



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 over 58% of adults are considered overweight or obese and 13.7% of youth are considered overweight and 12.2% obese. These individuals have an increased risk of many health problems, ultimately leading to premature death. A contributing factor to these rising numbers are the portion sizes Americans eat on a daily basis.

McDowell County EFNEP partners with local schools to promote the importance and encourage students to eat healthy balanced diets, using MyPlate as a guideline. In an effort to combat the mindset that bigger is better, the EFNEP program assistant taught a lesson on portion sizes. Using food models, the program assistant showed a class of third graders the amount of food they probably consumed a day, then showed them the recommended serving sizes they should be consuming. The EFNEP program assistant also had various healthy snacks packaged in snack size resealable bags to show the children ways to control their snacking! By having their snacks prepackaged to the appropriate amounts would reduce mindless eating.

Although the EFNEP portion size lesson was aimed to change a group of third graders eating behaviors, it had a huge impact on their teacher's life as well. The teacher had recently been diagnosed pre-diabetic. With the new information she had gained from EFNEP, she started watching her food intake and began walking 2 miles daily. She is now on the road to a happier and healthier life. She even reported that both herself and her daughter had lost weight, but the best part was she had not felt this energized in years.



NC State University
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Empowering People • Providing Solutions

4-H Youth Development

Chad Ray



Volunteer Readiness

The Youth Livestock program is expensive and popular. The average cost to maintain a show animal is \$750. Eighty one youth participated in the McDowell County horse and livestock shows in 2015.

Cooperative Extension coordinates volunteers that oversee the youth livestock program in McDowell County. This group of volunteers was started in 1957 and continues to lead youth livestock programs in McDowell County. Through the McDowell Youth Foundation, volunteers obtain resources to support the youth livestock program. This includes a livestock chain, donations, and yearly scholarships. Currently there are 15 volunteer board members.

In 2015, the McDowell Youth Foundation helped coordinate the local horse show with 26 participants and a livestock show with 65 participants. Award money totaled \$3525 for both shows. Two \$500 scholarships were given to youth involved in the 4-H livestock program. Over the lifetime of the scholarship, \$28,000 has been distributed to McDowell youth. Without these volunteers the shows and scholarships would not have happened.

School to Career

Cooperative Extension and 4-H uses Shooting Sports Programs to teach youth gun safety and life skills like self-confidence, personal discipline, responsibility, teamwork, and sportsmanship.

McDowell County Shooting Sports program offered over 120 hours of instruction with competitions over a 7 month period for 73 youth participants. Four new volunteers were recruited into the program. Seventy three youth learned how to handle firearms safely and developed life skills. Three



Agriculture & Natural Resources

Adam Lawing & Molly Sandfoss

Production & Sustainable Agriculture

Sows were not getting pregnant for a local producer. The farmer had 3 sows and none of the sows had piglets.

Cooperative Extension talked to the producer about his production practices and determined that the sow feed ration appeared to be the problem. A feed sample was taken and analyzed. The Extension Agent formulated a new sow ration that met the nutrient requirements for the sow.

The producer reported that on the new sow ration

all 3 sows got pregnant and that the 3 sows had an average litter size of 11 pigs each.



Cooperative Extension had the tools to help cattle producers co-mingle their cattle for truck load sales 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. Data was collected based on weaning weights/price compared to the weekly auction prices. In 2015, 8 McDowell producers sold 120 head (over 4 loads of cattle). These calves were sold at a premium ranging from \$150-\$375/head with an average of \$275. One hundred twenty head at an average of \$275 is an additional \$33,000 in the pockets of these producers. of these producers.



Local Food Systems

The value of crops pollinated by honeybees is approximately \$17 billion and makes up about one third of our daily diet. There has been a steady decline in the number of honeybee hives in the US for many decades. The loss can be attributed to pests, diseases, nutrition, pesticides, and genetics. With the decline in the bee population, the need for bee management education and the need for new beekeepers has never been higher.

Cooperative Extension partnered with the McDowell Honeybees, McDowell Farm Bureau and McDowell Technical Community College to conduct a three day bee school. One hundred people participated in the school including 32 people with no bees or beekeeping experience.

Thirty two people took the certified beekeepers test and passed the written portion of the test. Fifteen people took and passed the practical exam becoming Certified Beekeepers.



Urban & Consumer Agriculture

In order to help supply McDowell County food pantries, Cooperative Extension with McDowell County Extension Master Gardeners planted a community garden with funds from the Association and donations from area businesses.

Approximately, 25 individuals volunteered time to maintain the garden. Some of the volunteers were high risk youth. In 2015, six hundred pounds of fresh vegetables were grown and donated. Charities that received the produce included the McDowell Mission Ministries, Clinchfield Methodist Church, Saint John’s Episcopal Church, Blue Ridge Terrace Apartments, and the McDowell County Senior Center.



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

2015 Report

Educational Program

Total Participants 21,208

Total Non-face Contacts 5,009

- Telephone calls
- Email
- Newsletters

Volunteer Development

Volunteers 771
Hours 3,892
Value \$86,169

Total Face to Face Contacts 16,199

- 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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