous projects available, including foods, clothing, public speaking, models, aerospace, wood science, and livestock.



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