FROM THE DIRECTOR

It is a pleasure to provide this report of our Cooperative Extension educational programs during 2006. It was a busy year once again.

We are now fully staffed in the office. In June, we welcomed Ms. Toi Degree. She is the Family and Consumer Sciences Agent and is focusing on programs in nutrition and wellness, family and parent education, health and human safety and housing.

In September, we welcomed Ms. Sara Drake, 4-H Youth Development Agent. Sara worked as a 4-H agent in Alleghany County for three years. She arrived in Rowan County just in time to help with the Rowan County Fair.

Darrell Blackwelder participated in a month-long international work experience in Tajikistan. He assisted a company in that region that is working with tomato growers.

North Carolina began creating one identity for Extension. The slogan is “One Mission ~ One Vision ~ One Extension.” Out of this initiative, Extension has developed a new county plan of work and a new individual performance plan. A new competency-based performance appraisal tool was also developed.

Cooperative Extension has and will continue to change. Areas such as nutrition, food safety, economic prosperity and wise land use will be important for many more years. Our staff is excited to deliver integrated programming.

Rowan County Center Report to the People 2006 Annual Report

Our Mission

Cooperative Extension is an educational partnership helping people put research-based knowledge to work for economic prosperity, environmental stewardship and an improved quality of life.

Bringing Land-Grant Universities to Your Community in 2006

North Carolina Cooperative Extension brings the power of university knowledge to you, right in your community. The Rowan County Center is directly linked to North Carolina State University and North Carolina A&T State University, thus we can provide timely, problem-solving educational programs based on the latest and best research.

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Extension Contacts Reported in 2006 ........... 27,959
67 Trainings or Workshops Held Reaching .... 3,015
Grants Received ................................. $14,910
Program Delivery through Media:
74 news articles – households reached .... 696,478
2 television spots – households reached .... 20,000
4-H Reached 344 Youth in 45 Clubs or Groups.

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, 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.
Marketing Effort is Profitable for Rowan County Beef Producers

Analysis of Rowan County beef producer demographics by Rowan County Cooperative Extension revealed a tremendous seedstock industry represented by most of the major beef breeds. The logical question became, "how to promote this high-quality, diverse industry in Rowan County?" Rowan County Cooperative Extension met with the county’s beef seedstock breeders to discuss the situation and to propose the purchase of a one-page advertisement in the Carolina Cattle Connection (monthly publication of the North and South Carolina Cattlemen Associations, circulation 6,500) for 12 months. Contracting the ad for 12 months resulted in a 20% advertising rate discount. Twelve Rowan County beef producers, representing eight breeds, chose to advertise on the page, which cost each producer $400/year. The page is set-up in a way that each producer is featured in the center section of the page once a year, therefore allowing them to specifically promote their herd as they choose (bull sales, female sales, embryos, herd bulls, show stock, etc.). With the help of Rowan County Cooperative Extension, pictures are taken, advertising concepts are generated, the page is laid-out, and the information is sent to the Carolina Cattle Connection each month for their review and publication. The Rowan County Seedstock Producer’s page has received great acclaim from the advertisers, other producers, and Cooperative Extension Agents. The Rowan County seedstock page advertisers estimate that the page has generated in excess of $70,000 in sales in less than one year. By comparison, the equivalent value of this same stock, if sold through normal marketing channels is estimated at $35,000. – Brad Johnson, Dairy and Livestock Agent

2006 Achievements

The ECA clubs kept 16,912 pounds of recyclables out of the Rowan County landfill through their recycling efforts. In addition to recycling, reported activities include crafts, such as making toboggans for premature babies and Alzheimer’s aprons. They collected school supplies, participated in Operation Christmas Child, collected can tabs for the Ronald McDonald House, and made desserts for volunteers who participated in the United Way Day of Caring Project.

A total of 3,293 volunteer hours were reported with a value of $56,607. Volunteers visited various churches and nursing homes. The following places were also recipients of volunteer hours: Rowan Helping Ministries, Rowan County Fair, Iredell County Fair and the ARC of Rowan County. Medicine bottles were donated to the Good Shepherd Clinic and pound cakes were donated to Habitat for Humanity. ECA donated more than $1,000 to various church/organization outreach programs. – Toi Degree, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent.
Rowan County has a strong tradition of state champion 4-H dairy judging and dairy quiz bowl teams. 2006 was a banner year for the Rowan County 4-H Dairy Judging and Dairy Quiz Bowl teams, as both won state championships and had record-breaking accomplishments representing North Carolina at national contests.

Through a series of judging workouts, the Rowan County 4-H Dairy Judging Team of Tyler Bussard (Mt. Ulla), Carrie Hoffner (Mooresville), and Hillary Robinson (Salisbury), all members of the state champion 2005 Rowan County 4-H Dairy Judging Team, made the State 4-H Dairy Judging Team. They competed at the 2006 All-American, Harrisburg, PA, and World Dairy Expo, Madison, WI. The team placed second in linear evaluation at Harrisburg and concluded their 4-H dairy judging careers by placing 13th in the nation at World Dairy Expo, including Carrie achieving “All-American” honors by placing in the top-25 overall and Tyler placing 3rd in the Guernsey breed.

The success of Tyler, Carrie, Hillary, and Caleb Knox (Mt. Ulla) participating in 4-H dairy judging carried over into the State FFA Dairy Evaluation Career Development Event (CDE), as the team from West Rowan High School won the 2005 event and represented North Carolina at the 2006 National FFA Convention in Indianapolis. The team achieved the highest rating possible, “Gold”, and placed 12th overall. Tyler and Hillary had just represented North Carolina on the State 4-H Dairy Judging Team at Madison, WI, while Caleb was on the State 4-H Alternate Dairy Judging Team and competed in Louisville a couple weeks later.

Competing for South Rowan High School FFA, Carrie was the high-individual at the 2006 State FFA Dairy Evaluation CDE, which equals the accomplishments of her brother, John (2005) and sister, Laura (2003 AND 2004).

Four of the five youth on the state champion 2006 Rowan County Dairy Quiz Bowl team (Tyler, Carrie, Hillary, and John Hoffner, Mooresville, along with Ryan Sloop, Mt. Ulla) had represented North Carolina on the State 4-H Dairy Judging Team in the past two years. This dairy quiz bowl team studied tirelessly and finished ninth at the National 4-H Dairy Quiz Bowl in Louisville.

These teams are coached by David Correll, a former Cleveland-area dairy farmer, and Brad Johnson, Rowan County Cooperative Extension Dairy and Livestock Agent. We are very fortunate to have outstanding working relationships with the Ag Teachers at South Rowan High School, Mr. David Overcash, and at West Rowan High School, Mr. Jason Chester, who also provide invaluable training to their FFA Dairy Evaluation CDE teams.

It is the finding of Rowan County Cooperative Extension that the students participating on these teams have developed invaluable life skills of: decision making, public speaking, organization, time management, and team work, in addition to learning about the dairy industry. Many of the youth have also achieved major leadership positions (for example, State FFA President), earned many scholarships, and have secured very successful college educations.

We find it very ironic that as the dairy industry in Rowan County continues to shrink, the 4-H Dairy Youth program is as large and strong as it has ever been. — Brad Johnson, Dairy and Livestock Agent
Helping North Carolina Families Eat Smart and Move More:
2006 Program Successes for Rowan County

Results of the 103 families participating in EFNEP

100% of EFNEP participants showed improvement in their nutrition practices.
100% of EFNEP participants showed improvement in their resource management practices.
92% showed improvement in their diet.
89% of EFNEP participants showed improvement in their food safety practices.

Adult Program Success

The latest research indicates a correlation between the amount of fruits and vegetables offered in meals and the rate of overweight and obesity. The rise in obesity is greatest in children. NC Cooperative Extension’s Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) offered a series of classes on nutrition including a lesson on fruits and vegetables and a lesson on shopping for fruits and vegetables. A participant of the class shared she had only offered her children cookies, chips, and candy for snacks, but now plans to offer fruits and vegetables instead. She stated she learned the importance of fruits and vegetables in the diet and also found that by planning her meals and shopping wisely, she could include these nutritious foods in the diet of her family everyday. – Lovetta Miller, EFNEP Program Assistant

Childcare Providers Receive Area Training

In November 2006, agents from several counties across North Carolina brought their varying expertise together to host a workshop for childcare providers. The focus of the workshop was to address critical issues such as childhood obesity, temperament, best practices in parent education, physical activity, and child development. Agents and partnerships with numerous agencies throughout North Carolina made it possible for 85 childcare providers to receive four continuing education contact hours and it is estimated that over 500 children will be directly impacted. There were 12 exhibitors present and 20 workshops offered. Eighty-nine percent of the childcare providers that attended expressed in their evaluations that they gained new knowledge and will implement what they have learned in their centers. – Toi Degree, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent
Rowan County Tomato Trial: Think Pink
Volunteers researched varieties for this pink only variety trial, selecting those known for dependability in this area as well as color. Over 750 plants were grown out from seeds started in the Association’s greenhouse. Over 50 participants received sets of four varieties, plus “bonus” plants—either a pear tomato or a heirloom. Questionnaires were mailed and a session was held at the end of the season to review results.

A Master Gardeners’ Writers Forum was created as part of the outreach program providing educational gardening information to the general public. Rowan County Master Gardener volunteers contributed beneficial gardening information to the general public, and also promoted the educational programs with their participation. Recognized for useful and educational information from previous publications, the Master Gardeners’ Writers Forum was invited to write articles for the Home Improvement Section of the Salisbury Post in March and September. This special section reached approximately 27,000 homes in five counties or approximately 125,000 people. The approximate value of the Fall Home Improvement publication is $1,250 per page or approximately $24,000 worth of educational advertising in our local paper for this promotion.

Master Gardener Volunteers conducted workshops to the general public on propagation and hypertufa. Brochures, hands on procedures, and quality results were the end result of these beneficial programs. Twenty-one attended the sixth annual propagation class. Volunteers were teamed with individuals to give one-on-one instruction. All were able to plant a tray of cuttings which were grown out over the summer, and then all returned for a lesson in “potting up”. The hypertufa class attracted 15. Planters and garden art were created as a fun project in the Fall.

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<tr>
<th>Rowan County Master Gardeners under the direction of Darrell Blackwelder, Horticulture Agent, and Carole Massey, Master Gardener Coordinator, add a great deal of value to Extension.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Master Gardeners in 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total volunteer hours in 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Value of volunteer hours @ $15/hour</td>
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<td>Funds raised, grants, out of pocket expenses, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of people served</td>
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<td>Number of youth reached with school gardens</td>
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Migrant Driving Laws

Many law enforcement officials in Rowan County were unaware of driving laws concerning Hispanic migrant workers. Migrant workers were falsely arrested causing growers thousand of dollars in lost time, creating distrust toward local authorities and causing problems with the court system. The horticulture agent learned that many law enforcement officials in local municipalities, including sheriff’s deputies, had different and conflicting interpretations of the current driving law. The Extension Horticulture Advisory Committee cited this as a major problem for growers using migrant workers. The horticultural agent contacted the Rowan County District Attorney, the NC Highway Patrol and law enforcement officials from municipalities to arrange an informational meeting to discuss migrant driving laws. Fifteen law enforcement officials met with local growers and the Rowan County District Attorney to discuss migrant driving privileges. As a result of the meeting, the Rowan County District Attorney developed a countywide information sheet for local enforcement agencies designed to alleviate improper arrests. Information discussed at the meeting was also deemed important enough to include in the NC State Training Handbook for new law enforcement officials. Due to Cooperative Extension mediation, no migrant workers were falsely arrested during the 2006 growing season. – Darrell Blackwelder, Horticulture Agent

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Meet Our Staff

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Extension Agent, Agriculture – Horticulture

Brad Johnson
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Toi Degree
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