



IN MCDOWELL COUNTY

In McDowell County, we strive to make a difference in your life, family, and OUR community. We have a dedicated staff of trained professionals delivering educational programs in agriculture and natural resources, family and consumer sciences, and 4-H and youth development. The McDowell County Center is your gateway to NC State University, NC A&T State University, and beyond.

You'll see some key numbers and successes in this report, but the numbers don't always show you the people or the full impact of our work. We hope that Report to the People will tell you some of our impacts.

Family & Consumer Sciences Kristin Mart

Safety & Security of our Food & Farm Systems

In response to the increased need for safe food handling programs for consumers in McDowell County, Cooperative Extension provided a 2-hour, hands-on workshop on canning jams and jellies. There were 12 participants who received current, research-based recommendations for canning jams/jellies using a boiling water bath. Through verbal and written feedback, all of the participants reported increased knowledge of safe canning procedures and plan to adopt at least one of the recommended practices, if not doing so already.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP-Ed)

Nearly one out of three (32%) children ages 10-17 in North Carolina is overweight or obese. McDowell County Cooperative Extension partnered with Eastfield Elementary and Marion Elementary to deliver the Steps to Health



nutrition education program to 125 third grade students. Parents and guardians were invited to attend the classroom sessions along with their children and sent a weekly handout with nutrition information and recipes related to the classroom sessions. Based on 104 matched pre-tests and post-tests, 76% of students improved their overall knowledge of nutrition. Completed parent feedback forms found that more than 80% of the parents and their children are eating more fruits and vegetables as a result of this program.

4-H Youth Development Chad Ray



Lack of self-esteem and insecurity in speaking publicly holds many people back from reaching their full potential in their careers. The NC 4-H Presentations Program has always served as a great way to teach youth public speaking skills and overcome low self-esteem and insecurity. This past year, McDowell County 4-H had 14 youth present on the county level with 7 of them advancing to state competition. One McDowell 4-H youth won State Gold in Chicken Barbeque and qualified for nationals held in Louisville, Kentucky. She placed 6th overall in the nation and gained valuable experience and confidence.

School to Career

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, US students placed below average in science scores as compared to students from other countries in the Organization for Economic Development. In an effort to ensure that students have a better understanding and appreciation for science-related subject matter and to better prepare youth for tomorrow's global economy, McDowell County 4-H developed programs and workshops for students and teachers. NC Cooperative Extension's 4-H program in McDowell County worked with elementary students in 2nd, 4th, 5th and 6th grades in a variety of science-related, hands-on programs including: Embryology, Agriculture Awareness Field Day, Engineering Olympics, and Conservation Field Day. By participating, students learn their required objectives set by NC's Department of Public Instruction's Standard Course of Study and gain a strong foundation in science-related studies. These programs are available to all participants free of charge using donations from the McDowell County United Fund.



Volunteerism

On April 27, 2011, deadly tornados ripped through 5 states in the southeastern United States. Citizens were left homeless and with very little potable water for human consumption. McDowell County 4-H and McDowell County Cooperative Extension quickly put together a bottled water drive to help. McDowell 4-H partnered with our local Lowe's Home Improvement to purchase discounted water and a local church to deliver the water. After three weeks, 2,898 individual bottles (139 cases) were sent to help with the relief effort. This contribution equaled \$695.

Agriculture & Natural Resources

Craig Adkins, Greg Anderson, Molly Sandfoss



Production & Sustainable Agriculture

Nursery growers in the foothills are growing over 300 species of ornamental plants. Each year, new species and cultivars are added to nursery inventories. This practice increases the potential that new and emerging pests may be introduced into the foothills. 698 growers and employees attended IPM seminars and on-farm scouting programs to learn techniques for scouting nursery fields and greenhouses for existing and emerging pest problems. 98 growers participating in the 2011 program realized a savings of \$833,000 on chemical, labor and equipment costs by adopting and implementing IPM on 4,620 acres planted in ornamental plants. Those participating in the 2011 program have indicated that implementing IPM helped them to produce quality plants by staying on top of potential pest problems.



Youth involved in livestock judging gain critical knowledge of the standards and ideals of the industry and gain an interest in agriculture. In addition, livestock judging helps youth learn skills such as public speaking, problem solving, and decision making. Youth are trained to rank animals based on industry ideals and defend their placing by presenting oral reasons to an official. Five McDowell County youth participated in livestock judging workshops and contests throughout 2011. As a result of training they received through Cooperative Extension, their scores improved in all competitions. In the State Fair Livestock Judging Contest, the junior team placed first in Beef, Sheep, Swine, Goats, second in reason, and second overall.

Local Food Systems

Marketing is a challenge for many agricultural producers. With a \$6,000 grant that is managed by the Cooperative Extension Service and with Extension expertise, Mountain Spring Garden completed the necessary steps to bring bamboo shoots to market: product testing, proper labeling, applying for a UPS code and purchasing commercial canning equipment and machinery. Canning will allow Mountain Spring Garden to greatly increase produc-

tion and enable year-round sales, without geographical limitations.



Urban & Consumer Agriculture

During our current economic downturn with more individuals and families interested in supplementing their diet with homegrown vegetables and enjoying a relatively inexpensive hobby, Cooperative Extension with the Extension Master Gardener volunteers hosted a Gardening 101 Workshop. Twenty seven people participated. Participants completed a post-workshop questionnaire. At least 60% of the participants gained knowledge in soil sampling, planning your garden, vegetable gardens, flower gardens, and herb gardens. Thirty percent of the participants said they were going to start a vegetable garden. Home vegetable production will save these individuals money, get exercise, and help them eat well.



Empowering People, Providing Solutions to McDowell County

Educational Program

Total Participants 35,230

Face to Face

Office
Field
Workshops
Seminars
Demonstrations 10,417

Non-face

Telephone calls
Email
Newsletters 24,813

Volunteer Development

Volunteers 251
Hours 4,174
Value \$84,524

NCCES-McDowell County Center

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