



Report to the People

MCDOWELL
county center

North Carolina Cooperative Extension

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, food, and youth. 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 the people or the full impact of our work. We hope that this report will enlighten you on some of our impacts.

Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program

Heather Peek

Healthy Eating, Physical Activity and Chronic Disease Risk Reduction

In McDowell County, North Carolina Cooperative Extension partners with local schools to deliver the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).

After teaching first graders about the health benefits of eating nutrient-rich whole grain foods, the EFNEP program assistant was approached by one of the students. The little girl explained that she had asked her mother in the past to purchase whole grain bread, but her mother had refused to do so.

The following week, the girl excitedly shared that after telling her mother about the benefits of eating whole grains, her mother had agreed to try whole grain bread. and liked it! Through one little first grader, EFNEP has successfully changed the eating behaviors of an entire family.



EFNEP delivered a series of lessons for five women at a local homeless shelter. One of the lessons covered food safety. The lesson emphasized the importance of hand washing, sanitizing cutting boards and countertops, and ways to reduce cross-contamination. Many of the participants admitted that they left meats out on the counter to thaw, and used the same cutting board to cut raw meats and fresh vegetables.

Hearing how easy it is to fall victim to food borne illness made an impact on all of the participants. Each of the women vowed to practice food safety measures in their kitchen. By increasing the participants' knowledge on food safety, the EFNEP PA had given these women the power to reduce their risk of contracting food borne illness in their home.

NC State University
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**COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION**

Empowering People • Providing Solutions

4-H Youth Development

Chad Ray



School to Career

Finding resources to develop and design or locate hands-on activities that engage students in science can be difficult for educators.

Cooperative Extension used funding from McDowell Farm Bureau and McDowell United Fund to purchase incubators and equipment to provide quality programming to 25 elementary classrooms in McDowell County. McDowell CES also partnered with a local farmer to provide 30 dozen fertilized eggs at no cost. Five hundred thirty youth experienced the life cycle of a chicken in a hands-on learning environment.

Teachers reported that they noticed great improvement in their students' knowledge of science, relating science to real life experiences, class participation, behavior, and teamwork.

Livestock Judging and Skillathon challenges youth to learn a vast array of knowledge dealing with all aspects of livestock production. The agent provided over 1000 hours of instructional coaching to 12 youth over a seven month time span. Participants learned how to evaluate four species of livestock on production and market characteristics.

Youth competed in multiple contests over the course of the seven months in which they were scored on their performance.

Participants received top placings on an individual and team basis at five regional or state contests. All 12 youth placed in the top 10 in a category at the state contest. In addition, these young people built their public speaking and critical thinking skills through developing and presenting reasons defending their class placings.



Agriculture & Natural Resources

Craig Adkins, Greg Anderson, Molly Sandfoss

Production & Sustainable Agriculture

During 2014, 149 greenhouse growers and employees were trained at Diagnostic Clinics and production workshops on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and innovative greenhouse production techniques. On-farm greenhouse visits were conducted to provide hands-on training to growers.

One hundred twenty two greenhouse growers and employees (82%) have indicated the adoption of two or more of the improved production practices.



Thirty five of the greenhouses now apply fewer pesticides to crops and the environment as a result of having implemented a proactive IPM scouting and monitoring program. Cost savings from implementing recommended practices for greenhouse production were \$45,800 in 2014.



With beef prices at record highs, beef cattle producers want to know how they can boost profits through value-added marketing.

McDowell County Cooperative Extension partnered with Polk, Cleveland, and Rutherford County and Southeast Livestock Exchange to work with these producers to co-mingle calves to sell in truckload lots under the Mountain Cattle Alliance. This group evaluated and processed these calves to verify that health and quality issues were

addressed in order to market high quality cattle.

Over 25 producers sold 13 loads of cattle (~975 head) in 2014 valued at \$1,560,000. At an average of \$225/head on 975 head of cattle, that is an additional \$219,375 profits back in the pockets of these producers.



Local Food Systems

Many farmers cannot grow or diversify their business without funding.

Cooperative Extension worked closely with a local beekeeper to plan the expansion of his bee operation with the help of a \$6,000 Ag Options grant.

The farmer met his goal of doubling the number of hives in production. He has also started producing queens for sale and is taking a course on bee artificial insemination.



Urban & Consumer Agriculture

Eighteen percent of McDowell County's population is food insecure with 32% of children living in food insecure homes. Many disadvantaged households rely on food pantries.

Cooperative Extension with Extension Master Gardeners planted a community garden with funds from WNC Foundation. Approximately 25 individuals volunteered time to maintain the garden. Some of the volunteers were high risk youth.



Four hundred eighty six pounds of fresh vegetables were grown and donated. The fresh produce provided a healthy alternative to the processed foods that are often distributed at food pantries.

Empowering People, Providing Solutions to McDowell County

2014 Report

Educational Program

Total Participants 15,520

Total Non-face Contacts 4,745

- Telephone calls
- Email
- Newsletters

Volunteer Development

Volunteers 887
Hours 4,963
Value \$109,881

Total Face to Face Contacts 10,775

- Office
- Field
- Workshops
- Seminars
- Demonstrations

North Carolina State University and North Carolina A&T State University commit themselves to positive action to secure equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status, or disability. In addition, the two Universities welcome all persons without regard to sexual orientation. North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments cooperating.

NCCES-McDowell County Center

For more information, you may contact us at:



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